Senior student affairs officers, campus community, and diversity: A qualitative inquiry into six institutions

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SENIOR STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS, CAMPUS COMMUNITY,
And DIVERSITY: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY
INTO SIX INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Senior Student Affairs Officers, Campus Community, and Diversity: A Qualitative Inquiry Into Six Institutions

By

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Colleges and universities have a social responsibility to help prepare the country’s future workforce and leaders. All colleges and universities operate within a campus environment. Student affairs divisions exist on literally every campus in the country. Little is known about how the SSAO impact the development of the campus environment especially in terms of campus climate and culture. This study reports on how, by looking for discernible patterns across several higher education institution types—urban community college, rural community college, rural research university, religious-affiliated college, and metropolitan university, SSAOs impact the development of their campus environments, particularly as they relate to campus communities that are conducive to diverse students.

The researcher used Katz’s Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations to examine to what extent the institution’s environment was conducive to diversity and what role, if any, SSAOs in the study played in creating the current campus environment.
environment of their institutions. The models assesses where an organization falls on a continuum between monocultural or multicultural based on the characteristics and dynamics of the organization. The organizations exhibiting passive attitudes toward diversity on the monocultural end and are labeled *Exclusionary* for those with extreme barriers to diversity and *Symbolic Difference* for the not as extreme. Organizations fairing moderate on the continuum are labeled as *Affirmative Action* because they typically seek to fulfill quotas and/or take initial steps to being more inclusive. For those organizations that are more advanced in diversity efforts, they fall on the multicultural end of the continuum as either *U.S. Focus or Global* and tend to have adopted an attitude that places value in diversity.

This study provides an in-depth look into the administrative role of the Senior Student Affairs Officer and his/her impact on creating a campus culture. This bit of knowledge can serve as an aid to others in the field of student affairs as they explore ways in which to move their campuses to multicultural accepting institutions. Additionally, this study adds to the body of research generated knowledge about the role of the SSAO in creating community.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been stated and restated that multicultural diversity needs to be understood on American university and college campuses (Barr & Strong, 1998; Katz, 1989; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Rendón & Hope, 1996; Stage & Manning, 1992). Schuman and Olufs (1995) defined multiculturalism as a “consideration of many cultures” (p. 230). In 1990, Boyer noted that on college campuses, racial tensions had become a crisis. By 2004, Boyer’s crisis had not lessened. “Every year over half a million college students are targets of racial slurs and racist behaviors” (Choi-pearsor, Castillo, Maples, 2004, p. 132; Willoughby, 2003). As a young student affairs professional, I, unfortunately, had to experience the frustration that goes along with coping with racial incidents that impact campus community culture.

As an undergraduate I attended a metropolitan university. Because the university was located in the capital city of a southern state and the institution offered numerous comprehensive undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees, it attracted students from all walks of life across multiple racial and ethnic groups. Even though diversity was represented within the campus community through the student composition, incidents of unrest among the students occurred as a result of remarks and actions made toward a
particular group (for instance, vandalism and negative editorials toward minorities in campus newspapers).

When I accepted a position in the year 2000 as the multicultural recruiter at a liberal arts institution in the mid-Atlantic region, I quickly saw the difference between the large, diverse, campus environment I had experienced at my undergraduate institution and the small, rural, meticulously landscaped campus at the liberal arts institution where I now worked.

The culture of the liberal arts institution differed because its small enrollment size encouraged meaningful interactions among students, faculty, and staff in contrast to a large urban institution where meaningful interactions were less frequent. A sense of community was evident upon my first arrival on campus. Once ensconced, students frequently interacted with fellow classmates in a variety of settings and regularly called faculty and administrators by their first names. The dining area, which served as a common coming together spot for students, faculty, and staff, resembled that of a dining room that would be found in a cozy cabin nestled in the mountains, only much larger to accommodate the needs of the campus community.

Admittedly, this was a friendly and welcoming college campus community that prided itself on being inclusive. Therefore, it came as a shock to learn that someone had defaced a sign announcing the meeting date and time for a minority organization on campus with an unflattering racial slur. On the flyer announcing the meeting of the Black Student Union student organization, the word “Nigger” was marked over Black. The incident prompted student leaders of various ethnic groups to take action in which they spoke out against the slur at a unity rally that was held to reaffirm the campus
community's commitment to inclusiveness. Although the administration took no official
disciplinary action because they did not know who was responsible for the incident, they
did support the students in their efforts to address the incident and attended the rally in a
show of support. Although someone took it upon him/herself to attempt to incite or
negatively attack a particular group with an act of vandalism, the spirit of the campus
community was not broken. If anything, it was strengthened.

Such incidents remain all to common on college campuses and in some cases the
responses to those incidents do not turn out as well as the one I just described because the
campus community is not as one-minded, particularly about diversity, as that community
was. Therefore, it is critical for colleges and university officials to take an active role in
creating an inviting and culturally receptive community that encourages the campus
community to respond in a unified position manner when incidents like this one occur.

As a result of racially charged incidents on college campuses, many professions
have examined their own structural adherence to diversity. Higher education,
specifically, has called attention to this issue. College campuses have instituted some
form of diversity initiatives that build awareness among campus constituencies of the
need to deal with organizational complexities, which arise when a citizenry becomes
more diverse, especially in terms of race and ethnicity, but in other ways as well.
Umbach (2006) noted, “People of color now make up approximately 31% of the United
States population (p. 317).” When comparing the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses, data
indicate that the Hispanic population saw a 57.5 percent increase, 21.5 percent for
African American, and 74.3 percent for Asian American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).
As America continues to diversify, so too does the American workplace. Moses (1994) commented that a key role of American colleges and universities has been to prepare students for the world in which they live and work. The representation of multiple ethnic groups residing in the U.S. can visibly be seen within many employment sectors. With this inevitable shift in the organizational arena, it has become necessary for professionals, particularly those in administrative positions, to be culturally competent. As a result, it has become part of higher education institutions’ responsibility to prepare individuals to work effectively in a diverse workplace. “The focus on diversity draws from core ideas about universities as places where diverse views are expressed as part of the free exchange of ideas” (Maruyama, 2004, p. 252).

Cross (1988) defined cultural competence as “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or professional and enable that system, agency or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p. 1). According to Lum (2005), a culturally competent individual would “honor and respect the cultural collective values and temper individual values within the larger context” (p. 6). A culturally competent professional, observed Green (1982) would be able to “reflect an internalized awareness of specific cultures and have an ability to carry out professional activities consistent with that awareness” (p. 52). Consequently, for those working at postsecondary institutions there is a growing need to provide academic and co-curricular services that are inclusive of students from various backgrounds.

Although many higher education institutions have made a concerted effort to study, if not implement some type of diversity initiative, diversity still remains a hotly debated topic because of its sensitive nature. Resistance to multicultural recruitment
practices, minority-hires, and the insertion of multicultural curricula are a few examples of how campus communities reject attempts to enact diversity policies. As Walker (1979) stated decades ago, "universities can be incredibly tenacious in their counteractions to being shoved" (p. 96). Historically, "university administrators possess no immunity from the tendency of people in organizations to resist orders" (Walker, 1979, p. 98). Consequently, noted Astin (1993a), some college campuses have elected not to pursue diversity as a goal at all or have modified initial plans in response to opposition.

In the late spring of 2005, an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that at the University of Oregon, the president backtracked on a proposed five-year diversity plan, which included faculty evaluations based, in part, on cultural competency. The plan called for changes in the way in which eligibility for tenure and the post tenure review process would be assessed (Smallwood, 2005). Some faculty members were not receptive to the notion of being evaluated on their competency in multicultural areas, nor to the hiring of faculty in multicultural specific programs. Because of initial opposition to the diversity plan, the president was forced to revisit these issues within the plan. Despite the mishap, the institution continues to move forward with a strategic diversity plan.

At Duke University, administrators found themselves dealing with outcries from members of the campus community over the alleged sexual assault of an African American woman by members of the men's varsity lacrosse team, most of whom were Caucasian. "Students, faculty members, and local residents held – and continue to hold – vigils for the woman…over what they considered a slow initial response to the incident
by Duke's administration" (Lipka, 2006, p. 33). As a result of the incident, campus administrators "acknowledged that the incident has exposed persistent problems in campus culture – not unique to Duke – and said that they will redouble their efforts to improve the culture" (Lipka, 2006, p. 33). The Duke situation teaches us that despite an institution's best intentions at trying to create a campus community that is conducive to diversity, setbacks are prone to happen.

Levine and Cureton (1998) posited that on today's college campuses, issues related to diversity tend to be a major cause of unrest among students. This comes in the shadow of Kuh's et. al. (1991) earlier calls for incidents of multicultural conflict to be viewed as evidence of a need for change on college campuses.

The definition of a multicultural organization was defined by Barr and Strong (1998) as being "genuinely committed to diverse representations of its membership; sensitive to maintaining an open, supportive, and responsive environment; working toward and purposefully including elements of diverse cultures in its on-going operations; and authentic in its response to issues confronting it" (p. 1). Cox (1993) adds that a multicultural organization takes on the following characteristics:

1. A culture that fosters and values cultural difference
2. Pluralism as an acculturation process
3. Full structural integration
4. Full integration of the informal networks
5. An absence of institutionalized cultural bias in human resource management systems and practices
6. A minimum of intergroup conflict due to the proactive management of diversity (p. 229).

Thus, adds Cox, managing diversity means creating an environment where multiple cultural characteristics can influence and thrive within a given organization.

Critics of multicultural efforts often cite several reasons for their skepticism of diversity efforts (Moses 1994):

1. Embracing diversity means lowering admission standards and therefore the overall quality of who is admitted;

2. Standards for students are usually measured by standardized tests such as SAT scores and GRE scores, which have a high degree of predictive value: students who do not have high scores will be less successful;

3. Admission policies are discriminatory in favor of diverse students, because there are “set asides” or special admission status for them;

4. Minority and women faculty and staff hired into university slots to fill diversity or affirmative action quotas are not as qualified as faculty and staff hired through “normal” procedures;

5. The attempt to introduce issues of ethnicity, gender, and class into the university curriculum has weakened the curriculum. For example, the “real knowledge” in Western civilization courses is being shoved aside to make room for information about the contributions of people of color (p. 11).

More recently, Clegg (2000) suggested that pro-diversity efforts “cloak an agenda that is anti-merit, pro-preference, and anti-assimilationist” (p. B8). He contends that long-time preference advocates want to simply pressure the institution to meet some pre-
determined quota. According to Clegg, the drive to curb preference in favor of certain minorities does not just stop with selection. "If colleges and universities lower standards to achieve diversity in admissions, diversity advocates will inevitably pressure those institutions to rig the requirements in grading and for graduation. After that diversity advocates will move on to the college workplace and start questioning how institutions determine who gets promoted" (p. B8). Minority groups disagree with efforts to raise admissions standards, thereby leaving college officials having to grapple with charges of practicing racism and excluding minorities from attending their institutions.

The suggestion that in order to increase minority representation on college campuses, institutions' must somehow lower their admissions standards only fuels speculation that admitted minority students cannot handle the rigor of college-level work at some prestigious institutions. Standardized tests scores tend to be a primary measuring tool for potential college success. Therefore, prospective students who do not score well on the tests are deemed at-risk for failure in a four-year college environment. Any attempt to overlook and subsidize a student's less than satisfactory standardized test score performance with alternative admissions policies is often viewed as discriminatory to groups of students who do not fall into that category.

In relation to minority faculty, set-aside hires and preference for minority applicants can also be viewed negatively. Consequently, persons hired under these circumstances are often met with hostility and a lack of respect from colleagues. In the case of the curriculum, efforts to supplement western civilization instruction with more diverse courses represent a threat to quality instruction.
Moses (1994) suggested that cultural inclusion is a shared belief among institutions of higher learning of all types and that it is critically important that campus leaders from the president on down play a significant role in institutionalizing diversity. Whether it is articulating a vision, building consensus, working with the community, identifying and allocating resources, or establishing policies, the comprehensive involvement of key institutional personnel is vital to any diversity vision.

"The climate of an organization can influence people's behavior, and thus may be linked to teaching practices" (Milem, 2001, p. 236). As observed by Baldwin and Krotseng (1985), the administration of the institution plays an important role in determining the climate of the institution, which in return can promote high faculty morale. Tierney (1988) pointed out that administrators routinely fail to recognize the cultural influences that impact their daily decision-making processes. Thus, it is impossible to fully implement a policy that adequately promotes diversity within the institutional culture because there is no clear understanding of the current cultural climate within the organization.

When it comes to learning on college campuses, faculty have control over the classroom while student services professionals tend to support the building of campus environment. Cox (2001) stated that it is the heads of operating units who are responsible for creating initiative and ensuring overall success. For the purposes of this research project, I examined the role that student services plays in creating campus cultures that embrace diversity as a critical component of campus life. In particular, I investigated the role, if any, that senior student affairs officers play in creating a campus community that values diversity.
Culture and Community

Schein (1985) characterized culture as involving members of an organization who share basic assumptions and beliefs. O’Toole (1995) described culture as being “the unique whole – the shared ideas, customs, assumptions, expectations, philosophy, traditions, mores, and values – that determines how a group of people will behave” (p. 72). In further examining culture, Hanson (1991) and Peterson & Spencer, (1990) described institutional culture as comprising of the dominant behaviors and belief patterns that hold an institution together. Institutions of higher learning belong to a culture that is steeped in tradition. Typically, according to Austin (1990), institutional culture within higher education is reflected in the following: mission and goals of the campus, structure of governance, administrative leadership styles, curriculum and academic standards, student and faculty characteristics, student-faculty relations, size and location, and physical environment. Colleges and universities, noted Morgan (1986), involve various stakeholders that include regents and administrators, faculty and staff, and multiple kinds of students.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) defines culture as “a holistic, context-bound, and subjective set of attitudes, values, assumptions, and beliefs” (p. 95). The culture of higher education has many subgroups that operate within its confines. These subgroups vary according to student and faculty status, race and ethnicity, residential and non residential, and so forth. From these, a common set of traditions emerges within the institution. It is these traditions and expectations that Kuh and Whitt argue can be “used to socialize new students and faculty into the norms and values of the institution” (p. 95).
In 1989, Katz observed that most colleges and universities tend to accommodate the dominant culture's values and ideas, more specifically, the white culture. Often there is a feeling of uneasiness among the different ethnic groups when they attend events planned by other groups. Levine (1991) contends that “minority students regularly complained that white students did not come to their activities and that they felt uncomfortable at majority events” (p. 340). Manning and Coleman-Boatwright (1991) also support the notion that most institutional culture is heavily rooted in dominant cultural values. As a result, Richardson and Skinner (1991) noted that the difference between the culture of the institution and the expectations of minorities form a barrier to student achievement and success. Often, adds Cibik and Chambers (1991), ethnic minorities encounter barriers, such as discrimination and indifference from other students, as well as the institution.

When describing community as it relates to higher education, Tierney (1993) characterized it as revolving “around interactional meanings and redefinitions of what it means to be a citizen” (p. 143). In essence, “communities exist through the coming to terms with the parameters of ideas, such as social fellowship and obligation” (p. 80). Gardner (1989) characterized the traditional community as “homogeneous ... experiencing relatively little change from one decade to the next and resenting the little that it did experience ... demanding a high degree of conformity ... was often unwelcoming to strangers and all too ready to reduce its communication with the external world.” Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) saw community as being a “dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people:

- participate in common practices;
• depend upon one another;
• make decisions together;
• identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and
• commit themselves for the long term to their own, one another's and the group's well-being” (p. 7).

Often, when confronted with difficult scenarios, college administrators find themselves questioning the concept of an actual academic community (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992). “The psychological dimension of the climate for diversity involves individuals’ views of group relations, institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes held toward others from different racial/ethnic backgrounds” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 25).

Senior Student Affairs Officers

Campus intolerance of diversity may turn away minority students and discourage those seeking to push the issue (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991). Resentment of diversity mandates, on the part of students and faculty, may result in negative feelings toward those perceived as being the beneficiaries, persons of color. In order for efforts to implement diversity initiatives to stand a chance, there needs to be a force in place to advocate for and motivate the campus community to acknowledge and ultimately accept diversity as a goal. This is where the campus senior student affairs officer (SSAO) can have an impact. As noted by Kuh et. al. (1991), the SSAO is looked upon by the
president and others at the administrative level as the expert on matters that relate to students.

"Student affairs officers serve at the pleasure of the institution's president" (Sandeen, 2000, p. 381). They are expected to adhere to the president's wishes and orders and, typically, the charge for creating a multiculturally accepting campus is assigned to them (Sandeen, 2000). These individuals are tasked with overseeing the services that aid in creating a welcoming and safe environment for the entire campus community - administrators, faculty, staff, and students, alike. Walker (1979) observed that the most effective administrators push with a sense of direction and extraordinary persistence, giving very little hint of hesitation as they state their vision for the university. For the SSAO, this sort of drive is needed when building community as they must juggle the responsibilities of being effective managers of personnel and overall fiscal affairs. They must also serve as mediators between various campus groups and educators of policies and procedures as they relate to behavioral and social goals (Sandeen, 1991).

The role of the SSAO has changed over time (Sandeen, 1991). "The influx of handicapped, learning disabled, ethnic minority, female, older, part-time, and international students has changed American higher education from the domain of middle- and upper-class citizens to a heterogeneous community demanding exemplary teaching, advising, interpersonal, and leadership skills from not only teaching faculty members but also student affairs professionals" (Brown, 1997, p. 545). For example, because of changing student demographics and technology, the responsibilities of the SSAO have expanded to include judicial duties as they now monitor academic integrity.
issues among students and supply services to accommodate the needs of the adult learner and commuter student.

The demographic range of college students today varies from recent high school graduate to the adult learner. Also included in the mix are part-timers and persons with disabilities. Technology has aided student affairs professionals in some aspects of their work, but compounded it in others. For example, technology makes it no longer necessary for student to come on campus if they choose to be educated through on-line courses. Course registration and tuition payments are made easier through campus web services. Technology also poses problems as students are tempted to use high tech gadgets, such as calculators and camera phones to store exam information, therefore creating academic integrity issues that need to be addressed.

The student affairs profession is continually evolving. Its work to support the academic mission of the institution and develop the holistic student is recognized by the higher education community (American College Personnel Association, 2006). SSAOs have the task of shaping their campuses to embrace and tolerate change, specifically as it relates to diversity. In addition, it is expected that the SSAO “define and organize these services and programs for the institutions, and ensure that they are managed and delivered effectively” (Sandeen, 1991, p. 5).

Research Problem

Creating a culture that is receptive to change as it relates to diversity is difficult. In his book *Who Moved My Cheese*, Johnson (1998) points out that different people have different reactions to change. It is not uncommon for any attempt by those in student
affairs to confront resistance to efforts to promote acceptance and understanding (Bliming & Whitt, 1999). Colleges and universities have been struggling for years to create effective multicultural campuses. Already in place, in terms of institutional policy, are initiatives designed to accommodate the dominant culture (Manning & Boatwright, 1991). Such policies are reflected in campus programming, institutional offices, faculty and staff composition, training, and sensitivity to diversity. Therefore, it is imperative that SSAO, in order to effectively influence campus culture and implement change, have an active and visible role in diversity initiatives on college campuses. Little systematic research has been conducted about the role student services plays in this endeavor and in particular what impact, if any, SSAOs can have on these efforts. Research, for the most part, examines single institutions or like institutions, but identifies few commonalities (good or bad) across institutional types.

Problem Statement

Colleges and universities have a social responsibility to help prepare the country’s future workforce and leaders. Student affairs divisions in some form exist on literally every campus in the country. All colleges and universities operate within a campus environment. Little is known about how SSAOs impact the development of the campus environment especially in terms of campus climate and culture. This research examined one approach—creating a campus culture—to educating the future workforce about diversity. Student services and SSAO leadership are keys to this effort.
The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which six institutions created a campus community that valued diversity and the role each institutions SSAO played in the development of this environment. Particular attention focused on examining discernible patterns of campus community as they pertain to diversity across several higher education institution types—urban community college, rural community college, rural research university, religious-affiliated college, and metropolitan university.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this research, the following definitions apply:

• Diversity: The differences among individuals; race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion, age, size, and height.

• Culture: A uniform set of behaviors and practices that are shared by a common set people.

• Community: The coming together of perspectives under the same element.

• Senior Student Affairs Officer (SSAO): Highest ranking student affairs professional at an institution, often appointed by the president, and oversees areas related to student services and development.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- To what extent is the institution’s environment conductive to diversity?
- What role if any did the SSAO play in getting the institutions to where it is today as it relates to diversity?

The Study

This study used a qualitative case study method and investigated how campus culture was created. The researcher conducted open-ended interviews with the SSAO and two other individuals affiliated with the institution within the student affairs division. In addition to qualitative interviews, observations and document items from strategic plans, brochures, website content, magazines, newspaper articles, and marketing materials about the institution were collected. The benefits of using the qualitative research model in this study is that it offers the flexibility to incorporate principle known as triangulation, or “collecting information from individuals using a variety of methods,” for example, participant observations, participant interviews, and artifact collection (Maxwell, 1996, p. 75). The theoretical framework used in this study comes from Katz’s (1989) *A Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations*. The model, previously used in Woodward-Nakata’s (1999) dissertation, is explained in chapter 11 as this study sought to replicate that study.

Participants were selected in part because their respective institutions had stated in their missions or a separate document a commitment to creating and maintaining diversity. Participating institutions represented the community college, liberal arts, land-
grant, and comprehensive university areas oriented-areas, the private and public sectors, as well as the Midwest and western regions.

In gaining access, initial contact was made with the Senior Student Affairs Officer's Administrative Assistant to set up a possible telephone conversation in which the researcher could explain the study to the SSAO. Once contact had been made with the SSAO and after hearing of the details of the study, campus visits were scheduled. My role as researcher was that of an interviewer, observer, and interpreter of data.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited generalizability in that the sample size is small – only six sites. In addition, my time at each institution consisted of only one week. Another limitation was that my access and time spent with each SSAO varied. Some SSAOs were very accommodating and welcomed my visit and permitted me to sit in on meetings and scheduled a second follow-up interview. Others’ schedules did not permit such access; therefore, time spent with the SSAO was relegated to the initial interview and sitting on a leadership team meeting. Also a limitation is fact that I knew three of the SSAOs and had extensive knowledge of two of the campuses. Such information could, even though I kept it at the fore, unintentionally bias my reporting and interpretation of the data.

Significance of the Study

It is expected that results from this study will yield an in-depth look into the administrative role of the Senior Student Affairs Officer and his/her impact on creating a campus culture. This bit of knowledge can serve as an aid to others in the field of student
affairs as they ponder ways in which to move their campuses to a multicultural accepting institution. Additionally, this study will add to the body of research generated knowledge about the role of the SSAO in creating community.

Overview of the Study

The study is organized around the research questions that address six institutions’ conduciveness to diversity and the role and impact of the SSAO played in getting the institution where it is today as it relates to diversity.

Chapter one introduced the topic being investigated and provided the purpose of the study, the problem statement, and its significance. Discussed in the chapter are key definition of terms, research questions, and limitations.

Chapter two, the literature review, presents research related to organizations, culture, community, and higher education. A key discussion on student affairs and the role of senior student affairs officers is also included.

Chapter three is the methodology and includes the in-depth study design and execution. Explained in the chapter are the means for how participants were identified, as well as how data was collected and analyzed.

Chapters four through nine are the results. Significant data from each of the six institutions are organized and presented in individual case studies for the reader to refer to in reviewing the study.

Chapter ten is the comparison of the individual case studies. Findings from all six of the cases are compared and contrasted.
Chapter eleven presents the theoretical framework used in the study, *Katz's Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations*, from which, the analysis and interpretation of data were based upon.

Chapter twelve is the analysis and interpretation of the data. The each individual case study is analyzed and placed on the Katz model.

Chapter thirteen is the concluding chapter. The chapter summarizes the findings of the study and offer recommendations and implications for future research.

Appendices I-IV are presented for the reader’s review.

A bibliography and the researcher’s vita are included at the end of the report.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter includes a review of the literature, which discusses the nature of organizational culture in higher education, the culture of community and diversity in higher education, the student affairs profession, and leadership, cultural change and the role of the senior student affairs officer.

Organizational Culture of Higher Education

An organization, according to Denhardt (2000, p. 14), is “a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons.” Culture is grounded in and perpetuated by “shared assumptions of individuals participating in the organization that can be identified through stories, special language, norms, institutional ideologies, and artifacts” (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p. 7). Organizational culture is defined as “underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as a foundation for the organization’s management system, as well as the set of management practices and behaviors that both exemplify and reinforce those principles” (Cox, 1993, p. 161; Denison, 1990, p. 2). Organizations all possess cultures and cultural differences between them that are real and tangible.
Besides values and beliefs, two other dimensions of organizations, structure and the environment, come into play. Structure, Chaffee and Tierney (1988) suggests, refers to how an organization is able to function and ultimately get things done. The enacted environment refers to the “objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints” (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988, p.18) of the institutional members. These cultural differences provide stability, meaning, and predictability within a specific organization and make culture a prized asset within the organization (Schein, 1992). “Individuals always bring the attributes of their external culture to their organizations” (Tierney, 1991, p. 132), for instance, factors, like region, social class, race and ethnicity, and gender differences, and other hallmarks of national culture.

The United States is a diverse country. Its people, a mixture of various ethnicities, races, religions, and thoughts, somehow converge to make for a widely unique living-learning environment. Thelin (2003) reported that in the early twentieth century, the challenge to higher education was the growing diversity of institutions. Today, the nation’s composition is mirrored in its institutions of higher learning. College classes have become increasingly made up of diverse groups, including Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and foreigners (Justiz, 1994, p. 7). “Over the last forty years, colleges and universities have responded to demographic shifts in a number of ways, including targeted recruitment, special mentorship programs, efforts to create more inclusive campus climates, and curricular and pedagogical transformation” (Petrone, 2004, p. 112).

Although obtaining a postsecondary degree was often seen as a source of social mobility with open access to all Americans who wish to pursue it, U.S. institutions were,
at one point, reluctant to provide various groups access to higher education. From its inception, American higher education has been exclusive. Although students did not have to be of a particular institution’s religion to attend classes, early colonial colleges were limited to sons of the wealthy. These colleges were primarily founded for the purpose of educating white men. “Campuses were populated mostly by men, drawn primarily from the privileged class (Carnegie Foundation, 1990, p. 4).” “Virtually no black or ethnic minority students were enrolled” (p. 4), and the same treatment applied to women.

The teaching of women was a controversial social issue as women were not deemed, at the time, physically capable of handling the perceived rigor of a college education. Also locked out of higher education in the U.S. were Blacks because laws in the south prohibited them from learning to read and write. It was not until institutions, such as Oberlin College in Ohio, began the slow introduction of admitting women and Blacks that the culture of higher education began to change. However, it was with the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 that a much larger sector of the American population gained access to higher education in America. Decades later, with the passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890, Black’s chances to pursue higher education were increased (Tegene, Ballenger, Norton, Essel, Larson, & Clarke, 2000).

Despite modest gains Blacks suffered a setback in access to higher education with the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson that upheld segregation. The Plessy decision served as the basis for states to impose strict segregation laws that sparked increased violence toward Blacks (Fleming, 1976). As a result of these new laws, Blacks were relegated to mostly attending Historically Black Colleges and
Universities that were often underfunded and at times inferior to other institutions. This situation persisted until the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, which outlawed segregation. Astone and Nunez-Wormack (1990) contend that desegregation allowed minority students to enroll in institutions that historically served white students only. The resulting “desegregation policies in public schools and colleges were designed to alter their racial/ethnic composition, improve educational opportunity, and ultimately, change the environments of our educational institutions” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998, p. 282).

The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill) also provided opportunity for more Americans to attend college. The bill created educational opportunity for a large number of Americans by paying for returning veterans’ tuition, fees, books, and supplies, plus a monthly living allowance. This federal initiative was responsible for a significant surge in college enrollment that eventually changed the landscape of American colleges and universities.

Further, the 1946 Commission on Higher Education and the 1956 Committee on Education Beyond High School took on the issues of expanding access to higher education and ensuring that young people were adequately prepared, particularly in the subjects of math and science. Significant gains to higher education for minorities were later made with the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s; most notable was the Higher Education Act of 1965, which levied stiff penalties against institutions receiving any type of federal funding that practiced discrimination. Niba and Norman (1989) point out that the purpose of the Higher Education Act of 1965 was to further expand student access to higher education and encourage academic excellence for disadvantaged students through
increased funding and the establishment of programs, such as TRIO, that target first
generation and minority college bound students. Carleton (2002) added that the act also
provided much needed resources for institutions for infrastructure, equipment, and
facilities expansion. Subsequent amendments to the act further expanded access with
additional funding and program expansion, such as the Gaining Early Awareness and
Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). GEAR UP “aims to identify
students in elementary, middle, and secondary schools that are at risk of dropping out,
and provide them with information, activities, and scholarships to encourage them to stay
in school and pursue education after high school” (p. 183). In addition, the creation of
need-based financial aid programs, such as the Pell Grant and Perkins Loan, offered more
Americans the opportunity to attend college by providing non-repayable grants and low-
interest loans for low income students. The establishment of a system of community
colleges in the late 1950s and 1960s has further made it possible for Americans to receive
a postsecondary education.

Higher education has long played a key role in the preparation and development
of young men and women to fulfill societal needs in the workforce and civic sectors.
McDonald (2002) asserts that colleges and universities are “sanctuaries of our personal
and civic values, incubators of intellect and integrity (p. 8).” According to Boyer (1987)
the world needs more innovations from the younger generations who are well-informed
and thirst for new knowledge. Given this assumption, it is imperative that embedded into
the actual collegiate experience is an awareness and/of exposure to life’s realities, which
would include the recognition and appreciation for diversity. Twenty years ago, Boyer
(1987) contended that students needed to understand that there are people and cultures
that are different and with whom they must learn to interact. In addition, as Johnson and Lollar (2002) suggest, “Diversity education also plays a foundational role in a democracy by equipping students for meaningful participation” (p. 306).

Readily visible across college campuses is a vivid display of this country’s most talented students preparing to take on future roles as workers, leaders, and innovators in a complex and changing world. Hurtado (2005) argues that in addition to preparing our leaders of tomorrow for an uncertain future, higher education is “responsible for ensuring they are prepared to handle the complexity that diversity and inequality present in a democratic society” (p. 4). The question remains, how well prepared are these students to meet the demands of the workplace, more specifically, are they prepared to function in a culturally diverse workforce.

Although it may seem second nature for college officials to want to expose their students to the realities of our world by placing an emphasis on multiculturalism, there are critics who remain skeptical and often criticize efforts to incorporate diversity initiatives. Alger (1997) observed that “critics of diversity argue that factors, such as race, should not be considered in admissions or financial aid because such decisions should be based solely on individual merit” (p. 23). The fear was, and continues to be, that a multicultural emphasis means a lowering of standards, therefore students are less prepared and will not be successful. The sentiment is that admission policies that discriminate in favor of the more desirable minority student, questionable minority hires, and a multicultural push in instruction will weaken the curriculum or academic quality (Moses, 1994).
Continually, “issues of unequal representation among students and staff based on race and gender, and campus hostility toward diverse members of our academic communities are [but two] examples of the difficult problems administrators face” (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992 p. 1). Because racial prejudice has such a profound impact on both the academic environment and campus climate, it becomes imperative for senior college administrative officials to pay attention to campus hostilities as they relate to racial prejudice (Choi-Pearson, Castillo, & Maples, 2004; Talbot, 1996).

The Carnegie Foundation (1990) identified six principles that serve as guides for campus administrators in their quest for a collegial community. The principles state:

First, a college or university is an educationally purposeful community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on the campus.

Second, a college or university is an open community, a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerful affirmed.

Third, a college or university is a just community, a place where the sacredness of the person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued.

Fourth, a college or university is a disciplined community, a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good.
Fifth, a college or university is a caring community, a place where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged.

Sixth, a college or university is a celebrative community, one in which the heritage of the institution is remembered and where rituals affirming both tradition and change are widely shared. (p. 7-8)

In fostering a purposeful community, faculty and students engage in a partnership that promotes learning outside of the classroom. Usually, a connection between instructor and pupil evolves into a mentor/mentee relationship. For an open community to flourish, stakeholders must find a meeting place for their varying values and viewpoints. Critical to this principle is the adherence to freedom of expression as individuals work through their own cultural awareness. The just community principle thrives on diversity and builds on the notion that institutions of higher learning serve as a beacon to society to respect differences. A disciplined community harkens to the notion of instilling a sense of ethics, discipline, and developing character among students. Likewise, in a caring community “students make connections between what they learn and how they live (p. 54).” Lastly, the celebrative community centers on tradition that ultimately generates loyalty from community members.

Many times, the charge for building community on college campuses falls on the shoulders of student affairs personnel, particularly when it involves diversity. Today, as in the past, “student affairs professionals have always played an important role in addressing multicultural issues in higher education” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004,
p. 4). This responsibility of bridging cultural differences places student affairs staff at the forefront of community building.

Diversity affects institutions of higher education in numerous ways. An essential part of the college experience is for students to be members of a diverse student body. Schneider (1996) characterizes diversity as "the variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning, which generally flow from the influence of different cultural and religious heritages, from the differences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability (p. 5)." Cox (2001) adds that diversity is "the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined employment or market setting" (p. 3).

As a result of increased attention to diversity within higher education, scholars have pondered the benefits of diversity and the actual collegiate experience. Levine (1991) suggested that diversity is the most urgent and pressing issue confronting higher education. According to Ebbers and Henry (1994), "the greatest challenge for America's colleges and universities in the 1990s [was] to create a climate in which the student body not only accepts and appreciates diversity but learns to celebrate it as well" (p. 693).

"Universities and colleges are places where students from homogenous backgrounds can be introduced to the diverse environment in which they will live their adult lives" (Johnson & Lollar, 2002, p. 306). Gurin (1999) observed that students who experience diversity at college are more insightful and better prepared to function in a diverse society. Therefore, a diverse student population makes for a unique learning environment in which individual differences in race, culture, beliefs, and socioeconomic
status bring together new ideas, opinions, experiences, and creative talents to the campus community. Exposure to other persons’ differences provides ample opportunity to develop cultural awareness. There is a perception that within higher education racial diversity impacts students’ cultural awareness, therefore increasing their likelihood of practicing good citizenship (Johnson & Lollar, 2002). As Johnson and Lollar concluded, “Racially diverse experiences are thought to produce perspective taking, mutuality and reciprocity, acceptance of conflict as a normal part of life, acceptance of difference and capacity to perceive commonality amidst the differences, and interest in the wider world and citizen participation (p. 306).”

Minority recruitment and retention has seen increased attention as of late as institutions seek ways to add more diversity to its campuses. Even though recruitment into postsecondary institutions is of increasing concern for those involved in higher education (Opp, 2001). Hurtado et al. (1998) reports, “Success in creating supportive campus environments often depends on an institution’s initial response to the entrance of students of color” (p. 283). College campuses can create a sensitivity toward and an appreciation of diversity in the classroom. Alger (1997) noted that racial diversity is a compelling need for colleges and universities and the administration needs to enlist the support of the faculty in promoting the benefits of diversity. Forming alliances with faculty can often entail spending ample time educating those within the professorate on student affairs practices.

“Campuses that increase their racial and ethnic enrollments can significantly improve the college experiences of historically underrepresented groups” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 19). Additionally, “attaining a diverse
student body and hiring diverse faculty result in significantly more opportunities for all students to learn how to deal with others from different cultural backgrounds after college” (Hurtado, Miled, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 19). According to Bair, Klepper, & Tobin (1998), “one measure of diversity within a college or university is the degree to which the college-bound population of the geographical area served by the college or university is a mirror image of the enrolled population on the campus” (p. 27). However, there is skepticism whether this notion can hold true for institutions that are located in a geographical area that is not as diverse. For example, if the institution is located in an area that has a low concentration of ethnic minorities, the likelihood of attracting a representative number of students of color is remote because of the limited population for that group. Even so, Cox (2001) contended that without diversity goals to work toward, it is unlikely that an organization will be serious about integrating diversity.

Levine (1993) suggested that there are four definitions for diversity within higher education: representation in or admission to college; support or retention; integration; and pluralism or multiculturalism. Garibaldi (1991) pointed out that in the struggle for equality in higher education, African Americans have paved the way for other underrepresented groups. Today, institutions have modified their diversity initiatives to include more than just attracting African Americans. As Levine (1993) noted, the notion of minorities has grown from blacks to include a variety of underrepresented populations ranging across race, gender, religion, and ethnicity. In addition, when it comes to diversity, a much broader representation is sought within the faculty, staff, administrators, and the trustees. However, based on Levine’s lenses, it is questionable
whether most institutions had realized the definitions fully. Most emphasized the first two parts of the definitions of diversity.

The Student Affairs Profession

Postsecondary institutions are uniquely complex (Carnegie Foundation, 1990). College campuses "are complex social systems defined by the relationships between the people, bureaucratic procedures, structural arrangements, institutional goals and values, traditions, and larger socio-historical environments" (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998, p. 297). The student affairs function has been separated from the academic aspect of higher education whereby a separate staff is now designated to administering services geared toward assisting students (Clement & Rickard, 1992).

Several factors influence how universities or colleges are structured, one of which is the student body composition. For instance, "a community college might be established to serve students in a distinct region or metropolitan area" (Alger, 1997, p. 22). As a result, it may have a large number of part-time and first generation college students who do not have anyone in their families with prior knowledge of attending college. In addition, they may need more academic and financial support. In contrast, the student services provided at a private liberal arts college, where one is more likely to find traditional and academically talented students, might focus on leadership as students at these kinds of institutions tend to be full-time and residential and are likely to need less academic, financial, and advising support. Many large metropolitan universities design services to accommodate multiple constituencies that include single parents, commuter,
and part-time students because these kinds of populations make up a large percentage of their enrollment.

The size of the institution can also influence the structure of student services. Many smaller institutions tend to have staff members who take on multiple responsibilities in assisting students while at larger institutions, and some community colleges, separate departments function to handle such duties.

The location of the campus can also play a part in how student affairs units organize and operate. At most urban campuses, for instance, a majority of the students, particularly upper class students, live off campus. Therefore, housing a student for the duration of his/her college experience may not be as great a concern as it would be for a rural institution. Many community colleges do not offer housing so, again, on-campus housing is not an issue, however, off-campus housing could potentially be a concern.

When it comes to the organizational structure of student affairs, because of the various enrollment patterns, such as full-time or part-time, degree seeking and non-degree seeking, and other factors, there is no such thing as “one size fits all.” As the dynamics of the institution and its students change, so too will the student affairs administrative model at the various institutions. Students are influenced by popular culture, which carries over into their collegiate experience. For example, students who choose to live on-campus now expect their institutions to provide internet outlets in their residence hall rooms so that they can communicate via email with family and friends in the convenience of their own rooms.

In examining the nature of student affairs work, Manning, Kinzie, and Schuh (2006) found that over time, there were three distinct approaches related to the
organization of student affairs units; student services, student development, and student learning. Student services takes on the notion that “student affairs provides a collection of services to students that are part of their experience” (Manning, et al. 2006, p. 13). Typically, under this model student affairs units can fall under multiple areas within the institution; for example, one might find student services falling under the supervision of the provost as there may be a high emphasis placed on co-curricular instruction at that particular institution.

In a student development approach, “the units of student affairs work together to provide a coherent, cohesive out-of-class learning experience for students” (Manning et. al., 2006, p. 13). Here, services tend to be a bit more expanded to accommodate students’ various needs. The student learning approach “conceptualizes the student experience as an integrated, coordinated series of experiences that begins when a prospective student contacts the institution for information about applying for admission” (Manning et. al., 2006, p. 14). In order for this model to be effective multiple units have to come together in order to provide the student a more meaningful collegiate experience.

McDonald (2002) observes that in order for a community to remain healthy, it is necessary to balance conflicting points of view. Ideally, the multicultural institution, notes Darder (1994), is able to adequately address tensions associated with cultural differences due to an increasingly diverse environment within the campus community.

Life for students in American colleges prior to the Civil War was rather primitive. The dormitories were simple, the food was plain, and school sponsored social activities were almost non-existent. The campus atmosphere consisted of strong religious influences, strict moral discipline, restrictive curriculum, and constant student rebellions.
Colleges offered very little support for their students financially, socially, and academically. Cohen (1998) noted that the student experience during the early times in American history at college was different than what can be expected today, as the residence halls often resembled military barracks. Modeled after the English colleges, students lived in dormitories, where “the aim was to foster among all students a common social, moral, and intellectual live” (Lucas, 1994, p. 111). For those faculty who did stay on campus, most tended to be older with families of their own to care for, who did not really want to have much to do with the students on a social level. Instead, the role of faculty members tended to be that of disciplinarians, which strained faculty/student relationships. Depending on the era, faculty (tutors) could not marry because they had to live on campus. “Each professor or teaching master was expected to help enforce the college’s many stringent policies and rules” (Lucas, 1994, p. 124). Cohen (1998) observed that “college life was designed as a system for controlling the often exuberant youth and for inculcating within them discipline, morals, and character” (p. 23). These stringent codes led to many disciplinary problems, with students often distrusting the faculty. For many of the early institutions of higher education, “the purposes and practices of colleges and universities have been expanded and altered in a dynamic relationship with the needs and demands of the nation” (Musil, Garcia, Hudgins, Nettles, Sedlacek, & Smith, 1999, p. 2).

Thelin (2003) noted that between the 1700s and 1900s college attendance for traditional-aged students, those between the ages of 18 and 22, was under 5% of the total population. However that percentage grew considerably, to 50%, by the year 1970. In the beginning, the president and/or the faculty handled any services to students as no
student services unit existed. In the late nineteenth century Harvard became the first institution to appoint a dean to deal specifically with students (Sandeen, 1991). As institutions grew and the demands on the president increased, administrators were appointed to do the things presidents did. The increased demand for student services freed both university presidents to concentrate on such efforts as fundraising and community relations and faculty to pursue their research interests (Barr & Albright, 1990; Cohen, 1998). The addition of such positions as dean of men and dean of women gave credence to the growing need for college and university professionals who could work specifically with students. At first, student affairs were relegated to dealing with housing, financing, and recreational needs (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). Over time, as the position grew in responsibility, student affairs leaders become what is commonly referred to as director of student affairs, vice president for student affairs, vice president for student development, and senior student affairs officer, depending on the institution’s organizational structure (Ostroth, Efird, & Lerman, 1984; Rickard, 1985; Risacher, 2004).

Significant changes in the way college officials administrated, as it related to students, occurred during the turbulent 1960s. Originally, in loco parentis cited “gave college personnel the authority to act as parents to their students, to guide their growth both in the classroom and beyond” (Hirt, 2006, p. 7). “During the 1960s, in loco parentis all but disappeared” (Carnegie Foundation, 1990, p. 5). As a result, students assumed increased responsibility for their college education. The period of unrest and massive student demonstrations on college campuses across the nation in the 1960s also gave rise to added responsibility of high administrative authority positions within student affairs,
such as the vice president of student affairs. This more visible position within the institutional administrative hierarchy signaled a willingness to accept and begin to value the work of student affairs. With this move, "the influence of student affairs divisions on higher education continued to expand and become more vital to the successful matriculation of students and the academic mission of students" (Brown, 1997, p. 545). Ironically, these same social movements and student unrest led to the eventual phase out of in loco parentis (Hirt, 2006; Lucas, 1994; Nuss, 2003).

Today, student affairs is a phenomenon that has evolved over time into a proactive approach to student development within the American higher education system (Rhatigan, 2000). In defining the nature of student affairs work, Lloyd-Jones (1994) explained that "personnel work in a college or university is the systematic bringing to bear on the individual student all those influences, of whatever nature, which will stimulate him and assist him, through his own efforts to develop in body, mind, and character to the limit of his individual capacity for growth, and helping him to apply his powers so developed most effectively to the work of the world" (p. 19). Adding to that, Barr (2000) posited that the mission of student affairs is readily influenced by the institution's mission, which can be dictated by such factors as character, history, focus, governance, system affiliation, and geographic location.

Upcraft and Barr (1990, p. 296) noted that "student affairs professionals must develop campus environments, as well as student services, programs, and facilities, because of the increasing diversity of our students and the need to promote equality and eliminate prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination." As a result of disabled, minority, and adult students pressuring the administration for equal access and services, diversity
emerged as an important initiative in higher education (Barr & Albright, 1990). In addition, Komives & Woodard, Jr. (1993) argued for the need for more collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty in creating a supportive academic environment.

Rhoads and Black (1995) noted that as a result of more diversity within the student population, institutions have sought to create a greater sense of community on their campuses, and the development of a learning environment that is receptive to multiple cultural perspectives. Therefore, as institutions are becoming more diverse, “student affairs practitioners must be dedicated to building multiracial colleges and universities” (Barr & Strong, 1998, p. 28).

Central to the goal of influencing learning styles within student affairs practices is the notion of student development. Student development can be defined as the process that a student experiences while evolving into a more complex individual. “Student affairs educators devote considerable attention to helping students engage in healthy relationships with others and participate effectively in communities (e.g., healthy residential living environments, student organizations, campus work settings)” (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 240). Evans (1996) explains that “student development theory provides a useful guide for student affairs professionals, in that it describes how students grow and change throughout their college years; it provides information about how development occurs and suggests conditions that encourage development” (p. 64).

College is a time for exploring and figuring out what an individual wants to do. For a traditional aged college student, negotiating the college experience can be a long, hard, and intimidating process. In addition to trying to fit in and manage new
surroundings, students are forced to deal with issues that center on “Who am I,” and “What’s my purpose.” Sanford (1967) stated that if the development of the individual as a whole is a primary aim, then colleges should organize all their resources in efforts to achieve it. Today, most Division of Student Affairs at institutions seeks to serve the needs of students through interaction, programming, and service. The very nature of student affairs work requires the practitioner to have integrity, belief in the dignity of individuals, and a respect for differences, commitment, and dedication.

As part of their mission, “most college and university student affairs programs promote cultural awareness and acceptance” (Ebbers & Henry, 1994, p. 695). Because a large share of their work consists of building communities, “student affairs professionals may have the best sense of the complexities inherent in creating a diverse learning environment” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 99). Many within student affairs, “have engaged in efforts to maintain a climate of civility, attend to the specific needs of distinct racial/ethnic communities, and devise programs that build bridges across diverse communities” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 99).

Cultural Change and Leadership

Bennis (1989) identified three reasons why leaders are important; first, “they are responsible for the effectiveness of organizations,” second, “the change and upheaval of the past years has left us with not place to hide,” and lastly, “there is a pervasive, national concern about the integrity of our institutions” (p. 15). We learn from Bennis that having a guiding vision is a basic ingredient of leadership. Essential to being a leader is
knowing what one would like to accomplish both in professional life, as well as personal, and having the drive to persist despite setbacks (Bennis, 1989). Stogdill (1974) coined leadership as “a working relationship among members of a group in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion” (p. 65). Kotter (1996) explained leadership as more of a phase through which change can be successfully navigated within an organization.

Woodard (1998) observed that “most of our [college] campuses do not look like they did during the 1960s and early 1970s” (p. 7). In the face of increasing demographic changes due to more opportunities for people from multiple backgrounds to attend college, university administrators are at the forefront of dealing with change. Therefore, it is imperative, as stated by Ebbers and Henry (1990), that institutional leaders, specifically those within student affairs, are sensitive to the needs of these diverse students and possess some form of “cultural competence” (p. 319) to keep up with the changes that are taking place in society as well as on college and university campuses. If an institution has any hopes of instituting significant changes that lead to a multiculturally inclusive environment, it is the senior student affairs officer who must assume responsibility (Grieger, 1996; Jones, Terrell, & Duggar, 1991; Reisser & Roper, 1999). However, there are few higher education leaders, according to Ramirez (1996), that have the depth of knowledge on diversity matters to enact the required changes.

When exploring change within an organization, it is important to have an understanding of the culture. McDonald (2002, p. 3) characterizes a healthy community as being “one in which essential but often competing values are maintained in tensioned
Cross (2001) writes that an organization takes its cues from its leaders; if the leaders embrace change, the organization will change. For a leader to be successful in a time of change, observed Fullan (2001), he/she must create a condition in which moral purpose, consensus, communication, and knowledge sharing can flourish. Senge (1990) contends that often it is the small changes that yield the big results. "In attempting to initiate organizational change, administrators should determine the values and beliefs that pose a threat to innovation" (Rhoads & Tierney, 1992, p. 19).

Cox (2001) contended that leadership is a "behavior that establishes a direction or goal for change, provides a sense of urgency and importance for the vision, facilitates the motivation of others, and cultivates necessary conditions for achievement of the vision." As a result, ultimate success, observed Haro (1993), at implementing change initiatives as they relate to diversity within an organization is dependant upon the leader's actual commitment. On managing change, Bennis (1989) noted "a leader imposes his philosophy on the organization, creating or re-creating its culture" (p. 145).

"Major change is often said to be impossible unless the head of the organization is an active supporter" (Kotter, 1996, p. 6). In examining the keys to successful change Kotter offers these suggestions:

1. Establish a sense of urgency.
2. Create the guiding coalition.
3. Develop a vision and strategy.
4. Communicate the change vision.
5. Empower broad-based-action.
7. Consolidate gains and produce more change.
8. Anchor new approaches in the culture (p. 21).

According to Kotter, “the first four steps in the transformation process help defrost a hardened status quo” (p. 22), reemphasizing the point that change is no easy task. If a sense of urgency is established up front and the vision is clearly defined then cooperation is more likely to result from team members. In phases five through seven Kotter introduces many new practices, such as getting rid of obstacles and taking risks, while the last stage seeks to make change applicable to the corporate culture. In all likelihood, stated Kotter, “successful change of any magnitude goes through all eight stages” (p. 23).

In looking at cultural change, Kotter identified culture within the group as the biggest impediment to creating change. So, therefore, in order to successfully implement change, the norms and values of the group need altering. “Culture changes only after you have successfully altered people’s actions, after the new behavior produces some group benefit for a period of time, and after people see the connection between the new actions and the performance improvement” (Kotter, 1996, p. 156). However, as O'Toole (1995) pointed out, “Individuals are what they believe, and groups are their cultures; hence to require a group to change its shared beliefs is to threaten its very existence” (p. 250).

Leadership, Cultural Change, and the Role of the Senior Student Affairs Officer

The field of student affairs has expanded to cover a wider range of responsibilities. Leaders in student affairs must be able to successfully balance organizational duties that impact student development, learning, and outcomes while at the same time maintaining efficiency (Miller & Prince, 1976). Dressel (1981) observed
that the senior student affairs officer’s responsibilities tended to center around monitoring student conduct and promoting moral integrity. Sandeen (1991) later described those serving as the senior student affairs officer as being “part of the institutional management and leadership team; he or she manages and directs the various services, programs, and policies for students that support the educational and social objectives of colleges and universities” (p. 4). How institutions organize their various student affairs functions depends on such factors as the educational purpose of the programs and services offered, the size of the institution, the nature of the student body, the nature of external community, and the relationship of student affairs with other institutional functions (Sandeen, 1996). “Senior officer responsibilities often vary from one campus to another, depending upon the problems facing the institution, the priorities of the president, the ability of the senior student affair officer, or the traditions and history of the institution” (Sandeen, 1996, p.436). Serving at the pleasure of the president, the senior student affairs officer is undoubtedly one of the most visible administrators on campus in his/her role as institutional advocate for students (Sandeen, 1996). Therefore, a thorough understanding of students and their development within a college environment is a must.

Taking into account the changing composition of the student body and the need for services to accommodate these changes, we begin to see recognition from college officials of the importance of student development. Charles William Eliot, president of Harvard University from 1869 to 1909, advocated for a broadly elective course of study to replace the prescribed classical curriculum. In those efforts he supported the elective
system as a way to allow students to follow their “natural preferences and interests” and thus pursue academic study with greater enthusiasm and interest (Rudolph, 1965, p. 293).

Dickson (1991) posited that improving the educational contribution of student affairs in the campus community continues to be an important issue for senior student personnel officers because the organizational structure tends to focus on managing service areas. The practical side of student affairs as innovators in student and community development is evident on college and university campuses through programming and services provided. However, the focus on learning has been overlooked as a function of student affairs because many from within and outside of the academy view academic units as the only source for academic scholarship. In actuality, many student affairs divisions have actively assisted in the academic instruction of college students through collaboration with faculty in learning community ventures. As a result, faculty interact with their students in a forum outside of the classroom that facilitates learning.

"Leadership is essential to the creative improvement of services and programs for our increasingly diverse student populations" (Clement & Rickard, 1992, p. 3). If a SSAO is going to have any impact on implementing change on any campus, he/she must display strong leadership. Nuss (1996), in examining personnel practice pamphlets, characterizes student services as being offered and organized in ways that support the unique mission of each college.

Thomas (2002) reminds us that the core of student affairs leadership is ethical considerations, such as having ethical values, integrity, and the courage to do the right thing at the right time. Central to any senior student affairs officer’s responsibilities is
the commitment to understanding and working with students. Sandeen (1991) highlights several keys to understanding students, some of which include the:

1. ability to listen to many groups;
2. use of available data;
3. knowing students’ reasons for attending or not attending the institution;
4. willingness to consult with Campus Offices;
5. use of assessment services;
6. ability to listen to parents;
7. willingness to consult with employers;
8. effort to monitor student health;
9. commitment to learning about student life-styles; and
10. capability of staying in touch with the realities of student life. (pp. 37-57)

In addition to being a visionary, a senior student affairs officer, in order to be a driving force for change, must be clear in articulating his/her goals. “The effective student affairs manager is a leader whose vision and enthusiasm should cause others to support student life” (Sandeen, 1991, p. 89). Dalton and Gardner (2002) and Woodard, Love, and Komives (2000) asserted that SSAOs need to be able to manage a changing environment well into the future as changes with the institutional culture, leadership, technology, and student dynamics are evident. To deal with the issue of diversity, college administrators have turned to student affairs professionals to address this concern (Kuh, 2000). In essence, Miller & Winston (1991) describe the role of student affairs professionals as primarily responsible for the out-of-class education and development of college students.
Concluding Remarks

The literature reviewed here presented an overview of organization and culture as they relate to higher education. Values, structure, and enacted culture are important to consider when you think about change within any organization because they influence efficiency and productivity. It has been stated in the literature that it is imperative for student services practitioners to be productive members of teams and organizations (Clement & Rickard, 1992). That notwithstanding, the question remains, how effective are efforts made by student service practitioners, specifically, the SSAO, in dealing with issues related to building campus community, as they relate to diversity and can the division of student affairs be successful in this endeavor if the SSAO is not truly committed and actively involved in efforts to build a campus culture that values diversity. The results of this study shall provide some insight.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology for this study. Presented at the outset is the research question. The research plan explains the procedures for data collection, analysis, and reporting of data.

Research Methodology

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) pointed out that “without a touch of passion you may not have enough to sustain the effort to follow the work through to the end” (p.51). That passion was poured into investigating an area that has very little written about it. This study explored the extent to which six institutions created a campus community that valued diversity and the role each institutions SSAO played in the development of this environment.

The methodology used for this study was a qualitative multiple case study based on data collection from interviews, document analysis, and field notes. Qualitative research is naturalistic, inductive, and concerned with understanding multiple perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), which, according to Lofland and Lofland (1995), provide an opportunity for researchers to obtain in-depth information from participants. As a result, data collection occurred from participants at their institutions in their everyday
situations (Yin, 2003). This study touched on the sensitive topic of diversity and a multiple case study strategy was employed to capture the uniqueness of each institution studied. In describing multiple case study method, Miles and Huberman (1994) observed the differences of conditions and their reactions within complicated situations.

Yin (2003) found that case study methods affords the researcher an opportunity to identify and understand the situations and circumstances holistically. In defining case study, Yin (2003) concluded that a “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Creswell (1998) defined the case study as “the exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). Yin (1994) indicates that the strength of a study is “its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations” (p. 20).

Data Collection

To maintain credibility, Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggests researchers do the following: do persistent observation; do peer debriefing; practice triangulation; collect documents, films, videotapes, audio recordings, artifacts, and other “raw” or “slice-of-life” data items; do member checks; establish structural corroboration or coherence; establish reverential adequacy. Primary sources of data for this study came from participant interviews, institutional documents, and personal observations of the campus. Ideally, data collection would have consisted of the following for each institution: an

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introductory and follow-up interview with the SSAO, an interview with 2 subordinates, observation of a leadership team meeting headed by the SSAO, obtaining documents by physically going to diversity centers on campus for materials, the admissions office for brochures, reviewing the website. Due to scheduling and other conflicts that arose, data collection varied at some institutions (see Appendix I). In addition, Yin (2003) stated that having some sort of protocol is critical to ensuring reliability. A specific interview protocol consisting of thirteen open-ended questions was used across all cases where each person was asked the exact same questions.

Participant Interviews

This study followed the standardized open-ended interview format, where each person was asked the exact same questions. The interview questions were written out in advance in the same manner as they were asked during the interview, with elaboration written into the interview process itself (Patton, 1990). For this study, interview questions from a previous study were used. The open-ended interview relies on a highly focused instrument such that the interviewee’s time is carefully used (Patton, 1990). Open-ended interviews tend to be more flexible, interactive, and insightful (Babbie, 2001; Darlington & Scott, 2002; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2003). In addition, open-ended questions allow for more in-depth responses (Seidman, 1998). A tape recorder was used to assist in obtaining full and exact quotations for analysis and reporting (Patton, 1990). The interviews were then transcribed.

Yin (2003) stated that during the interview the researcher should “follow [his/her] own line of inquiry, as related by [the] case protocol, and ask actual (conversational)
questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of [the] line of inquiry” (p. 89-90). For the interview protocol, the SSAO was initially asked a total of thirteen questions related to their background, role as SSAO and creating campus culture (See Appendix II). After meeting with and interviewing subordinates (See Appendix III) and observing campus dynamics, follow-up interviews with only four of the six SSAOs were used to ask unanticipated questions arose during the site visit. Other SSAOs schedules did not permit for a follow-up interview. These questions were unstructured and open-ended. Creswell (1994) noted that “the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants that will best answer the research question” (p. 148).

Documents

Analysis of essential documents produced another source of information as they provided “valuable information because of what the evaluator can learn directly by reading them” (Patton, 1990, p. 233). Yin (2003) suggested that with case study data collection, a high volume of documents are collected at the field site. Documents serve an invaluable purpose of corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003). For this study, documents were collected via the internet, office pamphlets, admissions brochures, and available reports.

Access

As Glesne (1999) noted on gaining access, “if the study involves some sort of organization or agency, then you must first make contact with its gatekeepers, the person or persons who must give their consent before you may enter a research setting, and with
whom you must negotiate the conditions of access” (p. 39). In gaining access, initial contact was made with the senior student affairs officer’s administrative assistant to set up a possible telephone conversation in which the researcher could explain the study to the SSAO. Once contact had been made with the SSAO and after hearing of the details of the study, thus securing cooperation, campus visits were scheduled. Subsequent telephone calls were placed to professional staff that report to the SSAO whom the researcher deemed necessary to interview for their ability to provide. To protect the participants, confidentiality and anonymity are critical in securing participation and gaining access (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, pseudonyms for participants and their institutions were used in the reporting of findings.

Role of Researcher

Glesne (1999) advised, “As a researcher, you need to define clearly your research role” (p. 41). My role during the observation phase of the research was to observe participant interactions and physical artifacts. As an interviewer, I remained consciously aware of issues regarding ethics, rights to privacy, and protection of anonymity (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 90-98).

Observation

Yin (2003) explained that “by making a field visit to the case study “site” you are creating the opportunity for direct observations” (p. 92). Initial observations will enable the researcher to identify the distinguishing characteristics of the institution. As part of
the observation process, field notes were taken. Field notes provide “the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 74). Targets for observation are symbols and layout of the institution, buildings and structures, and staff meetings.

Participants

Participants were purposefully selected based on the following criterion:

- The presence of a SSAO at the institution
- The institution has some kind of diversity policy on record
- Institution has encountered situations as they relate to diversity and/or has taken steps to promote or increase diversity

By identifying participants through purposeful sampling, individuals who can best represent and contribute to the phenomenon being studied are selected (Babbie, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Patton (1990) suggested, “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p.169). It is further noted that having an ample sampling frame proves critical to the reliability of a multiple case study design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). The six institutions and SSAOs for this study included the following:
Stake (1998) describes a case as something idiosyncratic, which has totality by virtue of its boundaries; “it is a complex, dynamic system” (p. 406). Therefore, as noted by Yin (2003), cases should follow a replicated design rather than a sampling logic.

Senior Student Affairs Officers were contacted from institutions in the west and midwest to ascertain whether they were interested in participating in the study. The institutions in this study reflect a range of sizes and characteristics. Three institutions are located in the mid-west; however, they vary in that one was a community college, another was a religious affiliated university, and the last was a land-grant research university. Two institutions were located in the southwest and differ in that one is a community college and the other a metropolitan research university. The remaining institution was located in the northwest and was a land-grant research university.

Setting

This study was conducted on six campuses. Three of the institutions were located in a midsize city with a population of about 250,000. The first institution was a state research university with a student population of about 22,000. The primary informant at this institution was the vice chancellor for student affairs. The second institution was a liberal arts university related to the United Methodist Church, with a student population...

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<th>SSAO</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>President's Diversity Council</td>
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<td>Land-grant</td>
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<td>New Cultural Center</td>
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<td>Student Diversity Alliance</td>
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of 1500. The primary informant for this institution was the vice president for student life. The third institution was a community college comprised of three campuses. For this study, the city campus that boasts a population of 7,000 full and part time students was observed. The primary informant was the campus dean. Two institutions, a metropolitan research university and a community, were located in a western city with a population of over 500,000. The university had a student population that exceeds 26,000 where the primary informant was the vice president for student life and the community college enrolls over 35,000 students where the primary informant was the vice president for student affairs. The remaining institution is a research land grant university and had an enrollment of over 19,000 students. The university was located in a small college town in the northwest corridor of the U.S and the primary informant was the vice provost for student affairs.

Data Analysis

With analysis, the aim is to systematically search and arrange all data collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Data analysis was conducted using what Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify as typological categories or themes. In pursuit of themes, transcribed interviews were coded into categories to make generalizations. Codes are efficient data-labeling and data-retrieval devices (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Yin (2003) speaks of conducting cross-case syntheses as a means to uncovering patterns (See Appendix IV). Although the study focused on the role of the SSAO, for triangulation student affairs professionals with knowledge of the SSAO and the institution were interviewed to corroborate and/or add to information. Merriam (1998) defines triangulation as “using
multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (p.204). Although the interview was the primary method for collecting data, other pertinent information from archives, newspaper clippings, reports, resumes, and information related to the institution were included as a means for triangulation. Stake (1995) notes that triangulation is important in case study research to ensure accuracy and alternative explanation.

Creswell (1994) suggested that “qualitative researchers have no single stance or consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability in qualitative studies” (p. 157). However, to be certain that data collection and analysis were accurate, construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability measures will be observed (Yin, 2003). Validity, as defined by Pelto and Pelto (1978), “refers to the degree to which scientific observations actually measure or record what they purport to measure” (p. 33). Multiple data sources can control for construct validity (Yin, 1994); this study used interviews, observations, and documents. Internal validity, noted Merriam (1988), relates to the accuracy of data collected. As a form of fact check, collected documents were used to verify spelling of names and dates. Generalizing a qualitative case study is difficult (Yin, 2003). For external validity, a protocol was developed to collect data from interview participants. However, due to the uniqueness of a qualitative study, exact replication is unlikely, therefore reliability was limited (Creswell, 1994). The following six chapters present the case studies in this research project.
CHAPTER 4

VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Vincent University

Vincent University’s history dates back to the late 1800s when it was chartered by the Methodist church. Six core values guide Vincent University; they are excellence, the liberal arts, personal attention to students, community, stewardship, and diversity. Dr. Angie Rose serves as Vice President for Student Life at what she describes as a “vibrant” university. For the past academic year, the institution has been operating with an interim president. In February of 2007, the university announced that its 16th president will take office on July 1st. The new president will lead a faculty and staff of 300 and a student body of 1,500, of which 93 percent are in-state residents. Broken down by race, students of color make up less than 5 percent: African Americans, 1.4%; Native American, 0.7%; Asian Americans, 1.26%; Hispanics, 1.46%.

Situated in an historic residential section of a medium sized Midwest city, the university enjoys modest seclusion from the rest of the city. At the main entranceway of the campus, the Methodist Church symbol is displayed on a small grassy hill with a light fixed on it. The buildings around campus offer a quaint mixture of modern day construction blended in with old style architecture. Old Main, the university’s oldest building, still remains a noticeable fixture as it towers over the campus. The building is
constructed in red brick and has stained glass windows. Inside Old Main is a chapel and on the outside roof top are bells situated on three sides. Along the Vincent grounds are donated items, such as rocks, trees, and stone benches and tables from past graduating classes.

A native of the state, Dr. Rose has experience as both an administrator and faculty member at small colleges and large research institutions. Dr. Rose, who has a communications background, is a Caucasian woman in her fifties, with a distinctly conservative look and dress. She began teaching at local small colleges and high schools before assuming a position as a mid-level student affairs administrator at the state’s land grant institution. For over a decade, Dr. Rose served as Director of Campus Activities and Programs. She left that position to once again pursue teaching at her present institution when she was hired as the Chair for the Communication and Theatre Arts Department. Four years into Rose’s academic career, the then vice president for student life left to take a presidency position. At that time that the university’s president offered Dr. Rose the VP for Student Life position, which she accepted. She is now in her twelfth year. Dr. Rose sums up her ascend to the senior student affairs position as “the easiest job I certainly ever got in all my life.” Her back and forth dabbling in student affairs work and teaching is a pattern that Dr. Rose still holds to this day. In addition to her regular schedule as VP for Student Life, she finds time to, as a tenured faculty member in the Communications and Theatre Department, teach a leadership course or two per semester.
Campus Community at Vincent University

Dr. Rose describes Vincent University's campus community as predominantly residential and undergraduate with most of the fifteen hundred students being in-state and of European-American background. Many of the students exhibit that “niceness” approach, which is so identifiable with the culture of Midwesterners. Specifically, Dr. Rose observes, “As a group, they are not comfortable with conflict or with confrontation.” These students harbor an immensely noticeable work ethic that led a former graduate intern in the student life unit to comment to Dr. Rose, “I don’t think these students know how to play.” According to Dr. Rose, seventy-five percent of students at Vincent qualify for need-based financial aid to pay the $21,000 tuition, fees, and room and board bills.

The faculty, about a hundred who are either tenured or tenure-track, tend to be committed to the institution, as well as to their students. The university boasts two colleges, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which houses the undergraduate program, and the University College, which serves the nontraditional students whom, Dr. Rose acknowledges, several members of the community including administrators, faculty, and students, question the logic of servicing.

The community at Vincent is, Dr. Rose admits, cordial, “everybody knows everybody.” “For the student who wants to be anonymous, this isn’t the place to go to college.” The National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), a student assessment the university used to measure student participation, results suggest that the students at Vincent are very engaged with the campus. Entrenched as part of the core institutional values for the university is the idea of giving personal attention to the students. Jaime, a
senior-level report to Dr. Rose who is also a Caucasian female, describes the culture at Vincent:

We have a very student-centered focus that's very positive in our campus community, and we're all about the students. Faculty, staff, housekeepers, you name it, it's all student-centered. So that's very, very much a part of our culture.

Community, according to Dr. Rose, is strong at a place like Vincent University because of its residential liberal arts focus, which strengthens their collegiate experience. "Size makes it easy to have that [community] institution-wide." Some campus traditions include the Rat Olympics, late night breakfast during finals week, Matriculation/Graduation Walk through the arches, and movies on the lawn (Vincent University Guidebook). Carol Parker, who serves as Director of Student Involvement and has roots in the northwest, describes the community at Vincent as tight-knit, particularly among students where they tend to know each other. Faculty and staff, observes Carol, are, for the most part, collaborative and tend to accomplish different activities and programming ventures together.

Critical to the collegiate experience at Vincent are interactions the students have with other students and with staff. On numerous occasions, as I escorted Dr. Rose back and forth from the administration building and the student center for meetings, she was routinely acknowledged and stopped by students, faculty, and staff alike. Dr. Rose likes to be hands on, accessible, as well as approachable. It bewilders Dr. Rose that, in her words, "there are people who work everyday at colleges and universities and never interact with a single student."
Perhaps the hardest thing any community has to deal with is a tragedy. Over the Christmas holiday break this past year, a Vincent University student and his father passed away from carbon monoxide poisoning. As told by Carol, the community responded:

Really bond[ed] together. We had a service for the student on campus, in addition to the funeral services that the rest of their family had provided once that accident had occurred. Our football team, because the student was a football player, is in the process of getting a tree that we are planting on campus. When we have a current student that pass[es] away, it has become a tradition that a tree is planted in his or her honor on campus, and then they have a plaque under it or nearby it.

Overtime, the institution garnered the nickname “suitcase campus” because so many students commuted. In an effort to build community at Vincent University, Dr. Rose thought it was critical to get everyone living back on campus again. As a consequence, a three-year residency requirement was instituted and new residential facilities were built. Millions of dollars went into making them more desirable places to live for students. In the fall of 2003, two new state-of-the-art residence halls and a townhouse village opened (Vincent University Guidebook). The goal, noted Dr. Rose, “is to have a really nice social space in every single building on the campus, and we’re close.” Formerly, in the administration building were hard wood benches along the side the “great hall” entranceway. Now, with the makeover, one finds colorful benches and chairs and plants not to mention people hanging out, which, according to Dr. Rose, is part of the way that you build community; “you give people the physical environments where they can have that happen.” Looking outside of her office window, Dr. Rose cherishes
the incredible view she has that overlooks practically all of the major facilities and spaces on the 50 acre campus:

I do have the best view on campus out my window here. I’ve got the library, the residence halls, the athletic facilities, I have the whole deal, and then this big Commons area, this big green area here, I mean it’s a wonderful yard for them. If you’re going to have a community, you got to have some green area; you got to have a yard. We’ve got over there, some sand volleyball courts and some basketball courts and, tennis courts, and we’re in the process of putting some picnic tables right there. I mean, the way you build community, in part, is you give them the facilities.”

In addition to the residence halls, improvements were made to recreational areas, athletics, and social facilities. The Center for Student Involvement was created to build campus community. It houses student activities, leadership programs, international education, Greek life, multicultural programs, women’s resource center, and the GLBT resource center. A word often used at Vincent that sort of caught on with the campus community is “vibrant.” Dr. Rose explains, “When there’s something really wonderful that happens, we say, that’s vibrant.” As a result of moving into the new campus facilities a Vibrant Campus Coalition was formed consisting of students, faculty, and staff who spent almost a year talking about ways to make the campus more “vibrant.” In an effort to build community, the student voice, adds Dr. Rose, is critical. “We want to hear the student voice and we want to listen to the student voice. Student voice is very important to us. So we have all kinds of advisory groups.” There are two voting student
members on the Board of Governors and student representatives on over twenty major university committees.

Giving students the opportunity to be heard is very dear to Dr. Rose. “When you start to listen, when you start to empower students and you start to listen to the student voice, then you begin to provide the opportunity for some disenfranchised groups to have their voices heard more loudly, I think, more clearly.” But it doesn’t just stop there with Dr. Rose. In addition to listening, something has to come out of it. As a result of hearing some of the heartfelt stories of her minority students, Dr. Rose advocated for resources in order to adequately meet the needs of groups that felt disenfranchised. “It says a lot to open a GLBT resource center in the student union because it then sends the message, you matter” to those students and to the rest of the community. The same holds true for a women’s resource center, and the hiring of a full-time, twelve-month Director of Multicultural Programming and Services for which Dr. Rose fought vigorously, as opposed to having someone staff that position part-time or having it assigned collaterally with another position, which is common for an institution that size. The reason for her tenacity in pursuing these initiatives: “They needed to have a place where they could hang out and have somebody who they could talk to.”

Vincent University receives in the neighborhood of thirty to forty thousand dollars a year for diversity education and programming through the Hawk Fund for Diversity Education. These funds come by way of a generous gift from a couple and friend of the institution given over a decade ago to support diversity programming (i.e., speakers, entertainment, and workshops). The funds also support student cultural immersion experiences both within the U.S. and abroad, as well as faculty and staff
development. Dr. Rose’s responsibility to the Hawk Fund is to administer funds, with the assistance of the President’s Council on Cultural Diversity (PCCD) in which, through a subcommittee, proposals for funds are reviewed and recommended for allocation to the full PCCD body.

Two successful diversity programs and initiatives that Dr. Rose identified at Vincent include the Global Service Learning Team, which is a student led service learning effort in which the group goes into the community, locally, nationally, and internationally. Some national campaigns have included service in Appalachia, the Rosebud Indian Reservation, homeless shelters in Washington, D.C, barrios in Los Angeles, and the Urban Life Center in Chicago. International service has involved stints in Central America, Africa, Russia, and southeast Asia. When reflecting on the impact that these experiences have on students at Vincent Dr. Rose explained:

You take somebody who grew up in [the midwest] and you put them in the middle of one of these experiences and it changes their life. And they come back to campus and not only does it change their life, but then they start to interact with their peers and things happen with respect to appreciation of world citizenship and appreciation of diversity on the campus.

A second successful program is the Multicultural Student Awards Program, which recognizes students of color for their scholarship, leadership, artistic expression, athletic performance, and service to the community. In addition, Dr. Rose is particularly proud of the fact that New Student Orientation has a segment that allows for freshmen, as a group, to explore diversity. The university brings in a group of improvisational actors who, in their performance, “Strange Like Me,” go through a series of vignettes. They encourage
the students to talk about these vignettes, which happen to deal with diversity issues. By having a diversity component in orientation, it sets, according to Dr. Rose, an expectation that “those things must be important.” Although the importance of diversity might not resonate with all incoming students it does provide a framework for a beginning. Carol notices that with students diversity is recognizable for those students in quest of finding a niche, particularly with others who are like them.

If there had to be a “granddaddy” of them all, as it relates to diversity programming at Vincent University, it would have to be the annual step competition in November, which, to this day, takes Dr. Rose by surprise that they even have one. Commonly associated with Black college Greek letter organizations, “stepping is a ritual dance performance that involves a combination of singing, speaking, chanting, and synchronized movement” (Fine, 2003, p. 3). The step show, started by the student organization comprised of students interested in promoting diversity awareness MOSAIC, which stands for the Meaning Of Students Addressing Intercultural Concerns.

MOSAIC invites step teams from colleges and universities and area high schools. These teams are comprised of mostly African American students. Delighted, Dr. Rose describes the scene as this; “It is great! I go to that thing and I just can’t believe how wonderful it is because, you know, you have all these African American step teams from colleges and universities, the step teams from high schools are predominantly African American and Hispanic, a few white students, and then you look out here in the audience, besides all of those folks and their families, here all these White Vincent University students.” The highlight of the event for Vincent University students is when a couple of their own students get on stage, after learning a few step moves from participating teams,
and participate. For a university that has no established African American fraternity or sorority, the step show provides an opportunity for Vincent University students to experience something different. As summed up by Dr. Rose, “How can a group of white students learn that piece of contemporary African American culture if they don’t participate in a step show, if they don’t go to one?”

The student life unit began keeping track of campus happenings as a means to determining patterns of programming. Jaime Turner, a Caucasian female who serves as Associate Vice President for Student Life, explains, “We used this as a way to see what our flow is on the campus and where we kind of don’t have a lot going on and where we need to fill in.”

Something that Dr. Rose sees as beneficial from a staff development standpoint is the creation of a “one-day drive-in conference” at Vincent called Small Colleges Doing Big Things. The purpose of the conference is to focus on diversity issues at small colleges. Originally, only colleges within the state were invited and yielded some seventy delegates. Overtime, it grew to include small colleges from other Midwestern states. Today over two hundred people attend. According to Dr. Rose, what the conference actually ended up doing for attendees was that “it energized us.”

Concerns at Vincent University

In identifying the university’s main concerns Dr. Rose is quick to refer to the mission of the institution, which in her words is “to provide an outstanding liberal arts education for undergraduate students that prepares them for a life of learning and
With the focus of the university on ensuring a quality undergraduate liberal arts experience for its students, administrators grapple with the task of trying to deliver on that promise in a higher education market that is fiercely competitive and expensive.

As a private institution that is dependent upon revenues generated mostly from tuition, fiscal restraints can pose a problem if enrollment dips. However, one positive aspect of being a private institution is that, as Dr. Rose puts it, “I don’t have to worry about the legislature, ever.” “Although, donors,” Dr. Rose confesses, “I certainly have to worry about.”

Additional university concerns, as identified by Jaime, include dealing with an aging physical plant (buildings and Greek houses) and strengthening community with the students, faculty, and staff. The university is recovering from what was reported to this researcher as a “civil war” between the administration (the president and VP’s) and the faculty, staff, and even students.

I’d say there’s a community that’s two groups now, and sometimes you can even hear the students talk about it. They talk about the faculty and them, and then there’s the rest of us. So I think the community has to be rebuilt because it was a very divisive thing. So we’ve got to rebuild community.

The “mini-war” as Jaime characterizes it, was brought on by years of strife between the administration (president and vice presidents), the faculty, the staff, and the students over a number of issues, one of which was salaries, where faculty members were fuming over not being appropriately compensated. At an institution that is heavily dependent upon revenues generated from tuition, finances are restricted. Therefore, the debate as to who

1 Vincent University 2010 Strategic Plan Mission Statement: Vincent University is an academic community dedicated to intellectual and personal growth within the context of a liberal arts education and in an environment of Christian concern.
should get the pay increases, the faculty or the staff, is often contentious. Rebuilding community and helping to bridge some of the gaps that exist between faculty and staff is something Jaime hopes the new president can work through.

During my visit to Vincent, I had the opportunity to sit in on an All Staff Meeting. A separate All Faculty Meeting was held earlier that month. The meeting was early, 9:00 a.m., and held in a large lecture room in the Administration Building. Employees from Human Resources moderated the meeting, and the interim president, along with Dr. Rose, represented the administration, sat toward the front of the room. Attendees listened to the president talk about campus concerns, such as voice mail problems, faculty and student achievement, and facilities issues, such as possible plans to construct an elevator in one of the academic buildings that currently does not have one. When the president asked staff members if they had any questions for him, nobody responded. Dr. Rose recognized new staff and spoke about the recent death of a student and plans that were being made by fellow students to plant a tree in his memory and related those actions as an example of building community at Vincent. In surveying the room, I couldn't help but notice that there were only two noticeable persons of color; myself and a young African American women who worked in Enrollment Services. As the meeting ended, staff members filed out the room chatting, some even gathering in the hallways sharing a laugh.

In contrast to Dr. Rose and Jaime, Carol identifies the university's main concern as "educating students...so that they are ready for life outside of the campus."
Just like it's a parent's job to raise someone who can be independent and, you
know, move on to do their own thing, I think it's the college's job to bring a
student along academically, developmentally to the point where they’re ready for
the next step.

Student Life Priorities at Vincent University

The mission of student life at Vincent University is, according to Dr. Rose, to
support students' learning, foster personal development, encourage community
involvement, and cultivate leadership. Dr. Rose identified three major priorities for the
unit. The first being to support a vibrant residential campus. That included continuing to
service the needs of students living on campus through programming and facilities.

The second priority was to support student retention; student success, and
persistence toward graduation. Dr. Rose says, "We're the retention unit." Jaime
concurred that fine-tuning a residential program that helps the first-year students have a
more meaningful experience was a high priority, as it is with the sophomores whom,
Jaime acknowledges, "are as much of a retention issue as sometimes the first-years
because they can start slipping out the end of that sophomore year." During her tenure as
VP for Student Life, Dr. Rose has spear-headed the monumental task of reinventing the
institution as a residential campus. She recounts, "We had less than half of our students
who were living on campus and it wasn't vibrant at all." In addition she contends:

We’ve got to continue to look at our retention in our residential facilities, continue
to look at our retention of our commuter students, which are the toughest group
because we’re not a commuter campus. But a student who commutes has a lot of
challenges on a residential liberal arts campus because if they want to be successful, they’ve got to be involved with this community. And so we’ve got to work on that.

The third priority is to support students’ development as global citizens, which, explains Dr. Rose, is the focus of the university’s general education program: Preparing for Global Citizenship (the actual name of the general education program).

Diversity at Vincent University

With the luxury of having the experience of working at both a large research institution and several liberal arts colleges, Dr. Rose describes the ideal campus community as friendly with subcultures that remain connected with the larger campus community. Hence this is the type of environment one would expect to find at Vincent University. Indeed, Dr. Rose recalled terms and phrases, such as “friendly, we pretty much know each other, the faculty care about us a great deal,” that students commonly use to describe Vincent.

Adding to the idea of campus community, Dr. Rose noted that she “used to define community as a bringing-together of diverse voices toward a common goal.” Here, diversity was limited in focus to only race and ethnicity. However, she acknowledges that in today’s contexts, with an overwhelmingly in-state student body located in the heart of the Midwest, diversity has taken on a different meaning when it comes to defining community. “We have diversity in terms of ability, in terms of small communities, farms, large cities. We have religious diversity. We have diversity in
terms of sexual orientation.” All of which, Dr. Rose concedes is important and must be taken into account when thinking about community at Vincent University.

Dr. Rose stresses the importance of thinking broadly about how one views diversity particularly at Vincent University where less than 5 percent of the student body are students of color. Dr. Rose concedes, “We don’t have a critical mass,” however, optimistically her sights are set on doubling the percentage of students of color. “Anytime a community starts to feel very self-satisfied, that community is going to be on its way to becoming less effective.” Dr. Rose is referring to the fact that some members within the community may not see a need for increasing diversity on campus. When asked whether diversity was important to her personally, Dr. Rose exuberantly responded that it is important if for no other reason than the learning process that is associated with it. The idea of thinking broadly and engaging multiple points of view as they relate to diversity, is, as only Dr. Rose phrases it, “why [do] I get up in the morning? To help students to have learning experiences.”

As a result of past events at Vincent University, the President’s Council on Cultural Diversity (PCCD) was formed to look at racial and ethnic diversity. However, over time PCCD broadened its view of diversity to be more inclusive. According to Dr. Rose, at Vincent University, diversity did not come onto the institutional radar until the early nineties, and even then race was the sole concept of diversity. In the fall of 1991, several students confronted the then president of the institution about the need to enhance diversity efforts. As a result, the president appointed a Task Force on Racial and Ethnic Diversity. The following year, the task force recommended to the president a need to improve minority recruitment, mentoring programs, and activities. In the years that
followed, the task force continued to meet and make recommendations, such as the
drafting and adoption of a policy statement on personal harassment, the incorporation of a
diversity program within New Student Orientation, increased minority scholarships and
academic services, the creation of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday observance,
and a permanent standing committee on diversity, which is now the President's Council
on Cultural Diversity that was formed in 1994.

Previously, other forms of diversity, such as sexual orientation, were not
acknowledged, if at all accepted. The university had a support group for gay and lesbian
students under the minister's office, placed there in part because the Church itself has
been and continues to be conflicted about the issue of sexual orientation. As a result, the
university, explains Dr. Rose, treated sexual orientation much like one would treat a
gambling addiction or eating disorder through these support groups. "I mean, it was like
a therapeutic model," gasped Dr. Rose. Over time, the GLBT organization, Plains Pride,
was formed and approved by the university student government, but not without incident.

The student leader who headed the effort to start the organization received death
threats. Outraged, students and faculty came together in a show of solidarity to protest
the negativity that was directed to this underrepresented population on campus. In April
of 2003, Vincent University identified persons whom students could go to as a resource
on sexual orientation. Hence, sexual orientation is now part of Vincent University's
statement on diversity, as well as the institution's equal opportunity statement. Today's
more global perspective is reflected in the council's purpose: "to provide support for all
groups, committees, individuals, and initiatives in our community working to reduce and
eliminate intolerance, harassment, and discrimination based upon, among others, race."
ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, social class, disability, or religion” (Vincent University, President’s Council on Cultural Diversity Purpose).

Dr. Rose is extremely proud of the progress of the President’s Council on Cultural Diversity, which is actually staffed by her office. The council’s meetings are organized out of her office, agendas typed, files kept, and minutes sent out. As the VP for Student Life at Vincent, Dr. Rose is able to carry out what she feels is the hallmark of one of her strongest philosophies. Dr. Rose contends, “I should be facilitating, which means making things easier. I should be making things easier around processes that are really important.”

New student orientation plays a key role in building a community that is receptive to diversity at Vincent, as it establishes expectations for new students. However, Dr. Rose is cognizant of the fact that the educational process of helping, even guiding a student through something as emotionally sensitive as diversity is tough and takes some internalizing. “It takes a lot of work…one shot never works with anything that’s important.”

Students at Vincent are mixed in their comfort level in talking about diversity, depending on who you talk to. Dr. Rose observes that diversity as a topic:

Is difficult for some pockets of students, particularly some first-year students, some of our young men particularly. I think it’s difficult sometimes, from what the fellows tell me, and I observe this also, in the fraternities. I think it’s easier typically for young women to discuss diversity issues, as a group, than sometimes it is for young men. And I think it’s easier for upper-class students, again because of where they are developmentally, to discuss those issues than sometimes for
first-year students to discuss those issues. [In general] diversity is so broad that it
may be easier to talk about issues relating to disability issues than sexual
orientation issues.”

Echoing similar sentiments, Jaime concludes:

And we’ll continue, of course, to work with this generation of students who are
[for the most part] really millennials [born between 1981 to 1999] and they look
like the millennial description and they act like the millennial descriptions, and so
it requires us to reframe what we do to meet their needs, which is continuing, and
that’s in counseling services, disability services, I would also suggest in diversity
issues, women’s issues, men’s issues, which right now our campus isn’t ready to
really, I think, talk about, but it’s bubbling.

In identifying diversity related situations the campus community has difficulty with
servicing, Jaime adds:

Most of our judicial encounters are with young men, which I think, to me,
suggests that, much like the press out there is talking about and a few books have,
that we need to shore up and help young men meet us at the college level, because
that population issue now is shrinking. And our GLBT students, now we need to
meet their needs. So, you know, as we get more diverse, as the millennials come
in and say, hey, we need this, you must provide that, give me the structure, we
have to continue to work and make those structures very much so they can see
how we meet those needs.

Disability issues have come to the forefront in the last few years at Vincent University.

Carol points out:
I think the definition of diversity has kind of opened up and broadened some.
And I think that has come with the realization that we are lacking in multiple areas in diversity, like a lot of our buildings are not particularly accessible to those with physical disabilities, and over the past couple of years we’ve started to really try to show that to people a lot more. When we did the renovations in this building [the Student Center], we decided that there really needed to be a passenger elevator that the public had access to, because the only elevator that we had in this building is a frightening freight elevator that goes into the back of the kitchen, and if someone was in a wheelchair and needed to travel inside the building from downstairs to upstairs, that’s what we had to take them in. It was horrific. So I think that over time that definition of diversity has really broadened and we’ve really started to look at all different areas and what we can do to increase awareness.

Making the campus more accommodating for person’s with disabilities was a major topic at the President’s Student Advisory Council that I was privy to attend. Held in a classroom in the Administration Building, students, eight in all, represented various sectors of the campus community; athletics, greek life, commuters, the arts, and residential were in attendance. For this meeting, no ethnic minority student was present. The interim president and Dr. Rose, representing the administration, positioned the desks in a circle so that everyone could see each other. The president, after some light-hearted jokes, presented to the students two priorities that the administration is focused on; the elevator situation in one of the academic buildings, and enrollment. The students sat attentively and jotted down notes as the president spoke, in a conversational style, about
faculty tenure and the evaluation process and other university happenings. When Dr. Rose spoke, she presented the student with a list of priorities for Student Life: as the president stated previously, the elevator situation, finishing adding furniture to the new Student Center, and more furniture and recreation space for the residence halls. With a limited budget, the task before the students was to determine what the main funding priority should be. Dr. Rose listened as the students began to talk through their options. One student voiced concern over people having to carry heavy objects up and down the stairs in buildings that did not have an elevator. Another commented that the residence hall furniture could wait. After minutes of weighing their options the students unanimously consented that getting an elevator should be the main priority. Here, the students had an opportunity to participate in the decision-making of how funds would be appropriated. In this case, they wanted to see better accommodations with the construction of an elevator.

Overcoming Setbacks

Not without their share of challenges, Dr. Rose recalls some very negative occurrences at Vincent University. One of which was when a group of students of color voiced their displeasure about being disenfranchised. Dr. Rose recounts a frustrated multicultural student advisor telling her “these are supposed to be the best years of these students’ lives and listen to them – to what they are saying.” That incident, according to Dr. Rose, “really helped our university to wake up and say we have got to do something and we have got to do something now for these students.”
A recent setback for the university, at the time of my interview with Dr. Rose, was the vacancy of the Director of Multicultural Programs position. As identified on the Vincent University website, the Multicultural Programming office provides programs and services to increase campus awareness of African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American Cultures, racism and biases. The previous person in that role left to take a position with another institution and her presence is noticeably missed.

Carol knows all too well the impact of not having someone in that diversity role as she has taken on some of the responsibilities caused by the vacancy. A search to fill the position was unsuccessful, leaving the university without a Director for Multicultural Programs for a full academic year. Dr. Rose posits, “We have so few faculty of color at Vincent University and every time we lose a faculty member of color, it is a setback because our students of color need role models.” Adding to the importance of having someone in that position, Jamie states, “I feel very strongly that our director of multicultural programs is not an individual but is supported in our climate with a lot of people. I can’t imagine what it’s like to be a person of color as a professional staff coming to Vincent University.” Additional setbacks include significant budget cuts, however, the multicultural director position and the admissions multicultural recruiter were spared due to priority in increasing and sustaining minority enrollment.

Recently, it was reported by some in attendance that at a dinner for an international student organization in which a group of drummers/dancers from Zimbabwe performed, a group of Caucasian athletes walked into the area where the dinner was being held and disrupted the performance by singing the song “The Circle of Life” from
the animated film *The Lion King*. Perhaps surprising, then again, not so surprising is the fact that nobody did anything at the time of the incident. Clearly, the event had racial overtures, however, given the culture, and here is where the “Midwest niceness” comes into play, nobody said or did anything.

Whenever hate crimes or other forms of vandalism occur the university sends the message that these kinds of behavior are unacceptable. Helpful, according to Carol, in responding to these acts are community conversations in which people are encouraged to talk about the incidents:

Typically that seems to be how we do things, and if we know of a particular student that’s been affected somehow by what has happened, faculty and staff tend to just kind of come together to really support that student.

From an administrative standpoint, in this particular incident Dr. Rose will speak with the coach to determine the proper course of action to take, which could possibly include bringing the students together to talk about the incident.

When asked to look ahead as to what Vincent University will look like ten years from now Dr. Rose envisioned that the campus will physically look somewhat like it does now with modest enhancements. The university will have completed a major capital campaign, which will provide opportunities for students to travel and learn beyond Vincent University through internships and service. The student body will remain the same, mostly Midwest, the institution will be closer to reaching its goal of a 10 percent student of color population – a goal that underscores the need for merit-based aid specifically for students of color. Jaime hopes for a future at Vincent where there isn’t a
need for a President’s Council on Cultural Diversity “and that faculty, staff, and students are all on the same page when it comes to diversity issues.”

Jaime credits Dr. Rose as being the voice of financial and staffing support and praises her ability to be the architect in helping students find ways to discuss tough issues. In a perfect world, Dr. Rose would like everyone to be able to understand the big picture. For example, the athletic coaches would not just focus on the sporting aspect of the college community but would factor in other entities of a student athlete’s collegiate experience, such as their academic and residential experiences. The same applies to faculty being able to understand the part that co-curricular activities play in the development of the student. This would in return help the different areas of the campus community understand that what each other does is of equal importance to the students and to the institution. The barriers that exist between academics, athletics, and student affairs on college campuses poses a barrier to creating community. Dr. Rose yearns for a community that is able to understand the connections within that particular culture.

“When I cannot understand the biggest picture of my community and I cannot have the ability to appreciate somebody else’s situation, then we’re never going to have as effective a campus, as effective a town.” Idealistically she adds, “It would be a better community if we all could think holistically.”
CHAPTER 5

MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Midwestern State University

Dr. Robert Hughes serves as the senior student affairs officer at Midwestern State University, a land grant institution in the heart of America’s mid section, also known as “beef country.” The university is, so to speak, the heart and soul of the state, a bearer of pride and a symbol of excellence to the faithful followers of its powerhouse athletic programs. Come game-day, the campus, and city for that matter, are swamped by a sea of football enthusiasts drawn by the prospect of another national title. With a total student enrollment approaching 22,000, most of whom are in-state, the university has an 11 percent minority population (including international students). Established in the mid 1800s, the university is comprised of two campuses; one nestled in a residential corridor houses the institution’s agricultural and some professional programs. The other, which is known as the main campus, sits on the edge of the downtown district within the capital city. As a comprehensive land-grant university, its three primary missions are teaching, research, and service. Midwestern State enjoys such recognition as U.S. News & World Report’s Top 50 Public Universities honors. The university houses nine colleges; agriculture, architecture, arts and sciences, business, the arts, education, mass communication, engineering, and law.
Dr. Hughes, a Caucasian male in his mid-sixties and a native of the Midwest, received all three of his degrees, two in business, including an MBA, and a third, the doctorate in education research, from his home-state’s Big Ten Conference land-grant institution. His latter degree came about while working in a job full-time with the Orientation and Testing Center that had him doing institutional research where he received extensive experience in conducting studies for the university. This experience gave him motivation to pursue a doctorate in educational research, focusing on higher education and institutional research. He then began working with the medical school on evaluating a new curriculum they had just implemented where he oversaw the development of a database and a strategy for evaluating their new curriculum.

As a result, Dr. Hughes was offered a full-time position with the medical school as director of its Division of Research and Evaluation where he served for four years before moving to take the Director of Educational Resources and Research at a major research university in Michigan, which he again held for four years. Dr. Hughes then accepted a Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs position at the medical center in the state of his present institution, a position he was in for four years before being tapped to fill the Chancellor position on an interim basis, which he did for a year. Once the new Chancellor was selected Dr. Hughes went back to his Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs position at the medical center, soon after which he moved to the state’s land grant institution, Midwestern State University, to assume the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs position. Dr. Hughes describes that move as:

After eighteen years in health science center administration doing research and administering, I served a year as the interim chancellor at a medical center, and
while that was great fun, I knew I would never be a permanent chancellor because I'm not a health professional. And I began thinking, do I really want to spend the rest of my life in health centers? I'd kind of done it all and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do.

In the two years that he served as Associate Vice Chancellor at Midwestern State, Dr. Hughes worked primarily with undergraduate programs, which put him in constant contact with individuals working in student affairs. During that time Dr. Hughes was able to successfully start the Honors Program, combine all the college catalogs into one undergraduate bulletin, and start the New Student Enrollment and University Foundation's programs to help freshmen acclimate to the university. This kind of success with implementing new programs that better served the students won Dr. Hughes praises from the student affairs side. So when the senior student affairs officer position became available the chancellor asked Dr. Hughes if he would fill the position on an interim basis. Dr. Hughes agreed, and after a search, became the permanent Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Midwestern State University. In explaining how he ended up as the SSAO, Dr. Hughes recounts:

I started out in student affairs, you know, forty-three years ago at [my Alma Mata] in a student affairs unit, which also did a lot of institutional research, took a side track for eighteen years in Health Sciences, and then two more years in general university academic affairs administration, and ended up back in student affairs, but it was more logical than it seems.

After over twenty years as the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Midwestern State, Dr. Hughes retired at the end of the 2005-2006 academic year and returned to the faculty.
Campus Community at Midwestern State University

To Dr. Hughes, the ideal campus community should offer excellent educational opportunities to students, have a wide variety of programs, be an environment that is very student-centered, and an environment that provides students with a broad array of opportunities to develop as individuals. In elaborating on those key qualities of an ideal campus community, Dr. Hughes contends that when it comes to going off to college people want to go someplace where they know they’ll receive a good education. Making no effort to conceal his preference, Dr. Hughes admits that he has a strong bias toward large comprehensive research universities.

I’m sure that small schools have their advantages, but I’m so grateful for what I got as an undergraduate at a large school, and the opportunities I had, that it’s always impressed me all my life... I like the large environment because it tends to be a research-based environment, and that puts you in touch with faculty members who are out there on the cutting edge of their disciplines, and that’s terribly important to me. As an undergraduate I studied with some on the nation’s leaders in the field of business, the people who were writing the textbooks, the people who were doing the research that was being published in the journals, and that was just great, particularly in my MBA program, I had a chance to learn from some masters, you know, and it was just great.

On the student-centeredness piece, Dr. Hughes makes reference to a publication by Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini, entitled How College Affects Students, and draws from a chapter that looks at how important it is to chose a college that is student-centered. And no matter what institution one elects to attend, the true indicator for later success is
what a person actually does while attending college (i.e., applying him/herself and learning well or experiencing leadership in college and learning to motivate and work in groups). Therefore, opportunities for the student to develop and grow outside of the classroom are important as well. Hence, Dr. Hughes is proud of what they’ve been able to do at Midwestern State – provide the opportunities to develop the whole person. For instance, Midwestern State budgets annually, six hundred thousand dollars for undergraduate research and encourages faculty who receive grants to bring undergraduates into their research labs. Second, the university has over 350 registered student organizations on campus, a sharp increase from the 200 when Dr. Hughes first started. Student Affairs alone invests over a quarter-million dollars a year in leadership development.

Dr. Hughes is most proud of his student affairs leadership team, also known as the Council of Student Affairs Directors (CSAD). He describes them as a cohesive team of leaders who are able to work well together and support each other. He briefs the group regularly on various happenings and polls them about issues.

Dr. Hughes: A lot of times, we just come to some consensus in the meeting. I never take votes. I don’t think we’ve ever taken a vote. I’ve taken some straw polls or something like that. But you know as an administrator you don’t want to have everything decided by committee, so I think the group appreciates that I keep them pretty well informed and that they have a lot of opportunity for input on issues, but I don’t ask them to decide things typically. Some things I do.

Testifying to Dr. Hughes’s style, Mark Lampley, an administrator within Student Involvement, adds:
Dr. Hughes has relied upon councils and groups to raise issues and to address issues. The Council of Student Affairs Directors, CSAD, is a great example of that. The business of Student Affairs gets done at that council, rather than simply through the edict of Dr. Hughes, who has the authority to make decisions but instead relies upon consensus across that group. And that's a very important community-building piece.

Mark admits though, that he would like to see more diversity within CSAD so that other voices can be heard. "My greatest concern is that as voices gather around the table, those voices are too similar, and the voices of diversity are still too few and far between."

Presently, CSAD is comprised of 20 individuals of which five are women and two are ethnic minorities.

As a researcher, I had an opportunity to, as part of my observations, sit in on one of the monthly CSAD meetings. The meetings are held early, around 7:30 a.m., in a break-away conference room within the dining hall of one of the residence halls. Members of the group trickle in, assess where they will sit, put down their belongings and shuffle out of the room into the dining area to grab some breakfast. Once back in the conference room and situated with their food, they engage in friendly conversation within the group. Making a noticeable entrance, Dr. Hughes hurries in to begin the meeting as he sits at the head of the table. With a tote bag by his side that he routinely peeks in and pulls out papers, Dr. Hughes goes over meetings he's participated in, status updates on projects, pending initiatives, and other pertinent items related to student affairs. The tone of the meeting is quite relaxed. The directors continue to eat their meals as Dr. Hughes, in a conversational soft tone, briefs them on campus and upper-level administrative
happenings. Occasionally he will ask for their opinions on a matter, but mostly Dr. Hughes runs the show.

Jane Crawford, a native of the state and a member of CSAD, describes her colleagues as “lifelong learners” and enjoys the freedom that her position as director within the student affairs unit affords her to be creative and innovative, as well as collaborate with other areas. A Caucasian female herself, Jane acknowledges that the university has made progress with increasing gender diversity at the faculty and administrative level, however, in terms of people of color in these positions, she’s not as convinced that the university has made strides to increase the number of minorities in the faculty and administrative ranks.

Concerns at Midwestern State University

In identifying the university’s main concerns, Dr. Hughes list the first as enriching the undergraduate experience. There was a time when, according to Dr. Hughes, it was not a major priority as there was tremendous pressure to become a more successful research university. As a result, student-focused funds were scarce until the university was able to move to Research-I status under the Carnegie classification standards. This is the highest designation given to institutions that demonstrate high levels of research activity. With that designation, the university was now able to get discretionary dollars that could be earmarked for student programming.

A second concern of the university is diversity, both within the student body and the faculty and staff. Acknowledging the issue, Dr. Hughes states:

It’s tough because every institution I know has that as one of their major concerns
right now. We’re all very aware that the minority populations in our states and the areas we serve are growing dramatically, and that the population of those students going on to higher education is not keeping pace with what it should, you know, with the majority population. We’ve got some huge challenges out there.

Conceding that his institution does not have enough faculty of color to serve as role models for minority students, Dr. Hughes does stress the importance of at least ensuring that “all of our students have the opportunity to get used to working in a multiethnic environment, an international environment.”

Another key concern for the university, as identified by Dr. Hughes, is access and affordability. His state has, in the past several legislative sessions, made tremendous cuts in funding for education, particularly for higher education, thereby, forcing the institution to raise tuition. Consequently, increased tuition reduces the likelihood that a number of students will be able to afford the cost of attendance at Midwestern State. As a result, offering need-based aid is a challenge as the university tries to stay affordable.

Student Affairs Priorities at Midwestern State University

At the end of each spring semester, Dr. Hughes convenes his group of directors from the fourteen different units that make up student affairs for a two-day retreat where each unit is responsible for reporting on key information related to its unit, such as budgets, employee profile, and various statistics. In addition, Dr. Hughes asks each unit to describe its unit’s achievements and areas of particular strength in the past year, followed by a description of areas of particular difficulty that the unit must address. Afterwards, the units go into the status of the major goals they had for the year that’s just ending,
goals for the coming year, and any long-range goals and objectives. As a group, the directors discuss theses goals in order to determine what should be the major priorities for the student affairs division for the coming year. Dr. Hughes is then able to, when he attends the Chancellor’s retreat held for the senior administrative team (five vice chancellors, the associate chancellor, director’s of athletics, alumni, government relations, institutional research, public relations, and equity access and diversity, and the special assistant to the chancellor for minority faculty and staff recruitment), report on the most important things for the Division of Student Affairs. For the last retreat, the division had the following as the student affairs priorities for 2005-2006:

1. Increase course availability for new freshmen and undergraduate transfer students (based on deposit information and coordinated with Academic Affairs and colleges/departments)

2. Secure approval to go forward with the new Culture Center (with funding sources identified)

3. Develop a major initiative (with Dean of Undergraduate Studies and General Studies) to help prospective students, who are “undecided” about major/career, begin the exploration process and appreciate the unique resources that Midwestern State has to offer them

4. Develop effective/efficient plan for coordinating international student recruitment (comprehensive – graduate and undergraduate)

5. Ratchet up community college relationship, transfer student recruiting (requires additional resources), and transfer student services
6. Increase college, departmental, and individual faculty involvement in recruitment and retention efforts

7. Develop and adequately support an assessment task force for the Division of Student Affairs (Division of Student Affairs Priorities, 2005-2006).

In summing up these division-wide student affairs priorities, Dr. Hughes mentioned that although overall freshmen admission was up, it was harder to find classes for them; therefore improving course availability was a concern. Also of concern was securing approval for a new cultural center, which, Dr. Hughes gloatingly adds, “we’re just about there.” In a student referendum last spring the student body voted three-to-one in favor of a cultural center to be housed adjacent to the student union. The students agreed to fund half the project through bonded indebtedness, paid off by a twelve-dollar-a-semester extra facilities assessment. Currently student fees for full-time students, excluding tuition, sit just above $350. A similar referendum to allocate student activity fees to the construction of a cultural center was overwhelmingly defeated three years ago.

Explaining the difference between that referendum and the one just passed Dr. Hughes states:

We had specifics this time. I didn’t even want that other one to go forward because it wasn’t specific enough. People didn’t want to sign a blank check. They wanted to know, what’s it going to cost me, for how long, when will it start, you know. We didn’t have any of those specifics. It was just kind of a general, how do you feel about, you know, signed bonds and then you pay them off by student fees to build a new cultural center, period. That’s the total knowledge they had. Where here we did all kinds of specifics. Twelve dollars a semester, not starting till fall of
2009, some architectural renderings, they could see what they're getting.

The proposed cultural center will be 30,000 sq. ft. and will have meeting rooms for student groups, exhibit and function space, student lounges, computer lab space, student organization office space, and academic support for all students (Cultural Center Fact Sheet). Part of the strategy used to secure student approval was to emphasize that the new center would be a benefit to the entire campus community as it will be an expansion to the existing student union, therefore increasing meeting room space and providing additional assembly areas. The reason for this strategy was because a few years prior to the original referendum vote, a group of graduate students in the Student Affairs Leadership program at Midwestern State did, as a class project, a study using surveys and focus groups on student attitudes toward culture centers. Results indicated that non-minority students viewed it as a facility only for students of color. As a result, a concerted effort has been made to make the current culture center a place of activity for all students.

Hoping for at least 60 percent approval, on the required referendum, the actual voting percentage neared 75%, which, according to Dr. Hughes, sent a clear signal to the chancellor that this 8.7 million dollar project is important to the community and money needs to be allocated to cover the remaining half. Already, money sources has been identified from the twelve-year agreement that the university has with a major soft drink distributor, and from the university foundation, as well as possible key donors that administration assumes will come forward. With the soft drink contract, signed eight years ago, Dr. Hughes submitted plans for how the funds would be allocated with $25,000 a year for leadership development, $30,000 a year for diversity initiatives, and
$25,000 for reducing high-risk drinking. Each year, states Dr. Hughes, the funds escalated, leaving him with a little extra flexibility for additional funding for minority student organizations and multicultural programming.

Diversity at Midwestern State University

In 1999, Midwestern State adopted a Strategic Plan for Diversity that outlined the institution’s commitment to diversity. The plan stated:

Diversity is about creating an equitable, hospitable, appreciative, safe, and inclusive campus environment – one that embraces the full spectrum of all community members’ contributions.

As part of the strategic plan, the following goals and objectives were identified:

Goal 1. Create a campus climate where respect and inclusiveness are modeled and expected, so everyone enjoys equitable opportunities for professional and personal fulfillment.

Goal 2. Support programs and curriculum that explore the experiences, perspectives and contributions of various cultures, groups and individuals.

Goal 3. Create a truly diverse community of faculty, students, administrators and staff that reflects both our multi-cultural society and individual differences and achieve among faculty, students, administrators and staff representative numbers of groups historically denied access because of race or gender (Midwestern State University Strategic Plan for Diversity, 1999).

The university is in the process of revising the 1999 strategic plan to make it more up to date.
When Dr. Hughes began his job as the senior student affairs officer some twenty years ago the university had a minority enrollment of less than 4 percent, much lower than the actual minority representation within the state. A goal was set to double minority enrollment to 8 percent within the next decade; however, the university fell short of that goal by almost 2 percent, as minority enrollment only grew to 6.6 percent by the year 2000. The university as of 2006, through the leadership of a multicultural admission recruiter who Dr. Hughes describes as dynamic, domestic minority student enrollment has jumped to 8.4 percent.

Early in his tenure as SSAO, Dr. Hughes recalls an instance when he was invited to attend a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observance that was being sponsored by one of the African American student organizations on campus. The event, held in a small room at the Cultural Center, had about twenty five people in attendance. Dr. Hughes was the only non-African American person present. After the guest speaker, a minister from a neighboring big city spoke, the group engaged in a discussion about peaceful protest and their present feelings at the institution. The conversation really had an impact on Dr. Hughes. He recalled:

I listened to this debate and I listened to these students express their frustrations and it was a very, very sad and moving experience for me. I thought, these are students at my university and they seem to feel totally disenfranchised. They don’t feel a part of the fabric in the university. They’re alienated. They just feel like their survival depends on supporting each other in this subculture.

That one experience, Dr. Hughes remembers, just months into his position as SSAO left such a lasting impression that he was committed to doing something about alleviating
some of the feelings of alienation that these students felt. He initiated the Student Affairs Advisory Committee, a group comprised of directors from various student affairs units, who convene monthly and meet with invited representatives from the multicultural student organizations. Today this group holds annual Cultural Diversity Retreats.

The diversity retreats consists of bringing students together in a retreat environment to talk about issues, such as race in a multicultural setting. Generally a two-day retreat, the event garnered more than 70 people in attendance. The students of color shared personal stories of not feeling welcomed and the White students came to the realization that they've been ignoring whole segments of the campus community. It is at these retreats that students from the campus population come together, who might not otherwise, and form a coalition that generally results in the running of a diverse ticket for student government elections.

Central to the university being able to attract more students of color, outside of direct recruiting, which has been a major focus over the past several years, has been the allocation of scholarships to help attract students to Midwestern State. Scholarships include monies for freshmen and transfer Native American students, state minority, lower-income, first-generation, and other underrepresented groups to campus. Packages are also available for National Achievement and National Hispanic scholars as well where their entire tuition bill (in-state and out-of-state) is paid. There is even a scholarship to attract minorities into science and engineering fields.

Another program that has been successful in the recruitment and retention of students of color is the summer bridge program. The summer program allows for students to, during the summer, attend classes and get to know faculty, staff, and other
students prior to the start of the often hectic fall semester. According to Dr. Hughes the program has been successful at helping students of color make that transition into the university culture and become a more integral part of the university. In describing the progress Midwestern State is making in increasing diversity, Dr. Hughes states: “We’re making progress, but it’s slow, it’s evolutionary, it’s not revolutionary, it’s evolutionary.”

Over the decades at Midwestern State Dr. Hughes served under six different chancellors, four permanent and two interims, and diversity has steadily increased as a institutional priority. Basically, Dr. Hughes notes, “We’ve gotten better at figuring out what makes a difference [scholarships and recruiting].” Recently started at Midwestern State was a learning community for students of color. Named in honor of a revered former administrator of color who was well respected around campus by administrators, faculty, staff, and students alike for his charisma and advocacy for people of color, the learning community helps transition students to the university. With learning communities Dr. Hughes emphasizes:

Learning communities are a great mixer and we know, it doesn’t matter what your color, if you the Journalism Learning Community, the Engineering Learning Community, you’re going to be part of a group. You’re going to interact more and you’re going to have classes in common with the people you’re living with and you’re going to get together and study more at night. Any kind of community-building we can do that also attracts all students, all varieties of students; majority and minority, is a good learning community.

Also, to better attend to the needs of students, particularly, students of color, the university expanded the former multicultural affairs office to the new Office of Academic 93

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Support and Intercultural Services (OASIS). Under the old model, the office functioned almost in a territorial fashion as assigned advisors worked with targeted populations only. Ideally, Dr. Hughes recalls, “We wanted to have a multicultural support team of all kinds of different people working together to be a support unit for our students of color, through programming.”

As a result, OASIS was created to, as stated in its mission: Provide services and programs that foster the academic, cultural, social, and professional development of students (OASIS brochure). The office, which is located in the Cultural Center, sponsors intercultural and co-curricular programs, such as movie and game nights, cultural celebrations, leadership recognition ceremonies, and student luncheons, in addition to academic support that includes a mentoring program, counseling and support, and tutoring.

Rodney Warner, whose origins are from the Midwest with a stint in the south for college, heads up OASIS as interim director. Previously he worked as an advisor in the office and before that on multicultural initiatives for the university athletic department. Rodney acknowledges that progress on diversity has been made with the go ahead for a new multicultural center. However, he would like to see more diversity within the faculty and staff. Currently, less than 200 of the more than 1,300 faculty are ethnic minorities.

When describing diversity at Midwestern State, Rodney uses the following analogy:

When you look at the beauty of a rainbow, with all of the colors represented—of course, (it’s been adopted by GLBT, by the gay-lesbian-transgender—
bisexual nation), the spectrum of colors is beautiful. And that's what this campus has, if you may allow me to use a rainbow for the purpose of this conversation, that it's beautiful because they all actually mesh together. If you look at how a rainbow is, it's a meshing of various opinions and different things like that. But it's beautiful because it's almost like we accept the fact we're a rainbow. We accept the fact that you're red, that you're yellow, and guess what? We can still produce a beautiful climate and beautiful government.

Diversity, adds Rodney, is an attention getter particularly on college campuses. Describing initiatives and efforts that are put forth and geared toward diversity as "pimping diversity," Rodney would like to see the day when people, such as himself, who are charged with working with students of color and his office that supports diversity programs are no longer needed because everyone on the college campus has taken ownership for working with minority students.

Additional efforts to retain students include the institution of the Students Taking Academic Control program (STAC), now in its second year, where students who have been identified as academically at risk are encouraged to seek academic assistance. A Student Support Services Office (SSS) housed under TRIO also, as stated in the SSS brochure, "offers supplemental services and personalized courses to promote the academic achievement to qualified undergraduate students" (SSS-TRIO brochure).
Overcoming Setbacks

When asked about any setbacks or challenges to diversity efforts Dr. Hughes goes back to when the new admissions standards went into effect in 1997. “We had quite a backlash from particularly the African American community,” Hughes recalls.

As the lead person in getting the new admission standards in place, Dr. Hughes met with various constituents from the minority community in the metropolitan city about an hour from Midwestern State where the university draws most of its students of color. Thinking everyone was on board with the proposal, local school and university administrators, which included Dr. Hughes and other representatives from the university, held a public hearing about the new admissions plan. They ran into overwhelming resistance from members of the Black community. Dr. Hughes adds, “They felt that our admission standards would be discriminatory toward them and that we might be using these to keep Blacks out, and that wasn’t the case at all.”

This was a serious setback that the university had to overcome as minority enrollment numbers took a major hit in both 1997 and 1998. The reason for the increased admission standards was to ensure that students took the proper courses in high school before enrolling at the university, thus increasing their likelihood of being successful at Midwestern State. Those standards included four years of math, English, and writing along with three years of natural sciences and social studies, and finally two years of a foreign language. The required ACT score was also increased to 20. In speaking about whether it was a good idea to increase the admission standards Dr. Hughes notes:

I think we did the right thing but we paid a price along the way. It became a challenge and a hurdle for us because we had to overcome some resentment in the
Black community. We didn’t run into that in the heavily Hispanic communities. In summing up that experience, Dr. Hughes adds, “We just ran into a buzz saw.”

Another incident that occurred that galvanized the campus community was when a predominately white fraternity burned a cross. As Dr. Hughes explains, once, as a part of their initiation week rituals, the fraternity re-enacted a certain Civil War battle scene in which, at the conclusion of the re-enactment, the group would burn a cross in the bonfire they had constructed. At a secluded field, almost in the middle of nowhere, the group, dressed in Civil War attire, was caught by a local Sheriff’s Deputy who happened to be African American. The media was notified and the incident became a major news story throughout the state. Insisting that this was a racially motivated incident, members from the minority community, both locally and on campus, called for disciplinary actions. However, the fraternity was not in violation of any of the codes within the Student Conduct Handbook. If that wasn’t enough, that same week of the cross-burning incident, a student at the university died by accidentally hanging himself in one of the residence hall rooms. The local authorities ruled it accidental in that evidence pointed to the fact that the individual, an international student, was attempting to gratify himself sexually through restrictive blood flow in the neck and accidentally ended up killing himself. Needless to say, that incident of a student hanging was then associated with the cross-burning episode, thereby further infuriating members of the minority community. Out-of-town when the hanging incident occurred Dr. Hughes, recounts working assiduously from the moment he got back, and for several years after the incidents, to ease tensions.

In speaking of setbacks within the community, Jane recalls an incident a few years ago where a bulletin board announcing GLBT events was vandalized on a regular
basis. Jane concedes, "We still have some challenges around creating a safe environment for GLBT students, faculty, and staff." When the university wanted to hire a GLBT coordinator, a state legislator became outraged and threatened the institution with possible retaliation if state funds were used to fund the position. As a result, the university found other sources to pay for the position.

When asked what the campus will look like ten years from now Dr. Hughes contends that it will be more diverse, due to the state's population trends and successful recruiting efforts.

The more we have students of color and the more it becomes commonplace to have students of color in the classes, and the more it becomes commonplace for the Chess Club, or the Ski Club, and the Young Democrats, and the Young Republicans to have students of color, it's going to change the whole campus. To get there, we've got to continually work at promoting intercultural activities; we've got to continue to try and bring groups together; we've got to create the kind of environments that are supportive of all students and particularly of minority students. But I think we'll get there, and I think ten years from now it'll be a much more diverse campus.

Rodney describes Dr. Hughes's contribution to promoting diversity on campus as that of a "champion" who has devoted his time and the necessary dollars to its expansion.

"People have a lot of opinions about Vice Chancellor Hughes in the minority community. I think he's a good guy and I think that he's been good for diversity here."

How would he be remembered when he retires, Dr. Hughes responds:

I would hope that I would be remembered as being a friend of students of color
and someone who tried to develop new programs to make them a more integral part of the campus and make them feel very much at home here.
CHAPTER 6

REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction to Regional Community College

Regional Community College is comprised of three campuses with twenty additional off-campus sites within a 15 county span in the Midwest. The community college enrolls over 18,000 students, either full-time or part-time, and another 14,000 in non-credit course (Regional College Catalogue, 2006). Stated as the institution’s mission, Regional Community:

Values the opportunity to provide quality career/technical and academic educational opportunities for the students, businesses, and communities of our district. To achieve that purpose, Regional Community will:

- Continue to value local governance
- Value and support diversity
- Be affordable and accessible
- Develop and maintain partnerships
- Provide responsive delivery systems
- Respond to emerging technology
- Promote continuous improvement
- Promote student learning though the provision of quality instruction and curriculum
- Embrace lifelong learning
- Maximize and utilize resources efficiently
- Be accountable
- Encourage a positive environment
- Promote recruitment and retention
- Be communicative
- Be fiscally responsible (Regional Community College website)
With an enrollment of 7,000 students, the Metropolitan campus of Regional Community College is situated just on the boarder limits of the state’s capital city. Visible from the road are the two tennis courts, volleyballs courts, child playground, and a massive building complex. The building functions as a multi-use facility as all of the academic and technical programs, along with student use facilities, such as the library, gymnasium, student center, and daycare, are housed in it. Upon entry into the main entrance of the building one comes up on the enrollment services area. There, the service windows for admissions, financial aid, and registration are located just steps from each other. The campus features career/technical programs in business, laboratory science, construction, electronic/computer, family and consumer science, health, manufacturing, mass media/communication, and transportation. In addition, the campus also has an academic transfer program in which over 98 percent of its graduates have either continued in their education or were placed in jobs (Regional annual report, 2005).

Mark White, the Dean of Student Services, is Caucasian and is now in his six year at the metropolitan campus of Regional Community College. Although the institution has a Vice President for Student Services, Mark handles much of the duties often associated with the SSAO for the metropolitan campus due to the fact that the vice president, who serves as the chief administrator for that campus, has additional responsibilities assigned to her, such as business operations, and academic programs, because the offices of the president and other administrators are housed off campus.

Prior to becoming Dean, he served for ten years as Director of Career Services at Regional. When the Dean’s position became vacant, Mr. White stepped into that role. He is a community college graduate of a school in Iowa where he first took up interest in
photography before shifting to a graphic art program on the recommendation of a friend. It is at that point that he realized how beneficial a higher education could be. He later received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from a state school in Colorado. The Detroit native is the first in his family to go to college or graduate from high school. He strongly believes that in the higher education system, specifically within community colleges, lives are changed:

We have the power, based on how we treat somebody at that front counter, with a smile or a frown, to literally change their life because – we do.

Mr. White categorizes the ideal campus community as having a good cooperative working relationship between those in student services and instruction. “I think that’s very important in order to provide a good level of customer service, and that’s a challenge to maintain that relationship.” Also on the list of an ideal campus community is a welcoming atmosphere. Mr. White notes:

We have that at the top of our list, to provide a welcome to students who come to our campus, make them feel at home, make them feel appreciated, make them aware of the services that we have available here for them.

Creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere on campus and having the staff within student services understand the importance of creating and maintaining such an environment is important because, as Mr. White observes, “that’s what we do here, we change lives, and we kind of drive that point home frequently with our student services people.”
Campus Community at Regional

Regional provides a number of services for its students that are geared toward ensuring their success. In addition to financial aid, counseling, and activity services, Regional has a Child Development Center that offers child care for both staff and students, as well as a gymnasium and wellness center. The campus also has a student center that is located directly across the hall from the gymnasium. The center has televisions, couches, study tables, vending machines, and video games. With respect to the actual community at Regional, staff personnel are trained extensively on good customer service practices. In building an effective community, Mr. White notes a number of activities that the community college offers:

We have a lot of activities directed toward students. We have a multicultural organization. We have organizations directed toward folks with different sexual orientations. We have people who work with international students. We have events around campus that try to bring diversity issues to the students in masses, so we'll have activities in the Student Activities Center where some of those diverse activities will take place and students are invited to come in and participate. Different things like that that reach out to the students.

These activities are conducted in an effort to expose students to different and positive experiences at Regional, although, Mr. White adds that even with the consciousness-raising or awareness training, receptiveness to diversity “doesn’t happen overnight.” A diversity program that was well received throughout the college from faculty, staff, and students alike was a presentation from a group of Sudanese Refugees often referred to as “The Lost Boys.” The program served as a development opportunity for the participants.
Cindy Newman, who’s been at Regional for five years, is an Assistant Director for the TRIO program. She is a native to the state and attended the state’s land grant institution, received her master’s degree in counseling education at another institution within the state, and worked as a classroom teacher for eighteen years and a guidance counselor for another six before coming to Regional Community College where she likes the small size of the institution and the opportunity to work with adult learners. She explains the benefit of the Sudanese program:

It’s a great leadership opportunity for our students to be able to gather their thoughts and stand up in front of a really very large group of people and share the experiences that they’ve gone through as refugees, being separated from their parents at a very early age and living along in camps and things like that.

Prior to assuming the position of Dean over six years ago, Mr. White recalls that there wasn’t a lot of emphasis on customer service:

The guy that held this position before I did, he was ready to retire, he’d heard it all and seen it all and was just the kind of person that probably after thirty years of dealing with complaints all day long from students and parents and staff and everybody else, that just kind of spilled over in his personality. And as a result, a lot of the staff weren’t very happy, and that would spill over on the other side of the counter, and we had a lot of issues with that and a lot of people not getting good service at all.

Since his tenure as Dean, Mr. White has made it a priority to provide training for his staff on the importance of customer service. Essential to the training is role-modeling potential situations and scenarios. Mr. White explains:
We get every kind that come into this counter. Every kind. They can be threatening. They can be mentally ill with some very serous emotional problems. They can be terrified. They can be angry. I mean the list goes on and on.

Something Mr. White remembers his professor saying in an introduction to community college course he took in undergraduate training till this day sticks in his head:

A community college will reflect the community.

That phrase is something Mr. White finds himself repeating often to his own staff.

Due to a scheduling conflict, I was unable to meet directly with a second staff person within the student services unit whom could offer insight about campus community at Regional. However, through email, I was able to receive brief responses from this individual to some of the questions. Doris Jacobs, whose academic background is in K-12 Physical Education, is the Coordinator for Student Activities at Regional Community College. She began her career at Regional as Assistant Activities Coordinator where she supervised the intramural program. The Gym and Wellness Center at Regional is available to students, faculty, and staff and offers personalized fitness programs, individualized assistance, and campus wide wellness activities (Regional Gym & Wellness Center brochure). It is equipped with a fitness from stocked with weight lifting equipment, treadmills, step machines, and basketball/volleyball courts. When the Director’s position became available, she applied and was selected. Her perception of the ideal campus community is one where “all students, and faculty/staff work together for the betterment of the student and the student’s success.” Doris describes Regional as “a commuter campus with students ages from 18-70.” She
adds, “The smaller programs of study are very close knit while the larger programs tend to be hard to communicate easily with.”

Concerns at Regional Community College

Mr. White stated that the community college’s priorities were enrollment and retention. “The competition for individual students is increasing, numbers of high school graduates are declining, so everyone’s kind of competing for the same bodies around here at all levels.” Mr. White is referring to other higher education institutions in the area. With regard to retention, Mr. White admits, “It’s a challenge to keep them here once we get them,” primarily because students enrolling at Regional come with limitations in math and writing and are in need of developmental courses, which often extends their time of study at Regional Community College. The TRIO office at Regional, notes Mr. White, has influenced retention significantly. The Student Support Services (SSS) program under TRIO provides the following for students:

- Academic, financial, and personal counseling
- Mentoring
- Career planning and job shadowing
- Cultural events and on-campus activities
- Student leadership opportunities
- TRIO grant aid
- Scholarship research assistance
- Four-year college tours and transfer school counseling
- Textbook and resource lending library
• Laptop computer checkout
• Advocacy and referral services
• Group workshops or individualized help regarding time management, stress management, study skills, test taking, note taking, scholarship essay writing (Regional TRIO brochure).

Services offered by SSS are available to enrolled Regional students taking at least 6-credit hours in a program of study that is leading toward an Associate degree or is a declared Academic transfer student. Mr. White contends that the transitory nature of the student population makes it difficult for such assistance to be effective. Mr. White explains:

Our students are very busy being students, number one, being employees, employers, being parents, the list kind of goes on and on, so even though they might be interested in getting involved in something like that, they may opt not to because they just can't fit it into their schedule. They have kids they're raising and spouses they need to spend time with and so on and so forth.

Cindy identifies the greatest challenge for the community college as being able to deliver and help those students who come to Regional to “reach their full potential.” She suggests that in addition to the traditional vocational program offerings at Regional Community College, a growing number of students, due to the raised admission standards at the local university, are enrolling to meet the basic core curriculum in hopes of soon-after transferring. In contrast, Doris cites a concern for the college as being the “lack of security for students and staff/faculty.” In a recent security report, Regional had nine incidents at the metropolitan campus. Two aggravated assaults, five burglary/thefts, and
nine alcohol violations. There is no established security force at Regional. In the academic college catalog under the campus security section it reads:

Regional Community College students, visitors, and employees should report any suspected criminal activity or other emergencies at any Regional location to local law enforcement. Any student who is involved in an incident concerning safety and security should immediately report the incident to the campus Dean of Student Services (Regional College Catalog, 2005-2006).

Student Service Priorities at Regional Community College

Within student services specifically, Mr. White lists priorities for the unit to be the following:

1. maintaining a high level of customer service
2. providing a welcoming atmosphere
3. focusing on retention
4. sharpening the services provided
5. ensuring that staff are trained and understand their role within the system in helping students.

Doris concurs with Mr. White that providing ample social and recreational opportunities for students is a priority. Cindy echoes those sentiments regarding student services priorities and describes her unit’s job as “put[ting] the students first.”
Diversity at Regional Community College

At Regional, Mr. White states that the community college strives to increase diversity. He admits that given the present demographics of the state, “the only minority that they [students] may have had any experience with is when they’re watching TV.” This sentiment holds true for the faculty as well as for the students who attend Regional Community College. The campus has two multicultural student organizations, MESO, or the Multi Ethnic Student Organization, seeks to help students feel welcome at Regional and highlight the positive contributions of all race and ethnic groups (MESO brochure). The Kaleidoscope Alliance is a GLBT group whose purpose is to: create a positive environment for GLBT people and eliminate negative behaviors and attitudes by increasing awareness and understanding using education and advocacy (Kaleidoscope brochure).

Cindy agrees that the state is pretty conservative both politically and religiously. However, the people within the community college tend to be on the more open and receptive side of things, particularly as the institution tries to ensure that the staff is reflective of the diversity within the community in the hiring process. Doris sees no problem with the campus community as it relates to diversity contending that everyone is “very open minded.” To work with individuals who may be unfamiliar with diverse populations, the Affirmative Action Office at the community college provides mandatory diversity training. In the not so distant past, diversity was not so much of a priority at Regional. There were no plans for increasing diversity yet alone retaining persons of color at the community college. Prior to the opening of the Affirmative Action Office (AAO), programs relating to diversity did not exist. According to Mr. White, “that office
has really changed the attitude and perception of diversity within this organization.” He credits the office’s leader, Mr. Lopez, who holds a law degree and serves as Vice President for Affirmative Action/Equity/Diversity at Regional Community College, for being the driving force behind a lot of change and receptiveness toward diversity at Regional.

Regional Community College has a Diversity Education Initiative that is monitored through the AAO. As stated in the AAO’s brochure, the program was developed for the following reasons:

The Diversity Education Initiative at Regional Community College has been developed to enhance our knowledge, skills, and abilities in a number of areas.

- Understanding the challenges of diversity at RCC
- Preparing ourselves and our students to be part of a multicultural society
- Acknowledging and eliminating racism, prejudice, and other discriminatory behaviors
- Recognizing the benefits of diversity in the workplace and student population
- Capitalizing on people’s different talents and abilities
- Creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment in which to work and learn
- Learning about other ways of “thinking, being and doing”.

The initiative requires each full-time, regular employee to earn 27 hours in diversity training to be completed within the initial three-year period of employment. At least 9 hours must be completed each of the three years. For part-time employees the
requirement is adjusted. For example, employees hired at .75 FTE are only required to
do 21 hours in three years and .50 employees must complete 15 within the same three
year time frame. After completion of the initial 27 hour requirement, each full-time
regular employee must participate in a minimum of 4 hours of diversity education
annually. The Diversity Education Policy that was adopted by the eleven-member Board
of Governors at Regional Community College reads:

It is the policy of Regional Community College to require regular employees of
the College to pursue a course of ongoing involvement and participation in
Diversity Education activities designed to increase their awareness, sensitivity,
skill, and competency in and appreciation for working in a diverse and
multicultural work place, and working with students and employees of diverse
and multicultural backgrounds. (Regional Diversity Education brochure)

There are two guidelines for meeting the 27-hour initial requirement for the
diversity initiative. Employees have to participate in a minimum of 9 hours in a RCC
coordinated or approved activity and they must initiate some type of activity with the
maximum hours being 18. The plan allows for employees at RCC to be creative and
personalize their diversity education. Examples of possible projects include attending
diversity conferences or workshops, taking diversity courses, volunteer work, viewing
diversity videos, reading multicultural literature, and reviewing and evaluating diversity
related web-sites. Most anything related to diversity, outside of what the employee
would normally do as part of his/her job at RCC, is permissible. Although the program is
extensive and has received some praises around campus, Mr. White notes challenges that
Mr. Lopez and his staff still have to navigate through:
You know we still have some staff that just aren’t interested and don’t want to be effective and it takes some pretty intense effort on the part of Mr. Lopez and his folks to direct some activities their way.

A good number of students at Regional come from small rural towns within the state that is known for its agriculture.

The largest community college in the state, Mr. White foresees continued growth. The city in which Regional resides has been a major resettlement for international refugees and immigrants. Settlers come from places, such as Africa, Afghanistan, Vietnam, South America, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. In search of a life here in the United States, these immigrants turn to the community college as a step toward learning a skill or even pursuing higher education.

Mr. White:

I’ve had people sit in that same chair that you’re in with apparently fresh bullet wounds, shot from fleeing some refugee camp in Sudan two months ago and now they’re in that chair, talking about how they get started in community college. I mean, it just boggles your mind. Boxes of cereal sit on their kitchen tables uneaten because they’ve never seen a box of cereal and they don’t know how to open it or what to do with it, and two years later they’re walking across the stage with a degree in electronics.

It is these kinds of stories, adds Mr. White that “happen here all the time and if that continues, we’ll continue to probably see diversity keep increasing, a lot of students like that from all over the world.” In her interactions with refugee students, Cindy describes them as “extremely motivated, very driven to get an education.” She recounts the
difficulty many of them have with attempting to transfer to the local university. The 
university requires high school transcripts and many of the refugees who come from 
camps are lacking those critical documents because they no longer exists. Therefore, 
they have to basically start over and get a GED before beginning an associate’s degree. 
Cindy states:

What impresses me the most is that these refugees, nothing discourages them. 
They do not give up. They have huge obstacles and I feel that it’s really 
important for us to help them get over those obstacles so that they can go on to, 
if it’s what they’ve selected to do, to a university. They have such potential. 

Ignorance, still poses the biggest challenge to diversity at Regional adds Cindy:

I grew up in [this state]. It’s a great state. It has a lot of assets. But to be real 
frank, it’s got a lot of redneck, closed-minded people, too, and I’m really 
embarrassed and ashamed sometimes in the way some people act or respond to 
issues of diversity.

Cindy recalls an incident earlier in the year where members of the Hispanic community 
were spat on during an immigration demonstration. Some of those participating in the 
demonstrations who were spat on were her students or their family members.

In describing Mr. White’s contributions to promoting diversity at Regional, Cindy 
credits him with “set[ting] a very fine example, not just in his professional life but his 
personal life, of being open and willing to help those people that are in need.” She shares 
a story in which Mr. White revealed to his staff in a meeting that he and his wife were in 
the process of becoming foster parents. That struck Cindy as being an example of 
someone who puts words into action and does something. She comments:
If you can walk the walk, that has a stronger effect on me than if you do nothing but talk the talk.

For Cindy, Mr. White is someone who defines a good leader because he is open-minded and listens attentively. Doris, in commenting on Mr. White's adds:

[He] encourages all of us [staff] to participate in any or all of the diversity education opportunities given to us.

Overcoming Setbacks

In identifying setbacks, Mr. White notes that given Regional’s Midwest location, sometimes the culture is not conducive to accepting differences. He comments:

Because of the nature of where we’re located and maybe just the type of culture that exists in this state and spills over into people who may come to work here, who kind of present a challenge in areas of diversity.

That kind of attitude from employees can negate efforts by the Student Services Division to deliver quality customer service to students. Cindy agrees with Mr. White that some people within the state tend to be closed-minded. “It’s got a lot of rednecks.”

Mr. White offers the following scenario in explaining the lack of exposure to diversity for some people within the state:

You get someone from here who lives in a town of four hundred people and they come to work for the college and you send them to a conference in Philadelphia and they fly into the airport there, it’s like Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz.

Mr. White observes that people coming to work for the college with a limited experiences with diversity “can be a challenge sometimes.”
CHAPTER 7

WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Western University

Western, a land-grant institution, employs over 1,800 faculty who netted over $208 million in research dollars in 2006 alone. The university is comprised of 400 acres and enrolls over 19,000 students, of which 14% are students of color with Asian/Pacific Islander making up the largest minority group at close to 1,300 students. Students at Western, although more than half are from within state, represent over 100 different foreign countries. Almost two hours from the state’s main city, the university is located in the northwest United States in what can be described as the typical college town as shops, storefronts, and other local establishments display the institutions colors and paraphernalia. Nearby attractions and activities include skiing and snowboarding, rock climbing, hiking and mountain biking, fishing and hunting, as well as relaxing on the beach.

Dr. Bill Stevens is Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Western University. A representative of student services throughout the university and community, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Western reports to the provost/executive vice president and serves as a member of the executive leadership team of the president. He collaborates with others to develop and implement policies concerning student and general university
programs (Western University website). Dr. Stevens, an African American, has over thirty years of student affairs experience, eleven of those years at Western. Prior to coming to Western, Dr. Stevens was a Vice President and Dean of Students at a liberal arts college on the east coast, a position he held for six years, and before that he served as Dean of Students at another eastern small college. Although his initial student affairs experience was in housing where he at one time served as director of housing, Dr. Stevens has had stints in multicultural affairs, counseling, and leadership development. Dr. Stevens received his undergraduate degree in history and a master’s in college student personnel at two separate Ohio schools. His doctorate in college student personnel administration was obtained at a eastern university that is recognized for it’s higher education program.

Campus Community at Western University

Dr. Stevens is well-versed in student affairs literature as evidenced by his extensive publications on student affairs issues, such as leadership, the role of senior student affairs officers, and multicultural practices. He believes the ideal campus community should “be an environment where people really have a shared destination, and where they develop the ability to work together to take responsibility for the conditions of their space.” The idea here is that members within that community have a vested and shared stake in it, which in turn results in more collaboration and ownership from the member with regard to their space. Dr. Stevens adds that an ideal community is also a place in which people encounter struggles. The kind of struggle that allows for one
to acknowledge any shortcomings and to do so openly while at the same time committing oneself to develop in an effort to get better or become more knowledgeable.

At Western, Dr. Stevens admits that in his view the campus struggles:

I think the struggle is related to our aspirations to truly be the people’s university in terms of living our land-grant mission and the challenge that we have around resources and other things that will often times pull us in the direction of something else.

The campus community at Western, according to Dr. Stevens, tends to be highly engaged particularly when it comes to student leadership. A strong system of student governance exists at Western that allows for student participation and involvement in major institutional decisions and leadership. When expanding on campus community at Western, Dr. Stevens uses such words as decency, respectful, caring, and non-confrontational. He explains:

We really buy into and really believe in dialogue as being a very important tool in leadership, so we convene lots of important conversations and work through difficulties with each other. So that’s what I mean by struggle, that we really openly work through the challenging issues that confront us in our daily lives.

For me struggle is a positive. It’s a positive thing.

The most significant strategy used by student affairs at Western to build campus community is the creation of the Campus Covenant. The compact is a document that states the institution’s vision, commitments, and values. The document stipulates:

Cultural Centers attract and retain students and faculty as micro-communities within the larger community. They serve as a refuge to celebrate and to find
solace, to find support and challenges, to facilitate and share a broad understanding of all aspects of a diverse range of cultures. As such, we commit that Cultural Centers will be a part of Western University, not in lieu of the larger University community, but as enrichment to it.

That document, Dr. Stevens notes, is what:

We saw as our role and as our responsibility to transform those aspects of the culture that would influence us to become more like a community. And so we used that document and it's still used in our organization as an orientation of folks to the organization and as a way of introducing people to the core and fundamental values of our organization.

Three years ago the Student Affairs Division revised the mission statement to better reflect the desire to build a community that enhances student success. As a major player in facilitating campus dialogue that influences institutional policies, the division is able to collaborate with areas throughout campus that are outside of Student Affairs.

Concerns at Western University

Dr. Stevens identifies the primary main concern of the university as being:

The effective education of students, which means creating an environment that transforms students' lives in a way that enhances their capabilities for living a rich and engaged and socially responsible life, which includes the ability to find meaningful endeavors, to find a niche and their place in the world in terms of where they will commit.
The university has challenges with trying to meet that goal of delivering an effective education to students. Some of those challenges are with institutional stakeholders, such as helping state legislators and members of the board, understand university needs such as facilities, instruction, and staff. In recent state budget allocations, the legislature has failed to increase funding for state institutions. An additional challenge lies in trying to live up to the land-grant mission of the university. As a result of reduced state funding, it has become harder for Western to fulfill its land-grant responsibilities, such as providing access to a quality postsecondary education for residents of the state.

Western is dealing with some very tight fiscal constraints due to lack of adequate funding from the state and a pending ballot initiative to further restrict state spending, thus, affecting allocation to state institutions. In response to an uncertain financial future, Dr. Stevens is forced to consider probable scenarios to cut back spending. At the time of my visit to Western, Dr. Stevens was preparing for the annual Division of Student Affairs Fall Meeting where faculty and staff within the unit assemble to hear about division accomplishments, future goals, announcements, and so forth. A couple of days prior to the Fall Meeting, Dr. Stevens met with his leadership team, which is known as SALT (Student Affairs Leadership Team). The composition of the group was mixed, the women outnumbered the men fourteen to eight and four of the members were persons of color.

Dr. Stevens sat at the head of a conference-style table set-up as the team listened attentively to his briefing of the proposed powerpoint slide presentation he will give at the Fall Meeting. The lunch meeting was interactive as Dr. Stevens engage the team around the content of the slides asking for amendments which they happily provided.
The group, focused on what Dr. Stevens was presenting to them and asking of them in terms of feedback. Members were very alert, only periodically engaging in chatter with one another. Given the serious nature of the task at hand, they were all about business as uncertain budget cuts meant certain realignment within the division and possible job cuts.

In the wake of having to deliver the news of pending budget cuts throughout the student affairs division, Dr. Stevens confesses that the situation weighs heavily on him.

I didn’t sleep a whole lot last night; it’s not always, that when you’re doing something that has the potential, because we don’t quite know what alternative possibilities for revenue are coming up, but when we do something that potentially has human consequences, for me I can never take that lightly because I feel like I’m really invested in the human dimensions of our organization and I really care about my colleagues.

Acknowledging his own marketability and the opportunities that have been presented to him to move on to other institutions, Dr. Stevens remarks that he values greatly what he has at Western University.

The thing that’s kept me here really is the human community, is sort of the depth of relationship that I feel like I’m able to enjoy with my colleagues here, that I’m not sure that I would be able to enjoy other places.

At the Fall Meeting of the Student Affairs assembly, Dr. Stevens stood at the front of the ballroom located in the student union. He did not wear a suit coat, not a dress shirt and tie for that matter, instead he had on a long-sleeve shirt similar to the university’s school colors. Steadily, people walked into the ballroom, which was arranged in a row of tables slanted diagonally with chairs. In the back of the room was a continental breakfast
of coffee, tea, and donuts. As people began to take their seats Dr. Stevens started the meeting, adjusting the microphone that was fixed on his shirt. Almost instantly, a silence came over the room as Dr. Stevens began with a “hello.” I don’t know if it was the fact that I had advance knowledge of what was about to be explained to the group or if in fact it actually was, but there seemed to be a feeling of concern in the air. There was no chattering, or side-bar conversations going on, as all eyes were fixated on Dr. Stevens. Even though I was only an observer, I somehow found myself choked with a bit of emotion for the future of the division for while I was only on the campus for less than a week these were people I had interacted with during my stay and here they were confronted with this difficult, uncertain prospect.

Dr. Stevens laid out the facts, the challenge was that the university was faced with a significant budget deficit due to decreased allocation from the state and increased costs. As a result, the university had to cut cost and each area was asked to present a plan of how they would reduce spending. For the Division of Student Affairs, it meant possible realignment. Well aware of how this kind of news could overwhelm his unit, Dr. Stevens gave his expectations for the group during this difficult time:

- Share your best thinking
- Express what you are feeling
- Support your colleagues
- Say what needs to be said
- Ask for clarification you may need
- Check your assumptions
- Keep focus on students

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• Hold needed conversations in the room, not outside
• Honor each voice

These expectations are consistent with the style that Dr. Stevens has adopted and readily displays. A style that is focused on the task at hand; do what needs to be done, focus on the students, and remember that people are involved.

Student Affairs Priorities at Western University

A major priority for the student affairs unit at Western University, as identified by Dr. Stevens, is student success. He observes:

That success doesn’t happen in isolation but success happens through creating a foundation and creating a strong network of people who share a common aspiration of elevating the possibilities for students’ lives. And for us, that student success is about enhancing student learning, it’s about citizenship, it’s about preparing folks to be effective communicators, it’s preparing people to be engaged and contributing members to a community and to society. We in our work have gotten very clear that the primary responsibility that we have is to advocate student success.

Teresa Mason, a native of a much more diverse state along the southern west coast whose office actively works with students of color, also argues that a major priority of student affairs is ensuring student success. She adds at times it is a challenge trying to fulfill that priority when it relates to exposing them to diversity:
We have a lot of folks from all over the place. You got a good number [from within the state]. Quite a few people, I would say, have limited experiences in terms of dealing with differences.

Diversity at Western University

Personally, diversity for Dr. Stevens is a core value that serves as a primary anchor for his professional identity.

Dr. Stevens: I believe that if I, in this role, act like nothing more than a caricature of my peers, my European American peers or female peers or what, (you can pick the background of a person), then my value to the institution is lost, and that my value is in the unique life situation that I bring, the unique personal history and struggles that I’ve gone through, and how those informed me in terms of the importance of resiliency, the importance of community, the importance of collective effort, communal responsibility for one another, the importance of spirit. So I believe that my diversity [Dr. Stevens is African American] and the diversity that I have the responsibility to support in others and to honor in others in terms of their uniqueness is a core asset that I bring to my organization, and that if I were not to allow my own diversity and commitment to diversity to surface, then my value to the university is greatly diminished.

University-wise, diversity is a core part of the institution’s mission as significant resources are allotted for it. The concept of diversity at Western has been expanded to having a greater understanding and value of the international, gender, and GLBT components as opposed to just the ethnic one.
Over-time, diversity at Western has changed in that the university once dealt with it from a problematic perspective. Dr. Stevens recalls, “Often we found ourselves reacting to the incidents in the life of the institution that diversity created.” Campus incidents related to diversity forced the university to respond and deal with a number of situations. Before Dr. Stevens arrived at Western University in 1996, an incident happened in 1972 in which several African American athletes held a walkout that led to the creation of the Black Cultural Center. The then head football coach at Western, who was Caucasian, informed some of his players that in order to play they must shave their facial hair and cut their Afros. At the time, the Afro stood as a sign of personal pride and identity. After conversations between the athletes and coach failed to yield any resolution to the dispute, the Black students staged a walkout from classes. The event received widespread news attention and members of the Western University community took sides, often along racial lines. White athletes contended that the athletes involved in the incident had to do what the coach said. The incident resulted in Black athletes boycotting the season, which left Western fielding a football team without any African Americans. Soon after, some of the African American athletes on other teams within the university’s athletic conference refused to play against Western as a result of its treatment of their African American athletes.

Not too long after Dr. Stevens arrived at Western University, he faced an incident in 1996 in which an African American student was walking by a residence hall and was met by several individuals yelling racial slurs at him. Then a Caucasian student attempted to urinate on the student from a residence hall balcony. The event mobilized members of the community to take action. An all-campus boycott of classes and services
ensued in which students held a rally and marched to the administration building to voice their outrage at the incidents. Coincidentally, a year later, the same student who was involved in the incident that sparked the boycott was again the target of an incident that had some racial overtures. Walking down the street, a white male in a fraternity house threw a firecracker out the window at the student and yelled the “N-word.” Angered by the incident, members of the community again began to express their indignation over the racially charged actions of a member from the Greek system. Calling for the fraternity to be banned from campus, students again rallied and marched to the administration building to meet with the President. Tipped off by one of the students as to what was about to happen, Dr. Stevens informed the President of the students’ intentions and recommended to him that he should leave campus and go home and allow him [Dr. Stevens] to meet with the students. Dr. Stevens explains his rationale for this advice as “Part of my role is to take bullets for the President. I mean, that’s my job.” Following his advice, the President left and Dr. Stevens met with the students where he sat down on the floor with them and listened to them voice their concerns. As a result of their conversation regarding meaningful policies that could be put in place to reduce the chance of future incidents of this magnitude, Dr. Stevens invited the students to submit a set of recommendations that they would like to see the administration consider and act on in the President’s Cabinet. Given that the drafting of the recommendations was work for the university, Dr. Stevens paid the students for the time they spent writing the document. The students formed a group, TEAM, to come up with suggestions. As a result of their work, the document was adopted by the administration. Specific recommendations called for the President to, in the State of the University Address that he delivers annually,
 devote an entire section of his speech to diversity. In this year’s address the President noted the progress of the University Diversity Action Plan, which is in its final stage of completion and the work being done to increase faculty of color hires.

As for the fraternity that was involved in the racial incident, they were initially voted by their peers to have their charter revoked and expelled from campus. Appealing to Dr. Stevens for leniency, the fraternity asked for a second chance. Dr. Stevens agreed to hear their case only if current and alumni members of the fraternity spent a day with him in a retreat setting. The goal was to talk about their values, aspirations, and the potential of the organization. After spending the day with the fraternity, Dr. Stevens did something that he had never done; overruled the appeal and allowed the fraternity to stay on campus. As a result, the fraternity made a complete turnaround as they decided to go alcohol-free and within a year won Fraternity of the Year based on their involvement within the community, strong displays of leadership, and affirmed commitment to diversity.

With this particular incident involving the fraternity, Dr. Stevens makes the point that what he tries to do as the SSAO is to educate students in the fairest of conditions regardless of what others may deem suitable. In this case, many felt that the fraternity should have been banned from campus. However, Dr. Stevens interprets his duties as such:

My responsibility is to satisfy the educational needs of our students, not the thirst of our communities for information about what we’re doing.

This kind of stance has developed as a pattern for Dr. Stevens in his dealings with multiple incidents involving students. Just last year an African American football player
got into a scuffle with a Marine Reservist who was just about to be deployed to Iraq. The incident resulted in the football player knocking the Marine unconscious. University officials were confronted with a huge media circus over the incident, as people wanted to know what actions administrators were going to take. The player was suspended by the football coach and, as far as giving advice to the President regarding media relations, Dr. Stevens suggested:

I just told our President, we will not talk publicly about what we’re doing. I said, we’ve got an educational responsibility to the students, not to the journalists. And you know, I really had to battle our President. He keeps saying, well, we need to let people know that we’re taking this seriously and that we’re being responsible. I said, we will talk about what our processes are, but we will not talk about the details of a particular student’s process. That is their educational experience and we don’t try to educate people in the public square.

This kind of stance, observes Dr. Stevens, often leads people to speculate that the university is perhaps trying to hide or covering something up. Dr. Stevens counters:

Yeah, we’re trying to hide from people the issues that the students might be struggling with and that we have a responsibility to address.

It just so happened that during my visit to Western, Dr. Stevens was confronted with another news-making incident as a student on a foreign exchange in Asia was allegedly sexually assaulted by a classmate. As I arrived to meet with Dr. Stevens for my first interview, I caught him in the administration building just as he was about to go up the elevator to his office on the top floor. The sharply dressed man in a dark suit had a gray school backpack with yellow strips thrown over his shoulder. He was holding the
state’s newspaper in which he indicated Western University was featured. The incident was reported in the local and state papers. Family members of the victim accused university officials of being slow and inadequate in their response claiming that the accused was not removed from a class that he shared with the victim until three weeks after the incident allegedly happened. The university’s response was to issue a no-contact among the parties involved and a senior student affairs representative flew to Asia, where the students were participating in a foreign country study abroad, to meet with the students and explain the disciplinary process. In the course of my hour-long interview with Dr. Stevens, he was interrupted several times, one of which he had to excuse himself for an extended period to meet with the president regarding the incident. His manner was calm and collected and had it not been for the knock on the door by an assistant or colleague, one would not have known that the university was facing a crisis.

Underscoring his own effectiveness as a leader Dr. Stevens is cognizant of the fact that everybody learns differently, therefore it is imperative for a leader to be flexible in their style especially in accommodating human differences.

I just try to share with people that, you know, share my own struggle, that for me, the biggest challenge that I face is that I’m living in a world that is different than the world into which I was born, and I’m somehow trying to lead a world that is different than the world in which I was formed, or the world in which I was born. I’ve got this struggle to somehow have the arrogance to believe that I’m capable of living and leading something that I’ve never experienced.

Not claiming to be a know-it-all on every possible subject, Dr. Stevens acknowledges his own deficiencies in understanding human differences. He shared a story about how a
student cleared up some questions he had about persons who are transgendered. In a lunch outing he had with a student worker and several other students, Dr. Stevens asked one of the students, whom he had known through previous lunch discussions was going through hormone therapy, about the process.

I said, is it OK if I talk with you about what’s going to happen with you? I said, I didn’t know any of that. I said, I was stunned. I said, you know, pardon me if I stare… so I confessed all of my ignorance which, you know, which gave me permission to be able to ask really dumb questions.

In search of a clearer understanding to the nature of this type of human difference, Dr. Stevens took a chance to come out directly and ask the student about it rather than tiptoe around it and pretend that what this individual was going through was not happening.

As a leader, Dr. Stevens has never been hung up on titles and status. He explains: For me, the bottom line is that if a person has an issue, they want to talk to somebody who cares and who can do something about it. They don’t care where you are. They just want to know, do you care and will you help me, and can you do something about what my concern is and what my issue is?

Part of his style is to be accessible to everyone, parents and students, alike:

I give people my direct line. I don’t feel like people have to go through somebody to get to me.

This is a style that this researcher experienced first hand as I communicated with Dr. Stevens directly either by calling his direct line or emailing him to set-up and confirm my visit to meet with him.
In talking about his role as an administrator of color, Dr. Stevens is well aware of how that might be perceived, good or bad, in a community that has little diversity.

I know that with that goes a unique burden...I don’t have the same license that my other colleagues have to be able to blow up at people, to be a hothead, to have incidents of anger and outbursts in my background, because with the combination of position and race, an angry black man would be a really difficult one to work with.

The Division of Student Affairs at Western has adopted a set of learning goals that are division-wide and serve as an assessment for continuing development of faculty and staff within the division. The learning goals, as developed by the Student Affairs Assessment Council are:

- Effective Communication
- Healthy Living
- Active Citizenship and Responsibility
- Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Competence
- Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills
- Attitude of Inquiry

Each of the goals is meant to facilitate the learning experience that members within the division undergo as they perform their duties and engage in personal development.

Karen Knight, who works with multicultural students and is also an alum of Western University, has a real passion for access and retention, particularly for students of color. She agrees that Western University does a lot in terms of diversity when compared with other like-institutions. Western has six cultural centers (Black, Native
American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific, Women’s and Pride), the Minority Education Office, the LGBT Outreach and Services office, and the Office of Community and Diversity. However, she believes more could be done as it relates to funding. Karen is concerned that scholarships, particularly minority scholarships, have been amended due in large part to the Michigan affirmative action case. As a result, funds once used to attract primarily students of color to Western have now gone to Caucasian students. In-state tuition at Western is over $5,000 and out-of-state is over $17,000. Currently, the university offers the Diversity Achievement Award, which is awarded to anyone of ethnic minority origin, low income status, or a student with a documented disability, to help offset costs. The scholarship is competitive with award amounts ranging from $900 to $2,700. Karen also cites the “revolving door” phenomena of many of its faculty and staff of color as being a challenge to diversity at Western, which much of the claims has to do with being located in a town as desolate as the one in which Western is situated.

The university does have an Office of Community and Diversity that promotes cultural diversity awareness throughout campus. The office assists with the recruitment of minority students, staff, and faculty, as well as curriculum development, and collaborative efforts to engage community members in diversity efforts, such as the education forum discussions that the office puts on several times a semester. One of the activities that the office sponsors is a Diversity Book Club Forum that is open to the Western University community as well as to the local community. Books are identified for reading and a brown bag lunch forum is held in the student union where participants come and discuss the reading. This year’s readings include *Mexicans and Americans*: 

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Cracking the Cultural Code by Ned Crouch, When the Emperor Was Divine by Julie Otsuka, and YELL-Oh Girls! by Vickie Nam.

Also at the university is a faculty group, the Association of Faculty for the Advancement of People of Color (AFAPC), that provides support for faculty of color at Western through networking and communication, as well as personal and professional development. The Ethnic Studies Department at Western, in which Dr. Stevens holds the rank of full professor, is another avenue through which multicultural programming and exchange takes place. The department, established in 1995, is housed in the College of Liberal Arts and offers disciplines that students can major or minor in that focus on the experiences of African Americans, Asian and Pacific Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, and Native and Alaskan Americans.

On my visit to Western, the Ethnic Studies Department, in collaboration with the Vice Provost for Student Affairs Office and the Office of Community and Diversity, sponsored a lecture for the campus in which they brought in a well-know sociologist to talk about the issue of race. The Race Consciousness Forum was in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Department of Ethnic Studies at Western University. Held in the auditorium of one of the classroom buildings the event had a good turnout as members from both the campus and local community attended, as did the Dean for the College of Liberal Arts.

Several years ago Dr. Stevens, along with the Provost and VP for Finance, visited the cultural centers and it was at that time that Dr. Stevens proposed the idea of a Covenant as a way of ensuring that the cultural centers would remain a permanent fixture on the campus, thus reinforcing the university’s commitment to diversity. In the process,
a number of rooms in the Student Union was redesigned with the consultation of students to reflect more of a cultural theme. Since then, Dr. Stevens notes, "I think now we are much more intentional and strategic in our conversations and in our leadership and in our response to issues." The cultural centers, according to Dr. Stevens, have been very successful diversity programs at Western University because they are student-led and maintain an active programming. Karen attests to the success of the cultural centers and it's staff with diversity programming:

I mean they [the students] supervise people, they have control over budgets, they manage a facility, and what other student opportunity on campus do you get to do that?

The cultural centers provide "spaces that allow students to share their unique identities in a safe and secure environment" (Western, Diversity Development brochure). Each of the cultural centers has it's own distinct purpose and history. For example, the Native American Cultural Center is the oldest facility at Western. Situated in the heart of the campus, since its establishment in 1971, the center seeks to provide "the opportunity to build a bridge of understanding between the regions' tribes and visitors of all cultures" (Native American Cultural Center brochure). The Black Cultural Center, located on the edge of the campus grounds, was created in 1975 as a result of pressure and protest for a place in which African American students could assemble and feel comfortable. It "is committed to the retention of African and African American students as well as other students of color. It provides support services and leadership development opportunities, residential facilities, events and activities (Black Cultural Center brochure). The Hispanic Cultural Center, located across the football stadium, was also established in
1975. It “exists to support different ethnic and cultural peoples’ pursuit of their educational goals and the retention of their culture” (Hispanic Cultural Center brochure). The Asian Cultural, also located on the edge of campus, was opened in 1991 though the persistence of Asian faculty at Western who were concerned that students of Asian descent did not have a place to gather and socialize. All of the cultural centers boast cable television with a VCR and stereo system, computers, conference table, a full kitchen, living room, and meeting rooms, as well as literature relative to their culture.

The Pride and Women’s centers, although university facilities, do not fall under the student affairs umbrella as they are housed in other areas within the institution. The Pride Center at Western, located just off-campus in a residential section, provides programs and support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) and allies of the Western community (Diversity Resources brochure). The Women’s Center, that sits across from the library, provides resources, programs and services, which assist in advocating for and empowering women and their allies (Diversity Resources brochure).

Another successful program, according to Dr. Stevens, is the cultural meal events program that puts on over thirty large-scale cultural events with total attendance of over 3,000 people. The program has been so successful that there is a full-time Cultural Meal Events Coordinator who prepare meals, with the assistance of volunteers, in a industrial-sized kitchen designated for the program. Additional successful programs include Team Liberation, a student-led diversity initiative that provides training and diversity resources for organizations and groups and the Campus Coalition Builders, a
chapter of the National Coalition Building Institute that conducts training on ways to reduce oppression and prejudices on campus.

Dr. Stevens notes that there are specific initiatives in place as they relate to attracting students of color. Specifically, there are Spanish-language advertising and commercials on television. The university does outreach by going to community centers in minority-serving neighborhoods to work with students and render on-the-spot admissions decisions. Once students of color enroll at Western they meet with a support team in the Minority Education Office, which is under the Student Affairs Division. The office “provides academic support and advocacy services to students of color by offering a safe and welcoming place for students who are navigating the challenges of being a cultural, racial, and ethnic minority at Western” (Minority Education Office brochure). Activities include mentorship, graduation ceremonies, banquets, leadership development, and celebrations. The offices, broken into four sections (African American Education Office, Asian/Pacific American Education Office, CASA (Hispanic) Office, and the Indian Education Office), were created by popular student demand and are staffed by a professional in each office who actively advises and works with students.

Teresa hopes that people within and outside the university do not misconstrue the existing programs that support diversity as being enough:

I think a lot of folks think that there’s a lot happening, so, we really don’t need to put too much more resources into that aspect of campus life. I think that some folks think that it is a waste of resources because everybody is the same and we shouldn’t have these special kind of programs, and kind of the basic kind of stuff that pops up when you start talking about diversity, whether it’s in corporate
America or other higher education institutions, those issues are here as well. I think people don’t have a clear understanding of what it is, or know how to deal with the different issues around diversity.

Overcoming Setbacks

Setbacks at Western, particularly as they relate to diversity, have been incidents of vandalism to the cultural centers and incidents of violence to members of the community due to biases and prejudices. Dr. Stevens comments, “Anything that at any point ever diminishes the humanity or the dignity of a person also diminishes the integrity and the dignity of the community.” At best, adds Dr. Stevens, “we try to turn those into high points by elevating them to educational issues and figuring out how to deal with it.” For example, the campus had an incident where an editorial in the school newspaper featured a commentary by a staff writer in which harsh negative comments and criticisms of Muslims were written. To show a commitment of pluralistic values, the administration sponsored a series of activities for the campus community to ease tensions.

Teresa is well aware of what incidents related to diversity that occur at Western do to the institution’s image within the minority community:

Western has a reputation in the communities of color, various communities of color based on past things that were happening. When something goes down, you got the grapevine. Students are telling each other, or families are telling other folks, and so I mean the word gets around, negative word gets around.
Dr. Stevens is optimistic that Western University will be a university that has lived up to its mission of providing a quality education to an increasingly diverse group of students:

My hope is that it will be [in the future] a more full picture of the community [to which] we aspire, which is one of an engaged, culturally diverse, highly invested, committed community that is working to sustain its health.

Karen thinks that Dr. Stevens has been an outstanding promoter of diversity, giving his support as a mentor:

He very much wants to mentor and to be supportive.
CHAPTER 8

CENTRAL METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction to Central Metropolitan Community College

Central Metropolitan is the largest higher education institution within the state with over 35,000 students, of which, over 40% are minority. Broken down, Caucasians make up 51.6% of the student population, Hispanic 17.4%, African American 10.2%, Asian 10.3%, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 1.2%, Native American 0.9%, and Unknown 8.4% (Central Metropolitan Institutional Research & Planning). Located in a tourist-oriented city in the southwest part of the United States, Central Metropolitan’s offerings cover over 200 career fields and include close to 80 associate degrees.

Dr. Ben Davis, an African American, is Vice President for Student Affairs at Central Metropolitan Community College. Now in his second year at Central, his has over eighteen years of community college experience, mostly in the state of California. His senior administrative experience began at a college in San Francisco where he remained for three years before accepting a Vice President of Student Development position at a small college north of Los Angeles. After a two-and-a-half year stint there, Dr. Davis moved on to another institution just outside of Los Angeles to become Vice President of Student Support, Planning, and Research, a position he held for almost five years before arriving at Central Metropolitan. Dr. Davis academic education includes a
bachelor’s degree in African American Studies and Philosophy and a master’s in communication. His doctoral degree has a concentration in minority higher education.

Campus Community at Central Metropolitan

The ideal campus community, according to Dr. Davis, is learning-centered with those working in student affairs at it’s core. In fact, the ideal campus would be one in which instructional faculty as well as Student Affairs faculty and staff embrace the learning-centered community college but not only embrace the ideal, but were able to put it into practical terms, in terms of how we impact students as a learning-centered institution, how do we change our approach to teaching, how we change our approach to service, with the student at the center of it. Teaching is still done primarily with the faculty member lecturing, but we need to develop new teaching techniques, have it widespread.

Dr. Davis adds:

It’s that you have a system that insures that students get certain things done for them, such as making sure they have educational plans, so it places them in contact with staff for a specific purpose. That’s learning-centered. Learning-centered is a little intrusive.

He contends that as a result of new and innovative ways to meet that learning-centered challenge, the Student Affairs unit at Central is becoming more customer-friendly. However, despite an institution’s best efforts to incorporate ideal campus practices, Dr. Davis is skeptical as to whether an institution is capable of reaching such a utopian status.
"But I don't think you ever sort of get there. I mean, you're still working toward that ideal campus because over the years your population is changing." Or Dr. Davis is referring to the changes that are associated with the different generations that matriculate through college over time and how university officials need to be in-tune with the unique characteristics and demands that these students bring with them that affect how a college attempts to meet their needs.

Central is comprised of three campuses and thirteen satellite locations. Each of the three campuses, observes Dr. Davis, has its own distinct characteristics. The Boulevard campus, which happens to be the oldest of the three, has what Dr. Davis describes as a traditional college campus feel as it services over 10,000 students. It has, over the years, been burdened with a negative image of being too "ghetto" because it is located in a high African American and Hispanic serving neighborhood and offers developmental education. Students and faculty, alike, do not want to be at that campus due to safety concerns and the stigma of the campus as being inferior to the other campus locations. Enrollment at the Boulevard campus has seen a decline, although numbers remain high when compared to other institutions. Dr. Davis suggests the possibility that advances in distance education may be the cause for declines coupled with higher than normal attrition rates among African American and Hispanics who make up a large percentage of enrollment at that campus.

A committee has been formed to identify concerns at the Boulevard campus and suggest possible solutions. Not certain as to the actual reason why enrollment is down, administrators speculate that it is because students are drawn more to the Shadow Ridge campus because it offers more transfer-oriented courses.
With over 12,000 students, the Shadow Ridge campus is a newer campus. Of all the campuses, Shadow Ridge is growing the fastest in terms of enrollment. It has a large international community of over 700 students. Seen by students as the “flagship” campus, Shadow Ridge is home to the main community college administrators (the president and his cabinet). Soon, the campus will boast a new 78,000 square feet academic classroom building in anticipation of an enrollment surge.

Outside of the metropolitan area city limits and nested within the confines of a suburban community is The Lakes campus of Central Metropolitan Community College. With an enrollment of about 4,000 students, The Lakes is small and tends to take on what Dr. Davis describes as an “isolated” culture feel due to its remote location. The campus boasts a large building complex that houses the computer lab, classrooms, and a Police Academy. Although no major administration personnel outside of the campus chief academic officer are housed there, Dr. Davis and the College’s Vice President of Academic Affairs make an effort to visit the campus once a week.

Dr. Davis describes Central Metropolitan’s overall culture as the following:

A culture in transition. I sort of see culturally the college at a point of a new paradigm, in that there have been traditions of change at the college. Dr. Davis is referring to the fact that Central has seen a rapid turnover in its leadership with six presidents serving in an eight-year span. With the current president entering his third year at the helm, the college has been able to implement a strategic plan that will serve as a guide to moving the institution into a stable future. Part of that stability includes the placement of key individuals within the administration. Dr. Davis joins the Central Metropolitan team as an outsider with no previous contact or affiliation with the
institution. The strategic plan calls for all departments to develop three-year plans that will ensure the continuation of area objectives should a key-level person leave.

Dr. Davis has instructed each department within his area to develop a mission statement, something that previously did not exist within the student affairs division, that is consistent with the college mission. The Student Affairs Division is currently drafting a vision statement that will incorporate the importance of building community through collaboration and intrusive advising when it comes to students’ progress. At each of the three campuses, one will find a convenient central location for enrollment services—financial aid, admissions, registration, and disability resource services. Each area has a desk with chairs available for students to sit down and speak with a staff member.

Keeping in step with those collaborative principles, Dr. Davis, with the president’s guidance, has worked closely with the Vice President of Academic Affairs on projects, such as working with area high schools, building learning communities, and instituting better faculty advising. The college has established transfer centers on all three campuses that better educate students about the requirements and possibilities of transferring. In response to the results of a student satisfaction survey that indicated negative attitudes toward academic advising, the college has enacted a program that mandates students taking fifteen or more units to develop, with a counselor, educational plans that outline what they intend to get out of their education at Central Metropolitan. This gets at the problem of students electing to self-advice, by not taking the courses they need, and not connecting with staff members. With the educational plan, students have to sit down and meet with a staff member and discuss their educational goals.
In expanding on campus culture at Central, Dr. Davis is quick to point out that the institution, as he observes it, is more of a teaching institution rather than a learning institution. He explains the difference between the two designations:

When you’re a teaching institution, your students are not involved as much in their own learning as if you are more of a learning institution. The learning institution tries new skills of insuring that students know certain things. And that doesn’t happen overnight, and I’ll give you one example where it has occurred. All courses now have learning objectives. We’re also implementing student learning objectives in Student Affairs.

With the learning objectives the idea is for each department to establish an objective, try to get students to complete the objective, and reevaluate it. Dr. Davis explains what he characterizes as a “paradigm shift” within Student Affairs at Central:

We need to be able to demonstrate that we have specific objectives that we try to accomplish and that, in fact, students accomplish these objectives and, in fact, these things are good for education.

Tammy Holmes, a veteran of Central Metropolitan for over sixteen years, currently serves as a dean within the Student Affairs Division. She is African American and a long time resident of the community who completed her college work at a nearby university. At one point, Tammy filled in as Vice President of Student Affairs at Central Metropolitan on an interim basis. She sees the ideal campus community as an environment in which the main focus of everyone (faculty, staff, administrators) is student learning. She characterizes the current culture as being both “unique and not unique in the sense that it mirrors the transient nature of our greater community.”
Tammy points out that a significant portion of their students work full-time for the major industry in town, which has unpredictable scheduling adjustments, making it hard for students to maintain their studies. The culture at Central Metropolitan is changing, observes Tammy. Due to projected growth, there have been talks about the possibility of constructing residence halls for students who attend Central Metropolitan. This would enable students to live on-campus and help out with the already high cost of living in the area.

Within the last year, a new director of student activities has been hired to work on campus programming. That director, Raul Lopez, who is Hispanic, comes to Central Metropolitan with experience in academic advising and student activities. He is working on completing his doctorate. Raul describes the campus community at Central Metropolitan:

I think it's a really good community in terms of what we're trying to do for our students and the level of investment that we've made in our students in terms of our time, our energy, and really going out of our way to make it as welcoming a community as possible.

Central Metropolitan has over thirty student clubs and organizations as well as a student government. At the Boulevard and Shadow Ridge campuses, there are multipurpose commons spaces where students can gather, eat their meals, study, log onto their laptops, and socialize with classmates. On the Boulevard campus, the commons has a stage for entertainment events. Popular programs include salsa lessons, Open Microphone Poetry Slam, and Tea Time where female students connect with female faculty and staff for who will serve as mentors.
When Dr. Davis arrived at Central Metropolitan he assessed the student affairs division and found a need for improved customer service. As a result, a group of student affairs personnel were sent out to be trained in effective customer service practices. The group came back to Central and conducted workshops on what they had learned to their fellow student affairs co-workers.

As part of his regular meetings with student affairs directors, Dr. Davis, once the regular business meeting has adjourned, likes to engage his leadership team in a professional development session. As an observer, I sat in for both a two-hour long Student Affairs Administrators Meeting and a hour and a half long Professional Development Training Session that followed, both conducted by Dr. Davis. The meeting started at about 10:00 a.m. in the main conference room on the administrative floor of the administration building. Photos of the college campus at different periods hang on the walls of the nicely furnished room that has wood panel and a large wooden conference that seats close to twenty people. Refreshments were available on one of the side tables, where in-coming meeting attendees stopped by once they’ve selected a place to sit at the conference table. Dr. Davis, seated at the head of the table, opened the meeting and ran through the items to be covered on the agenda. The meeting was both informative and collaborative as attendees were briefed on current enrollment trends for the college by research staff and pending date confirmations for the up-coming calendar year. In response, they offered input and suggestions on existing and possible jump-start initiatives.

After the administrators meeting wrapped-up the directors retreated into a nearby conference room where lunch boxes were waiting. Here the directors quickly feasted on
the sandwiches, chips, and cookies that have been provided and engaged in some friendly conversation with one another. After about fifteen minutes, the group returned to the main conference room for the Professional Development Training Session. Sessions are optional, however, everyone usually attends.

Dr. Davis, still seated at the head of the table, with coat taken off, began the session by first thanking the directors for attending. With a separate meeting agenda, the session had a relaxed tone and feel about it as the group began first discussing the Student Affairs Vision at Central Metropolitan and what it meant to them as Student Affairs professionals. Attendees shared their accounts of situations on campus that involved students and staff. Dr. Davis provided the group with some readings on civility and roles and functions of Student Affairs administrators for discussion. Attendees were attentive to the conversations shared by Dr. Davis and others. Dr. Davis comments about the meeting:

In a meeting like that, [the idea] is to sort of get people to open up because then if people open up, they tend to take barriers down and then learning can occur a lot easier.

Dr. Davis adds that by incorporating development activities within the meeting he hopes to transform the present culture within the division so that they, as a group, will be able to have a positive impact on the rest of the college.

Right now, Dr. Davis states, “The schools operate with a certain degree of autonomy.” That is not how Dr. Davis would like for the Student Affairs Division at Central Metropolitan to function. Instead, “we’re trying to cause a cultural shift,” particularly as it relates to addressing diversity within the departments. Part of that plan
to address diversity includes collaboration with academic departments and other units within the college. One example is with the Office of Diversity where that office, along with student affairs, plan to create a mentoring program that will be aimed at African American and Hispanic students because as Dr. Davis points out “their retention rate is lower than students in other ethnic and racial groups.”

Concerns at Central Metropolitan Community College

Dr. Davis sees the major concerns of Central Metropolitan embodied in the institution’s mission to address the needs of the area that the community college services. Doing so entails providing training for the major industry within the metropolitan area and offering developmental education for low-level learners, as well as appropriate instruction for English-as-a-second-language students, a group that constitutes a large portion of the college’s enrollment.

Raul identifies two major concerns for Central Metropolitan: retention and graduation. With substantial growth in student enrollment over the last decade, Raul contends that the college is now poised to “focus on the retention, graduation, and transfer of our students.”

Tammy identifies a major concern for the college as being related to funding. She notes that the student affairs unit at Central Metropolitan is not funded by its Full-time Enrollment or FTE’s like other the academic departments, therefore the area is left with having to work with limited resources as the college enrollment numbers soars. Tammy comments about the resources:
In a lot of ways we’re so blessed. Resources are not as we would want them to be. But...in a lot of areas we have abundance.

Student Affairs Priorities at Central Metropolitan Community College

Within student affairs specifically, unit priorities were derived through a planning process that yielded the following emphases:

1. increase successful course retention,
2. increase the graduation rate,
3. increase the transfer rate,
4. address the issue of diversity, and
5. and work toward improving equity of success (Student Affairs Priorities, 2006).

The priorities for student affairs were developed by the leadership team through a planning process, out of which the following were deemed high priorities: retention, graduation, and increasing the transfer rate. Dr. Davis notes that Central Metropolitan has some of the lowest graduation rates of any community college within the state, and the institution does not fare well on retention at the national level as well as less than 70% of students fail to matriculate. As a result, community college officials have been collaborating with the local school district to catch and prepare students before they arrive at Central Metropolitan and with the local universities to better improve transfer prospects for students once they graduate.

Raul also identifies main concerns for the area as being retention and customer service. He cites the addition of the E-Alert system, which calls for faculty and staff to
notify the retention specialist when a student runs into academic difficulty, as being one of the new initiatives geared toward increasing retention.

Raul: [We must make] sure that our students have a great experience here and that we, as a team, help our students, help them navigate through the system.

In an effort to better meet the needs of the students at Central Metropolitan, Tammy points to the creation of the Student First initiative. The program was started to better gain an understanding of why people enroll at Central Metropolitan. Previously, college officials had no way of knowing what the student expected to get out of their experience at Central Metropolitan. With this new data, administrators can assess whether students are enrolling in hopes to completing a degree, for skill development, and so forth.

Diversity at Central Metropolitan Community College

During his doctoral studies, Dr. Davis was interested in programs that sought to provide equity and educational opportunity for underrepresented groups. Diversity, to Dr. Davis, enhances the educational process.

"It helps people learn to live in a pluralistic society. Helps people to understand, I think, it helps people to understand themselves by understanding others."

When it comes to diversity Dr. Davis views it as an intense learning process:

You can’t just have a few workshops and say, OK, we’re doing a great deal for diversity, we understand it, although that’s part of it. It’s like understanding it is so complex, it would be like going from doing fractions to doing high-level algebra. You have to build – get the building blocks up to that level. And
it’s the same thing with understanding diversity. It’s not simple. It’s not simply saying, I treat everyone the same. Although consciously you might say you want to treat everyone the same, the goal should be treating everyone fairly and that is understanding at a deeper level what goes into treating everyone fairly, and it’s not always treating everyone the same.

As to Central Metropolitan, Dr. Davis admits that with only a year under his belt, he’s not all that familiar with the evolution of diversity at the institution, and, due to the lack of data on any cultural assessment of the college, he cannot adequately comment where they are in terms of diversity. However, Dr. Davis does suggest that the college should insert a course in cultural pluralism into the curriculum. In doing so, Dr. Davis believes that:

You are insuring that all the students who receive an associate’s degree will at least have some academic exposure. Theoretical exposure is so important because, again, just by living around someone, it’s not going to make you appreciate that diversity.

Tammy recalls that not too long ago Central Metropolitan had a nationally recognized company come in to administer a diversity survey. The group held a series of interviews and focus groups and circulated questionnaires. Tammy notes the results revealed the following:

We found out some interesting things about Central Metropolitan that some of us believed, some of us thought we knew, but some of the things were actually reinforced, others were not what we may have thought.
As a result of the survey, a Diversity Coalition was assembled to meet monthly and address issues that impacted the institution. Some of the concerns that came before the group included the perceived lack of attention being paid to the Boulevard campus and the hiring process. Steps were taken to ensure equal resources in terms of faculty and staff were provided at the Boulevard campus. In addressing another concern regarding employment and tenure, the hiring and promotion policy was revamped to allow the college to advertise in more diverse publications and consider more in-house candidates.

As interim Vice President, Tammy was well aware of the lack of minorities being considered for positions. Therefore, she had no problem with putting a halt to a search in progress due to the lack of diverse applicants. Tammy notes:

A lot of people confuse diversity with affirmative action, and there was a significant resistance to any affirmative action efforts. So we had to do some work in terms of helping our faculty recognize that if there’s no one on a committee – if everyone on the committee looks the same, then chances are that committee will hire a person that looks just like them.

By broadening the participation on search committees the likelihood that more diverse applicants would be identified and potentially hired was increased. Since the revamped search process has been in place, the percentage of full-time minorities employed has increased from 25% to 37% in ten years.

Currently, Central Metropolitan has a recruitment plan to attract more students of color, specifically African Americans and Hispanics, who tend to not fare as well as their counterparts. Efforts include establishing a KIOSK in one of the nearby feeder high schools from which Central Metropolitan draws a large number of students. The college
created the Office of Diversity, which later became the Office of Equity and Inclusion, to assist with the planning and with building awareness about diversity. As mentioned on the website, the Office of Equity and Inclusion is dedicated to:

Creating and maintaining a supportive and open community predicated on mutual trust, respect, and support. We promote an awareness, appreciation, and inclusion of diversity’s importance in all aspects of the college and use diversity as a factor to guide and influence all institutional and individual decisions to promote the betterment of ourselves and our community (Office of Equity and Inclusion website).

Dr. Davis admits that the institution is just starting with its diversity initiatives and there have been a few bumps in the road. For example, there was a recent change in the Director’s position for the Office of Equity and Inclusion. However, Dr. Davis is still satisfied with the direction in which the college is going with respect to diversity. In assessing his own area as far as diversity goes, he acknowledges “We’re probably the most diverse division in the college.” When commenting about his role with the college as it relates to diversity Dr. Davis notes:

My main job is not diversity; it is a part of everyone’s job. I think, my main job is try and help create a campus environment with strategies that increase our student success rate.

Raul credits Dr. Davis with providing the financial support to get things going as far as programming goes. Before, his area never had a budget. Now, with over $25,000 appropriated to his office, he can plan programs. One of the ideas that came to fruition for Raul is the themed months initiative. Each month a different culture and/or holiday is
celebrated on the Central Metropolitan campuses through displays, events, celebrations, speakers, and so on. Commenting about the initiative Raul states:

We’re definitely trying to be as inclusive as possible because it’s about exposing individuals to different things, things that people might not ever have an opportunity to be exposed to unless we provide that exposure. And I’m glad to say that we’ve been supported to a great degree by the college.

Dr. Davis does not take his role as an administrator of color lightly and is keenly aware of what it means as he performs his duties as a SSAO.

I think the advantage is that in the process of my studies, and because of my experiences, I developed an additional sensitivity to the needs of ethnic minority students, in particular, and, in general, students that represent diverse views and feelings.

In looking ahead toward the future Dr. Davis comments that he’d like to see the following:

I hope that we’re able to say that our student success rate is second to no other community college in the nation of comparable size and like characteristics.

That’s what I hope. And that [success] is equitably distributed among all racial, ethnic, and other diversified groups within our college.

In speaking about the role of Dr. Davis, Tammy gives him credit for conveying to each area within the Student Affairs Division the importance of being involved when it comes to supporting the total learning experience.
Overcoming Setbacks

In his short tenure at Central Metropolitan, Dr. Davis states that his challenge with diversity is in the area of inclusion. Dr. Davis is adamant about the notion that diversity is not a single person’s responsibility, instead, he notes, “it is a part of everyone’s job.” Diversity is just one area that Dr. Davis has to deal with:

There are so many issues that I have to deal with that are not diversity specific.

It’s just having the time and having the right avenue to include diversity.

When he came to Central Metropolitan, Dr. Davis arrived at an institution where employee moral was low. College scandals in recent years, such as the abrupt firing of the previous president for insubordination and alleged cronyism, along with a perceived unfair hiring and promotion policy that overlooked long-time employees of the college, left many feeling disenchanted with the direction in which the college was heading. Vowing to clean up Central Metropolitan, the new president brought in a new administrative team, which included Dr. Davis, and so the initial impression of Dr. Davis, as with any new person to an organization, was that of uncertainty from employees.

From day one Dr. Davis has tried to improve the “overall working situation for staff so they are more enthusiastic about coming here.” With that comes changing attitudes, some of which can be toxic to the changes Dr. Davis is trying to implement in creating a campus environment that fosters student success. Tammy recalls earlier attitudes toward Central Metropolitan’s efforts to increase diversity were not positive as employees resisted attempts to implement affirmative action policies. As a result of educating community members about diversity and creating opportunities, Tammy notes
“We’ve seen some growth” as people are more receptive to diversity than they were before this initiative.

For Raul, challenges with diversity lie with time and staffing. As the lone Director for Student Activities, he has to plan programming for three campuses. Granted each campus Student Activities Office has an Administrative Assistant, but Raul is responsible for ensuring that the officers run efficiently, he has to work with Student Government, and oversee the leadership development component for the department.

Raul admits that his responsibilities can be difficult:

It’s at times a little bit challenging in terms of being able to develop more programs. We as a department can develop the programs, but it’s a matter of the logistics and being able to take care of the detail and being able to make sure that each program is given all your attention. To make sure that the program is successful.

Raul talks about the challenge he had with initial perceptions about the “themed months” cultural programming that he initiated this year:

September 15th, 16th to October 15th, 16th is considered Hispanic Heritage Month, and all of the programming that has come out of the office, some people are taking it – some people were very excited about all of the different programs. I would say a few individuals were a little put off by it because they saw – [me], a Latino male, and said that’s why he’s doing that, and they don’t realize the big picture that we have as a department in terms of celebrating all months and celebrating all the different cultures. So I think that was one small challenge that we had in terms of our programming, some people, the perception.
CHAPTER 9

VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Valley State University

Valley State University, founded in 1957, is located within an active, metropolitan city in the southwestern United States. Originally created as a branch of the state's main university, Valley State is situated on a 340-acre campus and has a student enrollment of over 28,000 students, of which 38 percent are ethnic minority. Broken down, Caucasians make up 50.3% of the student population, Asians 13.6%, Hispanics 10.7%, African Americans 7.7%, Native Americans 1.0%, Foreign Nationals 4.3%, Unknown 12.4% (Valley State Institutional Research Data). The university, ranked as a Doctoral/Research Intensive institution by the Carnegie Foundation, offers various degree programs, such as business, engineering, hotel administration, architecture, social work, journalism, and law.

Dr. Gwendolyn Taylor, who is Caucasian, serves as Vice President for Student Life at Valley State University. An academic, she studied English as an undergraduate and taught high school English for ten years. After obtaining a doctorate in teacher education she moved on to teach, as an assistant professor, at her present institution where she eventually earned tenure. When a new president took over in 1995, Dr. Taylor was brought out of the faculty to work on institutional planning and assessment. Then,
with the departure of the Vice President for Student Life, she was asked by the president
to fill the vacant position as interim Vice President for Student Life. After a national
search, Dr. Taylor was selected to be the permanent Vice President for Student Life at
Valley State University.

Campus Community at Valley State University

Dr. Taylor describes the ideal campus community as “a place where all of the
members of that community – faculty, staff, students – have a shared sense of purpose
and pride.” For employees, that kind of campus environment supports the work that they
do and provides adequate resources for them to achieve objectives with the satisfaction of
knowing that they are valued and contribute to the institutional mission of making a
difference. For students, Dr. Taylor adds, “It’s a combination of an intellectually
rigorous, accepting environment where they are well served.” Building campus
community includes creating an environment where both educational and personal
growth can occur. As a result of this kind of experience, observes Dr. Taylor, comes the
adoption of core values by students, such as respect for one another, respect for the
individual, care, and civility.

After working at Valley State for over twenty years, Dr. Taylor sees the
institution as “a place that has always taken great pride in the fact that it is becoming
something else.” Acknowledging that change and growth are constants at Valley State,
Dr. Taylor recalls when the perception of Valley State was that it was a commuter
campus. Even now, as they try to create a better sense of campus life, she concedes that
at times the campus culture can be a bit apathetic:
This is not a place where there is a lot of controversy...everybody just kind of comes and does their thing and goes somewhere else to live their lives...our campus is not as vibrant as it could be because of that.

Dr. Taylor points out that within Valley State there are “pockets of brilliance,” as one of the colleges within the university has managed to do an exceptional job with capturing that sense of community within the faculty, staff, and students. In this case, Dr. Taylor is referring to a college within Valley State where students, faculty, and staff appear to be engaged and actively participate in college events. The college has its own student affairs area that handles academic advising, internships, and working with college oriented student organizations. The dean of the college stresses the importance of mentorship in his welcome on the college’s website, thus creating an environment to where faculty and staff are encouraged to actively engage with the students in the college. This then makes for a more meaningful academic experience for the students and provides ample opportunity for connecting with faculty and staff within the college and vice versa.

Dr. Taylor enjoys being a part of the Valley State community. She describes the institution as a “dynamic” place and its people as having a “sort of can-do, pioneer spirit.” In examining strategies that the Student Life Division at Valley State uses to build community, Dr. Taylor points to efforts in campus programming:

We’ve tried to do programming, coordinate our programming and do it... in such a way that it has those fundamental core principles, collaboration, diversity...and then do it in a way that it’s inviting, to get people to come back [to diversity programmed events scheduled by student life], get students involved.
Other strategies include increasing the number of student organizations, doubling the number of residence hall beds on campus, and making the Greek system more visible. Valley State, notes Dr. Taylor, is trying to adopt more institutional traditions. For example, the university hosts a week long orientation during the beginning of the fall semester that includes welcome booths. At the welcome booths, faculty, staff, and student volunteers sit at tables situated across campus. These booths are stocked with water and offer information ranging from directions to building locations, to class schedules. This is one of the rare occasions, observes Dr. Taylor, that members from multiple sectors of the campus community come together and collaborate:

We don’t create a great campus community for our students without everybody on campus thinking that it’s part of their role, to make a difference in what the campus community is.

Amanda Irving is the Associate Vice President for Student Life at Valley State University. She’s been in that position for a little over five years. Prior to becoming Associate VP she worked in Residence Life for fifteen years at various institutions, five of which were spent as Director of Campus Housing at Valley State. With an undergraduate background in business and a master’s in Student Personnel, Amanda was selected by the then interim Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Taylor, to be the Associate VP during a reorganization phase of the Student Life Division. When the interim VP became permanent, Amanda stayed on as Associate VP. Throughout that reorganization stage Amanda recalls the division as being segmented with each of the eighteen departments operating individually:

You got things because of who you knew. It was fairly competitive. We didn’t
Because Dr. Taylor came over to the student affairs side from the faculty ranks she knew relatively little about student affairs practices. Part of Amanda’s job was to educate Dr. Taylor about Student Life.

After a year of discussion about changes within the Student Life organization with directors, Amanda and Dr. Taylor decided to move the division into a cluster format in which departments and offices with similar or related purposes were grouped together. The resulting structure comprised five clusters: Campus Life, which deals with orientation and co-curricular; Student Wellness, which houses the Student Health Center, Counseling, Campus Recreation, and the Women’s Center; Enrollment and Student Services, which handles registration, admissions, and recruitment; Academic Success, which encompasses career and disability services as well as first-year transition and international programs; and a final cluster, which handles the federal TRIO support programs. As a note, the main location for the TRIO program administration at Valley State is headquartered off-campus, separated from the rest of the campus, however, there are offices located on-campus to service students. One of the largest TRIO programs in the country, it has over 14 different services that it provides ranging from Gear-Up and Upward Bound for elementary to high school students, to Student Support Services and the McNair Scholars Program for college students. All of these clusters fall under the umbrella of the Division of Student Life, over which Dr. Taylor has jurisdiction.

For Amanda, an ideal campus would be one in which students are engaged and have a voice at the table and the campus itself is diverse. There would also be a strong connection between the academic area and student life.
institution prepared for life because they had developed the proper set of competencies, such as leadership, interpersonal communication, and ability to work in a team setting.

In looking at the history and current state of Valley State, Amanda comments that the institution “is so young, and really didn’t have a campus community side.” Valley State, at 50, is a relatively young institution. Successful efforts to encourage a sense of community include the Family Weekend, which is a student-organized event for parents during the fall, where they can come on campus and experience campus community through planned social events. Another program that has developed into a tradition occurs during orientation. For ten years students have been participating in a photo shoot where they assemble at the green lawn at dusk and fill in the school acronym that is marked on the ground while holding candle sticks. The event is meant to serve as a festive welcome for new and returning students as food and drinks are available, along with live music. University t-shirts are also handed out at the event.

Diane Brown, an African American, coordinates diversity programming at Valley State, and has been with the institution for almost three years. A Midwestern native with a master’s degree in culture and personnel, Diane works with underrepresented populations because of her passion for social justice and diversity. For my interview with Diane in her office, I had to check-in with the student receptionist who then rang back to her area to see if she was available. After successfully contacting Diane, the student receptionist had me sign a visitor sign-in sheet before I proceeded through the door to the offices of student activities staff.

For Diane, the ideal campus community is “one where it really does feel communal in a sense, where there’s a sense of responsibility that everyone feels to the
environment, to each other.” A product of the liberal arts college environment herself, Diane feels that often at a large university it is easy to lose that sense of communal support. Other components of an ideal campus community for Diane include a link between academic and co-curricular activities, diversity, and opportunities for people to express themselves. Based on her observations of Valley State, Diane comments:

I think working here at Valley State, I’ve found that I’m not convinced that we always encourage our students to really articulate and express who they are and what their ideas are...I think a lot of times we want to keep the peace, so to speak, rather than engage students in critical thought.

Adding to that thought, Diane observes that within the culture at Valley State:

I think there’s a disconnect between the staff and the students and what student needs are.

Diane furthers that by explaining:

We want to make Valley State this very traditional school, but the reality is it’s not...we’re not a residential campus. In some ways, I mean we’re kind of like an overgrown community college.”

**Concerns at Valley State University**

Dr. Taylor cites diminishing state revenues as a main concern of Valley State. The situation has placed extreme pressure on university officials to secure external funding. In addition, the university has seen substantial growth over the years both in enrollment and physically. This growth, Dr. Taylor admits, has made it difficult for the university to keep up with infrastructure demands. Due to the rapid change in the
demographics of the city, and an increasing Hispanic presence, Dr. Taylor suggests that Valley State has found it difficult to adequately meet these students’ needs, particularly when it comes to education and language accommodation. In addition, the university is currently undergoing a major organizational change, as Valley State is adjusting to a new president who took over when the previous president resigned.

Like Dr. Taylor, Amanda can clearly identify university main concerns. She sees the university main concerns as being finding adequate resources, whether it be personnel or money, sufficient infrastructure to support the growing student population, or keeping the student-centered focus while becoming a research university. In contrast, Diane admits that sometimes she feels as if she’s not completely sure what the main concerns of the university are. She explains, “We espouse really great things about what we want to be.” For example, she notes the push to be a recognized Research-One institution and efforts to address the high percentage of students needing remedial course as probable concerns. However, Diane comments:

I think my main problem is I’m not really sure of the details of what our agenda is at this institution. So particularly around the area of diversity, I think we say a lot of the things that sound great and what you should strive to do anyway, but in terms of what that agenda is specifically, I think it’s not always communicated very well.
Student Life Priorities at Valley State University

Dr. Taylor identifies a primary priority for the Student Life Division as the completion of Phase II of the new Student Union and the new Student Recreation Center, as well as expansion to the existing Student Services complex. To staff the new facilities, the Campus Life unit within Student Life has nearly doubled in size, which necessitates training and orienting them to the culture at Valley State.

A second priority stems from the assimilation of enrollment management under Student Life in 2004. Since that time a major priority has been to better understand that area and integrate the people within the unit into the culture of Student Life. With over five hundred employees working in Student Life, Dr. Taylor notes that another high priority for her is effectively managing the complex organization while retaining core values. Those core values include engaging and working with students and being more responsive in the delivery of service to campus constituencies.

Amanda believes the priorities for the Student Life Division are focusing on providing effective service to students, staff development, and adhering to the core values of collaboration, shared leadership, diversity, and providing a suitable learning environment. Diane believes the size of the entire unit makes it difficult to always understand the priorities. She notes that serving students better has been the rhetoric for some time, and this year diversity seems to be the major topic as some of the minority student groups felt marginalized. As a result, Diane adds:

A lot of the responsibility fell to Student Life to create some sort of response to requests or demands [of these students].
The university, within the last year, has seen a tremendous interest from constituencies of the institution both inside and outside, with students and faculty of color, as well as local minority community groups, voicing dissatisfaction with the level of recruitment and representation of persons of color within the faculty and administration. Last year, when the situation came to a head, only one of the executive cabinet members was an ethnic minority, and three, including the then-president, were women. The community appealed to the newly appointed Chancellor of the state’s higher education system for intervention. The Chancellor convened a group of community, education, and business leaders to meet monthly in a roundtable luncheon and discuss matters as they relate to diversity and access within the state.

One of the last actions that the previous president took with regards to diversity was to assemble a group of faculty, staff, students, and community leaders to serve on a Presidential Task Force on Equity and Diversity. The group was to:

Work collaboratively with Valley State University to determine how the university has defined its diversity goals and how it could better achieve them with regard to students, faculty, and staff, and community outreach (Task Force Report).

After meeting as a group for over four months and listening to presentations from university officials about diversity efforts and pouring over documents, the task force recommended the following:

1. Reformulate the university’s diversity goals

2. The new Officer of Institutional Diversity should be an executive/Cabinet
position, responsible solely for institutional diversity and not legal compliance.

3. The new Officer of Institutional Diversity should collaborate with the Provost and other Cabinet officers to develop a comprehensive and coordinated accountability system that will actively measure, evaluate, and analyze the University’s actions on diversity.

4. The University should continue to reform its strategic planning process.

5. Monitor, examine, and evaluate the effectiveness of existing diversity plans and strategies at the executive, administrative, and faculty levels.

6. Identify “choke points” where diversity goals become implemented, and modify decisional structures to facilitate greater consciousness of how processes and decisions will impact on diversity outcomes.

7. Allocate resources to support the University’s commitment to diversity.

The report was submitted to the administration, the new president included. One noticeable act taken as a result of the Task Force recommendations was the elevation of the diversity officer position to Vice President.

Diversity at Valley State University

Diversity is something that Dr. Taylor feels benefits everyone. It allows for individuals to learn about other people and their ideas and customs. She adds, “I think it contributes to the mission of a university, which is both learning and personal growth.” In what she describes as a “rainbow of opinions,” diversity brings with it various forms of thought. She elaborates:
Confronting ambiguity is an important part, I think, of an educated person, [his/her] ability to understand ambiguity and work in ambiguous circumstances...the more I understand about who you are and where you come from, the better I'm going to be able to help you be successful if you're working for me because I don't just write you off because you don't behave the same way I do, or respond the same way I do, or talk the same way I do.

Also, an important part to diversity is access. Dr. Taylor states:

The idea of access for people who have typically been underrepresented in our education [system] is also very important to me, again because of the value those people bring into the lives of those of us who have had access.

Diane adds to that sentiment:

Higher education doesn’t necessarily reflect the diversity in society, but the reality is, there’s a world outside of the university bubble and you need to prepare students to work within the context which is where they live in our society.

During her time as the Vice President for Student Life Dr. Taylor recalls the issue of diversity as being a constant conversation at the executive level.

As to efforts specifically targeted toward diversity Dr. Taylor notes:

As we have become more diverse as a campus, the topics of our programs, the content of our programs [have] changed. I think the faces of our staff have changed. The training for our staff, we’ve done a lot of training about cultural competency.

In 2005, the university unveiled A Vision for Diversity for Valley State University. It reads:
Valley State University will be characterized by a civil, inclusive campus climate that demonstrates a respect for individual differences and commitment to equity and free expression. That climate will create an environment where members of the campus community have increased awareness of diversity and the opportunity it presents (Vision for Diversity, Valley State University).

Prior to the creation of the diversity office, the President had a planning committee called the Committee for an Inclusive and Just University, of which Dr. Taylor was a member. Originally it started as a task force. The group of presidentially-appointed members was charged with coming up with a planning document of stated goals of how the university was to proceed in becoming more diverse and inclusive. The resulting Diversity Statement reads:

Valley State University is committed to being a civil, just, and inclusive learning community in which all individuals feel valued, safe, and free to express themselves. This environment is vital to the pursuit of excellence in intellectual and interpersonal endeavors. With respect and openness guiding our activity, we honor what distinguishes us from one another while celebrating that which binds us together.

However, despite efforts by the administration to convey to the campus community the need to be tolerant of differences there have been a few hick-ups within the recent past. Dr. Taylor recounts the time when a hateful article about Columbus Day was featured in the school newspaper two years ago in which Native Americans were portrayed negatively. Some within the campus community were angry with administrative officials for not responding to the incident. Dr. Taylor notes that “the
administration will always be caught between the principle of freedom of expression and the way expression hurts others.” Dr. Taylor adds:

People have a right to say what they say that’s nasty and ugly. And the educational piece. Is helping them understand, if they don’t, that they’ve been ugly, or helping them understand the impact of that ugliness on others and hoping that they care, but also repairing the damage that’s done.

Dr. Taylor points out that typically, in matters such as the news article, it is customary for the administration to write a letter to the editor or send out campus memos reminding members of what painful acts can do to a community. Somewhat in contradiction Diane posits:

I think diversity is viewed here like people don’t really want to push buttons. It’s saying keep the peace, let’s talk about diversity from a harmony standpoint, let’s just celebrate everybody and everybody’s great.

With her staff, Dr. Taylor has invested a great deal of resources in diversity training. She’s brought in nationally known diversity trainers to spend a week conducting workshops for the entire Student Life Division. Within the division itself exists a Diversity Committee that assists with staff development. Amanda serves as chair to the Diversity Committee and sees the work of the committee as that of “training and education of staff so that they are more effective in their interactions with students.”

The idea of a standing committee on diversity came out of a small planning group Amanda had assembled within Campus Life to look at diversity for that particular area. From that group, one of the recommendations was for there to be a divisional diversity committee. When Amanda approached Dr. Taylor with the recommendations she agreed
to make the Diversity Committee a standing committee. One of the products to come out of the Diversity Committee over a division-wide Diversity Commitment Statement that reaffirms the division’s commitment to diversity. The first sentence of the statement presents what the area stands for as it relates to diversity:

The Division of Student Life is committed to fostering a community that nurtures and celebrates diversity.

The last sentence sums it up with a declaration that everyone is a part in carrying out the mission of making the institution a welcoming environment:

The divisional commitment to value diversity must be embodied by all members of Student Life in order to achieve the desired civil, just and inclusive community.

That commitment statement is sent out to all potential employees in the search process along with the division’s vision and mission statement. The committee also developed a set of interview and reference-check questions that are asked of candidates in order to ascertain where the applicant stands on diversity as it relates to their personal and professional experience. With this approach, the perception that diversity is everyone’s responsibility is presented to applicants before they begin work at Valley State.

However, Diane is skeptical that the notion has caught on. She was for a period seen as the go-to-person on matters for dealing with diversity. She comments that for a quite while the scenario had been:

Go talk to Diane because she’s the multicultural person, like the only multicultural person in the division.

She now feels that the institution has realized that it should be a more collective approach and the new Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion is a start to changing the culture.
Several programs have been successful as they relate to diversity at Valley State. Amanda notes the success of a drag-queen program. Some of the older staff members within student affairs were less than sure that students would turn out to such an event that saw a standing-room only attendance. It is one the largest events put on at the university with standing room only attendance. Amanda comments on diversity programming:

So part of diversity has been an educational process for us, relearning what diversity means for the students that we work with, and getting rid of our own tapes that play.

Amanda notes that when she walks into the Student Union during lunchtime she is excited about the diversity within the building:

It’s a mix of students, and they seem very comfortable with each other. It’s our staff that have difficulty, our older staff. They’re uncomfortable in that environment.

In the summer of 2006, the Student Life Division created the Student Diversity Programs and Services Office to focus on working with the minority population in the areas of leadership development and involvement. As stated in its brochure, the Student Diversity Programs and Services seeks to do the following:

SDPS creates and fosters the development of activities, policies, procedures, and persistence and success programs to enhance campus diversity and multicultural student engagement (SDPS brochure).

The office was created when the search for an Assistant Director for Multicultural Programming yielded what Amanda described as two exceptional candidates. Amanda
felt that the time was right to bring in multiple staff members to the campus who had expertise and experience in diversity. The notion of creating an office for diversity programs was on the radar with Amanda, however, it was to originally come to fruition years down the line. After seeing the opportunity to create the office with these potential candidates Amanda pitched the idea of creating the Student Diversity Programs and Services Office to Dr. Taylor who agreed.

As a result, a Director of the Student Diversity Programs and Services Office and a Assistant Director were hired. The new office was just put together before the start of the 2006-2007 academic school year. Prior to that, only one person, the Coordinator for Multicultural Programs, who now falls under the new SDPS office, still as a coordinator, was available to plan diversity programs.

Other programs and initiatives include the Ethnic Student Council, a group of students that works with the Student Diversity Programs and Services Office and staff on programming. Although the student council is comprised of students, Diane notes that in general is appears as if the same group of about fifteen students get involved and work with the office. This year the university is hosting theme month celebrations with activities planned around Hispanic Heritage Month, Women’s History Month, and Black History Month.

Each year the university sponsors a three-day cultural leadership retreat in January at which around fifty students discuss and share there perspectives on diversity. In addition, for several years now, Student Life has put on an event that takes an in-depth look at the various forms of oppression. The program gives a realistic look through video footage, pictures, and constructed situations of living and working conditions of the
world's oppressed groups. Amanda describes the program as "a very intense, emotional experience." As a follow up to the program, which is held in the early spring, this year there will be a Unity Fest just before the semester ends to serve as a celebration of "what could be" when multiple groups come together.

Additional programs include a twelve-hour GLBT Train-the-Trainer series for students on GLBT issues and safe zones, the Social Justice Forums that are designed to help students understand social justice and advocacy practices, and the Multicultural Assistance Residence Program, started in 2005. In this particular program student resident assistants are placed in each of the residence complexes to create an awareness about multicultural issues. Another successful residential program is Global House, which is a partnership between Residential Life and international students and scholars. With the Global House program students discuss world issues, celebrate diversity, explore new languages, and prepare for a possible study abroad. To meet the needs of those persons with disabilities, Valley State has a Disability Resource Center. Also on campus is a Women's Center that serves as a resource center and offer workshops and seminars on women's issues.

Overcoming Setbacks

In commenting as to how Student Life diversity efforts influence the building of campus community at Valley State, Diane observes:

I'm not really sure that the diversity work that we do in Student Life has greatly impacted the establishment of a better campus community. But I think that some of it is because we haven't had the resources...This is the first year

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we’ve had four people working, four full-time staff working on diversity stuff.

However, in comparison to other institutions of comparable size, Diane notes that her area is funded pretty well:

I think there’s a good amount of dollars for programming for students compared to other universities.

With the completion of a multicultural competency assessment within the Student Life area Diane is confident that a direction for diversity will be identified.

Amanda credits Dr. Taylor with being supportive of diversity efforts by allocating resources for the new Diversity Office and for training and programming. Diane is appreciative of Dr. Taylor’s openness to hearing concerns and the support she gives to diversity efforts, such as the Diversity Committee. Describing her as a “student-friendly vice president,” Diane notes Dr. Taylor’s efforts to reach out to multiple student groups and her approachable style as she makes it a priority to attend many of the planned diversity events. Diane adds:

I think just her interpersonal style is very conducive to building a positive campus community. And I think that just sums up just who she is, and I think that she truly passionately cares.

When asked about any setbacks to diversity efforts, Dr. Taylor points back to this past year where, what she describes as a very small group of students of color (she first quotes their numbers as being twenty-five to thirty), primarily Hispanic, felt disenfranchised. The group had what Dr. Taylor characterized as an “activist-oriented” and “very confrontational” style in which they voiced their dissatisfaction with present diversity efforts. Completely caught off guard by their displeasure, Dr. Taylor admits
that she has not had as much experience working with Hispanic students as she has with African American due to her southern upbringing. So when the students challenged her directly with their demands about diversity, Dr. Taylor felt personally attacked because she does not work or respond well under that style of problem-solving. The student group was comprised of representatives from various multicultural student organizations of campus that include the Student Organization of Latinos, Young Latino Democrats, the Valley State NAACP chapter, the National Organization for Women chapter, and Spectrum (a GLBT organization) to name a few. The collection of representatives called themselves the Alliance of Student Organizations of Color. They submitted a Plan of Action to Dr. Taylor to be considered for adoption and implementation. The purpose for the plan reads:

We, the Alliance of Student Organizations of Color at Valley State University, hereby recognize this university's commitment to diversity is futile in nature and further nullified by its actions and thereby nothing more than rhetoric. Today, we unite to ensure a fundamental and permanent commitment toward campus diversification and inclusion of Students of Color.

The document called for university officials to address the need to recruit and retain more students and faculty of color, increased financial assistance for minorities, better staff appropriate services, and provide adequate meeting and social space for multicultural students. The latter, emerged as the most contentious issue as the university was preparing to open a new student union. In a series of meetings, the students met with Dr. Taylor to discuss the Plan of Action and propose solutions and in particular the allotment of space for a multicultural lounge in the soon-to-open student union. Dr. Taylor recalls:
Literally four or five months before the Student Union was supposed to open, this group wanted to meet with me about having space in the Student Union. Due to a limited budget, and the fact that the union is generic in construction, meaning designs did not plan for additional space other than a dining hall, meeting rooms, a ballroom, office and store space, she had to tell the students that she could not meet their demands for a multicultural space.

When the Student Union was opened in a ceremony the students demonstrated with signs calling attention to the fact that there was no space allotted for multicultural students. Dismissed as only a small demonstration, Dr. Taylor still feels that her decision to not allot space for a multicultural space was the right one:

That Union has been embraced by our campus and it’s an incredible diverse group of students who are using the Union. It’s just twenty-five or thirty students who feel…it’s just I couldn’t solve the problem they wanted solved in the way they wanted it solved in that time frame.

Since the opening of the new Student Union, the President has called for exploring a way in which an actual multicultural center can be created, and he has asked Dr. Taylor to lead efforts to begin a dialogue within the campus community as to what a multicultural center will bring to the university. Still looking back at the confrontation with the students Dr. Taylor suggests that not all students of color shared the opinion that the university is neglecting its minority population:

I don’t believe in playing student groups against one another. There are some students who would take this group on if I asked them to. I’m not going to.
Dr. Taylor admits that traditionally the university has not historically taken an adversarial relationship with its students of color. As a result, she adds:

So the challenge is how to hear them, listen to them, be respectful, but continue to be realistic and to focus our energy and to make sure that, as you try to serve 28,000 students, forty students don’t become disruptive to that process.

Dr. Taylor and Amanda are pleased, when they walk into the Student Union dining area, to see students from multiple races and backgrounds eating and socializing. They see it as a reflection of a community that is able to get along. The dining area resembles what one would find at a shopping mall as it features popular franchised food and beverage vendors.

When walking through the union, one notices the loud resonance of conversations taking place among the students and staff who are eating, using their laptops, or just plain socializing. Also worth noting is that within the pockets of students there tended to be little diversity in terms of race. Where there were large numbers of African American students, there tended to be few, if any, persons from other races conversing with them. The same could be said with other ethnic groups as I observed similar patterns with Caucasians, Hispanics, and Asians. In other words, although diverse populations use the student union, they do so in isolation. They simply do not mix or function as an integrated community.

In reference to staff development, Amanda admits that the unwillingness of staff members to prioritize and allot time to attend diversity training sessions is a setback to diversity efforts. She notes:

Everybody is very, very busy at this institution, especially in this division, but

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my approach is diversity is also part of what we do; it’s part of our competency set.

She is hopeful that with the hiring of the new Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, “there will be a more unified, connected, systematic approach on this campus” as it relates to making diversity a part of the Valley State culture.

Diane also feels that there is a need for more accountability for staff when it comes to diversity.

Diane: Some people are held accountable for diversity and other people aren’t, particularly, in Student Life, its part of our management plan, part of the expectation that you’re involved in something related to diversity. I’m not sure how well accountable people are really held to that.

Diane, in talking about overcoming setbacks, adds that:

We’re always talking about in Student Life about the value of diversity and we incorporate it into our interviews, diversity questions, but people are going to say what they need to say to get a job. When it comes time for the rubber to meet the road, they’re not always there, so it’s a huge challenge.
CHAPTER 10

COMPARISON OF THE CASES

Six Senior Student Affairs Officers from six different institutions were selected for participation in this study. Each SSAO and institution has its own distinct qualities, yet, at the same time, some of them share similarities. For example, with the SSAO’s, two are Caucasian males, two were Caucasian females, and two were African American males. By institutional makeup, two are community colleges, two are land-grants, one is religiously affiliated, and one is a metropolitan university. The institutions represent different geographical regions of the United States as three of the institutions studied are located in the Midwest, two are situated in the southwest, and one in the northwest.

Institutional and SSAO Comparisons

The lone private liberal arts institution, Vincent University, is located in the Midwest with a student population of 1,500, of which, less than 5% are minority. The SSAO for Vincent is Dr. Rose, a Caucasian female, who has been in that position for over twelve years. She has an academic and student affairs background having both worked at a large research university and small liberal arts colleges.

Midwestern State University, also located in the Midwest, is a land-grant institution of 22,000 students, in which, Dr. Hughes serves as the SSAO. He is a
Caucasian male with extensive administrative experience in both upper-level academic and student affairs administration. At Midwestern State, he has been the SSAO for over twenty years.

Regional Community College is a Midwest institution of close to 18,000 students. Its metropolitan campus is situated in the capital city and has an enrollment of 7,000. Mark White, a Caucasian male, has been the Dean of Student Services for the past six years.

In the rural northwest corridor of the United States lies Western University, also a land-grant institution of over 19,000 students. Dr. Stevens, an African American male, serves as SSAO. He has over thirty years of student affairs related experience.

Central Metropolitan Community College is situated in the southwest United States. It is comprised of three campuses with a total enrollment of over 35,000 students, of which, more than 40% are minority. Dr. Davis, now in his second year at Central, is the SSAO. He is an African American gentleman with extensive student affairs experience.

Also in the southwest is Valley State University. A metropolitan university located within a large city, Valley State has a 28,000 student enrollment (38% minority) and is primarily a commuter institution. Dr. Taylor, a Caucasian female, came over to the SSAO position after serving as a faculty member.

Interesting to note about these institutions is that with the two community colleges, although they are both located in urban areas, they serve different populations. For example, Regional Community College is situated in the Midwest where the U.S. racial minority population is small; however, there is a large Sudanese refugee program...
in that area, which in turn accounts for much of the college's diversity. Central Metropolitan Community College, due to its southwest location, has a large percentage of minority students. The same comparison can be made between the research universities. Midwestern State, although located in a city, serves noticeably fewer students of color (11%) than does Valley State (38%). Although Western is in a rural location it attracts a slightly higher minority population (14%) than does Midwestern State.

Community Across the Institutions

At Vincent University, Dr. Rose, who serves as the Vice President for Student Life, characterized the community as being a "vibrant" residential campus. Formerly a commuter institution, Vincent built new residence halls and implemented a three-residency to draw more students on campus. As a result, the campus flourishes with activities for students, popular traditions include the "Rat Olympics," the matriculation/graduation walk under the arches, and the planting of a tree in memory of students who pass away while attending Vincent. In addition to new residence halls, the university has added on to the Student Center and has designated social spaces outfitted with comfortable furniture for students, faculty, and staff to gather and socialize. In valuing the input from students regarding administrative decisions, Vincent has a number of student advisory groups, such as the President's Council on Cultural Diversity, and the President's Student Advisory Council, on which students serve and make recommendations on institutional issues.

The community at Midwestern State University is described by its Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr. Hughes, as one in which quality educational
opportunities for students and research have merged. The institution has adopted the philosophy of developing the whole person when it comes to dealing with students, both in and out the classroom, as dollars have been allocated to facilitate academic and co-curricular experiences. One important addition to the co-curricular experience for the entire campus community is the planned construction of a Cultural Center that will serve as a hub for diversity on the Midwestern State campus.

Regional Community College, according to its Dean for Student Services on the Metropolitan campus, Mark White, seems to effectively incorporate student services and instruction. Consistently delivering quality customer service to students is embedded in the culture for those coming in contact with students. Although it is located in a Midwest state with a fairly homogeneous population, the institution enrolls a large number of refugees from places, such as the Sudan. Regional has instituted, out of the Affirmative Action and Diversity Office, a mandatory complex diversity training initiative in an effort to ensure that all of its employees are knowledgeable about diversity.

For Western University, Dr. Stevens, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, sees community as that in which everyone has a shared destination. Every now and then, that community will encounter struggles, however, those struggles will enable the community to grow and overcome together. Students at Western are highly engaged and are perceived by the administration as partners in the decision-making process.

Central Metropolitan Community College’s Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Davis, has the belief that an ideal campus community has a learning-centered focus with those working in Student Affairs at it’s core. With that said, he places emphasis on having a customer-friendly division to where students are able to connect with staff.
Central Metropolitan is comprised of three campuses, each with its own recognized character. The Boulevard campus has been stereotyped as the “ghetto” campus due to its location within a largely minority residential area and high minority enrollment. The Shadow Ridge campus has been deemed the flagship campus because it houses more academic transfer programs and the college’s administrative team. The Lakes campus is secluded as it is located far away from the other two campuses. Central Metropolitan as a whole has experienced numerous leadership changes within the last decade. The Student Affairs Division is developing a mission statement that will outline the area’s purpose and priorities and would sustain the division in future leadership changes.

At Valley State University, the Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Taylor, describes the ideal campus community as being a place where everyone shares a common purpose. She considers Valley State to be a “dynamic” place because of its people. Changes within the Student Affairs Division has been a constant with the adoption of a cluster format, turnover in enrollment services, the construction of new student-use facilities, and the installation of a new president.

The SSAOs view their roles in creating campus community somewhat differently. For example, Dr. Hughes at Midwestern State sees building campus community as part of his responsibility, particularly when he takes diverse populations into account, while Mr. White at Regional Community College instead relies heavily on the VP for Diversity to take the lead on diversity efforts. In looking at the two metropolitan universities, Dr. Hughes at Midwestern State sees value in having cultural centers on campus while Dr. Taylor at Valley State has been reluctant to allot space for a cultural center. In comparing the land-grant institutions, Dr. Stevens at Western has enacted a Covenant to
protect the cultural centers from future demolition and Dr. Hughes at Midwestern State is about to upgrade its existing cultural center. A side note, at Midwestern State Dr. Hughes has already retired, leaving provisions to build a new cultural center facility. At Western, where Dr. Stevens was pivotal in protecting the cultural centers, the question might be asked what happens to future diversity efforts once he leaves the institution? For Valley State where the Dr. Taylor has hesitated on allotting space for students of color, what might happen if she were replaced? At Regional Community College, where Mr. White has deferred diversity efforts to the VP for Diversity who has been instrumental in developing the institution’s comprehensive diversity education program, what will happen if the diversity officer leaves?

Institutional Concerns

Key concerns for Vincent are ensuring a quality undergraduate liberal arts experience for students and addressing the aging facilities. Now that Vincent has a large percentage of students living on campus it has made it a priority to offer a wide range of programs for students to participate in as well as providing the social space and amenities for them to gather and use. Additional concerns include finding additional revenue sources, increasing diversity, and improving faculty and staff relations.

Midwestern State University has placed emphasis on enriching the undergraduate experience for students. Since attaining Research I status, the institution has encouraged faculty and staff to work with undergraduates, either by including them on research projects or by allocating funds for programming and development. Diversity and access are two other concerns that Midwestern State has been preoccupied with in the last
decade. A great deal of attention and resources has been paid to recruiting and retaining students and faculty of color, as well as making the institution affordable in the wake of increased tuition due to cuts in state funding.

At Regional Community College, institutional concerns are enrollment and retention. Within the city that the institution is located there are a number of postsecondary institutions, a major research institution and a private liberal arts university to name a couple. Mr. White noted that sometimes it leads to competition for students with these other local institutions, therefore, potentially affecting enrollment.

Western University has been consumed by dwindling state funding. This situation has put administrative officials in the precarious position of having to make difficult decisions regarding the budget, while at the same time trying to live up to the institution’s land-grant mission.

For Central Metropolitan Community College, the focus has been on addressing the needs of the community. That includes servicing a growing Hispanic population through English as a Second Language (ESL) offerings and supporting the city’s major job industry by providing a trained workforce. Retention has become a key concern as of late due to the fact that Central Metropolitan has the lowest graduation percentage of any community college in the state.

Valley State University’s concerns have been centered around research as the institution is striving for Research I designation. The institution has also been confronted with trying to deal with changing demographics within a city with a growing Hispanic presence.
The concerns vary across institutions. The private institution is more preoccupied with creating a dynamic undergraduate experience for its students while the other three universities have more research-oriented agendas. Three institutions, the private university, the southwest metropolitan university, and the southwest community college, have installed new presidents within the last three years. Budgetary concerns apply to almost all the institutions, as do retention and graduation rates.

Student Affairs Priorities

For the Student Life Division at Vincent major priorities center around continuing to service a vibrant residential campus and increasing retention, while Midwestern State has been preoccupied with getting approval on a referendum for a new Cultural Center. For the two community colleges, retention is seen as the major priority. Within Student Life at Valley State, diversity has been made a priority due to demands made by some students of color, along with the completion of buildings.

The overarching priorities vary across the institutions. Student-use facilities seem to dominate the priority lists for some as even the private university strives to create a “vibrant” campus, which calls for better buildings. Midwestern State has been focused on constructing a new Cultural Center while Valley State is seeking to construct its first Cultural Center. The two community colleges, Regional and Central Metropolitan, have made improving customer service a priority. At Western, trying to get through major budget cuts seems to be an all consuming priority.
Diversity

For Vincent, the concept of diversity is broad. With a small ethnic minority population, less than five percent, the university finds itself dealing with multiple forms of diversity, such as religion, GLBT, and disability. Lately, administrators and students have been focused on ensuring that buildings can adequately accommodate persons with disabilities. Vincent has also had to go through an academic year without a Multicultural Programming Director. However, the university is still able to educate the campus community about diversity through a generously-endowed diversity fund and creative programming, such as the step-show.

Midwestern State University too has a diversity fund to draw from for diversity efforts. Much of the attention regarding diversity seems to be centered around race. With the approval of a Cultural Center that will lie adjacent to the student union, the campus will have a facility to hold events and learn about various cultures. After years of discontent among the minority community over racist related events, Midwestern seems to have recovered, as minority enrollments are increasing.

At Regional Community College, the consensus is that although the state is conservative, people at the college are open-minded. This is perhaps attributed to the mandatory diversity training that all college employees have to go through. The program is the Diversity Education Initiative, which is monitored by the Affirmative Action and Diversity Office. Race and ethnicity appears to be the focus for diversity at Regional as the institution enrolls a large number of refugee students.

Western University boasts a number of services and facilities to engage the campus about diversity. The institution features four cultural centers: Black, Hispanic,
Native American, and Asian; a Women’s Center; a GLBT Center; a Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander Minority Offices. To ensure that the cultural centers are a permanent fixture on the Western University campus they are protected by a Covenant. There are also the Office of Community and Diversity and the Ethnic Studies Department that the Student Affairs Division collaborates with on diversity education and programming.

For Central Metropolitan Community College, the SSAO, Dr. Davis, is only in his second year and is still gauging the campus climate as it relates to diversity. One thing worth noting is that he did hire a new Director for Student Activities and created a budget for the office, which is something the office did not previously have. The institution is trying to combat the perceived inferiority of one of its campuses due to the high minority enrollment. Central Metropolitan has changed the search process to consider more minority applicants and has a plan for recruiting more minority students. Also onboard is a new Director for the Office of Equity and Inclusion charged with planning diversity initiatives for the college.

Valley State University has responded to diversity rather hurriedly these past few years as just this academic year alone it has created a new Student Diversity Programs and Services Office, and is searching for a Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. These moves come in response to some members of the local and minority student communities voicing their displeasure with existing services at the university that are supposed to accommodate people of color.

For the three Midwest and northwest institutions, increasing diversity in terms of students of color appears to be a high priority while for the two southwest institutions
trying to service the large percentage of minority students already enrolled is the priority. It appears that Regional Community College has a visible diversity officer who handles the bulk of the diversity initiatives, while the others institutions either have a diversity officer who does not have as high a level of responsibility or are in the process of hiring one. Five of the institutions have had to deal with some type of hate-crime and/or a protest by students in respect to diversity.

Overcoming Setbacks

For Dr. Rose, the fact that several minority students at Vincent were feeling disenfranchised further emphasized the need to better service its students of color. She notes that Vincent is not without its share of racial incidents, as such was the case with the banquet situation where Caucasian students mocked an ethnic dance presentation. Anytime the institution loses a faculty or staff of color that loss is felt across the campus community as evidenced by the departure of the Director for Multicultural Programs, where the institution went a full year without having a person in that position to program and interact with students. In addition, budget cuts have also been a setback to Vincent as administrators must prioritize needs within the institution.

At Midwestern State, Dr. Hughes identifies the rocky relationship that the university has had with the minority community due to past racial incidents on campus, such as the fraternity cross-burning. Also, the perception that the revised admission standards were aimed at limiting access to Midwestern State, particularly students of color, left those within the minority community a negative impression of the institution.
Mr. White at Regional Community College cites people's lack of exposure to diversity as a setback. As a result of not having much contact with individuals from other cultures, staff can carry a negative attitude about diversity and hinder the quality of service that a student might receive at the college.

Dr. Stevens cites repeated vandalism and acts of hatred toward other individuals because of their differences as setbacks at Western. These incidents run contrary to culture of tolerance that the institution tries to instill on its students. However, Dr. Stevens sees them as an opportunity to educate and figure out how to deal with these kinds of situations as a community.

Dr. Davis at Central Community College cites inclusion as a setback. He notes that trying to fit diversity in at all levels of the college at the right time poses challenges because not everyone is as enthusiastic about it. For Dr. Taylor, the protest by minority students at Valley State over perceived lack of resources for students of color was almost a slap in the face, as she thought that the university was already meeting the needs of all students.

In examining the setbacks across the institutions, Vincent, Midwestern State, Western, and Valley State each experienced some sort of unrest from the minority community; either from students on campus or in the local community. Vincent was dealt a blow when the Director of Multicultural Programs left to take a position at another institution. For the community colleges, Regional and Central Metropolitan, setbacks tended to center around employee attitude and receptiveness to diversity. In the next chapter I present the theoretical framework that I used to analyze and interpret the data for this study.
CHAPTER 11

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDY:

In 1981, Jackson and Hardiman presented their model for measuring whether an organization was multicultural, *A Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations*. The model was later expanded upon by Katz (1989) to reflect the components necessary for achieving multicultural status. In her dissertation, Woodward-Nakata (1999) used Katz's expanded version of Jackson and Hardiman's model to study whether each of five higher education institutions, as told by the senior student affairs officers, was diverse. In this study, I attempted to replicate Woodward-Nakata's study. Although I have done some paraphrasing in the description of Katz's model, for the most part, because their description was so precise, I used language from Woodward-Nakata's study. Her language of the criteria for each of the stages was so clear that I have elected to use her description for clarity.

*A Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations*

The model originally devised by Jackson and Hardiman and later expanded by Katz and Miller (1986) and researched by Woodward-Nakata (1999) consist of four multicultural awareness stages that has six sub-categories, which is shown in Figure 1.
Katz (1989) describes each of the stages as the following:

1. **The club**

   *Exclusionary.* The exclusionary club maintains White male superiority. As a monocultural system, it sees no value in women and people of color. Based on the belief that *only* White men have value, the system works to maintain its own position of domination and superiority. The members of such “clubs” explicitly value the ethic of sticking with their own kind and see anyone who differs as “bad.” The exclusionary club has restrictive membership requirements and often uses secret handshakes, sayings, or initiation rites to protect its boundaries, which determine who gets in and who is kept out. Examples of the exclusionary club.
include eating clubs and country clubs that have worked hard to maintain all-male and all-White membership. More extreme examples include the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. (p.9)

**Passive.** The passive club strives to maintain White and male privileges through the organization’s monocultural norms and values. The founders of these systems did not specifically or overtly decide to exclude people of color or women in key roles. Rather, they just conducted “business as usual,” according to their cultural framework and values. Many of these organizations began as family businesses that saw themselves as a large extended family. The good old boys belong, and White women and people of color can belong only if they assimilate into the White model. Members do little acknowledgement of people who are different except when they do something wrong. Most companies and institutions of higher education in the United States were founded as passive White male clubs. They maintain the belief that they are open to White women and people of color as long as such outsiders meet the original standards. What often goes unrecognized is that “the standards” themselves benefit Whites and are founded on the values, norms, and beliefs of White male culture. (p.9-10)

The second stage to Katz’s Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations is the Symbolic Difference Organization. Katz (1989) describes the stage as the following:

2. **The symbolic difference organization (pioneers)**

At some point, organizations began to realize that a White-only system was insufficient. Much of this awareness developed during the 1960s as legislation and litigation brought racism and sexism to organizations’ attention. To operate
within the law, many systems began placing people of color and White women symbolically within their ranks. Although this is a step toward the organization changing its composition, it often remains a token effort, signifying little real change. The norms of the system remain monocultural (that is, White and male), and its values reinforce the notion that everyone should assimilate to, rather than challenge, these norms. The organization wants “qualified” minorities and women to fit into the organization, play by the rules, and ignore issues of race or gender. Many of the people of color and White women in these first roles found themselves as pioneers. They struggled with high visibility and pressure to conform, fit in, and survive. Just like the pioneers who ventured across the United States, the organizational pioneers suffered. Some survived, some were killed along the way, others found themselves adapting and changing to fit into the system. The pioneers are necessary in order to pave the way for the next step in the change process. The symbolic difference organization responds to the fear of lawsuits or loss of government contracts as a motivating factor for change. Within the system, a great deal of fear of differences supports White individuals’ avoidance of the issues. (p.10-11)

The third stage to Katz’s model is Affirmative Action. Katz describes this stage as the following:

3. **Affirmative Action**

*Numbers.* As organizations become more serious about moving from monoculturalism to multiculturalism, they examine the composition of their populations. For some organizations, this effort results from external pressure to
create affirmative action plans in return for federal contracts. Many organizations identify numerical goals only to function within the law and do little else to follow through on plans for change. Some institutions make their targeted goals serve as a quota or ceiling to limit the number of White women and people of color in their ranks. As the federal government has lessened its concern for diversity, many organizations have filed away their affirmative action plans. Affirmative action institutions that focus on numbers alone can be misleading because many of them revolving doors: People of color and White women are hired but rarely stay. They leave because the organization has failed to take the next critical step, which is to create a climate that supports diversity. On the positive side, numbers can play an important role for organizations whose leaders have begun to believe that it is in their own interest to foster diversity. Numerical targets and goals are developed as a step to change the complexion of the working population. This task involves not only setting numerical targets, but also actively recruiting White women and people of color for jobs at all levels. At this stage officials of organizations serious about creating a diverse work force take aggressive steps in their hiring procedures. They also begin to develop a tolerance for difference and believe that people of color and White women have a rightful place within the system. (p.11)

A climate of acceptance. As organizations continue their efforts to become multicultural, their next step is creating a climate and culture that supports diversity. To foster such an atmosphere, an organization’s members must want to move beyond the numbers and begin to accept the differences of individuals and
groups. The leaders of such an organization focus on the growth and development of people of color and White women. Within the organization, these previously neglected populations develop their own identity. Ideally, such coalitions are not seen as threatening or negative, but rather as supportive of those individuals’ identity and strength. As a result, the institution becomes more responsive to the needs of its members and begins to address institutional forms of discrimination that may block the advancement of people who are different.

This is a crucial transition point for the organization. Until this point in its history, the norms and values of monoculturalism were firmly entrenched. As the institution moves forward and its members examine the possibility of accepting people of difference, they begin to face the important questions about power and culture and the need for change. The organizational norms are now in transition. A great deal of discomfort is aroused because people have a clear sense that they no longer want racism, sexism, or other forms of oppression within the organization, but they have few clear models or visions of interacting in a multicultural system. The old organizational rules no longer work, and the organization has not yet identified a new set of norms for creating a multicultural work place.

At this point some organizations try to return to their old patterns and stop many of their efforts and programs to move forward. Those who do progress find themselves in uncharted waters that are both frightening and exciting. This is the point where many organizations stop. Some, however, chose to take the next step. (p.11-12)
The last stage in the Katz model is the culturally diverse organizations stage. Katz explains this stage as the following:

**4. Culturally diverse organizations**

*United States focus.* Members of a culturally diverse institution see the value of its diversity and behave accordingly. The system incorporates people of all races and both genders in ways that empower them as individuals and as groups; the style differences between women and men or Blacks and Whites are acknowledged and valued. Multicultural values and norms are institutionalized as racism and sexism once were. Being multicultural is fundamentally connected to the organization’s business, mission, values, and purpose. The organization is multicultural not because its leaders want to do social good, but because they recognize the benefit of having diverse ideas, opinions, and styles of operating. Diversity is seen as a strength, allowing each person to contribute fully. Members believe that multicultural teams yield more creative, synergistic, and effective outcomes. Members are more willing to engage in straight talk and conflict as a way to acknowledge, address, and confront their differences positively. Recognizing that the development and maintenance of a multicultural organization is a process, people do not seek a final destination but are prepared to learn and grow as the issues emerge.

*Global focus.* When a U.S.-based organization functions as a multicultural system, its members begin to examine their relations with individuals of other nations. The leadership of such organizations, realizing the benefit of being culturally diverse, applies this awareness by furthering this learning to
interactions with clients and constituents overseas. The unique identities of individuals from other nations are seen as valuable for productivity and problem-solving. In order to achieve this goal, the organization may find itself following a similar path of growth: from changing its status as a monocultural "club"; to symbolically including individuals of other nations; to focusing on the composition of its global population; to creating a climate of acceptance of its more numerous multinational members; and finally to supporting a multicultural system that embodies the values of global differences. (p.12)

The above is Katz's (1989) description of the diversity model she devised from Jackson and Hardiman's earlier multicultural development model. The model was previously cited and used in Woodward-Nakata's (1999) dissertation on senior student affairs officers and multicultural campuses. Chapter twelve presents the analysis of the six case studies using the Katz model.
CHAPTER 12

ANALYSIS

As discussed in Chapter Eleven, the Katz's model, *A Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations* was used to analyze whether the institution has characteristics relative to a monocultural or multicultural organization on the continuum. For those institutions placed on the monocultural end of the continuum, they represent an organization that is still clinging to views where white males remain the dominant force and women and people of color are considered outsiders (Katz, 1989). For the institutions placed on the multicultural end of the continuum, they have a high regard for diversity within their respective organization. In this study, only one institution was placed beyond the midpoint of the continuum.

Vincent University

Symbolic Difference

Within symbolic difference organizations, pioneers emerge and advocate for change. At Vincent University, administrators felt it was imperative to have a full-time person on staff, the Director of Multicultural Programs, who would program multicultural events, educate the campus community on matters of diversity, and mentor students of color. Consequently, that position was left unfilled for the 2005-2006 academic year, and
the impact of not having anyone in that position was felt campus-wide. The Multicultural Programs position is important because it was that individual in whom the students of color confided about their unhappiness at Vincent due to the lack of diversity and cultural programming.

It was the students who, in the early 1990s during their demands for change and inclusion, led to the installment of diversity initiatives, such as the creation of the President's Council on Cultural Diversity (PCCD), increased money for minority scholarships, a diversity component during New Student Orientation, observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and recognition of the GLBT organization, Plains Pride. Worth keeping in mind is that Vincent University was founded by the United Methodist Church and the Church was not as tolerant of such issues as related to GLBT. Formerly, at Vincent, students who identified themselves as GLBT were sent to counseling.

Students at Vincent are very much a part of the governance structure. They serve as voting members on advising councils and boards where they serve as a strong and influential voice as evidenced in the President's Student Advisory Council meeting where the student's took into account the situation that one of the academic buildings on campus was lacking an elevator, thus making it difficult for persons with disabilities to navigate. Instead of allocating money for recreational and social use, the group advocated for an elevator to make the building more accessible.

Affirmative Action – Numbers

The SSAO is confident that Vincent will double the enrollment of students of color within the next ten years from its present less than 5% to 10%. This substantial
increase would allow for more exposure to diversity for the Vincent community. Dr. Rose is committed to devoting the resources to making this goal a reality. We heard from other officials at Vincent that the university has trouble attracting and retaining the faculty and staff of color that they hire due to the lack of diversity and resources within the area. Even if the university is able to attract a dynamic person of color to work at the institution, that individual does not stay long and the university is left with trying to fill the vacancy, which can be a challenge as evidenced with the recent Director of Multicultural Programs search.

Although Vincent has had some success with diversity initiatives the university still suffers from hate-fueled incidents. Vandalism to diversity boards, unrest over the creation of a GLBT organization, and the mockery of an ethnic dance presentation are a few examples of how Vincent still struggles with trying to create a climate that supports diversity. However, Dr. Rose is determined to press forward with attempting to change the culture by investing her time and energies to securing finances for diversity in the area of staffing and programming. She oversees allocation of the Hawk Diversity Fund and is very engaged with the PCCD in helping that group come up with and carry out goals for the campus as it relates to diversity. Also, Dr. Rose is committed to increasing the representation of persons of color on campus both within the student body and staff by creatively seeking out ways to provide the necessary dollars to attract them to Vincent.

Affirmative Action – A Climate of Acceptance

With less than 5% of its student body a person of color, and over 90% of its students coming from within the state (which is predominantly white), Vincent is overwhelmingly dominated by a culture that is Caucasian and rooted in Midwestern...
values. However, college officials and students alike are responsive to the idea of changing the current demographics. Understanding the benefits of diversity for the entire campus, increasing diversity has become a goal for the university. This does not mean that diversity has been embraced at Vincent. One has to note that part of Midwestern culture is to be “nice.” Therefore, members of the community may present a receptive demeanor toward diversity in public but in actuality be dead-set against any diversity efforts.

In response to students of color demands for increased services, Vincent officials created a Task Force on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, which recommended that the university improve minority recruitment, mentoring, programs, and activities for its students of color. Soon after, the President made the task force a permanent council to investigate ways in which the university can better address the needs of persons of color at Vincent.

The annual step show competition has become a popular annual program at Vincent. Commonly associated where there is a visible presence of Black Greek-letter Organizations, Vincent, which has no Black Greek-letter organizations, has managed to showcase step teams from across the Midwest. Each fall, teams, comprised mostly of ethnic minorities, descend upon Vincent University to participate in the competition, thus exposing the campus community to persons from other ethnic cultures. Students at Vincent have embraced the annual event, as some, after receiving instruction on how to step by members of competing step teams, participate by stepping themselves.

Other efforts to build a conducive climate at Vincent toward diversity include making accommodations for those person’s with disabilities. Dr. Rose has a broad
definition of diversity that encompasses not just race and ethnicity, but religion, GLBT, and disability. With less than 5% of the total student body being persons of color, Vincent is not as impacted with problems of racial tension as might be the case with institutions with a much higher percentage of students of color. Instead, Vincent is confronted with challenges to become more accessible to persons with disabilities who might be confined to a wheelchair. For example, a major concern for campus community, administrators and students alike, was securing funds to install an elevator in an academic building that lacked one. On another occasion, prior to the renovation of the Student Center, the only elevator in that facility was the service elevator, which was located in the back of the kitchen. University officials were appalled, if not embarrassed, to have persons in wheelchairs having to go through the kitchen to use that elevator in order to get to the second floor.

Dr. Rose has made it a priority to improve the available social space at Vincent University. Whether its picnic tables and additional recreational space or lounge chairs and sofas in academic and administrative buildings, she has managed to create an environment that if anything, allows for people within the campus community to come together and dialogue in a friendly sociable atmosphere. In order to gain a better understanding as to what additional steps Vincent could take to be more receptive to diversity, Dr. Rose coordinated a diversity conference of senior student affairs officers from small colleges throughout the Midwest to discuss what programs have been successful at their respective institution.
Vincent University’s Placement on the Multicultural Continuum

Vincent University was placed closer to the affirmative action – acceptance stage on the multicultural continuum because, despite setbacks in hate crime incidents and their inability to attract and retain staff of color, the university is committed to move forward and make the campus more diverse. The SSAO has a goal of doubling the percentage of minorities who attend Vincent to 10% and has invested a lot of time and resources to turn things around and create a campus that is conducive to accepting and appreciating differences.

Figure 2. Placement of Vincent University on the multicultural continuum.

Symbolic Difference

The SSAO at Midwestern State has adopted a style that allows for his directors within Student Affairs, also known as the Council of Student Affairs Directors (CSAD), to provide a great deal of input about the direction in which the division should go. He is very proud of the leadership that the CSAD group provides and values their judgment. However, the composition of the group does not lend itself to multiple voices at the CSAD discussion table as out of the 20 people who make up CSAD, 5 are women and only 2 are ethnic minorities. The two ethnic minorities both work in areas that deal with diversity, the TRIO programs office and the Cultural Center. This gives credence to the notion that minorities within the division are placed in symbolic positions, in this case, working with diversity initiatives.

Affirmative Action – Numbers

One of the first goals the SSAO set when he came into the position was to double the minority enrollment from 4% to 8% in ten years. Touched by the expression of frustration from students of color over their feelings of being disenfranchised at Midwestern State, Dr. Hughes was committed to take action to alleviate their discontent. One of the areas in which Dr. Hughes has had a significant impact, as it relates to diversity, is with the substantial increase of minority scholarships to attract more students of color to Midwestern State. These financial packages target Native American, Hispanics, African American, and other ethnic minorities, lower-income, and first-generation. Monies are even available to attract minorities into the science and engineering fields.
Past racial incidents and the perception from the minority community the Midwestern State is unfriendly to minorities have taken a toll on minority enrollments. Dr. Hughes has made attempts to smooth over those relationships and it appears as if he’s been successful. An aggressive minority recruitment campaign, led by a determined Minority Recruitment Officer who Dr. Hughes describes as “dynamic” has yielded a minority enrollment growth to 8.4% in 2006. However, the increased percentage of students of color does not change the fact that Midwestern has had difficulty retaining its faculty of color, currently 200 of the 1,300 faculty members.

Affirmative Action – A Climate of Acceptance

Providing opportunities for people within the campus community to learn and talk about diversity has been a priority for Dr. Hughes. From the moment he listened to students of color voice their disappointment about their experiences at Midwestern State, he has advocated for a climate that supports diversity. The Student Affairs Advisory Committee that he started as a means for minority student leaders to voice concerns about the university now holds annual Cultural Diversity Retreats that attract over 70 people who all share personal stories about how they’ve been impacted by diversity. The Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services, under the leadership of Dr. Hughes, was created to effectively support students of color both academically, and programmatically.

Perhaps the most telling sign of Dr. Hughes commitment to creating a supportive climate to diversity was his determination to secure funding for the construction of a new Cultural Center. Previously defeated by a wide margin in a student referendum was a proposed student fee increase for a new Cultural Center to be built at Midwestern State. Not deterred by the referendum defeat, Dr. Hughes sought to educate the campus on the
benefits of a new Cultural Center. Securing the passage of the Cultural Center referendum was a priority for the Student Affairs Division. However, it was CSAD, the group of mostly Caucasian males, that supported and assisted with efforts to make the new Cultural Center a reality. As a result of an intensive education campaign that included focus groups, discussions, and advertising, the measure passed overwhelmingly in a second referendum.

Midwestern State University’s Placement on the Multicultural Continuum

The SSAO at Midwestern State has managed to change the attitude of students about a proposed new Cultural Center that required an increase in student fees from unfavorable to favorable. In addition, he has eased tensions from the minority community over their perception that the university is unfriendly toward minorities by demonstrating the institution’s commitment to diversity through its diversity programming, such as the diversity leadership retreat, allocation of resources for minority scholarships, and extensive community outreach. As a result, minority enrollment is at the highest it’s ever been at Midwestern State. Therefore, Midwestern State places near the Climate of Acceptance stage on the continuum.
**Figure 3.** Placement of Midwestern State University on the multicultural continuum.


**Regional Community College**

**The Club - Passive**

It was disclosed in the case study of Regional that people within the state tend to be close-minded and unreceptive to differences. This kind of attitude spills over into the college as employees bring with them those same destructive perceptions of people they encounter who are of a different culture or background. Therefore, Regional Community College, because of the conservative nature of the state and the apparent unreceptiveness to diversity by some employees leads Regional to display characteristics of an organization that, despite its best efforts, has failed to create a campus that supports diversity.
Symbolic Difference – Pioneers

An undeniable force at Regional in support of diversity has been the Vice President for Diversity. This individual, who is a senior report to the president, is responsible for instituting a comprehensive diversity plan that requires each hired employee of the college to undergo intense diversity training within their first year of being hired and continue diversity development for the duration of their tenure at Regional. The VP for Diversity has been charged with developing and carrying out diversity initiatives, whereas the senior student affairs officer is focused on ensuring that his area functions effectively and delivers quality customer service to college patrons.

Affirmative Action – Numbers

Regional has invested a great deal of effort and money into the development of a mandatory diversity initiative that requires all employees to go through a rigorous diversity orientation and continued diversity development. For such an initiative to be mandatory, only underscores the commitment of college officials to making diversity a key mission of the institution. However, it is the VP for Diversity that has assumed responsibilities for leading diversity. Mr. White’s (SSAO) contribution to diversity has been more of a cheerleader as he encourages division employees to attend programmed diversity events and practice good customer service etiquette.

Regional Community College’s Placement on the Multicultural Continuum

Regional Community College suffers from a culture that allows people to walk around with “blinders” over their eyes. This is not necessarily the fault of any individual, instead it reflects the nature of a region with very little diversity. Had it not been for the Vice President for Diversity conceptualizing and implementing a stringent diversity...
education initiative to educate college personnel about diversity, Regional would be at the far end of the passive stage. However, because of the VP’s efforts, which has taken the responsibility of building awareness about diversity away from the SSAO, Regional is placed in the passive stage in the continuum as it has not reached the symbolic difference phase.

**Figure 4.** Placement of Regional Community College on the multicultural continuum.

Symbolic Difference – Pioneers

To service students of color Western University has established the Minority Education Offices, four in all, each to serve a specific population; African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American. The problem is that each of the offices are staffed by one person, who happens to be a member of the ethnic background that the office services. This individual must carry out the advising, mentoring, programming, and advocacy functions of that office. Needless to say, the head of the Minority Education Office, which oversees the cultural centers on campus, is also an ethnic minority. Although Western has people of color in key staff positions, those positions tend to be tied to some aspect of promoting diversity.

A pioneer for change at Western has been the SSAO. Dr. Stevens is committed to building a campus community where everyone has a shared destination. He is an advocate and mentor for students of color, as well as a teacher and mediator for tolerance and understanding to the campus community as a whole.

Affirmative Action – A Climate of Acceptance

Western University has six cultural centers (Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and Pacific, Women’s and Pride-GLBT). Clearly it appears by the number of centers that administrative officials are supportive of creating and sustaining a climate that is accommodating to its students of color. However, that was not always the case. When the university unveiled its strategic plan for the future, the cultural centers were not in the plan. This sparked a massive protest from the campus community and led to Dr. Stevens proposing the idea of creating a Covenant for the centers to symbolize the
importance of these centers and to ensure that they remain a permanent fixture on the
Western University campus for years to come.

Culturally Diverse – U.S. Focus

The most visible person of color at Western is no doubt the SSAO. Dr. Stevens
has a noticeable presence on campus and is often sought after to speak at various campus
functions. Part of Dr. Stevens’ philosophy is to recognize that a community is prone to struggle and it is through those struggles in which the community is able to learn and heal together. He encourages dialogue and empowers students to effect change. One example of this is when Dr. Stevens invited students demonstrating over a recent racial incident on campus to produce a set of recommendations that they would like the university to enact regarding diversity. What came out of the recommendations submitted by the students was an agreement from the president to devote an entire section of his State of the University address toward diversity.

Another example of Dr. Stevens effective ways for empowering students to come up with solutions was when he required a fraternity that was about to be expelled from campus for participating in a hate-crime toward a fellow minority student to spend a day with him to discuss the incident and the proper course of action he should take as the SSAO. After listening to the fraternity members discuss the incident and offer their own suggestions for ensuring something like that did not happen again, Dr. Stevens decided to overrule the recommendation of the judicial council to suspend the fraternity. One year later, that fraternity was recognized for its exemplary service to the community.

Many universities have within their mission a statement signifying the institutions support of diversity. It should be noted that in this study, all of the institutions had a
statement emphasizing the importance of diversity. However at Western, in addition to a statement, they have a Covenant that guarantees the continued existence of its diversity centers. Also, they have a signed pledge by the president to devote a section of his annual State of the University address to talking about what the university has done the past year as it relates to diversity.

**Western University's Placement on the Multicultural Continuum**

Western University is the only institution to have characteristics of a culturally diverse organization as the SSAO clearly demonstrates the drive to advocate for an inclusive campus community. His approachable demeanor and ability to get all sides to discuss their differences openly only further adds to his capabilities of being a driving force for cohesion at Western University. Despite setbacks with repeated hate crimes, Western is able to bounce back and continue on their quest for an all inclusive environment and use these instances of hatred as opportunities to educate each other on the importance of understanding human differences. The mere fact that Western has six well-equipped cultural centers, while other institutions do not even have one, and these cultural centers are protected with a Covenant that protects their continued existence, only suggests that Western places a very high emphasis on supporting its students of color. Therefore, Western University is placed closer to the multicultural end of the continuum, just below the U.S. focus stage.

Central Metropolitan Community College

Symbolic Difference – Pioneers

At Central Metropolitan, the SSAO is fairly new, having been in the position for two years. Since coming to Central, Dr. Davis has taken the usual cautious steps of any new chief executive to an organization. He has assessed the area, become acquainted with personnel, looked over progress reports, learned the system of getting things done, and placed people in key positions. One of Dr. Davis’s first hires was the Director of Activities. In addition to hiring someone to fill the director’s position, Dr. Davis created
a budget for the Activities Office in hopes of increasing activities and programming across campus.

With Dr. Davis’s support, Raul, the Director of Activities, has increased the number of diversity focused programs on campus. This year, he unveiled the college’s “Themed Month” diversity celebrations, in which different cultures will be celebrated each month. Implementing this ambitious plan is not without criticism. As a Hispanic, Raul has been accused of only planning for Hispanic culture as the first “Themed Month” celebration occurred in October, which is Hispanic Heritage Month.

Affirmative Action – Numbers

With a 40% minority population Central Metropolitan has a great deal of diversity in terms of numbers when compared with other institutions. So while the college does not necessarily have much of an issue with trying to attract students of color to attend Central Metropolitan, it does, however, have a problem keeping them once they enroll, as less than 70% of students persist to graduation. To combat attrition, Dr. Davis has instituted a Retention Office that is staffed with Retention Specialist to assist students with developing an educational plan that serves as their own personal academic guide while they are attending Central Metropolitan.

What has become a growing concern to administrators at Central Metropolitan is the perception that one of its campuses, the Boulevard campus, is a “ghetto” campus because of its high minority enrollment and location in a predominantly minority neighborhood. This identity has prompted more students to instead enroll at the perceived flagship campus, Shadow Ridge. In addition to seeing a drop in enrollment, personnel working at the Boulevard campus felt as if their campus was being neglected.
by college officials because the administrative offices are housed on the Shadow Ridge campus.

In response to criticism internally over perceived unfair promotion and hiring practices, Central Metropolitan changed the way it conducted searches and how personnel are considered for promotions to take into account diversity. As a result, minority representation within the faculty and staff ranks grew from 25% to 37% in a ten year period.

Dr. Davis acknowledges that diversity is not under his jurisdiction. Instead, to lead the college in its diversity efforts, Central Metropolitan has a full-time diversity officer. Dr. Davis is, however, trying to change the apathetic climate within the Student Affairs Division that is a result of repeated leadership changes within the presidency and the fact that departments within the college have been allowed to operate autonomously with little to no collaboration. In an effort to change the culture, Dr. Davis has placed an emphasis on customer service for division employees to practice and instituted a professional development segment to his monthly directors meeting.

Central Metropolitan Community College’s Placement on the Multicultural Continuum

Central Metropolitan’s SSAO has been on the job for only two years. Therefore it is too soon to assess his impact on creating a culturally accepting environment. However, in the course of his two years, Dr. Davis has taken steps toward improving the culture. He brought on board a new Director of Activities and for the first time allotted a budget for the office. He has placed a high emphasis on changing student affairs personnel attitudes about their work and be more customer service friendly. He has addressed the
problem of attrition by putting in place retention specialist who work with one-on-one to develop an educational plan for graduating at Central Metropolitan.

Although there are things that has taken place at Central Metropolitan prior to Dr. Davis arriving, such as the repeated leadership changes, perceived unfairness of promotion and hiring practices, "ghettoization" of the Boulevard campus, Dr. Davis has acted to try to curb the apathy and shift the previous isolated culture of the Student Affairs unit to being more collaborative, customer service friendly, and student focused. Central Metropolitan has hired a full-time Director of Equity and Inclusion to serve as the go-to person for diversity initiatives at college. Therefore, even though diversity is not a primary responsibility of Dr. Davis, he has put in place means for educating the campus about diversity through diversity programming out of the Student Activities Office. On the continuum, Central Metropolitan Community College is placed just below the affirmative action – numbers stage.
**Figure 6.** Placement of Central Metropolitan Community College on the multicultural continuum.


**Valley State University**

**The Club – Passive**

Several factors contributed to Valley State displaying characteristics of a passive organization. One would be the resistance of the SSAO, Dr. Taylor, to take seriously and implement some of the recommendations that its students of color presented to the administration over perceived inattention toward minorities. For example, the allocation of space for a multicultural area in the new student union was one of the requests made by the students. Here, Dr. Taylor cited the fact that the request came late, just months
before the opening, as a reason for not being able to meet the demand. This may be true, however, she dismisses the validity of the request and the credibility of the charges that students of color are feeling alienated with the university due to lack of resources as being a ploy by a very small number of student activist, mostly Hispanic. Rather than devote full attention to try and find a compromise, Dr. Taylor chose to passively entertain their requests. It was only after the students protested with signs and banners at the opening to the Student Union and the president announced that he would like to explore the possibility of creating a Multicultural Center at Valley State that Dr. Taylor began to proceed with the possibility of establishing such a facility. The perception that Dr. Taylor and her Associate Vice President for Student Life is that a Multicultural Center would only separate the campus community because it would segregate the students of color who would use the facility from the rest of the campus. They contend that the student union mirrors the ideal space where people of all backgrounds can come together and socialize. This may be true in some instances; however, the reality at Valley State is that in the student union students of various ethnic backgrounds are not mingling per se, rather, it is fairly segregated.

Symbolic Difference - Pioneers

Fed up with what they perceived to be a lack of attention and resources devoted toward people of color, students at Valley State University took matters into their own hands and protested. As pioneers, the students, representing various cultural groups, organized and presented to the SSAO, Dr. Taylor, a list of recommendations that they wanted to see implemented at Valley State. On the list was a request for additional staff to work with students of color, more multicultural programs, increased recruitment of
minority students, better retention services, and a multicultural space in the new student union.

Dr. Taylor did act on some of the recommendations as she created the Office of Student Diversity Programs and Services to promote and celebrate diversity. However, one area in which Dr. Taylor refused to give in on was the allocation in the new student union for a multicultural room. Her reasons for not meeting this request was that plans for the new union were final with space already designated and it would be impossible to try to make room for a multicultural area where students of color could congregate due to the fact that the opening of the student union was four months away. Undeterred, the students pressed forward with their demand for a Multicultural Center and when the new student union had its grand opening, the students were there to protest the administration’s neglect of its minority population by not allocating space for students of color. Dr. Taylor dismisses the student revolt as the actions of only a small number of the minority student population at Valley State. She puts the number of advocates for the multicultural space as somewhere between twenty-five to thirty students and contends that the majority of students of color do not share in their opinion that the administration has not been responsive to the needs of minorities. Needless to say, the protest sparked in-depth discussions between the students and administrative officials over the feasibility of creating a Multicultural Center at Valley State and in January, the president announced that he had instructed Dr. Taylor to lead a series of focus group discussions across campus about whether a Multicultural Center is needed.

The multicultural space fallout is a prime example of the “squeaky wheel gets the grease” cliché. That is, if you have a complaint about something that you perceive to be
unfair, you make a lot of noise in hopes that something can be done to fix it. In this instance, a group of students of color were dissatisfied with the fact that the new student union did not have a multicultural area. As a result, they made their concerns known to the administration, and when the administration did not act or present the students with a reasonable explanation why they could not act on their request, the students protested. It was then that administrative officials began to discuss the possibility of opening a Multicultural Center, and that is where the university is today; discussing plans for opening the center.

Affirmative Action – Numbers

Prior to the start of the 2006-2007 academic year, the Student Life Division at Valley State had only one person, the Program Coordinator for Multicultural Programs, to work with students of color and program multicultural events. The division has made steps to convey the message that diversity is a part of everyone’s responsibility. A diversity committee has been set-up to assess the diversity needs of the division. In addition, the committee offers diversity development sessions for Student Life personnel. However, these sessions are not mandatory and many within the division do not participate, citing lack of time as the reason.

Despite rhetoric that diversity is a team effort with everyone within Student Life having a hand in promoting diversity, the bulk of the responsibility fell on the Multicultural Programs Coordinator. In the summer of 2006, when Student Life was conducting a search for a Multicultural Programs Assistant Director, the Associate Vice President for Student Life, Amanda, noticed that she had two very qualified individuals in the applicant pool. Rather than let these two candidates get away, Amanda convinced
Dr. Taylor to create an Office of Student Diversity Programs and Services, which would allow for the hiring of the two candidates in the Assistant Director search, one as the Director of this newly created office and the other as the Assistant Director.

The idea of creating such an office had been on the radar screen for Amanda and Dr. Taylor, however, it was a couple of more years down the road. Seizing on the opportunity to establish the office now, with candidates in hand, the two decided the moment was right for such a move. The timing could not have been better, considering the pressure that students of color placed on the administration over lack of services for minorities. By creating this office, Dr. Taylor was responding to the charges that the university was unresponsive to the needs of students of color.

Valley State is a relatively young institution, only 50 years old. Programs designed to promote diversity and build community have been successful. The Tunnel of Oppression exhibit, Multicultural Assistance Program, the GLBT Train-the-Trainer series, New Student Orientation are a few examples. Although the Office of Student Diversity Programs and Services is new, it has increased the number of persons available to work with students of color and promote diversity programming. The university is in the process of hiring a newly created Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. It is still uncertain as to what role this individual will play in promoting diversity at Valley State, as previously that responsibility was left to Human Resources.

**Valley State University's Placement on the Multicultural Continuum**

Valley State has made significant strides in respect to diversity in recent years. They are currently searching for a Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, the new Office of Student Diversity Programs and Services was created, and administrators are
exploring the possibility of establishing its first Multicultural Center. All these efforts seem as if the university is heading in the right direction as it relates to diversity, however, the problem is that these changes came about because of pressure placed on the university by students and the community. It took a few unrelenting students to pressure the SSAO for multicultural space in the new Student Union and, even then, Dr. Taylor was hesitant to act. It was only when the president made the Multicultural Center a priority that she began to explore means for making it a reality.

Granted, the university has its pluses as it relates to diversity with programming and increased services. But also, the university has its minuses as well, and the attitude of those working in Student Life appears to be at the top of the list. Student Life personnel can preach about the importance of everyone working to promote diversity but when it is time for the rubber to meet the road, only those assigned specifically to work on diversity actually do so. To make things worse, Student Life personnel do not take advantage of diversity development sessions that are offered by the Student Life Diversity Committee. This kind of attitude can be only be toxic to any efforts to making an organization multicultural. One has to wonder about the leadership, in this case the SSAO and her ability to change the culture. She says that she is committed to diversity and several people who report to her concur, however, her inattention to the demands by students for multicultural space in the student union and the apathetic attitude by Student Life personnel toward diversity development says otherwise. In contrast, the institution has taken some positive steps toward diversity. Therefore, on the continuum, Valley State places at the affirmative action - numbers stage.
Summary

In this chapter, the researcher compared six institutions and analyzed data to determine where they placed on Katz’s multicultural continuum. Analysis focused on determining to what extent the institution’s environment was conducive to multiculturalism and what role, if any, the SSAO played in getting the institutions to where they are today. In looking at the continuum, the institutions varied from being culturally diverse, as was the case with Western University, to being almost passive (Regional Community College). The following chapter offers the researcher’s conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which six institutions create campus communities that values diversity and the role each institutions SSAO played in the development of this environment. The six SSAOs who were studied were from both public and private, and liberal arts and research colleges and universities situated in the mid-west and western states. As a result, data yielded from this study provide a basis for discussion about possible implications and future research in the area of building a campus community whose climate is receptive to diversity. In this chapter the researcher restates the problem studied and the methodology used in investigating the problem. This is followed by a summary of the results and implications for further research and practice.

Review of Problem

In response to the rapidly changing demographics in America and the need for a workforce that is capable of functioning within the parameters of a diverse work environment, many institutions of higher learning are responding to the call for culturally prepared graduates by increasing opportunities for exposure and interaction to differences. Institutions have enacted diversity policies, implemented aggressive
minority recruitment plans, created multicultural centers, and hired additional staff to program multicultural events for the entire campus community. However, despite their best efforts to create an environment that is conducive and receptive to diversity, some institutions have fallen short due to opposition and/or lack of commitment from the administration.

As Johnson (1998) pointed out individuals have different reactions to change. It is not uncommon for any attempt by those in student affairs to confront resistance to efforts to promote acceptance and understanding (Bliming and Whitt, 1991). Colleges and universities have been struggling for years to create effective multicultural campuses. Already in place, in terms of institutional policy, are initiatives designed to accommodate the dominant culture (Manning and Boatwright, 1991). Such policies are reflected in campus programming, institutional offices, faculty and staff make-up, training, and sensitivity to diversity. Therefore, it is imperative that SSAOs, in order to effectively influence campus culture and implement change, have an active and visible role in diversity initiatives on college campuses.

Little systematic research has been conducted about the role student services plays in this endeavor and, in particular, what impact, if any, SSAOs can have on these efforts. Research for the most part examines single institutions or like institutions, but identifies few commonalities (good or bad) across institutional types. It is uncertain as to the level of impact the SSAO has in the development of the campus environment especially in terms of campus climate and culture.
Study Overview

This research examined one approach—creating a campus culture—to educating the future workforce about diversity. Student services and SSAO leadership are key to this effort. The purpose of this project was to look for discernible patterns across several higher education institution types—urban community college, rural community college, rural research university, religious-affiliated college, and metropolitan university. This study followed a qualitative case study method and investigated how campus culture was created. The researcher conducted open-ended interviews with the SSAO and two other individuals affiliated with the institution within the student affairs division. In addition to qualitative interviews, observations and document collection aided the researcher in obtaining information about the institutions. The following research questions guided this study:

- To what extent is the institution’s environment conductive to diversity?
- What role if any did the SSAO play in getting the institutions to where it is today as it relates to diversity?

Participants were selected in part because their respective institutions had stated in their missions or a separate document a commitment to creating and maintaining diversity. Participating institutions represented the community college, liberal arts, land-grant, and comprehensive university areas oriented-areas, the private and public sectors, as well as the Midwest and western regions.

This study contributed to the research by providing an in-depth look into the administrative role of the Senior Student Affairs Officer and his/her impact on creating a campus culture. This bit of knowledge can serve as an aid to others in the field of student
affairs as they ponder ways in which to move their campuses to a multicultural accepting
institution. Additionally, this study added to the body of research generated knowledge
about the role of the SSAO in creating community.

Review of Methodology

For the study, Yin’s (2003) case study methodology was implemented. Yin
(2003) found that case study methods provides the researcher an opportunity to identify
and understand the situations and circumstances holistically. Therefore, data collection
occurred from participants at their institutions in their everyday situations (Yin, 2003).
Given that this study touched on the sensitive topic of diversity, a multiple case study
strategy was employed to capture the uniqueness of each institution studied. Miles and
Huberman (1994) observed that the differences of conditions and their reactions within
complicated situations surface in case study research. Primary sources of data for this
study came from participant interviews, institutional documents, and personal
observations of the campus. Documents were also collected during the site visit and via
the web. Interviews followed the standardized open-ended interview format, where each
person was asked the exact same questions. A tape recorder assisted in obtaining full and
exact quotations for analysis and reporting (Patton, 1990). Each interviewee was initially
asked a total of thirteen questions related to their background and role as SSAO in
creating campus culture. In gaining access, initial contact was made with the Senior
Student Affairs Officer’s Administrative Assistant to set up a possible telephone
conversation in which the researcher could explain the study to the SSAO. Once contact
had been made with the SSAO and after hearing of the details of the study, campus visits were scheduled.

Summary of Results

This study investigated six Senior Student Affairs Officers (two Caucasian males, two Caucasian females, and two African American males) from six separate institutions that included two community colleges, two land-grants, one religiously affiliated, and one metropolitan university, and their level of involvement in building a campus community that is receptive to diversity. The institutions varied in enrollment size, percentage of student diversity, and geographical location. As for the SSAO at each institution, they differed in how they ascended to that role and how they perceived the climate for diversity at their respective institution. Some citing near perfect harmony amongst members of the campus community as it relates to diversity, while others recounted numerous incidents of setbacks fueled by prejudice and hatred.

As communicated by the SSAOs, the definition of diversity differed at each institution. For example, at Vincent, because the institution has a small ethnic minority population, diversity undertook a broader definition to include religion (Vincent was founded by the Methodist Church) and disability. At both Regional and Midwestern State, although they too have small ethnic populations, diversity efforts tend to focus on race and ethnicity. Western and Valley State managed to incorporate centers that service GLBT and Women specifically into their support offerings. Central Metropolitan has increased services and programming tailored toward students of color.
Community across participating institutions differed from the vibrant residential campus, as was Vincent University with very little ethnic diversity but a cordial and accepting attitude toward differences, to bursting at the seams with ethnic diversity and the quest to provide adequate services for their high percentage student population at Central Metropolitan Community College and Valley State University. For instance, at Regional Community College and Midwestern State University, both situated in the Midwest, their student enrollment represented the homogeneous population of the state in which they are situated located. For Western University, administrative actions to deal with repeated efforts to disrupt campus community through racially charged hate-crimes have motivated members of that community to take ownership in guiding the institution to being multiculturally inclusive.

Each of the institutions faces its share of challenges. Vincent grapples with trying to deliver a quality undergraduate liberal arts experience for students while at the same time dealing with aging facilities. Midwestern State too has placed emphasis on strengthening its undergraduate offerings but must cope with maintaining its stature as a Research I institution. Both Regional and Central Metropolitan Community Colleges have as the top of their priorities to increase retention; however, Regional also is concerned with increasing enrollment. For Western, it is confronted with dwindling state funding and challenges related to operating on a reduced budget.

To determine to what extent an institution’s environment was conducive to diversity, the researcher used Katz’s Model for Developing Culturally Diverse Organizations. The models assesses whether an organization is monocultural or multicultural by determining where the organization falls along a continuum based on the
characteristics and dynamics of the organization. The organizations exhibiting passive attitudes toward diversity and inclusion place fall on the monocultural end and are labeled *Exclusionary*, for those with extreme barriers to diversity, and *Symbolic Difference*, where the environment is less extreme. Organizations faring moderately on the continuum are labeled as *Affirmative Action* as they typically seek to fulfill quotas and/or take initial steps toward being more inclusive. For those organizations that are more advanced in diversity efforts, they fall on the multicultural end of the continuum as either *U.S. Focus* or *Global* because they have adopted attitudes that place value in diversity.

A matrix of Katz’s multicultural continuum was constructed to determine which institutions displayed characteristics of the different stages. Based on how the institutions placed on the matrix, they were then accordingly assigned a stage on the multicultural continuum.

Vincent University was placed at the affirmative action – numbers stage based on its commitment to be a more diverse and inclusive campus. Midwestern State falls near the affirmative action – the climate of acceptance stage due in part to the availability of resources for multicultural recruitment, programming, and outreach. Regional Community College was placed at the symbolic difference stage because of a seeming reluctance to embrace diversity by college staff despite a mandatory diversity education initiative. Western fared the best on the multicultural continuum and falls closer to the U.S. focus stage because of numerous programs, services, centers, and positive steps forward to combat hatred by students and administrators. Central Metropolitan is just below the affirmative action – numbers stage as the institution is in the process of
implementing changes that are geared toward better service for people of color and educating the community as a whole about diversity. Valley State was placed at the affirmative action – numbers stage of the continuum for its recent actions to be more receptive to diversity and improve services in response to demands made by members of the minority community.

**Figure 9.** Institutional placement on multicultural continuum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monocultural</th>
<th>R.C.C</th>
<th>C.M.C.C</th>
<th>V.S.U</th>
<th>V.U.</th>
<th>M.S.U.</th>
<th>W.U.</th>
<th>Multicultural</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Role of SSAO in Creating Campus Community

In addition to determining how each institution placed on Katz’s multicultural continuum, the researcher also assessed the level of involvement by the SSAO in relation to how the institution fared on the continuum. Katz’s model does not take into account the potential role that SSAOs can play in creating campus community. To measure their effectiveness, a second matrix was constructed where SSAOs were placed on an impact continuum that runs from low to high impact. As a result, two stages were used in creating the impact continuum for SSAOs. First, the researcher superimposed the impact continuum over the diversity efforts continuum. Second, the researcher combined the
finding to place the institution within the quadrant based on environment and SSAO participation.

**Figure 10.** Matrix for level of involvement and impact by SSAO.
At Vincent University, the SSAO, Dr. Rose is very in touch with her campus community and actively seeks to improve campus relations by providing the resources, whether it is a funded multicultural programming position or by securing funds for diversity programming. Her positive and optimistic attitude about diversity and the direction in which the institution is headed with respect to diversity trickles down to those reporting to her. Therefore, Dr. Rose displays places toward the upper end of the high impact stage of the continuum.

For Midwestern State, the SSAO, Dr. Hughes has been a trailblazer in the quest to change the attitudes and perceptions about diversity at the institution. Constant mishaps with regard to diversity have left those within the university and local community to question whether Midwestern State was truly serious and committed to diversity. Weathering the storm, Dr. Hughes actively led the charge to change how people viewed Midwestern State by overseeing an aggressive minority recruitment campaign, securing the necessary funding to attract and maintain students of color, and convincing the campus community of a need for a new cultural center. This display of active involvement and success warrants Dr. Hughes' placement at the upper end of the high impact stage.

Regional Community College’s SSAO, Mr. White, has a less active role in building campus community and working with diversity, in part because of the presence of a Vice President for Diversity who reports directly to the president. The VP for Diversity has been charged with implementing and monitoring a complex diversity education initiative, thus, relegating the Mr. White to overseeing his division and
monitoring the performance and attitudes toward diversity of those working in his student services division. Therefore, Mr. White falls at the lower end of the low impact stage.

The best example of an SSAO having a profound impact on creating a campus culture that is receptive to diversity is at Western University and its SSAO, Dr. Stevens. At Western, Dr. Stevens is a unifying force and champion of diversity. His commitment to diversity is displayed in the kinds of services offered to diverse populations at Western. His openness and approachableness only adds to his ability to facilitate an atmosphere of change and tolerance for this rurally located campus community. This is why Dr. Stevens places highest among the SSAOs on the high impact stage of the continuum.

Dr. Davis, at Central Metropolitan Community College is fairly new to the institution, having been on the job for only two years. He has taken steps to understand the institutional climate and search for new ways to improve service to students. The hiring of new staff and a reallocation of resources to better support diverse clientele are a few of Dr. Davis actions. Central does have, on an interim basis, a diversity officer who operates as the go-to person for diversity initiatives. Dr. Davis is clear that diversity is not a primary responsibility of his although he has made efforts to improve the climate for people of color at Central Metropolitan. Even so, Dr. Davis has voluntarily taken steps toward creating a conducive campus environment at least among student service personnel. As such, he falls just above the mid-point on the high end of the impact continuum.

For Valley State the SSAO, Dr. Taylor, has played a part in implementing several diversity initiatives at Valley, however, she did so in response to pressure from members
of the minority community. Because of her belief that students of color are generally pleased with the culture at Valley State, she has long resisted calls for a multicultural center as a place for students of color to gather for fear that it would isolate these students from the rest of the campus community. Under her Student Life Division, several diversity initiatives were in place, however, it was debatable as to its level of effectiveness. For example, the diversity development series offered by the division’s diversity committee was rarely attended. Dr. Taylor did seize on the opportunity to develop a multicultural office that would be staffed by more than one person when multiple candidates for a diversity position search displayed excellent qualities. Valley State is on track to building a culture that embraces diversity. Dr. Taylor is responsible for some of the institution’s move to inclusion, such as with the potential construction of a multicultural center. She is also responsible for some of the apathy toward diversity and inclusion by not recognizing or acknowledging discontent among students of color at Valley State about the lack of services and attention being paid to minorities. Therefore, Dr. Taylor places close to the midway point for impact on the continuum.

Figure 11. SSAO level of impact by institution.
The Intersection of SSAO Involvement and Institutional Community

The question remains, in relation to the SSAOs who have made an impact at their institutions in building cultures that are responsive to diversity, what is going to happen to these successes when the SSAO leaves the institution? Are the programs and initiatives going to hold up or will they wither away? In the case of Midwestern State University, that SSAO has, since the study, retired. Is the new SSAO going to continue what his predecessor started when he secured a referendum vote in favor of a new culture center? Will the new SSAO be committed to raising the remaining funds needed to construct the facility? In looking at Western University where the SSAO is a driver of diversity efforts and the attitude of tolerance throughout the community on that campus, what will happen if he decides to leave Western?

Similarly, what would potentially happen if a SSAO is replaced for whatever reason. Hypothetically speaking, if the SSAO was replaced and that person had been a barrier to efforts to create a campus community that supported diversity, will a new SSAO with a broader sense of diversity and the know-how to implement programs that would foster a diversity centered environment be a welcome addition and help that institution move from a monocultural organization on Katz’s multicultural continuum to a multicultural organization? For example, at Valley State the SSAO had been previously resistant to the idea of a multicultural center because, in her view, students of color had not appeared to be unhappy and perceived the push for a center was the doing of only a small number of minority student activists who did not speak for the entire minority student population. Before the student unrest, there were no plans to construct a new multicultural center, there weren’t even any plans for allocating space in the new
student union. As a result of pressure and publicity, the SSAO was forced to examine the possibility of finding suitable space for a multicultural center for students of color to congregate. What would happen if that SSAO was simply replaced and that kind of resistance to multicultural change was removed?

Across postsecondary institutions, we are seeing a rise in the position of chief diversity officer. It is true in this study. At Regional Community College the Vice President for Diversity has assumed sole responsibility for implementing and monitoring diversity compliance. Valley State University is in the process of hiring a Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion who will report directly to the president and lead the institution’s diversity efforts. Central Metropolitan Community College has a chief diversity officer who is responsible for promoting diversity across campus. At Western University, where the SSAO is strong and takes an active role in creating a campus culture that fosters diversity, it too has a chief diversity officer who reports to the president and is just as visible as the SSAO and is effective with collaborating with various sectors of the campus community to promote diversity.

Implications for Institutions

This study set out to investigate the level of involvement of the SSAO in building campus community that was receptive to diversity. Results indicated that while some SSAOs were heavily involved in diversity efforts at their institutions, others were not. Reasons given by those SSAOs who were not as involved include “that’s not part of what I do (as SSAO),” in other words, the SSAO is implying that creating a sustainable diverse campus community is not part of his/her job description. Others cited the presence of a
chief diversity officer on campus who already has the responsibility for promoting diversity.

In recent years, many institutions have hired, at the executive level, a chief diversity officer to assume the mantle of carrying out the institutions diversity initiatives, some in response to racially charged events on campus. Gose (2006) noted that elite universities, such as Harvard, Texas A&M, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Virginia, all have a chief diversity officer. He posits “are universities making a serious new commitment to diversifying the faculty, curriculum, and student body, or are these high-profile appointments a way for university presidents to appease minority students and professors who have been clamoring for a stronger voice on campuses” (Gose, p. B1).

Although chief diversity officers may be one solution to promoting diversity on college campuses, it is uncertain as to how effective they will be in implementing diversity initiatives. Resources are necessary to provide the person assuming the position with a foundation for assessing the dynamics and needs of the institution as it relates to diversity, as well as, for staffing an office to assist with policy formation and implementation. In addition to resources must come the power and authority to enforce the policies created to guide the institution into becoming more tolerant of diversity. That is why it is imperative that the chief diversity officer is classified as an executive level position that reports directly to the president. It is the president that is held accountable for the operations of the institution and presumably “the buck stops here” with the president. As a direct report to the person who has the most authority at the
institution, the chief diversity officer should be able to effectively pursue diversity policy and change without going through a lot of campus bureaucracy.

A potential threat to the chief diversity officer’s effectiveness is the unwillingness of members of the campus community to abide by and comply with the policies and initiatives generated out of the diversity office. A backlash over the need for a chief diversity officer can result in members of the community becoming hostile to the individual’s attempts to break down barriers that pose obstacles for those within the institution. Resistance often results because of the perception that there are no problems with diversity at the institution; therefore, a chief diversity officer is unnecessary, yet alone any new diversity policy.

Also, a threat to bringing a chief diversity officer is the possibility of overloading the responsibility of diversity on this position. Already, there are cries from those who work in diversity-related positions on college campuses at the director, assistant director, and coordinator levels about how they typically are the go-to individuals when it comes to diversity, thus, relieving other employees from having to focus attention to it. This situation has caused many within diversity and multicultural affairs positions to feel alienated from colleagues who demonstrate little to no interest in diversity: their solution being to pass multicultural responsibilities off to the diversity person. Senior-level diversity officers can fall subject to the same fate unless steps are taken to communicate to the campus community that this individual is charged with motivating and leading campus diversity efforts and not with bearing the sole responsibility for any diversity overtures.
In this instance, it makes sense for the president to communicate to members of
his/her institution up front that the chief diversity officer position was created to assist the
various sectors of the campus community improve upon their diversity initiatives and
outreach. Therefore, possibly eliminating any perception from employees of the
institution that diversity is covered and is not part of their job functions. Creating a
campus community that values diversity cannot be the sole responsibility of one
individual, whether it is the chief diversity officer, or the SSAO, everyone must be
included in the diversity efforts, including the academic units.

Perhaps, institutions could form a unified diversity committee comprised of
individuals from various sectors of the campus community including; students, staff,
professional staff, faculty, administration, and local community representatives. This
committee, that is representative of the campus, would be chaired by the chief diversity
officer or SSAO and serve as a diversity advisory and advocacy group. They would meet
regularly, assess the current climate of the institution as it relates to diversity, examine
current efforts and programs that is geared towards diversity, and offer suggestions on
ways the campus can improve. In order to ensure that this is not another pointless
diversity committee, the president of the institution needs to be involved and stress that
the chief diversity officer is not “it” when it comes to diversity and this committee has the
full confidence of the president. The temptation is to make the chief diversity officer the
diversity “token” and any committee that focuses on diversity marginalized. The
president needs to step up to the plate and charge this committee to collaboratively come
up with a diversity agenda for the entire campus community and motivate members of
their constituencies to adopt and support these diversity principles. The likelihood that
everyone within the campus community will buy into the notion that diversity is valued and embraced by the institution is increased once the entire campus community sees that the president has seriously taken an interest in promoting diversity. He/she can do this by hiring a chief diversity officer or SSAO, providing adequate resources for that chief diversity officer, and instilling within the community that diversity is everyone’s responsibility by assembling an institution-wide diversity committee comprised of representatives from the various units and employee levels of the institution. While this is not a final solution, it is at least a start.

Recommendations for the Six Institutions

Vincent University has the challenge of trying to increase a low ethnic minority enrollment due to its Midwest location. Its optimistic SSAO believes the institution can rise to the occasion and offer its students more diversity within the next decade. She has put her money to where her mouth is by devoting resources to increasing diversity initiatives. Her staff seems to echo those same positive diversity sentiments, therefore increasing the likelihood that Vincent may very well pull it off and substantially increase the representation of ethnic minority students on campus because of a clearly evident diversity commitment from the administration. This is the kind of optimism that fosters an attitude of change and high hopes that is needed for institutions wishing to build a campus community that values diversity. The SSAO should be commended for her personal sacrifice and devotion to diversity. It is recommended that Vincent continue on its current course for inclusion by continuing to offer the environment and physical space
that encourages dialogue and discussion about matters important to the campus community, as diversity seems to be one of them.

Changing the mindset of almost an entire campus student population is, in itself, a monumental feat. Yet, that is exactly what has occurred at Midwestern State University as students voted in favor of a referendum to allocate resources for the construction of a new multicultural center. This, by no stretch of the imagination, should be underestimated in importance as it relates to diversity initiatives at Midwestern State. For the mere devotion of resources, time, staff, energy, and sustained commitment to seeing it through deserves praise. The administration at Midwestern State, namely the SSAO, has done something that should be applauded and taken into consideration by anyone looking to implement diversity changes; he simply listened. Hurt by bad publicity in the minority community over perceived insensitivity towards minorities, Midwestern State has been able to rebuild some of that trust and increase its ethnic minority population through an aggressive public relations and minority recruitment. Sensing the need to build a newer and larger facility to better support its students of color and showcase diversity across campus officials advocated for a new multicultural center that will eventually come into fruition. As Midwestern State has repaired its image within the community and secure funding for a new multicultural facility, they have in essence, responded to the needs of the community. For a Midwest located institution that does not have a lot of diversity to recruit from within the state they have taken steps to convey to the ethnic minority students already attending Midwestern State that diversity is valued. A new SSAO has replaced the SSAO interviewed for this study. It is strongly recommended that this new
SSAO continue the outreach and advocacy for diversity that his predecessor showed during his tenure.

On paper, the Diversity Education Initiative at Regional Community College sounds impressive. In reality, its overall effectiveness is somewhat questionable considering the institution’s rurally situated Midwest location that fosters an attitude of monophilosophic beliefs and norms. The attitudes of college personnel at Regional, as with any institution, carry over into how they interact with and service students. With the implementation of a mandatory extensive diversity training component for all college employees the administration has made diversity education a high priority. However, as with anything that is mandated, resentment tends to be an obstacle and this diversity initiative seems to be no exception. Any administration that enacts a diversity program as extensive as the one at Regional Community College should be commended. They have taken a monumental step in moving to change the culture of the campus community to value diversity. It is recommended that they continue the diversity education initiative and pay more attention to the kinds of persons they hire to work at the college on the front end to avoid any negative drawbacks to diversity sensitivity on the back end.

Every now and then one will come across a situation, or in the case of this study an institution, where the only response one can muster up is “what else can I say.” While Western University is by no means the perfect institution, it does have some qualities that make it standout in this study. Confined to a rural location in the northwest corridor of the U.S., Western lacks a significant ethnic minority population. However, they do no lack in services. With four ethnic cultural centers, a Women’s center, and a GLBT center, in addition to numerous minority academic assistance offices and programs,
Western has demonstrated that it is an institution that values diversity. Western personifies the best scenario for any institution aspiring to be supportive of diversity. They offer the program and services for diversity support and education, as well as, they have a SSAO who “walks the walk” in pushing for diversity causes as evidenced by his policies and consistency in matters related to diversity. There is very little that this researcher has to offer as a recommendation for this institution.

Central Metropolitan Community College appears to be an institution on the move with respect to diversity. With a fairly new SSAO and a new chief diversity officer, more time is needed to properly assess the impact of their policies and efforts. As to changes already made by the SSAO, the researcher commends the allocation of funds for additional multicultural recruitment, support, and programming and the implementation of a senior staff training session after regular staff meetings. These are pivotal steps in the formation of a culture that is going to value and respect every member of the campus community, as well as support diversity. I recommend that Central Metropolitan assess their efforts in three years time to determine progress.

Valley State University has made positive enhancements to its diversity offerings but there is still room for improvement. The institution needs to take the opportunity that the students had started through their protest and begin a dialogue with these students over the possibility of a multicultural center. It appears that the administration is stalling on this issue. With the presence of multicultural centers on college campuses across the country and the benefits outweighing the negative, there is no reasonable explanation that anyone at Valley State can give for not creating a space for students of color at their institution. If anything, think of the message that it would send to those advocating for a
multicultural center and to those monitoring the situation from the sidelines that the administration is receptive and responsive to the needs of its minority students.

Another recommendation for consideration is the need for the diversity training session that is currently offered by the student life division diversity committee be mandatory for all student life employees. It is clear that very few individuals have taken advantage of this session, instead people have elected not to attend citing busy schedules. What good is it to have a diversity committee at all when personnel ignore or dismiss their work as insignificant or unimportant.

At the time of the writing of this report, the Vice President for Diversity position had not been filled. It would be interesting to see if, once a person is in place, how the student life division will interact with the new diversity office. Who will begin the dialogue of potential collaboration or will diversity just be marginalized?

Recommendations for the Profession

There is no doubt that the changing demographics of America make it necessary to understand those who appear, act, and sound different. Due to the increasing presence of minority populations we now hear such phrases as minority-majority in states, such as California, where a growing Hispanic population out numbers Caucasians. Therefore, the need for discussion and understanding the differences and similarities of multiple cultures is as great as it has ever been.

The student affairs profession, for many decades now, has provided strong leadership and a commitment for exposure to best practices and continued development of students on college campuses across this country. It is imperative that these
professionals meet the call for addressing issues of diversity and creating a receptive environment by being themselves culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of minorities. It is inexplicable for anyone with a good conscious to think that in a profession that prides itself on helping others, you can relegate the task for dealing with diversity and servicing students of color to a few professionals who have devoted themselves to making the campus accessible and conducive to all. First, professionals should be committed to helping everyone, this includes people of various ethnicities, abilities, gender, sexual orientation, religion, social economic status, and so forth. Second, as advocates, it is good common-sense practice for professionals to speak out on any perceived or noticeable injustice, particularly as it pertains to diversity. Last, seizing on opportunities for collaboration should be at the core of what the student affairs practitioner does on his/her campus because unless resources are unlimited at that particular institution, collaboration is often necessary for most anything positive to get accomplished, not to mention it increases ability to offer more services and programs. With this said, there should be no reason whatsoever for a diversity/multicultural affairs person to feel overwhelmed because the heart of the student affairs profession stresses the importance of helping everyone, speaking out about injustice and discrimination, and for collaboration with student services and across campus with academic and other professional units. Therefore, given these principles, and assuming that every student affairs professional were actually in compliance to these principles, everyone would assume responsibility for diversity on their campuses.

A possibility for ensuring that new student affairs professionals adopt a mindset that diversity is everyone’s responsibility is making sure they are culturally competent
before they enter into the profession. Cross (1988) defines cultural competence as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system. A culturally competent individual through self-awareness and understanding is able to confront and deal with any stereotypes and prejudices they themselves may have of others in hopes that they can successfully interact with and help people who are different from them. The student affairs professional often receives his/her training in a student affairs/personnel services preparation program. There is a critical need for these programs to institute a course in cultural competence to adequately prepare the next generation of student affairs practitioners, especially considering that it is the student affairs person who is charged with creating a safe and inclusive environment. Wouldn’t it be wise to equip these individuals with the skills necessary to appropriately meet this challenge by offering a course on diversity in their preparation program. A course in which the soon-to-be student affairs practitioner can acquire an understanding of the impact that attitudes, beliefs, and biases have on an organization, such as higher education institutions, and on their ability to effectively do his/her job.

The need to engage in multicultural dialogue is essential at the academic preparation phase as well. With the need for Student Affairs personnel to have an integrated sense of multicultural awareness to go along with their theoretical knowledge, it is imperative that student personnel services preparation programs insert, as part of their core curriculum, a multicultural component. Such a component would be beneficial to the aspiring practitioner as well as the student affairs profession as a whole, as it would create a better multicultural awareness and understanding that would be reflected in everyday duties and responsibilities.
Recommendations for SSAOs

Whether the SSAO plays a major role in the implementation of diversity policies and the transformation of an institution’s campus community that values diversity or a minor one they are, without question, in some way connected to the overall success or failure of that institution when it comes to diversity. Therefore, as either go-getter diversity trailblazers or sideline cheerleaders, SSAOs must from the start of their appointment possess a mindset that diversity is something that they personally value. They must adopt an attitude that diversity is important and display that personal commitment to diversity through their actions as SSAO. This calls for at minimum, a commitment by the SSAO to work to ensure that those working within the student affairs division of the institution that they have been entrusted by the president to build campus community reflect the same attitude and commitment toward diversity.

When making staff hires the SSAO must be astute about who comes to work at the institution. If the people they bring on board have little to no knowledge or interest in diversity then they may pose a barrier to any diversity efforts. Already, student affairs practitioners are supposedly hired for their keen grasp of student affairs theory and practices. With that said, if diversity is at all considered a competency within student affairs, then potential applicants should have knowledge of diversity practices. If the applicant is not familiar with diverse populations, then that applicant does not meet the requirements for hire.

The idea that student affairs practitioners can get by and do their job without any knowledge of diverse practices is absurd and needs to be dealt with. The SSAO is in a prime position to tackle this issue for he/she has final say over all student affairs hires. If
the SSAO makes the commitment to hiring a culturally competent student affairs professional in a directors-level positions besides just multicultural affairs, this will in turn set in place an opportunity to create an atmosphere within the division among student affairs personnel that diversity is everyone’s responsibility because the culturally competent student affairs director has made it a priority within his/her unit.

Implications for Future Research

The focus for this study was on the SSAO and his/her effectiveness in building campus culture. It would be interesting to assess the degree of cultural awareness for student affairs professionals at levels of operation other than the SSAO. The debate as to whether America is going to continue to become diverse is over; the answer is a resounding yes. Now that we know the answer to this question a more appropriate question should be directed to our nation’s institutions of higher learning. Are you prepared to deal with this diversity? Part of dealing with this diversity is having people in place who are competent, specifically, culturally competent. This study revealed a common trend among many college campuses in respect to diversity – that many institutions are hiring chief diversity officers to take on diversity initiatives. While this may be a solution to the issue of fostering diversity on college campuses it raises another question. The question that originally guided this study now must be asked of the chief diversity officer. What role, if any, does the chief diversity officer play in getting the institutions to where it is today as it relates to diversity? This is an emerging position on college campuses with a lot of money going into it. Given the state of higher education
where many public institutions are seeing their budgets greatly reduced, it would be good
to know whether it is money well spent.

Suggestions for improving the study include conducting the same study in
different settings. The researcher examined institutions in the Midwest, southwest, and
northwest geographic regions. Future studies could incorporate institutions in the east
and south. Also, although institutions were diverse, ranging from public to private,
liberal arts to land grant, no Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s), were
included. It would be interesting to study these institutions that have a large minority
enrollment and see what their campus community is like. Along those lines, future
studies may want to also include Hispanic-serving and Native American-serving
institutions as well. A last suggestion would be to add a quantitative component. While
a qualitative allowed for SSAOs to tell their stories and quantitative survey would
encompass more institutions for study.
APPENDIX I

DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOL
## DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>SSAO Interviews</th>
<th>Subordinate Interviews</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vincent University</td>
<td>Intro. &amp; Follow-up</td>
<td>2-interviews</td>
<td>Leadership team meeting and Student Advisory Council meeting</td>
<td>President's Council on Cultural Diversity Student Involvement brochure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwestern State U.</td>
<td>Intro. &amp; Follow-up</td>
<td>3-interviews</td>
<td>Council of Student Affairs Directors meeting</td>
<td>Admissions materials Website Cultural Center brochures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Comm. C.</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>(1 via email)</td>
<td>None (scheduling)</td>
<td>Website Cultural Center brochures Admissions materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western University</td>
<td>Intro. &amp; Follow-up</td>
<td>2-interviews</td>
<td>Leadership team meeting Fall Student Affairs Divisional meeting</td>
<td>Office of Diversity information Covenant document Website Diversity Initiative handouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Metro. C.C.</td>
<td>Intro. &amp; Follow-up</td>
<td>2-interviews</td>
<td>Leadership team meeting Professional Development Training</td>
<td>Student Activities brochures Admissions materials Website Diversity Plan Diversity office brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley State U.</td>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>2-interviews</td>
<td>None (scheduling)</td>
<td>Student Involvement handouts Admissions materials Website</td>
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APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SSAO)
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SSAO)

1. What is your background and how did you come into this position?

2. Describe the ideal campus community.

3. What do you believe are the university's main concerns?

4. What are the major priorities for this student affairs unit (division)?

5. Describe your campus community (what you have presently at your institution).

6. Diversity was (or was not) mentioned (in terms of community). Is diversity important to you personally? Why?

7. How is diversity viewed on this campus?

8. In what way has the institution’s view on diversity changed over time?

9. What strategies has student (services, division) used to build a campus community?

10. In what way has diversity influenced the building of campus community at (UNL, Neb. W.)?

11. What programs or ideas have been successful as they relate specifically to diversity at (UNL, Neb. Wes.)? (committees, personnel, finances, training). (if diversity has not been an influence, what has been successful at building community)

12. What setbacks or challenges have you encountered concerning diversity? How did you overcome these?

13. What will this campus look like ten years from now? (students, faculty, administration)
APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SUBORDINATES)
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SUBORDINATES)

1. What is your background and how did you come into this position?

2. Describe the ideal campus community.

3. What do you believe are the university’s main concerns?

4. What are the major priorities for this student affairs unit (division)?

5. Describe your campus community (what you have presently at your institution).

6. Diversity was (or was not) mentioned (in terms of community). Is diversity important to you personally? Why?

7. How is diversity viewed on this campus?

8. In what way has the institution’s view on diversity changed over time?

9. What strategies has student (services, division) used to build a campus community?

10. In what way has diversity influenced the building of campus community at (UNL, Neb. W.)?

11. What programs or ideas have been successful as they relate specifically to diversity at (UNL, Neb. Wes.)? (committees, personnel, finances, training). (if diversity has not been an influence, what has been successful at building community)

12. What setbacks or challenges have you encountered concerning diversity? How did you overcome these?

13. From your perspective, what role has the SSAO played in the promoting diversity on campus?

14. What will this campus look like ten years from now? (students, faculty, administration)
APPENDIX IV

MATRX FOR DETERMINING INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENT ON
KATZ'S MULTICULTURAL CONTINUUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Cultural Diversity</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Matrix for determining institutional placement on Katz’s multicultural continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Club: Exclusionary</th>
<th>Vincent</th>
<th>Midwestern State U</th>
<th>Regional C.C.</th>
<th>Western C.C.</th>
<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monocultural norms &amp; beliefs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business as usual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Little acknowledgement of differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Symbolic Difference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vincent</th>
<th>Midwestern State U</th>
<th>Regional C.C.</th>
<th>Western C.C.</th>
<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness that white-only system don’t work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Token efforts, ex. Minorities in symbolic positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Qualified minority” mentality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers for change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Affirmative Action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Regional C.C.</th>
<th>Western C.C.</th>
<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examine compositions of populations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerical goals in accordance to law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use quotas to limit diversity in ranks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of color &amp; minorities are hired but rarely stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization has failed to create a climate that supports diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders believe it is in the best interest to support diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to hire minorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe minorities have a place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**A Climate of Acceptance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Western C.C.</th>
<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a climate that supports diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders accept differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members focus on growth &amp; development of people of color &amp; women</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and people of color develop networks and coalitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White men explore their own identity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization is responsive to the needs of members &amp; address discrimination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Culturally Diverse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members see value in diversity &amp; behave accordingly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System incorporates people of all races &amp; gender and empower them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Differences are acknowledged &amp; institutionalized</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural values are institutionalized</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Being multicultural is reflected in the mission, values &amp; purpose</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity is seen as a strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Members believe multicultural teams are creative &amp; effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address differences positively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Global**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vincent</th>
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<th>Western C.C.</th>
<th>Central Met. C.C.</th>
<th>Valley State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No fixed destination but a process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine relationship with individuals of other nations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership apply international logic with clients &amp; constituents</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique identities (international) of individuals are seen as valuable</td>
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</table>

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Senior Student Affairs Officers, Campus Community, and Diversity: A Qualitative Inquiry into Six Institutions

Dissertation Examination Committee:
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Committee Member, Dr. Sterling Saddler, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. Porter Troutman, Ed.D.