

Appendix B

THE RESEARCH

DOES DIVERSITY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

THREE RESEARCH STUDIES ON DIVERSITY IN COLLEGE CLASSROOMS:
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY²

WHY RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY MATTERS

The dramatic transformation in the composition of the student population of America's colleges and universities over the past generation is unparalleled in the history of Western higher education institutions. In the early 1960s, with the exception of those attending historically black colleges and universities, only a relative handful of Americans of color went to college in the United States; today, upwards of one in five undergraduates at four-year schools is a minority. That this revolution has led the way to the social and economic integration of millions of minority individuals into the mainstream of American life is remarkable, if unsurprising, because in the past 30 years, a college education has become almost prerequisite to advancement in our society. Equally remarkable, though less often recognized, are the contributions these individuals make, not only to American social, economic, and cultural vitality, but also to the academic, intellectual, and educational vigor of the college and university communities of which they are members. Nevertheless, the nation's march to full equality of educational opportunity for all its citizens is not over.

To increase access and expand the institutional diversity that results in enhanced social and educational outcomes, many higher education institutions have long engaged in such activities as the recruitment of underrepresented students, high school mentoring and tutorial programs, articulation agreements with community colleges, need-based financial aid awards, and race-sensitive admissions policies. Tools such as these are indispensable to achieving a diverse campus environment.

Taking race and ethnic origin into account in admissions decisions is one of the most controversial of these practices. Race-sensitive admissions were recognized and affirmed in Justice Powell's opinion in the 1978 Supreme Court decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, but subsequent federal court decisions, popular referenda, and institutional policies responding to these recent mandates are forcing some colleges and universities—and threatening to force many others—to abandon race-sensitive admissions policies and to limit the educational value all students derive from learning in a diverse environment.



² Excerpts from *Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms: Executive Summary* (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education and American Association of University Professors), 2000. Used with permission.

The strong empirical evidence presented in this monograph, comprising three studies of college teachers' and students' attitudes toward and experiences with racial and ethnic diversity, demonstrate that campus diversity represents an educational benefit for all students—minority and white alike—that cannot be duplicated in a racially and ethnically homogeneous academic setting. The studies presented here strongly support the proposition that practices such as race-sensitive admissions lead to expanded educational possibilities and better educational outcomes for all students, regardless of race or ethnic origin.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

The findings outlined below are based on (1) analyses of data from more than 570 faculty members (out of a random sample of 1,210) using the Faculty Classroom Diversity Questionnaire, the first comprehensive survey ever conducted of the attitudes toward and experiences with racial and ethnic diversity of faculty members at America's leading research universities; (2) analyses of data from a similar survey of 81 faculty members at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota; and (3) an in-depth, qualitative, multiple case



study of three interactive, multi-racial/multi-ethnic classrooms at the University of Maryland, College Park.

- Upwards of two-thirds of faculty members surveyed believe that their universities value racial and ethnic diversity.
- More than 90 percent of faculty members indicated that neither the quality of students nor the intellectual substance of class discussion suffers from diversity.
- Faculty members said that diversity helps all students achieve the essential goals of a college education, that positive benefits accrue from diversity in the classroom, and that white students experience no adverse effects from classroom diversity.
- The vast majority of faculty members reported that student diversity did not lead them to make significant changes in their classroom practices.
- Faculty members reported being well-prepared to teach diverse classes and feeling comfortable doing so, yet only about one-third of them raise issues of diversity or create diverse work groups.
- Women faculty members, more politically liberal faculty members, and faculty members of color have more positive views of the benefits of diversity than survey respondents as a whole, while full professors and faculty with more years of teaching have less positive views of the benefits of diversity than respondents generally.

- Each of America's top liberal arts colleges has as its core mission a range of developmental outcomes that focus on intellectual purposes in the service of social, personal, and ethical goals. Tolerance and diversity are central to the missions of well over half of these colleges.
- Fully 92 percent of Macalester College's faculty respondents said that having a racially or ethnically diverse student body is essential or very important to achieving the college's mission, while close to 90 percent disagreed with the view that an emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity has lowered the quality of the institution or the student body.
- Almost all Macalester survey respondents believe that a racially and ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students.
- Forty percent of Macalester's classes had no African-American or Latino students in the semester in which the survey was administered, and U.S. students of color were the sole member of their racial or ethnic group in two-thirds of their classes.
- Racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom is necessary, but not sufficient in and of itself, for creating the most effective educational environment.



- Racial and ethnic diversity increases the educational possibilities of the classroom.
- Multi-racial/multi-ethnic classrooms enhance educational outcomes.

WHERE THE EVIDENCE POINTS

The empirical evidence from the three studies presented in this monograph makes it clear that barring colleges and universities from access to a diverse student population denies them an important educational tool for preparing students for their own futures and for the future of our society. The data demonstrate that there are strong educational reasons for universities to recruit and admit a diverse student population.

Faculty members at the nation's top higher education research institutions and at one of the leading liberal arts colleges in the country—the expert practitioners of the college teaching profession—value diversity on their campuses and in their classrooms, regardless of their educational philosophies. The vast majority say that diversity has not diminished the quality of their institutions or their students, does not disserve white students, generates powerful educational benefits for all students, and helps achieve many of the key objectives of a college education. Many faculty members make use of student diversity to enhance the learning process and to enrich their classes. Professors who recognize and use diversity as an educational tool, who include content related to diversity in their courses, who employ active learning methods, and who create an inclusive,

supportive classroom climate can and do produce better educational outcomes in racially heterogeneous classes than in homogeneous classes.

American colleges and universities articulate goals and aspirations related to their underlying values. Most have a range of educational objectives—including academic excellence; learning diverse perspectives from people of diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures; commitment to community; and personal and moral growth—that can be realized only with diverse student populations. A lack of diversity drastically limits the educational opportunities available at colleges and universities and gravely compromises institutions' capacity to fulfill their missions.

If institutions and their faculties are to be true to their own commitment to providing the best education they can, they must have the authority to establish policies and implement practices that will attract students who will contribute to the shared values of the academic community and who collectively will create an environment conducive to accomplishing the institutions' missions. Unfortunately, the affirmative action debate has deflected public discourse away from consideration of the range of qualities that make individuals potentially valued participants in a learning community. The controversy has portrayed race-sensitive admissions policies and other programs to create diverse campus environments as antithetical to academic quality, when the evidence in fact supports Justice Powell's assertion in *Bakke* that racial and ethnic diversity contribute to the "robust exchange of ideas" that characterizes intellectual excellence on college campuses. Finally, the discussion has ignored the educational value of a diverse learning environment to all students—a value to which the findings set forth in this volume attest. The time has come to return the focus of the debate to where it ought to be: how to provide a high-quality college education to all Americans.



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Appendix C

THE CORE VALUES OF VIRGINIA TECH³

The mission of Virginia Tech is three-fold: teaching, research, and outreach. While this does not distinguish the university from other land-grant universities, the people associated with the university think it is a special place indeed. What makes Tech unique are the values we hold as we approach the myriad tasks of the university community. The following five core values and possible means for implementing them are derived from conversations with 19 different focus groups representing seven different segments of the university. The segments are administration, alumni, faculty, graduate students, parents, staff, and undergraduate students. In all, over 200 people participated in these discussions. Over 30 people assisted in the facilitation of the focus groups. While the groups express unique views of the university, the values that follow are held in common, or represent core values, across the groups.

Each of the 19 groups was asked to discuss and answer four questions:

- What do you think of when you think of Virginia Tech?
- What values should Virginia Tech espouse?
- What values do we need to take us to the 21st century?
- What strategies support these values?

Five core values evolved from the discussions. These are briefly discussed, and the strategies identified in support of each value are listed.

Common Bond The members of the university community should be linked by a common bond. This common bond contains a complex profile of moral values that embody the relationship between the person and the university. The specific values that apply to the university include respect, shared and inclusive government, high standards of ethical behavior, and life-long relationships. Individual worth, creativity, and flexibility contribute to the common bond by demonstrating such principles as duty, integrity, honor, leadership, and commitment. Hard work, teamwork, and unity are also listed as expectations of the individual. While there are many dimensions to the establishment of this relationship between the individual and the university, some aspect of the common bond is among the most frequently mentioned values to all groups.

Diversity This university values diversity. As with the notion of common bond, diversity has several dimensions. These dimensions fall into two primary categories: social diversity and intellectual diversity. Social diversity means that Virginia Tech should welcome and appreciate all people regardless of race, gender, social class, or other social category. Intellectual diversity refers to the broad range of undergraduate degree programs, a diversity of theoretical approaches, and a broad definition of service. All segments,

³ Virginia Tech's core values were measured on November 1, 1995.



save one, listed diversity as significant. Central to this value is openness and the continuance of the land-grant tradition of the university.

Education of the whole person is a value expressed by six of the seven segments. It refers to the breadth of the education provided by the university. This value also has two dimensions. The first refers to the manner in which the university interacts with each student and involves strategies that provide for life-long learning. All segments of the university should engage in educating the student, and opportunities to learn should extend beyond the specific core and major studies of the student. The second dimension refers to the continuous education of all members of the university community. Education and training for faculty, staff, and alumni, along with the development of strong outreach educational programs, are central to the idea of excellence. The provision of education, training, and information to the state and its regions along with the exploration of the use of technology to accomplish these goals are emphasized by a number of the respondents.

Excellence refers to the expectations we hold for the outcomes of our efforts. Five of the seven segments of the university community applied the idea of excellence to all three missions of the university: teaching, research, and outreach/service. All groups supported applying this value to at least one of the tripartite missions.



Service Virginia Tech's motto, *Ut Prosim*, has meaning for all segments of the university. Respondents commented that service permeates the university and is endemic to our existence. Many respondents commented that service was the most central of the core values. Discussions of service included elements of other core values, such as duty and integrity. Outreach and service were related to the practical use of knowledge and were listed by all groups in all segments of the university community and, in some groups, dominated the conversation. Much of the conversation concerning strategies surrounding this value had to do with helping the university community, the state, and the general public understand the commitment to service exhibited by this university. Of the core values, service is clearly central.