

### The Future of Minority Studies

A timely series that represents the most innovative work being done in the broad field defined as "minority studies." Drawing on the intellectual and political vision of the Future of Minority Studies (FMS) Research Project, this book series will publish studies of the lives, experiences, and cultures of "minority" groups—broadly defined to include all those whose access to social and cultural institutions is limited primarily because of their social identities.

For more information about the Future of Minority Studies (FMS) International Research Project, visit [www.fmsproject.cornell.edu](http://www.fmsproject.cornell.edu)

#### Series Editors:

Linda Martín Alcoff, Hunter College, CUNY  
Michael Hames-García, University of Oregon  
Satya P. Mohanty, Cornell University  
Paula M. L. Moya, Stanford University  
Tobin Siebers, University of Michigan

#### *Identity Politics Reconsidered*

edited by Linda Martín Alcoff, Michael Hames-García,  
Satya P. Mohanty, and Paula M. L. Moya

#### *Ambiguity and Sexuality: A Theory of Sexual Identity*

by William S. Wilkerson

#### *Identity in Education*

edited by Susan Sánchez-Casal and Amie A. Macdonald

#### *Rethinking Chicana/o and Latina/o Popular Culture*

by Daniel Enrique Pérez

#### *The Future of Diversity: Academic Leaders Reflect on American Higher Education*

edited by Daniel Little and Satya P. Mohanty

## THE FUTURE OF DIVERSITY

### ACADEMIC LEADERS REFLECT ON AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

*Edited by*  
*Daniel Little*  
*and*  
*Satya P. Mohanty*

palgrave  
macmillan



THE FUTURE OF DIVERSITY  
Copyright © Daniel Little and Satya P. Mohanty, 2010.

All rights reserved.

First published in 2010 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®  
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world,  
this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,  
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,  
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies  
and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States,  
the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN: 978-0-230-62068-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The future of diversity : academic leaders reflect on American  
higher education / edited by Daniel Little and Satya P. Mohanty.

p. cm.—(Future of minority studies)

ISBN 978-0-230-62068-1 (hardback)

1. Education, Higher. 2. Minority college students. 3. Cultural  
pluralism. 4. Multicultural education. 5. Racism in higher education.  
I. Little, Daniel. II. Mohanty, Satya P. (Satya Prakash), 1954—

LB2326.4.F87 2010

378.1'982900973—dc22

2009046870

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: June 2010

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

## CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	vii
Introduction: The Future of Diversity <i>Satya P. Mohanty</i>	1
1 Universities and Democratic Culture <i>Nancy Cantor</i>	19
2 From Diverse Campuses to Integrated Campuses: How Can We Tell if We Are "Walking the Walk?" <i>Jeffrey S. Lehman</i>	41
3 Is Diversity without Social Justice Enough? <i>Michael Hames-Garcia</i>	51
4 Equity and Excellence from Three Points of Reference <i>Daniel Little</i>	69
5 Prestige and Quality in American Colleges and Universities <i>Steven J. Diner</i>	83
6 Embracing the Commitment to Access, Diversity, and Equity in Higher Education <i>Muriel A. Howard</i>	89
7 Diversity and Excellence in American Higher Education <i>Eugene M. Tobin</i>	97
8 Educational Inequality and Three Ways to Address It <i>Michael S. McPherson and Matthew A. Smith</i>	109
9 Consuming Diversity in American Higher Education <i>Gregory M. Anderson</i>	123
10 College Access, Geography, and Diversity <i>Teresa A. Sullivan</i>	147

not think these students were just saying it to make me feel that faculty are important. I think they were sincere.

In summary, it is important for many reasons that students at universities that practice affirmative action in admissions actually reap the benefits of those practices. Campuses should be not merely diverse but also integrated. To prepare themselves for life in an integrated world, the students should take advantage of the opportunities for perspective enlargement and role reversal. It is unrealistic to expect them to do so all the time; it is a worthy aspiration that they will experience a daily ebb and flow between the comfortable and the challenging.

Universities should evaluate how successful they are in this regard. They should do the work of evaluating the prevalence of integration pods on campus, and the extent to which they touch the lives of a broad cross-section of our students. And they should nurture them as best they can.

If a university does all these things, then it will have used the sharp knife of integration to carve a work of great importance. It will be walking the walk of integration in a way that even Justice Scalia should admire.

#### NOTES

1. This essay was prepared as a paper for presentation at a symposium entitled, "Diversity and Excellence in American Higher Education: The Road Ahead," at Cornell University, July 30, 2005.
2. *Grutter v. Bollinger*. 539 U.S. 306 (2003).
3. William G. Bowen, Martin A. Kurzweil, and Eugene M. Tobin, *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 4.
4. Mary Jo Bane and David T. Ellwood, "Slipping Into and Out of Poverty: The Dynamics of Spells," *Journal of Human Resources* 21.1 (1986): 1-23.

### 3

## IS DIVERSITY WITHOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE ENOUGH?

*Michael Hames-García\**

#### INTRODUCTION

I recently returned to the small liberal arts college where I received my B.A., not to teach and not to attend classes or an alumni event. Instead, I was returning to give advice to faculty in my former major department concerning its historical challenges recruiting and retaining faculty of color. One of my former professors thought that, as an alumnus of color who directs an Ethnic Studies program (now an Ethnic Studies department) at a large, nearby state university, I might be able to offer some useful insights about how to further the college's and the department's diversity goals. One consequence of returning to my alma mater was a series of reflections about what "worked" for me, what about this college from my perspective as a former student helped me to stay in college. What, specifically, made remaining at *this* college seem doable—particularly given that there were no U.S.-born faculty of color in arts and sciences at the time that I was there and given that there were pitifully few students of color (as far as I know, there were two Latinos in my entering class on a campus of around one thousand students)?

This visit coincided with a request from the editors of this volume to write on the topic of equity and diversity in higher education.

---

\*Michael Hames-García has been Program Director and Department Head of Ethnic Studies at the University of Oregon since 2006. He also directs the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality Studies (CRESS) at the University of Oregon. He is a founding member of the Future of Minority Studies Research Project (FMS) and the author and editor of several books.

In short, I was asked, based on my experience—as an undergraduate at a small, private liberal arts college, as a graduate student at a large, Ivy League research institution, as a junior faculty member in a traditional humanities discipline at a large, highly diverse public research institution, and as director of an Ethnic Studies program at a significantly less diverse public research institution—what I think works in improving equity and diversity for underrepresented groups in higher educational institutions. While I believe that pipeline issues and the dire state of primary and secondary education for people of color in the United States are probably the biggest obstacles to diversifying our colleges and universities, I have arrived at three related recommendations specific to institutions of higher education. I believe that some of these recommendations can also spill over to addressing the issues around the larger pipeline of primary and secondary education, as well.

The first recommendation is to better integrate the university's mission of scholarly excellence into "multicultural affairs" agendas, breaking down the mighty barrier between student affairs and academic affairs and thereby infusing multicultural affairs initiatives with greater intellectual weight and legitimacy in the academy. Second, I believe that it is vital for equity and diversity initiatives (including curricular initiatives) to view any commitment to diversity as part of a larger commitment to social justice, rather than as an end in itself. Indeed, it might be advisable to discard the language of "multiculturalism" and "diversity" in favor of more expansive commitments to social justice. Finally, I would like to recommend ongoing encouragement (rather than a mere tolerance) of the sometimes-inconvenient student organizing that disrupts business as usual on our campuses and frequently forces us to reexamine our moral values and intellectual commitments.

#### CAN DIVERSITY BE A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE ACADEMY'S RESEARCH MISSION?

The common wisdom holds that a surefire way to recruit and retain more students and faculty of color is by recruiting and retaining more students and faculty of color. This strategy usually goes by the name of "achieving critical mass." I agree with it, but with the increasing restrictions on affirmative action practices and the difficulties in increasing the number of people of color in the faculty pipeline, we have to have broader strategies as well. Until an institution can

achieve "critical mass," how can it retain students and faculty who might feel isolated on an overwhelmingly white campus? Student Affairs offices are always involved in decisions about where and how students of color spend their time and receive their support. But what relationship should exist between student affairs and faculty, particularly faculty of color? As chair of an Ethnic Studies department, I am acutely aware of the gulf that exists between research and academic affairs, on the one hand, and institutional equity and diversity and student affairs, on the other. To be blunt, most research faculty, including faculty of color, have a primary identification with the research and academic mission of the university rather than with the kinds of work faculty typically associate with student affairs and offices of equity and diversity. Institutional climate surveys, workshops about stereotypes and overcoming prejudice, and similar activities usually directed toward undergraduates commonly do not seem to be directly engaged with the kind of research that faculty in Ethnic Studies and women's and gender studies, broadly speaking, see themselves doing. As a result, administrators and staff in diversity offices and student affairs are (often unfairly) viewed as intellectually "light" when it comes to precisely those subjects that are most important in recruiting and retaining faculty and students of color.

Those faculty members who enter administrative positions in student affairs or equity and diversity risk a loss of prestige. Ethnic Studies faculty sometimes see such administrators as having given up on real research in order to engage in feel-good activities aimed at "celebrating our differences," rather than addressing legacies of racism and ongoing conditions of structural inequality. At other times, they view them as gatekeepers whose job it is to run interference for an administration resistant to real change. In her May 2008 address to the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education, Evelyn Hu-DeHart accused those working on diversity in higher education with "covering up" for colleges and universities that are not really interested in addressing racism. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*,

[Hu-DeHart] asked her audience to comb through the program for the five-day meeting and note the job descriptions of those who would be speaking, and think about those who seemed absent from this event. The group found plenty of listings for chief diversity officers, administrators and staff members from campus offices in charge of

student support, outside diversity consultants, and faculty members in the fields of education, psychology, and ethnic studies. But they found little evidence of the presence of college trustees, presidents, provosts, academic deans, or professors in more traditional academic fields, especially mathematics and science.

Many of those missing, she said, are “the heart of the academic side” of colleges, people who have power over research, curriculum, and the hiring and evaluation of faculty members.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the fairness of such criticisms or the good intentions of diversity administrators, the gap between them and research faculty is real, and it continues to be, in my mind, one of the most important barriers to making recruitment and retention schemes truly effective. So long as research faculty (who are essential to the equity and diversity missions of colleges and universities) view student affairs and diversity administrators as lacking academic credibility, students of color will remain ill served by retention efforts.

While the organizational chart varies at different institutions, I assume throughout this essay one of the most common arrangements. This arrangement entails an office of multicultural affairs or multicultural services, typically located under a vice provost or vice president (VP) for student affairs; usually separate from this office is the increasingly common vice president or vice provost for diversity or for equity and diversity, often reporting directly to the president or to the senior provost. Offices of multicultural affairs sometimes report to the VP for diversity, but both offices are typically outside of academic affairs and the research division. A nonrandom sampling of websites and organizational charts in June 2008, for example, revealed the following arrangements: Harvard University’s Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity reports directly to the University Provost; the Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Equity of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and its Associate Vice Provost for Academic Multicultural Initiatives both report to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, although the college and school deans report directly to the Provost, rather than to Academic Affairs; the Director of the Multicultural Information Center at the University of Texas, Austin, reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs; Cornell University’s Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development reports directly to the Provost; the University of Virginia’s Dean for African-American Affairs reports to the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer and its Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity reports directly to the

President; the University of Oregon’s Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity reports to the Provost and is, in turn, the reporting unit for the Office of Multicultural Academic Support; Stanford University’s Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity reports to the Provost; Brown’s Associate Provost and Director of Institutional Diversity reports to the academic Provost; Syracuse’s Director of Multicultural Affairs reports to the Senior Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs; the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion of the University of California, Berkeley, reports directly to the University Chancellor, and its Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Equity reports to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. Neither Texas nor Syracuse has Vice Provost- or Vice President-level positions in charge of diversity and/or equity.

This list represents a wide range of leading institutions of research and higher education, and yet, reading the mission statements and web pages of chief diversity officers at Harvard, Michigan, Texas, Cornell, Virginia, Oregon, Stanford, Brown, and Syracuse turns up not a single use of the word “research.” In my sample, only Berkeley distinguishes itself by mentioning research as part of the mission of *both* its Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion *and* its Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Equity. In addition, the Vice Chancellor’s website prominently features links to academic units researching different aspects of diversity. Berkeley’s Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Equity lists as part of her mission “conducting cutting-edge research on faculty equity,” while the Vice Chancellor lists as one of his responsibilities to “encourage ongoing research to understand the effectiveness of activities here and elsewhere.” Offices at the other institutions on this list typically describe their mission as contributing to their institution’s diversity goals and educational mission by eliminating prejudice and discrimination on campus and by creating a climate for recruitment and retention of students, staff, and faculty of color. However, they fail to conceive of themselves (at least within their mission statements) as central to the research mission of the university (either as producers or disseminators of research), except insofar as they describe diversity as a precondition for academic excellence.

I would like to take it as given that more cooperation and communication between academic researchers and multicultural affairs is a desirable goal. Given this goal, the question arises, “What are the optimal conditions for generating the most productive cooperation and communication across the research/student affairs divide?” Another delicate question follows, “Are offices of equity and diversity

as they are currently structured on most campuses more likely to bridge or to deepen that divide?" To address these questions, I would like to make three proposals.

1. *The research mission of the University needs to be front and center in multicultural affairs.* One place to start would be to ensure that the staff of multicultural affairs offices and student affairs include active academic researchers. In order for this to happen, it is necessary for senior administrators to think of the positions as research positions in the hiring process, possibly including turning some positions in multicultural affairs into joint, tenure-track faculty appointments with research departments ranging from math and economics to English and Spanish. Of course, the tasks that multicultural affairs staff members perform include providing emotional support for students, and often students' families. Clearly, not all researchers are necessarily qualified for this kind of work. The goal, then, should not be to hire only active researchers for such positions, but to allow the intellectual mission of the university to take a central role in multicultural affairs work by involving at least some active researchers in the work of multicultural affairs. A position in multicultural affairs, however, would only be attractive to the best researchers if it included teaching and involvement in an academic department, commensurate salary, and the resources necessary to conduct research.

Another way to center the research mission of the university in multicultural affairs would be to involve students as researchers in campus climate surveys, rather than as simply objects of such surveys. Similarly, research internships, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields could figure prominently in the kinds of opportunities that an office of multicultural affairs affords students. Opportunities for undergraduate research would help students to gain confidence in quantitative and scientific research without the stigma of the "remedial" courses that are associated with multicultural affairs at some campuses. Additionally, "honest dialogues" about managing cultural difference in labs could ultimately prove much more important to the success of students of color than workshops on difference set within residence halls, and could also engage the interest of science faculty.

2. *Offices of multicultural affairs and diversity offices must take the lead in disseminating current scholarship on race and education to the faculty and to the administration.* Faculty members of color are often disappointed with how ignorant many senior administrators are regarding research on race and inequality. For example, researchers from Claude Steele to William Bowen have conclusively demonstrated

the inutility of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for judging success in college and beyond, and yet most universities continue to promote it as an important factor in admissions decisions.<sup>2</sup> How can we expect provosts and presidents to be aware of the growing scholarship on race and higher education, however, if their own diversity officers and multicultural affairs staff are not able or interested enough to keep up on and engage in this research? Quite simply, the era when faculty and administrators talk about race without data needs to end. Given how increasingly overburdened many multicultural affairs offices are, enabling them to remain on top of current research, to contribute to it, and to disseminate it within their institutions might mean additional resources, administrative restructuring, and/or a closer convergence between research faculty and multicultural affairs staff. I do not know what the correct answer will be, and it likely will vary by institution, but every institution needs to consider seriously how it can make research more relevant to multicultural affairs and multicultural affairs more relevant to research.

3. *In some cases, equity and diversity offices might actually get in the way of building substantive links between research faculty and multicultural student affairs.* Equity and diversity offices certainly have the potential to create one more layer of bureaucracy between the two. Given the fact that these offices exist, however, institutions should strategize about how to ensure that they do not exist simply to generate another set of disconnected events and initiatives. Rather, they should function to facilitate contact, communication, and collaboration between faculty and students from underrepresented groups. White faculty and faculty in the natural sciences and engineering should be central to this project, both because those faculty are in some cases the least likely to be aware of research on race and inequality and because underrepresented students are most likely to feel personally and socially alienated in their classes. How to mitigate that alienation and how to mitigate inequalities in educational preparation that might result from racism and structural inequality should be priorities of faculty in STEM fields and of senior university administrators. Solutions need not only to take STEM research seriously, but also to take seriously social science research on inequality and social interaction in academic learning and research spaces. Diversity offices are particularly well situated to bring these researchers together to find the necessary solutions, but they need to have the will and the research legitimacy on their campuses to make it happen. They might take as one model among others Stanford University's Medical Youth Science Program (SMYSP). Begun in 1987, the SMYSP mentors low-income

and underrepresented high school students in ways to promote their college attendance and entry into health sciences fields. It has three main aspects. The largest brings high school students to Stanford for a science-based summer program. Another includes weekend workshops focusing on college applications and career counseling, and a third seeks to enrich high school science teaching, in part by training teachers and counselors. Initiatives like this would go much further toward advancing academic diversity goals than a hundred roundtables about stereotypes, prejudice, and "difference" in academic residence halls. Instead of perpetuating the belief that inequality results from individual feelings rather than structural inequality, programs such as SYMSP target the material disadvantage and lack of opportunity faced by communities of color across the nation.

### SHOULD UNIVERSITIES PURSUE DIVERSITY OR SOCIAL JUSTICE?

I would like to make a modest recommendation that universities question the utility of words like "multicultural" and "diversity" and consider replacing them with the goal of contributing to social justice. In the interest of full disclosure, I should note that I have made more than a few arguments in my time in favor of multiculturalism and diversity. Furthermore, I recognize that many different kinds of projects have been articulated under these rubrics, some of which I support and some of which I do not. Few academics would even agree on the definition of a loaded term such as "multiculturalism." Despite such caveats, I am convinced that institutions of higher education should seriously commit to a vision of the university as tied to questions of social justice.

What seems most vital to me at this moment in the history of higher education is that we avoid being sidetracked by justifications for diversity that appeal to diversity for its own sake. These both risk repeating the errors of *Brown v. Board of Education* (which assumed that racial equality would follow automatically from racial integration) and lead to a lack of focus regarding *what* diversity, *when*, and *why*.<sup>3</sup> Brown, Kurzweil, and Tobin remind us that equity, as well as excellence, has a long if inconsistent history as a central concern of higher education in the United States. They argue that the existence of this country's vast system of higher education rests at least in part on the recognition by many different people at many different times of the role education can play in making society more egalitarian and in furthering the ends of social justice.<sup>4</sup> We must try not to let diversity

for its own sake get in the way of keeping these more important goals in sight. It therefore makes sense to me to link faculty and student diversity goals to social justice programs when feasible. Furthermore, I believe that those initiatives, like the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF), that have switched from a strict consideration of race to a consideration of race as one among many factors actually have the potential to strengthen the ends of social justice and racial equality more so than initiatives based strictly on increasing racial diversity. However, it clearly depends on what those "many factors" entail, and I would argue that they should not simply include "a commitment to diversity," but rather a more robust "commitment to social justice."

Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin offer a detailed account of the restructuring of the Mellon Foundation's MMUF:

For the program's first 15 years, only members of "underrepresented minority groups" were eligible to apply. In light of [*Grutter v. Bollinger et al.* and *Gratz v. Bollinger et al.*] and the evolving needs of higher education, the MMUF mission statement was broadened: "The fundamental objectives of the MMUF are to reduce, over time, the serious underrepresentation on faculties of individuals from certain minority groups, *as well as to address the attendant educational consequences of these disparities*" (our emphasis). Then, to ensure that the Foundation's intentions were understood, the criteria for program eligibility were made more inclusive. . . . The new selection criteria include race as one factor among others . . . and they also emphasize the importance of a "demonstrated commitment" to the fundamental purposes of the program.<sup>5</sup>

I would like to draw attention to the difference that the italicized "broadening" of the MMUF mission statement makes. It shifts the emphasis of the MMUF from a goal of pursuing diversity for its own sake to addressing the negative impact of the absence of particular kinds of diversity. In addition, the shift in the eligibility for the fellowship actually targets more precisely students who are committed to improving the representation of underrepresented groups on university faculties. The underlying commitment of the SYMSP to social justice is even more explicit. The SYMSP website states the Program's belief "that helping low-income and ethnically diverse students reach their own educational goals is ultimately the most effective way to help improve the health care services available to underserved and low-income communities." The ultimate goal of the SYMSP, therefore, is not simply to diversify the health sciences, but to improve healthcare

for low-income communities and people of color—a fundamental commitment to social justice. The success of these two programs is undeniable. SYMSP reports that, for its summer program, 100 percent of its students have been from low-income backgrounds, 58 percent have been African American, Latina/o, or Native American, 82 percent have graduated from four-year colleges, and 50 percent attend, or have completed, medical school or graduate school.<sup>6</sup>

Following the lead of programs like these, I would like to suggest three proposals to enhance higher education diversity initiatives.

1. *“Diversity” and “multicultural” requirements in undergraduate curricula should substantively address the nature of structural inequality, racism, power, and privilege, rather than emphasize cultural diversity and tolerance of difference.* Most universities introduced requirements in the 1980s or 1990s for a course or sequence of courses addressing multiculturalism and/or diversity. In many cases, the original intent of the advocates of these requirements was that courses satisfying them would substantively address the causes and consequences of structural inequality in U.S. society. However, on most campuses, a number of compromises were necessary in order to overcome faculty resistance. It is time that colleges and universities revisit those compromises. One common source of resistance was the belief that there were too few faculty members on campuses to staff enough courses unless a broader range of courses on cultural difference and social diversity were included. As a result of transformations across the disciplines in the past two decades, this objection no longer holds at many institutions.

Particularly with regard to students of color, I suspect that diversity classes that are inattentive to structural inequality and legacies of systematic racism can in fact impair retention efforts by leaving students feeling even more alienated from their faculty and peers. As an undergraduate at a not-so-diverse campus, I found encouragement by finding space in the curriculum where faculty and students addressed race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social justice in a substantive manner. I did not receive this from a “diversity” or “multicultural” requirement because, when I was in college, the university did not have such a requirement. Instead, I was able to take courses at all levels of the curriculum (often, the only course offered during a given semester) where the view of the world from a race-conscious perspective either was a starting point or was at least a subject of serious inquiry. This was not all that I took, of course. I also took (and loved) courses on Milton, Dante, European Renaissance art, modern Japanese literature, and chemistry. However, I could study these topics while also

knowing that the reality and struggles of people like me were also worth studying at the university and that there were those at the university who considered it important to work toward a more egalitarian society. I could see that there were faculty and students who recognized the world as a place where racial injustice existed and structured both our society and the educational system. Knowing that I was on campus with others who shared a commitment to racial justice sustained me perhaps more than anything else did. For students of all backgrounds, understanding the nature of social inequality and how power and privilege function will contribute far more to the building of a better society than being introduced to “cultural competence” and the celebration of difference.

2. *Colleges and universities would benefit from restructuring equity and diversity offices into offices with a mission to enhance social justice.* Doing so would, to be sure, encounter significant criticism. One of the greatest obstacles, I believe, would come from development officers’ and trustees’ fears about the reactions of donors. I think, however, that in most cases such fears are unfounded and express rather the timidity of many development offices. I am not calling for academic institutions to have social justice as their *only* mission, only to consider it as the more substantive goal underlying their already-affirmed commitments to diversity. Exemplary cases of how a broad commitment to social justice can be integrated into a university’s mission include efforts by Syracuse University and Brown University.

In 2005, Syracuse University unveiled a set of initiatives intended to bring that university closer to the surrounding indigenous communities, on whose ancestral land the university was founded. In addition to enhancing resources in Native American Studies and creating a student-learning center, the centerpiece of the new initiative is the Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship Program. Providing full financial assistance to students who are citizens of one of the six Haudenosaunee nations (either in the United States or Canada), the Haudenosaunee Promise increased the number of incoming Native American students at Syracuse by 800 percent in one year, to 44 (only 30 of whom were funded by the program).<sup>7</sup> By seeking to address a legacy of economic disadvantage and educational discrimination, the university also met a significant diversity goal. Notably, the university doubled the number of incoming Native American students—even discounting those funded by the new program. The justification for the program, however, is not to increase diversity at Syracuse, but rather to make the university accessible to qualified students who might otherwise not be able to attend.<sup>8</sup>



Brown University's creation in 2003 of the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice has received much more national publicity than the efforts of Syracuse to cultivate relationships with neighboring Native American communities. More striking than the actual report of the Committee, however, is the university's 12-point response. The response included a commitment to work with the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island to "develop ideas for how the history of slavery and the slave trade in Rhode Island may gain its appropriate and permanent place in the public historical record." It also promised to expand a program to provide technical assistance to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and to engage in a wide array of endeavors to support and enhance Providence and Rhode Island public schools.<sup>9</sup>

I believe that more of these sorts of initiatives could arise if colleges and universities were to replace the secondary goal of diversity with the primary goal of social justice. Just consider the differences that a search might yield if advertised as a search for a Vice Provost for Social Justice, rather than a Vice Provost for Diversity. How much more broadly might the successful candidate be invited to envision her or his charge in relation to the campus and to local, regional, national, and global communities?

3. *Colleges and universities cannot shy away from measures of assessment and accountability in enacting their commitments to diversity and social justice.* This is a point that Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin have already made, but it bears repeating.<sup>10</sup> Institutions that make a public commitment to social justice should be able to demonstrate how they have measurably influenced social inequality locally, nationally, regionally, and/or globally. Have their efforts to improve the preparation of disadvantaged high school students and to make higher education accessible to them improved representation of students from underrepresented groups not only in college generally but also in STEM fields? How many students actively participate in endeavors related to social justice, sustainability, and/or community service after graduation? (This last question should be as important as how many go on to receive postgraduate education.)

#### HOW CAN STUDENT ACTIVISM CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY?

In concluding this essay, I should note that part of my own success as a minority undergraduate, and later graduate, student certainly came from an active and effective office of multicultural affairs and from

the presence of faculty members who demonstrated a visible commitment to racial equality and social justice in both their teaching and their support of students. However, another important element was a vibrant, political, and multiracial cohort of friends.

Active support of student initiatives around identity issues needs to be a key element in a broad-based retention program. Being involved, in my case, in a Latina/o student group, in a gay and lesbian student group, and a peace-and-justice residence hall enabled me to feel that, even if there were very few students like me on campus, I at least had a place (or places) where I could feel supported and affirmed. These were not always ideal spaces, of course, but they helped me immensely. One way that universities can foster such spaces is through the support of themed program houses, including racially themed residence halls. Philosopher Amie Macdonald has offered a robust argument in favor of these units.<sup>11</sup> Other ways are to encourage an environment in which students feel empowered to discuss their ideas with faculty and senior administrators.

To illustrate my point, I would like to share two experiences I have had as a faculty member witnessing senior administrative responses to student activists. During my second year as a tenure-track faculty member, white students brutally attacked a Korean student, who suffered brain damage because of the assault. Students called on the administration to denounce the attack, but the president's office responded with a brief statement saying that it did not want to do anything that might jeopardize ongoing criminal investigations. Students were, understandably, outraged that the administration could not even issue a general condemnation of hate crimes, without specific references to any single example. Several student groups, including Asian and Asian American groups, Latina/o and African American student groups, and a number of social justice organizations mobilized and staged a march that culminated in a half-day occupation of the lower floors of the university's administration building. As part of the march, every participant carried a carnation (in Korea, flowers are traditionally presented to teachers on Teacher's Day). The carnations were to be left at the administration building in protest, although once the students arrived, they decided to wait until the university president agreed to talk with them. I observed the sit-in at the administration building, and was appalled when the university president finally made an appearance to hear the students' grievances. She descended from the upper floor, flanked by security guards, as if she feared bodily harm from the carnation-wielding students at her own institution. From a distance,

I could see the thinly veiled contempt she held for the students and she actually turned her back on the designated student leader when he asked her why the administration could not issue a broad statement against hate violence. She could not even bring herself to look him in the face, and I was ashamed that this was my university's administration.

In contrast, at my current university, students recently became active in asking the administration to departmentalize the Ethnic Studies program. Again, the sophistication of the students impressed me. Ascertaining that the college dean was a principal block to departmentalization, they decided to present her with a "bad apple" award, which consisted, rather unpleasantly, of an actual bad apple. To her credit, however, this dean, despite not changing her mind, remained in her office for well over an hour to discuss the matter with them. I am sure that it was unpleasant for her and that she had many other things to do, and she could have dismissed them as disrespectful rabble-rousers, but she did not. Equally impressive to me were the more senior administrators, who repeatedly took time out of their schedules to meet with students and to hear their point of view. This was not a question of ceding authority on intellectual matters to students, but of taking time to educate students about how universities function, what constraints administrators face, and what kinds of reasons they base decisions on. Rather than condemning student activists, the administration at this university actually invited them to participate as interlocutors about the future of higher education.

Making students feel validated in this way makes them more sophisticated activists and citizens. They are more likely to feel good about their alma mater after graduation and more likely to feel valued while they remain on campus. It is quite likely that students in my first example will retain as one of their defining memories of the institution, not the beating of a fellow student, but the university president's response to their plea to her to recognize their pain, anger, and grief. Students in the second example felt respected by the administration and will likely remember those experiences of empowerment and mutual respect as a defining feature of their undergraduate careers.

### CONCLUSION

During my visit to my alma mater, I shared with the faculty in the department that had invited me an article by higher education scholar Anthony Lising Antonio. In it Antonio seeks to address not the

difficulties of recruiting and retaining faculty of color, but what the value of having faculty of color is. Furthermore, he does not approach the topic from the perspective of diversity (providing role models and mentors for students of color or creating a more pluralistic academy). Instead, he asks the question, what unique value, if any, do faculty of color bring to the university's *scholarly* mission? Antonio finds that professors of color "are much more likely [as much as 30 percent more likely] than are white faculty to place high importance on the affective, moral, and civic development of students."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, they "are 75% more likely than white faculty to pursue a position in the academy because they draw a connection between the professoriate and the ability to effect change in society."<sup>13</sup> Clarifying this last point, Antonio adds that although a majority of *both* white professors and professors of color "believe that *colleges* should generally be involved in solving the problems of society... faculty of color are more likely to take *personal* responsibility for applying their talents to the cause of social change."<sup>14</sup> Antonio's research suggests to me that the link between diversity and social justice is, indeed, alive and well for faculty of color. Furthermore, those institutions that pledge commitments to students' civic and moral development and to social change central to their missions will be more successful at recruiting and retaining faculty of color. In turn, those institutions that recruit and retain faculty of color will be most successful at pursuing missions related to students' civic and moral development and to social change.

Colleges and universities will undoubtedly face criticism for centering social justice in their missions, and not all would even do so. However, a social justice mission, within the sciences, math, engineering, arts, and business, as well as within the social sciences and humanities, is perfectly within the range of ends a university might legitimately debate and pursue. Some of the examples I have given show the range of ways institutions have pursued this endeavor. Most colleges and universities in the United States have already stated commitments to diversity. Broadening that commitment to acknowledge the reasons why diversity has become important to begin with can help them to link diversity goals with other goals ranging from sustainability, peace and international cooperation, social welfare and equality, to global health and the elimination of hunger and poverty. My contention is, further, that those institutions that take social justice seriously as central to their missions of producing and disseminating knowledge will also be those most successful in diversifying their faculty and student body. They will also be those that contribute

the most to the elimination of "pipeline" limitations that result from legacies of discrimination and ongoing structural inequality.

### NOTES

I would like to thank Satya Mohanty, who insisted that I actually did have something important to contribute to this discussion. I would also like to acknowledge those senior administrators who have demonstrated to me that, with some vision, hard work, and perseverance, we can accomplish truly amazing things, especially Johnella Butler, Nancy Cantor, Johnnetta Cole, Dan Little, and, at my own institution, Linda Brady and Russ Tomlin. I would also like to acknowledge the many student activists I have had the honor to know at Willamette, Cornell, and Binghamton Universities and at the University of Oregon.

1. Peter Schmidt, "Cold Reality Intrudes on Diversity Conference in Disney World," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 30, 2008).
2. See, among others, William G. Bowen, Martin A. Kurzweil, and Eugene M. Tobin, *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2005), pp. 79–87; Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69.5 (1995): 797–811; and Claude M. Steele, Steven J. Spencer, and Joshua Aronson, "Contending with Group Image: The Psychology of Stereotype and Social Identity Threat," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 34 (2002): 379–440.
3. See Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown V. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
4. Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin, *Excellence*, esp. pp. 13–38.
5. *Ibid.*, 154.
6. Stanford Medical Youth Science Program (SMYSP), Stanford University School of Medicine, "Mission," <http://smysp.stanford.edu/about/> (accessed June 15, 2008) and "Evaluation Results," <http://smysp.stanford.edu/evaluationResults/> (accessed June 15, 2008).
7. Sara Miller, "Haudenosaunee Promise Succeeds in Helping Native American Students Attend SU," *Syracuse University News* (August 22, 2006), [http://sunews.syr.edu/story\\_details.cfm?id=3428](http://sunews.syr.edu/story_details.cfm?id=3428).
8. "The Haudenosaunee Promise at Syracuse University," Syracuse University, <http://financialaid.syr.edu/scholar-haudenosaunee-flyer.htm> (accessed June 15, 2008).
9. *Response of Brown University to the Report of the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice*, Brown University, Providence, 2007. See also "Brown University Committee on Slavery and Justice," [http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery\\_Justice/](http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/).

10. Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin, *Excellence*, p. 151.
11. Amie A. Macdonald, "Racial Authenticity and White Separatism: The Future of Racial Program Housing on College Campuses," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael Hames-García (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 205–225, esp. 207 and 217–219.
12. Anthony Lising Antonio, "Faculty of Color Reconsidered: Reassessing Contributions to Scholarship," *The Journal of Higher Education* 73.5 (2002): 582–602, 591.
13. *Ibid.*, 593.
14. *Ibid.*, 594; emphasis in the original.