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Developing, Implementing and Assessing Effective Strategies to Build an Inclusive Campus Climate

Abstract
This session outlines steps to create and to sustain an inclusive campus climate. Presented strategies will focus on recruitment and retention, student and faculty mentoring, and community outreach. Strategy implementation recommendations discussed include gaining executive support, leveraging existing programs, and maximizing technology. Creating success metrics will also be covered.

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Creating an inclusive college campus climate is a formidable task because of the many factors that can derail even the best laid plans. However, this session will address ways to increase the probability of successfully creating an inclusive campus climate. To this end, the objectives for this session are to:

- Identify and discuss effective strategies to create an inclusive campus climate.
- Review strategy implementation methods to increase the probability of successfully creating an inclusive campus climate.
- Define and select metrics to measure the success and degree of campus inclusiveness.

This session will be interactive as participants will be asked to share their experiences throughout the session. The sharing of ideas and best practices will surface as participants actively discuss their experiences with creating an inclusive campus climate. The session leaders will use the case study format. Session participants will walk away with knowledge, actionable ideas and tools to create an inclusive campus climate.

This session will identify strategies that can create an inclusive campus climate. Strategies in this session will focus on recruitment and retention, student and faculty mentor programs, community outreach, and leveraging technology. Recruitment and retention focuses on getting qualified students on campus. The admissions office working with field and community representatives can target specific students to increase the pool of diverse applicants. Once students are on campus, the challenge is retention. Student professional organizations, Greek organizations, and other social organizations can create an inclusive environment that makes students feel welcome and part of the campus community.

Additionally, mentor programs for faculty and students both work to create a feeling of belonging and sense of community. This session addresses variables that can make mentor programs successful. Having clearly established expectations, rigorous mentor selection and effective program management are a few mentor program aspects discussed. Providing students with mentors can help make the adjustment to college life easier. Similarly, a mentor program for newly hired faculty assists them as they enter the academic community.

The community outreach strategy in the form of partnerships can yield benefits to both the college and business. Opportunities for internships, shared social functions and networking are

three possible positive outcomes from community outreach efforts. Partnerships help expand the borders of the school and business which in turn make for an inclusive community.

The technology strategy discussion focuses on having a web presence that accurately reflects campus diversity. Managing an institution's web image helps create an inclusive campus climate. Website development should highlight and showcases efforts at building an inclusive campus. Having such a site can not only show progress made toward improving the environment, but also remind everyone of the commitment to inclusiveness.

Creating campus-wide educational opportunities is another strategy that helps create an inclusive campus climate. Educational opportunities *for* students should be developed *for* each year they are in school. This inclusion curriculum begins with their first year. Each subsequent year, they would be exposed to other inclusiveness learning events. Having newly hired faculty and staff attend sessions shows the institution's commitment to inclusion. The accumulative effect of these educational opportunities creates a common focus and helps establish the norms of inclusion on campus.

The session's next part reviews implementation methods to increase the probability of successfully creating an inclusive climate. Having support from the highest levels is a key. Having the President and Provost set the tone *for* an inclusive climate is the first step to ensuring success. The Deans and the department Chairs must also support the initiative at their level. Leadership at the top must set the tone, apply appropriate resources, and lead the institution.

Involving cross-functional teams to address inclusion issues and programs is another implementation recommendation. For example, having Academic Affairs and Student Life work together to provide educational opportunity, is a positive step in creating teamwork as well as showing students the importance of inclusion. Having the Community Affairs and Admissions Departments work on a joint recruiting effort to target underrepresented students is another cross-divisional example of teamwork. An added benefit of cross-divisional teamwork is that it leverages resources, expertise, and time toward accomplishing the desired goal of inclusion.

Faculty engagement is required to ensure successful inclusion implementation. Faculty can be engaged by soliciting their expertise in developing the student curriculum. Faculty members can facilitate the educational opportunities throughout campus. Faculty can share their ideas and research on the topic of inclusion. This adds to the richness of inclusive dialogue on campus.

The final part of the session will address success metrics. An initial assessment is invaluable to determine opportunity areas to increase campus inclusion. The session will provide sample surveys for students, faculty, and staff to measure campus climate.

Presenter

Dr. Jerusalem Howard is the Director of Equity and Diversity at The College of New Jersey where he serves as a senior advisor to the President, providing leadership in the development and implementation of programs to support and promulgate a diverse and inclusive campus culture. He collaborates with academic and administrative units to promote the recruitment, retention and success of a diverse student and employee college community. He monitors compliance with *ANEEO* policies and programs, and works with the various campus constituencies to facilitate an understanding of how to apply policies and programs to daily actions, behaviors and decisions to support diversity, inclusiveness, equal access, and equitable treatment. Dr. Howard initiates and develops educational activities related to inclusion, ensuring that the link between inclusion and

excellence is understood and integrated appropriately into the college community.

Prior to taking this post, Dr. Howard served in various Human Resource management positions within a corporate environment. He served three years with Merrill Lynch in a Diversity and Training role. Dr. Howard also worked as a Manager in the Change Management practice with Andersen Consulting. Prior to consulting, he worked *for* Johnson & Johnson and Bristol-Myers Squibb as an HR Manager responsible *for* training, employee relations, organizational development and recruiting functions.

Dr. Howard has presented on the topics of diversity, mentoring, and instructional design at other national professional conferences. He has recently co-authored an article entitled "Essential Mentor Characteristics and Functions in Governmental and Non-governmental Organizations." This work will be published by the International Personnel Management Association for Human Resources. Additionally, Dr. Howard holds an adjunct faculty appointment where he teaches Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior.

Dr. Howard's Ph.D. was granted from Syracuse University. His dissertation topic was "Identifying Essential Mentor Traits in Business, the Military and Academe." At Syracuse he was an awarded the African American Fellowship. He has an MS in the Dynamics of Organization from the University of Pennsylvania and his BS degree is from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.