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Campus Racial Climate Policies: The View from the Bottom Up

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Abstract
We review the debates over campus multicultural goals from the perspective of university officials and again from the perspective of the policy target: students. We then assess a sample of student policy opinions and the role of campus experiences and diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in shaping those opinions. Often descriptive, this provides insights on working with diverse student populations. We focus our research on students because student voices are often unheard in education. Administrators are assumed to "know better" because of their years of campus experience or professional training.

Keywords: student, diversity, education, multiculturalism

Administrators, faculty, staff and students in higher education continue to struggle with the complexities of diversity. Multicultural policies and procedures are endorsed by some for bringing disparate perspectives together (Takaki, 1993), or are challenged by others for creating destructive divisions (Bloom, 1987). Policies for implementing diversity education are complex, involving curriculum and more general campus climate issues. Higher education encounters a more diverse student population that responds differently to policy goals and implementation strategies. This paper untangles the policy perspectives of students: their differing opinions and goals, and the relationship of those opinions to their group membership, socioeconomic background and campus experiences.

We focus our research on students because student voices are often unheard in education. Administrators are assumed to "know better" because of their years of campus experience or professional training. While student involvement in policy making is often exhorted on college campuses (Green, 1989) it is difficult to guarantee. Disenfranchised student groups which are already missing from the campus environment or from key arenas of policy debate, such as student government.

Students are a dynamic dimension in race relations policy activities, often more diverse racially and culturally than their faculty and administrators. Traditionally-aged students come from different cohort experiences than administrators and faculty. Nontraditionally aged students may reflect histories more similar to staff, but they must factor in the undergraduate experience. Students may draw from a more homogeneous geographic area than administration and faculty. Finally, students have a different stake in the outcomes of educational policy: they are often perceived as "just passing through" and lacking a commitment to long term policies. However, students can be policy innovators, undaunted by the experience of failure. Vellela notes that students coping with a rapidly-changing worlkd "...are growing more determined...to make their voices heard" (1988:238).

We review the debates over campus multicultural goals from the perspective of university officials and again from the perspective of the policy target: students. We then assess a sample of student policy opinions and the role of campus experiences and diverse racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in shaping those opinions. Often descriptive, this provides insights on working with diverse student populations.

Multicultural Policies: The View at the Top

The American Council on Education endorsed a framework of multiculturalism and proactive diversity policies in 1989 with the publication of Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity. Green (1989) outlines policies which place responsibility on higher education officials and encourage student involvement in policy setting and implementation. Green asserts that campus climates require an institutional response, that pluralism is a valued goal, and that policies must be comprehensive, yet adapted to different campuses.

Policy strategies toward these goals include: 1) recruitment and retention of minority faculty and students; 2) teaching, learning and curricular enhancement; and 3) a pluralistic campus climate (1988:115-117). Below, we identify key themes in the debate on these three general policy arenas related to the multicultural campus.

Recruitment and Retention

The recruitment of racial/ethnic minority administrators, faculty and students creates a critical mass of human resources on campus for enhancing other pluralistic policies (Chandler 1993; Jones and Thompson 1991; de los Santos and Richardson, 1988). In contrast, D'Souza (1991) challenges colleges and universities to hold to "single standards" of admission and hiring and to resist student calls for "separatist minority organizations" on campuses. He condemns pluralist policies as responsible for minority and nonminority student discontent (1991:18).

Policy issues for minority faculty include: treatment as peripheral to the academy; divergent perceptions of campus and faculty roles; and lower satisfaction rates about salary and promotion opportunities (Aguirre et al. 1993). Pluralistic retention policies and programs question traditional models of tenure and promotion, evaluation of faculty research and teaching performance, and the balance of service demands for campuses with few minority faculty to draw on as resources.

Curriculum and Climate Policy Issues

Policy makers and faculty continue to debate curricular changes. Auletta and Jones (1990) criticize diversity courses—"ethnic studies" and "women's studies" programs—as undermining the mainstreaming of multicultural issues (inclusion into every appropriate course) and for often providing only superficial surveys of issues. Oliver and Johnson (1988) argue that racial/ethnic diversity too often focuses on black/white issues, and omits multiracial themes. Curriculum transformation programs are challenged for ignoring "basics", and creating "divisions" within the academy or undermining academic freedom (Bloom 1989). Curriculum diversity policies require funding and a racially diverse faculty (Green 1989). Thus, minority faculty and students may be caught in the bind of promoting politically unpopular curriculum changes or programs, with few resources and with resistance from peers on campus.

The benefits of a positive campus climate are endorsed in most research on student recruitment and retention. Tinto's (1987) research on student retention demonstrates that student academic factors (grades, study habits, etc.) do not sufficiently explain student success. The student's own integration to campus life directly affects retention rates, including: low reports of racial discrimination, high satisfaction with their university, membership in the racial majority on their campus and having relatively strong peer relationships.

The general campus us climate has been assesed as "the aggregated perceptions or feelings of individuals in the college or university about the institutions" (Crosson 1988:380-81). Some aspects of racial climate include student social adjustment; attitudes of other students; access to instructors; academic programs; social support; institutional policies; and financial aid (Boughan 1992; Anderson 1988; Crosson 1988; Mallinckrodt 1988; MATC 1988; Abatso 1987; Allen 1987; Garibaldi 1986; Oliver et al. 1985; Staples 1984). Other campus climate factors include: school size, forms of control, residential or commuter status, admissions selectivity, income per student, as well as student characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors (de los Santos and Richardson 1988).

Financial concerns were important to minority student success; students with fewer financial concerns persisted longer (Abatso 1987). The quality of interaction with faculty, staff, and other students became crucial to minority student retention, once finances were secured. The intersection of race and class issues in campus policy directly affects minority student success.

Overall, the literature highlights five campus climate factors that improve retention for minority students: 1) size of minority population and access to minority culture, 2) location, 3) school involvement opportunities, 4) financial aid and 5) climate of residence halls (Crosson 1988). Positive campus environments are most likely to occur with visible administrative commitment to promoting the success of minority students comprehensively and systematicly rather than sporadically (Green 1989). Negative campus environments had small numbers of minority faculty members and limited involvement in multicultural strategies by faculty members. The most progress occurs on campuses enhanced by a favorable policy climate.

Inclusion and integration policies can conversely emphasize assimilation of minority students and threaten "cultural suicide" (Tierney 1993). Campus members disagree on faculty recruitment and student admission strategies. Nor do they have similar goals when curriculum changes or campus diversity programs are implemented. For some, the implicit goal is to assimilate students into the academic culture; for others, the more difficult goal is to support minority cultures within traditional academic programs (Tierney 1993). Hoover (1990) argues that most campus diversity policies assume a "deficit" model for minorities; strategies are developed to assimilate the minority student, while leaving non-minorities unchanged by the multicultural experience. To yet other educators, all multicultural strategies are detrimental and represent only political, not educational, goals (Auletta and Jones, 1990). Given these contrasts among policy makers, we can anticipate that students will reflect this

range of opinions and strategies, and perhaps provide new dimensions to this complex equation.

Diversity and Disagreement: Student Perspectives

Student experiences of the campus racial climate on predominantly white and predominantly black campuses are markedly different (Fleming 1983, 1984; Allen 1987, 1992; Feagin and Sykes 1994). Students attending traditionally Black schools come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, with poorer academic preparation, and have fewer time management skills, yet their psychological adjustment is reported as much more positive than peers at white institutions (Allen 1987; Fleming 1983). Allen (1987, 1988) describes black students on predominately white campuses as having access to better physical facilities, financial support and academic resources, but at the cost of psychological well-being and isolation. Fleming (1984) cites the hostile interpersonal climate on white campuses as leading to anger and despair, and "a desire for separation and withdrawal from whites." Both Allen (1992) and Fleming (1983) report that African American women have more positive social and academic experiences on predominately black campuses. Fleming highlights the responses of black women to adverse conditions on white campuses as encouraging greater self reliance and assertiveness.

Hurtado (1992) summarizes studies that compared perceptions of campus climates. Black and Chicano students' views of "institutional commitments to diversity are associated with perceptions of relatively low racial tension" (Hurtado: 561). School racial climates were described as unhealthy, and racial problems were reported with increasing frequency. However, some schools with impressive records of minority degree achievement had favorable urban locations and large minority communities.

These schools enhance the social and academic integration of minority students through specific policy initiatives. However, generally speaking, the students on predominately white campuses do not view minority group representation in the curriculum or on the campus as a top policy goal. White/Anglo student respondents were less likely to perceive the racial tensions on their campus.

Boughan (1992) studied white and nonwhite student reactions to the changing demographics of a school as minority students became the majority (62%). A majority of the responding students appreciated the campus diversity policies and a relatively healthy racial climate. Yet students were still divided over national issues such as multicultural education

and affirmative action. One third of the students (minority and non-minority) felt that they had been discriminated against because of race. Specifically, many of the nonwhite students expressed feelings that American values of equality did not hold true on their campus.

Feagin and Sykes' research indenitifies institutional discrimination in white campus culture which essentially omits "black values, interests or history" (1994:95). Black students are subtly urged by professors, administrators and peers to assimilate into white middle-class culture. Regardless of black students' reactions, they are viewed as incompetent, less competent, or even "uniquely competent" in their academic achievements. Forced to play the role of race representatives in classrooms and committees, black students are then criticized for studying black culture or planning programs and policies that focus on African Americans. In "Case Studies in White Racism" (1995) Feagin and Vera elaborate the role of stereotyping, rumor and the dependence of white educators on the media as practices of institutional discrimination in higher education. They cite the failure of white administrators and faculty to effectively counter antiblack attitudes and practices through policy and leadership. A black student leader in their study remarked "Right now we're in the midst of a civil war on this campus" (1995:37).

The Campus Environment for Minorities

In the 1993 study year, the Midwestern campus for this study had 24,000 full and part time students at the undergraduate and graduate level of which only 903 minority undergraduate students were enrolled.

Minority students were disproportionately urban, from out-of-state, and first-generation college attendees. During the study period, scholarships for undergraduate and graduate minority students were established by an African American entrepreneur. The percentage of minority faculty increased, but remained below 10 percent of the total faculty population. A new Chancellor encouraged recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty, but was publicly criticized by a University Regent for holding a "liberal agenda" and spending "too much time on justice issues, and not enough time on academics."

The state's racial composition (94 % white, 3.6 % Black, 0.8 % Asian and Pacific Islander, 0.8% Native American and 2.2 % Hispanic) describes a less diverse citizenry/than the nation. However, state demographic changes parallel national shifts: between 1980 and 1990, the white/Anglo population decreased as a total percentage, while Asian, American Indian, Hispanic, and Black populations experienced huge growth (percentage growth was 53.4 %, 37.4 %, 24.2 %, and 19.2 % respectively). The

university faced two conflicting tensions. There was great momentum to diversify curricula, to recruit and to retain minority faculty and students, and to address widespread inequities. At the same time, university and state newspapers often debated the advisability of advancing race and gender equity and issues of economic access.

Racial conflict and assaults against minority students remain an ongoing campus problem. In 1992, four white police officers apprehended an African American undergraduate charged with public assault against a woman. The court cited extreme pressures for the student to perform as both a star football player and as an undergraduate; he was diagnosed with "atypical psychosis" and released to outpatient psychiatric treatment. Soon after, he ceased his medications and was then to police for beating on a residential doorway in an agitated state. Two white police officers attempted to apprehend him; the student was shot and permanently paralyzed by police fire. In a similar case, a white student who was in out-patient treatment for suicide attempts, engaged in drive-by shootings at police cars and other vehicles. He was "talked down" at a busy highway section by police officers. This armed student experienced no physical harm during his apprehension.

Minority faculty were not immune from institutional racism on this predominately white campus. In 1993, a white male student challenged an African American female professor's grade of his work based on his charge that the faculty member was racially hostile. The student's grade was changed by a department committee. On the faculty member's appeal, the University Faculty Senate Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee ruled that the professor's academic rights had been violated and recommended redress from the Board of Regents. The Regents ignored the Faculty Senate recommendation. The professor left to take a senior appointment at another university.

Given this volatile environment, the campus exemplifies historical patterns of racial division on a predominately white campus. Campus members' experiences revolve around common themes of racial tension and intolerance, media interpretations that underrepresent minority perspectives, and disparate commitments to campus diversity policies.

In this research, we assess the range of student attitudes concerning diversity policies on campus. Our interest is to identify and contrast the policy opinions of students between minority and non-minority groups, as well as within each group. We assess the students' views of the campus climate, background and campus experiences, and their perceptions of the campus commitment to multicultural perspectives. We then analyze the contributions of these factors to the various policy goals held by minority and non-minority students. By drawing a sample from one university campus, we hold constant the institutional environment, and ex-

amine the range of student responses to that environment, and the impact on student policy opinions.

Research Methods

Data on student policy opinions and information on socioeconomic background and campus experiences come from a racial climate survey from the spring of 1992 at a large mid-western state university. The survey was restricted to undergraduates, enhanced by an oversampling of the minority student population. A total of 433 undergraduate students responded to a telephone survey, conducted by the campus Bureau of Sociological Research. The respondents included 101 African American students, 76 Hispanic/Latino American students, 15 Native American, 50 Asian American students and 201 non-minority students. Students were randomly selected from university registration lists and response rate was quite high: 87.6 percent of the targeted sample completed interviews.

Students self identified their racial ethnic classification. A cross-check was made with administrative codes of student race/ethnicity. In thirteen cases, students who reported themselves as "other" (including "human", "every", etc.) were recoded to the administrative racial/ethnic classification. For statistical analysis, we classified 201 students as Nonminority (including white, non-Hispanic), 101 students as Black/African American and 131 students as Other Minority (including Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American identities).

Dependent Variables

Two dependent variables were constructed for the analysis. Policies was an 8-item scale consisting of statements which reflected students' perceptions of institutional policies on three issues. Attitudes toward recruitment and retention policies for minority personnel and students consisted of four items: "We need American minority faculty members at (University)," "Academic support should be provided for those minority students who feel they need assistance," "(University) should have scholarship programs designed specifically to attract minority students," and "Special consideration should be made to increase the number of minority faculty and administrators on campus." Curriculum concerns were highlighted in three questions: "The education of all students should include ethnic studies," "I would support the inclusion of ethnic studies as part of the academic offerings," and "I believe that

all courses should reflect the contributions of all racial/ethnic groups." One additional statement emphasized institutional policy intervention on climate issues: "I think that the University should encourage students to live with someone of a different race than their own." All eight statements were coded on a five-point Likert scale with strong agreement with the statement represented by a score of 5. The items were initially factor analyzed and the scale has a Cronbach's reliability alpha of 0.83.

One response which did not factor into the Policies scale was used as a separate dependent variable. "All students should meet the same academic standards for admission, regardless of race" (Admission) was coded so that strong agreement with this statement received a score of 5 and strong disagreement received a score of 1.

Independent Variables

Background factors were collected from student respondents, including their age, race, sex, the proportion of minority students in their high school, if they are a first generation college attended and the size of the community in which they attended high school. We also asked about their current class standing, grade point average and current jobs.

Multicultural Practices on Campus

A key component of student experience is the level of involvement on the campus. Involve consists of six variables initially factor analyzed to identify homogeneous items (scale reliability, Cronbach's alpha was 0.87). The items included in the scale were: "I feel I am a real part of the school spirit," "I am very involved in social activities on campus," "The student government at (University) effectively represents me," "I don't feel a part of the (University) social life" (reverse coded), "The administration helps students to belong to campus activities," and "There are plenty of arts and entertainment offered on campus."

An indicator of the campus racial Climate was constructed from six items, including: "Minorities and non-minorities are generally friendly on campus," "I have been the target of a racist act on campus" (reverse coded), "I am seldom conscious of my race when I am on campus," "Inter-racial dating is acceptable on the (University) campus," "I have seen racist acts on this campus" (reverse ceded), and "Whites resent special considerations to minorities on campus." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.72.

As an important dimension of classroom climate and multicultural curricula, four items were identified for a scale called Instruct (Cronbach's alpha of 0.70). The items included were: "Instructors do not show prejudice on the basis of race," "Instructors draw minorities into active participation in the classroom," "Instructors do not show favoritism on the basis of race," and "Instructors refer to the contributions of minorities."

The items for the scale COMMIT pinpoint students' perceptions of the level of demonstrated institutional commitment toward diversity issues and include: "There appears to be a sincere effort by (University) to recruit and retain minority faculty members and administrators" "There appears to be a genuine effort to recruit minority students to (University)" "There is a visible presence of minority administrators on the campus" "systematically addresses race-related issues on campus" "has a clearly stated commitment to diversity and to eliminate racism" "has visible leadership from the chancellor and other administrators to increase minority participation on campus."

Research Findings

As seen in Table 1, the three racial/ethnic classification groups differed substantially on some demographics, although the majority of students fell within a traditional age range (18-22). The African American students come from a more urban, national background than other groups. Only 54.4 percent of Black students graduated from a within-state high school, compared to 74 percent of other minorities and 87.1 percent of nonminority students. Black students in the sample also were more likely to come from counties with large populations.

Differences were also found in the students' educational experiences. Some 30.5 percent of other minority students were the first member of their family to attend college, while 24.8 percent of Black students and 24.4 percent of nonminority students were first in their families to attend. Students had widely different experiences with cross cultural contact in their high schools; only 18.4 percent of the nonminority students and 34.4 percent of the other minority students came from high schools with a minority population greater than 15 percent; 65.3 percent of Black students attended high schools with minority populations this large.

Substantial differences were found in college grade point average by race/ethnicity. While 34.3 percent of nonminority students and 42.7 percent of the other minority students had GPAs below 3.00, some 61.4 percent of the Black students had college GPAs below this level. Differences were also found in current student employment levels: while 63.2 percent of nonminorities and 61.1 percent of other minorities were em-

ployed while in school, some 49.5 percent of African American students were employed. In general, when students were employed, their average hours worked per week were similar across groups.

Student Experiences of the Campus

As anticipated, a tremendous variation occurred in student descriptions of their college experiences with cross cultural contact, multicultural practices and policy opinions. African American students described their campus climate more negatively (see Table 2), citing white student resentment toward minorities, describing less friendly interactions among races, and stating that they have seen or been the target of racism on campus. Other minorities reported substantially more positive views of the campus climate than African American students, but were significantly less positive than white/Anglo students.

The scale involve reflects student reports of a sense of belonging to the campus community through extracurricular activities. Nonminority students reported significantly higher agreement that the student government represents their views, that they feel involved in social life and school spirit. African American students reported significantly lower involvement rates and less positive views of the quality of campus interaction than white/Anglo students. Other minority students rated their experiences as more similar to nonminority students, and as significantly more positive than African American students.

Students also differed by race in their rating of the level of multicultural efforts and interactions of the faculty. Instructors were rated most positively by nonminorities in their efforts to refer to minority contributions in the classroom, efforts to draw minorities into class participation, and their equitable treatment of students. Black/African American students rated the instructional climate lowest, while other minorities (Hispanic/Latino, Native American and Asian) ranked the climate significantly higher, but substantially less positive than nonminority students' ratings.

Student's perceptions of the institutional commitment to diversity mirror the results of the campus climate and instruction ratings. African American students were significantly less likely to perceive the administration as supportive of diversity policies than all other students. Nonminority students were the most likely to report institutional efforts to expand minority retention of both faculty and students. Other minority students reported higher evaluations of the institutional commitment than African American students, but lower evaluations than nonminority students.

Student Policy Views

Student policy opinions were also examined for group differences in resistance to or acceptance of general multicultural educational policies, and a specific indicator of student attitudes toward differential admission standards tied to race/ethnicity. African American students are the most likely to support general multicultural policies, other minorities are significantly less supportive, but still more supportive than nonminority students.

When students were asked if they support a campus policy that all students, regardless of race, meet the same admission standards, the pattern of responses are again related to student race. Nonminority students support the notion of a "color blind" admissions standard at a significantly greater rate than do all minority racial groups. This is the only indicator in which the dichotomy of minority/nonminority student status splits the responses. Admissions policies constitue a unique dimension in factor analysis and student policy opinions.

The variation of responses within student groups by race is greatest among African American students (sd = 1.03) and least among non-minorities (sd = 0.72). While minority students have significantly different policy perspectives than nonminorities on the issues, we find substantial disagreement within minority groups, especially among African Americans, over the latter issue. That students of color are in disagreement is perhaps imbedded in the clashing views meted out by the legal system, heard in political debates or the media, and implemented by educators across school settings. Certainly, we have little national consensus on the meaning and consequences of race conscious policies (U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1979).

Social Influences on Student Policy Views

Our analysis demonstrates the influence of student background variables (gender, race, school standing and employment), then adds more demographic information on diversity students experienced in high school (size of home community, the proportion of minority students and the quality of interaction between non-minority and minority students in high school). We then assess the effects of current multicultural experiences of the students on campus, as well as their ratings of the campus commitment to diversity.

These factors contribute significantly to explaining student viewpoints on general multicultural policies as well as the admissions variable (see Table 3). Students who strongly support general multicultural

policies rate the university as significantly lower on its commitment than other students. The coefficients in the equation demonstrate that women and African American students are significantly more likely than all other students to support multicultural policies, and that Anglo/white students are significantly less likely to support these policies. Note that the controls for the size and diversity of the students' past experiences make no additional contribution to the equation. These variables explain over 25 percent of the variance in student policy views. A test for interactions among gender, race/ethnicity and other student variables yielded no significant results.

Only two variables from our model explain student views on admissions policies: student ratings of university commitment and instruction al attention to multicultural issues in the classroom. The student background variables (sex, race/ethnicity, class standing, etc.) do explain a significant amount of variance in attitudes toward admissions policies though none of the individual coefficients are significant beyond a 95 percent confidence level. The total model explains only 10 percent of the variance in student attitudes.

Gender and Policy Views

We ran the regression equations separately for female and male college students. The equation predicting general multicultural policy support among women explains 16 percent of the variance, though none of the individual predictors is significant This suggests that women students hold fairly homogeneous views, though the direction of the coefficients show that African American and white/Anglo women students diverge in their levels of support, even when all other factors are controlled. Male students who support multicultural policies do so in a similar pattern and African American men are significantly more likely to support multicultural policies than White/Anglo and other males. Ratings of the campus commitment to equity activities are related to their perceptions of administrative action, with men who rate such commitment as very LOW showing the highest support for multicultural policies. The adjusted R(2) for this equation is .335.

The equations predicting women students' attitudes toward admission policies yields only two significant predictors: their ratings of instructional practices and their perceptions of the commitment of the university to multicultural actions. In general, among all women students, those who positively rate the actions of their faculty and the administration are most likely to exhort an admissions policy that treats all students the same. The same trend appears among male students, with the excep-

tion that student standing enters as a significant predictor. Senior males are more supportive of admissions policies that ignore race and ethnicity factors.

Race and Campus Policies

We next ran the equations separately for three groups of students: African Americans, White/Anglos and Other Minority Students (see Tables 5 and 6). For the general multicultural policy regressions, the intercept for each regression line of the three groups demonstrates the substantially different models for each group. White/Anglo students have the lowest level of support for multicultural policies in higher education (intercept value of 23.728). White/Anglo females, students who see the campus climate as positive, and students who rate the campus level of commitment to equity as low, are the most supportive of such general policies. White/Anglo students are most in support of admission standards that treat all students without regard to race/ethnicity or any other status (4.129) and show no significant patterns of variation in their support for this policy.

African American students, including both women and men, support general multicultural policies at the highest level (40.470) for the three groups, and none of the factors in our equation differentiates the level of support among these students. Their policy attitudes are quite different from other racial/ethnic groups on the campus. Their support of a "race conscious" admissions standard is greatest among the groups, with a lowest value intercept of 0.836. On this latter equation, some differences among African American students are revealed, with the equation predicting some 10 percent of variance. The single factor which distinguishes support among these students is their rating of the level of campus commitment to equity issues.

Other minority students on the campus exhibit support for general multicultural policies at a relatively high rate. Our model predicts the greatest amount of variance in scores for this group ($r(2) = .197$, $p = .01$) and the factors which contribute are instruct, climate and commit. Among minority students other than African Americans, the higher their rating of instructional equity practices among faculty, the greater their commitment to multicultural policies. In contrast, those students who rank the University as having a more negative racial climate, or who rank the campus commitment to multicultural issues as low, are more likely to support general multicultural policies. Their support for a race-conscious admissions policy is at a level between the White/Anglo and African American groups (intercept value of 2.24). The factors predicting

variation among these other minority students are the multicultural factors of instruct, involve, and climate, as well as community size. Students from larger communities are more likely to support a race-conscious admissions policy.

Conclusion and Discussion

Our research demonstrates important patterns in student policy attitudes linked to their racial/ethnic status, even alter other student characteristics are controlled (grades, urbanicity, experience with diversity, campus experiences). African American students see the campus climate less positively, administrators as less committed, are less involved in campus life, and perceive classroom activities as less inclusive than other minorities or white/Anglo students. To some extent as a consequence of these perceptions, African American students more urgently endorse multicultural curricular revisions.

African American students stand apart from their campus peers on policy opinions. On a multiethnic/multiracial campus, our data show evidence of some erosion of support among non African American minority groups for multicultural policies and affirmative action. Non-minority students are clearly the most resistant to affirmative action admission policies and other pluralist campus goals. As federal policies are under pressure, and state university systems consider repeal of affirmative action policies, student policy opinions are in flux. If African American students experience an increasing gulf between themselves and their non-minority or other minority group campus peers, past research suggests their alienation will increase and retention rates will drop.

The differences between African American and all other groups of minority students remain a consistent finding. However, we note the very marked diversity within racial ethnic groups of students. African American students support general multicultural policies, while the support of Anglo/white students and other minorities is less positive, and with a greater diversity within groups. The "other minority" group, we remind the reader, is an artifical construction of several distinct ethnic groups (Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Native American) that were collapsed to meet parameters for the statistical analysis. This group has great variation in opinions on multicultural policy support, and our data cannot reliably untangle the relationship for distinct racial/ethnic groups. This polyglot group of students is also more resistant to race conscious admissions standards than African American students. Given these patterns, administrators, faculty and students must carefully balance their under-

standing of "minority" campus issues to recognize diversity both within and between racial/ethnic groups.

Keys to understanding differences in student policy opinions are student perceptions of instructional practices, campus climate, and campus commitment to multicultural practices. Each contributes to student policy views, even after taking into account the wide variation in student perceptions within racial/ethnic groups. As some minority groups define the campus as more positive in instruction and climate, they perceive the administrative commitment as more positive. For all racial/ethnic groups, students who perceive their administrators as committed to diversity policies are more likely to commit themselves to policies of multiculturalism.

We did not question students about potential sources of funding for the multicultural policies they support. The debate over reallocating limited resources on campus should include students who, in our study, are less involved in student decision making groups. The domination of student associations on campuses by nonminorities ensures that minority students, who are most alienated, will have few opportunities to change campus funding priorities.

Those students who see mostly positive inter-racial contact, who report higher grades and a greater sense of inclusion on campus, appear to approach student policy issues from a position of complacency. The status quo is working in their viewpoint. As African American and women students view the campus more negatively than their peers, and often from a position of distance from campus activities, they bring policy perspectives that must be a part of the campus debate. The diversity of opinions within these more disenchanted groups argues against tokenism on campus policy committees, or reliance on generalized media views of campus events. The singular African American or female student cannot know or effectively represent the range of student policy opinions needed to provide a robust account of student experiences, creative resolutions and economic scenarios. Given the construction of gender, class and race in campus administration, on campus faculties, and in student government, it is likely that minority, low income and female students will have a difficult time being heard in regular policy channels.

We urge administrators and educators to consider systematic input from disenfranchised groups, including qualitative interviews and focus groups with concerned students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds. We measured student perceptions of campus climate and policies. Clearly, other measures of these important dimensions must be developed at the local level to triangulate with student and faculty opinions. Our estimates of the effects of student demographics (prior experience with diverse schools and communities, student grades, etc.) are quite conserva-

tive because of the broad categories available in our study. Our use of an oversampling of minority student groups allows us to look at within and between group differences. However, our statistical models cannot be generalized to other campuses because of this sample distortion. Future research should refine the measures of student experiences and group perceptions, with a special emphasis on multicultural practices on predominately white campuses, including qualitative case studies to include diverse student voices.

The quality of educational opportunity and work life is affected for every group by our day-to-day campus policies on child care, health benefits, salary equity, promotion and tenure of faculty, etc. Inclusiveness and equity filter into every dimension of the university. Our findings indicate that student support and perceptions of these processes are closely linked to their racial-ethnic status. Our research also demonstrates gender-based differences in endorsement of multicultural policies, although our models could not fully identify variables which influence these gender differences. Administrators and faculty should build into their policies a recognition of these important differences between and within student groups. To build support for multicultural educational goals on any campus will require demonstrated administrative commitment, changed instructional practices, and attention to the pluralistic inclusion of student groups in policy decision making.

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