Assessing business students' sensitivity to diversity issues within in a MSI: implications for continuous curriculum improvement

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ABSTRACT

Demonstration of cultural context diversity in business programs is essential to obtain and maintain AACSB accreditation.   For minority serving institutions (MSI) knowledge of business students' awareness of and sensitivity to diversity issues is crucial in order that a wide variety of perspectives may be included in all business courses and activities. The purpose of this study was to assess the existing levels of awareness among MSI business students toward issues of diversity. Study results are presented, implications for AACSB "continuous improvement" through micro-curriculum revisions are discussed, and suggestions for including diversity in MSI business courses are also provided.

Keywords: Diversity, MSI, continuous improvement, business,

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural and diversity understanding are two of the general knowledge and skill areas required for obtaining and maintaining The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) undergraduate degree program accreditation.   AACSB's requirement (2009) for learning experiences in "multicultural and diversity understanding" defines neither *multicultural* nor *diversity*. As Pope notes, "there is no single or broadly accepted definition of the term *multicultural*" (Pope, 1993). However, Barr and Strong define a multicultural organization as "one that is genuinely committed to diverse representation of its membership; is sensitive to maintaining an open, supportive and responsive environment; is working toward and purposefully including elements of diverse cultures in its ongoing operations; and is authentic in its response to issues confronting it" (Barr and Strong, 1988).

Students also do not have a clear understanding of the meaning of *multicultural*.   Insofar as diversity, *Merriam-Webster's* online dictionary offers this definition: "**. . .** the condition of being diverse : VARIETY; *especially*: the inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization <programs intended to promote diversity in schools> …" (Merriam-Webster, 2009). Schneider's definition also focuses on variety: "Diversity refers to the variety created in society by the presence of different races, ethnic backgrounds and cultures, as well as differences that emerge from class, age, and ability, with the expectation that each of these concepts, in relation to each other, enriches the meaning and value of the other" (Schneider, 1995).   While no federal law defines a diverse workforce, Guion's definition of diversity is helpful: "Diversity is a mosaic of people who bring a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact" (Guion, 1999). Public companies and governmental agencies have been reported as more likely to have a definition of diversity whereas small businesses as least likely to have an official definition of diversity. Greenberg offers a good working definition of workplace diversity: "Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more" (Greenberg, n.d.)

Penn State notes there are two dimensions of diversity: primary dimensions of diversity are those characteristics that cannot be changed, such as gender, ethnicity, race, age, physical abilities or qualities, etc., while secondary dimensions such as education, marital status, income, and geographic location are mutable or changeable (Penn State, 2001).   Within the educational environment, Gurin's expert report offered in *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* presents a three-pronged view of campus diversity: structural diversity (the student body's racial and ethnic composition); classroom diversity (curricular incorporation of knowledge about diverse groups); and informal interactional diversity (the opportunity for student interaction with others from diverse backgrounds). She explains: "The impact of structural diversity depends greatly on classroom and informal interactional diversity. Structural diversity is essential but, by itself, usually not sufficient to produce substantial benefits; in addition to being together on the same campus, students from diverse backgrounds must also learn about each other in the courses that they take and in informal interaction outside of the classroom. For new learning to occur, institutions of higher education have to make appropriate use of structural diversity. They have to make college campuses authentic public places, where students from different backgrounds

can take part in conversations and share experiences that help them develop an understanding of the perspectives of other people" (Gurin, 1997).

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY

It should be noted that, at least from the perspectives of minority students, ethnicity is the primary criteria for defining diversity in the workplace (76.6 percent). Gender is the second more important component (53.4 percent), followed by age (29.8 percent) and nationality (26.6 percent). Socio-economic background, religion, personality, and education are also included to a lesser extent; and language skills, sexual orientation, work *style*, work function, physical disability, and inclusive work environment are also mentioned (Definitions of Diversity, 2008).

Although students value at least the primary dimensions of diversity, they are unsure as to what constitutes diversity in their education. For example, results from a recent Kennedy School Student Government survey of Harvard students demonstrated a significant gap between the value placed by students on diversity (3.6 on a scale of 4) and the extent to which students felt diversity was incorporated into the classroom through teaching and course materials (2.7 to 2.9 on a scale of 4) (Kennedy School Student Government Survey, 2009). Since 2000, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has obtained annual data from students from more than 1300 colleges and universities about participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. NSSE survey data represents undergraduate "good practices" that are used to identify and improve aspects of the undergraduate experience (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2009). Focusing on campus diversity as one of those aspects of good practices, Pike and Kuh utilized 2001 NSSE data to conclude that "the effects on the campus environment of interactions among diverse groups seem to depend on the nature and quality of the interactions, rather than on their quantity" (Pike and Kuh, 2006).

Rankin and Reason (2005) examined student perceptions of race on campus and also found differences between the experiences and perceptions of students of color (African American/Black; Asian American; Chicano/Latino/Hispanic) and white students. They encouraged "[q]uality interactions, those that intentionally maximize cross-racial interactions and encourage ongoing discussion contact... both inside and outside the classroom" (Rankin and Reason, 2005). The Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS) initiative helped 102 participating MSIs support enhanced student success through the collection and use of NSSE data for decision making, accountability, and campus change in various areas including diversity and multicultural awareness (Del Rios and Leegwater, 2008).

Laird and Associates also used 2003 NSSE data to investigate whether HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions) were serving Hispanic students in similar ways that HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) serve African American students. They concluded that "the average Hispanic senior at an HSI looks quite similar to the average Hispanic senior at a PWI (Predominately White Institution) in terms of engagement, satisfaction with college, and gains in overall development in contrast to the results for African American seniors who are more engaged at HBCUs than at PWIs" (Laird, et.al., 2004).

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The authors were inspired by the work of Hansman, Jackson, Grant and Spencer who surveyed graduate students to determine gender, race, equality and diversity perceptions prior to revising the curriculum to encourage understanding of racial and gender issues. The authors administered The Campus Diversity Survey, an instrument developed and validated by The Regional Consortium for Multicultural Education (2007). A copy of The Campus Diversity Survey can be found in the appendix.

This study was conducted during the fall 2009 semester at a southern minority serving institution of more than 12,000 students. While the desire for higher education is great, the economically disadvantaged state of the region means that students are often at risk of leaving school to focus on the needs of their families for periods of time. Those factors (the majority of the student body attending part time, being first-generation, depending on financial aid, and lacking college readiness) contribute to extended times for many of our students to graduate (UTB/TSC, 2009). This university is generally considered a commuter campus where students drive in from surrounding communities with only a small portion of its student body living on campus. This survey was administered to 72 graduate and undergraduate students in the School of Business, specifically enrolled in management and marketing classes.

RESULTS

The survey instrument is composed of five different sections: background information campus experiences with diversity, attitudes and actions related to diversity, improving the campus environment toward diversity, and the campus as a welcoming environment.

Background Information.

This section solicited demographic data from the students being surveyed. The survey results indicated that 79 percent were full-time undergraduate students with only three percent being graduate full-time students. Sixty-four percent were management majors and 34 percent were marketing majors. The age groups represented were: 25 years of age or less (the largest percentage at 72); between 26 and 40 years of age, 25 percent; and more than 46 years of age, three percent. Ninety percent of the students surveyed indicated being Christian or a specific religion with only ten percent having no religious affiliation. Ninety-two percent indicated they were Chino/Latino/Hispanic while one percent African American/Black; four percent White/Caucasian and three percent reporting other. Forty-eight percent of the students were female with 52 percent male. Of the students surveyed, 97 percent reported being heterosexual with three percent bisexual.

Campus Experiences With Diversity.

This section dealt with students' sensitivity to having been discriminated against in some way while on this university campus. Eighty-two percent of the students responded they had never felt discriminated against or harassed whereas 18 percent had felt discrimination or harassment. Of the 18 percent that had felt discrimination, 15 percent felt that discrimination was because of age; eight percent because of economic status; 46 percent because of gender,

eight percent because of ethnicity; and 23 percent because of physical appearance, poor Spanish-speaking skills or background.

Students indicated that discrimination or harassment was mainly expressed by verbal comments at 77 percent of the responses, 15 percent indicated they were ignored and 8 percent indicated they were harassed or discriminated against with glances. Thirty-three percent of these instances occurred in a college office, 33 percent while working at a college job and 25 percent occurred in a college classroom. The groups responsible for the discrimination or harassment were: 38 percent faculty; 31 percent, staff; 3 percent, students; and 8 percent, administration.

Table 1 represents three questions specifically about the group that was responsible for making insensitive or disparaging remarks (See Table 1 at end).

These scores indicate that students have a low to moderate awareness of discrimination or harassment and need additional training in sensitivity and awareness of issues making up discrimination and harassment of others. Faculty members should make every effort to recognize diversity in all their classes and incorporate presentations regarding racial and gender issues, case studies, group presentations and readings that promote multiple viewpoints of these issues. (See Table 2 at end).

These percentages suggest that college staff, faculty, administrators and teaching assistants have a moderate to high degree of awareness about discrimination or harassment. Because educational institutions must implement diversity training programs within their institutions, these results point to a high percentage of awareness within this group. None the less, more training or repetition of training should occur to ensure this percentage is even lower.

Attitudes And Actions Related To Diversity.

Section three relates to student attitudes and possible resulting actions toward various aspects of diversity. This section surveys for the students own experience related to various aspects of diversity prior to university enrollment.

Regarding ethnicity, 97 percent of students indicated most prior contact with Chicanos/Latinos/Hispanics and 84 percent of students indicated prior contact with Whites/Caucasians. Less contact was reported with other ethnic groups including 28 percent with African Americans/Blacks; 26 percent with Asians/Pacific Islanders; and 6 percent with American Indians/Alaskans/Aleuts. 75 percent of students indicated prior contact with Non-native English speaking persons.

Regarding sexual orientation, 42 percent of students indicated prior contact with openly gay, lesbian or bisexual persons. Twenty-five percent of students indicated prior contact with persons of a different economic background other than their own. Thirty-five percent of students indicated prior contact with persons of a different religious background other than their own. Fifty-one percent of students indicated prior contact with persons with a disability.

This section next surveyed the student's possible resulting actions as related to various aspects of diversity. For example, students were asked whether or not they would be comfortable being close friends or roommates/neighbors with individuals of different ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, religious belief, HIV/AIDS status, and national origin. Ninety-five percent of students indicated comfort when considering either becoming close friend or roommates/neighbors related to persons of different ethnicity, religion and national origin other than their own. However, less comfort was indicated related to sexual preference and HIV/AIDS. Approximately 29 percent of students indicated that they would not be comfortable

being close friends or roommates/neighbors with an openly gay or bisexual man or woman. Forty-nine percent of students indicated that they would not be comfortable being close friends or roommates/neighbors with an individual with HIV or AIDS.

In addition, students were asked whether or not they would be comfortable dating an individual of different ethnicity, sexual preference, disability status, religious belief, HIV/AIDS status, and national origin. Regarding ethnicity, 99 percent of students indicated a willingness to date Chicanos/Latinos/Hispanics and 88 percent of students indicated a willingness to date Whites/Caucasians.   Similarly, 87 percent of students indicated a willingness to date an international student. Approximately 62 percent of students indicated a willingness to date each of the other ethnic groups including African Americans/Blacks; Asians/Pacific Islanders; and American Indians/Alaskans/Aleuts. Regarding religion, 75 percent of students indicated a willingness to date a person with a different religious belief than their own. Regarding disability status, 50 percent of students indicated a willingness to date a person with a disability. Only 3 percent of students indicated willingness to date an openly gay or bisexual man, while 21 percent of students indicated willingness to date an openly gay or bisexual woman.   Only 8 percent of students indicated willingness to date an individual with HIV or AIDS.

This section then surveyed the student's likelihood of experiencing various feelings and/or behaviors as related to various aspects of diversity. Interestingly, for four of nine issues or scenarios, the student's responses lack overall agreement or tendency. For example, excluding respondents reporting, "not sure/don't know," 46 percent of students, indicated a likeliness that they would not challenge others on racial/ethnic specific derogatory comments while 41 percent of students would. In addition, 53 percent of students indicated a likeliness that they would disapprove of a display of public affection by a gay or lesbian couple while 40 percent of students would not. Furthermore, 53 percent of students indicated a likeliness that they would refuse to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture or sex, while 43 percent of students would not. Also, 46 percent of students indicated a likeliness that they would take action to have offensive graffiti removed, while 42 percent of students would not.

For five of the nine issues or scenarios, the student's responses indicated further overall agreement or similar tendency. For example, excluding respondents reporting, "not sure/don't know", 80 percent of students indicated a likeliness that they would approve a display of public affection by a heterosexual couple, while 15 percent of students would not. In addition, 78 percent of students indicated a likeliness to get to know people from different cultures, while 14 percent of students would not. Furthermore, 71 percent of students indicated that they would not repeat a comment or joke about a religion other than their own, while 28 percent of students would. Also, 73 percent of students indicated that they would not repeat a derogatory comment or joke about gay, lesbian or bisexual individuals, while 25 percent would. Also, 87 percent of students indicated that they would not repeat a derogatory comment or joke about people with disabilities, while 11 percent would.

Next, this section surveyed the students regarding how their attitudes toward various aspects of diversity have changed since they became university students. On the average, 35 percent of students indicated an increased acceptance toward various aspects of diversity with a range of 30 percent to 45 percent related to all diversity variables included in the survey including ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, HIV/AIDS status, and national origin. 30 percent of students indicated an increased acceptance toward both heterosexual women and individuals with HIV or AIDS. Forty-five percent of students indicated an increased

acceptance toward a person with a disability. On the average, only 2 percent of students indicated a decreased acceptance toward various aspects of diversity with a range of 0 percent to nine percent related to all diversity variables included in the survey including ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability, HIV/AIDS status, and national origin. Nine percent of students indicated a decreased acceptance toward individuals with HIV or AIDS. In addition, seven percent of students indicated a decreased acceptance toward an openly gay or bisexual man or woman. Furthermore, five percent of students indicated a decreased acceptance toward American Indian/Alaskans/Aleuts and Asians/Pacific Islanders. Also, one percent of students indicated a decreased acceptance toward a person with a different religious belief than their own.

In summary, survey results related to prior ethnic diversity-related contact reflect the demographic make-up of the student body and university community surveyed. Overall, surveys indicated significant acceptance related to most aspects of diversity. Specific aspects of diversity indicating less acceptance included sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS status. Over 50 percent of students surveyed, for example, indicated that they would befriend and date regardless of diversity variables except for openly gay or bisexual men/women and individuals with HIV or AIDS.

Improving The Campus Environment Toward Diversity.

The survey results of section four are shown in the following tables which illustrate how the students believe that three positive interventions by the institution could possibly help them become more aware of and sensitive to the needs of different multicultural groups:
The three interventions are: 1) Awareness/sensitivity workshops or programs; 2)Taking a general education course that focuses on research perspectives relating to multicultural groups; 3) Having art, music and cultural events that recognize distinctive multicultural groups. (See Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 at end)

Eighty-four percent of the students surveyed felt that evaluating staff and faculty on their ability to provide services that enhance the university climate for diversity would positively affect sensitivity and awareness of minorities and cultural distinctiveness on our campus.

In summary the survey results were overwhelmingly positive for sections four and five of the survey. The students expressed positive attitudes regarding more awareness/sensitivity workshops or programs specific to multicultural entities. They were in favor of taking at least one general education course that focuses on research and learning perspectives of multicultural issues. The vast majority of the students also favored having more art music and cultural events to recognize cultural diversity. They also felt positively about having staff and faculty being evaluated on their ability to provide services that enhance the university climate for multicultural diversity.

The Campus As A Welcoming Environment.

Section five of the survey instrument asked for the student's views regarding their perception of the campus as a welcoming environment. Eighty percent agreed that they experienced either to a great extent or to some extent a sense of belonging or community at this university. Sixty-six were either very satisfied or satisfied with their campus experience/environment regarding multiculturalism at this university. Only 11 percent was

dissatisfied with their campus experience/environment regarding multiculturalism at this university.

DISCUSSION

Seeking and utilizing student input as a basis for change is not new. Hansman, Jackson, Grant and Spencer surveyed graduate students to determine gender, race, equality and diversity prior to revising their curriculum to encourage understanding the reality of racial and gender issues (Hansman, et.al., 1999). Phillips, Settoon, and Phillips used student survey input data to design new business management curricula (Phillips, et.al. (2003). The Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Polytechnic Institute has gone one step further and is one of the first institutions to offer a business diversity minor.

Attention and sensitivity to curricular, social, economic and cultural expectations must also be considered prior to curriculum revision. Laden reminded HSI business faculty to be cognizant that HSIs also educate non-Hispanic White students and that the "dynamics of cultural and social diversity will continue to be played out in a variety of dimensions within HSIs" (Laden, 2001). All MSI faculties should keep these recommendations in mind. Dayton and Associates also reinforce the need to expand and diversify Latino students' experiences while creating a supportive environment that recognizes individual differences. As one student in their survey of HSIs recognized... [G]oing through the transition of working with people from other races is kind of difficult"(Dayton, et.al. 2004). MSI business faculties that deliberately expose students to other cultures and experiences will help students graduate with greater confidence to enter a diverse work environment.

Muller and Parham agree that "racially homogenous students may be differentiated along the lines of class, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other dimensions." They place the burden on the instructor "to draw out these stereotypes and dimensions so that they become the focal point of some of the class discussion. In short, diversity education is applicable not just to visibly multicultural or multiracial groups, but to any collective of persons" (Muller and Parham, 1998). Spencer writes that some MSIs are now reaching out to white students in an attempt to diversify their student body. She reports a MSI faculty observation that white students attending an MIS learn that "people are individuals and that there are as many variations within race as there are within society" (Spencer, 2009).

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THOUGH MICRO-CURRICULUM CHANGES

MSI faculty can start by following Egan and Bendick's suggestion that "[O]bsolete, incorrect, contradictory, offensive, stereotypical, ethnocentric, or otherwise flawed content . . ." be eliminated from lecture notes and classroom handouts. MSI business faculty can also take advantage of ideas learned from diversity initiatives at other universities that allow students to explore and expand views about human diversity, learn about diversity research, and read specifically about diversity. For example, case studies can compare and contrast at least two cultures, one of which can be the student's culture of origin. Syllabus methods and objectives can also be expanded to include specific strategies for acquiring cross-cultural and intercultural knowledge that are based on the pre-course survey (Pickens, 2009).

MSI faculty can explore the important issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation by discussing multicultural and diversity cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education (*1954) and

other landmark decisions such as *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), or the controversial proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (which would prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity).   These cases and legislation involve real people and dynamic emotions that can serve as a springboard for discussion and dialogue opportunities that fit into many business and management topics. Professor Bennett-Alexander offers one instructor's model approach to raise awareness among students on the power of cultural stereotypes.   That instructor asked each student to write an anonymous paper including all stereotyped groups (i.e., "women, born again Christians, blacks, gays, Hispanics, men"). The students were also asked to discuss if they'd ever had trouble working with certain groups. After reviewing the reports and identifying common perceptions, the instructor systematically brought guest speakers to class who shattered the cultural stereotypes directed at each group. "The experience generated emotional discussion on the negative power of cultural stereotypes—and fostered a new understanding of the importance of future managers assessing the impact of their personal biases on hiring decisions, communication among diverse groups and general management issues" (Bennett-Alexander, 1997).

The CORE approach recommended by *Culture to Engage* as a simple mnemonic for employer diversity can easily be adapted by MSI business faculty: **Communication** to keep all [students] …. informed of the meaning, impact, and values of a diverse workplace; **Opportunities** to experience and appreciate such diversity; **Resources** to expedite diversity-based approaches to specific projects; and **Engagement** modeling by [faculty] … who engage in clearly linking [student]... engagement and [appreciation of] workplace diversity (Culture to Engage, 2008).

Continuous improvement through micro-curriculum changes is not a new concept. As the Southeastern University and College Coalition for Engineering Education (SUCCEED) notes, "The continuous improvement process is not intended to revamp or renew the curriculum, but rather to identify opportunities for smaller improvements. The continuous improvement activities focus only on such incremental improvements (or 'kaizen')..." MSI business faculty can apply continuous improvement to each course and make improvements in two areas: course conduct (how the course is delivered) or course content (the specific topics covered and their levels of emphasis).   Student input through pre-course survey can be incorporated into both techniques (SUCCEED, n.d.).

As Emiliani observed, "methods used to achieve continuous improvement may be ad hoc, or subject to interpretation by the school or by members of the peer review team" and can "embody any means that leads to improvement as judged by one or more stakeholders: AACSB International, administrators, faculty and staff, students, and the organizations that hire graduates." He was the first to use incremental improvements, or kaizen, to improve a graduate business school program. This technique identified improvement opportunities in an Executive Master's Program and successfully implemented changes in courses and content, including objectives, material, organization, sequence, and classroom experiences Although Emiliani recommends kaizen as a method for quickly achieving improvement, he cautions that "students' perception of value changes over time" and thus "the job of continuous improvement is never done" (Emiliani, 2005). The utilization of pre-course survey assessment data for continuous curriculum improvement offers an additional bonus to MSIs because AACSB expects schools to demonstrate a high degree of maturity in "…use of assessment information to improve curricula" (AACSB, 2009).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results clearly indicate that the students surveyed are in very much in favor of and desirous of positive and constructive university interventions that educate and inform regarding multicultural issues as they relate to gays, lesbians, individuals with disabilities, persons from diverse economic backgrounds, persons with HIV or AIDS as well as women, and ethnic/racial minorities. The results also indicate that the majority of students (80 percent) found the university campus to be a welcoming environment where they experienced a sense of belonging or community. They were also mostly (66 percent) satisfied with their campus experience/environment regarding multiculturalism at this university.

In conclusion it is recommended that administration and faculty develop strategies and programs that facilitate implementation of the previously mentioned interventions in order to foster a campus experience for all students that engenders acceptance of multiculturalism and sensitivity for culturally diverse individuals and groups.

The authors propose the use of simple pre-course surveys and micro-revision of course curricula by selecting and weaving in alternate customized curricular activities and experiences to reap dual benefits.   Not only will MSI faculty make a meaningful contribution to the diversity demonstration required for ACCSB accreditation, but they will also equip their business students with "knowledge, awareness and skills that prepare them for an increasingly global and diverse workplace" (Pickens, 2009).

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Table 1: Students Making Remarks

About	Never	Once or Twice	3-5 times a year	6-9 times a year	10 or more times a year
Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons	22 percent	29 percent	29 percent	11 percent	10 percent
Non-native English speaking persons	19 percent	30 percent	30 percent	14 percent	8 percent
Person of particular economic background	36 percent	32 percent	14 percent	15 percent	3 percent
Person of particular religious background	48 percent	30 percent	18 percent	4 percent	0 percent
Persons with a disability	55 percent	34 percent	5 percent	4 percent	1 percent
Persons of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds	34 percent	34 percent	19 percent	8 percent	4 percent
Women	45 percent	18 percent	19 percent	8 percent	10 percent

Table 2: College Staff, Faculty, Administration or Teaching Assistant Making Remarks

About	Never	Once or Twice	3-5 times a year	6-9 times a year	10 or more times a year
Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons	77 percent	18 percent	5 percent	0 percent	0 percent
Non-native English speaking persons	65 percent	21 percent	14 percent	0 percent	0 percent

Person of particular economic background	74 percent	21 percent	5 percent	0 percent	0 percent
Person of particular religious background	73 percent	23 percent	4 percent	0 percent	0 percent
Persons with a disability	89 percent	10 percent	1 percent	0 percent	0 percent
Persons of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds	70 percent	16 percent	11 percent	3 percent	0 percent
Women	68 percent	16 percent	10 percent	4 percent	1 percent

Table 3: Awareness/Sensitivity Workshops or Programs

Minorities	Percent indicating that such programs would positively improve the climate
Gay, lesbian, bisexual	66
People with disabilities	76
Diverse economic background	76
HIV or Aids	76
Racial/ethnic minorities	81
Women	72

Table 4: Taking a General Education Course that Focuses on Research Perspectives Relating to Multicultural Groups

Minorities	Percent indicating that taking a such a course would positively improve the climate
Gay, lesbian, bisexual	65
People with disabilities	74
Diverse economic background	74
HIV or Aids	73
Racial/ethnic minorities	78
Women	72

Table 5: Having Art, Music and Cultural Events that Recognize Distinctive Multicultural Groups

Minority	Percent indicating that such events would positively improve the climate
Distinctive cultures	92
Distinctive sexual orientations	77
People with disabilities	83

Appendix
Diversity Awareness Survey
Developed and Validated by The Regional Consortium for Multicultural Education (2007).

Part I: Background Information

Instructions: Please complete the following questions by circling the answer or filling in the blank spaces for each question. Provide only one response unless prompted otherwise. Do not skip any questions unless instructed to do so.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS IN THIS SURVEY WITH RESPECT TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE.

1.   What is your current student status?
        (Please mark only one)
        ○ Full-time undergraduate student (12 or more credits per semester)
        ○ Full-time graduate student (9 or more credits per semester)
        ○ Part-time undergraduate student (less than 12 credits per semester)
        ○ Part-time graduate student (less than 9 credits per semester)
        ○ Other: Please specify _____

2.   How many semesters, including the current semester, have you been enrolled at this college/university? **(Exclude summer semesters)**
        ○0   ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5   ○6   ○7   ○8   ○9

3.   What is your major area of study/department at this university? **Please specify:**
        _____

4.   What is your current age in years?
        ○20-25○26-30○31-35○36-40○41-45○46-50○51-55○56-60○61-65○66+

5.   What is your religion?
        ○ Christian
        ○ Hindu
        ○ Jewish
        ○ Muslim
        ○ No religion
        ○ Other (Please specify) _____

6.   Do you currently have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity **(such as seeing, hearing, learning, walking, etc)?**
        ○ Yes **(proceed to question 7 before answering question 8)**
        ○ No **(if you marked this response, skip to question 8)**

7.   Please specify your disability below:
        (Mark all that apply)
        ○ Coordination impairment
        ○ Hearing impairment
        ○ Learning disability

○ Mobility impairment
○ Speech impairment
○ Visual impairment
○ Other **(Please specify)** _____

8. Please indicate the primary racial/ethnic group with which you identify. **(If you are of a multi-racial or multi-ethnic background, indicate that group with which you identify most of the time)**
○ African American/Black
○ American Indian/Alaskan Native/Aleut
○ Asian/Pacific Islander
○ Chicano/Latino/Hispanic
○ Middle Eastern
○ White/Caucasian
○ Other **(Please specify)** _____

9. What is your sex?
○ Female   ○ Male

10. What is your sexual orientation**? (Please mark only one)**
○ Bisexual
○ Gay
○ Heterosexual
○ Lesbian

11. In what setting did you spend most of your life before coming to this university? **(Mark only one. If several apply, use the most recent)**
○ Large city or metropolitan area
○ Rural area or town
○ Small city
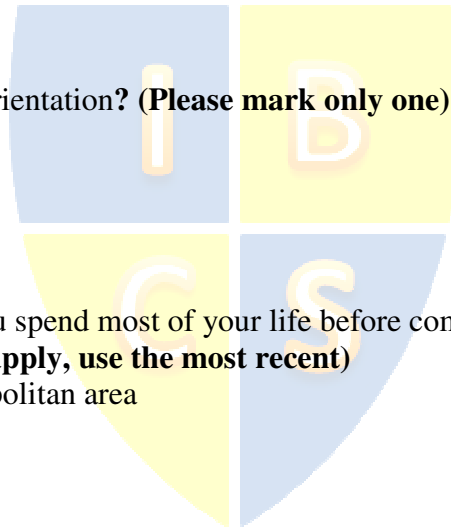
Part 2: Campus Experiences with Diversity

Instructions: Below you will find a set of statements about experiences with diversity that you may have had on your campus. Please provide a response to each statement.

Use the following rating guide for your response to questions 12-14.
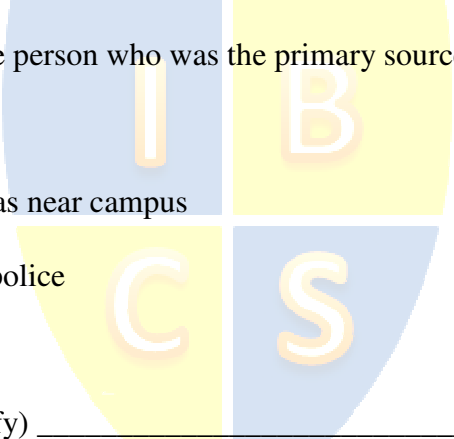
N = <u>Never</u>
R = <u>Rarely</u>, i.e., once or twice a year, on average
O = <u>Occasionally</u>, i.e., 3-5 times a year, on average
V = <u>Very often</u>, i.e., 6-9 times a year, on average
F = <u>Frequently</u>, i.e., 10 or more times a year, on average

12. Please circle the letter that corresponds with the number of times you have heard a student make an insensitive or disparaging remark about:
Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons...N   R   O   V   F

Non-native English speaking persons ....N R O V F
Person of particular economic backgrounds....................................N R O V F
Person of particular religious backgrounds....................................N R O V F
Persons with a disability ....N R O V F
Persons of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds...........................N R O V F
Women...N R O V F

13.   Please circle the letter that corresponds with the number of times you have heard a
      college staff member, faculty member, an administrator or teaching assistant make
      insensitive or disparaging remarks about:
      Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons..N R O V F
      Non-native English speaking persons ....N R O V F
      Person of particular economic backgrounds....................................N R O V F
      Person of particular religious backgrounds....................................N R O V F
      Persons with a disability ....N R O V F
      Persons of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds...........................N R O V F
      Women...N R O V F

14.   Please circle the letter that corresponds with the number of times you have been present
      at university affiliated events where the following **would not** feel welcome:
      Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons..N R O V F
      Non-native English speaking persons ....N R O V F
      Person of particular economic backgrounds....................................N R O V F
      Person of particular religious backgrounds....................................N R O V F
      Persons with a disability ....N R O V F
      Persons of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds...........................N R O V F
      Women...N R O V F

15.   Have you ever felt discriminated against or harassed (even subtly) on this campus?
      ○ Yes **(if you marked this response, proceed to questions 16-19)**
      ○ No   **(If you marked this response, skip to Part 3, Question 20)**

16.   What do you believe was the **primary** reason that you were discriminated against or
      harassed? **(Please mark only the primary one)**
      ○ Because of my age
      ○ Because of my disability
      ○ Because of my economic status
      ○ Because of my gender
      ○ Because of my race or ethnicity
      ○ Because of my religious beliefs
      ○ Because of my sexual orientation
      ○ Other (Please specify) _____

17. In what form was the discrimination or harassment **mainly** expressed?
   ○ Actual physical assault or injury
   ○ Anonymous phone calls
   ○ Glances
   ○ Ignoring
   ○ Publications on campus
   ○ Threats of physical violence
   ○ Verbal comments
   ○ Written comments
   ○ Other (Please specify) _____

18. Where did this discrimination or harassment usually occur?
   ○ In a college classroom
   ○ In a college office
   ○ In a residence hall
   ○ While working at a college job
   ○ Other location on campus (Please specify) _____

19. To which group did the person who was the primary source of the discrimination or harassment belong?
   ○ Administration
   ○ Faculty
   ○ Neighbors in the areas near campus
   ○ Residence assistants
   ○ Security or campus police
   ○ Staff
   ○ Students
   ○ Teaching assistants
   ○ Others (Please specify) _____

Part 3: Attitudes and Actions Relative to Diversity

Instructions: For the questions in this section, you will be asked to rate particular statements about diversity according to your beliefs or attitudes. Answer as honestly as possible. Read each items carefully and use the rating scales specified for each item.

Use the following rating guide for these questions:
   N =   No contact
   L   =   Little contact
   M =   Moderate contact
   F =   Frequent contact
   VF = Very frequent contact

20. Generally speaking, how much contact would you say that you had with people of the following backgrounds prior to coming to this university? (**Mark one rating for each group of people**)

African Americans/Blacks..N L M F VF
American Indian/Alaskans/Aleuts ....N L M F VF
Asians/Pacific Islanders..N L M F VF
Chicanos/Latinos/Hispanics..N L M F VF
Whites/Caucasians ....N L M F VF
Non-native English speaking persons ....N L M F VF
Openly gay, lesbian or bisexual persons.............................N L M F VF
Persons of economic backgrounds other than your own ....N L M F VF
Persons of religious backgrounds other than your own.............N L M F VF
Persons with a disability ....N L M F VF

21. Would you be comfortable being close friends with any of the following persons? (**Mark yes or no**)

African American/Black ....Y   N
American Indian/Alaskan/Aleut ....Y   N
Asian/Pacific Islander ....Y   N
Chicano/Latino/Hispanic ....Y   N
White/Caucasian ....Y   N
A heterosexual man...Y   N
A heterosexual woman...Y   N
A person with a disability ....Y   N
A person with different religious beliefs than yours.........Y   N
An individual with HIV or AIDS......................................Y   N
An international student..Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual man ....Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual woman..Y   N

22. Would you be comfortable being a roommate/neighbor of any of the following persons? (**Mark yes or no**)

African American/Black ....Y   N
American Indian/Alaskan/Aleut ....Y   N
Asian/Pacific Islander ....Y   N
Chicano/Latino/Hispanic ....Y   N
White/Caucasian ....Y   N
A heterosexual man...Y   N
A heterosexual woman...Y   N
A person with a disability ....Y   N
A person with different religious beliefs than yours.........Y   N
An individual with HIV or AIDS......................................Y   N
An international student..Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual man ....Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual woman..Y   N

23. Would you be dating any of the following persons? (**Assume that you are single. Mark yes or no**)

African American/Black ....Y   N
American Indian/Alaskan/Aleut ....Y   N
Asian/Pacific Islander ....Y   N
Chicano/Latino/Hispanic ....Y   N
White/Caucasian ....Y   N
A heterosexual man..Y   N
A heterosexual woman..Y   N
A person with a disability ....Y   N
A person with different religious beliefs than yours.........................Y   N
An individual with HIV or AIDS...Y   N
An international student..Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual man ....Y   N
An openly gay or bisexual woman..Y   N

Instructions: use the following rating guide to indicate how likely you are to experience the feelings and/or behaviors specified in questions 24 – 33: (**Mark one rating for each question**)

VL = <u>Very Likely</u>
SL = <u>Somewhat Likely</u>
SU = <u>Somewhat Unlikely</u>
VU =<u>Very Unlikely</u>
 ?   =<u>Not sure/don't know</u>

24.   Challenge others on racial/ethnic/sexually derogatory comments... VL SL SU VU ?
25.   Fell disapproval for a display of public affection by a gay or lesbian couple
.... VL SL SU VU ?
26.   Feel disapproval for a display of public affection by a heterosexual couple
.... VL SL SU VU ?
27.   Get to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals
.... VL SL SU VU ?
28.   Refuse to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any
group or culture or sex .... VL SL SU VU ?
29.   Repeat a comment or joke about a religion other than your own   VL SL SU VU ?
30.   Repeat a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians or bisexuals
.... VL SL SU VU ?
31.   Repeat a derogatory comment or joke about people with disabilities VL SL U VU ?
32.   Take action to have offensive graffiti removed .... VL SL SU VU ?

Instructions: Use the following rating guide for your response to question 33:

MA = <u>Much more accepting</u>
SA = <u>Somewhat accepting</u>
LA = <u>Less accepting</u>
EA = <u>Extremely less accepting</u>
NC = <u>No change</u>

33.   Please rate how your attitudes toward he following groups of people have changed since you came to this university. (**Mark the rating that best corresponds to your current attitudes**)

African American/Black ....MA SA LA EA NC
American Indian/Alaskan/Aleut ....MA SA LA EA NC
Asian/Pacific Islander ....MA SA LA EA NC
Chicano/Latino/Hispanic ....MA SA LA EA NC
White/Caucasian ....MA SA LA EA NC
A heterosexual man..MA SA LA EA NC
A heterosexual woman..MA SA LA EA NC
A person with a disability ....MA SA LA EA NC
A person with different religious beliefs than yours............MA SA LA EA NC
An individual with HIV or AIDS.......................................MA SA LA EA NC
An international student..MA SA LA EA NC
An openly gay or bisexual man ....MA SA LA EA NC
An openly gay or bisexual woman.....................................MA SA LA EA NC

Part 4: Improving the Campus Environment Toward Diversity

Use the following rating guide to respond to questions 34-37, according to how much you believe that each one would affect the climate for diversity on this campus.

IC = <u>Improve climate considerably</u>
IS = <u>Improve climate somewhat</u>
WS = <u>Worsen climate somewhat</u>
WC = <u>Worsen climate considerably</u>
NC = <u>No change</u>

34.   Providing more awareness/sensitivity workshops or programs to help the university community to become more aware of the needs of: (**Mark one response for each group**)

Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons......................................IC IS WS WC NC
People with disabilities ....IC IS WS WC NC
Persons from diverse economic backgrounds.................IC IS WS WC NC
Persons with HIV or AIDS ....IC IS WS WC NC
Racial/ethnic minorities ....IC IS WS WC NC

Women... IC IS WS WC NC

35.   Requiring all college students to take at least one general education course that focuses
       on issues, research and perspectives on: **(mark one response for each group)**
       Gay, lesbian or bisexual persons.......................................IC IS WS WC NC
       People with disabilities .... IC IS WS WC NC
       Persons from diverse economic backgrounds................ IC IS WS WC NC
       Persons with HIV or AIDS .... IC IS WS WC NC
       Racial/ethnic minorities .... IC IS WS WC NC
       Women... IC IS WS WC NC

36.   Having more art, music and cultural events that recognize: **(mark one response for each
       category)**
       Distinctive cultures ....IC IS WS WC NC
       Distinctive sexual orientations................................... IC IS WS WC NC
       People with disabilities ....IC IS WS WC NC

37.   Evaluating staff and faculty on their ability to provide service that enhances
       the university climate for diversity ....IC IS WS WC NC

Part 5: The campus as a welcoming environment

38.   To what extent do you experience a sense of belonging or community at this university?
       (Mark one)
       ○ To a great extent
       ○ To some extent
       ○ To a small extent
       ○Not at all

39.   How satisfied are you with your campus experience/environment regarding
       multiculturalism at this university? (Mark one)
       ○ Very satisfied
       ○ Satisfied
       ○Neutral
       ○ Dissatisfied
       ○ Very dissatisfied