**Outline**

1. **Context – historical and practice**
2. **Connecting change initiatives**
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**Executive Summary (one page)**

**Full Participation: Systemic Integration of Civic Engagement, Diversity, and the Postsecondary Success of Underserved Students**

**I. Context**

*The project of achieving inclusive institutions is not only about eliminating discrimination or even increasing the representation of previously excluded groups. It is about creating the conditions enabling people of all races and genders to realize their capabilities as they understand them. All institutional citizens should be able to realize their potential and participate fully in the life of the institution* (Sturm, p. 4).

URGENCY: PROBLEM STATEMENT. For nearly a quarter century, higher education institutions in the United States have been challenged to change their organizational cultures in ways that provide opportunities for an increasingly diverse[[1]](#footnote-1) population of students and faculty to thrive and succeed. There is a long and rich history of the emergence of interdisciplinary units (ethnic studies, women’s studies, etc.) where women faculty and students and faculty and students of color have found homes in the academy for more engaged scholarship and inclusive pedagogical practices. There is also a long and complex history of using affirmative action as a policy to provide access for underrepresented students as a way to address the historical inequities of exclusion to education. Additionally, campus diversity efforts have proliferated with the creation of multi-cultural centers and more recently the appointment of executive level chief diversity officers. Civic engagement efforts are traditionally disconnected from campus diversity work, yet often seeking diversity learning outcomes for students and partnerships with communities with diversity unrepresented on campus.

While there have been successes in admissions and in changing the culture in parts of the campus, there has not been institution-wide, systematic efforts that have allowed diverse faculty and students to fully participate in the educational opportunities offered through higher education. Full participation requires a systematic focus on integrative organizational change across institutions of higher education. It also requires an approach to diversity and to civic engagement that move both from being formulated as desired and valuable outcomes to a place where both are the means to achieving the larger purpose of full participation in education and a wider public culture of democracy (Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton, 2008).

A systemic approach to diversity and civic engagement in higher education (Sturm, 2006) frames inclusiveness as a core institutional value and democratic imperative for institutions of higher education. It is grounded in the understanding that institutions of higher education will not embrace diversity for diversity’s sake, nor will they embrace civic engagement for the sake of civic engagement. Both diversity and civic engagement need to be pursued as means to a larger and more central aim of building inclusive organizations in which all of its members realize their full potential through full participation in the life of the organization. The concept of full participation through “institutional citizenship” is based on the premise that the fundamental goals of a democratic culture include social justice and equity. Full participation, Sturm argues, can be achieved through institutional transformation built upon an “architecture of inclusion” that incorporates new normative frameworks of knowledge generation and discovery, more active pedagogical practices, expanded research priorities and methods, reward policies that recognize a broad spectrum of scholarship, and more robust environmental supports. As Sturm writes, “there is a framework and methodology for pursuing inclusive institutions and for building the architecture to sustain the practice of inclusiveness (p. 4).” The principle of full participation, applied to organizations, establishes “institutional citizenship” as a core value.

**II. Connecting Change Initiatives**

Ceiling that is created that can only be overcome if these things are brought together.

IS IT A FUNDAMENTAL REORIENTATION? Full participation calls for a fundamental reorientation of higher education toward addressing equity and opportunity in deeper, systemic, more complex, and more transformative ways. Above all, it requires examining faculty, students, and institutional policies in relation to one another.

Achieving the full participation of diverse students and diverse faculty in higher education and beyond--in democratic communities and civic institutions--requires systemic inquiry and action focused on a set of connections that has yet to be rigorously addressed: the integration of

(1) active teaching and learning,

(2) collaborative knowledge generation and discovery, and

(3) the academic success of underserved students (first-generation, low-income, students of color).

Understanding this interconnected matrix is a necessary pre-condition for fundamental changes in institutional cultures, structures, policies, and practices at colleges and universities. Only a comprehensive, integrative approach to the full continuum of teaching, learning, and research can ensure that all student--but especially those with the fewest resource--have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in postsecondary education and to fully participate in the economic, social, political, and civic life of the nation. Above all, it requires that we look at faculty, students, and institutional policies affecting both in relation to one another.

Diversity has many dimensions in the context of higher education. In relation to students, a shifting national demographic has reshaped the student population to be increasingly representative of underserved students – students of color, first-generation students, and/or low-income students. Students increasingly represent racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and socio-economic class diversity. For faculty, higher education institutions have struggled for more than a decade to create a more diverse academic workforce, with remarkably meager success. As an “industry,” higher education recognizes that fulfillment of its mission, and for some campuses their very survival, is dependent upon both attracting and supporting diverse faculty and attracting and retaining a more diverse student body.

According to a recent report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), [*A Portrait of Low-Income Young Adults in Education*](http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/m-r/%28Brief%29_A_Portrait_of_Low-Income_Young_Adults_in_Education.pdf) (June 2010), there are 35.2 million low-income young adults in the United States who are between the ages of 18 and 26, and whose parents’ income or their own (if financially independent) is up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Young adults living in “total poverty” are more likely to be Native American, Black, and Hispanic (59 percent, 57 percent, and 47 percent, respectively). This stands in contrast to 47 percent of their White and 40 percent of their Asian contemporaries.

College enrollments for Blacks and Hispanics have increased nationwide and there is a widespread perception that major strides have been made to meet the goals of equal educational opportunity. Even though the number of underrepresented students (including low income or first-generation students and students of color) who go to college and earn a degree is an impressive accomplishment when compared to forty years ago, the gap between Blacks and Hispanics, on the one hand, and their white, non-Hispanic counterparts persists and continues to grow (Ruppert, 2003). Students of color lag well behind whites in completing college. In 2001, of high school completers ages 25 to 29, about 37% of Whites, 21% of Blacks, and 16% of Hispanics had received a bachelor’s degree. The assumption that progress has been made *beyond access* into higher education for African Americans and Latinos is not supported by the evidence (Swail et al., 2003). The achievement gap among these groups is substantial nationwide and has not diminished in the last fifteen years (Bok, 2003). A pervasive rhetoric of America as a near “post-racial society” further confuses the issues even when there exists no indicator of social health that demonstrates that “minorities” are on par with their white counterparts.

Research indicates that the academic success of systematically and traditionally underserved students is enhanced by increased opportunities to participate in high-impact teaching and learning practices - practices that involve greater engagement in learning. One of these practices is community-based teaching and learning (often referred to as service-learning or community engagement tied to the curriculum) (Kuh, 2008).

Further, research indicates that the academic success of underserved students is enhanced by increased opportunities to identify with faculty and staff who represent ethnic, racial, gender, and cultural diversity (Hurtado, 2001, 2007; Milem et. al, 2005).

It is also apparent that along with demographic shifts among students, there are demographic shifts among faculty. There is greater diversity among graduate students and early career faculty – and, at the same time a rotating door for underrepresented faculty seeking careers in higher education. The academy is attracting more under-represented faculty than ever before, but those faculty are leaving in greater numbers than coming in (Moreno, 2006).

A growing body of research has demonstrated that women and faculty of color are more likely to engage in both interdisciplinary and community-service-related behaviors, including community engaged and inclusive pedagogical practice in teaching and learning and building research agendas related to public problem-solving in local communities and are more likely to cite such experiences as critical to their purpose in the academy. (Baez, 2000; Antonio, Astin and Cress, 2000; Antonio, 2002; Vogelgesang, Denson, Jayakumar, 2010; Rhoads, et al., 2008; Hale, ed., 2008; Ibarra, 2001)

Additionally, there is research indicating that faculty roles and rewards –criteria for research, scholarship, and creative activity – either 1) reward community engagement as service (counting little in promotion and tenure) or 2) do not specifically reward community engagement as either teaching, research and creative activity, or service. Institutional policies create disincentives for faculty to undertake community engagement through their faculty roles (Saltmarsh, et al, 2009; Ellison and Eatman, 2008)

Efforts to connect diversity, community engagement, and student success in higher education have gained increased attention (Cress, C.M., Burack, C., Giles, D. E., Jr., Elkins, J, Stevens, M.C. (2010) *A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement*. Boston, MA: Campus Compact). Yet, the dominant response continues to focus primarily on expanding access to higher education through programs in which undergraduate student volunteers support programs aimed at preparing underserved high school students for access to higher education. While such programs are laudable, they are not sufficient, in part because they do not examine organizational cultures in higher education that would shift the focus from *access to* to *success through* postsecondary education.

Consequently, these efforts do not lead institutions of higher education to undertake significant organizational change aimed at creating environments in which underserved students and underrepresented faculty can thrive and succeed. Furthermore, the dominant approaches do not examine systemic organizational issues in a way that links institutional reward policies to two critical domains: student diversity, including diverse learning styles and asset-based educational environments, and faculty diversity, including diverse pedagogical practices and diverse forms of scholarship.

**III. The Urgency of Now**

Those who lead and teach and shape institutions of higher education have the ability to make choices and determine commitments and strategies that address change in organizational structures and cultures to achieve full participation for the next generation of students and faculty. The alternative is to allow change to happen as the shift in demographics of students and faculty continues to unfold, as the economics and management imperatives continue to compel the demise of faculty tenure as we know it, and as the shift to contract and contingent faculty reshapes the realities of shared governance.

The challenges that face institutions of higher education will not be addressed adequately by fragmented innovations aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of what exists – reforms that do not disturb the basic organizational features, substantially altering the culture of the institution. Achieving full participation of diverse faculty and students in the opportunities of institutional citizenship in higher education means introducing new goals, structures, and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems. The success and contributions of the next generation of undergraduates, graduate students, and early career faculty depends on addressing these changes now, not at some time in the future.

Many colleges and universities are demonstrating a commitment to be responsive to these challenges. There are experiments with new structures that combine civic engagement efforts with diversity initiatives. There are examples of the infusion of inclusive pedagogical practices aimed at addressing the retention and success of a diversity of learners. There are efforts to reshape faculty teaching and scholarship along with the alignment of assessment and student support structures to enhance the success of underserved students. There are examples of revised promotion and tenure policies to create space for validating community-based collaborative, public scholarship. All of this is evidence of the need to change. What is missing is a more systemic institutional approach that facilitates institutional transformation and allows colleges and universities to shape their future now.

**IV. Policy Recommendations**

* Holistic approach
* Fordiversity efforts – connect to faculty culture and roles and rewards.
* For civic engagement efforts – connect to teaching and learning for a diversity of learners; connect to faculty scholarship and reward policies
* For institutions – structural connections, faculty roles and rewards, faculty development
* For institutions – foster in structural connections – unit – Schoem
* For accreditation associations – performance indicators
* For academic leadership – integration of efforts
* graduate education

**V. Conclusion**

This line of inquiry and action makes the claim that 1) if campuses are going to take student success seriously, they need to take civic engagement seriously, 2) if campuses are going to take diversity seriously, they need to take civic engagement seriously, and, 3) if campuses are going to take new forms of knowledge generation and discovery seriously, they need to take engagement seriously. For institutions of higher education to fulfill their missions and educate all students effectively, they will need to diversify their faculty and provide environments where all students and faculty can thrive as institutional citizens engaged in the fulfilling the rights and responsibilities of that citizenship in the institutions and in the wider public culture.

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1. By diversity we refer to gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, as well as socioeconomic status, and first generation college-going. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)