

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION®

Idea Lab

Colleges
Solving
Problems

Student Diversity



Student Diversity

COLLEGES ARE DOING MORE to make sure Hispanic, black, and other minority students feel welcomed on campus. They are also finding new ways to promote discussion about race between these groups and white students.

This collection examines how colleges are approaching diversity training, how to assess the racial climate on campus, and what to do in response to a racist incident.

PROMOTING INCLUSION

4 How to Approach Diversity Training

The U. of Oklahoma says it requires “hard data and careful thought.”

7 Diverse Spaces

Making sure diversity efforts don't put students in “silos.”

10 Living Differently Together

Elon U. creates student “neighborhoods” to support inclusivity.

11 Talking About Race

A course at the U. of Maryland tries to bridge divides.

MAKING POLICIES

17 How Do You Create a Diversity Agenda?

It takes more than just a plan on paper.

21 Auditing Diversity

An interest in assessments is rising.

REACTING TO AN INCIDENT

24 Making Discipline Effective

What do you do with students who spew hate?

26 How to Respond to a Racist Act

Affirm your values and mission.

Cover photo from iStock

How One Campus Approaches Diversity Training

By BETH McMURTRIE

KATHLEEN WONG(LAU) knows that diversity education has its critics.

Some believe that it's designed to teach people to become politically correct, she says. "I say no, it's not. It's about people able to have good, honest conflict that's productive."

Ms. Wong(Lau) is head of the University of Oklahoma's Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, and designs and runs diversity programs for students, faculty members, and other people on the campus.

The university began the training this year as part of a broader effort by its president, David L. Boren, to create a more-inclusive campus culture. Plans for such changes predate the release last spring of a now-infamous video of white fraternity members singing a racist chant, but the fallout from the video accelerated the pace of action.

All freshmen and transfer students are required to take a five-hour diversity course. Academic departments and other groups, like fraternities and so-

rorities, can also request training that is tailored to them. In her programs, Ms. Wong(Lau) blends demographic data, social-science research, and discussion. The goal, she says, is to build empathy for others' perspectives and to develop skills to talk about complicated topics like race.

That kind of empathy is critically important, says Ms. Wong(Lau), because it leads to deep and meaningful discussion, which she feels is lacking on many campuses. Too often students and professors resort to platitudes or avoid talking about race altogether for fear of stepping on land mines.

"The first urge is to suppress it," she says. "What I want to do is get everyone in to talk about it."

Reams of data and research give her credibility with faculty members, Ms. Wong(Lau) says, and assure professors and students that she's not out to blame anyone. Rather, she presents documented problems such as unconscious bias, in which, say, teachers tend to call on boys more than girls, as societal challenges.

She also discusses issues like "cognitive load" and



U. OF OKLAHOMA

Under a training program designed to create a more-inclusive campus culture at the U. of Oklahoma, all freshmen and transfer students are required to take a five-hour diversity course, which includes an intergroup-dialogue session (pictured).

“stereotype threat,” technical terms for problems with which many people are familiar, including the fear of falling into stereotypical behavior. The result, she says, is that we become emotionally drained and distracted when talking about sensitive topics like race, rather than open and engaged.

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

When speaking to students in her training sessions, she asks them to think about their identities. How many do we each have — religion, race, gender, sexual orientation — and when are they most important? What happens when a student is seen

predominantly by one identity, like race, and not another?

Ms. Wong(Lau), who is also director of the National Conference for Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, often talks in those sessions about her own experience as an Asian-American. Her father came to the United States at a time when Chinese immigration was severely restricted. He and thousands of others purchased forged documents, known as paper names, to pretend that they were relatives of people here legally. Her surname is a blend of that paper name, Wong, with her original family name, Lau.

Students who have been through her training said

it reminded them of how small moments can have a big impact. For example, if a student who doesn't look like the stereotypical white Oklahoman is regularly asked by classmates where he is "really" from, he will end up feeling as if he doesn't belong even if he spent his entire life in the state.

Everett Brown, a junior who has been through several sessions to train as a facilitator, says he doesn't expect the course to work miracles, but he believes it gives people the skills to look at a situation from another perspective. "It's really easy to be vocal

"It's really easy to be vocal and get your thoughts out there and criticize someone when you think they're wrong, but it's harder to be empathetic."

and get your thoughts out there and criticize someone when you think they're wrong," he says, but it's harder to be empathetic.

Mr. Brown is a member of OU Unheard, a student group formed last fall to highlight the concerns of black students on the campus. While he says the university has real work to do to bring more racial diversity to the campus and to support minority-student groups, he is optimistic about the direction in which the campus is moving. "I've heard people have that epiphany moment," he says. "I'd like to think these conversations wouldn't be had without the diversity training."

CONFLICTING FEARS

The burden of not knowing how to discuss prejudice can have lasting effects, says Ms. Wong(Lau), who has also led training sessions for police officers, government officials, community leaders, and faculty members and students on other campuses. She was recently asked to talk to an athletic team — she declines to identify which one or on what campus — after a couple of the players had been called a racial slur by someone on a rival team. Even though the offending player had been punished, the coach told Ms. Wong(Lau) that the team dynamic had completely changed.

What she found, she says, was a group of people who didn't know how to talk about racism. "In this

case the white students were thinking, 'I hope they think I'm not racist,' and the people of color were thinking, 'I hope I don't fulfill a stereotype of not doing well.'"

She encouraged the students to discuss what had happened — no one had actually used the word "racism" until she came in — and urged them to offer direct words of support. Afterward, she said, the team's mood seemed to lighten.

In faculty-training sessions, Ms. Wong(Lau) talks about classroom dynamics and the role of the professor. She lets people know that, as she puts it, "mild things matter." If a male student cracks a joke about women getting overly emotional and the professor just brushes it off, "other students will unconsciously get the message that this professor will not have my back."

THE 'ME, TOO' APPROACH

Interaction may be so subtle, and students either confused or hesitant to speak out, that the professor doesn't even know what signals he sent. One common problem Ms. Wong(Lau) sees is the "me, too" approach — attempting to relate to someone of a different race or background by saying they're essentially similar. R. Bowen Loftin, the departing chancellor of the University of Missouri at Columbia, was criticized by a black student for doing exactly that when he talked to him about growing up in the South.

"We have been taught that, to gain social intimacy, you produce a message that says, 'I identify with you,'" says Ms. Wong(Lau). That works if everyone in the group is actually alike. "But if you're in the minority, somebody saying 'I'm just like you' marginalizes you because it erases the difference."

Brian A. Johnson, director of Oklahoma's Honors College Writing Center, participated in a recent session for faculty members in the college. The session, he says, was helpful because it enabled him to think through some of the issues he had been wrestling with in class. "I want to reach out to those more-quiet students" — some of whom come from different cultures — "and sometimes I struggle with why they're quiet, and Kathy helped me see that," he says.

While he doesn't expect that training will eliminate prejudice, especially the kind so vividly displayed in the fraternity video, Ms. Wong(Lau)'s program, he says, "seems to have the ability to confront ignorance with hard data and careful thought." ■

Originally published November 20, 2015

Making Sure Diversity Efforts Don't Create 'Silos'

By SARAH BROWN

WHEN the University of Connecticut wanted to help its black male students improve their graduation rate, officials decided to try something new. They created a living-learning community, set to open this fall, that is designed to help black men transition into college more successfully by grouping them among other students in the same boat and supporting them as they navigate academic and social hurdles.

Any male student can apply for one of the roughly 50 spots in the community, which is part of a larger dorm. But its name makes the purpose clear: ScHOLA2RS House, or Scholastic House of Leaders who are African American Researchers and Scholars.

Etching out spaces on campus to help students from specific backgrounds feel more welcome is nothing new. For decades predominantly white institutions have provided venues, organizations, and programs where minority students can connect with mentors and peers who understand their experiences. Many student activists implored their colleges to provide more such spaces during last fall's protests over race.

But critics of Connecticut's housing project and similar efforts say such diversity "silos" can be limiting, leading students who identify with particular groups to confine much of their intellectual and social life to narrow factions. One recent study suggests that membership in ethnically segregated organizations can actually increase tensions among students of different races. And some critics go further, saying these silos are nothing more than segregation in disguise.

Many student-life administrators and experts suggest that there's room for both retreat and interac-

tion. They stress that affinity groups and designated cultural spaces play an important role on an inclusive, dynamic campus. Still, they say it's also crucial for colleges to create environments for diverse groups of students to have difficult conversations.

Greater student diversity on a campus doesn't necessarily translate into more dialogue and friendship across ethnic groups, says Beverly C. Daniel Tatum,

Intergroup dialogue allows students to "learn in a facilitated conversation that they can say things and make mistakes."

a former president of Spelman College, a historically black institution for women in Georgia, and a clinical psychologist. She's also author of several books exploring the intersection of psychology and race.

"I think the expectation that some higher-education institutions have is that if we bring students of different populations together, they'll just stumble across each other and figure out how to do this," Ms. Tatum says. "But they don't."

Aditi Bhowmick, a senior at Cornell University, agrees. It's possible, Ms. Bhowmick says, for a student to get through four years at Cornell without stepping too far out of his or her identity group.

"Cornell is doing great work to make sure everyone feels at home," she says. "But I feel like there's a



PATRICK SHANAHAN, CORNELL MARKETING GROUP

Students from different racial and religious backgrounds attended a dinner to encourage intercultural dialogue at Cornell U.

lot of lost opportunity for people to interact and experience diversity.”

IT’S NOT that students don’t interact with peers of varied backgrounds, says Patricia Y. Gurin, a professor emerita of psychology and women’s studies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor — whether in dorms, on sports teams, or within student organizations. But this informal banter rarely delves into controversial issues, Ms. Gurin says, because that could get awkward or uncomfortable. She says students need to be able to go beyond, “What did you do on Saturday night?”

Another obstacle that Ms. Bhowmick has noticed is a tension between the “default settings” of particular groups. If a gay student who’s active in the college’s LGBTQ organization wanted to join a historically white fraternity, “it’s almost seen as a betrayal,” she says.

So how can colleges create spaces for meaningful interaction among diverse groups of students?

Intergroup dialogue has become one widely used strategy for colleges to break down diversity silos in the classroom and elsewhere. Ms. Gurin and several other researchers first used the concept nearly three decades ago to structure a course at Michigan.

Under this framework, relatively equal numbers of students from two different demographic groups — based on race, gender, or some other identity characteristic — participate in a course that usually lasts a semester. The students learn how to engage in constructive conversations and how to distinguish between debate and dialogue, and then select topics to discuss as a class. The final stage involves groups of four students — two from each demographic identity — doing a project together.

Ms. Gurin has observed that many white students come into race-focused courses having always wanted to be able to discuss race but worried that they would come across as ignorant or prejudiced. Minority students, meanwhile, struggle to understand how some of their white peers don’t grasp concepts

like microaggressions as easily as they do.

“They learn in a facilitated conversation that they can say things and make mistakes,” Ms. Gurin says. “We would never call it a ‘safe space,’ but there’s some assurance that they’re not going to be attacked or made foolish by their ignorance.” Most students haven’t been taught to properly listen to each other, ask questions, and build on one another’s ideas, she adds.

The Michigan course has evolved into a voluntary academic program and, more recently, an undergraduate minor. A handful of colleges have crafted intergroup-dialogue programs modeled after Michigan’s and roughly 160 institutions have participated in an annual institute, now in its 11th year, that the university holds for colleges interested in the theory.

Outside the classroom, some colleges turn to food or cultural events, such as concerts and dance performances, to bring together students who wouldn’t normally cross paths. Renee T. Alexander, associate dean of students and director of intercultural programs at Cornell, oversees a dinner series called “Breaking Bread,” where members of two or three student groups get to know each other over a meal.

Ms. Bhowmick, the Cornell senior, has helped facilitate several Breaking Bread events as part of Cornell’s intergroup-dialogue project. She recalls a recent one with Black Students United and Cornell Hillel, where the dinner featured cornbread and challah. “That’s just a dialogue you don’t see happening unless you bring those people together,” she says. By the end of another dinner, involving a diverse crowd of fraternity members, “it looked like they had been friends for years.”

One pressing question is whether such efforts are reaching the narrow-minded students who need it the most. Ms. Alexander says that’s a continuing process at Cornell. “We’ve started with the leadership — with students who tend to be progressive, change agents, difference-makers in their communities,” she says. “As we expand, the goal is to include as many people in the conversation as possible.” That will take time, she notes.

But Ms. Gurin says intergroup-dialogue courses work best when students are there by choice. “It’s about reaching those who are motivated to learn how to do this better,” she says.

EFFORTS LIKE Connecticut’s affinity housing for black men also have a role to play on campus, Ms. Gurin says. “Those safe havens are crucial as well.” Connecticut officials hope the program will help black men improve their six-year graduation rate, which stood at 54 percent in 2015 (compared with 83 per-

cent for all groups and 77 percent for all minorities). Michael Meyers, executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition, disagrees. He has written several letters to Susan Herbst, Connecticut’s president, criticizing the black-male housing. “I don’t know how they can make an argument that there’s equal access and equal treatment if they treat certain students differently,” Mr. Meyers says.

Colleges that promote ethnically segregated opportunities are, in fact, structuring their institutions through a racial lens — the antithesis of inclusion, he says.

But Kathleen Wong(Lau), director of the South-

“I don’t know how they can make an argument that there’s equal access and equal treatment if they treat certain students differently.”

west Center for Human Relations Studies at the University of Oklahoma, says people tend to oversimplify the discussion of cultural affinity groups and programs. It’s not as if students in such groups walk around campus surrounded by an impenetrable wall, she says. For minority students, she says, “your whole experience on campus is an experience of interacting with difference.” Given that context, it’s important for students “to have a safe place where people like them get it,” she says.

Ms. Tatum, the former Spelman president, says her son lived in an on-campus house geared toward African-American students during his first year at Wesleyan University. At the end of the year, Ms. Tatum held an intergroup dialogue at the house. One white student at the event said she didn’t interact with many black students because they were all hanging out with each other at the house. But Ms. Tatum pointed out that there were only 30 or so students living in the house, compared with many more black students at the university.

At times, Ms. Tatum takes issue with how the debate over diversity silos is laid out. “The question is often framed in terms of the silos that students of color are in,” she says. The conversation should be not only about how a college can support students of color, but also, “how we can help white students break out of that isolation.” ■

Originally published May 15, 2016

Elon's residential "neighborhoods" hold dinners in which students, faculty, and staff talk about diversity. Recently, student leaders from multicultural groups and Greek life discussed how they could collaborate to improve the campus climate.



ELON U.

At Elon U., Living Differently Together

By SARAH BROWN

ELON UNIVERSITY officials believe that encouraging undergraduates to live on campus for all four years will help them build relationships with peers who don't share their backgrounds. That philosophy is part of the university's Residential Campus Initiative, which seeks to foster inclusivity, says Brooke Barnett, associate provost for inclusive community.

In the fall of 2010, officials organized undergraduate housing into "neighborhoods." The grouped housing brings together diverse populations of students and offers common social and study spaces. Faculty members live among the students in each group, alongside residence-life staff members.

Elon officials also group new students from a given neighborhood in the same sections of required freshman courses

"Like our societies, we're a little more segregated than you'd think we'd be," Ms. Barnett says. "Peo-

ple still tend to spend time with more people who are more like them than not." That tendency often grows after freshman year, at which point students might segregate themselves on the basis of their identity, major, or extracurricular activities, she says. She hopes that living on campus will mitigate that trend.

Last fall Ms. Barnett also helped start a community dinner series, in which students and faculty

and staff members grapple with issues of diversity. The most recent dinner involved student leaders from multicultural organizations and Greek life discussing how they could collaborate to improve Elon's campus climate.

The housing program also involves expanding the number of living/learning communities. The university will add three such communities in the fall, including one where residents will explore disparities in access to education. The communities bring together diverse groups of students with common interests, Ms. Barnett says.

In the gender-and-sexuality community, for instance, half of the students might identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, she says. That composition offers them the opportunity to interact within a diverse group while providing them with a safe space to be with peers like them.

Ms. Barnett is looking into the possibility of cultural-competency training for new students as part of their on-campus housing experience.

"All of these things are aspirational," she says. Moreover, while it's crucial for students to interact across cultures on a diverse campus, she doesn't want minority students to feel as though they are doing so primarily for the benefit of their white peers. ■

Originally published May 15, 2016

CASE STUDY

Talking Over the Racial Divide

How much can a half-semester course
shift a lifetime of experience?

By DAN BERRETT

THE STUDENTS started trying to understand one another by explaining the origins of their names, then conveying their cultural identity in three objects.

Mike, a sophomore criminal-justice major, said his Brazilian parents hoped his name would make him sound more American, “whatever that means,” he added, smiling. He sat with his hands in his coat pockets and the zipper pulled up to his mouth on the first day of a course about race here at the University of Maryland, where the goal was to re-examine a lifetime of assumptions in two-hour shifts.

On the second day, Mike brought his objects in a Timberland box, from the boots he started wearing in North Newark, N.J., where lots of black and Hispanic kids did. The objects included a collection of press clippings about homicides in his neighborhood and a photograph of his 5-year-old nephew, Matthew, to help him remember his obligations back home.

Across from him sat Lindi, who grew up in Chevy Chase, Md., a wealthy suburb of Washington. She held up the bow hair clip she’d earned as captain of her high-school cheerleading team; a small box in the shape of Africa, because she had lived in South Africa for the first month of her life; and a Hamsa, a symbol to ward off evil spirits she got on a free trip to Israel for young Jews.

“I didn’t realize how much of a minority I was until I was in the majority,” she said of the trip. Back in the United States, she said, she tried to eat out on Easter but found restaurants closed.

On seven Tuesdays this spring, *The Chronicle* watched as 14 students met in a course dedicated to discussing race, a perennial, at times explosive issue on campuses and across the country. Maryland of-

fers the course as part of an effort to make students more proficient with difference — to help them have thorny conversations on uncomfortable topics, see the value of other people’s experiences, and gain some perspective on their own. At least, that’s the hope. But how potent a tool can talk be?

Some students walked into the classroom here a long way off from racial consciousness. Most had enrolled simply to fill out their course load or check off a diversity requirement. A few had grown up in segregated neighborhoods and schools. But here was a rare opportunity to participate in a dialogue with peers from diverse backgrounds, facilitated by two instructors, Benjamin L. Parks, a white man, and Erica C. Smith, a black woman. The trajectory toward understanding would prove messy, halting, but — maybe, ultimately — revealing.

The class established ground rules: Keep it real. Be specific. Avoid making personal attacks. Assume good will. Dialogue-based courses developed at the University of Michigan in 1989 provided a model. To encourage frank discussion, *The Chronicle* agreed to use students’ first names.

“We want you to be able to have tough conversations,” Mr. Parks told the class on the first day. “Learning can’t happen unless you get real.”

The notion of a “safe space” is imprecise and counterproductive, many instructors of dialogue courses at Maryland believe. They prefer to think of their classrooms as courageous places where students aren’t afraid to express and hear things that make them uncomfortable. At first, that was a tall order for many of the students. Politeness reigned. Hearing about one another’s foreign and Americanized names or racial experiences, several retreated to the same noncommittal word, “interesting.”

The exercise with the objects helped the students



ANDRÉ CHUNG FOR THE CHRONICLE

In a dialogue course at the U. of Maryland, students discuss race not in a safe space but in a “courageous” place where they are encouraged to express and hear things that make them uncomfortable.

recognize their identities as complicated, multifaceted, and socially constructed. It also sparked some early connections. A Coptic Christian whose family came from Egypt sat near the daughter of El Salvadoran immigrants. Around the circle were a Cameroon-born, Maryland-raised budding journalist and a white sister of a Marine.

The son of frugal Chinese immigrants, who grew up owning one pair of shoes at a time, carried his objects in the box that once held his prized pair of Kobe Bryant Nikes. He had bought the shoes to mark his progress up the economic ladder. Baye, a black senior majoring in American studies, leaned forward. His favorite NBA player, he said, was the Chinese star Yao Ming. It was one of the first bids at bridging difference.

Among the objects Baye (pronounced “Bye”) shared was a tattoo on his right forearm: “I solemnly swear that I’m up to no good.”

Sitting nearby, Sophie, a pale-skinned, half Iraqi Englishwoman, gaped. She recognized the vow of

mischief from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Sometimes, she said, your assumptions about other people fail you.

“I never would’ve put you down as a Harry Potter fan,” she told Baye.

He smiled. “I’m not what people usually think.”

THE STUDENTS disagreed at first on the importance of race or how deeply woven it is into the fabric of American life. But they rarely did so directly.

Such divergent perspectives had complicated previous diversity efforts at the university, says Mark Brimhall-Vargas, who directed the dialogue courses when they began about 15 years ago. Before that, efforts like speaker series and cultural events were derided from all sides as either superficial or shoving diversity down white students’ throats, said Mr. Brimhall-Vargas, who is now chief diversity officer and associate provost at Tufts University. The dialogue courses arose as a response: to

meet people where they were, ground the subject matter in students' own experiences, and encourage learning through reflection and discussion.

In this spring's course, the students came from very different places. Race was an inescapable fact for the minority students, even as they tried to play with its ironclad rules.

Mari, whose father is Afro-Caribbean and whose mother is biracial (black and white), rode a skateboard as a way of defying categories. That was uncommon, he said, for a black man in his neighborhood of Baltimore.

Baye, the Harry Potter fan from just north of the Bronx, who described himself as "dark-skinned and big," wore a New York Rangers hockey jersey to one class and talked about his affection for museums and Broadway musicals. But his own group and society more broadly, he said, could tolerate only so much self-invention. One day he proposed an exercise: having students say what racial and cultural categories they thought one of their classmates belonged to. He was the first subject. His race was black, someone said, and his culture African-American.

Baye waved it off. "I don't identify as African-American," he said. His mother is Jamaican, his father Senegalese. He often felt like he didn't fit in among the American-born black New Yorkers he grew up with. Other kids taunted him, he said, as an "African booty scratcher." He called them slaves.

Race had shaped his friendships and relationships. One white friend's grandmother refused to look at him; another's father adored him but warned his daughter not to date black men. When he would go out with a white woman, his stock rose while hers fell, he said, "like she's a car or something."

Some of the white students felt freer to slip from the bonds of race when it suited them, or to question its legacy, and even its existence. One white student said race wasn't a big deal. "It's not a significant piece we should be relishing in," she said, her foot bobbing.

Facilitators of racial-dialogue courses have noticed that perception take hold in recent years, as many students have been raised to aspire to a postracial ideal of colorblindness. But that dream can be a dodge, or even an insult. While seemingly the embodiment of Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision, colorblindness sometimes feels to minority students like a denial of the toll race still takes on them.

Sophie, the light-skinned, half Iraqi Englishwoman, rejected the idea that she was white. Instead, she identified with the Latino culture of her husband.

Lindi, the white woman born in South Africa, said she sometimes checks the box on forms to indicate that she's African-American, even though she knows she's not supposed to.

Ms. Smith asked Lindi why she does it. Africa was where she first drew breath, Lindi replied. "I think race is based off personal life experience and what

you know," she told the class, "and not far-off history."

After the course, she explained that she finds such classification odd. "I don't feel like an honest answer is even necessary," she said. "When they ask questions on these things, it further engrains this racial divide between everyone." Her answer, she said, was a form of rebellion.

Some of the minority students saw her action differently: as cultural appropriation. They kept that view to themselves.

Students' backgrounds tended to shape what they got out of the course. For minority students, the dialogue did little to reframe their thinking. It did, though, give them an opportunity to trade perspectives and bond with other students, in a room where others looked like them. But for many white students, hearing about their classmates' experiences upended their assumptions.

WHEN LONG-HELD beliefs get tested, people often dismiss what they don't want to hear. The facilitators tried to strike a balance between drawing students out and challenging their ideas, especially the white students.

At first, many of them resisted the idea that they benefited from privilege. When the topic came up, their body language showed their discomfort. Several fidgeted, tapped their toes, and rocked back in their chairs. Privilege, they said, was more likely to

"We want you to be able to have tough conversations. Learning can't happen unless you get real."

be held by minorities, who could claim an edge on college applications or in the workplace.

"Some people might get jobs if the company is trying to diversify it," Lindi said.

Mr. Parks asked if it was possible that white people had privilege. That was the instructors' dialogic approach: not offering answers, but phrasing a question to spark reflection. But that can do only so much when historical and theoretical understanding isn't shared. A white student said one day that the idea of privilege hadn't entered his thinking until a year ago. Mari, the black skateboarder from Baltimore, had long been familiar with the concept of double-consciousness. (Developing a common framework is one reason some of the courses at Maryland will be two weeks longer next semester, to allow time to discuss fundamental concepts at the start.)

The disparate depths of knowledge can place a



ANDRÉ CHUNG FOR THE CHRONICLE

In Maryland's dialogue course, race was more than black and white. It was Arab, Asian, and Latino, with identities refracted through class, neighborhood, skin tone, and to what extent a student's parents had assimilated.

burden on minority students. After Lindi's comment about affirmative action, Mike, the Latino student from Newark, described privilege as longstanding and intertwined with structures and systems of power. It's distinct from what the white students were describing, he said, the isolated examples of temporary advantage.

Around the country, minority students have felt

Politeness reigned during the first class. Several students retreated to the same noncommittal word, "interesting."

worn down by having to act as "professors of race" on top of their regular responsibilities. Mike didn't mind. "I don't have a problem explaining things," he said later. Though it can be frustrating when people make ignorant comments, he said, he also knew the shoe could be on the other foot. In his neighborhood, it was unusual both to have parents who were married and to get a scholarship to a private high school. "In that room, I was colored," he said of the class. "Back home, I was privileged."

One of the strengths of the dialogue course was

the diversity of the students, the instructors came to understand, and they wished they had done more to bring those nuances to the fore. Race was more than black and white. It was Arab, Asian, and Latino, with identities refracted through class, neighborhood, skin tone, and to what extent a student's parents had assimilated.

The more vocal minority students could describe race in concrete, personal detail. When those students were absent, the instructors sometimes struggled with how forcefully to confront white students' assumptions.

One day, Lindi wondered if demographic change might simply resolve racial problems, if white people became a minority. For now, she said, the priority should be self-examination. "We have to focus on ourselves," she said.

Mr. Parks turned to her. "I'm wrestling with how to say this, Lindi, because you strike me as a warm and open person," he said. "But that statement struck me as white privilege."

Sophie came to her defense. Everyone has a struggle, she said, and no one should be made to feel bad.

Advising people to focus on themselves and let time take care of the rest may ring hollow when they feel under attack, said Mr. Parks, who referred to social-justice movements like Black Lives Matter.

"Black Lives Matter? All lives matter," Sophie said. "Hispanic lives matter."

At several points, the Asian, black, and Lati-

no students offered gentle guidance to their white peers, helping them recognize their privilege without browbeating them. One day, after an activity in pairs, Mari remarked that privilege often exerts an invisible influence.

Ryan, a white freshman from suburban Maryland, picked up the thread. He mentioned cultural bias on standardized tests. One example was a question about horseback riding.

How should someone respond to that, to being called out for the privilege suggested by that hobby? Mari distinguished two reactions, guilt and awareness.

"If you have ridden horses," he said, "that's not something to feel bad about..."

"Yeah," Ryan jumped in.

"... just acknowledge it," Mari finished, because not everyone has that opportunity.

White people in interracial dialogues can feel like they're walking on eggshells, Mari later said. Throughout the class, he sought opportunities to send reassuring signals. "If they think people are going to jump down their throats," he said, "they'll never venture out on the ledge and be vulnerable." Taking a risk and being open to change, he believed, is necessary for true progress.

"If we make the conscious choice to do the thing that's a little bit harder," Mari said, like striking up a conversation with strangers or resisting the temptation to scoff at privilege, "we'll move forward."

Ryan heard in Mari's remarks an invitation to participate. The white student had been through racial-awareness activities before, he said, but they seemed to have preordained conclusions that people like him were the cause of inequality.

When Mari said people shouldn't be mocked for their privilege, Ryan felt validated. "To me, that was the biggest step," Ryan said. "I became much more willing to engage."

ENGAGEMENT COMES in many forms. For several white students it meant taking an intellectual approach.

By the course's midpoint, Mr. Parks and Ms. Smith worried that some students were staying in their heads as a way of distancing themselves. But the purpose of the course isn't to induce shame or to lead students to a particular conclusion. It's to encourage them to examine their own lives in light of others'. If the students detached from their own feelings, the instructors thought, they would never really hear one another's.

With three classes remaining, the instructors tried a few exercises to bring home race's immediacy. In one, students stood in a circle as Mr. Parks read a series of statements. It was assumed from a young age that you would go to college. No one in your immediate family has ever been addicted to drugs or alcohol. You've never been the only person of your racial or ethnic group in a class or workplace. After

each one, the students stepped forward if it applied.

Several of the students were surprised by how often they stepped forward. Ryan confessed that it made him feel not just vulnerable, but defensive.

The instructors could see in the students' journal assignments that they were starting to probe their assumptions and see themselves with new eyes. They were working on their final projects, personal essays exploring some aspect of race that made them deeply uncomfortable, something they would feel physically anxious to acknowledge and reluctant to divulge. And yet in class, some students still favored abstraction over frank acknowledgment.

In the next-to-last class, Ms. Smith and Mr. Parks tried another exercise. The group split in two. Those who felt they experienced "light-skin privilege" went with Mr. Parks into another room. Those who didn't stayed with Ms. Smith.

Around the country, minority students have felt worn down by having to act as "professors of race" on top of their regular responsibilities. Mike didn't mind.

The group divided along unpredictable lines. Some Asian and Latino students self-selected as privileged; others didn't. As the privileged students settled in, they described how uncomfortable they felt to be separated from their classmates.

"This is a weird activity," said Lindi. Mr. Parks asked her what "weird" felt like. Several times that day he prompted students to describe their feelings, occasionally drawing his fist to his chest for emphasis.

Some thought they wouldn't learn much with their classmates in the other room, while others worried what those students really thought of them. "I don't want them to think I've had the perfect life," said a white senior. Another student, a Korean-American who had said on the first day that race shouldn't exist as a category, expressed guilt about her privilege and her desire to share it. A Latina student felt bad living in a prosperous suburb, she said, when her cousins from the city would visit. But the term "privilege," a few students said, also seemed accusatory and unfair.

"I haven't done anything to have that privilege," said one student. "I like to think I've earned everything."

"Yeah," Ryan agreed. "That resonates with me." He turned to a white classmate. "When someone says you're in college just because you're white," Ryan asked him, "does that make you mad?"

It did, the two young men agreed. They had worked hard to make good choices. Dismissing their accomplishments as a result of privilege, Ryan said, “delegitimizes your work and your life.”

In the other room, the students who felt they didn’t benefit from light-skin privilege were more comfortable speaking freely. That’s why they often self-segregate, they said, and it’s part of how they learned to code-switch to better fit in with majority culture. Several students told Ms. Smith that they probably wouldn’t share those thoughts with the others.

When the two groups reconvened, the tension was thick. Eye contact was furtive.

The class then did something called a fishbowl exercise. The privileged group sat in the middle and debriefed on what they had just discussed while their classmates listened. Then the outer group recounted what they had heard. After that, they switched places. In the end, the nonprivileged group decided to share what they’d said when they were alone.

The awkwardness started to ease. The conversation grew more candid. Several of the students said they sensed they were hearing, at last, what their

that made them uncomfortable. Several students acknowledged that they sometimes felt uneasy among people of other races. Sophie, the half-Iraqi Englishwoman, described how she had left a recent class and made her way across campus. When a black man slowed near her, she tensed up. Then, to her embarrassment, he asked her for directions to the bus.

“It’s difficult for me to admit that,” she said. “I’m a minority.”

Several black and Latino students shared their perspective on moments like those. They often feared being perceived as threatening. Baye said he crosses to the other side of the street when he sees white women coming. Mari said he tends to keep his distance and look at his phone when walking at night.

He started becoming keenly aware in middle school, he said, of his place in the world. As the class wound down, he described one episode that left a mark. He and his grandmother, who is white, went to the mall the summer before eighth grade. He tagged along as she shopped, checking his phone as he trailed behind her, looking up every so often to make sure he didn’t lose her.

As they made their way to the exit, he realized she had gotten too far ahead. He ran to catch up.

Before he could reach her, a security guard blocked his way. Mari realized what the guard must have seen — not a grandson trying to rejoin his grandmother, but a young black man running after an elderly white woman. He remembered how the people around him quickly dispersed. He wondered what their lasting impression of him would be. Could they see him as he was, a bookish kid who loved documentaries and mythology, or was he just some young thug?

“That’s not something you forget,” he said softly.

The class fell silent.

Sophie, who until that point had disclaimed her whiteness, spoke first. “As a white woman,” she said, “I’m really, really sorry you have to deal with that.”

At the time, Mari wasn’t sure how to respond. Part of him felt bad that Sophie was expressing such distress. Should he reassure her?

That moment stood out as a powerful one as Mr. Parks and Ms. Smith reflected on the course. “So much of the credit,” Mr. Parks said, “goes to Mari.” But moments like those also need a facilitator cultivating trust and patiently sanding away politeness and resistance.

The exchange with Sophie stuck with Mari, too. A few weeks after the course, he said it had become clear to him how genuinely moved she was and why that mattered.

“In that moment, I was just glad that she listened,” he said. For her to understand how an episode like that could affect someone from a very different background felt meaningful.

“I didn’t want her to move mountains,” said Mari. “I just wanted her to hear me.” ■

Originally published July 14, 2016

“When someone says you’re in college just because you’re white, does that make you mad?”

classmates really thought. “I feel like there’s been a weight lifted off our shoulders,” a white student said.

The discussion lingered on the idea that the term “white privilege” could make some students feel like their lives and accomplishments were discredited. “Sure, there are advantages you grew up with,” said one of the students from the nonprivileged group. “But it wasn’t your choice.”

Mike could appreciate where some of the white students were coming from, he said. The reaction is similar to what he and other minorities feel, he said, when people assume they benefit unfairly from affirmative action.

THE EXERCISE marked a turning point. On the last day, the students shared more openly. They weren’t tiptoeing anymore, venturing instead to share their frustrations and fears. If they had achieved the goal of the course, learning to speak honestly across difference, they were also at the beginning of a longer and more arduous process of forging understanding.

Prompted by Mr. Parks, several students described their final essays examining an aspect of race

How Do You Create a Diversity Agenda?

By BETH McMURTRIE

COLLEGES have been roiled in recent months by students demanding more diversity on campuses. Their concerns are far from new. Diversity has been a hot-button topic since federal desegregation efforts began more than 50 years ago. Yet efforts to increase the numbers of minority faculty, staff, and students on campuses, create inclusive communities, and infuse the curriculum with diverse perspectives have met with limited success.

It's not for lack of trying — on paper, at least. So how do colleges make sure they live up to their promises? In short, how do you create an effective diversity agenda?

Scholars who study diversity in higher education say colleges keep making the same mistakes, even as they ramp up the rhetoric around diversity. From the civil-rights protests of the 1960s to the debates on affirmative action of the 1990s to the broadening of diversity to include sexual orientation and gender identity, colleges have often been reactive, not proactive, experts say. Planning is assigned to ad hoc com-

mittees, strategies are designed by small groups of people, and results are expected of those who often lack the authority and resources to produce them. Meanwhile, most people on campuses are left out of the conversation.

As a result, agendas are frequently disjointed, failing to connect different parts of a campus — from admissions to student life to human resources and beyond. Yet to diversify a campus means to transform it, experts say, and that sometimes also means throwing away long-held assumptions about how admissions, hiring, and curricular development function. And that is hard work.

If they continue to fall short on diversity efforts, colleges risk disconnecting from the larger culture. By 2020, minority students are expected to account for 45 percent of the country's public high-school graduates, up from 38 percent in 2009.

Many colleges fail to reflect those changing demographics. Nationally, three-fourths of full-time faculty members are white, according to Education Department statistics. Only 5.5 percent are

black, and 4.2 percent are Hispanic. Black women far outnumber black men in the professoriate, and faculty members across all minority groups are less likely than their white counterparts to be full professors.

And while 40 percent of college students are minority-group members, they are more likely to attend two-year colleges. They are underrepresented at the most selective institutions, which is where many of the recent protests have taken place. Minority students there say they often feel marginalized and isolated. They want colleges to put more resources into recruiting and supporting students and faculty of color, to provide spaces and programming for students from underrepresented groups, and to ensure that their complaints about racism or bias are responded to swiftly.

Following are some methods diversity experts suggest to help overcome common challenges in designing an effective agenda.

Take ownership. Too many college leaders presume that their campuses operate well, until it becomes obvious that they don't. When student protests occur, presidents often seem stunned by the depth of anger. Timothy M. Wolfe, the University of Missouri system's former president, perhaps best embodied that dynamic when a student video captured him staring ahead as student protesters, disturbed by what they saw as the administration's ineffective response to racism on the campus, blocked his car during homecoming last fall. "I was caught off-guard in that moment," he later said, explaining his reaction. "Nonetheless, had I gotten out of the

“Presidents don’t view being chief diversity officer as their job. That’s for some black person to do. That’s for some person of color to do.”

car to acknowledge the students and talk with them, perhaps we wouldn't be where we are today.”

Similarly, Purdue's president, Mitch Daniels, faced a backlash when he issued a letter to the community last fall saying the campus stood in “proud contrast” to Missouri and Yale University, both of which had been rocked by protests. Students quickly pushed back with a list of demands, including that he apologize for minimizing their experiences.

A recent survey by Inside Higher Ed and Gallup brought home that widespread confusion: 84 percent of college presidents said race relations on their cam-

pus were “excellent” or “good.” Yet only 24 percent said race relations on college campuses nationwide were good. In other words, these were other people's problems.

Why is that? For one thing, most college presidents are white and came up through predominantly white institutions. So it's no surprise that they may have little experience dealing with the complex problems of race and ethnicity, says Walter M. Kimbrough, president of Dillard University, whose research focuses on historically black colleges, like his, and black men in college. When diversity problems come to their attention, they may opt for the simple way out — hire a chief diversity officer and delegate responsibility.

“Presidents don't view being chief diversity officer as their job,” says Mr. Kimbrough. “That's for some black person to do. That's for some person of color to do.”

Diversity leaders say that when you get endorsement from people at the top, longer-term commitment is more likely to happen. Gregory T. Vincent, vice president for diversity and community engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, has worked with two presidents since arriving there, in 2005. Each has supported the development of his division, which encompasses a broad array of programs, such as academic support for underrepresented and first-generation students and a campus-climate team that responds to bias incidents. “Everyone has to strap in,” he says, “and say, OK, this is going to be at least a decade-long initiative to get going.”

Involve the entire faculty, not just the usual suspects. Typically, a diversity plan is hammered out by a small set of people. It often includes a disproportionate number of minority faculty members, who may not have seniority, along with the same set of white faculty members who have championed this cause for years. The problem is that this small group doesn't have the power to execute a campuswide vision. Yet the faculty as a whole probably has the most power on a campus to make changes, diversity experts say. Administrations change, and students come and go. Meanwhile, faculty members are the gatekeepers in hiring and, at the doctoral level, admissions. And they design the curriculum.

“Professors don't want to be racist,” says Shaun R. Harper, executive director of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. “Nor do they want to create classroom environments that are alienating to most people. But if the diversity agenda-setting doesn't involve most of them, they inadvertently do the things that students of color and faculty of color complain about for years.”

That point hit home, he says, during a recent campus visit in which he held a forum with faculty members about diversity in recruitment, classroom culture, and a host of other issues. He found them



RUTH REYES, EMORY U.

Students, faculty members, and administrators at Emory U. attended a retreat in February to discuss racial justice in depth.

“delightfully open” to what he had to say. Yet they told him this was the first time they had been given a chance to weigh in on the diversity discussion on their campus.

Late last year, Brown University released a comprehensive diversity and inclusion plan that involves all departments. Christina H. Paxson, Brown’s president, says the decision to push responsibility for diversity down to that level came out of conversations about why certain diversity goals set in earlier years hadn’t been met. “If faculty don’t own an issue, it’s impossible to make progress on it,” she says. “If there’s one lesson for college presidents, it’s that.”

Eduardo J. Padrón, president of Miami Dade College, a predominantly Hispanic community college, says buy-in to a diversity agenda should start during the hiring process and continue once faculty members are on the campus. As a result of that happening at Miami Dade, he says, the college has become increasingly diverse and has built stronger ties to the

community. “There’s a lot of dialogue and conversation and reaching consensus about what’s best for students,” he says. “It’s been a very deliberate conversation, not because of my position, but because people have bought into my agenda.”

Engage students. Presidents have sometimes avoided or dismissed student demands if they seem antithetical to how the college operates. Some student groups, for example, have demanded that their institutions fire or grant tenure to specific people, that faculty evaluations by students include open-ended questions about whether they had made racist remarks, or that tuition and fees be eliminated outright. But taking those lists at face value misses the point, says Ajay Nair, senior vice president and dean of campus life at Emory University. “Their demands are often jarring, but they’re meant to force a conversation,” he says. Unfortunately, he adds, “we are not very good as higher-education institutions at listening very carefully to our students’ concerns.”

Emory recently tried to do things differently. After students issued a series of demands last fall, Mr. Nair established working groups around each point, to get students and others together to figure out how to address them. One thing he learned, he says, was to look at the underlying issues. For example, the demand for a mechanism to report bias in the classroom turned into a discussion about how to better prepare faculty members to handle controversial issues in teaching.

As Emory's experience illustrates, when colleges

“Everyone has to strap in, and say, OK, this is going to be at least a decade-long initiative to get going.”

really listen to students, they often change or refocus their priorities. A recent American Council on Education survey, for example, showed that presidents are putting more emphasis on diversity-related curricular reforms because students say that is important to them.

Deborah A. Santiago, a diversity consultant and chief operating officer of Excelencia in Education, a nonprofit organization that supports Latino success in higher education, says that while black students' protests have highlighted their concerns in particular, a well-thought-out response can benefit all students, including Latino, gay and lesbian, and other groups. The real challenge, she says, is to juggle the quick win — changing the name of a dorm, for example — with more-significant plans. “The value-added of student voices, especially black students, is it's bringing media attention, which means institutions can't dismiss it as readily.”

At the same time, it's unlikely that colleges can give minority students everything they want — especially if their demands involve a rapid increase in the number of minority students and faculty. Mr. Kimbrough, of Dillard, thinks some minority students on predominantly white campuses are being unrealistic. “It riles me when students say, I want black faculty, black curriculum, black living spaces. I have all that. It's called Dillard University.”

Have the tough conversations. Fostering diversity and inclusion is not an act of celebration. It's hard work. Just look at some of the debates taking place on campuses today. If you create housing for minority students, does that create safe spaces or promote self-segregation? Where is the line between free speech and hate speech? If you want to recruit

more minority students, should you change your admissions standards? And in hiring and promotion, are professors unconsciously biased toward institutions and activities that benefit white candidates?

Those are complex conversations, says Mitchell J. Chang, a professor of higher education and organizational change at the University of California at Los Angeles who studies diversity initiatives on college campuses. Yet too often, he says, the people charged with developing a diversity plan lack the expertise needed to direct those conversations. He recommends inviting in diversity experts, or hiring people who have expertise in the field. There is a lot of good research out there, he says, if people know where to find it.

He also recommends conducting evaluations to help the campus determine where it needs to focus its efforts. A number of universities, including Brown and the University of Texas at Austin, have started campus-climate surveys that allow them to measure progress.

Hold people accountable. Too many diversity plans fail to achieve their goals, yet rarely is anyone held responsible for failure. “There aren't any other areas where you would establish the degree of effort we put forth without accountability, except for diversity,” says William B. Harvey, a distinguished scholar at the American Association for Access, Equity, and Diversity. “We pat ourselves on the back, say we gave it a good try, and move on.”

Brown has tried to avoid that endless cycle by building in review procedures and accountability processes without being overly rigid. “It's not set in stone, and we have a lot of things we think will be effective, but maybe they won't,” says Ms. Paxson. “The broad goals will be the same, but the tactics might change.”

Accountability will become increasingly necessary as the diversity agenda evolves, placing responsibility on a wider set of actors. Lorelle L. Espinosa, assistant vice president at the American Council on Education's Center for Policy Research and Strategy, says she sees colleges moving away from thinking of diversity strictly in terms of numbers. Colleges are now moving toward more structural changes, like curricular and pedagogical reforms, emphasizing the experiences students and faculty members have once they are on a campus.

While Emory is just beginning to craft its new diversity agenda, Mr. Nair says the university hopes to create a continuous loop of conversation and action. On a new website, Emory Campus Life Dialogue, anyone can respond to the working groups' suggestions. “We're creating an incubator,” he says, where people “can feed ideas to us, for action and implementation.

“This is just the beginning.”

Originally published May 15, 2016



DAVENPORT U.

Davenport U. hired a consultant to assess its diversity efforts, and the auditors recommended, among other things, a guest-speaker series focused on multicultural topics.

Auditing Diversity

By SARAH BROWN

WHEN Davenport University, in Grand Rapids, Mich., conducted its first “diversity audit” six years ago, officials there made several encouraging discoveries. Among them: Most students — no matter their race, gender, or age — had a positive view of the university’s diversity and inclusion efforts. But faculty and staff members, particularly women and minorities, were skeptical. Many believed that employees who weren’t white men faced a glass ceiling, and that the university’s leadership was an old boys’ club.

A closer look at the data revealed that student responses weren’t all rosy, either. Many students said they weren’t familiar with Davenport’s policies and procedures on discrimination and harassment. Students who took classes online or at a satellite campus felt isolated. And others said they wanted more meaningful interaction with students who were different from themselves.

Davenport has sizable diversity among its 8,400 students: 28 percent are from minority groups, more than half receive financial aid, and the average age of undergraduates is 28. Those figures made it especial-



DAVENPORT U.

Sybrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin, spoke as part of a new series of talks at Davenport U.

ly important for officials to formally evaluate how they could better serve diverse needs, says Richard J. Pappas, Davenport's president.

Nearly 2,500 students and employees across five of the university's 11 campuses participated in a focus group, an online survey, or both during the spring of 2010. The consultants overseeing the audit then made recommendations to Davenport's administration: Create an office of inclusion and equity. Estab-

“It wasn’t just a nice thing to do. It was critical if we were going to be successful in what we were trying to achieve.”

lish an inclusion council. Host a guest-speaker series focused on multicultural and global topics. Mandate diversity training for all employees. Reform the hiring process to ensure that all search committees have diverse representation.

Nearly six years later, Davenport officials have done all of the above, and more. “It wasn’t just a nice thing to do,” Mr. Pappas says. “It was critical if we were going to be successful in what we were trying

to achieve.” Within the next couple of years, he says, the institution will probably do another audit. He won a 2016 leadership award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine for his efforts.

While diversity audits have existed in higher education and other workplace settings for decades, interest in such assessments is rising as officials strive to show that they are committed to diversity. A recent survey of college presidents by the American Council on Education reflects that trend, Mr. Pappas says, particularly with respect to race: More than half of four-year-college leaders responded that the racial climate on their campus was a bigger priority now than it was three years ago.

The assessments come with drawbacks, though. They're not cheap, and it can be difficult for colleges to tell what, exactly, they're getting for the money. Davenport's audit took just over six months and cost \$46,000, “but it was well worth it,” Mr. Pappas says.

While the findings weren't earth-shattering, the assessment forced officials to be introspective about their commitment to diversity and to pinpoint which efforts to tackle first, he says. For instance, based on the consultants' final report, Davenport has expanded its outreach to the Hispanic community — which currently makes up just 3 percent of the student body — and has established goals to recruit, retain, and graduate more Hispanic students by 2020.

Moreover, the audit started critical conversations on the campus about embracing difference, Mr. Pappas says.

WHY MIGHT a college do a diversity audit? Momentum typically starts from the top, or it must at least have the support of senior administrators, says Myra Hindus, founder and principal at Creative Diversity Solutions, a consulting firm that helps colleges assess and improve their diversity.

A chief diversity officer might take the initiative, or a president might spearhead such a review as part of an institution's strategic plan. At Davenport, it was the latter. “Planning for diversity and equity is not separate from the overall vision for the institution,” Mr. Pappas says. He has led three other colleges and conducted a diversity audit at each.

Some reviews are the result of campus crises or student complaints. The University of Missouri system is doing a diversity audit as its campuses try to resolve racial tensions at its flagship, in Columbia. Student protests of the administration's handling of racist incidents there helped force the system's president and the flagship's chancellor to resign last fall. The assessment is part of a list of recommendations issued by the system's Board of Curators shortly after the administrators stepped down.

Some people are concerned the audit could further tarnish the university's reputation, says S. David Mitchell, associate dean of academic affairs and

an associate professor at Missouri's law school. "It takes a great deal of courage to do an audit, to engage in this process, to reveal things that might be uncomfortable," says Mr. Mitchell, who is chairman of the system's diversity task force, formed last fall to look at Missouri's policies and suggest reforms. Moreover, he says, when people think of an audit, "they think of a tax audit, which is a terrible thing. You don't want to be audited." However, "they don't recognize that audits can illuminate things that are going well."

His role as chairman of the task force will involve whittling down the consultants' recommendations into a handful of priorities and gathering comments from students, faculty and staff members, and alumni.

Ask college officials and others about what the audits should cover, and most stress that assessing all aspects of diversity — beyond race and gender — is the best approach. In Missouri's case, though, Mr. Mitchell says racial tensions were the primary impetus for the audit, and will receive special attention.

Initially, the Missouri audit was to be narrowly focused, covering just system-level policies and programs, and completed within a couple of months. "It was quick because it needed to be responsive," Mr. Mitchell says. But the audit was soon expanded to include the four campuses. Audits conducted in part or entirely by an outside consultant can take from three to eight months, depending on the institution's size and the audit's scale, says Ms. Hindus, the consultant. (Some institutions take more time; the University of Denver, for instance, spent all of 2013 on its most recent diversity audit.)

Most colleges Ms. Hindus has worked with have had active committees that collaborate with her on the audit. "I can't come in as an outsider and just start working," she says.

MANY ADMINISTRATORS say bringing in an outside consultant is key for a successful audit, but not all colleges can afford that option. Austin Community College, in Texas, couldn't, so two administrators — Connie P. Williams, manager of one of the college's testing centers, and Marcus Jackson, director of institutional planning and evaluation — are doing an in-house audit, the first ever at the college. They say one motivation for the review was a perception that most of the college's diversity efforts were focused on students, and not faculty and staff members.

But doing the audit isn't their full-time job, so it's taking significantly longer. Gathering information from surveys, student-success reports, and other assessments, crafting an evaluation template, and filling it in took more than a year. Then Ms. Williams and Mr. Jackson began to analyze the information: Which offices and centers on the campus do diversity-related work? How many personnel are devoted in

some capacity to diversity and inclusion? They will soon present a final report to the college's administration, and they hope nearby colleges will use their template to conduct similar diversity assessments.

Hodges University, in Florida, will try a hybrid approach, using a consultant for some of the work when it begins a diversity audit next year. "Everything that we can do ourselves, we will," Gail B. Williams, the chief diversity officer at Hodges, says of the audit. "But sometimes it's really best if someone from the outside comes in and works with me across campus to do interviews and to analyze with an unbiased eye." She estimates the consultant could cost a minimum of \$10,000.

Racial diversity among students isn't a problem for Hodges, where 42 percent of students are Hispanic and 13 percent are black. Ms. Williams's goals for the audit are to show how diversity helps the university and where limited resources can best be used.

There are also a number of tools colleges can use to self-evaluate, such as the Equity Scorecard developed by the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California.

DATA COLLECTION — both quantitative and qualitative — is one of the most concrete results of a diversity audit, Ms. Hindus says. Data might answer such questions as: Are you recruiting but not retaining minority students? Are there enough affinity groups for underrepresented students? Is there a perceived bias in college policies? In some audits, colleges compare themselves to peer institutions.

The reviews can also solve a persistent problem with diversity efforts in higher education: Each department on a campus often has no idea what others are doing. "So many of our efforts are fragmented," says Austin Community College's Ms. Williams. She hopes the audit will help the college coordinate its diversity activities more purposefully.

Ultimately, officials must have buy-in for diversity programs across an institution to become truly inclusive, says Dave Veneklas, executive vice president for organizational development at Davenport. Diversity, he says, "couldn't be seen as someone else's responsibility. It needed to be truly integrated into all of our work." That's something the audit helped emphasize.

There's evidence that skeptical faculty and staff members are gaining confidence in Davenport's commitment to diversity. The university's annual employee-satisfaction survey asks respondents to weigh their agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 5: "This institution values diversity of thought, people, and ideas." In the last five years, the average has gone from 3.49 to 3.74.

"Is it as high as we'd like? No," Mr. Veneklas says. "Are we moving in the right direction? Absolutely." ■

Originally published May 15, 2016

What to Do With Students Who Spew Hate

By KATHERINE KNOTT

A COLLEGE STUDENT says, posts, or does something racist. The university condemns the act, expresses outrage, and investigates. In some cases, the student is then suspended or expelled.

A college student says, posts, or does something racist. The university condemns the act, expresses outrage, and investigates. In some cases, the student is then suspended or expelled.

The final leg of that process — the discipline — plays out in a much-less-public arena than the first two. And it's often a more-complex endeavor than a casual higher-education observer might imagine.

As campuses across the country respond to a spate of racist incidents, it's worth looking at what disciplinary options a university has and what its ultimate goal should be.

At the University of Missouri at Columbia this week, members of a black student group reported being accosted with racial slurs by a group of white students. The interim chancellor, Henry C. (Hank) Foley, said the school has zero tolerance for such behavior and mentioned suspension or expulsion as possible punishments.

But kicking students off campus after such an incident would be a missed opportunity, said Thomas L. Hill, formerly senior vice president for student affairs at Iowa State University. "When you suspend or remove someone from the environment, you no longer have an opportunity to influence their behavior," he said. Mr. Hill instead suggests finding creative ways to educate students who do say or do something offensive.

It's in the spirit of educational institutions to

make their disciplinary processes a learning opportunity. At some point though, the presence of an individual spouting hate speech on a campus stands in the way of other students' learning.

But advocates of nontraditional disciplinary measures say they are more effective and help the campus community heal after a traumatic incident.

"Institutions should have a variety of methods for addressing the spectrum of behaviors that can occur, including both traditional student-conduct procedures as well as alternatives that go beyond discipline," said Laura Bennett, president of the Association for Student Conduct Administration.

Ms. Bennett acknowledged that one obstacle to disciplining racist speech is that most forms of speech are protected by the First Amendment, and thus are not policy violations — at least on public campuses.

Legal issues aside, expelling or suspending students can have the side effect of making them into "First Amendment martyrs," said Gary Pavela, a legal expert who has consulted with colleges, and creating a distraction that could yield further divisions on a campus.

In 2015 the president of the University of Oklahoma, David L. Boren, quickly expelled two students who had led a racist chant that was captured on video — a departure from the more considered, deliberative responses colleges typically employ.

A TRAGIC DECISION

David R. Karp, a professor of sociology at Skidmore College, said that decision was tragic. "The uni-



ALEXZANDRIA CHURCHILL, THE MANEATER

U. of Missouri administrators temporarily suspended Delta Upsilon, the fraternity whose members are accused of being at the center of a campus racial incident this week. Instead of suspending or even expelling students who engage in racist behavior, some campus experts advocate alternative approaches like restorative justice.

versity, in a sense, absolved itself of any responsibility for the healing process by just expelling the students,” he said. “And they placed the burden on the aggrieved community to take up that educational role.”

Mr. Karp is a proponent of the restorative-justice approach, which focuses on teaching the perpetrators of an incident through dialogue with the victims. The approach is gaining traction at colleges and universities. The University of Maryland at College Park’s president, Wallace D. Loh, mentioned it last year in a letter to the community after an offensive email written by a fraternity member went viral.

“We repair the harm to our community, in part, by restoring the wrongdoer as a responsible member of society,” he wrote. “I appeal to ‘the better angels of our nature’ and ask all members of our university community to join me in forgiving him in our hearts, not for his sake, but for our own.”

The restorative-justice model can take different forms depending on whether the offender is known. The offender is required to take responsibility for his or her actions as part of the process. As a result, restorative justice can clash with the student-conduct process, which tends to be more adversarial.

“We want to create the conditions in which it’s safe to slowly admit what they have done and take full responsibility,” Mr. Karp said.

Mr. Hill, of Iowa State, used a form of that ap-

proach in 2012, when the university’s student newspaper published a comment that was interpreted as a slur against Asian-Americans. He brought together newspaper staff members and Asian-American students, who then talked about their experiences and why the comments had been offensive. Mr. Hill said it was a poignant meeting.

“Voices quivered, heartbreaking stories were told, and it became obvious that this Iowa State community that we all call home does not feel at home to everyone in it,” the editor in chief, Jake Lovett, wrote in the newspaper’s apology.

Mr. Hill said he wanted to make sure an alleged perpetrator has a meaningful experience with people who are different. “You can’t structure it so that it’s a box-checking kind of thing,” he said. “To me, that’s worthless.”

But he acknowledged that Iowa State’s approach requires resources from staff members as they devise and monitor those meaningful experiences. “You don’t stick somebody in a highly pressured situation that could be emotionally charged and just leave them,” he said. “That’s irresponsible.”

Mr. Hill stressed that colleges should adjust their approaches based on their individual situations. “There’s no cookie-cutter model,” he said. ■

Originally published September 30, 2016

How to Respond to a Racist Incident

By BEN GOSE

PAUL YOUNG, the president of Sheridan College, was about to meet with Wyoming's governor to discuss community-college budgets when a call came in — someone had scrawled a racial slur on a whiteboard outside the dorm room of two of Sheridan's female Native American students.

Then the texts started rolling in — from legislators, and from a tribal member who serves as a liaison between the state and the Wind River Indian Reservation, where the women were from.

"You must have protocols for dealing with this," the tribal liaison said. No, Young responded: It had never happened before in his 13 years at the college.

Before the incident, in September, Young had thought that his college was free from the racial hate that had been making headlines on bigger campuses in more diverse communities. The white students who make up the vast majority of Sheridan's student body and the fewer than 50 Native American students from Montana and Wyoming tribes got along pretty well, he thought.

But as he made the 325-mile drive from Cheyenne back to Sheridan to confront the incident head-on,

Sheridan campus more welcoming to Native students. Sheridan notified all students about the incident that very morning, and the college provided resources to faculty members and asked them to talk about diversity and inclusion. The college estimates that about 30 percent to 40 percent did.

That night, roughly 100 people gathered at the campus center to support the women and speak out against hate. The college hosted a powwow and its first Native American Day a week later, and in February held a forum on Native Americans in education that included national policy makers. Native American students have started a club — the group recently brought to campus the Native rapper Supaman — and Young says he's committed to creating a Native American center where students can meet.

NOT LONG ago, the higher-education playbook for responding to racial incidents on campus was straightforward: Condemn the act, reassure affected and concerned students, take the press hit, and wait for the news to fade.

"The instinct of the college president is to protect the reputation," Young says. "But what's the cost?"

The recent rash of racist incidents on college campuses, however, has made it clear that such problems can happen at any college. Experts are giving marks to colleges that respond both immediately and over time — coupling a quick condemnation of the incident with a deep inward look at making institutional change.

The University of Maryland at College Park, for example, has taken a number of actions since last May, when a black student from Bowie State University was stabbed to death by a white Maryland student in a case being prosecuted as a hate crime.

The university has established a task force charged with nurturing a more respectful and inclusive climate; started a national hub for research, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education;

"The instinct of the college president is to protect the reputation. But what's the cost?"

he realized just how wrong his comment to the tribal liaison had been.

"It's happened — it's probably happened a lot," he says he realized. "It's just never been reported or been followed up on before."

That soul-searching led to efforts to make the



ADAM JAHIEL FOR THE CHRONICLE

Paul Young, president of Sheridan College, in Wyoming, has overseen efforts to make his campus more welcoming to Native American students like Braylee Armajo (left) after racial slurs were found written on a dorm whiteboard last fall.

completed mandatory training on racial bias for all of its more than 100 police officers; and administered a campus-climate survey that examines issues like diversity and bias. The university is also in the process of hiring a full-time coordinator for tracking and responding to hate-bias incidents.

“We’re focused on how to not only do the best job we possibly can in addressing issues of hate on our own campus, but also on being a leader in helping to advance the national conversation about these issues,” says Roger L. Worthington, Maryland’s chief diversity officer.

The University of Virginia is spending millions in response to the violence at a white-supremacist rally last August that left one woman dead. The university is expected to invest \$20 million to match large gifts to establish endowed faculty chairs that would help to prevent, respond to, or better understand the August incidents. Examples of academic areas that are eligible for the match include racial justice, emergency medicine, and early childhood education.

Virginia is expected to invest an additional \$5 million in scholarships for first-generation and financially needy students, to increase diversity. Another \$5 million will go to support “bridging projects” at various units on campus, with a goal of bringing together people of different races and backgrounds.

Risa L. Goluboff, dean of Virginia’s law school and chair of the working group that recommended those responses to the August violence, says the university continues to take “a hard inward look” at its history and whether additional changes are needed to make the campus more inclusive. Virginia removed two plaques honoring Confederate soldiers in September.

“We aspire to be a place of true equality,” Goluboff says. “We are still self-examining how we can do better.”

The deaths in Maryland and Virginia drew national media attention — and prompted robust responses that few other institutions have matched. But the crimes fit into a disturbing national trend:



U. OF VIRGINIA

Risa Goluboff, dean of the U. of Virginia's law school, led a working group that recommended various responses to the violence there last summer, including academic investments in fields like racial justice and emergency medicine.

White-supremacist groups are focusing on college campuses like never before.

The Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism documented 147 incidents in the fall of 2017 where white supremacists used fliers, stickers, banners, and posters to spread their message on college campuses — up 258 percent from 41 incidents in the fall of 2016.

Doron F. Ezickson, director of ADL's Washington, D.C., regional office, says white supremacists are targeting campuses not only in a bid for new members, but also because fliers posted on college campuses are sure to provoke a response and generate publicity. That response may “enable these groups to project more power than they have in actual numbers,” he says.

Even so, Ezickson says, it's unlikely their efforts will end soon. “This isn't simply bad luck for a few individual campuses — there is a coordinated campaign here,” he says. “It's incumbent on college administrators to reflect on what infrastructure they have to deal with it.”

Many universities, especially public institutions, are looking closely at their policies to determine how they can legally exercise more authority over how

both students and outsiders use the campus. The reviews include looking at where fliers can be posted and by whom, where assemblies can be organized, and where speeches can be held.

Goluboff says the University of Virginia has historically had few policies that restrict the “time, place, and manner” in which people can exercise their First Amendment rights. But the university is considering updating its policies in a way that would be content-neutral, she says.

“I think you can work out a compromise,” she says. “I suggest that people hold in their heads the speaker they like and want to make room for, and the speaker they don't like and rather wouldn't come. You only get one set of rules.”

Some conservative groups are wary that universities will err on the side of protecting underrepresented and minority students — in the process infringing on the free-speech rights of others. A recent battle over fliers at Stanford University highlights their concern.

After a student posted a flier on her dormitory door listing a hotline number through which people could warn others about activity by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, someone tore that

flier off her door and replaced it with a handmade “#BuildTheWall” sign. When supporters of the first student distributed 200 copies of the original poster — “Protect our community, report ICE activity” — another student posted a flier satirizing that message: “Protect our community. Report legitimate law enforcement activity.”

The #BuildTheWall flier and the satirical poster were both taken down by residence-hall staff members, under Stanford’s “Acts of Intolerance” policy, leading to complaints by the student who had posted the satirical flier, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, and others.

“To allow a political message on one side of a controversial public issue and to disallow a message taking the opposite position is a blatant example of viewpoint discrimination,” wrote Michael McConnell, a constitutional-law professor at Stanford, in an email to the student whose satirical flier was removed.

Lisa Lapin, a Stanford spokeswoman, points out that the decisions to remove the fliers were made by student employees. Such situations “can bring about opportunities to fine-tune practices or increase staff training relating to how to protect speech and promote learning across divergent student perspectives,” she says.

COLLEGE LEADERS say it’s important to have a plan in advance for dealing with hate or bias incidents. When a white student at Rhodes College, in Memphis, posted a racist essay on Altright.com, envisioning a white society “free of the troublesome burden of minorities,” President Marjorie Hass knew she had to speak out quickly and in an authentic voice.

“Think hard about the kind of communications you want to have come from the president’s office as opposed to other offices on campus,” she advises. “And make sure that you can articulate honestly and effectively the core values of your institution.”

The day the essay was published, she was bombarded by calls from the media, alumni, concerned parents, and Memphis residents. “There are a lot of voices wanting your immediate response,” Hass says. “My firm belief is that your first duty is to the students on your own campus.”

In an email to students and faculty after the essay was published, Hass pledged a “vigorous reaffirmation” of the college’s vision statement and commitment to diversity.

“This is who we are,” Hass wrote. “These are the ideals to which we aspire. These remain untouched and unbent.”

Hass says she can’t discuss the disciplinary process involving the essay’s author, Nick Pietrangelo, but she does say that she had some concern for his safety. “We don’t believe in shotgun justice on our campus,” Hass says. “You need to make sure that no matter what incident occurs, you follow your own

policies and do so with deliberation and safety for all involved, including the safety of students who may ultimately be on the wrong side of your disciplinary processes.”

The ADL’s Ezickson says that after condemning hate speech, colleges must turn to the harder and longer-term work — helping students understand how they can be allies for one another, and how their own biases can undermine feelings of legitimacy in others.

“The challenge must be met with an educational response,” Ezickson says.

After a video surfaced of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members singing a racist song at the University of Oklahoma in 2015, David Boren, Oklahoma’s president, moved quickly to expel two students and ban the fraternity. Within weeks, Boren had hired a new vice president for the university community — the equivalent of a chief diversity officer — and instituted mandatory diversity training for all incoming freshmen.

That diversity training, called the Freshman Diversity Experience, is delivered primarily during three and a half hours of programming over sever-

“We aspire to be a place of true equality. We are still self-examining how we can do better.”

al days at summer orientation camps. The program helps students become aware of group differences, introduces concepts like implicit bias and stereotype threat, and provides examples of inclusive language. The training was designed by the university’s Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, the group behind NCORE, one of the higher education’s largest diversity conferences.

Jabar Shumate, the university’s vice president for university community, and an African-American who served as president of Oklahoma’s Student Government Association 20 years ago, says the training won’t prevent hate incidents on campus but will help students better understand how to react.

“You’ll have a campus community that is more engaged in the conversation,” Shumate says. “Students will better understand incidents that occur on our campus so that we are better equipped to respond.”

Just a week after the August violence there, the University of Virginia assigned new freshmen online training to understand stereotypes and other hidden biases. The training, offered for the first time this

year, includes an option to take the controversial Implicit Association Test.

After the training, students go to a theatrical production that highlights issues around race and stereotyping. They then return to their dormitories for small-group discussions with resident assistants about how the bias training influenced their feelings about the skit.

“How do you create a comfortable environment for students to have conversations around things like race?” asks Allen W. Groves, the university’s dean of students. “A first-year won’t walk down the hall and say to a hall mate, ‘Let’s talk about race.’ It’s just not going to happen.”

For institutions with a large number of commuters, like Sheridan College, starting such a dialogue can be even more challenging. But Young, the college’s president, doesn’t question its importance.

Sheridan, Wyo., is named for Philip Sheridan, an Army general during the Indian Wars who is associated with the phrase, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian.” Some of the college’s residence halls

are named for white generals active in the Indian Wars, and students can still eat at General Sheridan’s Grille (though the college is considering a name change). The college reports that fewer than 2 percent of its employees are Native American.

A regional airline recently started direct flights between Sheridan and a town some 220 miles away on the edge of the Wind River Indian Reservation. Young says he has committed to bring Sheridan faculty to the reservation, so they get a better feel for the day-to-day slights and encounters with racism that the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribal members experience.

“If somebody says something that makes someone uncomfortable, what does a faculty member do?” Young asks. “Some hope to get on to the next moment — no harm, no foul. But instructors need to learn how to address these things — these micro-aggressions — so that students of any color don’t feel marginalized continually.” ■

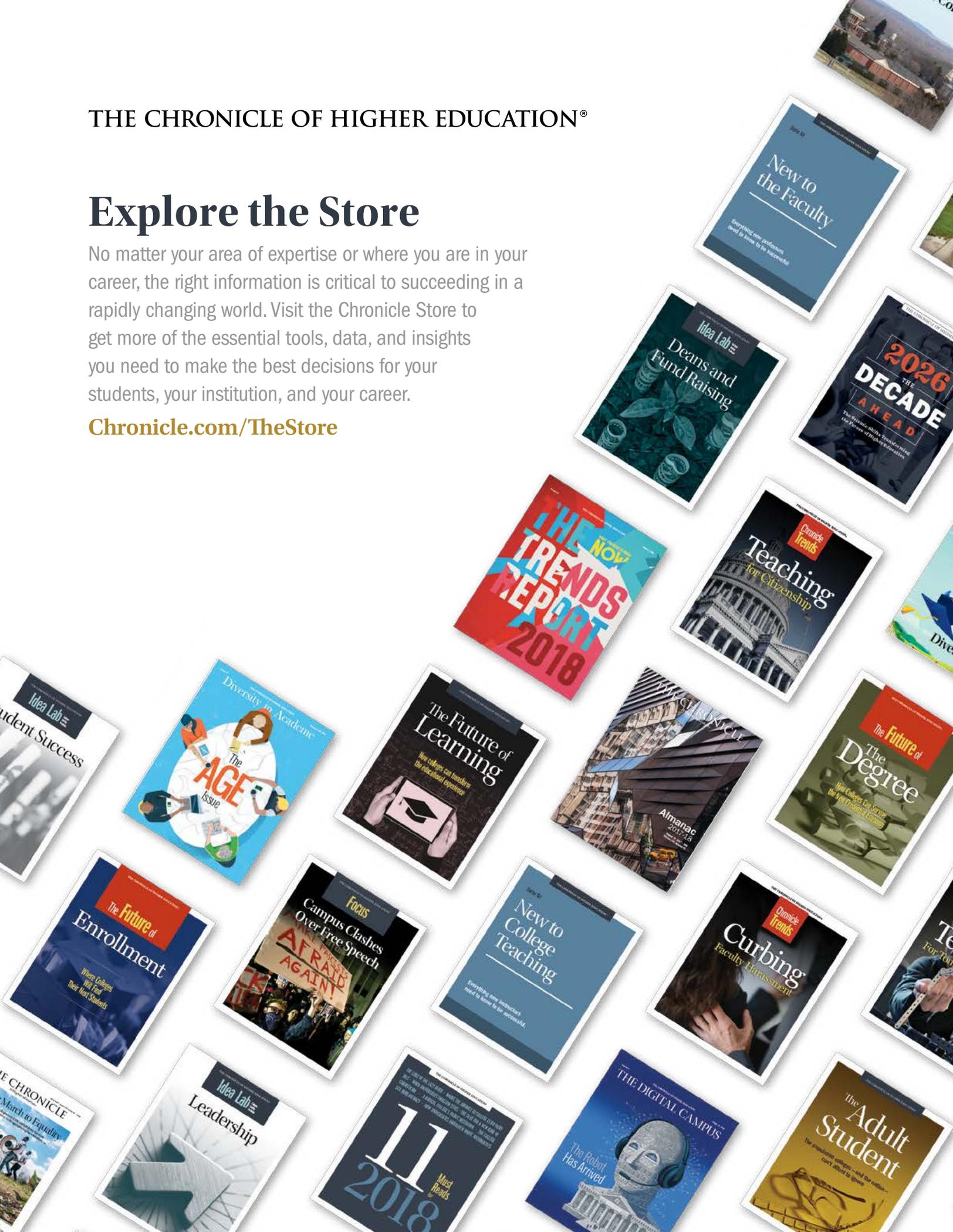
Originally published April 8, 2018

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION®

Explore the Store

No matter your area of expertise or where you are in your career, the right information is critical to succeeding in a rapidly changing world. Visit the Chronicle Store to get more of the essential tools, data, and insights you need to make the best decisions for your students, your institution, and your career.

Chronicle.com/TheStore



THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education®

1255 Twenty-Third Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
202 466 1000 | Chronicle.com