Organizational response to the demand and expectation for diversity

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Abstract. This study examines the interplay of institutional environments and organizational contexts in shaping the responses of four professional schools (public health, business, social work, and engineering) to diversity-related pressures, expectations, requirements, and incentives. The role of market demand in structuring postsecondary approaches to diversity is of particular interest.

One of the compelling stories to emerge from the U.S. Supreme Court's 2003 decision to permit the continued use of race as a factor in college admissions (*Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger*) was the remarkably strong show of support from industry and the military. Corporate and military elites argued persuasively in their amicus briefs that the ability of colleges and universities to enroll racially diverse student bodies bears directly on national competitiveness and security. One sees in this powerful external support an indication of just how much the diversity-related efforts of postsecondary institutions have come to be motivated and shaped by outside interests. There is no question that colleges and universities now pursue diversity-related aims (including affirmative action) in collaboration with various external actors, including Fortune 500 companies, private foundations, nonprofits, professional associations, community-based organizations, and local school systems.

This is an unconventional way to think about higher education's experience with diversity, even though it fits quite naturally against a wider backdrop of increasingly boundaryless interaction between postsecondary institutions and other organizations (see, for example, Etzkowitz and Ledersdorff 2000; Taylor 2001; Business–Higher Education Forum 2002; Bok 2003). The idea that institutions would need to be roused to action by industry, rather than by the customary stable of socially conscious agitators within the groves of academe, would

strike some as counterintuitive. Partly for that reason, the role of external forces (and organizations) in promoting postsecondary responses to diversity has not been well-documented. To be sure, much has been written about diversity in higher education, especially in the last decade (see, for example, Bowen and Bok 1998). However, while the explosion of diversity initiatives on college and university campuses (Benjamin 1996; Hurtado and Dey 1997) may be owed to demands, pressures, and normative expectations originating in the external environment and penetrating postsecondary organizations through the connective web of open systems (Katz and Kahn 1966), this proposition remains woefully underdeveloped and its logic largely untested. Clearly, the opportunity and need exist to explore the limitations on organizational choice imposed (or mediated) by external forces (Hrebiniak and Joyce 1985).

One promising approach is to bring the insights of institutional theory and resource dependence theory to bear on the issue. According to Scott (1992), institutional environments are marked by "the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform in order to receive legitimacy and support" (p. 132). Resource dependence theorists (see, for example, Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) posit that the need for critical resources creates interdependencies among organizations, leading to a form of external control over organizational behavior.

Historically, institutional and resource dependence theories have postulated different response repertoires in the face of external pressure. Institutional theory has asserted that organizations isomorphically conform to societal expectations, while resource dependence arguments have held that organizations may also exercise a range of active choices when confronted with externally induced demands. Indeed, early formulations of institutional theory focused on conformity and tended to neglect organizational interest and agency altogether (Goodrick and Salancik 1996), factors that were typically associated with the resource dependence perspective. More recently, however, a strategic choice element has been incorporated into institutional thinking, so that organizations are viewed as having some discretion over how and whether they respond to institutional environments. Oliver (1991), Goodstein (1994), and Greening and Gray (1994) are among those who have emphasized the compatibility of the two theories, in the sense that they can be viewed as shoring up each other's deficiencies and blind spots. In essence, this integrative approach merges the determinism

inherent in institutional theory with the strategic choice of resource dependence theory, so that responses to external pressures are understood as conditioned and constrained.

Oliver (1991), in particular, has highlighted the convergent aspects of these two theories and suggests that institutional and resource dependence pressures may be understood in terms of their cause, constituents, content, control, and context. Organizations confronting such pressures may employ a range of responses, including acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation.

Theoretical framework

The central purpose of the study was to explore environmental and organizational determinants of professional school responses to demands, pressures, expectations, or rewards related to diversity. As such, the study emphasizes an open systems perspective that highlights the role of multiple external environments – or layers of systems – in creating demands for organizational behavior related to diversity. In this investigation, the external environment is held to include the larger operating structure within which professional schools are nested (i.e., the ''parent'' university), as well as the wider social and professional contexts in which such units exist. It is important to note that the university setting in this study was operating under a campus-wide diversity ''mandate'' that functioned as a source of institutional pressure on, or expectation related to, constituent schools, colleges, and other academic units. Jepperson (1991) has described the manner in which higher orders of organization can produce institutional rules and requirements to which secondary or lower levels of organization are subject.

The framework (Figure 1) highlights three key dimensions: (1) the *institutional environment*, (2) the *organizational context*, and (3) the *organizational response*. The institutional environment, as conceptualized in this study, is a covering term for the constellation of diversity-related pressures, demands, requirements, expectations, and incentives originating in multiple levels of the external environment. Two levels of the environment are of particular interest: the wider social and professional context in which professional schools are embedded and the more proximally immediate university level. The responsiveness of the professional schools to their institutional environments has important consequences in terms of resource acquisition and legitimacy, so resource dependencies in this rendering are subsumed under institutional
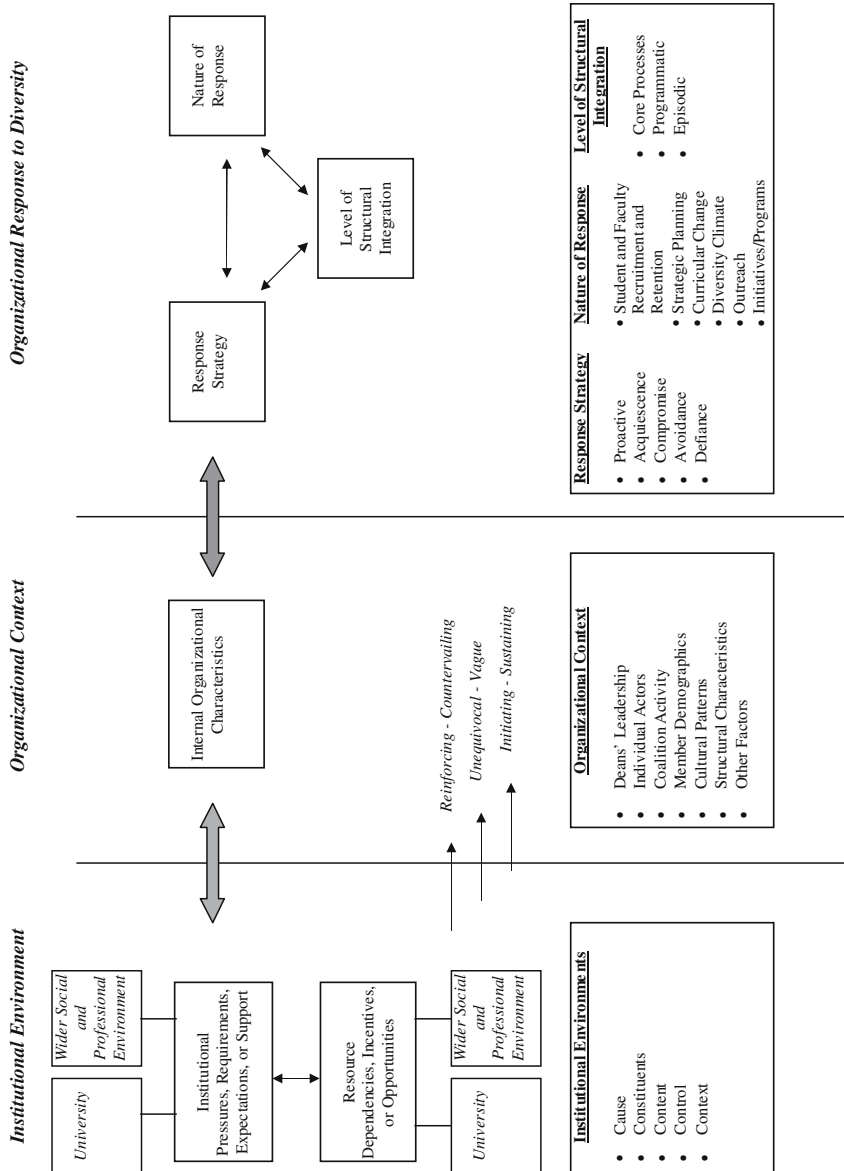
Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

environments. Taken together, institutional and resource dependence theories lead us to expect that organizations are shaped by normative and resource pressures. Following Oliver (1991), institutional arrangements can be explored in terms of their *cause* (why an organization is being pressured), *constituents* (who is pressuring the organization), *content* (what the organization is required or expected to do), *control* (how or by what means pressure is conveyed), and *context* (the environmental conditions in which pressure is exerted). The single-sided arrows traversing the institutional and organizational dimensions of the framework acknowledge that institutional pressures may reinforce or contradict existing commitments, may be unequivocal or vague, and may initiate new efforts or sustain older ones.

The second dimension of the framework – organizational context – takes into account a variety of factors that are proposed to interact with institutional pressures in the formulation of a response. For example, responsiveness may be conditioned by the agendas of school leaders, the will and interests of individual actors, the role of internal coalitions or interest groups, existing cultural arrangements, organizational structures, or the presence or absence of minority members. These and other organizational variables have been given short shrift in institutional theorizing.

The third dimension – organizational response to diversity – is characterized in terms of its nature (student and faculty recruitment and retention, for example, or curricular change), the level of structural integration involved (peripheral, episodic, or core, in a manner consistent with Dass and Parker 1996), and the response strategy employed. Amending Oliver's (1991) scheme slightly, organizational response strategies range from proactive behavior to outright defiance.

Methodology

I performed a comparative case study analysis, using the theoretical framework as an orienting mechanism. I selected four professional schools – Public Health, Business, Social Work, and Engineering – at Lakewood University (the pseudonym for a research university located in the United States) in order to observe the interplay of a campus mandate for diversity and the influence of market forces. Based on the assumptions of institutional and resource dependence theories, there were four main criteria by which the professional schools at Lakewood

University were arrayed and selected for inclusion in the sample. These four criteria included size (measured in terms of the number of faculty and students), financial capacity (a function of total sources of funds, less total uses), external connectedness (measured in terms of external funding), and progress in responding to diversity (as measured by percentage increases in minority faculty and student representation over a period of approximately 8 years).

The trend toward "marketization" (or at least the growing sensitivity to market interests) in academic life is perhaps most evident in the professional school setting; still, there is wide variation among professional schools in terms of the sectors in which they are involved, their orientations, and the sets of assumptions under which they operate. These differences were thought to allow for an interesting comparison and contrast of the responses of professional schools within a complex research university.

In all, I conducted 47 semi-structured interviews with organization members across the four sites (current and former deans, associate and assistant deans, department chairs, faculty, staff), and I performed an analysis of current documentation and archival records. Key informants reviewed and commented on the case study narratives I developed in order to substantiate construct validity. Those interested in additional background may wish to consult Siegel (2003).

Findings

Institutional environments

Cause
Although the four schools in the sample were expected to address issues of diversity for different reasons, the unifying theme was that responsiveness to diversity carried a reward of legitimacy conferred by external stakeholders. Informants at the School of Public Health, for example, explained that the commitment to diversity is organic to the field of public health and that the School could not consider itself a relevant or legitimate member of the field if it did not address issues of diversity in its teaching, research, and outreach. Minority populations, they noted, suffer disproportionately from certain health problems, leading to a climate of expectation that the School of Public Health would contribute meaningfully to the larger effort undertaken by the field to improve the health status of these and other populations. The commitment

to diversity was viewed, in other words, as a professional and academic imperative.

At the Business School, there was unanimous agreement among informants that the realities of a global economy and the changing composition of the labor force had, in recent years, created a concomitant sensitivity to issues of multiculturalism and diversity that permeated the business landscape and the precincts of management education. From the perspective of members of Lakewood Business School, diversity was understood within the framework of supply and demand – an instrumental or pragmatic consideration of recruiting, educating, and graduating a diverse student body so that they could assume positions of business leadership in a world characterized by rapidly shifting boundaries. Several informants expressed the opinion, shared by many outside the Business School, that the private sector was leading the way with regard to diversity. They argued that a powerful and tightly reasoned business case for diversity was capturing the imagination of multinational corporations – and other organizations, including academic institutions – and gradually setting the terms of discourse about the value of diversity. The business case, they explained, holds that diversity is important to companies because it allows the penetration of multicultural consumer markets, helps companies establish relationships with business partners and governments in the international arena, is a source of innovation, and has been shown to result in notable performance advantages such as the enhanced creativity of work teams. In short, there was practical business necessity and strategic value behind the Business School's attention to diversity.

Members of the School of Social Work articulated the idea that issues of diversity and multiculturalism are so intricately ingrained in the ethos of the field that they have become nearly taken for granted by its educators and practitioners. The animating principles of social work have to do with social justice, empowerment, and social welfare – themes that resonate deeply in the racial and ethnic minority communities to which many social services are directed. Consequently, much of the School's teaching, research, and outreach were pitched to the development of multicultural competency in interactions with client groups.

Of the many reasons given for the School of Engineering's interest in diversity, developments in the wider external environment were the common denominator; not a single informant suggested that the School was motivated by a sense of equity, social justice, or the belief that diversity was "the right thing to do." Like their counterparts in the

Business School, informants in the School of Engineering presented what amounted to a business case for diversity as the central catalyst behind their organization's interest in the topic. Industrial recognition of the value of diverse perspectives and backgrounds in the design of products and processes was said to guide the School's own interest. For years, there has been a concern at the national level about the low numbers of women and minorities entering science and engineering; prominent reports have detailed the scope of the problem and the challenges in trying to diversify the fields. Special outreach efforts have been undertaken by major universities to prepare students for access to and success in this technical arena, and informants at the Lakewood School of Engineering understood their organization's commitment to diversity as a form of "citizenship" in the national effort to diversify the engineering ranks.

Constituents

The role of constituents – external stakeholders, partners, collaborators, interest groups, and "consumers" of the schools' various outputs – figured prominently in the accounts of informants. The constituency shared by all four schools was, of course, Lakewood University, which created the most immediate climate of expectation for unit commitment to diversity. However, members of each of the four schools looked beyond their geographic boundaries to a much wider market-level field of influential stakeholders. In the School of Public Health, for example, key constituents included community-based organizations, agencies, and private foundations that supported public health research through lucrative grants. Each of these groups was influential in keeping the School focused on diversity-related goals and actions.

The Business School's chief stakeholder was the overall business community. More specifically, corporate recruiters trolling the waters for talented future employees constituted the most immediate interest group. According to the dean, the School's corporate advisory board members – executives from leading companies representing consulting, financial services, manufacturing, and marketing – stated unequivocally that the single thing they valued most about the School was its ability to supply racially and ethnically diverse talent. The School was effectively put on notice that if it faltered in its commitment to attracting, educating, and graduating such a diverse student body, companies would be forced to spend their recruiting dollars at competitor business schools. In other words, whatever favor was enjoyed by the School from a

recruiting standpoint was provisional; the School would need to continually demonstrate good faith in its diversity efforts in order to maintain corporate interest. This message from the corporate advisory board had evolved into something of a saga that was circulated liberally within the School (and even in public quarters) and functioned to remind members of their diversity-related obligations, said informants.

Like other academic programs in social work, Lakewood's School of Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which stipulates in its Curriculum Policy Statement that a school must show evidence of required multicultural content in order to receive formal recognition as a member in good standing. Given this special requirement, informants in the School of Social Work identified the Council on Social Work Education as expressing the most specific and explicit interest in the School's diversity-related performance. ''Downstream'' constituents included social work agencies working with underserved client populations – individuals, groups, communities, and organizations.

Two chief stakeholder groups guided the School of Engineering's interest in diversity. The first was described by informants as a loose ''national'' coalition consisting of the federal government, industry (aerospace, automotive, military), and education. This syndicate wished to promote gains in the number of women and minorities pursuing engineering as an academic and career option. For example, corporate dollars helped to underwrite fellowships and scholarships in support of minority engineers, and these same companies measured their return on investment in part on the flow of minority talent back to their organizations. The second major stakeholder in the School of Engineering's orbit was the University. Direct administrative pressure was responsible for the School's development of a strategic plan for diversity. Additionally, special funds were provided by the office of the provost for the express purpose of hiring women faculty.

Content
As reported by informants, diversity-related expectations and requirements tended to coalesce around (1) minority student recruitment and retention, (2) minority faculty recruitment, retention and promotion, (3) multicultural curricular innovations and research on underrepresented populations, and (4) improvement of the overall diversity climate. These aims received varying degrees of emphasis across the four schools, although all of the schools were expected to show progress in each sphere

of activity. For example, the School of Social Work experienced the
most direct pressure for multicultural curricular content; satisfactory
compliance with this requirement was a condition for accreditation.
None of the other schools in the sample encountered such an overt and
unequivocal mandate to integrate multicultural concepts and material
into the curriculum.

The Business School and, to a lesser extent, the School of Engi-
neering were focused on student diversity, commensurate with market
demand. The clear message from corporate recruiters and business
leaders was that student diversity was a top priority, and this message
was buttressed by resource availabilities and dependencies.

The School of Engineering was required by the provost's office to
develop a comprehensive strategic plan for diversity, detailing the efforts
the School would take to diversify its faculty and student body. No
other school in the sample was subject to a similar requirement by the
provost's office.

The four case studies revealed an expansive definition of diversity.
All of the schools in the sample included racial and ethnic diversity in
their formulations, and two of the schools – Business and Engineering –
evidenced a special focus on the recruitment of women students.

Control
Several mechanisms were in place to enforce and monitor compliance
with diversity-related expectations emanating from the environments of
the four schools. One of the surprising findings was that the University's
own mandate did not register in the minds of informants as a significant
factor in this regard. Generally, the mandate was interpreted as helping
to set the tone for campus diversity efforts, but it was not seen as forcing
new requirements beyond those already in place at the schools.

Informants in the School of Public Health claimed that normative
rules – those emanating from the public health profession – constituted
the primary means of "control" over the School's recruitment, curric-
ular, and climate-improvement efforts related to diversity. Specifically,
the field's concern for the health status of underserved groups was
highly institutionalized in academic programs in public health.

The School of Social Work's diversity-related performance was
monitored most closely by the Council on Social Work Education,
which outlined the actions necessary to achieve accreditation. Accredi-
tation was explicitly conditioned on the infusion of multicultural per-
spectives into the academic curriculum. This was the only example of an

accrediting body playing such a role; none of the other case study organizations operated in a similar regulatory climate. Additionally, the School operated under a professional code of ethics, a set of enforceable standards put forward by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) that requires a special sensitivity to human diversity.

The Business School was subject to no formalized external rules or regulations mandating its attention to diversity. However, the School labored under what amounted to a mandate from corporate America, namely, the directive to supply talented minority graduates to business. The rewards for compliance, and the punishment for noncompliance, were clearly understood by all of the informants in that site. Profitable relationships with influential companies depended to a large extent on conformity with corporate preferences regarding diverse talent; failure to meet corporate expectations would potentially jeopardize these important relationships.

Similarly, the School of Engineering claimed several lucrative relationships with top companies, some of which actively supported and prompted (through cash contributions and student recruitment) the School's diversity-related efforts. The School of Engineering was also required to develop its plan for diversity, which was subject to the annual review of university officials. Far more than its counterparts in the study, the School of Engineering's progress was monitored by the central administration. The School also actively benchmarked its diversity practices and performance against those of peer engineering schools; this ''sharing network'' facilitated a voluntary diffusion of best practices among top engineering programs that essentially dictated (controlled) the acceptable parameters of academic engineering's responsiveness.

Context
Two of the sample organizations – the Business School and the School of Engineering – faced the constraints of a shallow pool of qualified minority faculty. In fact, although the recruitment of minority faculty was the business dean's top priority, the School had been unsuccessful in achieving its stated faculty diversity goals. These unsuccessful efforts were owed to severe shortages of minority faculty in fields like accounting and finance, where there was an anemic representation of racially diverse doctoral students and ''moveable'' professors. In short, the pipeline of minority faculty into top business and engineering programs was held to be a significant and perennial delimiter. One African

American professor said about the overall availability of African American students interested in pursuing engineering, ''There are just not a lot of us out there.'' The chair of one of the School's large departments concurred, emphasizing that the number of faculty candidates of color was ''absolutely insufficient.''

Meanwhile, this problem was virtually nonexistent at the School of Social Work. The School of Public Health experienced the ''shallow pool'' challenge less dramatically than either Business or Engineering; certain fields within public health (such as epidemiology and biostatistics) were underrepresented by minority faculty, but this did not characterize the field as a whole.

Conditions of intense competition for minority faculty and students were the norm in both the business and engineering spaces. The combination of a shallow pool and competition for the relatively low numbers of minority faculty and students catalyzed efforts to develop the pipeline through outreach. In the Business School, for example, outreach took the form of participation in a national student recruitment consortium, a pipeline development initiative that reached back to high school, and an initiative to attract more women to graduate studies in management. Similar solutions were in evidence in Engineering and Public Health. These programs were geared more to student preparation than to faculty development.

Organizational characteristics

There was a notable tendency to attribute the interest in diversity to internal motivations, rather than to external pressures, expectations, requirements, or incentives. The dean of the Business School, for example, emphasized internal impetuses for his organization's attentiveness to diversity, despite clear indications of diversity's importance to stakeholders. Factors such as the leadership of deans, the catalytic actions of faculty and staff, coalition activity, member demographics, cultural patterns, and structural characteristics emerged as considerations in the stories informants told about their schools' experiences with diversity.

Deans' leadership
The leadership of school deans functioned in different ways to promote the diversity agenda. In the School of Public Health, the dean was viewed as playing a supportive, though not entirely critical, role. The dean's approach was described as passive, largely in deference to the

autonomy of decentralized academic departments, but also because it was widely felt that the School was already sufficiently committed to diversity and did not require much in the way of administrative leadership. An associate dean noted, ''There's just sort of an understanding that this is something that we all believe in and value and, I guess to a greater or lesser extent, practice.''

The business dean made it his top school-wide priority to recruit minority faculty, and he was seen as having more than a passing interest in departmental efforts to take diversity into account in faculty hiring. His predecessor was acknowledged by nearly all informants to have inaugurated the School's interest in and commitment to diversity. The former dean was responsible for involving the School in a high-profile minority student recruitment consortium that had come to be recognized as the organization's most important diversity initiative. Additionally, the former dean instituted an informal policy that every departmental faculty search committee had to contain at least one serious minority candidate.

In the School of Social Work, the dean was perceived by members to provide ''thought leadership'' on issues of diversity by speaking out publicly on and writing about diversity-related topics. The interest in (and leadership of) diversity and multiculturalism was much more diffused among the faculty, staff, and students in Social Work than in the other sites.

By contrast, nearly all informants in the School of Engineering suggested that the commitment to diversity was a top–down administrative priority, meaning that the dean led the effort. Ownership of the diversity agenda was not shared by department chairs or other leadership throughout the School.

Individual actors

In the School of Public Health, key faculty and staff were responsible for conceiving several of the organization's most enduring diversity-related initiatives. A professor created and developed the School's signature pipeline development program, a summer enrichment program for underrepresented high school students. Another professor was personally responsible for recruiting a number of minority faculty members. These individuals acted largely as independent operators, outside the official bureaucratic channels and without any ''positional'' authority behind them. This example of personal, local leadership – a classic grass roots approach – was in evidence to a greater extent in Public Health than in counterpart schools.

Individual actors, or change agents, also played a significant role in Social Work, where they distinguished themselves as forceful advocates for students of color and as occasional organizers of diversity initiatives – such as faculty workshops on multicultural topics – within the School. Additionally, several Social Work professors had helped organize campus-wide diversity efforts, contributing to the perception shared by many at Lakewood that the School of Social Work was the "conscience of the University."

In the Business School, informants pointed to a single individual who had voluntarily advised and mentored generations of minority students and had come to be recognized as the functional equivalent of a chief diversity officer, even though he had no official administrative duties. A small clutch of business professors comprised what was known as the center of gravity on diversity-related teaching, research, and consulting, but these professors exerted more influence externally than they did in internal organizational affairs.

Coalition activity
There was little recognizable coalition activity across the four schools. There were, however, significant pockets of faculty in each school whose primary research interests and consulting activity pivoted on issues of diversity. These groups of individuals did not act as conventional pressure groups for change, but they were known to their colleagues across the schools as those who could be expected to advocate (and occasionally agitate) for the diversity agenda. The activist spirit seemed to be most visible, perhaps not surprisingly, in the School of Social Work, where it was primarily the student body that took up the mantle of change and improvement in everything from the curriculum to the School's overall climate for minorities.

In some cases, the lack of coalition activity surprised informants. One informant in the School of Engineering typified the view shared by others across the four schools when he expressed amazement at the passivity of students when it came to issues of diversity within his department or at the School more broadly. Their voices were not to be heard lobbying for diversity-related organizational change. Similarly, a former dean could not recollect ever being approached by members of the student body or faculty to address the low numbers of underrepresented minorities or the climate for diversity in the School of Engineering. Finally, a department chair shared the same experience, noting that students "must either be too busy or must perceive my office to be

too removed, because I really don't get them coming here to my office and expressing their concerns."

Member demographics

The racial and ethnic diversity of school administrators and faculty (or lack thereof) was held to be significant in two of the sites. In the School of Social Work, the cabinet level administrative team was diverse, and the School was a campus leader in faculty diversity, particularly in the representation of African American professors. Student diversity in Social Work was also prominent. Diversity in the demographic make-up of the School was held to be significant for purposes of attracting additional minorities to the faculty and student body. Indeed, informants described a "critical mass" of minorities – a rather imprecise, dynamic (in the sense of fluctuating), and subjective measure of minority presence sufficient to attract other underrepresented minorities. A similar idea was expressed by informants in one of the School of Engineering's larger departments; the presence of women students in the department was felt to signal an invitational or welcoming climate to other prospective students.

In Business, the lack of faculty diversity was speculated to account for the absence of a coalition that might have otherwise materialized to push for diversity-related organizational changes. Viewed from this perspective, the School's few minority professors were isolated in terms of their political clout; the addition of more faculty of color might have had an empowering effect.

Cultural patterns

Symbols, stories, and other tangible expressions of each school's values were perceived by informants to either encourage or inhibit the diversity agenda. In the School of Public Health, members noted the cultural significance of three specific diversity-related initiatives: the institutionalization of a summer outreach program targeted to minority high school students, the inclusion of a specific reference to diversity in the School's mission statement, and the presence of an office of minority student affairs. These were all viewed as demonstrating and communicating to the outside world that the School of Public Health was devoting serious attention to underserved populations.

The School of Social Work had achieved almost mythical status as the campus launch pad for efforts supporting social justice and racial equality over the years. Social Work faculty had been catalysts, organizers, or principals in campus-wide movements to combat institutional

racism and promote multiculturalism at Lakewood. Activism of this kind was an important element of the organizational saga related by informants at the School.

One of the prevailing cultural artifacts in both the Business School and the School of Engineering was the focus on quality, or excellence. In both sites, informants explained that this value superseded all others, including the value on diversity. The dean of the Business School was inclined to view diversity as an essential component of quality, but informants revealed several instances – primarily in student admissions and faculty hiring – in which diversity and quality were in direct conflict. Similar examples were cited in the School of Engineering. Business and Engineering were culturally similar in other important respects. Both organizations were intensely competitive with peers; the Business School's diversity-related activity was routinely described as a ''competitive advantage'' over rivals, and the School of Engineering actively compared (through benchmarking) its practices with other schools of engineering nationally. Finally, both schools engaged in the culturally entrenched practice of recruiting faculty from a narrowly circumscribed universe of doctoral granting institutions, thereby effectively ignoring alternative networks of minority candidates.

Structural characteristics

Each of the schools was a complex organization in its own right. The decentralization of academic departments and administrative units within the schools contributed to marked unevenness in their responsiveness to diversity. Across the case study sites, informants consistently remarked on the fragmented quality of their organizations' commitment to diversity.

In Public Health, for example, faculty members suggested that departmental stances on diversity ran the gamut from high interest to indifference. An administrator in charge of the minority student affairs office there confessed that she was often unaware of diversity-related activity in other quarters of their school. This problem was particularly noticeable in the College of Engineering, where 14 separate (and largely autonomous) academic departments confronted dramatically different challenges in trying to diversify their faculties and student bodies. Only in Social Work, where the sub-disciplinary boundaries were not as tightly drawn as those in the other fields represented in the study, was there a modulation of this fragmentation issue.

Three of the four case study sites – Public Health, Social Work, and Engineering – had offices of minority student affairs. These were recognized as hubs supporting the recruitment, advising, and mentoring of students of color.

Organizational response

Organizational response was explored as a complex of three interrelated clusters: the response strategy, the nature of the response, and its level of structural integration with existing organizational practices, activities, and values. Significant differences in responsiveness, as well as interesting similarities, were observed across the four case study sites.

Response strategy

Compliance with institutional rules and requirements – or a strategic response of acquiescence, to use Oliver's (1991) nomenclature – was observed in two instances. The School of Social Work acceded to the Council on Social Work Education's requirement of multicultural content in the academic curriculum, for the School's accreditation was at stake. Although the stakes were considerably lower, the School of Engineering complied with the provost's demand for a strategic plan for diversity. In both cases, the organizational responses were directed to quite specific and unambiguous requirements flowing from powerful external groups.

There were also opportunities to observe proactive and enterprising behavior that was not addressed to a clear-cut demand so much as it was opportunistic and anticipatory. The Business School's voluntary decision to align itself with national pipeline development efforts was a clear example of such a strategy. Similarly, the outreach initiatives in place in Public Health and Engineering both attempted, in their own ways, to produce a more favorable set of conditions in their respective environments, namely, the advancement of minority interest in the academic fields of public health and engineering.

The example of Engineering's acquiescence in one realm of activity (its diversity-related strategic planning) and it proactive strategy in another (through outreach) illustrates the idea that organizations face multiple, differentiated institutional contexts that call for different responses or approaches. This was confirmed in the School of Social Work, where conformity to the accrediting body's curricular require-

ments only partially characterized the School's approach; the School also developed its own internal curricular guidelines that went beyond the CSWE's mandated content.

In some respects, the language of organizational response was problematic for informants in certain of the case study sites. In the School of Public Health, for example, informants tended to think of their organization's commitment to diversity not in terms of a calculated response but as a nearly taken-for-granted component of the public health enterprise. The same was true in the School of Social Work, where the interest in issues of race, class, and gender was depicted as practically hard-wired into the DNA of the discipline. Consequently, describing the School as "responding" to diversity-related pressures seemed for many informants there to understate the agency involved and minimize its importance as a core value.

Nature of response

There were numerous efforts, programs, plans, and initiatives that characterized each organization's diversity-related response. Of particular interest were the flagship – or signature – activities that unit members felt defined their commitment.

In the most general terms, the four sample organizations shared a focus on minority student recruitment and retention, minority faculty hiring and promotion, the integration of multicultural concepts into the academic curriculum, efforts to improve the climate for diversity, and the establishment of special task forces and standing committees to oversee diversity-related progress. Clearly, there were differences in the balance of attention these various foci received.

The multicultural curricular emphasis in Social Work, for example, was a preoccupation not shared by the other case study organizations. Social Work was also focused on faculty development strategies and continuing education. These took the form of structured dialogues, workshops, symposia, and panel discussions that engaged the entire Social Work community – faculty, staff, and students – in collective thinking about issues of diversity and multiculturalism. Students also frequently participated in focus groups and panel discussions to address issues of the racial climate and related topics. Such community-wide conversations were unique to the School of Social Work – they were not evident in the other sites.

Significant investment in outreach characterized the efforts of three of the four case study organizations, with Social Work proving the lone

exception. Business, Engineering, and Public Health all had outreach programs of long standing that were designed to shape the interests and appetites of young underrepresented students and thereby create pipelines of uniquely qualified future applicants. Each of these outreach initiatives received substantial financial support from major corporations and foundations.

Level of structural integration

In the School of Public Health, the office of minority student affairs was felt by its chief administrator to be marginalized and disconnected, suggesting to her that the issues of students of color were not a mainstream concern within the organization. However, the School's inclusion of a special reference to minority populations in its mission statement was viewed by informants as codifying a firm commitment to diversity in teaching, research, and outreach. A recent internal review had also identified diversity as one of the School's six priorities. The impression left by informants was that the School's diversity-related activity did not proceed in a coordinated, systematic fashion; rather, there were pockets of interest located in various departments and functional areas.

The Business School integrated diversity-related objectives into its core organizational values, commitments, and strategies to a limited extent. Rhetorically, at least, the School's rationale for its interest in diversity was tightly wedded to the business case – the idea that diversity is valuable because it impacts the bottom line. This pragmatic orientation was characteristic of the School in other areas, too. Rationalizing the commitment to diversity along instrumental lines seemed authentic at the Business School in the same way that racial justice motivations seemed completely natural in the School of Social Work. In other words, diversity was observed to matter at the Business School because it leveraged the organization's capacity to achieve its other core objectives (corporate interest and support, for example) in the process. This form of synergy, or simultaneity, was important to School officials and faculty. However, one of the critical stories to emerge from the Business School was the organization's failure to diversify its faculty, which was all the more glaring because the School had enjoyed great success on the minority student recruitment front. This discrepancy contributed to what informants described as a "bifurcated" response.

The School of Social Work exhibited the most elaborate efforts to thread diversity and multiculturalism into core academic matters. This

was evident in the knowledge development, or continuing education, offerings that the School made available to faculty in order to enhance their facility with multicultural concepts, and it was clearly manifested in the courses students took.

Social Work's approach stood in contradistinction to the one observed in Engineering, where the emphasis was on minority student and faculty representation (an issue of "head count"). Little attention was paid to making diversity an important part of the Engineering curriculum, teaching, or research, nor was it self-evident to informants how the discipline might accommodate and utilize diverse perspectives. The fact that diversity was held to be an administrative priority that was not widely shared by the faculty further illustrated tendencies of compartmentalization of the diversity agenda in the School of Engineering. Finally, the centralized office of minority student affairs in Engineering unintentionally promoted a policy of "benign neglect" throughout the School, as the decentralized academic departments and other units came to operate under the assumption that this office would effectively handle all of the organization's diversity-related tasks.

Conclusion

While the experiences of the four case study organizations in this study cannot be said to paint a complete picture of organizational response to diversity-related pressures and expectations, their examples do illustrate interesting patterns. At base, it is evident that the professional schools of interest did not pursue diversity in a vacuum; they very clearly reflected and projected wider societal and market interest in diversity. There is ample support for the claim that the units were guided by various remote exterior expectations, pressures, requirements, incentives, or public views (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) at least as much as they were directed by the University's own Mandate and reward structures. They were, in other words, market-responsive; even where external forces did not directly initiate and monitor diversity-related action within the schools (enforcement), the continued support and encouragement of key stakeholders clearly obligated the organizations to be responsive to the issue of diversity (reinforcement).

A more nuanced recognition and appreciation of the role of external forces in developing and actively promoting a diversity agenda is useful, partly because it furnishes a corrective to traditional notions of colleges and universities as being out of touch with the will, preferences, and

opinions of external audiences. This project demonstrates that diversity is a collaborative enterprise, undertaken in the interest and service of influential stakeholders.

The amicus briefs filed in *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* suggest the emergence of a new current within the diversity movement, namely, the rise to prominence of a strong market rationale (and its affiliated "business case for diversity") that has in many ways superseded traditional civil rights or social justice arguments that prevailed in the earlier days of the fight for racial equality ("the moral imperative of diversity"). Future research might attempt to further elucidate this phenomenon.

From a practical standpoint, this study points out that the differentiated external arrangements that influence decentralized units will likely complicate efforts to introduce systemic change evenly throughout a campus and will probably make it exceedingly difficult to characterize in any meaningful way an entire university's response. In other words, totalizing claims will miss the diversity that inheres in decentralized units and their external contexts.

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