**Beyond “Recruitment and Retention”: Principles of Effective and Sustainable Diversity Initiatives in Higher Education**

**03/14/2013**

**Question and Answers**

**Question 1: Approach to changing equity when things change over time?**

You need a long term or 5 year plan with goals on how to achieve an equitable environment. Piecing things together year by year does not work. Have different strands on how to get there. With an assessment, to include a policy review and curriculum review to look at the subtlest ways in which biases are stuck in our policies or practices. Also a long range plan for professional development that is on-going and not a once-a-year event. Need to look at changing the culture of the institution and not the students entering them.

**Question 2: What are other institutions doing to reach equity?**

Have an outside group that has expertise in equity and assessment to come in and identify people’s experiences and trouble spot. Start with the professional development of administrators and leaders. It is about policy and accountability; about having a policy that is not just a marketing statement but one that holds faculty and staff accountable. If there is no accountability then it will not be very effective. Units need a person whose primary area of expertise is how to create an equitable learning environment.

**Question 3:  When I worked in a program that recruited and retained students of color at the University of Wi, there was much talk about closing the achievement gap. Do you think these talks miss the point of achieving equity?**

They do miss the point just the way that concept id framed. That is more about the institution wanting to raise scores for the assessment of the institution. Not so much as achievement gap but equal opportunity gap. Need equal access to welcoming, full of support unbiased environment. Would mitigate issues but not erase. Looking at the sores and percentages doesn’t give us the story. There are groups who are scoring well but it doesn’t mean they are experiencing the institution well.

**Question 4: Model Process for reporting experiences**

I see models that work. The entry point is to have a person for that conversation that has to be seen as an advocate for students and functioned to be separate. Not a defender of faculty. Faculty need to not be a defender of the institution as well. There should be a student advocate as well as a faculty advocate.

**Question 5: If there is very little diversity what is the motivation to effect cultural change, is it a matter of which comes first, the student or the change?**

They can be happening concurrently. We cannot look at current diverse students and say we need to wait until there are more people like you to begin changing. It is unjust to not create an equitable learning environment if we are going out and try to convince people from underrepresented groups to attend. It’s a both/and not an either/or.

**Question 6: Is striving to improve access similar to striving for equity?**

Yes, if we think about access in a broad way then just being accepted to the program is not the only way. It’s who has the most cultural and social access to the institution then were getting access to equity. If it’s just physical access like, “I am allowed to be in the program”, then that’s kind of a low stage thought about equity. Not as holistic as I would challenge us to think.

**Question 7: How to find out who feels inequity?**

One thing would be to have somebody or an organization come in and can do a smaller scale inequity assessment complete with focus groups and surveys. Bring someone in from the outside so that there’s nobody who feels uneasy about talking to the person. That is the best way to find out. Even some informal focus groups would be great.

**Question 8: How do we reach out to clinical preceptors to get them on board with equity?**

You might not feel as if you have complete control. One of the things is to invite them into the conversation. Sponsor a combined opportunity for professional development around these sorts of issues. At the very least, you can capture from students who have you worked with in that capacity and give students an outlet to process bad experiences.