

**Organizational Rhetoric or Reality? The Disparities Between Avowed Commitment to
Diversity and Formal Programs and Initiatives in Higher Education Institutions**

Larry L. Rowley, Sylvia Hurtado, and Luis Ponjuan¹

The University of Michigan
610 E. University
2117 School of Education
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259

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² Please address any correspondence to llrowley@umich.edu

Introduction

For more than four decades, institutions have engaged in efforts to increase the presence of racially and ethnically diverse student populations, enlarge the availability pools of trained graduate students who can assume the faculty ranks in academia, and implement curricular and co-curricular diversity initiatives. These efforts reflect the massive organizational challenges associated with efforts to expand the ideals of democracy within American higher education (Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001; Smith, 1994). Challenges to affirmative action practices that target efforts to increase racial/ethnic diversity on campus have hampered institutional strategies in some states, and yet, a growing body of research has begun to more clearly document the value of diversity to individuals, organizations, and a society that is growing increasingly diverse and complex (Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Hurtado, 1999). In fact, under conditions of increased interaction with diverse peers in formal and informal structures, an enriched educational experience results in terms of learning and democratic outcomes for all college students (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, forthcoming). Moreover, the expansion of diversity within institutions has become almost universally acceptable as an important goal for American higher education institutions (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Rudenstine, 2001; Smith, 1995). The essential question, however, is the extent to which institutional rhetoric on diversity is so common as to be rendered meaningless when weighted against the context of actual practice.

This study examines selective aspects of the approaches that institutions utilize to emphasize or achieve diversity on college campuses. Specifically, the study contributes to discussions of how closely institutional diversity mirrors the institutional mission statements, administrative rhetoric, and formal policies. While a majority of the institutions state their commitment to diversity in their official mission statements and planning documents, it may be that few actually provide programs and practices that result in a diverse learning environment for

students. Other observers of higher education have articulated the need for matching institutional “talk” and institutional “walk,” or matching mission and evidence of institutional commitment in the form of tangible results, particularly when it comes to the representation of a more diverse faculty (Adelman, 1997; Milem & Astin, 1993). Faculty guide academic programs, curricula, institutional governance, and are involved in hiring practices that provide the long-term direction of activities on campus. Moreover, a diverse faculty can initiate and sustain diversity initiatives on campus.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Commitment to diversity in higher education is evident at rhetorical, policy, and programmatic levels within higher education institutions. Most institutions articulate their support for the importance of diversity through a variety of formal means. These include organizational behaviors and characteristics such as rhetorical articulation of the commitment to diversity by university leaders, formal institutional mission statements, and institutional policies such as strategic planning documents or programmatic guidelines. For example, institutions within states that maintained segregated systems of higher education were required (under Office of Civil Rights mandate) to provide evidence of plans for desegregating both undergraduate and graduate student bodies, as well as faculty and administrative staff (Williams, 1993). However, periodic reviews of institutional data indicate uneven progress towards diversity goals, and sometimes stagnation in actual efforts to increase the presence of underrepresented minorities on campus (Southern Education Foundation, 2002). Efforts to desegregate higher education continue as institutions define more varied aspects of their commitment including, but not exclusively, the presence of a more diverse faculty and student body, transformation of the curriculum, and formal recognition of diversity achievements on campus.

A number of scholars have described the important role that formal institutional missions and mission statements can play in the effective planning and management of higher education institutions (Dill, 1997; Holland, 1999; Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991). Moreover, mission statements and rhetorical declarations demonstrate both an informal and formal commitment to the goal of diversity to students, faculty, staff, and the external community. These forms of avowed commitments to diversity could conceivably manifest themselves in both curricular and co-curricular activities (Hurtado et al., 1999; Olguin & Schmitz, 1997). Whether or not a direct and consistent evolution from mission-based and verbal rhetoric to formal policies and institutional practices transpires is likely to be contingent upon a variety of intricate and complex organizational factors (Perrow, 1986; Weick, 1976). In fact, some scholars have suggested that there are various dimensions of diversity in higher education organizations such that commitment at one level may not translate to organizational change at another level. For example, diversity at the student representation level may not necessarily mean large-scale organizational transformation relative to diversity in other areas (Smith, 1995).

From an organizational behavior perspective one school of thought consistent with this analytical approach is the body of literature collectively known as *institutionalism theory* (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). From an organizational perspective, “institutionalized arrangements are reproduced because individuals often cannot even conceive of appropriate alternatives (or because they regard as unrealistic the alternatives they can imagine)” (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991, p. 11). Moreover, homogeneous organizational environments may be prone to “group think” (Cox, 1993), where divergent perspectives or alternatives are easily ruled out in the interest of going along with the group. In other words, organizations stay the same because it is easier for them to do so. This notion of institutional inertia, carried out by actors within the organization, has incredible appeal for understanding the continuing homogenous character of

many American higher education institutions despite tremendous discussion and promotion of the ideal of diversity.

Jepperson (1991) has observed that institutional arguments are structural analyses that take into account the content of social action and interaction and that give attention to social reflexivity. Moreover, institutionalism as a theoretical approach enables organizational analysts to conduct conceptually coherent empirical analyses of organizations in which both highly structured (organizationally complex) and highly phenomenological (socially constructed) concepts and variables are simultaneously present. In a critical analysis of the idea of diversity in college and university contexts, Adelman (1991) observed the following:

Students of political rhetoric have contributed much to our understanding of the ways in which language creates, reflects, and masks reality. Some have also demonstrated, very powerfully, how public and organizational policies stand and fall on words. . . . The term diversity has had a full life in the world of higher education. But the different applications of the term—to institutions, environments, instruction, curriculum, and people—are not always in harmony. Furthermore, they often exist in an uneasy tension with the language and ideals of equity. (p. 36)

Diversity therefore, should be conceptualized and studied as a politically and socially defined construct with inherently complex implications at numerous levels within higher education institutions as complex organizations.

Thus, utilizing institutionalism as a guiding theoretical framework enabled us to take account of the intricate processes by which the prominent and widely accepted societal concept and construct of diversity can have important (yet ambiguous) effects on organizational behavior and outcomes (Jepperson, 1991). Moreover, this conceptual approach articulates the manner in which formal organizations are often “driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts or organizational work and institutionalized in society” (Meyer & Rowan, 1991, p. 41). In other words, organizations often articulate formal dispositions and organizational structures, which may operate only as myths, in order to maintain

legitimacy within the broader societal context. Therefore, institutional rhetoric, missions, and organizational structures that tout the importance of diversity may be only loosely coupled with actual organizational actions, behaviors and outcomes that nurture and sustain diversity within colleges and universities (Weick, 1976). Hence, organizational analyses that explicitly conceptualize diversity as an institutional construct will advance both conceptual and empirical efforts beyond simple observations of the gaps between missions, structures and actual organizational outcomes. The present study is an initial effort to begin to move organizational research on diversity toward more intricate and complete explorations (and explanations) of the ongoing under-representation of diverse programs, practices, and populations within American higher education (Adelman, 1997; Myers, 1997; Trower & Chait, 2002).

In this investigation, we explicitly defined the institutional goal of diversity as an institutional construct and we hypothesized that there would be discernible differences between the avowed commitments (mission, rhetoric, policies) of the respondent institutions and their level of commitment in terms of actual institutional behavior. The detection of such differences would effectively provide empirical support for the theory that administrative behaviors and formal organizational structures such as institutional rhetoric, mission statements, and planning documents can indeed function as myth and ceremony in the highly institutionalized organizational context of American colleges and universities (Meyer & Rowan, 1991).

The study consists of two discrete, yet related segments of empirical analysis that are embodied in the specific outcome variables selected for exploration. Each segment of the analysis closely follows the conceptual scheme described above. The first level of analysis incorporates two measures of commitment to diversity as embodied in 1) institutional self-reported levels of evaluation and rewards extended for certain diversity achievements and 2) institutional self-reported comparisons with peer institutions on various levels of organizational

involvement in diversity initiatives. These outcomes are representative of the reflexive types of evaluations and assessments undertaken by colleges and universities attempting to maintain legitimacy on an organizational indicator (i.e., diversity) viewed (by external constituencies) as an institutional concept that serves a legitimating function within the broader societal context (Meyer & Rowan, 1991).

The second segment of analysis uses an objective measurement of commitment to diversity as embodied in the racial/ethnic composition of the 1) student body and 2) the faculty (tenured and non-tenured). These outcomes are conceptually identified in the literature as characteristic of the structural or representational dimension of organizational diversity (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Smith, 1995).

These distinct components of our conceptual approach enabled empirical analysis that considers that both internal and external dynamics influence organizational behavior relative to diversity in higher education institutions. We examined diversity in American colleges and universities in two important ways. First, the data could be viewed as representative of diversity as a construct that operates within a contextual or environmental manner relative to other universities and societal sectors (inter-organizational comparisons). Second, the data were examined viewing diversity as an aggregate organizational effect embodied in the demographic representation of minority students and faculty and the presence of diversity initiatives within institutions (intra-organizational comparisons). Thus, diversity could be seen as an institutional construct operating at both micro- and macro-levels within colleges and universities (DiMaggio, 1991; Jepperson, 1991). Overall, this conceptual framework enabled analyses of some of the key philosophical, structural, and practical considerations necessary to more fully understand diversity in American higher education.

Research Methods

Data Source

We conducted a survey under the auspices of the research project entitled, Preparing Students for a Diverse Democracy, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The nationwide survey examined the various approaches that institutions utilize to increase student involvement in civic behaviors and awareness of diverse perspectives. The survey was designed to elicit responses from the chief academic officer at each institution about institutional commitments to civic engagement and diversity initiatives. The postsecondary institutions selected for this study included those that: a) offer of a baccalaureate degree; b) have a substantial undergraduate student body; c) have a comparative institutional makeup that consisted of different types of undergraduate institutions (i.e. Doctoral, Masters, and Bachelors); and d) have a diversity of geographic representation.

The survey was distributed to all four-year colleges and universities identified through the directory of higher education institutions. A total 1440 surveys were mailed to institutions in all fifty states in the Spring of 2001. A second wave of surveys were sent after four weeks to individuals at institutions who failed to respond, resulting in a return rate of 55%.

Sample

Survey respondents for this study included a total of 744 chief academic officers, or their designee, employed at four-year institutions. For this study, the institutions were classified according to the 2000 Carnegie classification system³. This system better reflects the diversity of the types of institutions within the higher education system. The new 2000 version introduces a new typology of institutional categories. In this study, Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive

³ Please refer to the Carnegie website for more information: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/>

and Intensive represented 11.7%, Master's College and Universities I & II represented 42.2%, and Baccalaureate Colleges-Liberal Arts and General represented 34.5% of the sample. In terms of control of institution, public institutions were more represented than private institutions in the sample (56% Public; 44% private). Over 73% of the institutions are members of the American Council on Education, 69.5% were members of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), and 76.3% reported they were individual members of the American Association for Higher Education. Approximately 85% of the sample indicated that their institution's student enrollment figures are somewhat or very representative of the demographics of the population in the local area.

Measures

Table 1 shows the variable names, types and scales for each variable used in the study. Two of the dependant variables were a scaled index of various items. Both scaled indexes are constructs based on newly created items to measure institutional commitment to diversity initiatives. The remaining three dependent variables, the percentages of minority students, tenured minority faculty, and tenure track and tenured minority faculty were collected from the 1997 IPEDS data. This database included two data sets: the institutional enrollment dataset and the staff data set. The institutional enrollment dataset included the most recent public information available about all postsecondary institutions, including the percentage of enrolled minority students⁴. The staff dataset included information about all tenured and tenure track faculty members by race, ethnicity and gender. Unlike the institutional enrollment data that is published yearly, the IPEDS staff database is conducted biannually and thus there is no corresponding 1998 staff report database that matches the most recent 1998 institutional enrollment dataset. The most recent databases used for this study were the 1997 IPEDS staff database and the corresponding

1997 IPEDS institutional enrollment dataset. The three continuous dependant variables obtained from these data were the percentage of minority students, percentage of minority faculty (reflecting presence), the percentage of tenured minority faculty (reflecting commitment) for each institution were merged with the completed survey matching the IPEDS UNITID variable.

In Table 1, three independent variables were scaled indexes: the core leadership supports diversity, and whether the institution makes diversity and prestige a priority were developed from survey items. Both institutional membership in organizations and institutions with mission statements that addressed diversity issues were dummy coded and institutions with membership and mission statements that address diversity were the reference group respectively. The Carnegie classification variable was dummy-coded and bachelor's degree granting institutions were used as the referent group. Public institutions were the referent group for the dummy coded institutional type variable. Institutions' student enrollment that reflected the local area's demographics was a single item scale from the survey. The institutional selectivity variable was developed utilizing the information from the Peterson's online institutional database⁵. The institution's selectivity was based on the percentage of applicants admitted from the total applicant pool. Data was collected from each institution and added to the institutional survey database.

---Place Table 1 about here---

Analyses

Exploratory factor analyses were conducted using principal axis factoring and orthogonal rotation methods, in order to reduce the number of measured variables for these analyses. In Table 2, the factor loadings of at least .45 or higher were retained in the creation of the factor

⁴ The institutional dataset reflects data from the previous years, hence, the 1997 dataset reflects the 1996 student enrollment figures.

⁵ Please refer to the Peterson's website for more information: <http://www.petersons.com/>

construct. Items for each of the dependant and independent scaled indexes were multiplied by the corresponding factor weight to reflect the relative strength of each item to the factor construct. The Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for the scales ranged from .740 to .889. Descriptive statistics are shown in Appendix Table 1. First, bivariate analyses were conducted to ascertain institutional differences in the dependent measures. Second, each of the dependent variables were regressed on institutional characteristics (e.g. selectivity, control, type) in the first block and factors representing institutional rhetoric and stated priorities in a second block of variables. A final model that included the other dependent measures was constructed to show the relationship between the dependent measures, and the one dependent measure that was difficult to predict using the standard model of institutional characteristics and rhetoric. This equation was focused on predicting the percentage of tenured minority faculty at an institution. The implications of these analyses are discussed in the next sections.

---Place Table 2 about here---

Limitations. While the rhetoric variables may be well matched to a methodology that relies on self-reported data, the self-reported behavioral measures or institutional activities (evaluation and reward activities, and innovation relative to peer institutions) may be regarded as suspect. How do we know that institutions are doing what they say they are doing? Apart from this study, we have gathered some additional data on institutional initiatives that might help us further examine the responses of chief academic officers. For the purposes of the study, however, we have incorporated "objective" measures reported to the U.S. Department of Education regarding the representation of diverse students and diverse faculty. These dependent measures added an important dimension to further evaluate the relationship between institutional rhetoric and reality on campus. Additional measures that reflect the variety of institutional strategies for diversity will be examined in the future.

Results

Bivariate Results

As expected, approximately 80% of the survey respondents revealed that their institution's official mission statement addresses diversity. This is confirmation of how commonly diversity is now embedded in institutional rhetoric as a core value. In fact, 85% of doctoral/research universities and master's universities reported including diversity in their mission statements. Most baccalaureate colleges also reported including diversity in their missions, although a smaller majority of these institutions did so at 73% (Figure 1).

After calculating z-scores for our measure of institutional evaluation and rewards given for diversity on campus, we observed variation among institutional types. Figure 2 shows boxplots that indicate variation on these activities by institution type. The prevalent pattern shows that although each institution type has a great deal of variation (the length of the boxplot), doctoral/research universities had a higher median activity score on this measure than both master's and baccalaureate institutions. In addition, master's institutions scored slightly higher than baccalaureate institutions (Figure 2). This pattern also held true in subsequent multivariate analyses.

Upon examining the percentage of minority faculty present on each institution (tenured and non-tenured) small but important differences were observed across Carnegie institution types. For example, doctoral universities reported having a slightly higher percentage of minority faculty at 16% with master's and baccalaureate institutions lagging a few percentage points behind at 13% and 11% respectively (Figure 3). When non-tenured faculty members were removed from the ranks of minority faculty, indicating *institutional commitment* to hiring or retaining tenured minority faculty, the rank order of institutional types in terms of percentages remained the same. As can be seen in Figure 4, doctoral/research universities had the highest

percentage of minority faculty among the tenured ranks. However, the representation of tenured minority faculty was slightly lower at all institutions, indicating more difficulty in retaining minority faculty or a commitment to hire such individuals to tenure. Doctoral institutions show only 12% minority faculty among the tenured ranks. In comparison, master's and baccalaureate institutions each show only 9% and 11%, respectively, in terms of percentages of tenured minority faculty. These numbers reveal that while the percentages of minority faculty present at this sample of four-year institutions is generally low, as is the case nationally, the numbers tended to be slightly higher at the doctoral/research institutions in both the tenured and non-tenured ranks.

Regression Results

We conducted five hierarchical regression equations to investigate the relationship between institutional characteristics and institution's priorities and five outcome variables. The first two regression models used factor scales indexes of self-reported institutional priorities and the final three models used objective enrollment data for minority students and minority faculty. The results of the analyses for each of the block entries are available in Tables 3 through 7.

The first regression model shown on Table 3 explained 50% of the total variance in institutional activities to evaluate progress and reward diversity initiatives on campus ($F(12, 731) = 62.95, p < .001$). Doctoral level institutions are more likely than Bachelors or Master's level institutions to evaluate and reward diversity initiatives. Private institutions were more likely to engage in these activities than public institutions. Regardless of institution type, central administrative leadership support for diversity initiatives and the articulation of diversity as a high institutional priority are both strongly associated with actual evaluation and rewards for diversity initiatives on campus. Although institutional membership in higher education associations was significant in the first two blocks of the prediction equation, controls for

internal institutional factors that reflect institutional rhetoric accounted for much of the variation in institutional activity levels that focus on evaluating and recognizing/rewarding diversity on campus. However, it should be noted that an institutional mission statement that reflected diversity appears to be indirectly related to evaluation and reward activities, and not as important as leadership support and the articulation of diversity priorities. This highly predictive model suggests that the intra-organizational influences have more impact than structural characteristics or external influences (association membership or demographics of the region) on an institution's participation in diversity initiatives.

In Table 4, the second regression model explained 37% of the institution's activity level in innovations and programs to create a diverse environment relative to peer institutions ($F(12, 731) = 36.64, p < .001$). Institutions with central administrative leadership that supports diversity initiatives ranked themselves higher than peer institutions in creating a diverse environment. In addition, institutions that articulate diversity as a high priority were more likely to rate their activities as more innovative than their peers.

Aside from the self-reported outcomes, the true test of rhetoric and action comes in the form of the actual presence of diverse students and faculty. These results present a more sobering answer to our essential research question. Table 5 shows the prediction equation for the percentage of minority students on campus. Not surprisingly, results show that lower selectivity institutions tend to have a higher percentage of minority students. In addition, private institutions appear to have a somewhat more diverse student body, regardless of institution type and institutional rhetoric. In this particular instance, we find that none of the institutional rhetoric variables (mission, articulation of priorities, or core leadership support) were predictive of the percentage of minority students on campus. Indeed, the two predictors (control and selectivity) explained only 7% of the variance in the percentage of minority students on campus.

The portrait is more varied when it comes to the presence of minority faculty who are on the tenure track (tenured and untenured) on college campuses. Table 6 shows the institutional characteristics and rhetoric variables, and in the final block, the addition of other institutional behaviors. The model in Block three (with only institutional characteristics and rhetoric measures) shows our model predicts only 6% of the variance in the dependent measure. At this stage in the model, results indicate that less selective institutions, private institutions, as well as institutions that place a high priority on institutional prestige have a higher percentage of minorities within the faculty ranks. The final model (which includes institutional activity to evaluate and reward diversity, innovation in activity relative to peer institutions, and the percentage of minority students on campus in Block 4) predicts approximately 28% of the variance among institutions in the presence of minority faculty. With the addition of these institutional activities, no variation was actually due to institutional characteristics or category. Instead, a mission statement that reflected diversity, an institutional emphasis on prestige, and the presence of a high percentage of minority students are the key predictors of an institution having a significant number of minority faculty on campus.

Table 7 shows a final model testing our research question regarding institutional rhetoric and reality. The four-stage model predicted, at best, only 4% of the variance in the percentage of tenured minority faculty on campus. Institutions with a high percentage of minority students or institutions with a student population that reflects the demographics of the local area, tend to have a higher percentage of tenured minority faculty. It is interesting to note that institutions that place a high priority on prestige also tend to have a higher percentage of tenured, minority faculty. This remains true at the same time that somewhat lower selectivity institutions tend to have more minority faculty among their tenured ranks. Results from both regression models,

using faculty data, strongly suggest that an institutional emphasis on prestige does not preclude an emphasis on diversity among the faculty ranks.

Discussion and Conclusion

The conceptual framework that we utilized in this study was primarily based on two areas of theory. The first area of theory from which we drew was work by scholars who have postulated that diversity in higher education is a multi-level concept that is impacted by various institutional contexts (e.g., historical, structural, psychological) and that as an organizational concept its evolution can be observed across several dimensions within colleges and universities (Hurtado, et al, 1999; Smith, 1995). We did observe differences among various dimensions of diversity activity on college campuses. The second area of theory was derived from the sub-field of organizational theory known as *institutionalism*. In organizational analysis institutional theorists posit the premise that organizations often articulate their missions and construct their organizational forms or structures in response to prevailing ideals institutionalized in the broader societal context in which they are located (Jepperson, 1991). The organizational forms that are constructed sometimes operate as myth and ceremony rather than having a substantive impact on organizational work or outcomes. The central question we explored based upon this conceptual orientation was whether or not the rhetorical and structural articulations of support for diversity within American colleges and universities would be predictive of actual diversity activity and outcomes.

Our results lend support to both our conceptual framework as well as our hypothesis that there would be disparities between organizational rhetoric and actual diversity outcomes. First, our findings demonstrated that different organizational factors can have varying effects on diversity outcomes depending upon which dimension or level of organizational factors related to

diversity are being examined (e.g., behavioral or structural diversity outcomes reflecting presence and commitment of diverse students and faculty). Second, there were intra-organizational configurations and relationships among the predictor variables that worked in tandem producing various effects on the diversity outcomes. Third, the clusters of organizational factors that we examined had differing degrees and types of effects on our two different types of diversity outcomes.

Behavioral Diversity Outcomes: Reflecting on Institutional Activity

A couple of discernible patterns were observed in our findings for the two behavioral diversity outcomes. First, it was apparent that core leadership support and emphasis on diversity as a priority were the main predictors for both behavioral outcomes: evaluation and rewards for diversity on college campus; and innovation relative to peer institutions in creating a diverse environment. Another pattern observed was that the impact of mission statements and priority placed on prestige are mediated when central leadership support and diversity priorities on campus are taken into consideration. On both outcomes, the significance of whether or not institutional mission statements addressed diversity was completely diminished. On the evaluation and rewards outcome, the inclusion of rhetorical factors also removed any direct explanatory relevance of priority emphasis on prestige, although indirect relationships may be possible. Finally, it is important to note that the institutional rhetoric measures on priorities, leadership support, and mission were the strongest predictors of institutional behavior and action, regardless of institutional type. Rhetorical articulation of diversity alone, in the form of a mission statement, does not impact our intra-organizational diversity outcomes. For real action to occur on campus, it requires core leadership support and a strong articulation of diversity priorities. These results are compatible with observations made by scholars who have studied the role of institutional mission statements as strategic planning tools (Dill, 1997; Holland, 1999). These

findings also lend support to the premise of institutionalism, which was a key component of our conceptual framework. The mediating effect that leadership actions and priorities related to diversity had on mission statements resonates with the notion that structural factors can be impacted by both social actions and interactions such as those that transpire between university leaders, faculty, and students when negotiating the relevance of diversity in their universities (Jepperson, 1991).

Representational Diversity Outcomes: Reflecting on Organizational Reality

The representational outcomes embodied in the percentage of minority students enrolled and minority faculty on campus (tenured or on tenure track) presents a much different picture of the organizational characteristics we explored. As noted earlier, the representational outcomes were independently-reported measures of structural diversity, at the level of the individuals that populate institutions and hence provided a more substantive organizational outcome for analysis. At each level of the analysis, only institutional selectivity (less selective) and institutional control (private) had significant impact on the percentage of minority students enrolled. The fact that none of the other variables predicted this factor is important here as it demonstrates that rhetorical variables in this instance including leadership and priorities do not translate into higher enrollment of minority students. These findings also strongly support our theoretical assertion that institutional rhetoric (e.g., mission statements, policies, and related actions) regarding diversity can function as myth or ceremony to the extent that this rhetoric provides institutions legitimacy in the broader contexts that embrace access to higher education and diversity as desirable goals (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). In other words, these institutions appear to be “talking the talk” but not “walking the walk” as it relates to student diversity (Adelman, 1997).

The fact that private institutions (regardless of selectivity) and generally less selective institutions have higher minority student enrollments, points to at least two directions for future

research. First, it may be important to control for those institutions that have a mission or mandate to serve primarily minority populations (e.g. HBCUs, tribal colleges). As Adelman (1997) has noted, institutional missions can indeed be population-driven. Secondly, it may be important to attempt to assess more closely the admissions policies of private institutions since they are not subject to restrictions in their application of race-sensitive policies. It is worth exploring whether their activities and strategies for recruiting minority students are more effective than public institutions.

After replicating the full three-block predictive model of institutional characteristics and rhetoric utilized in each of the earlier analyses, we found that presence of minority faculty was higher at less selective institutions, private institutions (regardless of selectivity) and institutions that placed a high priority on institutional prestige (regardless of all other institutional characteristics). These variables were the same as those that had an effect on predicted enrollment of minority students, thus the same questions regarding the mission of these institutions would apply.

In an effort to get a more complete picture of predictors of a minority faculty presence on campus, we added a fourth block of explanatory variables that included measures that previously served as behavioral outcomes for our intra-organizational comparisons (evaluation and rewards and innovations in diversity activity), and the percent minority students enrolled at each institution. This increased the explanatory power of the model significantly, indicating other diversity activities had to be in place on campus to result in a more diverse faculty. Moreover, the replicated result of articulating a priority for institutional prestige was again a significant predictor of minority faculty on campus. This finding seems to suggest that diversity and excellence can indeed go hand in hand. This is a very important finding that serves as a partial rebuttal to the claims that institutions must weaken their academic or professional standards in

order to have a diverse faculty presence. Yet, it should also be pointed out that minority faculty continue to be much more likely than white faculty to work at less prestigious institutions (Trower & Chait, 2002). It seems that what is needed to get minority faculty on campuses is a welcoming environment that would include students of color, a focus on excellence, and evidence of commitment to diversity in institutional activities. Other research has shown that the overwhelming majority of minority faculty believed it is important for colleges and universities to solve social problems and that one of their personal goals included a desire to help promote racial understanding (Milem & Astin, 1993). Our findings were also consistent with recent analysis conducted by researchers at Harvard that contend that an “unaccommodating culture” appears to be the major obstacle to expanding the presence of minority faculty on many campuses (Trower & Chait, 2002).

The numbers of minority faculty members who ultimately acquire tenure is a more direct indicator or test of whether or not these factors can hold up in terms of demonstrating long-term commitment by institutions to a diverse faculty. As Milem & Astin (1993) observed, and Trower & Chait (2002) have re-confirmed with new data, that there has been very little increase in the numbers of minority faculty acquiring tenure over the last decade.

The final stage of our analyses demonstrated support for our hypothesis in the most dramatic fashion. Tenured minority faculty members are most likely to be found at those institutions with a high percentage of minority students and where enrollment reflected local demographics. This may suggest that urban or regional institutions (many of which have heavy minority enrollment and ethnically diverse local communities) are places that most minorities are acquiring tenure. This would not be surprising in light of the finding by Trower & Chait (2002) that the highest percentages for African-American faculty members are at public comprehensive institutions (9.1%) or public two-year institutions (6.1%) where many urban and minority

populations attend college. Although the numbers are small, for institutions that have secured tenured minority faculty members does not reflect a decline in an institutional quest for prestige.

In summary, from an organizational perspective, the disconnects that we observed between rhetorical statements and organizational reality supported the notion of institutionalism in organizations (Jepperson, 1991). In addition, we found evidence that was consistent with the theory that “institutionalized concepts,” in this case diversity, can lead to organizational actions that are in fact more consistently developed and supported when compared to the concomitant structures, programs, or behaviors needed to actualize the goals of diversity. That is to say, that the organizational dispositions, missions, and policies we examined may indeed perform the institutional role of “myth and ceremony” (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). Moreover, this first phase of data analyses provide tentative support for the theory of loose coupling in complex organizations such that there are different dimensions or tiers of diversity being implemented within colleges and universities (Perrow, 1986; Smith, 1995; Weick, 1976). To achieve a strong institutional commitment to diversity, this research suggests that a set of interlocking commitments to diversity must go beyond the rhetoric in mission statements to include articulation of diversity priorities, activities that evaluate and reward progress, core leadership support, and the development of a diverse student body. These are particularly important to secure the presence of a more diverse faculty.

Thus we can conclude from this study that universities are in fact making considerable efforts at rhetorical, planning, and programmatic levels to support diversity. However, it appears that more needs to be done to close the gap between the rhetoric and the actual achievement of organizational transformation commensurate with avowed diversity commitments. Possible future actions for institutions might include expanding their institutional resources and personnel responsible for implementing diversity goals across many institutional units—so that all are

charged with carrying out the vision articulated in mission statements. In addition, administrative leadership must extend beyond missions and planning documents, institutional priorities, and policies in order to encompass periodic reviews of institutional progress and implementation of those plans. These activities can move higher education institutions from rhetoric, to self-reflection, and into action and outcomes that enable them to be leaders of social progress and realize their role in expanding the ideals of an American pluralistic democracy.

Table 1

Summary of Variables and Indices in the Research Model

Variable name	Variable type	Scale Range
Dependent Variable Outcomes		
Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity	Scaled index, six items	1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Often 4=Always
Peer Comparisons to Create a diverse environment	Scaled index, five items	1=No activities 4=More activities than others
Percentage of Minority Students	Single-item, continuous	0-100
Percentage of Tenured and Tenure Track Minority Faculty	Single-item, continuous	0-100
Percentage of Tenured Minority Faculty	Single-item, continuous	0-100
Independent Variables		
Institutional Background Characteristics		
Institution's admission selectivity	Single-item, continuous	0-100
Student enrollment reflect demographics of population	Single-item, discrete	1=Not representative, 2= Somewhat representative, 3= Very representative
AACU membership	Single-item, dummy coded, discrete	1= yes 0=no
ACE membership	Single-item, dummy coded, discrete	1= yes 0=no
AAHE membership	Single-item, dummy coded, discrete	1= yes 0=no

Table 1 (continued)**Summary of Variables and Indices in the Research Model**

Variable name	Variable type	Scale Range
<i>Institutional Categorization Variables</i>		
Carnegie Classification	Dummy coded, discrete	Doctoral (Extensive and Intensive), Masters (I&II), The referent group was Bachelor level institutions
Institution Type	Single Item, dummy coded, discrete	1=Public 0=Private
Institutional Commitments Variables		
Core Leadership supports diversity	Scaled index, three items, discrete	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree
Institutional Diversity Priority	Scaled index, five items, discrete	1=Not a priority, 2=Moderate Priority, 3=Strong Priority, 4=Highest Priority
Institutional Prestige Priority	Scaled index, three items, discrete	1=Not a priority, 2=Moderate Priority, 3=Strong Priority, 4=Highest Priority
Mission statement addresses diversity	Single-item, dummy coded, discrete	1=Yes, 0=No

Table2
Factor Loadings and Reliabilities for Variables

Factor and survey items	Factor Loading	Internal consistency
<i>Dependent Measures</i>		(Alpha)
Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity ⁶		.836
Promotes research in area of diversity.	.746	
Recognizes students, staff, & faculty for their participation in diversity programs, initiatives, & efforts.	.663	
Assesses the campus climate related to diversity (e.g., racism, sexism, or homophobia)	.644	
Publishes the institution's accomplishments & efforts related to diversity.	.669	
Evaluates progress toward diversity goals for students, staff, & faculty.	.635	
Encourages campus wide participation in conferences & workshops related to diversity & civic engagement.	.681	
<u>Peer Comparison to Create a diverse environment⁷</u>		.789
Innovative practice & programs on issues related to social diversity.	.745	
Programs on tying institutional diversity goals to resources that are allocated to various academic & administrative units on campus.	.644	
Campus activities that help students respect racial/ethnic, sexual orientation, and disability differences.	.619	
Integration of social diversity issues into general education curriculum.	.533	
Enrollment of African-American and/or Latino Students.	.489	

⁶ Indicate your institution's level of participation in each activity: 1=never, 2=seldom, 3=often, 4=always

⁷ What is your institution's level of activity compared to peer institutions in the following areas: 1=no activities, 2=fewer activities, 3=about the same, 4=more activities than others

Table 2 (continued)**Factor Loadings and Reliabilities for Variables**

Factor and survey items	Factor Loading	Internal consistency (Alpha)
<i>Independent Measures</i>		
<u>Institutional Diversity Priority</u> ¹		.850
Developing and appreciation for a multicultural society among students & faculty.	.785	
Creating a diverse multicultural environment on campus.	.778	
Increasing the representation of minorities & women in the faculty & administration.	.707	
Recruiting more underrepresented students.	.670	
Maintaining a campus climate where differences Of opinion can be discussed openly.	.553	
<u>Institutional Prestige Priority</u> ¹		.880
Increasing or maintaining institutional prestige	.866	
Increasing the ranking of the college/university	.822	
Enhancing the institution's national prestige	.798	
<u>Core Leadership Support for Diversity</u> ¹		.734
University leaders regularly articulate the value of diversity	.940	
This University has a long-standing commitment to diversity issues	.581	
Strategic Planning documents contain goals for diversity	.465	

¹ Indicate the extent to which you think the following are priorities at your institution: 1=not a priority, 2=moderate priority, 3=strong priority, 4= highest priority

Figure 1

Percentage of Institutions with Mission Statements that Address Diversity

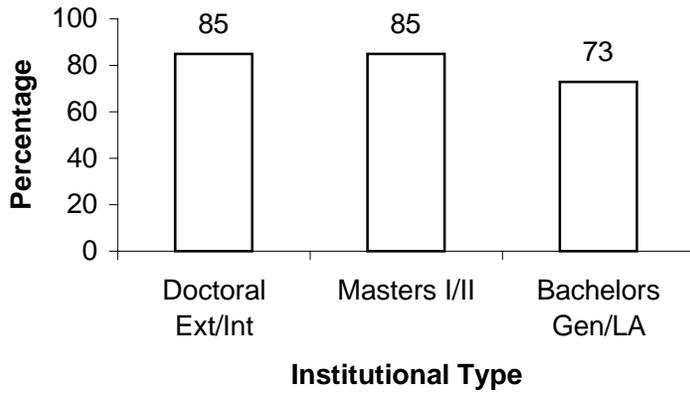


Figure 2

Institutional Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity

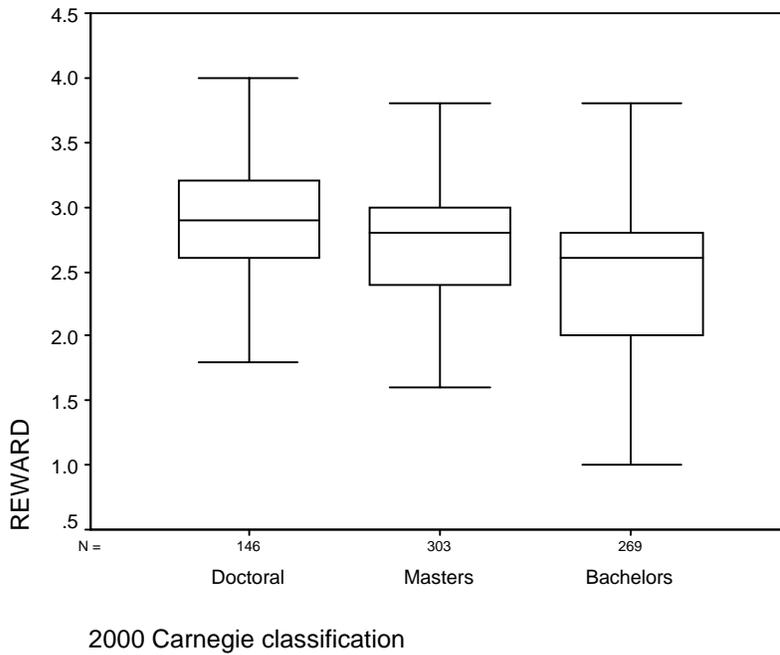


Figure 3

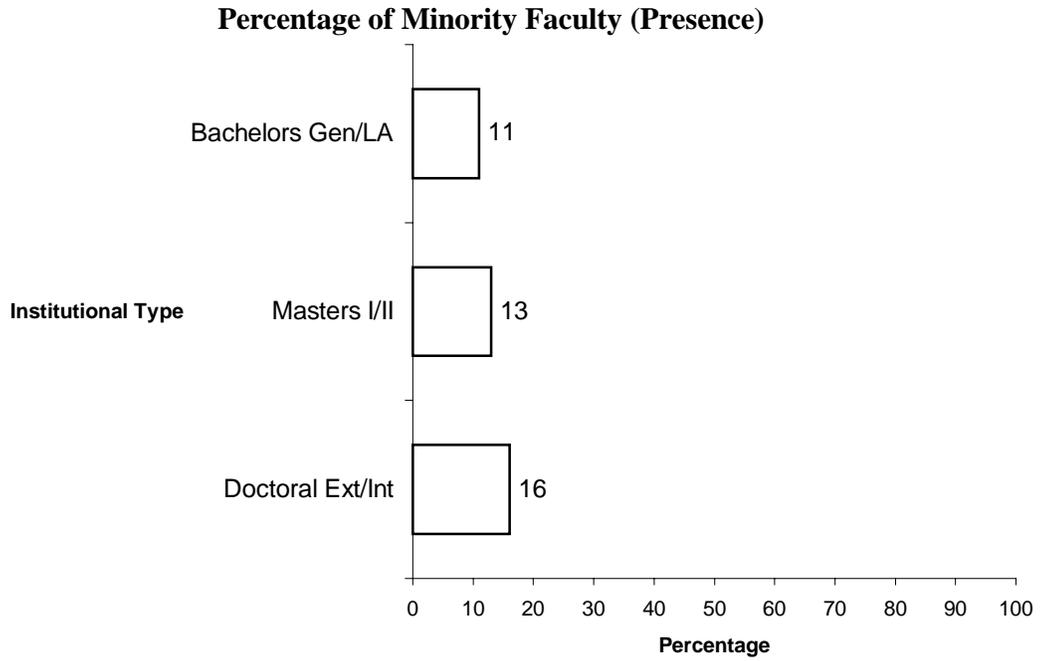


Figure 4

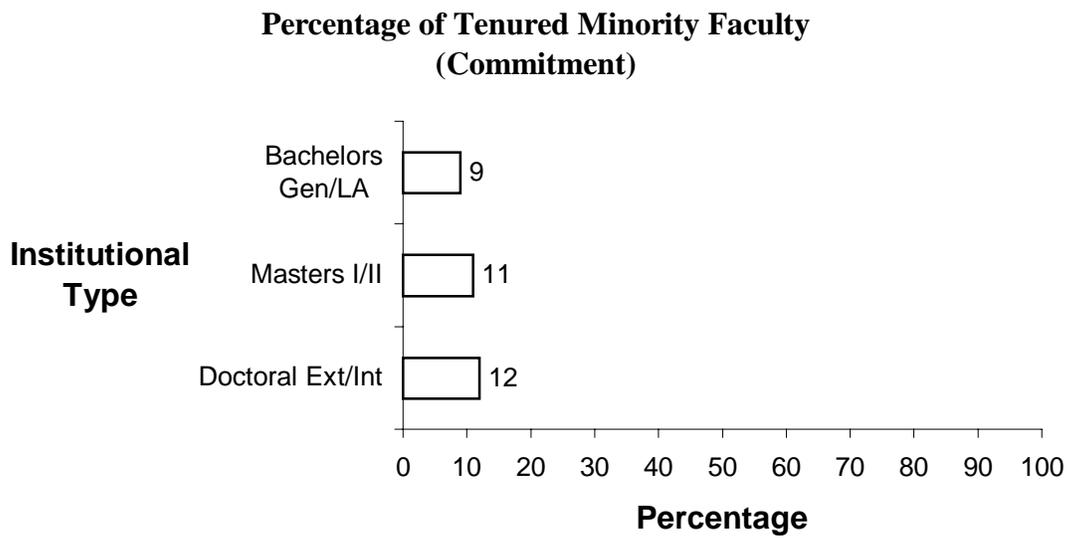


Table 3
Predicting Institutional Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity

n=744

Variable name	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Institutional Characteristics</i>			
Institution's admission selectivity	-.102**	-.098**	-.002
Student enrollment reflect demographics of population	.087**	.065	.053
AACU membership	.095*	.097**	.042
ACE membership	.198***	.147***	.038
AAHE membership	.068	.071	.029
<i>Institutional category</i>			
Doctoral Institution	.148**	.134**	.099**
Masters Institution	.039	.071	.033
Public Institution	-.212***	-.163***	-.103***
<i>Institutional Rhetoric</i>			
Mission statement addresses diversity	.185***	.161***	.022
Core Leadership supports diversity	.609***	.587***	.425***
Institutional Priority on Prestige	.148***	.113**	.022
Institutional Priority on Diversity	.537***	.520***	.253***
R2	.104	.160	.508
Change in R2	.104	.055	.348
F	17.25***	17.50***	62.95***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Beta coefficients presented in smaller type italics represent the beta coefficient for each variable not in the model if it were to be entered by itself in the next step.

Table 4

Predicting Institutional Progress relative to Peers: Creating a diverse environment

n=744

Variable name	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<u><i>Institutional Characteristics</i></u>			
Institution's admission selectivity	-.121***	-.121***	-.036
Student enrollment reflect demographics of population	.063	.056	.042
AACU membership	.095*	.095*	.060
ACE membership	.172***	.146***	.051
AAHE membership	.058	.061	.026
<u><i>Institutional category</i></u>			
Doctoral Institution	.054	.082	.068
Masters Institution	.052	.083*	.047
Public Institution	-.068*	-.031	.020
<u><i>Institutional Rhetoric</i></u>			
Mission statement addresses diversity	.166***	.156***	.035
Core Leadership supports diversity	.527***	.524***	.393***
Institutional Priority on Prestige	.029	.015	-.064*
Institutional Priority on Diversity	.448***	.442***	.209***
R2	.090	.101	.373
Change in R2	.090	.010	.272
F	14.685***	10.32***	36.34***

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Beta coefficients presented in smaller type italics represent the beta coefficient for each variable not in the model if it were to be entered by itself in the next step

Table 5

Predicting Institution's percentage of Minority Students

n=744

Variable name	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i><u>Institutional Characteristics</u></i>			
Institution's admission selectivity	-.197***	-.207***	-.203***
Student enrollment reflect demographics of population	.043	.014	.015
AACU membership	.033	.036	.030
ACE membership	-.005	-.020	-.021
AAHE membership	-.007	-.010	-.014
<i><u>Institutional category</u></i>			
Doctoral Institution	-.012	-.038	-.048
Masters Institution	.077*	.035	.033
Public Institution	-.146***	-.151***	-.146***
<i><u>Institutional Rhetoric</u></i>			
Mission statement addresses diversity	.037	.018	.012
Core Leadership supports diversity	.045	.026	.045
Institutional Priority on Prestige	.041	.039	.043
Institutional Priority on Diversity	.006	-.005	-.043
R2	.038	.063	.066
Change in R2	.038	.025	.003
F	5.96***	6.22***	4.33***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Beta coefficients presented in smaller type italics represent the beta coefficient for each variable not in the model if it were to be entered by itself in the next step

Table 6

Predicting Institution's presence of Minority Faculty (percentage)

n=744

Variable name	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
<u><i>Institutional Characteristics</i></u>				
Institution's admission selectivity	-.139***	-.135***	-.126***	-.029
Student enrollment reflects demographics of area.	.021	.009	.009	-.000
AACU membership	.027	.029	.010	-.004
ACE membership	.041	.012	.005	.015
AAHE membership	-.003	-.001	-.010	-.005
<u><i>Institutional category</i></u>				
Doctoral Institution	<i>.096**</i>	<i>.077</i>	<i>.051</i>	<i>.069</i>
Masters Institution	<i>.006</i>	<i>.022</i>	<i>.016</i>	-.000
Public Institution	-.130***	-.105**	-.096*	-.016
<u><i>Institutional Rhetoric</i></u>				
Mission statement addresses diversity	<i>.087*</i>	<i>.074*</i>	<i>.073</i>	<i>.066*</i>
Core Leadership supports diversity	<i>.032</i>	<i>.013</i>	-.006	-.046
Institutional Priority on Prestige	<i>.134***</i>	<i>.114**</i>	<i>.113**</i>	<i>.088**</i>
Institutional Priority on Diversity	<i>.027</i>	<i>.015</i>	-.013	-.004
<u><i>Institutional Behaviors</i></u>				
Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity	<i>.085*</i>	<i>.050</i>	<i>.061</i>	<i>.081</i>
Peer Comparisons to Create a diverse environment	<i>.059</i>	<i>.047</i>	<i>.061</i>	-.042
Percentage of Minority Students	<i>.484***</i>	<i>.480***</i>	<i>.476***</i>	<i>.482***</i>
R2	.023	.043	.060	.275
Change in R2	.023	.020	.016	.215
F	3.54*	4.22***	3.91***	18.47***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Beta coefficients presented in smaller type italics represent the beta coefficient for each variable not in the

model if it were to be entered by itself in the next step

Table 7
Predicting percentage of Tenured Minority Faculty

n=744

Variable name	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
<u><i>Institutional Characteristics</i></u>				
Institution's admission selectivity	<i>-.094**</i>	<i>-.093**</i>	<i>-.093**</i>	<i>-.071</i>
Student enrollment reflect dem. pop	<i>.075*</i>	<i>.073</i>	<i>.077*</i>	<i>.076*</i>
AACU membership	<i>-.005</i>	<i>-.005</i>	<i>-.020</i>	<i>-.021</i>
ACE membership	<i>-.009</i>	<i>-.022</i>	<i>-.021</i>	<i>-.017</i>
AAHE membership	<i>.022</i>	<i>.024</i>	<i>.021</i>	<i>.023</i>
<u><i>Institutional category</i></u>				
Doctoral Institution	<i>.029</i>	<i>.043</i>	<i>.023</i>	<i>.029</i>
Masters Institution	<i>.020</i>	<i>.038</i>	<i>.038</i>	<i>.036</i>
Public Institution	<i>-.026</i>	<i>-.008</i>	<i>-.005</i>	<i>.018</i>
<u><i>Institutional Rhetoric</i></u>				
Mission statement addresses diversity	<i>.001</i>	<i>-.003</i>	<i>-.004</i>	<i>-.004</i>
Core Leadership supports diversity	<i>.000</i>	<i>-.006</i>	<i>-.005</i>	<i>-.002</i>
Institutional Priority on Prestige	<i>.100**</i>	<i>.097**</i>	<i>.101**</i>	<i>.090*</i>
Institutional Priority on Diversity	<i>.003</i>	<i>-.000</i>	<i>-.015</i>	<i>-.007</i>
<u><i>Institutional Behaviors</i></u>				
Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity	<i>.024</i>	<i>.015</i>	<i>.027</i>	<i>.051</i>
Peer Comparisons to Create a diverse environment	<i>-.033</i>	<i>-.038</i>	<i>.042</i>	<i>-.075</i>
Percentage of Minority Students	<i>.116**</i>	<i>.115**</i>	<i>.111**</i>	<i>.121**</i>
R2	<i>.012</i>	<i>.014</i>	<i>.023</i>	<i>.038</i>
Change in R2	<i>.012</i>	<i>.002</i>	<i>.008</i>	<i>.015</i>
F	1.83	1.34	1.45	1.96*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Beta coefficients presented in smaller type italics represent the beta coefficient for each variable not in the model if it were to be entered by itself in the next step

Appendix 1

Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables in the Analyses
(n=744)

Variable name	Mean	Standard Deviation
<u>Dependent Variables</u>		
Evaluation and Rewards for Diversity ¹	2.68	.53
Peer Comparisons to Create a diverse environment ²	3.03	.54
Percentage of Tenured Minority faculty	.11	.18
Percentage of Tenured and Tenure Track Minority Faculty	.13	.12
Percentage of Minority Students enrollment	.19	.20
<u>Independent Variables</u>		
Core Leadership supports diversity ³	3.26	.56
Institutional Priority on Diversity ⁴	3.09	.57
Institutional Priority on Prestige ⁴	2.90	.79
Student Enrollment figures represent the demographics of the local area ⁵	2.23	.69
Does your Institution's mission statement address: Diversity ⁶	1.81	.39

¹ Four point scale: 1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Often, 4=Always² Four point scale: 1=No activities, 2=Fewer activities 3=About the same activities,4= More activities than others³ Four point scale: 1=Strongly agree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4= Strongly agree⁴ Four point scale: 1=Not a priority, 2= Moderate Priority, 3=Strong Priority, 4= Highest Priority⁵ Three point scale: 1= Not representative, 2=Somewhat representative, 3= Very representative⁶ Dichotomous scale: 1= No, 2=Yes

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