The Equity Scorecard: An Effective Tool for Assessing Diversity Initiatives

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Abstract: Effective assessment systems generate information that can help institutions adapt to changing conditions while they maintain stability and identity. Effective assessment also helps faculty and staff gain an understanding of how the college experience impacts students (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987). Effective assessment provides well-defined outcomes for curricular and co-curricular activities and programs. These programs "add direction and impetus to unfreezing institutional culture in order to make changes in policy, method, and procedures to stimulate innovation which results in improvement" (Messina & Fagans, 1992, p. 2. Assessment can support strategic planning efforts by helping institutions define goals and objectives, by identifying critical issues that need attention, and by providing feedback about the effectiveness of long-range plans (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987). In this way, institutions can use assessment both to respond to external demands for accountability and as a proactive effort to provide a rational basis for decision-making in light of the uncertain future of higher education and the changing external environment. According to Messina and Fagans (1992), effective assessment (a) focuses on areas that need improvement, (b) requires faculty, staff, and student participation, and (c) includes multiple avenues for feedback. The Equity Scorecard is a tool that helps incorporate these criteria into the day-to-day activities within campus communities. The Equity Scorecard is grounded in theoretical and practical literature that critiques and moves beyond access and retention to measure the level of academic success (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Bowen, Bok & Burkhart, 1999; Bok, 2003; Bowen and Bok, 1998; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). In the past, higher education leaders sought ways to change or influence at-risk students so they could succeed in institutions where the culture remained unchanged. In contrast, the Scorecard proposes that both students and institutions assume responsibility for educational outcomes. While there is extensive literature on what historically underrepresented students lack and how they can change to better meet the rigors of college, the Equity Scorecard focuses attention on institutional change. This assessment tool emphasizes the notion of the accountability side of diversity, which is the title of an article on the Scorecard written by Bensimon, Polkinghorne, and Bauman (2003). According to Bauman, Buntillas, Bensimon, Brown, and Bariex (2005). "...an institution takes inclusive excellence seriously if it (1) accepts the responsibility for producing equitable educational outcomes for students from historically disenfranchised groups, and (2) monitors the development of high achievement among historically underrepresented students" (p. 9). This tool provides the stimulus for the development of an institutional ethos that values a culture of evidence (Allan, 1995; Lawman, 2002).

Keywords: Assessment, Diversity, Equity Scorecard, Higher Education, College and Universities

Introduction

SOME COLLEGES AND universities experience difficulty implementing diversity assessment tools that result in the development of new processes, structures, offices, and priorities with a view toward achieving educational equity (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). The Equity Scorecard is one of the most effective assessment tools available to help institutions of higher education achieve educational equity. Specifically, "The Equity Scorecard is a diversity assessment tool designed to foster institutional change in higher education by helping to close the achievement gap for historically underrepresented students" (Bensimon, 2004, p. 44). Equity is defined as the point at which a particular group's representation across all academic indicators such as majors, programs, honors, retention, graduation and degrees awarded were equal to the group's representation in the student body. For example, if Latino students make up 25% of the student body, they should also make up a similar percentage on the Dean's List and the Honors Program. Flexible in nature, the Scorecard promotes the development of an institution-wide consultative process tailored to the needs of the organization as well as to the individualized needs of institutional units and programs. In this paper, we discuss the origin, features and strengths of the Equity Scorecard.

Origin of the Equity Scorecard

The Equity Scorecard was created by faculty at the Center for Urban Education at the University of
Southern California. Funded by The James Irvine Foundation, the Scorecard project aimed to develop an institutional equity scorecard and use institutional data to monitor progress toward equity for historically underrepresented students in four areas: access, retention, excellence, and institutional viability. The Scorecard was piloted on the campuses of the following fourteen colleges and universities in Southern California: California State University, Dominguez Hills; California State University, Fullerton; California State University, Los Angeles; Cerritos College; Los Angeles City College; Los Angeles Valley Community College; Loyola Marymount University; Mt. St. Mary’s, Chalon Campus; Occidental College; Riverside Community College; Santa Monica College; University of La Verne; University of the Redlands; and Whittier College.

Features of the Scorecard

Institutions of higher education receive “financial and other forms of support from local, state, and federal government, from taxpayers, from students and their families, and from numerous foundations and organizations” (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987, p. 3). Therefore, institutions are accountable to those who support them, and they should demonstrate that their goals are being achieved in a cost-effective manner (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987). According to Howard Bowen (as cited in Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987), accountability in higher education means that “colleges and universities are responsible for conducting their affairs so that the outcomes are worth the cost. It implies that institutional effort would be directed toward appropriate goals and that the outcomes should be consistent with these goals and should be achieved at minimum cost. It also implies that an institution should report evidence on the degree to which it is achieving its mission” (p. 1).

Effective assessment systems generate information that can help institutions adapt to changing conditions while they maintain stability and identity. Effective assessment also helps faculty and staff gain an understanding of how the college experience impacts students (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987). Effective assessment provides well-defined outcomes for curricular and co-curricular activities and programs, and these programs “add direction and impetus to ‘unfreezing’ institutional culture in order to make changes in policy, method, and procedures to stimulate innovation which results in improvement” (Messina & Fagans, 1992, p. 2).

Additionally, assessment can support strategic planning efforts by helping institutions define goals and objectives, by identifying critical issues that need attention, and by providing feedback about the effectiveness of long-range plans (Jacobi, Astin & Ayala, 1987). In this way, institutions can use assessment both to respond to external demands for accountability and as a proactive effort to provide a rational basis for decision-making in light of the uncertain feature of higher education and the changing external environment.

According to Messina and Fagans (1992), effective assessment (a) focuses on areas that need improvement, (b) requires faculty, staff, and student participation, and (c) includes multiple avenues for feedback. The Equity Scorecard is a tool that helps incorporate these criteria into the day-to-day activities within campus communities.

The Equity Scorecard is grounded in theoretical and practical literature that critiques and moves beyond access and retention to measure the level of academic success (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Bowen, Bok & Burkhardt, 1999; Bok, 2003; Bowen and Bok, 1998; Jencks & Phillips, 1998). In the past, higher education leaders sought ways to change historically underrepresented students so they could succeed in institutions where the culture remained unchanged. In contrast, the Scorecard proposes that both students and institutions assume responsibility for educational outcomes. While there is extensive literature on what historically underrepresented students lack and how they can change to better meet the rigor of college, the Equity Scorecard focuses attention on institutional change. This assessment tool emphasizes the notion of the accountability side of diversity. According to Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown, & Bartee (2005), “an institution takes inclusive excellence seriously if it (1) accepts the responsibility for producing equitable educational outcomes for students from historically disenfranchised groups, and (2) monitors the development of high achievement among historically underrepresented students” (p. 9).

Elements of the Scorecard

When implementing the Scorecard, campuses use measures to identify elements of data that illustrate where educational gaps may exist. Measures are indicators that illustrate areas of equity or inequity of educational outcomes among ethnic or gender groups of students. There are two types of measures: macro and micro. Macro-measures take a large-scale picture of the institution, (e.g., the overall representation of ethnic or gender groups in the undergraduate student population). Micro-measures, in contrast, examine specific trends and student outcomes at a more fine-grained level. These measures are indicators disaggregated by student and institutional descriptors. Student descriptors may identify freshman entering in 2008 that have accumulated at least 20 credits or define the ethnicity, gender, and level of students on
the Dean’s List. Institutional descriptors may define colleges, schools and programs by discipline, department, and course sequence. Reliance on fine-grained indicators using disaggregated data is based on the assumption that it results in more precise measures (Bensimon, 2004). The micro-measures are displayed in four perspectives that comprise the Scorecard Framework, as displayed in Figure 1. The perspectives include: access, retention, excellence, and institutional viability. A definition for each perspective and sample micro-measures are listed below.

![Figure 1: Equity Scorecard Framework](image_url)

Access refers to programs and resources that can significantly improve life opportunities for underserved students. The access perspective focuses on efforts aimed at the inclusion and success of underrepresented and/or underserved groups. Access measures, goals, and improvement targets address questions about access to particular majors, disciplines, financial aid, and special programs that increase the likelihood of working with faculty or continuing to graduate school (Bensimon, 2004).

Retention refers to the completion of degrees or persistence year to year. Retention measures, goals and improvement targets address questions about student persistence by program types, completion rates, and degree completion rates (Bensimon, 2004). Retention can also refer to continued progress toward degrees in competitive majors.

Academic excellence has an access and achievement dimension. The access dimension raises questions about courses becoming gatekeepers into certain majors and the over concentration of certain groups in certain majors such as the social sciences. The achievement dimension raises questions about completion rates in highly competitive programs (Bensimon, 2004).

Institutional viability encompasses goals and measures of institutional support that have been found to be influential in the creation of affirming campus environments for students, faculty and staff. This perspective refers to systemic and structural realignments necessary to support all of the perspectives. To ensure institutional viability and vitality, the organization must be able to achieve a holistic view of diversity. Institutional viability goals and measures address questions about hiring, mentoring, special support programs, and academic climates within colleges, schools and departments (Bensimon, 2001).

Once a campus has determined which micro-measures to examine, the data should be disaggregated by ethnicity and gender to determine equity of outcomes on the basis of share or rate. Share means the percentage of each ethnic or gender group present in a given indicator. For example, African American students share on the Dean’s List, means out of all students with a certain academic feature (e.g. Dean’s List), what percentage is made up by a particular ethnic group (e.g. African American). Rate means the percentage that students with a certain academic feature (e.g. Dean’s List) have out of all students of a certain ethnicity (European American). For indicators in which the data is analyzed by rate, such as graduation and retention, campuses may use the highest performing group as the benchmark.

After examining selected micro measures to determine the success and educational gaps in institutional units or programs, campuses should move to the next stage which involves defining goals and improvement targets. Goals express intended outcomes for the future, and their purpose is twofold:
(1) to identify areas in which inequities exist and (2) to indicate a way to reduce the inequity and achieve the equity benchmark. Goals statements may begin with "to increase," or "to decrease" (Bensimon, 2004). Improvement targets are periodic markers of the progress made toward equity.

Implementation of the Scorecard

The Scorecard was implemented at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in 2002. LMU is one of the nation's 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. LMU declares its mission to be: the encouragement of learning, the education of the whole person, the service of faith and the promotion of justice (LMU, 1990). In fall 2007, LMU offered 80 undergraduate degrees and programs, 29 master's degree programs, 15 credential programs, and a doctorate in Education. LMU served 5,746 undergraduates and 1,899 graduate students enrolled in four colleges of Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Communication and Fine Arts, Science and Engineering, and in the Schools of Education and Film and Television. Thirty percent of the undergraduate student body included: African American (8%), Latino/Hispanic (21%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (1%). Approximately 75% of the undergraduate students were California residents, and 24% were from other states. LMU also enrolled 1,327 students in Loyola Law School.

The LMU Scorecard was implemented during two distinct stages. Stage I began with the development of a small diverse Team. The President charged the Vice President for Intercultural Affairs, Director of Institutional Research, Associate Vice President of Ethnic and Intercultural Services, and a Professor in the English Department with gathering internal data and assessing the status of underrepresented students at LMU. The initial meetings centered on reviewing the goals in the University’s Mission Statement, the Intercultural Definition and Vision Statement, and the new ten-year Strategic Plan. The Scorecard was aligned with the goals in these defining documents. The institutional data examined were selected because of the potential to determine the University's success or failure in meeting its current goals (Robinson-Armstrong, King, Killoran, Ward, Fissinger, Harrison, 2007).

After completing the data analysis, the Team concluded that various units and programs across the University should implement strategies to improve the opportunities for and the academic achievements of underrepresented students. The Team’s first reaction was to present the data to the appropriate administrators, and offer solutions to eliminate identified educational gaps. However, they realized the implications of this approach, and concluded that this strategy would not work. While the Team could present compelling data to others in the institution which showed the status quo as well as the desired status, the Team members realized that to design and implement strategies to eliminate educational gaps across the University in specific areas, they needed the commitment and expertise of the faculty and staff that worked in the colleges, schools, and programs.

To initiate a campus-wide involvement in the Scorecard Project, the Team organized a Town Hall meeting which was attended by the President and senior level administrators, faculty, staff and students from across the University. The Team began the Town Hall meeting by presenting the following goals for the Equity Scorecard to the campus community:

- To foster institutional transformation to improve LMU’s capacity to reduce inequities in educational outcomes, implement inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, and sustain a climate in which members of the campus community could thrive and succeed
- To institutionalize the Scorecard for use with ongoing academic, business and student affairs processes and initiatives including preparation for an accreditation visit by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WSC), Strategic Planning, Departmental Assessment of Student Outcomes, Grant Writing Activities, and institutional unit Planning Processes
- To create broad-based Communities of Practice to increase the ability of faculty, staff and students to effectively implement strategies to close gaps in access to the University and its programs, retention, excellence, and institutional viability

During the meeting, the Team asserted that one condition necessary for institutional change was the use of open, participatory planning strategies that were aligned with LMU’s mission and long-term goals. The Team further stated that the Scorecard could not be successful nor could the University’s goal to achieve educational equity be achieved unless representatives from across the organization engaged in an open planning process. This guiding principle supported the following recommendations presented by the Team to the campus community: (1) representatives from colleges, schools and strategic programs will examine statistical evidence concerning equity of outcomes in their respective areas, and (2) as experts in their areas, the representatives should determine for themselves which questions to ask, what benchmarks to set, and what strategies to employ to close equity gaps in their units.

Nevertheless, some members of the campus community did not immediately demonstrate interest in accepting responsibility for educational equity within their respective areas. At that point, it became
clear that community buy-in was going to have to be earned by the Scorecard Team before the project could generate significant commitment and results. Public support from the President provided a crucial first step for the Scorecard Project. Vice Presidents and Deans did not hesitate to appoint associate deans, faculty, and staff to represent their areas on the expanded Team. This was the beginning of Stage II of the Scorecard Project.

The Stage II Scorecard Team included representatives from all of the colleges, schools, and strategic programs, including the College of Business Administration, College of Communication and Fine Arts, College of Liberal Arts, College of Science and Engineering, School of Education, School of Film and Television, Athletics, Division of Student Affairs, First Year Programs, National and International Programs, Office of Admissions, and University Honors. This breadth of participation gave the impression and created the consciousness of a community-wide responsibility for equity with the Scorecard providing the fundamental methodology.

To prevent area representatives from ignoring their responsibility to the Scorecard and to reinforce the idea that they controlled their own area Scorecard, the campus-wide Team met periodically. These meetings reinforced accountability, for individual members made progress reports to the Team. These reports, in turn, demonstrated local autonomy as area representatives presented the measures, findings, and strategies that they themselves had determined. Team members also learned to support one another’s efforts in the analysis of data and the formulation of programs designed to fulfill the University’s vision of providing equity in access, retention, institutional viability, and academic success for underrepresented groups.

The Team also learned to rely on each other for data analysis and for the support of individual efforts to be successful. For example, each of the colleges required admission data and support to assess their unique circumstances, and they, in turn, assisted the Admissions Office with creating evidence to strengthen the access of underrepresented students to LMU. This collaboration cemented the dissemination of the Scorecard throughout the campus community, and sharpened the understanding that these efforts were indigenous to understanding the University’s mission and identity.

Two years later, the University held another Town Hall Meeting to present the Scorecard to the campus community. Team members presented micro-measures in the access, retention, excellence, and institutional viability perspectives that revealed the current status of their unit and programs. They also presented improvement targets to help their units and programs identify progress made toward equity over the next two years. Stage II of the project culminated with the publication of 12 Scorecards created by the following units and programs: the College of Business Administration, College of Communication and Fine Arts, College of Liberal Arts, College of Science and Engineering, School of Education, School of Film and Television, Athletics, Division of Student Affairs, First Year Programs, National and International Programs, Office of Admissions, and University Honors, First Year Programs.

Findings

Four years after implementing the Scorecard, it became obvious that the synergy created by the presence of this assessment tool and numerous diversity initiatives within the campus community was beginning to have a positive impact on the University. Several structural, attitudinal and cultural components of institutional transformation, which did not exist prior to implementation of the Scorecard, were now present in the campus community. These new structures, attitudes and cultural components translated into the realization of intended and unintended outcomes in access, retention, excellence, and institutional viability. The Team attributed the overall success to the fact that not only did the Scorecard raise the level of consciousness about educational equity and its relation to academic excellence, but it provided the evidence necessary to support institutional change. Table 1 displays changes in intended outcomes in the retention perspective between 2002 and 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Second year retention rate for African Americans - 82.2%</td>
<td>Second year retention rate for African Americans - 90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Four year graduation rate for African Americans - 55.9%</td>
<td>Four year graduation rate for African Americans - 64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Four year graduation rate for Latinos - 60.7%</td>
<td>Four year graduation rate for Latinos - 72.8%</td>
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</table>
The increased diversity in University Honors represents a change in institutional policy, and makes the most compelling case for using the Equity Scorecard to assess diversity initiatives within the campus community. Throughout the past five years, the Program experienced the following difficulties: 1) the selection of students occurred too late in the calendar year to capture many highly gifted students, 2) the selection process ruled LMU out of any competition for students from underrepresented populations, and 3) the pool was extremely small. According to the program Director, “in the initial 2003 University Honors Scorecard report, it was noted that access to the program appeared to be the key to a renewed and vibrant student population. Since that time, the program administrators have worked with various offices on campus: Admissions, Intercultural Affairs and Ethnic and Intercultural Student Services, to recruit within the current protocol a more diverse Honors population” (Ingham, 2007, p. 4). By 2006, these efforts, as evidenced in Table 2, “produced modest gains in the diversity of the Honors population” (Ingham, 2007, p. 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Size 120</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>10.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissatisfaction with the slight gains made in diversifying the Honors as well as participation in the Scorecard project, motivated the Director to seek and gain approval from the program’s Advisory Board to reconfigure the recruitment process. The new process, which represented a paradigm shift in the recruitment of students, enabled Honors’ staff to recruit from a wider and more diverse pool of students, one that mirrored the overall LMU student body. For example, students who were awarded Honors at entrance now received a letter from the Director within two weeks of receiving a letter of acceptance from LMU, inviting them to go online, visit the website, and apply to the Program. In addition, students were not only recruited at the Presidential Weekend for Scholars, but the event also served as a way to connect with students who had applied to the Program. In the past, the entire focus of the event was on introducing students to the possibility of Honors rather than the beginning stage of enculturation into the Program. The benefits of the new recruitment process included: 1) earlier dissemination of information about the Program, 2) earlier selection, which put LMU into a more competitive calendar year with other universities, thereby enabling them to recruit from a more diverse population, and 3) increasing the pool of applicants. The 2007 freshman cohort in University Honors includes African Americans (4.8%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (12.9%), European Americans (58%), Latino (19.3%), and American Indians/Alaskan Natives (3.2%). These data represent the first cohort enrolled in University Honors after the paradigm shift in the recruitment process. The end result is that diversity in University Honors will no longer be an afterthought or attempt to catch up. Diversity will become part of the overall process.

The development of a Minority Opportunity Plan (MOP) by the Athletics Department is another example of a new structure which emerged as a result of the unit’s participation in the Equity Scorecard Project. The MOP is evaluated by the Athletics Advisory Board and presented to the President annually. The Plan seeks to ensure that opportunities are present for minorities in Athletics and uses as a guideline the ethnic composition of the University’s student body. It recognized that the Athletics Program could be a leader in the quest for increasing campus diversity and offering opportunities. After reviewing data that described the Athletics programs and comparing it to the data that described the student body, the Athletics Advisory Board reached the following conclusions:

- The Athletics staff is aware of the importance of a culturally diverse population and constantly seeks to enhance diversity
- The aggregate data shows that demographics of student-athletes is nearly identical for the campus population with the exception of fewer Asian-Pacific Islander athletes (8%) when compared with the student body (13%) and more European American athletes (66.5) when compared to the student body (5.6%)
- Over the last 3 years there has not been a significant staff turnover; therefore, there have been
few opportunities. However, there have been hiring changes. An African American men’s basketball coach was hired and a Latino baseball coach was hired to replace a European American

Unintended Outcomes

Unintended outcomes included the development of new structures such as the Academic Leadership Conference which began in 2005. The goal for the Conference was to improve the leadership skills of Department Chairs and Directors so they would be able to operate more effective institutional units, especially in the hiring and retention of faculty of color. The revision to the Faculty Service Report is another unintended outcome that represents a change in policy. The Report was revised to motivate faculty to align their work in the areas of teaching, scholarship and creative works, and service with LMU’s mission, identity and commitment to diversity. While this change was small, it helped some faculty understand that they support LMU’s mission and identity as a Catholic university during the learning process, they are also supporting the university’s commitment to diversity.

Implementation of the Transformation of Courses in the Major Project represented an important attempt to change the curriculum. This project was designed to enhance the quality of education for all students by encouraging faculty to integrate new research trends on gender, ethnicity, class and other dimensions of human identity into major courses in the undergraduate curriculum. Faculty received $4,000 grants to revise courses in the major during the summer. The Transformation in the Majors grant motivated the Chair of the Classics and Archaeology Department to examine traditional Latin textbooks to determine whether they represented the academic needs of underrepresented students, especially African-Americans. He found that Latin texts centered on Roman civilization in the first century BC or AD. The Chair used the grant to research and write a new Latin textbook, *In Africa: The Roots of Language and Civilization*, which included the most valuable components of Latin vocabulary and grammar with an exclusive focus on Africa.

The Scorecard also promotes accountability, transformational change, and organizational learning as described below.

Accountability

What is remarkable about the Equity Scorecard is that it encourages individualized institutional units to assume responsibility for implementing strategies that result in equitable educational outcomes. When administrators at the top embrace an instrument, such as the Equity Scorecard, it becomes clear to faculty and staff that the initiative is valued within the campus community, and this initial commitment encourages others to display similar levels of commitment.

Transformational Change

In addition to helping campuses make clear and compelling cases to key stakeholders about why things must be done differently, the Equity Scorecard provides opportunities for colleges and universities to develop supporting structures, and create incentives and resources for change efforts. This is especially effective on campuses where the Scorecard is implemented along with other strategic diversity initiatives. Thus, the Scorecard (1) fosters transformational change that reduces inequities in educational outcomes, (2) aids in implementing inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, and (3) sustains a climate in which members of the campus community can thrive and succeed. For the purposes of this chapter, transformational change alters organizational structures and processes that lead to reorganized priorities, new assumptions and ideologies. Transformational change is a “collective, institution-wide undertaking” (Eckel & Kezar, 2003, p.53). Using Schein’s (as cited in Eckel and Kezar, 2003) work on culture, Eckel and Kezar (2003) identified the following structural, attitudinal and cultural components of institutional transformation: (1) changes in the curriculum, (2) changes in pedagogies, (3) changes in student learning and assessment practices, (4) changes in policies, (5) changes in budgets, (6) new departments and institutional structures, and (7) new decision-making structures.

Institutional culture is the dominant pattern of shared assumptions, values, beliefs, ideologies, and meanings that people have about their organization that shapes what individuals do and how they think (Peterson & Spencer, 1991). Because institutional transformation is analogous to changing organizational culture, vivid cultural markers signal attitudinal and cultural shifts during the transformation process including (1) changes in the ways groups of individuals interact with one another, (2) changes in the language the campus uses to talk about itself, (3) changes in the types of conversations, (4) abandonment of old arguments, and (5) new relationships with stakeholders. The Scorecard can play a role in transforming institutional culture.

Organizational Learning

A learning organization can be defined as “an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights” (Garvin, 1993, p. 3). Learning organizations are characterized by their strengths in five areas: systematic problem solving,
experimentation with new approaches, learning from their own experience and past history, learning from the experiences and best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization. Systematic problem solving entails not relying on unsubstantial information or guesswork, but rather on the scientific method when diagnosing organizational problems. Systematic problem solving demands hard facts and proven evidence in order to make decisions (Garvin, 1993).

Neither a best practice nor a packaged intervention, the Scorecard is a process that cultivates organizational learning. It is built upon a core principle that suggests that in order to bring about transformational change, individuals must see for themselves, and as clearly as possible, the magnitude of the inequalities. The Scorecard cultivates organizational learning by bringing the campus community together to examine disaggregated data, and identify solutions to eliminate educational gaps. It stimulates debate about critical academic issues, such as access, student retention and academic success, academic climate, faculty and staff recruitment and retention, and curriculum transformation. The debate encourages the campus community to stay with the data until they craft an agenda that makes sense and focuses on improvement without assigning blame. It stimulates the development of an environment in which they can work while challenging its comfort zone to change institutional culture. When faculty and staff examine data together, discuss what they notice, and what it might mean, they construct new knowledge. Through their conversations, they translate tables of raw numbers into knowledge that can then be acted upon to bring about positive changes for students. Becoming aware that students of color are underrepresented in certain fields can motivate a deeper inquiry into why this is so. It is through this learning experience that an individual’s consciousness is raised, and this new knowledge promotes transformational change—beginning at the individual level—then spreading throughout the institution.

All in all, the Scorecard’s premise is simple and strategic; members of the campus community use established institutional data to measure student educational outcomes, and assess factors that influence those outcomes. It provides an organizational structure to systematically gather data, analyze it at the micro and macro levels, identify issues, and develop self-generated corrective strategies. The disaggregated data provided the evidence necessary to conclude that students of color were not achieving at the same rates as the majority population. By using established methodologies that are consistent with accepted academic practices and research, skeptics are unable to ignore the stories that the Scorecard tells.

Summary

The Scorecard provides college campuses with a blueprint for success. It illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of each institution and it challenges all of us to work harder to inspire the academic excellence that is within all of us. This initiative is very timely when looking at the challenges we face as a nation. At a national level there has been a reduction in the number of students of color who graduate from four-year institutions. Like any valuable project or exercise, a successful Scorecard, rather than reaching a conclusion or end point, reveals areas for further research, refinement and attention. The Scorecard, then, is not so much a project as an organizational learning and change mechanism which becomes integrated into the language and culture of the institution. Its value and impact is ongoing, not short term, and if implemented properly, it will enable and support access and equity commitments for many years.

References


**About the Authors**

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Dr. Abbie Robinson-Armstrong is Vice President for Intercultural Affairs at Loyola Marymount University where she is responsible for articulating vision and serving as a catalyst for the development, implementation, and assessment of diversity initiatives that support the mission and goals of the university. She collaborates with numerous internal and external constituencies to help the University realize its goals to achieve educational equity and infuse diversity across its academic and business processes. Abbie earned a Bachelor of Science at University of Indiana, a Master of Science at Indiana University, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Higher Education at University of Toledo. She held faculty positions at Seneca College, Centennial College and Durham College. She authored numerous abstracts, papers, and book chapters. Her latest article, Creating Institutional Transformation Using the Equity Scorecard, was published in Diversity Digest. She delivers speeches, and workshops to audiences of various sizes throughout the world. Examples of her topics include: A Systematic Approach to Assessing Diversity Initiatives; Faculty Diversity, Organizational Climate; Strategic Partnership Analysis and Facilitation; Learning Outcomes and Accountability; and Creating Deep and Systemic Organizational Change. An internationally recognized specialist on the topic of diversity in higher education, Abbie provides consulting services to Colleges, Universities, Public and Private Schools, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Her areas of expertise include Data Driven Strategic Planning; System-wide and Multiple Campus Reorganization; Program Review and Assessment, Professional Development; and Research and Evaluation. An example of her clients include: California Post Secondary Education Commission, Cedarville College, Fairport Central School District, Indiana Department of Education, Indianapolis Public Schools, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Ontario Public School Teachers’ Federation, Rochester Institute of Technology, Sinclair Community College, Syracuse University, St. John Fisher College, State University of New York at Buffalo, University of Rochester, and Trimmings Board of Education. Abbie's recognition for accomplishments include: the Award of Appreciation from Loyola Marymount University; Special Service Award from Culver City, CA Lions, Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring from the National Science Foundation, a commemorative certificate from President William Jefferson Clinton and a $10,000 grant to continue mentoring activities, a President's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism from Wright State University. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE).

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About the Journal

The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations creates a space for discussion for anyone with an interest in, and concern for, mediating cultural difference and diversity.

The journal examines the realities of difference and diversity today, empirically and critically as well as optimistically and strategically, touching upon the topics of Difference, Diversity, Globalisation, Commerce and Personality. At a time of virulent reactions to difference and globalisation (ethnonationalism, racist backlash, parochialism and protectionism), there is a pressing need to reflect critically on the shape and the possibilities of the normative agendas of diversity and globalism. The journal is a place for thinking about and discussing these pressing matters, and in ways that range from the 'big picture' and the theoretical, to the very practical and everyday business of negotiating difference and diversity in organisations, communities and civic life.

The journal is relevant for academics and educational administrators in the fields of globalisation, nationalism, anthropology and cultural studies, tourism studies, ethnic studies, indigenous studies, gender studies, disability studies, gay and lesbian studies, diversity management; research students; public administrators and policy-makers; private and public sector leaders: diversity management, equal employment opportunity, human resource development and workplace trainers and change agents—anyone with an interest, and concern for, mediating cultural difference.

The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations is fully peer-reviewed with a rigorous refereeing process to ensure a high standard of quality. The editors and advisory board comprise leading scholars in the diversity field.
Volume 8
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