Debra Daniels
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CREATING A CAMPUS OF INCLUSION
Campus Climate

What Precipitated the Need and Efforts to Address the Campus Climate?

- Negative Class Room Experiences
- Training and Commitment Needs
- Student Retention Concerns
- Students Not Prepared To Engage In Diverse Communities
- 54% from Racially or Ethnically Diverse Backgrounds
Creating a Culture of Inclusion

• Student Affairs Model
  – Campus Assessment
  – Student Focus Groups
  – Determine Depth of the Problem
Leading the Initiative

• Getting the Initiative Off the Ground
  – Commitment from VP of Student Affairs and All Departments
  – Representation
  – Team Building and Training
  – Utilize Expertize from Campus and Greater Community
Student Affairs Diversity Council

- Sustainability
- Assessment
- Hiring and Retention
- Leadership and Group Facilitation
- Training and Education
Accomplishments

• SADC Diversity Training Certificate
• Monthly Newsletter
• Invitations to Assist with Difficult Dialogues in the Classroom
• Monthly Seminars Address Diversity and Inclusion Issues
• Annual Pursuit of Inclusion Award
The Most Diverse MPA Cohort in Years, and How It Revealed Our Shortcomings

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The original research question was…

Does a strong cohort model for the MPA foster a more inclusive community of scholars, who graduate with the ability to work as professionals with diverse colleagues?
A cohort model can backfire and produce adverse results

News and rumors travel quickly in the cohort

Knowledge of other students’ grades fosters suspicion

Team projects are tense and can generate friction among members
Results from our most diverse cohort in years

A subset of mediocre US students complained bitterly about breaks given to international students.

Some international students complained about breaks given to US students and racial bias.

Tensions in teams for the capstone project were dramatic, requiring intervention.

All students resented the interventions.

Tensions between students did not follow clear race lines.
We (faculty) feel that this is very unusual for Oregon

Oregonians are really really nice!

Oregonians are very very polite!

And we think we’re progressive & culturally competent!
Racial bias concerns voiced by a non-white international student

Faculty members are cold and in a hurry – not interested in talking

Faculty members don’t address me by my name

“Grading is biased in favor of white/US students”

“I stopped putting in the effort because the grading is biased.”
Racial bias concerns raised by a white US student

“Your criticism of my teammate’s presentation was harsh and culturally insensitive”
Alleged bias in favor of international students (voiced by a US student)

My teammate isn’t doing any work – I want her off the team

It’s not fair that I have to work harder because she’s unwilling to do her fair share

I pay the same tuition and she’s getting all the breaks
Your thoughts might be…

- Yes, we are dealing with a similar situation at my university

- Thank goodness we don’t have that problem at my university (let’s make sure it doesn’t happen)

- I wonder if we are experiencing this and are unaware of it?
Why use this cohort model with lots of applied, high stakes team projects?

Cohort model allows faculty to closely monitor student skills throughout the program.

Cohorts maintain professional ties long after they graduate.

Team projects for external clients allow students to *practice* professional skills in the right setting.

….so we are not going to drop the strongly applied, cohort structure of our MPA program.
Some responses

Candid discussion among faculty to reduce perception of differential collegiality

More deliberate rubrics for grading written assignments...to make grading decisions transparent and instructive to students

Train faculty to intervene verbally and instantly when we see students being uncivil to one another (observe teamwork more often)

Provide more opportunity for mid-term peer evaluation in the team capstone project
Thank you – feel free to contact me with comments, suggestions

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