Leadership Lessons
from Successful Diversity Initiatives

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Doing Diversity Right

We have a science base that tells us what works and what doesn’t in diversity
Lessons from Last 20 Years

• Leadership matters
• Need to align diversity efforts at the level of departments and the institutions
• Training to increase knowledge and sensitivity for all campus staff, faculty and central administrative leadership
• Increasing presence of students and faculty of color can lead to a synergy that supports the retention and development of both groups and the attraction of others.

Turner & Gonzalez, J. Diversity in Higher Ed, 2008
Name-Blind Recruitment

“I want us to end discrimination and finish the fight for real quality in our country today. Today we are delivering on that commitment and extending opportunity to all.”

- PM had cited research showing that people with white-sounding names are nearly twice as likely to get job call-backs than people with ethnic sounding names

26 October 2015; Gov.UK Press Release
Diversity: Realizing the Institution’s Values

“To create and nurture a diverse community of the best people committed to leadership in alleviating human suffering caused by disease.”

Dean Jeffrey S Flier, Harvard Medical School
Diversity Aligned with Core Values

- A Cornerstone of Excellence
- A Prerequisite for World Leadership
- An Imperative to transform Culture
Case Study in Positive Action: The National Football League (NFL) and ‘the Rooney Rule’
Voluntary Effort

• NFL had a problem: few black coaches
• In 1987, NFL established the NFL Minority Coaching Fellowship program
• An annual summer program that gives minorities the opportunity to work with an NFL team’s coaching staff for the summer
• Of the 1,100 “graduates” of these program, only 34 had received coaching position
• (The typical NFL team has 15 assistant coaches)
• The yield of the program was not as good as the NFL envisioned

NFL Faces a Crisis

• Two black NFL coaches were hired by NFL teams in 2001-2002
• In prior 80 years, three others had been hired
• In 2002, 65% of NFL players were black compared to 6% of head coaches (2 out of 32)
• In 2002, two renowned civil rights attorneys (Johnnie Cochran and Cyrus Mehri) released a report with 15 years of data documenting that white coaches with limited experience were routinely hired over well-qualified black coaches
• They threatened a class action lawsuit

Enter the Rooney Rule

• NFL forms committee chaired by Dan Rooney (owner of Pittsburgh Steelers)
• It mandates all NFL teams to interview at least one minority candidate for head coach and general manager jobs
• It forces each team (decision-makers who may have implicit biases) to actively consider a candidate that they would have otherwise overlooked

After the Rooney Rule

• By 2006, there were 7 (22%) black head coaches in the NFL

• At the end of the 2005 season, three of six division titles went to teams with a black head coach

• All three coaches were finalists for NFL’s “coach of the Year” award, with one of them, Lovie Smith, the eventual winner
Lesson:

Value of a watch-dog mechanism to hold organizations to account and to maintain momentum

An affinity group (Fritz Pollard Alliance) of former black athletes intent on promoting diversity in the NFL was established to hold the NFL to its word
Case Study:
The University of Michigan
Michigan Mandate

- One of most comprehensive diversity initiatives ever by a predominantly white research university
- Blueprint to change racial makeup of the University
- In 1986-1987, Provost Dunderstadt, brought campus constituencies together to develop Michigan Mandate
- He implements plan when he became president in 1988

Roach, Diverse Education, 2005
Michigan Mandate: Keys to Success

1. He established a committee (consisting of 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest ranking official in each academic unit) to review progress, set objectives and formulate diversity policy.

2. He placed 1 percent of University’s budget, annually, into escrow to be used only for diversity purposes.

Roach, Diverse Education, 2005
Michigan Mandate: Excellence

1st and most important step was to link diversity and excellence as the two most compelling goals for the institution. Viewed the two goals as complementary.

“At Michigan, we remain absolutely convinced that there is a very strong linkage between academic excellence and campus diversity.” James J. Dunderstadt, President, University of Michigan, 1988-1996
Michigan Mandate: Results

By late 1990’s:

• **Minority** student enrollment more than doubled and marked increase in minority faculty

• **Success of minorities improved with** graduation rates rising to highest among public universities

• **Promotion and tenure success of minority faculty members becoming comparable to majority colleagues**

• **Increased appointments of minorities to leadership positions in the University**
The Trajectory of the Michigan Mandate

How do we sustain momentum and build on early successes?
Doing Business Differently
Improving Promotion Rate in the Military

• Problem: Blacks who were identified as being qualified for advancement were being promoted within the officer ranks at a lower rate than Whites

• Intervention:

1. Promotion boards explicitly reminded:
   -- to be race- and gender-conscious
   -- that all groups bring value to mission of army
   -- always begin with assumption that Black and women candidates for promotion were expected to be as qualified as White and male candidates

Improving Promotion Rate in the Military

• Intervention:
  2. If a promotion was not being approved, a written explanation/justification had to be provided (documenting how the candidate deviated from the promotion standard?)

• This change eliminated racial and gender disparities

Decision Architecture and Inequality

- When people make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with each decision seen as isolated, they focus on individual attributes and not group characteristics.
- Diversity is a property of a group.
- Case-by-case hiring versus cluster hiring results in the selection of fewer minorities.
- For example, people select fewer minorities when tasked with selecting from separate professionals as compared to a group of four.
- People more likely to select minority candidate when workplace framed as a group versus individual employees.

Purdie-Hughes et al., Columbia U, 2013
Consequences of Being Tardy

• National Survey data and experimental data in the U.S. reveal that tardy black people are penalized more harshly in terms of advancement opportunities than Whites or Hispanics.

• Performance appraisal ratings fully account for findings.

• That is, tardy black people receive more negative performance appraisal than their white peers, and it translates into poorer advancement opportunities.

• Key: not objective performance but biased appraisal of objective performance.

Luksyte, Waite, Avery & Roy, J Occ & Org Psy, 2013
Training Opportunity

- Raise awareness of both employees and managers about the existence and impact of implicit bias.
- Train managers/supervisions to evaluate employee performance objectively.
- Implement organizational policies that require managers to keep a detailed record of employees’ lateness behaviors and to check these records when preparing performance appraisals.
Effective Communication Strategies are Vital

The need to build a deliberate, explicit, communication strategy that consists of a steady drumbeat of supportive information
The Need to Build Empathy
Recent research suggests that we think with our hearts.

The role of emotion is central in interracial interactions and preferences for policy.
Key Questions About Any Innovation

- How do people think and feel about it?
- How do people think and feel about the people who are directing the initiative?
- What cultural models guide their reasoning?
- What is the framing of the public discourse on the topic?
Reframing

- How can the issue be reframed to elicit a different way of thinking, one that illuminates a broader range of alternative policy options?
Planning for the Future

- Smart organizations look ahead
- When they see a cliff, they steer away

- They don’t need an accident to tell them that they need to take action
Child Poverty Rates, UK, 2009/10-2012/13

Fisher & Nandi, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015; Measure of deprivation and poverty line (HH income <70% of median and deprivation score >25)
“The only thing necessary for the triumph [of evil] is for good men to do nothing.”

Edmund Burke, Irish Philosopher