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The Academic Workplace (Spring/Summer 1990): Notes on Teaching Pluralism

New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston

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The Academic Workplace

Volume 1, Number 2 – Spring/Summer 1990

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Mary-Beth McGee, *Editor*

A Letter from the Director:

"We want every piece of our cultural heritage to be incorporated and repeated again and again in our community life."

-Piedad Robertson, President, Bunker Hill Community College

Dear Colleague:

This comment from a panelist in a recent forum organized by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education frames the theme of this issue of *The Academic Workplace*: "Taking Responsibility for Creating the Multicultural Campus."

As administrators and faculty members across the country have dealt with bigotry and violence, they have come to see that they must change the quality of life on their campuses. They cannot, as one panelist put it, wait for a 'gradual trickling down' of change.

In struggling over what to do, they have learned that how we talk about the various manifestations of bigotry matters very much. We have chosen the word "multicultural" in this newsletter at the risk of sounding trendy. My dictionary defines culture as the "totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population." Those who argue that we need a more multicultural campus mean that colleges and universities must encourage the expression of a broader array of behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, products and thoughts than we have heretofore.

Those who argue against this view say that colleges and universities need to bring those from other cultures into a common culture. It's an old argument in American life, one we will probably never settle.

To start the conversation, we feature three excerpts from longer articles. The essay by Michael Morris looks at how demographic changes in the United States require colleges and universities to change. The article by Bobbie Knable parses the dynamics of relationships between dominant and subdominant groups. And the announcement from Suffolk University describes ways to bring campus attention to cultural differences.

Despite the cutbacks in state support that have devastated the University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Resource Center has continued to convene its various ongoing "think tanks" composed of invited members from the multi-cultures of higher education in New England: senior student affairs administrators, senior academic affairs administrators, presidents, higher education researchers, and middle academic administrators. At the same time, teams of researchers have been marshaling their forces to carry on the research projects described elsewhere in this issue.

It has been a busy year! We have enjoyed hearing from many of you and welcome your continuing interest in the work of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education.

Zelda F. Gamson, Director

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Current Research Projects

The General Education Project

The Resource Center was awarded a two-year grant from the Exxon Education Foundation to continue work on the *Implementation of General Education* begun last summer. The study focuses on how colleges and universities turn concerns about general education into curricular strategies, with particular attention to strategies which foster successful implementation. The project will examine how institutions with new general education programs restructure positions and programs and how they reward, retain, and recruit faculty. A research team from the Resource Center will be visiting a number of New England institutions in the next two years. Sandra Kanter, a faculty member at the College of Public and Community Service at UMass/Boston, is Project Director.

Faculty Labor Market Project

The Resource Center received a two-year grant by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to study how New England's colleges and universities contend with potential faculty shortages. Researchers will be visiting campuses over the next two-year period to speak with administrators and faculty in liberal arts as well as professional departments. The teams will be gathering information about how faculty are recruited, promoted and retained, and what colleges and universities are doing to plan for the faculty of the future. Zelda Gamson, Director of the Resource Center and Professor of Sociology at UMass/Boston, and Ted I.K. Youn, on the faculty in the College of Education at Boston College, jointly direct the project.

Minority Faculty Project

The Education Resources Institute (TERI) has funded the Resource Center to study the status of Black and Latino faculty in Massachusetts colleges and universities. The project has a dual purpose: first, to develop a data base on the need, supply and demand for Black and Latino faculty in Massachusetts higher education institutions, and, second, to enhance our understanding of what strategies and programs work best in fostering the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty. The study will identify trends and conditions in different types of institutions and in the state as a whole.

In addition to ascertaining the number of current Black and Latino faculty in higher education institutions, the survey has gathered information on the status of Black and Latino graduate students. The survey informs us about the existence of special minority faculty recruitment activities, how these work and how many positions have already been filled through these efforts.

The final report will be available in September 1990. The information gathered will be helpful to administrators and faculty both in the public and independent sectors as they plan faculty recruitment efforts and respond to queries about "pipeline" issues. It is anticipated that the study will be replicated to include all New England colleges and universities.

The Project Director is Sandra Elman, formerly a Senior Associate in the Resource Center, and currently Assistant Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

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**A Multicultural Society Needs A
Multicultural Education**
Michael Morris

Most of us in higher education are well aware of the projections of planning bodies and national commissions about the changing demographic trends in our society. Some have heard Harold Hodgkinson, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Educational Leadership, describe the new realities brought about by the shifts in our population:

-- Eighty-two percent of the twenty million new workers between now and the year 2000 will be female, non-white, or immigrant.

-- Two-thirds of all immigrants in the world come to the United States.

-- Most immigrants to the United States come from Asia, Africa, and South America. By the year 2000 most Americans will be descended from non-Europeans.

America is moving quite rapidly toward becoming a multicultural society, with Blacks, Latinos, and Asians assuming a greater importance in our social, political, and economic future. If we can anticipate these demographic changes, we can also predict that people of color will demand their full rights of participation in the political process. We see this happening already in the election of more Blacks and Latinos. What will Americans, all of us, need to know to participate intelligently in the decades ahead? What is the role of higher education in preparing us for a multicultural society?

At its core, "multicultural" honors other peoples' differing human experience. It means letting their literature, stories and music speak to us. Once we recognize these varieties of human experience and ways of knowing, how will we work to insure that the different voices get heard and expressed? This will not be easy, especially in a time of economic insecurity. As David Riesman

recently reminded us, "should our present economic high come to an end, what kind of meanness and social division will follow? The other side of American generosity is vindictiveness." Not only are we experiencing intolerance on America's campuses in hideous and unprecedented ways but, to a large extent, we remain a segregated society. The "colored only" signs are down but the invisible barriers remain in housing and employment and in the social and economic separation of minorities.

Maulana Karenga, the African-American activist and philosopher, argues that each people must be given its due. "The value of stressing diversity -- race, ethnicity, class, and gender -- is that such exposure is fundamental to understanding post-modern reality and the conditions we now live under." In other words, you cannot be an educated citizen unless you struggle with acquiring these understandings.

Current debates about higher education have produced an array of proposals about the skills or abilities students ought to possess -- math and computer skills, writing and general literacy skills, understanding cultural heritage, and critical thinking skills. To these skills we must now add those that our students will need in order to live in the new society of the twenty-first century. These would include:

-- **Interdependence** - an awareness of reciprocity in relationships and social processes.

-- **Collaboration** - the ability to work together across cultures, classes, disciplines and professions.

-- **Holistic Vision** - the ability to see things in their totality, to connect parts.

-- **Cross-cultural Communication** - the ability to function, through writing, speaking and small group interactions, in multicultural settings.

-- **Bilingualism and Multilingualism** - fluency in several languages

What we are really talking about is the development of multicultural persons, whose identities include life patterns different from

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their own. In the words of Peter Adler of the East-West Center, multicultural persons have "psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities." They recognize the importance of cultural context and accept the fact that "reality" differs from culture to culture.

We have a long, twisting journey until our society is populated with such people. In the meantime, those of us who are part of the dominant culture have much to do. Not only do we have the most to learn, but we have a responsibility to facilitate the transition. To do that we will have to find common grounds -- new spaces and places -- where we can talk and think together across cultural boundaries.

Traditionally, such conversations have taken place at forums and cross-campus conferences. The spirit of these gatherings, it is usually argued, must begin with building trust through more direct communication that allows stereotypes and myths to be fully explored and transcended. Important though they are, such meetings are only a beginning. Some faculty members and administrators should initiate multicultural units, where building a common ground becomes part of the institution's structure. We have a rich heritage of experimenting subcolleges, living-learning units and so on. It is time to revive them. Other faculty members and administrators may elect to expand opportunities for students and faculty to work together across cultural lines through internships, field study projects, youth activities, and mentoring.

Whatever we do, we should seek "to influence the eye students train on the world," as the feminist scholar, Peggy McIntosh, says is our primary task as educators. If we are successful, perhaps future generations may say we helped to create an America that views the diverse cultures of its people as its glory and its hope.

Michael Morris is Dean of the College, University of New England, and a founding member of the Academic Affairs Roundtable convened by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. Excerpted from "A Work in Progress...The New Civic Competencies," a paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Learning, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October, 1989.

Notes on Teaching Pluralism Bobbie Knable

One of the difficulties about discussing the changing relations among groups whose identities differ from one another is that there is no universally acceptable vocabulary. If I talk about "increasing diversity," someone may say that diversity just brings together a token number of people from different groups without making the environment more receptive to all groups or more reflective of the non-white, non-Christian, non-heterosexual, non-ablebodied, non-middle-class members. An instructor referred several times in class to 'Orientals.' Afterward, an Asian-American student said to the instructor, "many Asians and Asian-Americans object to the term 'Oriental.'" The instructor replied, "I don't see anything derogatory about 'Oriental.' It seems a perfectly acceptable term to me, and I don't see any reason to change."

Although many of us know that to speak of "minorities" may be culture bound, since only in certain cultural contexts are they the minority, we may not yet know what to substitute. Moreover, "minority" has come to have connotations beyond mere numbers, and it is those underlying meanings that groups designated as "minority" seek to evade. The attitudes that underlie the vocabulary of difference defeat our efforts to conceal them and come quickly to infect the new terms we select, forcing us into an endless search for yet another term that does not carry condescension, denigration, or contempt.

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So divisive is the issue of vocabulary that we may never get past it to deal with other issues. Language carries the values of the culture, creates our images of others and ourselves, and conveys the extent to which we are part of or alien to given cultural norms. Therefore, it is important to accept the need to shape definitions with care before looking for solutions. We must redefine old terms and become accustomed to new ones.

How do we recognize and give proper value to the costs of change, since it is through realistic assessment of costs that we can provide sufficient rewards for change? There are a number of techniques used to change people's attitudes toward other groups, each exacting some cost from the participants. Some are very confrontational, with an emphasis on the ventilation of anger by the oppressed group. If you are white or male, heterosexual or middle-class, you might be considered an oppressor. One of the reasons this technique is so satisfying to oppressed groups is that when you feel powerless to change your situation, your only comfort is knowing that right is on your side. The insults, exclusions, and rejections -- intended and unintended -- are bearable because your oppression makes you righteous. There are few satisfactions comparable to having members of the oppressor group admit guilt and acknowledge privilege, thereby diminishing the value of their accomplishments because they have been stolen from others less powerful.

Relatively few people wish to submit to lessons learned in this manner. Most become defensive when accused, resentful when guilty, frightened when insecure, and dangerous when threatened. When given a choice, they avoid confrontational workshops on prejudice, or acquiesce with sullen and hostile resistance when avoidance is impossible.

Change in dominant groups is more likely to occur when techniques are used that do not induce guilt. Such techniques try to affirm the identity of both dominant and subdominant group members and acknowledge the oppression that is common to all. It may not derive from a common source, for similar reasons, or in equal amounts, nor may it have an equivalent impact on lives. Yet efforts to lower the barriers between groups reveal the vulnerability at the core of each, at the hands of some oppressor in one painful and memorable moment in life. These shared revelations of hurt and pain diminish distance between groups and decrease fear and distrust.

This technique comes with a price -- this time to the sub-dominant group. Members must say, "I will relinquish my small claim to vulnerability -- my righteousness -- in the hope that you will be won over by my suffering. I must submit, yet again, to the risk that you will see the daily infliction of suffering on those of my group as no more significant than random, human misfortunes, when they are the result of a hostile culture. I must risk the conclusion that my systematic degradation will be equated with being left-handed or wearing glasses. Moreover, I must share some past humiliation with you, not merely from the safe perspective of the past, creating distance between my adult and defended self and my younger and defenseless self. I must reach back into a time that recaptures fear, humiliation, suffering, and shame. I must do so not only to re-experience it myself, but to show it to you, to let you know how much I have been hurt in the past, and how I could be hurt again."

It is a high price to pay in advance for change that may not happen. But it is just possibly worth it.

Bobbie Knable is Dean of Students at Tufts University and a founding member of the New England Student Affairs Think Tank convened by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. Excerpted from an essay written for the New England Student Affairs Think Tank and published in an expanded version in Metropolitan Universities.

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Dealing With Diversity at Suffolk University

In response to acts of anti-Semitic graffiti and a racist "White Pride" flyer posted in one of the Suffolk University buildings during the fall, Suffolk University took two important actions. First, five hours of the regular academic schedule were set aside for a "Cultural Awareness Forum." Many classes met at the forum and over six hundred students, faculty, and staff participated. The program focused on people sharing their differences, talking about their experiences and their culture. Following the program, small groups led by teams of faculty, staff and students discussed ways in which Suffolk could continue to work on this issue. The forum ended with an intercultural party complete with a variety of ethnic food and music representing a range of cultures. Recommendations from the forum included the need to continue and expand the university's efforts to diversify its faculty and staff and the need to change the curriculum so that the full range of cultures is reflected in every area.

The second action was an endorsement by the President for a strategic planning conference on the issue of diversity which took place on January 26, 1990. Trustees, faculty, staff and students attended. The conference explored ways that prejudice and discrimination (e.g., based on race, sex, disability, nationality or sexual preference) may manifest themselves in the life of Suffolk University. Participants identified strategies for addressing prejudice, discrimination and multicultural education in the ongoing policies and practices of the university. The results of the conference included short and long-term action plans as well as procedures for monitoring the progress of the plans. The President's Office, and particularly Dr. Sharon Artis, Assistant to the President and Director of Minority Affairs, is assuming primary leadership for the conference.

Reports of the plans that were generated from this conference were widely distributed. Other gatherings will be scheduled to broaden the opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to deepen their understanding of the issue of discrimination.

Nancy Stoll, Dean of Students at Suffolk University, is co-chair of the New England Student Affairs Think Tank. Excerpted from The Campus Connection, Suffolk University newsletter for Parents, Winter 1990.

Black and Latino Faculty

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education sent a questionnaire to all Massachusetts community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive institutions and doctoral-granting universities this past winter. The response rate was encouraging; seventy percent of all institutions surveyed responded, with a one hundred percent response rate from the liberal arts colleges and the public comprehensive institutions.

The preliminary analysis of the data has discerned distinct trends in the status of Black and Latino faculty in different types of higher education institutions. Findings also reveal several institutional recruiting patterns for Black and Latino faculty in Massachusetts institutions over the last decade.

As in many other states, Massachusetts colleges and universities have made deliberate efforts in the 1980s to increase their minority faculty representation. Nevertheless, the proportion of Black and Latino faculty hired during the last years compared to non-minority faculty remains relatively low. Much of the problem lies in the fact that there are comparatively few Black and Latino graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees in universities both nationwide and in Massachusetts. Black and Latino students comprise less than five percent of the total number of graduate students enrolled in Massachusetts doctoral-granting institutions. There seems to be little difference between public and private universities in the proportion of Black and Latino students pursuing doctoral degrees.

Colleges and universities have devised many strategies over the last few years in order to recruit minority faculty. At the moment, Blacks and Latinos constitute fewer than five percent of the total faculty in higher education. Several institutions indicate that there are no Blacks or Latinos on their faculties. While many institutions have not set any numerical goals for increasing the number of minority faculty, many colleges and universities are committed to hiring as many Black and Latino faculty as they can find.

Efforts to increase minority faculty representation in Massachusetts higher education institutions are being hampered by the fiscal crisis in the Commonwealth. The impact on the public sector has been dramatic because of a statewide hiring freeze. Respondents to the survey indicate that increasing minority representation will be a high priority when faculty positions open again. In the meantime, program initiatives, which will be described in the report, are being developed to attract Black and Latino faculty.

Minority Enrollments*

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF MINORITY ENROLLMENTS: 1984 and 1988

	Public			Independent			Total		
	1984	1988	(% gain)	1984	1988	(% gain)	1984	1988	(% gain)
Connecticut									
Black	5,148	6,135	(19.2)	1,969	2,809	(41.2)	7,137	8,944	(25.3)
Hispanic	2,155	3,402	(57.9)	966	1,443	(49.4)	3,121	4,845	(55.2)
Massachusetts									
Black	5,634	8,123	(44.2)	9,031	9,654	(6.9)	14,665	17,777	(21.2)
Hispanic	3,037	5,189	(70.9)	4,527	6,419	(41.8)	7,564	11,628	(53.7)
Rhode Island									
Black	972	1,083	(12.4)	1,034	1,082	(5.6)	2,006	2,165	(8.9)
Hispanic	428	731	(70.8)	546	466	(-14.7)	974	1,197	(22.9)
Maine									
Black	68	109	(60.3)	213	154	(-27.7)	281	263	(-6.4)
Hispanic	39	62	(59.0)	81	73	(-9.9)	120	135	(12.5)
New Hampshire									
Black	98	119	(21.4)	550	492	(-10.5)	648	611	(-5.7)
Hispanic	54	129	(138.9)	324	518	(59.9)	378	647	(71.2)
Vermont									
Black	79	90	(13.9)	147	187	(27.2)	226	277	(22.6)
Hispanic	77	123	(59.7)	84	111	(32.1)	161	234	(45.3)
New England									
Black	11,999	15,669	(30.6)	12,964	14,388	(11.0)	24,963	30,057	(20.4)
Hispanic	5,790	9,656	(66.8)	6,528	9,030	(38.3)	12,318	18,686	(51.7)
United States*									
Black	773,000	862,000	(11.5)	221,000	249,000	(12.7)	994,000	1,111,000	(11.8)
Hispanic	410,000	574,000	(40.0)	76,000	93,000	(22.4)	486,000	667,000	(37.2)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NEHIE analysis, December 1989
*Rounded to nearest 1000

TABLE 2
TOTAL N.E. ENROLLMENTS BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE AND RACE/ETHNICITY: FALL 1988

	Public				Independent				Totals	
	2 yr.	(%)	4 yr.	(%)	2 yr.	(%)	4 yr.	(%)		(%)
Black	9,041	(6.1)	6,828	(2.4)	1,204	(6.0)	13,184	(3.6)	30,057	(3.7)
Hispanic	5,786	(3.9)	3,870	(1.4)	846	(4.2)	8,184	(2.2)	18,686	(2.3)
Asian	2,791	(1.9)	4,490	(1.7)	308	(1.5)	12,317	(3.4)	19,906	(2.5)
Foreign	1,429	(1.0)	5,084	(1.9)	262	(1.3)	20,198	(5.5)	26,973	(3.3)
Total	149,202		272,113		19,991		364,426		805,732	

*From *Connections* 4 (4), Winter 1990



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MetaVersity

Grant Ingle, Director of Human Relations at UMass/Amherst, has developed a pilot project, *MetaVersity*, a national forum for those in higher education who are working to create a multicultural campus. *MetaVersity* is a computer conference that provides electronic mail, extends discussion of policy and program issues, and incorporates a "library" where members can post frequently requested policies, reports, and other documents.

MetaVersity is also part of a larger network of conferences on *The Meta Network*, an international on-line think tank concerned with social and technological change. For further information concerning *MetaVersity*, please contact Grant Ingle at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Office of Human Relations, 204 Middlesex House, Amherst, MA 01003, Phone (413) 545-0851 or *The Meta Network*, 2000 North 15th Street, Suite 102, Arlington, VA 22201, Phone (703) 243-6622, or Fax (703) 841-9798.

Events

New Pathways from School to Work

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education, working with the Goethe Institute, Bunker Hill Community College, and the New England Board of Higher Education, held a three-day international conference to explore what could be learned and adapted from the German Dual System of apprenticeship. In the German Dual System of apprenticeship, high school students become paid participants in theoretical as well as practical instruction, together with on-the-job training.

The conference was held in response to efforts being made in the United States to reduce the drop-out rate in high schools and to encourage more young people to acquire their diploma. A growing number of observers realize that real changes will require a restructuring to provide new pathways from full-time secondary study to eventual full-time work.

Multicultural Forum

On May 8, 1990, the Resource Center, together with the Center for the Improvement of Teaching, the Maurico Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, sponsored a forum on "Taking Responsibility for Creating the Multicultural Campus.

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Guest panelists included: Donald Brown, Director of AHANA Student Programs at Boston College; Estelle Disch, Director, Center for the Improvement of Teaching at UMass/Boston; Carolyn Elliot, Associate Provost, University of Vermont; Michael Morris, Dean of the College, University of New England; and Piedad Robertson, President of Bunker Hill Community College.

Workshops

Professional development of individuals in higher education has, from its inception, been one of the goals of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. Beginning this fall, the Resource Center will hold three day-long workshops on "Ethical Issues in a Time of Change and Diversity." Topics to be addressed in the three workshops will be "Free Speech and Its Limitations," "Community and Diversity," and "Truth in Advertising." The workshops are intended for middle-level administrators but are open to anyone interested. Each workshop will be led by an individual with special expertise on the topic. Ernest Lynton will be the overall coordinator of the series. A brochure will be available after Labor Day with further details regarding presenters, dates and costs. Please let us know if you or members of your staff are interested.

Of Special Interest

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education is involved in the publication of a new quarterly journal, *Metropolitan Universities*. Ernest Lynton, Senior Associate in the Resource Center, is Executive Editor. The first issue was distributed at a conference on "Metropolitan Universities" held in April 1990 at Wright State University.

Metropolitan Universities will focus on universities whose primary mission is closely related to the educational and other intellectual needs of their region. They are committed to serving a highly diverse student body and emphasize the preparation of practitioners in a wide range of fields. Metropolitan universities encourage faculty to engage in a broad range of scholarship, including the utilization of new knowledge.

The articles in the premier issue provide an overview of the nature of metropolitan institutions. Each subsequent issue will focus on one major topic: the challenge of diversity in the student body; the relationship of metropolitan universities to their communities; collaboration with local school systems; contributions to regional development; changes in content and format of instruction; and special demands on metropolitan university faculty members.

If you would like a brochure or more information on *Metropolitan Universities*, please call or write: Ernest A. Lynton, Executive Editor.

Staff Notes

Mary-Beth McGee joined the Resource Center staff in January 1990 as Projects Administrator and the editor of *The Academic Workplace*. Ms. McGee has been a staff member at UMass/Boston since 1982 in the Art Department and the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs. She received her B.A. in History from UMass/Boston and attended Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

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