


Cultural Responsiveness

 Bensimon, E.M. (2004). The diversity scorecard: A learning approach to institutional change. *Change: The magazine of higher learning*, 36(1), 45-52.

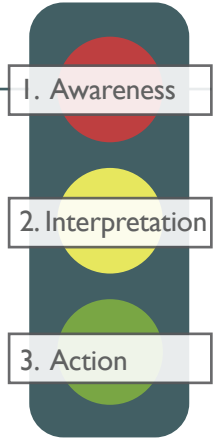
WHAT ARE THESE RESOURCES?

This article discusses the initiative “The Diversity Scorecard” being implemented in higher education to address closing the achievement gap for students who have been historically underrepresented.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

The Scorecard was field tested in 14 institutions in the Los Angeles metropolitan area between 2001 and 2004, including both 4-year and 2-year schools. The Diversity Scorecard’s model for institutional change focuses on three elements: identification and magnitude of the inequities present within an institution (awareness), an analysis and integration of those inequities (interpretation), so that the institution moves to act upon them (action). The Scorecard framework is organized into 4 core areas for awareness, interpretation and action:

- 1. Access.** Indicators constructed from the access perspective address questions like: What programs and majors do underrepresented students enroll in? Do the programs and majors in which underrepresented students enroll lead to high-demand or high-paying career opportunities? Do underrepresented students have access to important academic or socialization programs like special internships or fellowships? What access do underrepresented students have to financial support? What access do underrepresented community college students have to four-year colleges through transfer? What access do underrepresented students at four-year colleges have to graduate and professional schools?
- 2. Retention.** Indicators constructed from the retention perspective address such questions as: What are the comparative retention rates for underrepresented students by program? Do underrepresented students disproportionately withdraw from “hot” programs like engineering or computer sciences? How successful are underrepresented students in completing basic skills courses? How successful are underrepresented students in completing baccalaureate, associate, and credential/certificate programs?
- 3. Institutional Receptivity.** The institutional receptivity perspective examines dimensions of institutional support that can help create a more accommodating and responsive campus environment for students drawn from underrepresented groups. Consequently, it raises questions like: Do new hires at the institution enhance the racial and ethnic diversity of faculty, administrators, and staff? Does the composition of the faculty correspond to the racial and ethnic composition of the student body?
- 4. Excellence.** Questions include: Do particular majors or courses function as “gatekeepers” for some students and “gateways” for others? For example, is there a race bias in physics and mathematics? Is there a Western-culture bias in the humanities? Why are Hispanic students more concentrated in education, the social services, and business? What are the comparative completion rates for underrepresented students in highly competitive programs? What percentage of underrepresented students graduate with a GPA of 3.5 or higher? How big is the institution’s pool of high-achieving, underrepresented students in each academic discipline who are eligible for graduate study?



WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

By breaking down data on indicators of student outcomes by race and ethnicity, institutions of higher learning can locate the most critical gaps in academic performance for African American and Hispanic students. While many institutions had suspected that there were problems, they relied heavily on anecdotes to describe or address them. The Diversity Scorecard offers a disciplined and evidence-based approach to understanding educational outcomes and the dimensions of the equity gap.