MISSION UNACCOMPLISHED: IT TAKES MORE THAN “TALK[ING] A GOOD GAME” TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

• Understand the experiences and perspectives of faculty, staff, and administrators with one or more minoritized identities relating to diversity and inclusion initiatives at their institution

• Reflect upon efforts to promote diversity and inclusion at their own institution (see handout)

• Understand a model that can be applied at their institution to develop and continuously improve efforts to promote diversity and inclusion (see handout)

• List steps they can take at their institution to make meaningful progress in the areas of diversity and inclusion (see handout)
ON A MISSION

• Increasingly more higher education institutions in the US are including some mention of “diversity” in their mission statements and/or strategic plans

• In a recent study of the perceptions and experiences of faculty, staff, and administrators reporting one or more marginalized identities, it was found that few institutions are achieving this mission
  • “Our mission statement speaks to the need for diversity. I have heard and witnessed a contradiction to this position.”
RESEARCH FINDINGS

• Faculty, staff, and administrators frequently described diversity and inclusion efforts at their institutions as superficial at best and/or misleading at worst
  • “window dressing”
  • “lip service”
  • “just a tagline”
RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Overall theme: “talk[ing] a good game”
  - Institutional efforts to promote diversity and inclusion almost exclusively included task forces (“of course, because Universities create task forces for everything”), meetings, committees, and trainings
  - Generally described as narrowly focused and lacking in measurable, observable outcomes
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Several dynamics seemingly are associated with perceptions that diversity and inclusion efforts are mostly talk with little to no meaningful action.

- Tunnel vision (narrow view of diversity and inclusion that ignores individuals and groups in the periphery)
- Playing by others’ rules (lack of representation among and legitimation from those in power)
- Uneven playing field (feeling of powerlessness)
- Relegated to the sidelines (marginalization)
- Doing the heavy lifting (completing much of the diversity and inclusion work themselves)
- Taking a time out (distancing or preparing to leave the institution)
PLEASE COMPLETE HANDOUT 1 TO REFLECT UPON EFFORTS AT YOUR OWN INSTITUTION
MOVING BEYOND “TALKING A GOOD GAME”

• Based on the findings of the previously referenced research involving faculty, staff, and administrators who report one or more minoritized identities, a three-step process was developed.
  • Aim should be to disrupt and dismantle systems of (dis)advantage to promote greater diversity and inclusion.
Describe the Current State

Develop and Implement a Plan

Define Outcomes of Interest
PLEASE REFER TO HANDOUT 2 FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH STEP IN THE PROCESS
REFLECTION
PLEASE COMPLETE HANDOUT 3 TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN THAT YOU CAN COMMIT TO FOLLOWING AT YOUR INSTITUTION

CONSIDER POSTING THE COMPLETED HANDOUT WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT REGULARLY AS A REMINDER
CONTACT INFORMATION

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