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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes findings of a campus visit to consult on the establishment of Washington University’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Observations and recommendations offered here are based on a series of meetings conducted on Wednesday, Nov. 20-21, 2013, as well as careful review of artifacts that were furnished prior to, during, and following my campus visit.

Focus of the Review

The focus of the review is based on the questions I generated following my discussion with Robert M. Wild, Associate Vice Chancellor for Students and Dean of the First Year Center and Seiko Shastri, a student representative on the MOSAIC Project:

1. What are some of the key needs underlying the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?
2. What are the major concerns among campus constituents regarding the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?
3. What opportunities exist to ensure that the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion will be successful and sustainable?
4. What challenges/cautions should be considered in the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?
5. What general observations regarding the overall campus climate and institutional context should be considered in the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?

For each question, I list my observations and propose a set of recommendations that I believe contribute to and provide further guidance for the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

Limitations

It should also be noted that I offer recommendations beyond the scope the Center that deal with faculty and larger organizational observations. These recommendations are based upon a combination of written materials, information on the University website and limited feedback from some of the people with whom I met during the visit. That said, there are two key limitations to keep in mind with this report. First I was unable to meet with a critical number of faculty, particularly those on the Faculty Senate. Second, I did not have an opportunity to meet with the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

General Findings and Recommendations

The major findings of this report indicate that Washington University (WU) is an institution with a host of ongoing efforts toward increasing diversity and inclusion on campus. Despite these efforts the institution is similar to others in that much more work remains if diversity and
inclusion are to be truly experienced by various members of the campus community. One effort in progress is the planning, design and implementation of a Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Though there were historical conversations about the potential of this type of center on campus, recent conversations via the Mosaic Project and Task Force for the Center have been instrumental in moving the Center closer to becoming a reality.

Campus constituents, with whom I spoke, overwhelmingly agreed that there was a need for a Center. This need is rooted in a desire to have a more centralized space and entity on the campus to lead and coordinate diversity efforts. Moreover, there were expressed needs for an advocacy voice, as well as a designated campus entity capable of addressing student concerns in particular and campus climate concerns more broadly as they relate to diversity and inclusion. Though support is present, there is a great deal of work to be done in realizing the Center and in ensuring its sustainability.

It is critically important that more communication be shared with members of the campus about diversity efforts and ways to get involved. More effective communication will address the perception that WU lacks transparency when it comes to diversity initiatives. As the Task Force continues its efforts in getting the center established, it will be important to hire a qualified professional with an advanced degree who can handle campus politics, assert a strong advocacy voice, foster and coordinate partnerships, lead initiatives to support student development, as well as collaborate to enhance faculty and staff development. Moreover, this person must have experience with leading or participating in campus-wide initiatives and providing educational workshops/trainings. The new director must be capable of bringing greater visibility to diversity on campus and be able to articulate the benefits of diversity to a wide range of audiences. Overall, the new leader of the Center should be able to come into the WU environment, assess the needs of the campus, particularly with regard to students and enhancing campus climate, and clearly articulate an actionable vision that will bolster the overall institutional mission.

Currently, WU has a range of planning documents that mention diversity, but does not have an explicit strategic plan specifically for diversity. This type of plan is critical to WU and needs to be developed in order to give the campus a greater sense of direction and leadership. Leading the strategic planning process for diversity is something that should stem directly from the Chancellor or the Provost’s Office with the director of the Center intricately involved or in a key leadership role. Many of the initiatives at WU are strong but can be more sustainable if connected to a clearly articulated plan. The creation and implementation of a strategic plan will be most effective if the designated committee has a sense of all diversity efforts currently taking place on campus. Therefore, I recommend that WU conduct a diversity audit to find out all efforts taking place, those involved, and the rationale behind the efforts. Conducting the audit will help determine the potential for strategic partnerships, possible merging of efforts, identify existing gaps, and reduce duplication of efforts.

How the Center, which will likely have a greater student focus, connects with the larger campus community has much to do with how it gets positioned within the overall campus
organizational structure. In other words, the position needs to wield a certain amount of power and influence on campus. It might be more effective for WU to consider a few different approaches as they relate to the Center. Currently, the position is slated to report to the Vice Chancellor for Students. First, WU could continue in this direction, but I recommend that the leader of the Center (at minimum) be the Associate Vice Chancellor for Students and Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Another option as noted in the report is to have the position report directly to the Provost with the title, Vice Provost for Institutional Diversity. Another option WU should seriously consider is slightly shifting the organization of the institution by having a Vice Chancellor for Diversity who reports directly to the Chancellor and serves on the University Council. The person in this role could also serve in a supervisory capacity to the director of the Center or oversee the Center. This particular shift would also position the Center and the leader in direct contact with the Chancellor and demonstrate WU’s commitment to diversity as a major priority. Any of these options have the capacity of elevating the status of the center director to demonstrate a commitment to this role, empowering the person in this role, and ensuring that diversity efforts are intricately woven into the fabric of the institution.

The Center Task Force has identified four key areas of focus: Advocacy, Support, Collaboration, and Education and Outreach. Each of these areas makes sense in the context of the institution, but as noted above, will need to be connected to a strategic plan. Moreover, the Center will need to identify a programming and outreach structure to address the four areas using a comprehensive and thoughtful approach. Of the four areas, advocacy and education should be the top priorities. Given the range of recent campus incidents involving explicitly racist and anti-Muslim sentiments, the Center will need to play a central role in educating about privilege and oppression and cultural sensitivity and competence. The center leadership will also need to be keenly capable of handling future incidents and advocating for/with populations when their sense of belonging is threatened. All of the areas identified by the Task Force will need to be addressed using strategies that not only appeal to individual groups, but also foster a climate in which diversity and inclusion are highly valued. Doing so will require tremendous buy-in from a range of campus constituents. In order to be most effective, the Center will greatly benefit from a diversity council or advisory board with a diverse representation of people who will be committed to using their own knowledge and areas of expertise to keep track of the pulse of the campus as it pertains to diversity and to work with the Center in offering innovative programs and services that meet diverse needs and interests.

As the center develops, it needs to position itself as the entity that will move the campus toward greater cultural competency. This would involve responding to questions such as, “what cultural competencies should various campus constituents have to effectively conduct their work?” and “what cultural competencies should students have upon graduation to make effective, culturally sensitive contributions to society?” These types of questions are critical given the culture of niceness on the campus and the perception that diversity issues are rarely addressed in a direct and explicit manner. WU is quite an excellent institution and I believe that with strong, bold and visionary leadership in place, the Center will contribute greatly to
improving the campus climate and student experiences, as well as have the reputation and capacity to be a national model for other institutions in the country.
This report is based on a series of meetings conducted over 1.5 days, as well as careful reviews of artifacts that were furnished prior to, during, and following my campus visit. Following are the various constituent groups and persons with whom I met to gain insights:

**Wednesday, November 20, 2013**

5:00 pm  Mosaic Project Meeting  
Lopata Great Hall

6:30 pm  Dinner with Rob Wild, Sharon Stahl, Rob Brown and Students  
Whittemore House

**Thursday, November 21, 2013**

8:00 am  Breakfast with Rob Wild and Seiko Shastri  
Knight Center

9:00 am  Meeting with Rob Brown, Christine Dolan, Michelle Purdy and Student Representatives from the Center Task Force and Diverse Student Groups on Campus  
Danforth University Center

10:00 am  Meeting with Julia Macias, Campus Life and Mary Elliott, Residential Life  
Danforth University Center

11:30 am-1:30 pm  Consultant Talk on Culture Centers and Meeting with Students  
Danforth University Center

1:30 pm  Meeting with Jan Duchek, Director of Cornerstone  
Danforth University Center

2:15 pm  Meeting with Jill Carnaghi, Associate Vice Chancellor for Students and Dean of Campus Life  
Danforth University Center

3:00 pm  Meeting with Sharon Stahl, Vice Chancellor for Students  
Women’s Building

4:30 pm  Wrap up with Rob Wild and Seiko Shastri  
Women’s Building
In addition to information and insights collected through face-to-face interviews, this report is also based on the following documents and materials:

1. Washington University Website
3. Washington University Strategic Plan for Excellence in the Undergraduate Experience (March 2008)
4. MOSAIC Project Information Sheet
5. Chancellor Diversity Statement
6. Provost Diversity Statement
7. Vice Provost Diversity Statement
8. Provost’s Diversity Report, 2010
10. A Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Washington University: A Report on Key Themes from Fall 2013 Meetings (October 2013)
11. A Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Washington University: A Report for Vice Chancellor Sharon Stahl from the Fall Task Force (December 2013)
12. Diversity Related Organizations and Positions at Washington University and Their Websites (e.g. Student Diversity Organization List, Social Justice Center, Mosaic Project)
13. Diversity Affairs Council Campus Diversity Climate Survey and Results (2011)
14. University Priorities for Diversity and Inclusiveness
16. Dear Chancellor Wrighton Videos from Spring 2013

I also gave consideration to examining the diversity initiatives from an institutional context. I believe that it is important to examine the context, for example, of how some diversity initiatives developed at Washington University as well as recent racial incidents that have affected the campus climate for diversity.
Observations and Findings

1. In general, the individuals and groups with whom I spoke expressed a need and widespread support for the creation of a Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

2. The campus was described as “decentralized” with no real indicators regarding from where diversity initiatives should stem. Thus, there was remarkable agreement about the need to hire a professional who could lead and assist with the coordination of diversity and inclusion related efforts on campus. Similar sentiments were expressed regarding the need for a physical space that could serve as a both a tangible and symbolic indicator of WU’s commitment to diversity.

3. Those interviewed expressed a need to have a space for programming, outreach, education and advocacy to address issues of identity, internalized oppression, domination, lack of diversity awareness, and larger systemic oppression and structures of power (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.). Specific mention was made pertaining to the need for a space in which white students, faculty, and administrators could examine their white privilege. Specific mention was also made of efforts to provide education to the entire campus on issues of diversity and inclusion, not just students.

4. Constituents, particularly students, indicated that oftentimes, controversial issues on campus go unaddressed or are “swept under the rug”. They expressed the need for an advocacy voice that would validate the reality of issues and work to effectively address them.

5. There was consistent mention of needing a center with a team of professionals who are capable of addressing and negotiating the needs of student populations that have had historical issues on the campus along with those whose needs are more emergent. Currently, the most attention appears to be geared toward racial issues, particularly between black and white students, while incidents affecting other types of communities often get ignored or deemphasized; thus, a need was expressed for a place where people come together across differences, but also spaces to convene with a specific community.

6. Many of the campus diversity initiatives have been linked to individuals rather than positions. For example, there was consistent mention of the excellent work of Dean Jim McLeod and Naomi Sigg, Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership. Dean McLeod passed away in 2011 and Ms. Sigg left the University for another opportunity in the fall of 2013. Though each served in significantly different capacities, the campus was really lucky to have such a dedicated leader in Dean McLeod and great staff members like Naomi Sigg. However, there seems to be a need for initiatives and efforts that are sustainable.
regardless of who holds a given position. I observed that the stellar work of Dean Jim McLeod and Naomi Sigg declined considerably once they were no longer in their respective positions, suggesting that WU may struggle with the development of sustainable diversity efforts.

7. There is an overwhelming perception that WU has no qualified professional, with enough expertise to deal with diversity and inclusion issues in a comprehensive fashion.

Recommendations and Considerations

1. Clearly, WU needs to establish a Center for diversity and inclusion. The center should serve as a hub for diversity related activities and also play a major role with coordinating partnerships and efforts across the campus.

2. Given that existing efforts through the Provost’s Office are focused on faculty, it may prove useful to have the Center focus specifically on students and issues of campus climate. Should WU decide to have a strong student emphasis within the Center, the newly hired leader, along with an appointed advisory board and staff should design or adopt a programming curriculum that reflects the four components identified by the Center task force: Advocacy, Support, Collaboration, Education and Outreach. The model should be theoretically grounded to ensure that the programs and services remain consistent with the Center’s key areas. The Center should connect with peer institutions and similar centers across the country to generate a list of examples for what a programming curriculum can look like.

3. The center must use an intentional approach to foster partnerships in a systemic way to ensure sustainability of the efforts. All partnerships should be clearly linked to the Center’s strategic plan and WU’s strategic plan. The new director must have a global focus and vision that is guided by a plan and can be sustained regardless of who is in a given position.

4. The Center’s programming should deal with issues of identity development, cultural enrichment, intersectionality, privilege/oppression and overall education for the campus. These issues should be linked to the four components identified by the task force. Overall, the Center should be one of the first places that students visit to receive assistance and support in the aforementioned areas. It should also be among the first places that white students go for enhanced opportunities in cross-cultural engagement.

5. Because the Center will likely be a first point of contact at WU, the physical space should be reflective of diversity. Artwork should adorn the walls to provide cues to visitors that they are in a cultural space (See the Angelina Pedroso Center at Northeastern Illinois University). Materials should be made available via the creation of a resource center. The Center should have a main foyer or lounge area for students and other groups to convene. There should also be modular meeting spaces to accommodate groups or classes. Given that education
and outreach is a key area of the Center, it will be critical to have ample space for the center to serve as a venue to accommodate educational programming.

6. The Center will need to offer highly innovative programming. For example, see University of Illinois’ Black Geek Week or University of Wisconsin’s programming. At UW, they identify an annual theme and create programming around that theme that stems from their center as well as from other campus entities. They round out the theme with an annual symposium. The theme for 2014 is “Race and Body: Boundaries, Expressions, and Orientations”. They communicate this theme to the entire campus to solicit partnerships that focus on both academic and co-curricular opportunities. See also the UCLA Center for the Study of Women and Gender, which also offers a range of programs, publications, research etc. to the campus.

7. The Center should provide educational opportunities not only for students but also other campus constituents. Creating a partnership with the Provost’s Office, particularly the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, to strategically provide training and outreach to educate the broader campus community on ways to engage more deeply with around diversity related activities should be among the Center’s top priorities.
QUESTION 2
What are the major concerns among campus constituents regarding the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?

Observations and Findings

1. The campus lacks a clear strategic plan for implementation of campus diversity initiatives. There were a range of efforts mentioned but they did not seem to be connected to any larger goals outlined by the university. Many initiatives seemed to be “pop-up” efforts that emerged as the result of a racist incident or other controversial issue on campus. As a result, there is unclear articulation of diversity priorities and goals of the overall university.

2. A significant amount of diversity related efforts have been initiated on campus, but seem to be student-led with some minimal involvement from administrators and faculty. This seems to be directly related to a campus culture that values student autonomy. However, students often feel as if they bare the brunt of the work with limited support. Students feel used (not included, not heard, not rewarded) and expected to do diversity work. Many of these students, though committed, lack necessary training and education to be engaged in activities that are more reflective of responsibilities that might be better handled by professional staff. Many of the diversity efforts that professional staff lead, extend beyond their position descriptions.

3. The Mosaic Project is a major effort currently underway, but there is growing mistrust and lack of knowledge regarding its purposes and outcomes. In particular, there was repeated mention that the faculty involved are unaware of their roles. Faculty that are not directly involved are perceived as not seeing the Mosaic project as critical. Overall, there is not a strong faculty representation, which is perceived to be necessary. Lack of trust was also mentioned in terms of the coordination of the Mosaic Project and its capacity to embrace a more nuanced perspective of diversity. This has implications for how the campus may receive the Center given that it is one of the Mosaic efforts.

4. There is a deep concern about whether the Center will represent a “band-aid” effort used to make the campus look more inclusive than it really it is. In other words the intentions behind the center are not fully understood and constituents fear that the center is reactionary in nature and will not be perceived as an institutional priority. Some wondered about how the Center would be positioned as an institutional priority, rather than a mere symbol. Others wondered how the Center would be different due to fear that it would be a repeat of efforts currently in progress (e.g. the Social Justice Center).

5. The establishment of the center seems to be a rushed effort with members of the campus expressing that there has been insufficient communication to the entire campus about the possibility of having a center.
Recommendations and Considerations

1. WU needs to create a strategic plan specifically related to diversity initiatives on campus. This plan would clearly communicate the priorities of the institution and how the Center will be positioned to assist with these priorities. It will be important to take precautions in crafting the report. Please see Iverson (2007) in which she conducted a critical discourse analysis of diversity plans and found that such policies reproduced inequities and further marginalized communities by treating them as at-risk and on the fringes of the institution (See Question #1 and #3).

2. WU needs to do an extensive audit of diversity initiatives to decrease redundancy in efforts, to potentially merge efforts, and to gain a greater sense of who's doing what in terms of diversity efforts on campus (See Question #5).

3. The Director of the Center should, in some way, have a direct reporting line/connection to the Chancellor. Doing so would communicate that the Center is an institutional priority. This would represent a campus-wide office versus one primarily situated in Student Life. Moreover, this reporting line would provide a more explicit connection to the academic realm of the campus, increasing the likelihood of buy-in from faculty and staff.

4. While concerns loom about the Center being rushed, the Task Force should continue with its establishment to ensure ongoing momentum for this effort and to demonstrate an actionable outcome of the Mosaic Project.

5. Create a communication strategy that reaches campus-wide to inform the campus community about the establishment of the center. Once created, the Center will need to identify a marketing strategy to promote itself to various campus constituents. It must expand its visibility via word of mouth, social media, newsletters/newspapers, website etc.
QUESTION 3
What opportunities exist to ensure the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion will be successful and sustainable?

Observations and Findings

1. One of Center’s greatest opportunities, once established, will be its capacity to form collaborative partnerships with a broad range of offices and departments on the WU campus. The Center can play a vital role in ensuring that current diversity efforts continue and operate in a collaborative and comprehensive fashion. In their current state, many of the diversity initiatives do not appear to be part of an overall institutional strategic plan.

2. The establishment of the Center will provide a great opportunity to connect WU in more intentional ways with the surrounding St. Louis community, particularly low-income communities of color who may have a negative view of the institution or consider it to be inaccessible.

3. Given that there are currently limited centralized diversity efforts, the establishment of the Center provides an opportunity to appoint a much-needed additional senior level administrator to assist in leading such efforts on campus.

4. Many constituents indicated that there was a great deal of talk about diversity with very little in terms of actions. The creation of the Center presents an opportunity to move from talk toward an actionable effort.

5. The establishment of the Center provides an opportunity for more substantive campus engagement beyond cultural tourism (i.e. food and dance) that is theoretically grounded, supports the academic mission of WU and promotes more positive experiences and interactions on campus.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. The Center should work closely with the Vice Chancellor for Students, the Office of the Chancellor, and the Provost’s Office to develop a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion. The planning committee should be comprised of faculty, student and staff representatives. Two strategic plans may be in order, one to specifically outline initiatives related to a campus-wide plan; the other to focus specifically on the Center. Both plans should be in alignment with one another and WU’s overall strategic plan (See Question #1 and #2).

2. The Center should form a diversity cabinet or council of powerful and influential people who have a strong voice on campus and who are willing to commit time to diversity
related efforts. This should be a key group geared toward advancing a diversity agenda on campus in collaboration with various groups and individuals on campus. This group should also serve in an advisory capacity to the Center’s director (See Question #5).

3. In hiring the Center director, the search committee should identify a leader who has a strong capacity for relationship building and mending. These skills will be needed to facilitate strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts, as well as, bring members of the campus together to address critical issues. The director should also have knowledge of or experience with facilitating engagement with surrounding communities. Other characteristics should include an advanced degree and ability to negotiate highly politicized educational environments.

4. In addition to a community partnership staff member, the Center should also have graduate and undergraduate students working in the center.
QUESTION 4
What challenges/cautions should be considered in the establishment of the Center for Diversity and inclusion?

Observations and Findings

1. There was considerable use of language about the Center serving as a “safe space” for students and others on campus. Such language may unfortunately be a set-up for unrealistic expectations of the Center and what it can provide.

2. A challenge of the center will be clearly identifying its role on campus. In other words, it will be critical to provide effective communication regarding what the Center does and does not do. There seems to be a range of needs with regard to diversity and inclusion on campus and no single entity Center should be expected to handle every thing that is diversity related.

3. Issues of racism (institutional and individual), though not always shared explicitly, seem to be among the most pressing issues on campus. While the Center should be positioned to address racism, it cannot do so through a Black/White paradigm, nor can its emphasis lie solely on addressing racial issues to the exclusion of other forms of oppression.

4. Given the great opportunities that the Center represents, it may be a challenge to determine which existing diversity efforts should be moved within the Center’s realm of responsibility versus remaining in its current place.

5. While it may appear logical to take many of the existing efforts and place them under the auspices of the Center, doing so will incorrectly position the center as the place that does “all” things diversity related. This is a stance that WU must avoid.

6. There was repeated mention of the Center as a funding source for programs with a multicultural emphasis.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Steer away from the notion of “safe space” to reference the Center and any other effort on campus as such language can be deceptive. Ng (1993) stated, “To speak of safety and comfort is to speak from a position of privilege, relative though they may be. For those who have existed too long on the margins, life has never been safe or comfortable (p. 201). Moreover, Srivastava (1994) noted that comments regarding safe spaces and the belief that everyone can feel safe “don’t acknowledge that people of colour cannot be safe in such a context. They do not acknowledge that white people in this situation are generally safer, and that these different levels of danger are based on the power relations of racism. These statements also create an impression that the feelings of
unsafeness are not systemic problems but rather individual problems that can be overcome (p. 106).

2. The leadership of the Center, as well as it’s marketing materials and initiatives should embrace and espouse an intersectional approach that not only addresses racism, but also other forms of oppression that manifest on campus, as well as how these forms of oppression interact and converge to create an unwelcoming and isolating climate on campus for particular populations. Expansion of the definition of diversity/inclusion beyond race and ethnicity is critical, but there must still be specific efforts to address racism given its longstanding manifestation on the campus.

3. The new leadership should have experience with balancing the competing interests and needs of a broad range of constituents. The Center cannot be successful unless efforts are broadly conceived and crosscutting in nature. One way to broaden its services could be the implementation of a strategic initiative related to cultural competence. The Center could position itself as the experts on cultural competence, providing various trainings throughout campus. This initiative could play a role in diversifying the curriculum but also provide students, faculty and staff with important knowledge and information to be effective in promoting diversity.

4. Many of the existing efforts can operate in partnership with the center (See Question #3) rather than be transitioned under the center. Careful planning is needed to ensure that diversity and inclusion efforts are both centralized (via the Center), and infused throughout the campus in a range of departments and offices. EVERYTHING diversity should not fall on the shoulders of the staff in this Center. In order for the director and ultimately this Center to be effective, the responsibilities must be clearly outlined in a strategic plan (See Question #1, #2 and #3). This will ensure that there is clarity regarding what the Center does and does not do. The greater the clarity regarding the center, the more successful it will be on campus.

5. The Center should certainly have a set of funds to support various diversity related efforts, but the funding should not be used to usurp what is perceived to be an inequitable funding structure and decisions that appear to shape the student treasury’s process. The Center should have a strategic process for distribution of financial resources. The Center should create a system that requires proposal submission and outline the criteria upon which proposals will be reviewed and awarded. The funding decisions for the proposals should have a range of criteria, but there should be a requirement that efforts be clearly linked to the Center’s strategic plan and WU’s strategic plan. Recipients of the funds should be required to submit a final report, and if applicable, a presentation as outlined by the Center (e.g. via a sponsored brown bag series; research/lecture series).

6. While the treasury appears to operate with a fairly extensive amount of autonomy, students who are elected to these leadership roles should undergo training to make
decisions that are more equitable in nature and represent the diversity within the student body.
QUESTION 5
What general observations regarding the overall campus climate and institutional context should be considered in the establishment of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion?

Observations and Findings

1. While WU has undertaken efforts to assess the campus climate relative to diversity, namely via the campus climate survey conducted by the Diversity Affairs Council, it is difficult to assess how these student-led efforts translate into strategic actions and implementation on an institutional level.

2. During various interactions, constituents consistently mentioned incidents on campus, such as the “Bear’s Den” incident and the “Halloween” incident. These incidents, while vital to various discussions, were cloaked in a discourse of niceness/politeness. In other words, the racist and nativist issues related to these incidents often went unchecked in conversations, as if it was simply easier to avoid explicit mention of what the incidents were actually about. Overall, there seemed to be an atmosphere of political correctness on campus that may actually be prohibitive in providing deeper education and dialogue about improving the campus climate.

3. There was mention that many of the individuals who would have responsibility for handling “incidents” were less likely to have training and expertise in addressing such issues, or plainly stated, lacked cultural competence. Despite specific training in the areas of diversity, constituents mentioned the belief that if a person is perceived to be nice or caring, such characteristics were erroneously equated with being qualified to handle cultural conflicts on campus.

4. Some of those with whom I spoke, were clear that the fraternity event during the “Halloween” incident was “unintended”. Whether intended or not, the information appeared to let the students off the hook and it remains unclear how the actions of these students were adequately addressed as well as the well-being of the students who were targeted in the incidents.

5. There is an overwhelming perception that while diversity is espoused as an institutional value, it is not an institutional priority that is given sufficient attention. WU has a great deal about which to be proud, given its numerous rankings and accolades, but upon further analysis, the institution is not lauded, ranked, or considered to be a model in relation to diversity and inclusion. In that regard the institution is less competitive in comparison to various institutions that have been more explicit about their commitments to diversity and inclusion.

6. Constituents indicated that people of color or other marginalized groups conducted the lion’s share of diversity related efforts on campus, with less input and contributions from white faculty, staff and students.
7. With the exception of a few people (e.g. Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity), most faculty are perceived by many to have little time to engage in diversity related efforts. Those most interested are either tenure-track or pulled in other directions, preventing them from engaging in these efforts.

8. While improved, the curriculum lacks a diverse representation of perspectives, with the exception of a few programs/departments (e.g. social work; women, gender & sexuality studies)

9. While the WU website provides information about a range of diversity efforts occurring on campus, there is a perception that communication around diversity efforts is minimal and that such efforts must be sought out.

10. When “incidents” occur on campus, the Administration is perceived as reactive, not proactive and takes little accountability for what occurs on campus in terms of diversity.

Recommendations and Considerations

1. Changing a campus climate is not an easy task, especially one that has created and maintained a particular reputation for handling diversity on campus. WU, through the leadership of the Center should begin to acknowledge and disrupt the discourse of niceness that seems to permeate the environment. Hytten and Warren (2003) noted that climates rooted in niceness discourses “smooth over tensions in the effort to give the outward appearance that we all agree and we are all working together toward similar ends” (p. 83). Hiring a qualified leader of the Center who can usher WU toward more authentic explorations of diversity will be critical to the vitality of the many diversity efforts underway.

2. Augment the various reports, reviews, surveys and data collected on diversity with evidence that this information moves to strategic actions. Because no strategic plan or measure exists to specifically focus on and address diversity-related issues on campus, I highly recommend that the administration, not students (but perhaps in partnership with students) either hire an external party or conduct a more comprehensive campus-wide climate study of faculty, staff and students every five years. Particular attention should be paid to transparency when sharing any survey results with the campus community, as there is a perception that information is not readily shared (See Question #2). The results of the study should be used to generate a strategic plan for diversity. This could be one effort led by the new director of the Center.

3. Conduct an audit of diversity efforts throughout the campus to gain a more comprehensive scope of what is taking place and to decrease the perceptions and realities of a decentralized campus. A campus-wide inventory and analysis will provide a firmer grasp of ongoing efforts and where gaps may exist. The purpose of this process
should not be to eliminate efforts, but to understand where duplication of effort exists and why. It should also be used to make determinations regarding what resources might need to be redirected/relocated, to determine who is responsible, and to identify opportunities that facilitate collaboration and reduce duplication (See Question #2).

4. Some of the challenges regarding student perceptions of administrators may be because very few senior student affairs staff at WU have a deep professional grounding in diversity training, social justice, and advocacy work. This is apparent and presents challenges in times of crisis.

5. The Director of the Center should work with the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity to generate collaborative strategies to increase faculty involvement in diversity related activities. The perception among students and others interviewed is that many faculty are not aligned to the University’s values related to diversity and inclusion.

6. Develop a mechanism to assist faculty with infusing diversity in the curriculum and identify or explore the creation of a reward system for faculty and staff who engage in service related activity. This could be a key collaboration between the Center’s efforts and the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

7. WU should consider the creation of a diversity council or cabinet that is led by the Director of the Center rather than students. The current Diversity Affairs Council within the Student Union should remain in tact, but a representative from the Council should be on the institution-wide council led by the senior diversity officer in the Center. Similar efforts (e.g. Coordinating Council for Diversity Initiatives, Provost’s Diversity Work Group and Center Task Force) appear to be underway, but perhaps need to be more streamlined to capture not only faculty and staff but also students. It is critical that the cabinet have a clearly defined mission, purpose and charge (See Question #3).

8. All diversity/inclusion-related committees must have clear charges for their work with expectations that involve the implementation of specific outcomes. When this does not occur, it creates a perception that the institution only wants to give the appearance of diversity as a priority.

9. Given that WU currently has a Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Recruitment and efforts are also underway with regard to staff, the Center may benefit from having a particular focus on supporting students’ needs. On the webpage, it would be great to have a link devoted to “Student Diversity & Development”. Doing so would at minimum increase the perception that diversity efforts are seamless and not separate/compartmentalized. http://diversity.wustl.edu/faculty-staff/

10. Consider implementing an Inclusion Advocate Program to train faculty and staff to serve on committees so as not to overburden minority faculty and staff.
11. Consider hosting an annual event to allow the Provost or Chancellor to give an annual state of diversity address and recognize members of the campus community who engage in diversity-related efforts. This event could also be used to showcase the research of faculty whose work contributes to diversity and to highlight efforts among students and staff. The event could be both a mini-conference and awards ceremony organized by the Center, but in conjunction with the Provost’s or Chancellor’s office.

12. Aside from the website, the Center and WU should identify other strategies for communicating the work it’s doing and ongoing work in process. This could include a periodic electronic newsletter, a column in the student newspaper or alumni magazine, etc.). There should also be efforts to ensure that people external to WU hear about the campus diversity efforts.
While Washington University, through various diversity efforts, has accomplished much, it is obvious that much more can be undertaken to advance diversity at the institution. The individuals with whom I spoke reinforced my perceptions that there is a real need for a Center for Diversity and Inclusion on campus. There are both high expectations and a great deal of excitement regarding the establishment and future success of the Center.

On the other hand, there are considerable challenges that WU must deal with, namely a campus climate in which the value of diversity is not always foregrounded, feelings of uneasiness about the Center being rushed, and identifying strong leadership for the Center. All of these challenges could pose barriers or opportunities depending on the approaches taken and the commitment of those involved, especially senior level administrators. Diversity initiatives, regardless of how promising they seem, cannot be successful without the demonstrable support of the campus’ leadership.
1. Diversity Newsletter: http://diversity.utah.edu/newsletter/newsletter-archive/

2. The Journey to an Inaugural Chief Diversity Officer:
   http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/0014819A-9062-64A5-72CC1CD84EC8A273/the_journey_to_an_inaugural_chief_diversity_officer.pdf

3. The Role of the Chief Diversity Officer in Academic Health Centers:
   https://members.aamc.org/eweb/upload/The%20Role%20of%20the%20Chief%20Diversity%20Officer%20in%20Academic%20Health%20Centers.pdf

4. Diversity Data and Planning at UC Berkeley: http://diversity.berkeley.edu/vcei

5. Campus Climate Survey at the University of Denver:
   http://www.du.edu/cme/climate.html

6. Grand Valley State University:
   a. Inclusion Advocate Program:
      http://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/inclusion-advocate-program-60.htm
   
   b. Inclusion Implementation Plan:
      http://www.gvsu.edu/iiplan/InclusionPlan.pdf

   c. Intercultural Learning and Development Course Offerings:

   d. Intercultural Communities of Practice:

   e. myGVSU Climate Study: www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu


7. Campus Council on Diversity and Community at UC Davis
   http://occr.ucdavis.edu/cccdd/

8. Diversity Resources at University of Pennsylvania
   http://diversity.upenn.edu/resources/

9. Michigan Student Study with Survey Instruments:
   http://www.oami.umich.edu/images/MSS%20FINAL%20GUIDEBOOK.pdf
10. The Michigan Diversity Report:  
http://www.oami.umich.edu/images/MSS%20DIVERSITY%20REPORT.pdf

11. Working through the Challenge: Critical Lessons Learned for Sustaining a Robust Institutional Diversity Culture:  
http://www.oami.umich.edu/about/Publications/Working%20Through%20The%20Challenge.pdf

12. Diversity Audit Example  
a. Baldwin Wallace College:  


Dr. Lori Patton Davis is an Associate Professor in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program in the Indiana University School of Education. Her research agenda focuses on African Americans in postsecondary contexts, Critical Race Theory applied to higher education, college student development theory and the influence of campus environments on student experiences. She is the most well-known researcher and scholar in the area of culture centers. Moreover, she is the editor of the recently released book, *Campus Culture Centers in Higher Education*, which highlights various types of racial/ethnic specific culture centers in higher education, their continued relevance, and implications for their existence in relation to student retention and success. She is an author of the 2nd edition of *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, and the forthcoming 3rd edition of the *ASHE Reader on College Student Affairs Administration*. Dr. Patton Davis’ most recent research examines issues of intersectionality in the experiences of African American lesbian, gay and bisexual students attending historically black colleges and universities and those who belong to Black Greek-letter organizations. She is also engaged in critical scholarship on the experiences of Black undergraduate women in higher education. Her larger body of work has been published in *The Journal of Higher Education, Journal of Negro Education, Journal of College Student Development, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Negro Educational Review*, and several other well-respected journals, edited books and monographs, and professional magazines.
References

