Lake Washington Institute of Technology:
A Place for Everyone

Phase 1 Consultants Report (Vetted-Final)*
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Executive Summary

**Background**

The consultants, Christine Clark, Ed.D., and Mark Brimhall-Vargas, Ph.D., were hired in the early spring of 2014 through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) to facilitate Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWTech) through a two-phase process to 1) assess the campus's diversity climate (during spring 2014), and, 2) establish a campus diversity plan (over the fall of 2014). This report documents the results of the five phase one assessment activities undertaken.

**Approach**

The consultants took a case study approach to completing phase one activities. This approach was based on on six good practice elements of case study, in tandem with the use of constant comparative analysis (CCA). The approach was briefly discussed relative to the findings. Five minor limitations in the execution of this approach were identified and, again, briefly discussed relative to the findings.

**Noticings**

In the consultants' review of LWTech's external and internal marketing materials, website, and intranet, as well as of specific kinds of diversity-related information they sought out, two potential strengths and two potential challenges were "noticed."

**Findings**

The consultants contextualized and situated their findings relative to LWTech's leadership history, noting the intense emotions that the campus community as a whole brought into the assessment activities, and the central role that communication plays in moving the campus forward, both relative to diversity and more generally. Findings were reported into two areas: general and particular. General findings had implications for the campus as a whole, not expressly related to specific campus constituencies and/or stakeholders. Particular findings also had implications for the campus as a whole, but typically related to specific campus constituent/stakeholder groups.

*General findings* focused on: 1) whether the campus should have institutional definitions of diversity and cultural competence, and, if so, what these definitions should be and why; and, 2) what the institutional identity of the campus is, what it should/should not be, and why clarifying this identity is important.

*Particular findings* focused on: 1) the idea of mutual accommodation (students, staff, and faculty adapting to norms of the LWTech's campus culture, and LWTech's campus culture adapting to the norms of students, staff, and faculty); and, 2) tensions pertaining to the differing experiences of specific groups of people on campus related to race, gender, job classification, educational level, first language, immigration status, sexual orientation, academic discipline, disability, and age, considered both discretely (one at a time) and intersectionally (two or more simultaneously).

**Coda**

The consultants concluded the report by articulating the importance that everyone in the LWTech community feel both supported and challenged by their consultant efforts, noting that campus buy-in to these efforts will only occur if there is a sense that the consultants "see" LWTech clearly and are not "playing favorites."

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**Phase 1) Assess the campus's diversity climate (during spring 2014); and,**

**Phase 2) Establish a campus diversity plan (over the fall of 2014).**

This report documents phase one activities and findings.

The consultants' **Phase I** scope of work involved the following **five** main steps.

**Step 1a)** the consultants becoming educated (electronically and face-to-face) about LWTech by:

i) Reviewing the institution's website and intranet; and,

ii) Soliciting diversity-specific materials and data (e.g., history, mission, and vision documents, committee reports, curricular and co-curricular offerings, demographics) from, and/or meeting with, the Diversity Committee members, institutional leadership/Executive Cabinet, and other individuals with specific areas of responsibility (e.g., marketing and communication (internal and external), institutional research, employment policy));

**Step 1b)** the consultants working through the Diversity Committee to develop and implement a marketing plan for phase one data gathering;

**Step 2)** the consultants facilitating eight (8) face-to-face information sessions with a total of 109 faculty, staff, and students to introduce the scope of work (phase one and phase two) of their consultancy, inviting participation in phase one activities (via confidential face-to-face individual interviews, focus group interviews, and electronic confidential and anonymous interviews), and answering questions/responding to concerns;

**Step 3)** the consultants conducting 35 face-to-face individual interviews, 12 face-to-face focus group interviews with a total of 143 faculty, staff, and students, and 18 electronic interviews (9 confidential and 9 anonymous);

**Step 4)** the consultants facilitating 3 face-to-face "preliminary report out" sessions with a total of 71 faculty, staff, and students, 1 face-to-face "preliminary report out" session with members of the Diversity Committee, 1 face-to-face "preliminary report out" session with members of the Board of Trustees, and 1 face-to-face "preliminary report out" session with the President and Special Assistant to the President, to share initial findings from steps 1-3 above and to provide a basic idea for how phase one findings will inform phase two activities in accordance with the RFP; and,

**Step 5)** the consultants documenting the findings from steps 1-4 above in this phase one report and submitting it to campus leadership for campus-wide dissemination.

The consultants' **Phase 2** scope of work will involve the following **four** main steps.

**Step 1)** the consultants working through the Diversity Committee to develop and implement a marketing plan for phase two dialogues;

**Step 2)** the consultants facilitating 6-9 face-to-face dialogue sessions with 240-360 faculty, staff, and students to:

*Apply phase one findings to* (as obtained from the RFP):

    a) employment practices, policies, and procedures;
    b) marketing and promotional materials;
    c) student support services;
    d) instructional design and delivery;
    e) student success; and,
    f) recruitment and retention;

And to *discuss the implications of phase one findings for* (again from the RFP):

    a) common definitions (especially of diversity and cultural competence);
    b) shared values;
    c) good practices;
    d) scaffolded goals; and,
    e) necessary infrastructure (human and capital resources);

**Step 3)** the consultants facilitating 3-6 face-to-face "final report out" sessions with faculty, staff, and students to share the campus diversity plan and discuss its development, implications, and implementation (goals and action steps toward goals); and,

**Step 4)** the consultants submitting the campus diversity plan to campus leadership for dissemination and actualization.

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**Approach**

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The consultants took a particular approach (described below) when undertaking phase one activities. This approach is aligned with the nature of the work they were hired to do in that it engaged the LWTech community in a constructivist[1] process to surface their own ideas about, and concerns regarding, campus diversity (rather than to simply react to those shared from the consultants). This approach was a point of contention prior to, and during, phase one, and may continue to be so in phase two. This is to be expected. Diversity work is controversial. Accordingly, it raises a range of emotions from the various points of entry into discussion of the topic. For this reason, no matter the approach employed, push back is inevitable. The consultants

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[1] Constructivism is the idea that people build knowledge through interaction.

have worked, and will continue to work, with the LWTech community to build confidence and buy-in to the approach.

The consultants assessed climate by making use of qualitative and quantitative information about the LWTech community—past, present, and moving forward. The consultants relied on a case study orientation to compile "data" and "evidence" from which the assessment was made.[2]

**Elements of case study** that figured prominently in the consultants' approach include:

1) the development and use of an **interview protocol** (see Appendix A);

2) **thick description** or extensive, near verbatim, raw data representations of interviewees responses to the interview questions;

3) an **examination of the "lived experience"** of members of the campus community by observing the formal and informal interactions among and between those members;

4) **pattern matching**, based on their (the consultants') prior academic training/knowledge and professional expertise/experience of diversity-related climate assessment in other higher education settings (i.e., how is LWTech's climate similar to, and different from, peer and/or aspirational institutions);

5) **contrastive explanation building** to consider multiple accounts of events; and,

6) **triangulation** of three data points at a time to mitigate/overcome the weaknesses (especially biases) associated with singular considerations.

Related to triangulation, the consultants used constant comparative analysis (CCA)[3] to "make holistic sense of" *all* of the data sources considered. In CCA, each piece of data (e.g., an interview transcript, an historical report, a marketing pamphlet, a first-hand observation) is compared, on an ongoing basis, to every other piece of data in an effort to identify similarities across, and differences between, all pieces. Through this inductive[4] analytical process, critical new meaning can be garnered throughout the assessment process; that is, at no point do the existing data define (by deduction[5]) what should be statically understood about the focus of the assessment, in this case LWTech's climate for diversity. Practically speaking, this means that no single point of data is ever discounted, and neither does that single point of data dominate or overshadow the investigation.

As alluded to above, this approach and, more broadly, *any* approach to the assessment of diversity, was and will continue to be a point of contention for some members of the LWTech community.  For some of these members, this contention is related to their sincere desire to understand the work of diversity generally, and how it is being/should be undertaken at LWTech. Understandably, there was/is concern about the influence of the consultants—the extent to which

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[2] For more about case study see Creswell, 2009, 2011; Yin, 2009.
[3] Pioneered by Glaser in 1965.
[4] Inductive reasoning is a "bottom up" process that draws conclusions based on strong evidence, but not absolute proof.
[5] Deductive reasoning is a "top down" process that draws conclusions based on certain factors taken as given (as truth).

they are or are not imposing a particular structure for understanding diversity on the LWTech community. This concern is especially noteworthy relative to the campus's stated goal (in the RFP) to come to common definitions of, and shared values regarding, institutional diversity (discussed further in the findings sections, below). Some members of the campus community were fearful that the consultants would overtly or covertly enter their work with the community with a particular "agenda" or strong belief system that might have the effect of dividing the campus, or of excluding some members of the campus.  Others were fearful that in the absence of explicit guidance from the consultants, no meaningful diversity plan would be formulated. For a small, but highly vocal, group of campus members, "approach" was raised as an issue as part of a larger desire to derail any attempt to delineate diversity efforts of any kind.

Five limitations of the consultants' work thus far have emerged and, in the spirit of transparency, are well worth articulating.

**First**, the office locations chosen for the first round of individual interviews were a source of concern for interviews/potential interviewees. These offices were situated in a senior administrator's suite and were not able to be accessed non-confidentially. While all scheduled interviewees showed up, some expressed concerns about reprisal for their participation. For the second round of individual interviews, generic offices in the library were used, which improved interviewees sense of confidentiality, but the campus community's general lack of familiarity with the location of these offices did impinge on interview timing.

Related to timing, a **second** limitation that surfaced had to do with the time of day and time of year that the phase one activities were scheduled. This limitation is mitigated by the compensatory desire on the part of leadership to be expedient in responding to expressed urgent concerns about campus climate (i.e., better sooner rather than later).

Expediency was also tethered to a **third** limitation, namely, that phase one activities could have been scheduled and executed with greater "elegance," in the manner that the Strategic Planning and Accreditation activities were perceived to have been.  However, the number of participants in phase one activities exceeded those in Strategic Planning and Accreditation forums.

A **fourth** limitation of phase one activities also relates to timing. The architectural landscape of the campus is quite inaccessible.  Further, the campus community generally was observed to be inattentive to the need for, and thus locations of, elevators, ramps, and other accessible entry points into buildings and offices.  Because the consultants travel with roller bags with their materials, this inaccessibility made navigating the campus to execute phase one activities in a timely fashion somewhat challenging. This limitation resurfaces in the **fifth and final** limitation (discussed next) and well as in the discussion of findings (below).

**Finally**, the consultants erroneously took for granted that the LWTech community understood the purpose and, thus, structure of focus groups—that is, a structured interview process designed to surface specific stakeholder/constituent concerns. Instead, these focus groups were often perceived to be opportunities for "dialogue" or cross-group conversation. More intentionality and guidance around focus group formation and participation was needed. As a result of this oversight, there was no focus group dedicated for people with disabilities to raise concerns. Additionally, the focus group that was designated for people who speak English as a second

language was dominated, in number and overt participation, by people who speak English as a first language, but who work with people who speak it as a second one. As a result, one of the data collection vehicles expressly designed to ensure that a specific stakeholder group/constituency was "heard," ended up reinforcing their marginalization, and by the very people who identify themselves as allies and/or advocates for this population. While troubling, this limitation is instructive for the work of diversity on campus writ large—whose voices get heard, how, and how loudly? This concern relates to campus communication, which figures prominently in the discussion of findings (below).

**Noticings**

In undertaking phase one, step "1a" work (as described in the Background), the consultants **noticed** that LWTech's external marketing materials had good representation of diverse voices (for radio spots) and diverse images (on the website, in campus catalogues, and in program-specific brochures). While these materials can always be made more diverse (e.g., add voices and experiences of students whose second language is not only Russian), the attention to diversity was thoughtful (not stereotypical) and otherwise high quality (in terms of the caliber of the materials).

The consultants also **noticed**, especially through examination of materials through the campus intranet, that institutional support (infrastructure) for diversity work on campus appeared to be weak. Materials on the Diversity Committee area of the Committees space on the intranet were the most poorly organized and inconsistently posted relative to other committees of similar size or structure—there did not appear to be the kind of skilled administrative support of this committee's efforts that other committees seemed to have. From a review of the campus website (beyond the Diversity Committee and brief mention of an emerging International Programs Committee on the intranet), the campus did not appear to have any particular person or office whose responsibilities were directly and/or solely dedicated to diversity work—not in student affairs, academic affairs, administrative affairs, or campus-wide.

Also from a review of the website and intranet, and through an electronic question and answer process with campus leaders, members of the Diversity Committee, and individuals with specific areas of responsibility, the consultants **noticed** that attention to diversity through traditional human resources avenues also appeared to be weak.  For example, only a singular "Non-Discrimination Policy" was easily accessible, and because more than one version of that policy was posted, it was not clear what the current policy covered/included.

The consultants looked for reported incidents of bias and/or hate based on protected class statuses and **noticed** very little. A highly publicized incident with a long past campus leader's stereotypical remarks was recounted, mention was made of a couple of negative comments reported to a student affairs leader regarding promotion of a "Student of Color Conference," and concern that language used in a security flyer could be interpreted as racially profiling in nature was shared.  Additionally, just after the consultants finished their Phase 1 work on the LWTech campus, a small religiously-motivated protest took place. Because higher education is one of the first and only (in concert with the military) places where U.S. citizens have sustained interaction with each other across dimensions of difference, especially racial difference, it is not uncommon

for such incidents to occur.[6]  What is important is how the campus responds to these incidents. Developing effective "response-ability" is a major focus of the consultants' phase two work with the campus community.

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**Findings**

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It is important to **contextualize and situate** phase one findings against the leadership history at LWTech.  It is evident that past administrations—single leaders and/or the leadership culture cultivated by a group of leaders—have created an overarching climate of distrust on campus that, while generally acknowledged to no longer be emanating from the current President and Vice President of Instruction, is still largely perceived to be operational in most, if not all, campus interactions.  While this distrust is generally described as from the faculty, staff, and students towards administration, it has also infected relationships between and among faculty, staff, students, and within and across these groups on the basis of various dimensions of identity (especially race, gender, job classification, educational level, first language, immigration status, sexual orientation, academic discipline, disability, age, and ideology or strong belief system).

There is great hope from all quadrants of the campus that the new President and Vice President of Instruction will be able to effectively extinguish this distrust. Yet, there is also great fear that they will not be able to do so—that the future will only reinforce "business as usual" in this regard. This sentiment exists, because while these new leaders are doing and saying all the "right" things, other leaders and long-standing influential members of the campus community are doing and saying things that are perceived to not only harken past practice norms, but to act at cross purposes to the new leadership agenda to counter these norms. In other words, while senior leadership may be seen as moving in a positive direction, there is a sense that the senior leaders cannot "see" or manage, for example, every supervisor on campus who may not be "on board." While some of this "drag" behavior can be understood as merely a manifestation of fear of change (e.g., the devil one knows), some of it can be understood as the desire to thwart change because the status quo is known to serve one's interests, whereas new norms are perceived to serve the interests of "others" (this concern is discussed further below).

Against this backdrop, it should come as no surprise that phase one activities evoked heightened emotion (expressed as hostility, anger, malaise, disengagement, sadness, depression, pain, and often through tears) from *everyone* with whom the consultants interacted in the campus community. This emotion has tremendous implications for community members regarding their development of skill for, and comfort with, conversations on complex, controversial topics. (Phase two activities are expressly designed to engage these implications—to reveal to the campus community that they can, in fact, learn to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable).

As a **first** point of entry into such difficult conversations, it is important to note that, again, *everyone* from whom data were collected expressed the sense that they—as people—and their actions—as faculty, staff, and students—were not recognized, acknowledged, valued, appreciated, nor taken advantage of/engaged in service to/realization of the campus mission. The question:

***Who am I and what do I bring?***

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[6] Dill, B. T., 2003.

is one that <u>every individual</u> member of the LWTech community is eager to answer and have her/his answer *singularly* heard and heeded. It is also a question that <u>particular groups</u> within the campus community want to answer, be heard on, and have regarded *collectively*.

A **second** point of entry into conversations more generally (from the difficult to the mundane) is, again, a *general* sense that communication and messaging on and off campus (internally/within and externally/to and from) is poor and, therefore, confounds understanding, limits participation, hinders productivity, and ultimately leads to conflict. In stark opposition to this sense, is the *particular* sentiment that communication and messaging are only characterized as poor to the extent that they do not expressly speak to one's own reality—in short, if communication and messaging are not naming *my* experience (and my experience *only*), then there is something wrong with *it* and/or the people from whom it is perceived to emanate. There exists a corollary sense that "there is nothing wrong with me."

In diversity work, there are always persistent dynamic tensions that emerge between, for example, individual and group interests, singular and collective orientations, and general and particular concerns. This has been the case with the diversity work undertaken thus far at LWTech. Accordingly, the ensuing discussion in this section is divided between **general** and **particular** findings.

**General findings** are those that have implications for the campus as a whole, are structural/infrastructural in nature, and are not expressly related to specific campus constituencies/stakeholders.

**Particular findings** also have implications for the campus as a whole, but are inter-/intra-relational, and typically relate to specific campus constituent/stakeholder groups.

**General**

**General findings** flowed into **two** main areas:

1) **definitions**; and,

2) **institutional identity**.

Discussion of **definitions of diversity and cultural competence** were rich, surfacing many different, sometimes competing, definitions of each term.  In some instances, competing definitions were held by a single person or by self-identified members of the same group; in other instances, common definitions were found across *chosen* or *ascribed*[7] members of divergent belief system-based and/or identity-based "camps" within the campus community.  It is important to note that articulation of these definitions did not always mean that these definitions were claimed as good, true, relevant, and/or accurate. Rather, they simply had some significance for how diversity was understood or misunderstood on campus.

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[7] *Chosen*, groups one opts to identify with (as a member of), and *ascribed*, groups one associates others with (as members of).

Discussion of **definitions of diversity** surfaced the following:

1) an identity-based laundry list;

2) an identity-based laundry list *that prioritizes* race, gender, race and gender, age, employment status, academic area (developmental/trades v. "academic"), first/second language, and religious minorities/majorities;

3) an identity-based laundry list that intentionally, or simply descriptively, includes some categories of identities and intentionally excludes others (diversity should/should not include X, or diversity means/does not mean that anything/everything goes (especially when anything/everything is perceived as "cultural"));

4) to define diversity *at all* is to exclude (sometimes this definition was characterized as a manifestation of a "color blind" philosophy or political belief system, and was perceived to be inadvertently or intentionally racist);

5) to not define diversity *at all* is to do nothing (unintentionally or intentionally);

6) diversity means being color blind (intended to convey the intent to treat everyone "the same");

7) diversity means being color/identity conscious (intended to convey recognition of the importance of difference in people's lives); and,

8) diversity means race only and, by implication, *everyone but* white people, Christians, older people, and/or white men.

Discussion of **definitions of cultural competence** focused on:

1) cultural competence versus cultural awareness where the impact of the latter was understood to be something more immediately attainable, and the realization of the former was recognized as more of a long-term, lifelong undertaking;

2) cultural competence versus cultural appreciation where the latter was rejected by some who felt that there were many instances in which a culture (or cultural manifestation) was clearly not appreciated and *should* not be appreciated (e.g., various manifestations of sexism, heterosexism, and racism within and/or across national, ethnic, and/or religious groups); and,

3) cultural competence articulated as general global awareness and tied to a fifth core theme.

Institutional identity was considered foundational to the discussion of diversity, because it is understood to determine what the campus thinks it is and/or wants to be, thus, who it seeks to attract as students and employees, and how it brands/markets itself.  In sum, the sentiment was that the campus's diversity plan should flow from its institutional identity and should inform its institutional branding.  Despite the fact that the campus has recently undertaken a number of mission clarification efforts, there was no clear sense of what LWTech's educational niche is; therefore, confusion and conflict exist regarding why students come (e.g., skill development, job

readiness, career change, social interaction), which students come, which students should come and which should not, and whether or not the campus should be solely open admissions and/or also have selective admissions programs. This finding should not be understood to mean that recent mission clarification efforts have been unsuccessful, rather that it may take time for these efforts to permeate campus consciousness, that communication regarding these efforts must be on-going, and/or that even successful efforts can be enhanced by additional focused attention (in this case relative to diversity planning considerations).

Some members of the campus community (including students) felt strongly that students do not come to LWTech for "social interaction;" thus, diversity efforts (perceived as solely or largely directed toward such interaction) were considered unimportant to students' needs/wants. Other members of the campus community (again, including students) understood diversity-related social interaction prowess as a pivotal skill within a diverse and changing global economy, and therefore, foundational to all educational and employment pursuits.

Some members of the LWTech community wondered if selective admissions programs were changing the mission of the college (i.e., mission creep), even pitting programs (including students and faculty within them) against one another (e.g., health sciences (broadly considered) and digital gaming and media). Raised in tandem with this concern, there was a related concern that the climate of selective admissions programs was unwelcoming to students and employees (faculty and staff) who did not match the covertly held definition of who "selective" was to be understood to include in these disciplines/content areas (i.e., on the basis of race, gender, socioeconomic class background, size and appearance, and first language). It is important to note that, at present, these concerns have more to do with the campus's image, and less with resource allocation.

All members of the college with whom the consultants interacted expressed the desire to have a sense, or a stronger sense, of campus pride manifest, for example, in the inclination to purchase and wear/use LWTech "gear" from the campus bookstore. One idea for how such inclination might be manifest was through the establishment of a loveable campus mascot (there was confusion as to whether the campus already had one, if it was a good one (sufficiently loveable), and/or if mascot development/adoption was still under consideration).

**Particular**

**Particular findings** also divide into **two** main areas:

1) **mutual accommodation**; and,

2) **tensions pertaining to the differing experiences of specific groups of people on campus** configured around race, gender, job classification, educational level, first language, immigration status, sexual orientation, academic discipline, disability, and age, considered both discretely (one at a time) and intersectionally (two or more simultaneously).

With respect to **mutual accommodation**, members of the LWTech community asked:

*Who should 'accommodate' whom?*[8]

This is a particularly meaningful question for LWTech, as are the related questions:

*Who should accommodate whom first?* and,

*To what extent, towards what ends, and in what contexts should accommodations be extended?*

These questions emerged in discussions of student and faculty classroom interactions in which curricular accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as for students that speak English as a second language, figured prominently.

These questions also surfaced in conversations about workplace climate (for faculty and staff) relating to training (on-boarding/orientation), performance assessment (accurate recognition of preparedness and on-going engagement), mentorship (towards an aspirational future role), and promotion of/succession by employees from racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups, who speak English as a second language (especially those with native or near native fluency/proficiency, but also with an accent), are women, and/or are under 30 or over 50 years of age. In most instances, those acting in the supervisory capacities in these scenarios are white men over the age of 50.

Ideally, accommodation should be mutual—extending from schools towards students' families and visa versa.[9]  However, schools must take the first step, simply because they have formal authority.[10]

Following this lead, some members of the campus community expressed liking the idea of mutual accommodation, but wondered aloud whether or not there is sufficient expertise or will within the community to participate in such, much less to initiate it. For example, there was the sense that many supervisors were ill-equipped to understand, much less value and affirm, the depth and breath of knowledge and experience brought to the table by employees who were culturally different from them and/or the U.S. "mainstream." Other members of the LWTech community expressed the expectation that students accommodate to the norms of the professor, often characterizing this accommodation as necessary for students' educational and professional success.

While many **tensions pertaining to the differing experiences of specific groups of people on campus** can be seen in the afore-referenced accommodation questions discussion, additional tensions, as well as additional dimensions of these tensions, were also documented. Members of all of the following groups expressed some sense that they felt unwelcomed on campus:

1) Faculty and students in disciplines/content areas perceived to be less academically rigorous (e.g., trades, Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL));

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[8] In discussing the relationship between U.S. public schools and the increasingly diverse bodies of students they serve, Nieto (2010) poses this as a "profoundly multicultural question" (pp. 25, 101).
[9] Nieto, 2010.
[10] Nieto, 2010.

2) Older, white men (especially those moving toward or in/near retirement);

3) People from the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*[11] and Queer) communities;

4) People with disabilities;

5) People/women who speak English as a second language;

6) People/women who speak English as a second language with native or near native fluency/proficiency, but with an accent;

7) Professional/Technical (Prof/Tech) staff (specifically differentiated from non-exempt staff and faculty on the basis of their non-unionized status and, thus, more tenuous employment classification);

8) Women of color; and,

9) Younger women/of color.

Of particular note are the older, white men. In addition to feeling unwelcomed, many of the people in this group expressed a sense of themselves as increasingly powerless/lacking agency[12] relative to an increasingly younger, more diverse workforce and student body. In some instances members of this group expressed the concern that "diversity" does not include them. Thus, if the campus continues to prioritize diversity, their jobs might be at risk. In contrast, other groups perceived older, white men as continuing to have disproportionate influence/impact on campus operations, despite the increasing presence of younger, more diverse students and employees. Accordingly, older white men were characterized as having "legacy rights," special privileges ascribed to them because of the length of time they had been on campus (which was also understood to be a function of their race and gender). In other instances, older, white men expressed the sense that as they moved toward/into retirement, they were not being appreciated for the contributions they had made (rather, effectively "shown the door"), nor encouraged to continue to share their knowledge and experience with the campus community in different, creative, or innovative ways post-retirement.

Separate and distinct from the concerns of/about older, white men articulated above, was a parallel group of concerns. These concerns were expressed by members of the campus community who did not identify themselves as members of any racial, gender, or other group, though they did imply group interests, although with some degree of anxiety relative to this implication, such as referencing their own experience as representative of others "like them." For example, they expressed the sentiment that, "*some people* are concerned that if *they* do not participate in this assessment process that the findings of the assessment will not reflect *their* perspectives." This reluctance to openly express what was clearly implied as a "white" group interest can be understood as a function of:

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[11] Trans* is a more inclusive, and less clinical, term used to describe gender identity broadly.
[12] Agency, meaning the ability to effectively/successfully self-advocate.

1) socialization toward color blindness as polite or fair;

2) fear of being perceived as racist; and/or,

3) a desire to avoid giving any credibility to group identity as important for themselves, both because of a philosophically and/or politically-motivated desire to critique its claimed importance by/for others, and in favor of claiming a singular focus on individual identity.

For members of many non-dominant identity groups (especially along the lines of race, gender, and sexuality), there was real fear expressed that to publically associate with others like oneself (i.e., other people of color, other women, other LGBTQ people) would cultivate resentment on the part of dominant identity group colleagues, and that this resentment could have negative repercussions for the academic and/or employment advancement of members of these non-dominant identity groups. Accordingly, even though members of these groups felt extremely isolated and unsupported, they were still very disinclined to seek each other out for support and guidance. Instead they opted to suffer alone, while presenting a falsely optimistic "game face" to the campus community.

For people who speak English as a second language, especially those with native or near native fluency, but also with an accent, "game face" takes on almost superhuman dimensions. So intense was the expressed desire of people in this group to attribute persistent lack of recognition of their good work as students, staff, and faculty to something other than supervisory linguicism (language bias, prejudice, or outright discrimination), that many came to their interviews with transcripts, tests scores, résumés, and/or professional portfolios in hand and asked the consultants to review them in seeking to identify any other possible explanations for their continuing inability to complete or promote in a timely manner.

The continuing inability to promote in a timely manner, despite extensive qualification (or over-qualification in many instances), was a concern also expressed by and about women, younger women, and women of color. In some instances, members of these different identity groups (based on language, race, gender, and age) perceived that they were being pitted against one another in seeking advancement. So, for *hypothetical* example (given the very small sample size of the constituent groups at intersectional focus here), a younger, recently immigrated, woman of color, who speaks English as a first language might be perceived to be erroneously promoted over an older, women of color, with years of exemplary campus service, who speaks English as a second language with native fluency/proficiency, but also with an accent.

These concerns were tied to related concerns about what "merit" means (in theory and practice), and how merit is tied or not tied—overtly and covertly—to actual successful job performance and educational attainment, versus merely to age, race, gender, and language. In many instances people with years of professional experience articulated that they were encouraged to apply for promotions, did so, were not hired, were counseled to pursue advanced training and/or education, did so, were again encouraged to apply for promotions, did so, were not hired, were counseled pursue more advanced training and/or education…and so on and on and on.

Finally, divisive and demeaning employment and/or disciplinary hierarchies within the staff and faculty (and by enrollment association, student) ranks were documented. Generally, these

hierarchies were described in a manner akin to a socioeconomic class structure with tenured, full professors in academically rigorous content areas (e.g., Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics or STEM fields) on top, students in ABE and ESL programs at the bottom, and everyone else somewhere along the class continuum between these two poles.

Many members of the campus community conveyed that people in all academic and professional quadrants of the campus were outstanding in what they did as faculty and staff, and in their progression as students. Thus, excellence, not class advantage, should drive status. But other members of the LWTech community reinforced the lived reality of this class system. For these people, the business of the college is to educate, and within education there is—and has long been—an academic Canon that is generally accepted to have established what the most useful knowledge is, and to ensure that that knowledge stays in a privileged place. Accordingly, the people who pursue this knowledge are rewarded differentially from those who do not, because this knowledge is typically accepted as more difficult to acquire.

This last finding is of particular import to diversity work in higher education, including LWTech. Critiques of the Canon as Eurocentric[13] (broadly considered) began dominating campus conversations on curricular diversity in the 1990s, though challenges to the Canon—from both inside and outside Western traditions—long pre-date this discourse.[14] Ironically, some of the most elite faculty in the world (e.g., emeritus faculty at elite research institutions working in cell biology and molecular genetics with National Science Foundation (NSF) funding) are among the most multiculturally-inclined in their teaching, research, and service endeavors today.[15] In fact, STEM disciplines in many quarters of academia are leading the way in diversifying the Canon, precisely because doing so not only reflects current trends in their disciplines in the United States, but also current global social and economic trends.[16] These developments, among many others, can guide LWTech's diversity efforts moving forward.

## Coda

In sum, we—the consultants—see the findings recounted herein through the lenses of **hope and possibility**, though we understand that these findings might be read by others as only troubling. Our hope stems both from the latitude we were given to surface and document these findings (there was no effort made to limit findings in any way), and from the utter honesty that enabled the findings. Accordingly, we see great possibility for the LWTech to build a learning and employment culture in which diversity—thoughtfully considered—is affirmed in ways that ensure the institution's success through the success of all students, faculty, and staff, both on campus and beyond.

For the campus as a whole to "buy in" to the work we, as consultants, are doing, there has to be belief in our consultancy efforts that we are not "playing favorites." In some ways, everyone—especially the "diversity" people (however this group of people is defined)—have to experience us with mixed emotion; they must be a little unhappy with us and a little happy with us. We have to support and challenge everyone in a complexly balanced way. People have to see that

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[13] Eurocentric, meaning organized around the norms, experiences, and perceived contributions of people of European ancestry.
[14] Banks, 1993; Duster, 1993, 2000; Thompson & Tyagi, 1993; Yamane, 2002.
[15] Clark, 2002a, 2002b.
[16] Moses, 2002; Settlage & Southerland, 2012.

we "see" you (LWTech), and that in seeing you, we are making the best (not the easiest or most popular) recommendations to you for moving forward. Towards these ends this report, and the larger work, is dedicated.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1) Do you think LWTech has defined diversity?  If yes, can you describe what process the college used to define diversity? What do you think about the definition and the definition development process? If no, how would you define diversity in the context of LWTech and why?

2) Do you think LWTech has defined cultural competency? If yes, can you describe what process the college used to define cultural competency? What do you think about the definition and the definition development process? If no, how would you define cultural competency in the context of LWTech and why?

3) How, if at all, do you see diversity in general and/or specific diversity issues, "show up" in your daily life/work at LWTech as a student, faculty, or staff member?

4) What do you think should be LWTech's diversity goals? How would you know that LWTech has reached these goals?

5) Are you aware of any negative "incidents" related to diversity that have occurred at LWTech?  If yes, what are they and do you think they have something to do with why we—the consultants—are here? If no, why do you think we—the consultants—are here?

6) What is your ideal hope for diversity and cultural competency at LWTech?  That is, this process with the consultants will be a "success" in my book if…what?

7) What data (qualitative and quantitative) do you think would help us understand diversity and cultural competency issues at LWTech?

8) Is there anything else you want to share? Questions you wish we had asked?