COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO ESTABLISHING

RACIALLY DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

A WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CASE STUDY

by

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This study examines the level of commitment to diversity and inclusion at a large, multi-campus, urban community college in Western Pennsylvania. Using the institutional dimensions of the Multi-contextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments framework, this study identified strengths and challenges of the study institution. Using semi-structured interviews and document analysis, this study found that the institution's strengths were its hiring and search processes; the compositional diversity in students, staff, administrators, and full-time faculty; the presences of support mechanisms; diversity conscious strategic decision making; and diversity in curriculum. Challenges identified for the institution were student of color enrollment management; hiring process inconsistencies; diversity considerations in tenure; and the lack of resources allocated for diversity and inclusion initiatives. Recommendations were made to help the institution strengthen its commitment to facilitating diverse and inclusive environments.

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1.0   PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Nationally, students of color[1] are experiencing tremendous success in accessing community college education. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) reports that 45% of students attending community colleges in the United States identify as students of color. Latina/o students represent 21%, Black students represent 14%, Asian/Pacific Islander students represent 6%, Native American students represent 1%, and Multi-racial students represent 3% of all students attending community colleges (AACC, nod). By comparison, white students represent 50% of all students attending community colleges (AACC, n.d.). The enrollment of students of color reflects the demography of the country, with Latina/o individuals having the greatest increases in the population and community. Despite the compositional diversity reflected in the student enrollment of community colleges, an issue that continues to plague these institutions is the disproportionate graduation rates of students of color when compared to their white counterparts. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), students of color only account for approximately 35% of associate degrees conferred, while their white counterparts account for nearly 64% (Synder & Dillow, 2015). Specific to the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), the setting of this study, IPEDS reports that in 2015, 66% of students who were awarded associate degrees

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[1] For the purposes of this study, students of color are defined as students who self-identify as African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Multi-racial.

identified as white. This same data set reports that only 17% of students of color earn associate degrees. This is extremely troubling and illustrates the disproportionate completion rates of students. This graduation gap presents a problem that warrants attention.

There are a host of reasons for the disproportionate completion rates of students of color. Some researchers compellingly argue that the completion rates of students of color are a product of a lack of academic and social support (González, 2015; Thomas, 2014). Some researchers argue that the lack of successful completion among students of color is the result of pre-college attributes or pre-college environments that act as barriers to completion (Greene, Marti, & McClenney, 2008; Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011). Others argue that students are not completing their college education due to a lack of sense of belonging to the institution itself (Hausmann, Schofield, Woods, 2007; Smedley, Meyter & Harrel, 1993). Lastly, some research has found that a lack of peer support (Harper, 2007; Palmer & Gasmen, 2008) and a lack of financial support (Braunsteirn, McGrath & Pescatrice, 2001; Kim 2004) can contribute to the attrition of students of color.

Even though so much is known about the potential causes of the attrition of students of color, the inequitable completion rates by race persist. It is important that consideration be given to alternative explanations for this persistent and complex problem plaguing the country's community colleges. An alternate and less obvious explanation for this problem is the level of institutional commitment to facilitating a racially diverse learning environment conducive to the success of students of color. Many community colleges articulate a value of diversity and inclusion, yet the completion problem for students of color continues. With the great deal of knowledge available about students of color, little research explores the institution as the focal point. Moreover, there is a dearth of research with community colleges as the focal point. It is for

this reason that exploring this issue was warranted. In an effort to inform practice related to the problem area of disproportionate completion rates of students of color in comparison to their white counterparts, the problem of practice studied focused on measuring the level of institutional commitment to facilitating a racially diverse learning environment within one community college in Western Pennsylvania.

1.1   PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the degree to which one community college in Western Pennsylvania conveys an institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion and how it implements effective institutional strategies that demonstrate this commitment. Specifically, this study sought to assess the community college's institutional commitment by applying well-researched practices to the community college's articulation and action related to developing a racially diverse learning environment. While it is understood that diversity is much more inclusive than race, this study applies a focus on the racial dimension of diversity. For the purposes of this study, institutional commitment was defined as the degree to which the institution makes intentional efforts to enact diversity in the form of policies and practices in comparison to its stated values.

While the study did not empirically test the connection between institutional commitment and student outcomes, a relationship between these two things was assumed (Chang, 1999). As the research cited above has shown, this literature often uses the student as the focal point, examining what students want, need, or lack that can ultimately serve as predictors of success for students of color. Although the relationship between the student's stake in their own success and

completion cannot be denied, this study argues and assumes that the community college that serves these students possesses an equal amount of responsibility in committing to the facilitation of a racially diverse learning environment conducive to their success.

The role of institutional commitment and intentional institutional action was therefore an important aspect to study in tandem because identifying and measuring the degree of congruency between these variables allowed for honest conversation about what community colleges truly value. If community colleges genuinely value diversity and inclusion, effective institutional action should occur; this would help to provide students of color the necessary tools to be successful, all within the confines of a supportive and welcoming environment.

Ideal environments conducive to supporting the success of diverse populations of students do not happen by accident or chance (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012). Even community colleges that are compositionally diverse due to the demography of the community they serve must make intentional efforts to foster an inclusive diverse learning environment for all students. When the commitment of the institution is present, not only will students benefit, but faculty, staff, administrators, and all other stakeholders will ultimately benefit as well (Hurtado et al., 2012).

1.2   STUDY SETTING

The setting for this study was a large, multi-campus, urban, community college located in Western Pennsylvania. CCAC has four campuses and five branch centers spread throughout Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The mission of CCAC emphasizes its focus on affordable access, quality programs, diversity, and educating the citizens of the region. Structurally, CCAC

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is led by a system-wide president, four campus presidents, and a team of vice presidents that lead the system-wide offices of human resources, finance, government relations, marketing and public relations, diversity and inclusion, advancement, and information technology. These vice presidents are responsible for coordinating their respective processes and programs for the college system as a whole. A 15-member Board of Trustees is appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council governs the college.

1.3   OVERVIEW OF STUDY

This study examined the degree to which CCAC's institutional actions are congruent with its expression of commitment to racial diversity. CCAC's institutional actions were examined qualitatively using interviews and document analysis, in an effort to understand how the institution characterizes[2] its efforts to establish a racially diverse learning environment. The study answered the following questions:

1.)   How does the community college characterize its efforts to increase and/or maintain compositional diversity within its student body, faculty, staff, and administration?

2.)   How does the community college characterize its commitment to diversity in curriculum and tenure?

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[2] For the purpose of this study, the term "characterize" refers to how the institutional leadership describes the institution's behavior.

3.) How does the community college characterize its organizational behavior, organizational structures, institutional priorities, budget, and internal policies and practices around diversity?

By answering these questions, this study has provided information that will allow CCAC to understand the perceptions it possesses of its commitment to facilitating diverse learning environments and the reality of its actions. Thus, a report and suggestions will be presented to the college president as a demonstration of excellence.

1.4   SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study focused on assessing the commitment level of a community college that has expressed through its mission and values a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Examining an institution that has a clearly articulated commitment to diversity and inclusion provided an opportunity to learn if congruency between these articulated values and institutionalized policies and actions was present. In the areas that congruency exists within the institutional structure, the case study serves as an example of what commitment to diversity and inclusion looks like. In the areas of the institution that lacked congruency, the study serves as an opportunity for the institution to strengthen its commitment with the use of evidentiary support produced because of this study.

1.5   STUDY DELIMITATIONS

There are some delimitations to this study. This study did not examine how CCAC's institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion is tied to student outcomes. As a first step, it is important to measure and quantify the level of institutional commitment to establish if a commitment is present. Once quantified, further research can tie the measured commitment to student outcomes and compare it to other institutions.   This study also did not explore perceptions of the institutional climate itself. There are a number of studies that explore students and employees' perceptions of institutional climate (Bowman & Denson, 2014; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy & Hart, 2008; Wubneh, 2011). The goal of this study was to explore the degree to which institutional policies and practices are congruent with the stated mission and values of the institution. While perception of climate can indeed be indicative of institutional commitment, the goal was to find evidence of institutional action. The next chapter will explore the literature to help frame the study and to identify what institutional characteristics are indicative of an institution that is committed to fostering diverse learning environments.

1.6   CONCLUSION

Community colleges have the ability to impact the lives of students inside and outside the classroom. This impact has the transformational ability to not only change the lives of the students who attend the country's community colleges, but also the lives of others who depend on those students. As noted, there is a disproportionality of students of color completing their degrees when compared to white students; in particular, this problem plagues community

colleges. Although there are several possible reasons for this, I argue that the institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion is instrumental in establishing an environment that is conducive to the success of students of color. Therefore, the present study sought to explore and measure the level of institutional commitment at CCAC.

This study measured the congruency between CCAC's articulated values of diversity and inclusion and institutional action. I did this by exploring CCAC's institutional actions through an analysis of CCAC's institutional policies and interviews with the campus administrators responsible for overseeing and assessing such policies.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to assess and operationalize the institutional commitment to racial diversity within the community college context, exploration into the literature was warranted. This review explored the literature related to campus climate, starting with an overview of the Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environment (MMDLE) (Hurtado et al., 2012) as a theoretical framework. The first section of this review is framed using the MMDLE, with a specific examination of the research that has explored the compositional and structural/organizational dimensions of the climate. The section on the compositional dimension of the climate will be presented in two subsections of relevant research: first as it relates to student compositional diversity, then as it relates to faculty/staff compositional diversity. The second section will explore literature as it relates to the organizational structures of higher education institutions. This section will be organized into four areas that will provide insight into institutional structures including intergroup dialogues, curriculum, tenure, and institutional policy.

2.1   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The MMDLE framework was used to guide the inquiry as well as this literature review. The MMDLE is a multidimensional framework that connects campus climate to educational

practices and learning outcomes (Hurtado et al., 2012). The framework evolved from the early

works of Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1998, 1999). The original

multidimensional and multicontextual model for enhancing campus climate for racial/ethnic

diversity was produced from over 30 years of research related to students of color in higher

education (Hurtado et al, 1998; 1999). Up until this framework was created, the literature often

referred to campus climate as an "important but intangible factor" in understanding the

experiences of students of color on campus (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 280).

Hurtado et al. (1998; 1999) proposed four dimensions that were seen to be vital for

understanding campus climate for both research and practice. These dimensions were (1) the

institutional context; (2) the structural context; (3) the psychological context; and (4) the

behavioral context (Hurtado et al., 1998). The institutional context included policies, practices,

and history; the structural/organizational context was conceptualized as the compositional

racial/ethnic diversity of the campus; the psychological context included group relations,

people's perceptions of racial discrimination or conflict, and views towards racial groups other

than one's own; and finally, the behavioral context dealt with the interactions between and the

nature of intergroup relations (Hurtado, 1998). The model's two largest contributions to the field

were that (a) it assumed that the campus climate could be assessed and (b) that institutions that

focused on improving structural/compositional diversity often had legacies deeply rooted in

inclusion or exclusion (Hurtado et al., 2012).

Given the number of historically significant affirmative action cases that were brewing in

the early 2000's, scholars conducted more research seeking to link the structural diversity of the

student body and interaction with diverse peers to learning outcomes (Hurtado et al., 2012).

Researchers found that the physical presence of racially diverse students on campus was the first

step, but not the only step, in realizing the educational benefits of diversity on campus. This link was missing from the original model of campus climate (Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999). Also missing from the original model were the effects of diversity dynamics in the areas of co-curricular and curricular elements and an explanation of how these areas affect climate (Hurtado et al, 2012). Research on the behavioral dimension mainly looked at cross-racial interactions and campus involvement of and between faculty and students, with a dearth of research related to the role of staff. Although Mayhew, Grurnwald, and Dey (2006); Staton-Salazar (2004, 2010); and Garcia (2015) have since explored this area, Hurtado et al. (2012) noted this as a limitation in the original model.

Others have also criticized the original climate model, as it did not fully explain the importance of institutional policies in practice. Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) revised the model and added a fifth dimension. After renaming the structural dimension as "the compositional dimension" for clarification purposes, this fifth dimension focused on the structure and organizational aspects of higher education institutions including "curriculum, tenure processes, organizational decision-making processes, budget allocations, and institution policies" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 45).

With all of these things taken into consideration, Hurtado et al. (2012) proposed an updated model to adjust for these evolutionary developments. This updated model is known as the Multicontextual Model for Diversity Learning Environments (MMDLE) (Hurtado et al., 2012). The MMDLE (See Appendix A) explains how intentional curricular and co-curricular practices operate within the five dimensions of climate that work within the four contexts of an institution (Hurtado et al, 2012). The five dimensions are the historical, organizational,

compositional, psychological, and behavioral dimensions of climate. These five dimensions operate within four areas of socio-historical, policy, institutional, and community context.

Since the present study seeks to understand the role of institutions in facilitating climate, only the institutional-level dimensions of the climate will be examined. The institutional-level dimensions are defined as "dimensions such as the institution's historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion; its compositional diversity of students, faculty and staff; and organizational structures" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p.58). The historical dimension, which can be thought of as the effects of an institution's historical events on the current campus climate and practices, has been purposefully excluded because the focus of the present study seeks to explain the ways in which one community college commits to facilitating positive climates conducive to positive outcomes for students or color. While it is understood that historical events shape the way institutions operate, the focus of this study was on specific evidence of current commitment that can be more readily measured.

The structural/organizational dimension focuses on the institutional structures and processes, such as "tenure processes, decision-making processes regarding recruitment and hiring, budget allocations, curriculum, and other institutional practices and policies" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p.60; Milem et al., 2005). The compositional dimension refers to the quantity of representation of diverse populations in students, faculty, staff, and administration. Hurtado et al. (2012) state that the compositional dimension of campus climate is the first step in creating diverse learning environments.

2.2   COMPOSITIONAL DIMENSION RESEARCH

When implementing or assessing any diversity and inclusion effort for an institution, an important first step is to have the actual presence of diverse students, faculty, and staff within the campus community. Therefore, the compositional dimension can be defined as the "physical presence of previously underrepresented groups within an institution" (Hurtado et al., 2008). The compositional dimension of climate seeks to understand policies and procedures aimed at increasing the physical number of underrepresented constituents on a college campus. Many researchers have sought to understand and assess these policies and procedures, but most note that simply increasing the compositional diversity present within an institution does not automatically facilitate a welcoming and positive racial climate (Hurtado et al., 2008). While improving the compositional diversity on campus is vital to creating inclusive environments, the creation of these climates must be done in a purposeful, strategic, and intentional way (Hurtado et al., 2012). However, due to compositional diversity being the start of facilitating inclusive environments, assessing compositional diversity across all constituent groups of an institution can allow for greater understanding of campus climate (Hurtado et al., 2008).

2.2.1   Student Compositional Diversity

Although the research on compositional diversity is vast, such research primarily focuses on assessing the number of women and students of color on campuses (Hurtado et al., 2008). Some, however, have looked at the outcomes associated with compositional diversity. Pike and Kuh (2006) explored structural/compositional diversity and how it impacts informal peer interactions and campus climate. These researchers sought to examine the degree to which

educational outcomes were related to racial diversity on campus (Pike & Kuh, 2006). They found that compositional diversity was related to cross-cultural interactions between students (Pike & Kuh, 2006). Providing evidence of growing institutional interest in compositional diversity, some racial compositional research has explored the degree to which admissions marketing materials are consistent with the compositional diversity that exists within the institution (Pipert, Essenburg, & Matchett, 2013). Pipert et al. (2013) discovered that four-year institutions often misrepresent a level of racial diversity that is inconsistent with the compositional diversity within the institution (Pipert et al., 2013). The researchers also found racial diversity to be primarily represented by African American students (Pipert et al., 2013). Other compositional research focuses on the examination of the educational benefit of compositional diversity in the classroom (Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund, & Parente, 2001). Using the Classroom and Outcomes Survey, researchers were able to make a positive correlation between compositional diversity and learning; when there was more compositional diversity present, there were more learning gains for all students within the classroom setting (Terenzini et al., 2001).

Even with the great amount of research that exists, the body of literature fails to explore compositional diversity within the context of the community college. Some research, however, has fairly recently brought the examination of racial compositional diversity to the community college context. Jones (2013) explored the degree to which racial composition of the community college student body influences cross-cultural interactions and learning. He found that compositionally diverse community colleges have an increased likelihood of cross-cultural exchanges occurring.

2.2.2 Faculty and Staff Compositional Diversity

Although the research related to racial and gender compositional diversity provides valuable insight into its importance in the higher educational setting, this body of research as a whole focuses less on faculty compositional diversity and very rarely on staff compositional diversity and its impact on students and student outcomes. The research that focuses on the importance of increasing the compositional diversity of faculty will be briefly reviewed. For example, Lin, Francis, Minor and Eisele (2015) explored the impact that a ten-year diversity initiative had on faculty compositional diversity as it related to gender and race. They found that the diversity initiative increased the number of female faculty and faculty of color significantly (Lin et al., 2015). They also found the compensation gap for women faculty and faculty of color that existed prior to the initiatives was completely eliminated (Lin et al., 2015).

Other research has explored students' perceptions of, and satisfaction with, the compositional diversity of faculty (Lee, 2010). Using a quantitative survey, students at a predominantly white four-year institution were asked to share their perceptions of their faculty. The data were disaggregated by race and showed that white students were more likely to be satisfied with the compositional diversity of faculty than their student of color counterparts (Lee, 2010). The researchers also found that students of color were less likely to perceive a racially homogenous population comprised of white faculty members in an academic department as welcoming (Lee, 2010).

While faculty compositional diversity has been explored in the four-year context, little research has been conducted on faculty compositional diversity within the community college. Furthermore, less is known about the compositional diversity of staff. Garcia (2015) examined staff compositional diversity as it related to student affairs professionals. Using the MMDLE as a

framework, Garcia (2015) sought to examine the perceptions and experience of student affairs professionals at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI; an institution that enrolls 25% or more Latina/o students) as it relates to diversity. Findings showed that departmental compositional diversity affected how student affairs professionals experienced the racial climate within the institution.

2.3   STRUCTURAL/ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION RESEARCH

The way in which diversity is experienced on campus by students of color is a direct result of the policies, procedures, and programs that the institution employs, or does not employ, to facilitate a campus climate conducive to the success of students of color. This leads into the next dimension of climate that I will explore, with a focus on the literature that seeks to explain the structural/organizational dimensions that operate within higher educational institutions. As articulated previously, the structural/organizational dimension of climate focuses on the structures and organizational aspects of higher education institutions. These include institutional factors such as "curriculum, tenure processes, organization decision-making processes, budget allocations, and institutional policies" (Hurtado et al, 2012, p.45). In this section, I will focus on four structural/organizational elements to consider.

2.3.1   Intergroup Dialogue

Some institutional dimension research focuses on specific intentional programmatic efforts to facilitate inclusive climates for students of color. Some of these programs focus on

facilitating intergroup dialogue on campus as a way to improve campus climate. Lopez and Zúñiga (2010) provide a comprehensive review of literature related to intergroup dialogues. They note that institutional intergroup dialogue efforts often manifest themselves in the form of curricular courses. In their study of 42 college students at a large Midwestern university, Nagda and Zúñiga (2003) found evidence that intergroup dialogues help facilitate intergroup learning and communication which Vaccaro (2012) has linked to the improvement of campus racial climate.

2.3.2   Curriculum

Other structural/organizational research focuses on institutional curriculum. As Hurtado et al. (2012) note, many researchers have found that diversity curriculum has the transformational ability to broaden the perspectives of individuals and thus improve interactions with campus constituents from diverse backgrounds. Engberg (2004) came to this conclusion in his study of various educational interventions on students' racial biases. Curriculum was identified as a domain that was vital to the development of students' understanding of different people and the world around them (Engberg, 2004). Denson (2009) also came to this conclusion in her study of the impact of curricular and co-curricular diversity activities on student biases. Adding to the institutional curriculum literature, Epps and Epps (2010) assessed the diversity curriculum at Kennesaw State University (KSU). Using the Diversity Inventory developed specifically for this assessment, researchers found that the Coles College of Business provides adequate curricular and scholarship diversity. This assessment is important because it adds a way to assess the institutional curriculum as it relates to diversity and inclusion. Due to the benefits

found for diversity in curriculum, it is important to discuss the processes by which faculty are granted tenure, since faculty have control over the curriculum.

2.3.3 Tenure Process

According to research, tenured faculty positions are declining (DiMaria, 2012). Reports state that there was a 22% increase in faculty positions between 1997 and 2007 in the community college (DiMaria, 2012). While these numbers have increased, the number of tenure stream positions actually decreased by 21% during the same ten-year span (DiMaria, 2012). With tenure becoming scarcer, the fairness and level of equity present in the process of granting tenure has continuously come into question. While both four-year and community college tenure processes are extremely similar, the largest difference is typically the importance of service to the college as opposed to research and publications (DiMaria, 2012). However, both tenure processes involve the subjective judgments made by an individual or groups of individuals that ultimately decide who is granted this prestigious honor and those who are not.

The racial composition of faculty has been known to contribute to positive student outcomes (Abdul-Raheem, 2016); therefore, it is important to explore the process in which faculty are granted tenure, securing a faculty members future at the institution. Abdule-Raheem (2016) argues that when faculty members possess tenure, they are more able to advocate for cultural equitty and improvement in climate. Lawrence, Celis, and Ott (2014) explored the perceived fairness of the tenure process. Using Structural Equation Modeling, researchers surveyed 2,247 tenure track assistant professors at 21 research institutions. Researchers found that an individual's sense of control constructing tenure dossier shaped his or her perceptions of fairness of the tenure process (Lawrence et al., 2014). Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, and

Galindo (2009) found that faculty of color who pursue tenure often get less support for their research, a significant lack of mentoring, and an inability to find their academic identity within and against the prevalent institutional structure. All of these serve as barriers for faculty of color achieving tenure. Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, and Galindo (2011) found these to be barriers in a separate study as well. Using Critical Race Theories and counter narrative methods, the researchers reaffirmed these barriers, (Garrison-Wade et al., 2011).

2.3.4   Institutional Policy

As Hurtado et al. (2012) note, institutional commitment to diversity can manifest itself in the ways in which institutions make decisions around diversity and inclusion. The responsiveness or lack of response to diversity climate issues can also be a manifestation of commitment (Hurtado et al., 2012). If an institution is unresponsive to diversity climate issues, this could be a sign of a false commitment to diversity. The literature provides some insight into institutional policies and their importance to diversity climate. Some research has identified the importance of budgetary allocation decisions to diversity and inclusion efforts (Wilson, 2013). Wilson (2013) notes that institutional budget planning is vital in times of institutional financial distress. In his study, 97% of respondents noted that their diversity focused departments and initiatives were funded by the state. Sources of support included grants, federal stimulus funds, student activity fees, and other sources (Wilson, 2013). Although this examination of funding highlights the amount of funds given to institutions to support diversity and inclusion efforts, it also identifies a lack of institutionalized operating funding for diversity and inclusion initiatives. As state and federal spending on higher education dwindles, the importance of institutional support to diversity and inclusion initiatives will become more vital.

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The literature presents a wealth of information regarding the structural and organizational dimension of climate. While this information is vast, little research has been conducted on the structural and organizational dimension within the community college context. Moreover, within the available community college focused research, few have students of color as a focal point. Within the available body of community college research, the focus is almost exclusively on African American male students. As Harris and Wood (2013) assert, a void exists in the community college literature for students of color who do not identify as African American males. Therefore, a broader institutional-contextual examination is warranted to fully explore the dynamics of institutional/organization dimensions of climate.

2.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented information regarding the importance of the institutional stake in compositional and structural/organizational commitment to institutional diversity and inclusion. While compositional diversity is the first step to building inclusive climates, it is not the only step. Institutions must examine things such as tenure, institutional policies, intentional intergroup dialogues, and curriculum. As a result of this chapter, this study, which seeks to assess the institutional commitment to racial diversity and inclusion and the congruency between institutional action (policy, resources, curriculum, etc.) and expression of values of diversity and inclusion, was situated within the literature and MMDLE theoretical framework.

3.0   METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which one community college's actions are congruent with its articulated values of diversity and inclusion. Guided by two institutional-level dimensions of Hurtado et al.'s (2012) Multicontextual Model of Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE) framework and the applicable research found, the following inquiry questions guided this exploration to understand how the institutional leadership characterizes the community college's diversity and inclusion efforts. I used a single case study design and sought to illuminate an understanding of how this institution characterizes its efforts related to their commitment to facilitate diverse learning environments by addressing the following inquiry questions:

1.) How does the community college characterize its efforts to increase and/or maintain compositional diversity within its student body, faculty, staff, and administration?

2.) How does the community college characterize its commitment to diversity in curriculum and tenure?

3.) How does the community college characterize its organizational behavior, organizational structures, institutional priorities, budget and internal policies and practices around diversity?

In using this single case study design, I described and assessed the institution's commitment within the context of the study. This led to a greater understanding for the institution of how it characterizes its diversity and inclusion efforts and shed light on what it is doing well, as well as areas that need improvement.

3.1   INQUIRY SETTING

The setting for the study was a large, multi-campus, urban, community college located in Western Pennsylvania. The Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) has four campuses and five branch centers spread throughout Allegheny County, its sponsoring county (CCAC, n.d.a). The mission of CCAC emphasizes its focus on affordable access, quality programs, diversity, and educating the citizens of the region (CCAC, n.d.b).

Structurally, CCAC is led by a system-wide president, four campus presidents, and a team of vice presidents that lead the system-wide offices of human resources, finance, government relations, marketing and public relations, diversity and inclusion, advancement, and information technology (CCAC, n.d.d). These Vice Presidents are responsible for coordinating their respective processes and programs for the college system as a whole.

Established in 2007 with the appointment of the Vice-President/Chief Diversity Officer (CCAC, 2007), the CCAC Office of Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for managing the institution's diversity and inclusion efforts. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is comprised of three diversity-focused professionals (CCAC, n.d.c). The lead professional is the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion. This position reports directly to the System President. This team of professionals oversees institutional Title IX compliance, student

diversity, non-discrimination policies, disability accommodations, procurement of services through Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Businesses (MWDBEs) and other diversity related initiatives for the college (CCAC, n.d.c).

The college receives its funding from three primary sources: state funding, local funding, and institutional tuition dollars. When founded, the funding model adopted by the state called for all community colleges to receive one-third of its funding from each source. However, throughout the years this funding model has not been followed. For example, localities often neglected their responsibility in funding. The state, depending on competing state financial commitment often does not meet its responsibility. Also, Boards of Trustees are often too cautious about raising tuition prices. Given that a primary mission of all community colleges is affordable access, some boards err on the side of caution with approving any tuition raises. This can often cause issues when tuition raises are necessary to balance out deficiencies in other funding sources. CCAC has moved towards a greater emphasis on fundraising to overcome funding deficiencies.

Demographically, the institutional credit enrollment is 27,000 students (CCAC, n.d.e). Of these students 58% are women; 28% are students of color; 55% of students are enrolled in career programs; 65% are part-time; and 62% attend classes during the day. The college awarded 2,000 associate degrees and 600 certificates in 2014 (CCAC, n.d.e). Of CCAC's benefited employee population, 78% identify as white and 20 percent identify as people of color (CCAC, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 1,971 students completed associate degrees in 2014. Of these students, 66% were white and 17% were identified as students of color. The number of associate degrees awarded to students whose race was unknown was 17%. Given that students of color make up nearly 55% of students who attend CCAC, the fact that

these students only account for 17% of students who earn associate degrees is extremely troubling and illustrates the disproportionate completion rates of students.

3.2   EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

My epistemological approach to this study was rooted in Constructivism. This approach holds that people construct their own meaning of the world around them (Mertens, 2010). Constructivists assume that reality is constructed through the experiences we have, and believe that there is no objective reality, but that we all construct our own reality based on the unique experiences we have in our own skin (Mertens, 2010). Like many constructivists, I believe that knowledge is constructed based on a collection of our social and cultural experiences. Therefore, learning is a social process that is forever evolving. My approach to research thus depends on the ability to construct reality, gain knowledge, and learn through the interaction I can have with the phenomenon being studied. Thus, a case study approach using qualitative methods allows for this interaction to occur.

3.3   RESEARCHER'S REFLEXIVITY

As the researcher conducting the inquiry, it is important to be transparent about who I am and how I am situated within the study. Racially, I identify as African American because my ancestral lineage can be traced back to the continent of Africa. Socioeconomically I grew up in a single-parent, low income, working-class household. Education has given me the opportunity to

improve my socioeconomic position and I now identify as middle class. My gender and sexual identity is that of a heterosexual male. Although I hold many identities, the most important one as it relates to this study is my racial identity.

As an advocate for my race and ethnicity, I look for and identify ways in which higher education practitioners can better support not only African American students, but all students of color. Thus, a large part of my career has been devoted to serving students of color and other diverse populations. When I served as the Director of Student Life at CCAC, my curiosity, which was the motive behind this study, came about because the institution often articulated that it values diversity and inclusion. Given that I was not in a position that was directly responsible for diversity and inclusion by job description, I was able to objectively look at how the institution supported diversity and inclusion and facilitated diverse learning environments. My positionality within the institution allowed me to have an emic approach to this study. As Jackson and Hogg (2010) define, the emic approach examines what specifically occurs within a culture and seeks to understand the culture through the experiences of those who exist within it. This was an advantage because it allowed me to better understand the data that was collected through my emic point of view.

3.4   INQUIRY METHODS/APPROACH

A qualitative research design was used as the approach for this study. Qualitative research is often used to describe, understand, and interpret a specific phenomenon at a specific point in time within a specific context (Merriam, 2009). Thus, the study sought to describe, understand, and interpret how the institution characterizes its effort to facilitate diverse learning

environments. Furthermore, the qualitative dimensions of the study provided a deep understanding of the setting in which the phenomenon occurred.

There are many reasons why qualitative research was used for this inquiry. The study examines how CCAC institutionalizes its commitment to establishing diverse learning environments. As Creswell (2013) suggests, in the qualitative research process, the focal point is to understand what meaning the study's participants hold about a specific phenomenon. In this present study, I seek to understand what meaning institutional leaders assign to the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Creswell (2013) also suggests that qualitative research occur in the setting in which the issue or problem occurs. As a practitioner researcher, collecting data in the place at which I was employed, occurred in a naturalistic setting. As students of color at CCAC continue to depart from the institution without degrees at much higher rates than their white counterparts (NCES), being a practitioner researcher not only allowed for the exploration within the naturalistic setting, but also it provided an opportunity to understand the complexities that exist within the setting.

Lastly, Creswell (2013) suggests that qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data. To fully understand how the institutional leadership categorizes its efforts to commit to diversity and inclusion, multiple forms of data collection was used. If I would have relied solely on interviews as the sole form of data collection, I would not have gathered sufficient evidence to infer actual organizational behavior. By examining institutional policies, procedures, and budgets centered on diversity and inclusion, data collected in the interviews was then measured for concurrence with institutional action. These reasons provide support that qualitative research was necessary for meeting the inquiry objectives. Of the many qualitative approaches, a case study approach was used.

Case studies can be a great method for getting an in-depth look into a phenomenon. Case studies are especially useful when exploring an area of research that has not been fully explored or is relatively new (Eisenhardt, 1989). The study used case study primarily because the goal was to gain an in-depth and emergent understanding of how CCAC characterizes its institutional effort to commit to diversity and inclusion. This area of research, as it relates to higher education, is severely underdeveloped.

As Yazan (2015) suggests, multiple data collection tools are needed in case studies in an effort to have the data "converge in a triangulation fashion" (p. 142). Two qualitative tools that are often used in case study research are interviews and document analyses. This study used interviews with the college leadership to assess the level to which the institution's diversity and inclusion efforts were present. Document analysis was used as a secondary data source and was primarily used to analyze institutional policies as it relates to diversity and inclusion efforts. Interviews are great tools for gaining in-depth knowledge. Interviews allow for people to provide their perspective in their own words, they allow the researchers to adapt questions to dive deeper into understanding the answers provided, and they allow for unforeseen issues to be explored (Menter, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin & Lowden, 2011). Due to the emergent nature of the study, interviews were used in an effort to provide the flexibility to follow up on unforeseen issues. In order to support the data collected in the interviews, documents such as the institutional diversity plan and other college policies were analyzed to provide evidentiary support of the data found in the interviews. Next, I will explore the research design of the study.

3.5   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study consisted of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews have yielded the greatest amount of data as they consisted of interviews with senior-level administrators who oversee the areas that the literature demonstrated are necessary for an institution to consider if they are truly committed to the facilitation of diverse learning environments. As Yin (2014) asserts, interviews are an important component of case study research because they provide insight into human affairs and actions. Using this method allowed for better understanding of the actions, thoughts, and perceptions of the senior leaders who form the strategic direction of the institution.   The specific interview technique that was employed to interview the senior leaders is called "elite" interviewing. As Hoschschild (2009) presents, elite interviews are ideal when the researcher is seeking to gain understanding of recent historical change or the role of memory and perception. This technique relies on a base of knowledge about the context, stance, and past history of the interviewee. My positionality and experience within the institution equipped me to interview these senior leaders. The documents that were collected and analyzed shed light on the degree to which the leadership's intentions and perceptions found during the interviews were consistent with the language in the mission and values statement, strategic plan, and diversity strategic plan. As Yin (2014) argues, documents should provide insight and/or corroborations of other sources, in the case of this study, the interviews.

3.5.1 Sample

The study's participants were selected based on their oversight of areas vital to the compositional and structural/organizational dimensions of the MMDLE. The administrators who participated in the study were the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion, Vice President of Human Resources, Admissions Functional Dean, Provost, and System President. The interviews consisted of seven questions (See Appendix B). The following lists the participants and the focus of their departments.

- *Admissions Functional Dean* – The Admissions Functional Dean has the responsibility of coordinating and assuring collaboration for admissions related activity is occurring throughout system. Given the vital role admissions has in the recruitment and matriculation of new students, this dean was able to shed light on specifics of efforts being made to recruit students of color.

- *Provost* – The Provost is the chief academic officer of the institution. The Provost was able to provide information related to the institution's diversity efforts as they relate to curriculum, faculty compositional diversity, and the tenure process.

- *Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Inclusion* – The Special Assistant to the President serves as the chief diversity officer for the institution. The Special Assistant provided overall information regarding all of the institution's diversity and inclusion efforts both in the compositional and structural/organizational realms. He also provided some historical perspective of the office of Diversity and Inclusion.

- *System President* – The System President serves as the chief executive officer for the institution. He is responsible for overseeing all of the operations of the college, system-wide. The President was able to share information about how diversity and inclusion is taken into consideration when strategic decisions are made within the institution.

- *Vice President of Human Resources* – The Vice President of Human Resources is responsible for the oversight of the human resources division, which includes: staffing, benefits, compensation, training, and other employee related tasks. The Vice President was able to provide insight on the institution's efforts to provide training and professional development around diversity and inclusion for employees and efforts made to increase or maintain employee compositional diversity.

3.5.2 Procedure

I called each interviewee to schedule the interviews. Four interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participants' offices. Due to scheduling conflicts, one interview was conducted using Microsoft Lync video conferencing software. In each interview, informed consent, that outlined the purpose of the study, their options to opt out of the study, and information about how they can obtain the final report and any information gathered, was read to the participants (See Appendix D). The participants then verbally acknowledged that they agreed to participate in the study. Each interview was voice recorded so that I could focus on listening and engaging the interviewee without being primarily focused on taking notes. According to Yin (2014), recording interviews allows the researcher to be fully immersed in the interaction with the interviewee. As

Yin (2014) asserts, a strength of documentation in case study research is its accessibility. The documents that were analyzed for this study at its onset were the Institutional (1) mission, vision, and goals statements, (2) strategic plan, (3) the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) collective bargaining agreement and (4) institutional diversity plan. These documents were all available online through the CCAC website. They were downloaded and printed, and then analyzed following the interviews. Specifics about how these documents were analyzed are discussed in the following section.

3.5.3 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the online software Trint® for pre-analysis. Mentor et al. (2011) suggest that full transcription is important when the researcher needs to draw on precise details from the interview. To assure that nothing was missed in the interviews and that an accurate account of the interviewees' comments was recorded, full transcription was completed. The Trint online software allowed for the interview recording to be uploaded into their system and transcribed within a very short timeframe. As Miles, Hiberman, and Saldaña (2014) suggest, the text created from the descriptions were organized in files on my password secured laptop. The next steps were analysis coding, categorizing, and theorizing (Mentor et al., 2011). Coding consisted of labeling themes identified in the data in an effort to understand the phenomenon being studied (Miles et al., 2014).

As Saldaña (2013) suggests, coding should be done in two cycles: the first should be focused on breaking down the data into manageable chunks; the second should focus on themes identified within the themes found in cycle one. The first cycle was done by hand while cleaning the transcriptions produced from the software. The second cycle, also done by hand, was done

soon after. Two coding approaches were used. The first coding approach used was In Vivo coding. This coding technique consisted of the coding of "words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record" (Miles et al., 2014). This allowed for the interviewees, rather than the researcher, to tell the story of the institution.

The second approach that was used was the Deductive coding approach. This approach consisted of using codes identified from research and/or theoretical frameworks (Miles et al., 2014). I used the MMDLE and the research identified in Chapter Two to compare the interviews to preexisting codes. Column three in Appendix B outlines each interview question and the corresponding literature that was used to evaluate it. During this round of coding, each code was also compared to the supported documentation gathered in the document analysis phase (i.e. college policy, diversity plan, strategic plan etc.). For example, if a code identified is the institution strategically thinking about diversity and inclusion, comparing this code to diversity language strategic plans would allow for a reasonable assumption of congruency between the institutional document and perceptions of the senior level leadership. Throughout the interview process, two more supporting documents were provided by participants. The first was data related to the compositional diversity present among CCAC employee groups. The second was a strategic enrollment document that outlined a number of projections and other information related to student enrollment.

Some documents were analyzed and coded for information related to expressed values of diversity and inclusion. These documents provided evidence of expression of support of diversity and inclusion and will be used to evaluate the congruence between these expressions and institutional action. The coding technique that was employed was descriptive coding. As Miles et al. (2014) assert, descriptive coding "assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short

phrase… the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data (Miles et al., 2014 p. 74)." These codes were then compared to the interview codes for congruency and analyzed for consistency across all documents.

3.6   LIMITATION OF THE METHOD/APPROACH

There are a few limitations to the method and approach used for this study. The first limitation is related to concerns about rigor (Yin, 2014). As Yin (2014) discusses, rigor often comes into question in case studies because of the lack of specific procedures to guide researchers. It is thus important for researchers to follow systematic procedures and not consciously or unconsciously influence the direction of the findings and conclusion (Yin, 2014).

A second limitation to this method is that it is difficult for the researcher to remove held bias. It is possible that the researcher's feelings could influence the interpretation of the data (Yin, 2014). In an effort to account for this, I relied solely on the data found to draw conclusions. Another limitation of this study is linked to the usage of elite interviews. As Berry (2002) argues, "interviewers must always keep in mind that it is not the obligation of a subject to be objective and tell us the truth (p. 680)." It is important to take into consideration that high level administrators will sometimes only provide information in an interview that shows them or their institution in a positive light. It was thus important that I entered each interview with as much knowledge about the subject matter as possible in order to know when follow-up and clarification questions were necessary (Berry, 2002). Lastly, like many qualitative methods, collecting and analyzing the data can be time-consuming (Yin, 2014).

3.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter summarized the plan for which the current inquiry took place. This qualitative inquiry consisted of interviews and document analysis in an effort to explore how CCAC top-level administrators characterize the college's efforts around diversity and inclusion with respect to the compositional and structural/organizational dimension of the MMDLE. With insight into this, congruency between senior leadership perceptions and expressed values of diversity in the institution's mission, values statement, and strategic plans can be determined. Using In Vivo and descriptive coding analysis allowed for the interviews to be coded and analyzed according to themes.

4.0   FINDINGS

A single case study design was used for this study in an effort to learn how the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) expresses its commitment to facilitating diverse learning environments. The study participants provided a great deal of information regarding institutional practices related to diversity and inclusion and perceptions of institutional commitment. Five interviews were conducted with key members of the CCAC administration. Furthermore, the documents reviewed, including the institutional mission statement, the institutional goals, the institutional strategic plan, and the diversity and inclusion tactical plan, triangulated the findings about the ways in which CCAC expresses its values of diversity and inclusion.   By examining these documents, an understanding of how CCAC expresses its commitment was established.

Guided by two institutional-level dimensions of Hurtado et al.'s (2012) Multicontextual Model of Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE) framework and the applicable research identified in chapter two, the purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which CCAC's actions are congruent with its articulated values of diversity and inclusion. Nine themes emerged including, 1. Hiring and Search Process; 2. Administrator, Staff, and Full-time Faculty Compositional Diversity; 3. Student Compositional Diversity; 4. The Presence of Student of Color Retention Programs and Efforts; 5. Diversity Conscious Strategic Decisions; 6. Student of Color Enrollment Management; 7. Hiring Process Inconsistency; 8. Curriculum; and 9.

Subjective Tenure Process. These themes arose from the interviews and the documents analyzed. For the purposes of presenting the data in an effective and efficient manner, these nine themes will be separated into the institution's strengths and challenges. To begin with, it is important to first report the level of commitment to diversity and inclusion as articulated in the college's mission statement, goals, strategic plans, and diversity tactical plan.

4.1   EXPRESSED VALUES OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As Clayton-Pedersen, Parker, Smith, Moreno, and Teraguchi (2007) suggest, a commitment to diversity must be articulated in the college mission. CCAC expresses a commitment to diversity and inclusion consistently in its mission statement, vision statement, goals statements and strategic plan. The documents analyzed present a message of commitment to the compositional diversity through enrollment, support, and the success of underrepresented students. These documents also express a commitment to diversity and inclusion through professional development and growth in the compositional diversity present in all employee groups. The commitment was articulated first in a statement approved by the Board of Trustees in 2006 (CCAC, n.d.f.). First examining the college's mission statement, a clear and transparent articulation of commitment to diversity is expressed.

> The Community College of Allegheny County prepares individuals to succeed in a complex global society by providing affordable access to high quality career and transfer education delivered in a diverse, caring, and innovative learning environment (CCAC Mission Statement).

This commitment is further articulated in the strategic goals established for the institution, which guided the development of the college's strategic plan. The college has four goals established. Of these four goals, one has diversity as the focal point. The second institutional goal states, "CCAC will become a global learning community that stands on the pillars of proactive, intentional access, inclusion, diversity, social justice and respect, to positively impact the vitality of the region." To examine specific institutional intentions as it relates to this goal, the strategic plan was examined. It was found that the focus of these efforts are placed on enrollment management, in both matriculation and retention; teaching underrepresented students how to successfully navigate the college environment; growing the compositional diversity of employee groups; and providing professional development for employees.

4.1.1 Tactical Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

To support this institutional focus, CCAC has in place a Tactical Plan for Diversity and Inclusion. This plan outlines the institutional efforts to facilitate a diverse and inclusive climate. This plan includes information related to the following areas: student of color enrollment; faculty and staff cultural competency; faculty and staff compositional diversity; community partnerships; and procurement of services from Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (MEDBE). All of these areas provide some level of strategic guidance for the institution as it relates to diversity and inclusion. These documents combined express a clear and transparent commitment to diversity and inclusion that is publicly available for all to see. With an understanding of how these values are expressed, I turned to institutional action related to these expressed commitments.

4.2   CCAC'S STRENGTHS

The data indicates that CCAC has a number of strengths related to how it enacts its diversity and inclusion efforts. The strengths fall within both the compositional and the structural/organizational dimensions of the MMDLE. Among the compositional dimension, strengths include the hiring and search process, the compositional diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators, and the compositional diversity of students. The structural/organizational dimension strengths include the presence of institutional support mechanisms for students of color, diversity conscious strategic decision-making, and a diversity component of the curriculum.

4.2.1   Hiring and Search Process

The hiring processes of new employees were found to be a strength for CCAC that is inline with the compositional dimension of the MMDLE. One participant expressed this in comparison to the processes of other institutions.

> At a lot of institutions in higher ed there are the search committees. But at lot of institutions, there's not the consistency, the policies, the procedures… are not in place like they are at CCAC. Even if you look at like Pitt, Duquesne, they do not interact with their H.R. people… We are way above them in some of these things. So what I think supports diversity and at least puts us in a position to have to consider people who are different than the hiring manager I would say, is having search committees in place for every position.

Four of the five participants stated that the hiring process at CCAC was found to consist of a series of checks and balances to ensure the pool of candidates being evaluated is diverse. The college also ensures that hiring managers and search committee members are conscious of diversity when evaluating the pool as a whole. This starts with the posting of positions. The philosophy is that by diversifying the pool of candidates, the likelihood of a racially diverse candidate being hiring is increased. Job postings are advertised in diverse publications and websites such as Diversejobs.net and the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium. This allows for strategic and targeted recruitment to persons of color for job opportunities. After a posting has closed, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion examines the pool of candidates and ensures the level of diversity present reflects the regional and/or national demographics for the position being hired. If it is found that the candidate pool does not accurately reflect these trends, the position is reposted and more concerted efforts are made to increase the level of diversity. After a candidate pool is approved by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the hiring manager and search committee are given access to the applications for review.

Another important aspect of the hiring process related to diversity and inclusion is the training that search committee members complete. Each search committee member is responsible for completing a training on CCAC procedures and policies related to hiring. A component of this focuses on diversity and inclusion. The hiring process also ensures that there is sufficient diversity present on the committee. The name of committee members must be submitted to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for approval to ensure there is diversity present. This diversity is inclusive of not only race, but position categories and types within the college. Lastly, Human Resources and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion must approve interview questions. This ensures fair and equitable treatment for all candidates interviewed.

This process allows for CCAC to meet its commitment to ensuring that there is compositional diversity present among employees. This process also appears to be well articulated and transparent throughout the college. All five administrators interviewed could clearly articulate every part of the process in detail and could identify the importance of the process with respect to meeting the college's employee diversity goals. This leads to the next strength identified, which is the presence of compositional diversity among the college administrator, staff, and full-time faculty.

4.2.2   Administrator, Staff, and Full-time Faculty Compositional Diversity

Due to the intentional efforts made by the college to meet its goals of being a diverse learning environment, the college has experienced success with the physical number of employees of color, specifically within the categories of administrators, staff, and full-time faculty. The Vice President of Human Resources provided statistics related to the number of employees within the institution and the diversity present.

CCAC's most diverse group of employees are their administrators (See Figure 1). Employees of color[3] comprise nearly 25% of all administrators at CCAC. This number by percentage is higher than the persons of color rate of Allegheny County but slightly lower than the student of color rate at CCAC of 27%. According to the Census Bureau, Allegheny County is 21.3% persons of color. The county demographics can serve as a baseline for comparison. CCAC is also doing well within its staff. Staff of color comprise 20.6% of the staff population at

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[3] CCAC defines minority by race and ethnicity. This includes Black, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and Multiracial people. This does not include international visa students. In place of the term "minority" the inclusive term of student/employees/people of color will be used.

CCAC. While this number if slightly lower than the county percentage, it is considered to be on par with the county rate.

4.2.3 Student Compositional Diversity

It is important to compare CCAC's enrollment to the county demographics that it serves. As one interviewee presented in a conversation about the student racial demographics, "Because we are an open access enrollment institution and… just by sheer numbers, we have more diverse representation than any school in the region." As this participant alluded to, being an open access institution in Allegheny County leads CCAC to be more diverse than their regional counterparts. CCAC currently enrolls 27% students of color. When comparing the enrollment to the demographics of the county, CCAC student enrollment more than reflects the diversity of the region. With 21% of people in the region identified to be people of color, CCAC is six percentage points higher than the county.

When comparing CCAC student of color enrollment to the other state community colleges in Pennsylvania, we can see that CCAC is on par with the average. According to the NCES, the state average student of color enrollment for Pennsylvania's community colleges is 23.7 percent. Once again, CCAC is higher than the average. While CCAC's student of color enrollment is above average when comparing it to the county racial demographics and Pennsylvania community colleges, a challenge for the college related to student of color enrollment is the lack of a concrete and clear plan for enrollment of students of color and enrollment overall. This will be discussed further in the next section. While the enrollment of students of color is important, the MMDLE stresses that support mechanisms for these students is just as important (Hurtado et al., 2012).

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While the compositional diversity presented within the institution can be seen as a strength, one cannot discuss the number present at CCAC without having a conversation about the issue of equity. The six percent point difference between the CCAC student of color population and the same population of Allegheny County may present that the institution has an overpopulation of students of color due to the lack of access to other sectors of higher education. Carnevale and Strohl (2013) argue that this phenomenon reinforces the intergenerational reproduction of white racial privilege. This is important to take into consideration when examining compositional diversity present in community colleges in the state and in the U.S. While compositional diversity is good for CCAC, a larger question about access to more selective local institutions should be considered.
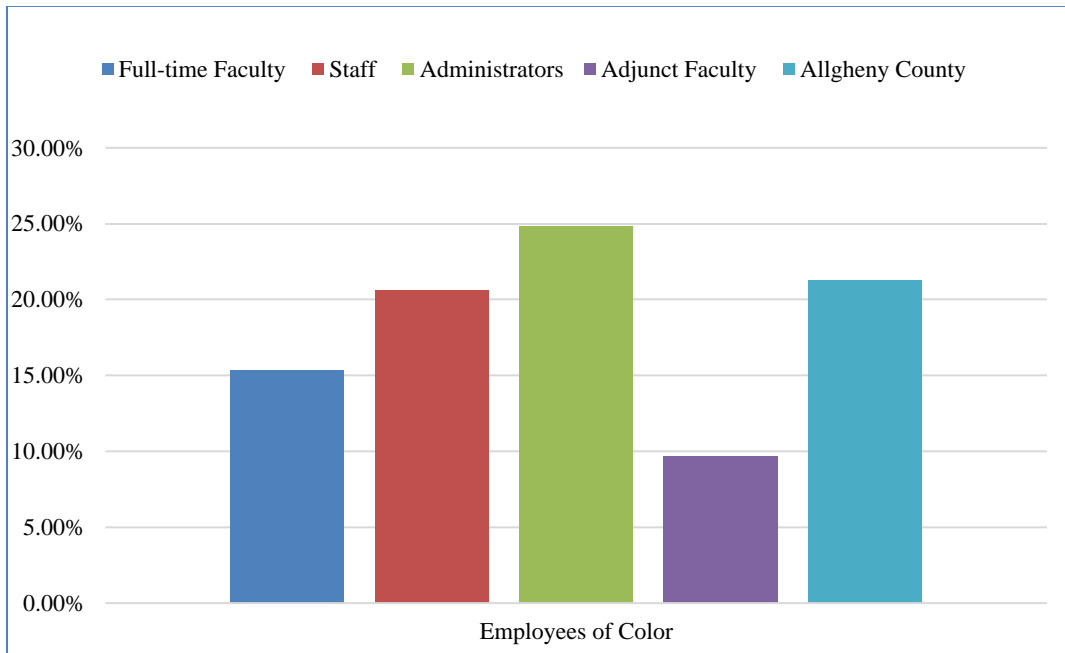

Figure 1. The Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) employee of color percentages by employee category.

Manigault, K. (2017). Human Resources Highlight: All College Day [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from https://www.ccac.edu/uploadedFiles/Smartform_Content/Captioned_Callouts/Faculty_and_Staff/ 16FA%20All%20College%20Day%20Final%20PDF.pdf

4.2.4   Institutional Support Mechanisms for Students of Color

CCAC makes intentional efforts to create programs that support students of color directly and indirectly, which provides evidence of congruency with its expressed value of providing a diverse and inclusive environment. CCAC's direct programs that were identified by all of the participants were the Men of Merit Initiative (MMI) and the Woman on a Mission Program (WOM). These supports are defined as supports specifically created for and targeted to students of color. The efforts of these entities present a great opportunity for the college to support students of color. The indirect supports for students of color can be defined as programs, services, or initiatives that are offered to the broader student body, but are also used to support students of color. I thus classify the efforts of the college's Achieving the Dream (ATD) committee, one-on-one tutoring, drop-in academic assistance, and student success coaching as indirect supports.

4.2.4.1 Direct support for students of color

All five participants identified two programs that are specifically focused on the retention and graduation of students of color. The programs were MMI and WOM. These programs are directly targeted to students of color. MMI is targeted toward men of color and WOM is targeted towards women of color. Both programs are currently available at all four campuses. According to one participant, it is the belief that CCAC, as a government entity cannot and does not limit participation in these programs only to students of color. The programs' services are available to any student who wishes to use them.

Men of Merit

The Men of Merit Initiative, which is currently in its third year of existence, was created to provide support for male students of color. The program was said to be based on best practices to support male students of color. Participants noted that while the MMI program has shown some success, the success has been limited to the small percentage of students participating in the program.

Woman on a Mission

During an assessment of the MMI program efforts at CCAC's South campus, it was discovered that the more serious issue was the retention rates of women of color. In an effort to provide support to the women of color, the WOM program was created. In its second year, the program has also shown some success with retaining and graduating students of color. The program was launched across the system in the fall of 2016, and is now available at all four campus locations and one satellite center.

4.2.4.2 Indirect support for students of color

There are a number of indirect efforts to support students of color, meaning they either do not directly provide support to students of color or they are not specifically for students of color. These efforts are the ATD committee, the college's academic support, and student success coaching. The connection between these indirect measures was discussed with one participant when speaking about the allocation of resources.

> So we had this conversation about what a diversity commitment is. To me part of that makes sure that we have sufficient resources allocated to encourage completion. So that means diverse constituents need tutoring. Do we put resources there? Diverse

constituents need access to the library. Are there sufficient resources there? So we think about that in a more inclusive manner. We think about conversations that could make a true commitment to inclusion at the community college level.

As the discussion further developed, CCAC has provided resources to academically support all students in hope that through its direct support programmatic efforts, students of color will learn about and utilize these services. As such, learning about the support services is built into the learning outcomes for both MMI and WOM.

Student Success Coaching

Student Success Coaches at CCAC serve as an indirect support mechanism for students of color. Students are assigned to a Student Success Coach if they test into more than one developmental class. These coaches provide guidance through regular meetings and check-ins. Given that students of color who test into the developmental sequence at CCAC are assigned a Student Success Coach, Student Success Coaches are vital to the success and retention of these students.

Achieving the Dream

As the CCAC website states, ATD is a national consortium with the goal of assisting students of color and low-income students succeed. The college's ATD committee works to examine the support structures that exist at CCAC, assess current practices, and create and implement proven practices to help support the success of CCAC's students.

4.2.5 Diversity Conscious Strategic Decisions

Another strength found is that diversity and inclusion is considered and discussed at the cabinet level when making important strategic decisions for the college. All five respondents answered yes when asked if the institutional leadership team takes diversity and inclusion into consideration when making important strategic decisions, and all five articulated a climate of openness to diversity and inclusion conversations. While discussing the group dynamic at the cabinet level, one respondent gave a hypothetical example of a time in which diversity may be discussed:

> I'm just making up something. You think about someone to be promoted and everyone is saying names and there is no diversity… you have to bring that up. So what about so-and-so? Because we want to look at a diverse group of people and that's all you would need to say with that… It really is just a reminder because there's nobody that's anti or fighting it.

Another participant praised the System President for his commitment to making sure diversity and inclusion is considered in strategic decisions.

> I think as the ultimate say is Dr. Bullock I would say yes. So my answer would be yes because all decisions end with him so most assuredly he takes inclusion into consideration because it's something that as a leader he's committed to.

The openness of the leadership team to have conversations related to diversity and inclusion and the perception of a president who is invested in diversity and inclusion, are strengths found at the institution. When asked about the leadership team and how they make decisions, the System president started by talking about the training he has initiated for them.

We've had team development for over a year, to really strengthen our working relationships amongst the leaders. Diversity was an element of that discussion as a way to help us understand what is diversity, what does that mean to me, how do we understand and celebrate differences of others.

The strengths identified show evidence of congruency between CCAC's expressed values of diversity and inclusion and the current actions of the college.

4.2.6 Diversity in Curriculum

Lastly, another strength found was that CCAC purposefully includes diversity components in every academic program offered by the college. Although not all participants were directly knowledgeable of specifics, all of the candidates were somewhat aware of that diversity and inclusion are considered in curriculum. An interviewee with experience on the institutional College Counsel, who approves of all new curriculum and curriculum changes, said this about diversity in curriculum.

There is absolutely a diversity component, the diversity component has been in there for years and years and years. …I don't know how far back it goes, but… it's always been part of that. So when academic areas, like student service areas, are looking at what they are doing, it is part of the fabric.

She then went on to state that when new programs are created, and also when existing programs are assessed, diversity and inclusion components are also assessed. Even though these strengths are present, I also found a number of challenges faced by the institution that could potentially be barriers to being congruent with its expressed values of diversity and inclusion. These challenges are discussed next.

4.3   CHALLENGES

CCAC faces four main challenges when it comes to diversity and inclusion. These challenges were identified by respondents as being issues that could bring the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion into question. These compositional and structural/organizational challenges are: the lack of an enrollment management plan for students of color; the lack of consistency in hiring policies across all employee categories; the lack of diversity consideration in granting tenure; and a lack of resource allocation for direct support programs.

4.3.1   Student of Color Enrollment Management

While CCAC's enrollment of students of color is above the county racial demographics and student make-up in Pennsylvania's community colleges, a challenge for the college related to the enrollment of students of color is the lack of a concrete and clear plan for not only the enrollment of students of color, but enrollment overall. Only two of the five study participants could articulate any specific efforts to recruit students of color to the college. These efforts include partnerships with community organizations and programs, the Pittsburgh Promise Scholarship Program and Job Corps. There was a mention of the possibility of an overall plan that was previously developed, but there was no knowledge of what this plan was and if the college had ever adopted it.

The Tactical Plan for Diversity and Inclusion (2013) does have a component dedicated to diversity and inclusion recruitment and retention, but specific to recruitment, this component does not include specific strategies of increasing student diversity; it simply calls for the

coordination and execution of a diversity recruitment plan, which could not be found. One could argue that due to the diversity that exists in the college's student population a plan may not be needed. However, relying on the existence of a student population, without specific strategies to maintain the high population could potentially cause problems in the future.

This presents an issue because admissions offices are actively recruiting students and employees are working to retain students, without knowing how their specific targets fit within the overall long-term vision and strategy for enrollment. Furthermore, this lack of a strategy presents a lack of understanding of the ideal size of the college. Current projected targets for enrollment appear to be tied to budget. When discussing this topic, a participant had this to say:

> As an institution, we never specifically identified what is our number. What is the number we need? We're always looking at well, we will increase, increase, increase. But what's the number that we… What's our number? What's our right size?

This conversation speaks to the lack of sufficient and transparent enrollment planning. This participant was able to find a Strategic Enrollment Management "data book." This book is a series of projections for enrollment. While this booklet presents some information and evidence of thought in enrollment of students, including students of color, only one participant spoke to it. Having worked at the college for over three years in an area key to student retention, this was the first time I was made aware of the data book's existence. This speaks to a lack of commonly shared and transparent planning which does not allow the institution to properly plan for not just enrollment of students of color, but the retention of those students as well.

4.3.2 Hiring Process Inconsistency

While CCAC's processes and procedures for the recruitment and hiring of employees is very diversity conscious, I found that these processes and procedures are not applied equally to all employee groups. Administrators, full-time faculty, and staff must follow all procedures and guidelines mentioned in the previous section. The only group that is an exception to these policies are adjunct faculty. When discussing this process, one participant stated:

> Because the chair of the committee, I mean they all have search committees but many times in a crunch it's the chair of the department that is [hiring] the adjunct. Whereas for our regular faculty, you know we have [processes] in place but it still is not garnering the kind of results that we should be seeing.

While no specific causal relationship can be assumed, it is a logical assumption that the lack of a concrete process for adjunct hiring, that includes the same processes that are included in the hiring of other CCAC employee groups, may be related to the low rates of racial diversity in the college's adjuncts. As the same participant admits, the racial diversity of adjunct faculty members presents an issue that the institution is aware of.

> To me our faculty who is way below where it should be and the expectation of I would think one of our greatest pools will be our adjuncts. That's worse. That's our worst area…. They're worse than our full time faculty… But I can say with the adjuncts. That's the one group that we don't have to search committees for.

The information provided by a participant shows that the college's adjunct faculty of color only comprises 9% of adjunct faculty (see *Figure 1*).

4.3.3 Tenure

I also identified a challenge for the institution related to the degree to which the tenure process was monitored for bias. When participants were asked about the tenure process, four of the five participants could not articulate any knowledge of the process. Human Resources only handles the paperwork associated with the tenure process, not the process itself. One interviewee was able to provide some information. Although the President and Board of Trustees has final say over which faculty tenure is granted to, he concluded that the faculty union ultimately controls the early stages of the tenure process. He suggested I contact a union representative and read the AFT collective bargaining agreement. To his knowledge, there were no considerations in the process to assure fair and equitable evaluation of faculty. For faculty members hired prior to July 1, 2014, the only criteria are that the candidate must have previously been promoted to a rank higher than tenure and that they have served for four years as a full-time instructor (CCAC, 2014). For faculty members hired after July 1, 2014, the candidate must have served for five years, achieved a rank higher than instructors, have an overall rating of satisfactory on their most recent performance evaluation, and have to make an application for tenure.

The process for granting tenure at CCAC involves the review of an application for tenure by a committee of four individuals. These individuals are represented by three AFT members and one college academic administrator (CCAC, 2014). For tenure to be granted, a simple majority is needed. After the decision is reached, the committee's recommendation is then sent to the College Presidents and the Board of Trustees (CCAC, 2014). The evaluation process for candidates for tenure includes the review of their teaching portfolio, most recent performance review, department head recommendation, a written justification statement, and anything else the candidate would like to put forth for consideration (CCAC, 2014). This process does not have

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any checks and balances, like those seen in the hiring processes at CCAC, to ensure candidates are evaluated equitability and fairly. CCAC's process, like other tenure processes, relies on subjective determinations of a candidate's worthiness.

4.3.4 Budget for Diversity and Inclusion Programs and Initiatives

Lastly, I identified a challenge for the institution related to the degree to which budgetary funds are allocated to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Overall, there appears to be little to no consistent financial support for the college's diversity and inclusion initiatives. When asked about funding to support diversity and inclusion efforts, all participants spoke primarily about MMI and WOM. One participant bluntly said, "There's no budget associated with MMI. There's no budget associated with Woman on a Mission… It's just a question of where is the budgetary support… for being able to implement." Another participant provided more details about this subject as it related to these two programs, starting that the support for MMI is inconsistent. Some campuses provide budgetary dollars for the programs and others do not. Related to funding for WOM, the participant noted that other than South Campus, there was no other budgetary allocation that he had knowledge of.

4.4   CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate some strengths in CCAC's commitment to foster a diverse and inclusive institutional climate as defined by the MMDLE. The college has very clear and readily accessible expressions of this commitment. The mission statement, goals, strategic

plan, and diversity tactical plans are ingrained with a concise message of commitment to diversity and inclusion that permeates every area of the college. This is an important step in ensuring a diverse learning environment is facilitated (Hurtado et al., 2012). This commitment manifests itself in the policies and procedures to increase faculty, staff, and administrator compositional diversity and in the diversity present in the student body. This illustrates a commitment to an important aspect of the MMDLE. Specific to students, the college offers a number of support mechanisms that both directly and indirectly help students of color succeed. The institution is also committed to the cultural competency development of its senior-level administrators, and is owned by those leading the college as a whole. These are important aspects of the structural/organizational dimension of the MMDLE.

Along with the college's strengths, there are a number of challenges that provide opportunities for the college to continue its growth and its ability to foster a climate that is truly diverse and inclusive. These challenges are the lack of policies to promote compositional diversity within its adjunct faculty, a lack of an enrollment management plan for students of color, the tenure process, and insufficient budgetary allocation for support programs. Although these challenges are present, they can also be viewed as opportunities for the college to strengthen its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Specific opportunities and recommendations will be discussed in chapter five.

5.0   RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which CCAC's actions are congruent with its articulated values of diversity and inclusion. Guided by two institutional-level dimensions of Hurtado et al.'s (2012) Multicontextual Model of Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE) framework and the applicable research identified in chapter two, the following inquiry questions guided the exploration.

1.) How does the community college characterize its efforts to increase and/or maintain compositional diversity within its student body, faculty, staff, and administration?

2.) How does the community college characterize its commitment to diversity in curriculum and tenure?

3.) How does the community college characterize its organizational behavior, organizational structures, institutional priorities, budget, and internal policies and practices around diversity?

With these questions in mind, the data from the five interviews and the analysis of CCAC's mission, goals, strategic plan, and diversity tactical plan, were examined. Seven themes emerged including: hiring and search process; administrator, staff, and full-time faculty compositional diversity; student compositional diversity; the presence of student of color retention programs and efforts; diversity conscious strategic decisions; student of color

enrollment management; and hiring process inconsistency. These themes were prevalent throughout the interviews and within the documents analyzed.

5.1   KEY FINDINGS

The findings of this study can be categorized in three key areas including diversity conscious hiring practices; maintaining compositional diversity of students, faculty, and staff; and diversity conscious decision making.

5.1.1   Diversity Conscious Hiring Practices

A key finding of the study was the presence of comprehensive hiring practices for administrators and staff of the college. CCAC expresses values related to diversity and inclusion and has concrete policies in place to diversify its faculty, staff, and administrators. At CCAC, these policies are related to training of search committee members, the selection of search committee members, ensure a diverse pool of applicants are being considered, and final approval of all appointments by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. These policies ensure that compositional diversity is present among faculty, staff, and administrators; are intentional and strategic; and are fair and equitable by making sure every candidate is given the same consideration. All of these practices are important to facilitate a diverse learning environment and to have a positive effect on compositional diversity (Hurtado, 2012; Lin, Francis, Minor, and Eisele, 2012; Lee, 2010; Garcia, 2015). With structures in place to review the equity of a search during every step of the process, CCAC is committed to the compositional diversity of its

employees. These efforts have led the college to maintain a high level of racial diversity in its full-time faculty, staff, and administration.

However, findings also indicated that these policies do not extend to the largest population of employees making up half of its workforce - adjunct faculty. The adjunct faculty hiring process was found to be inconsistent and lacking the checks and balances necessary to ensure the objective evaluation of candidates. As a result, adjunct faculty are the least diverse employee group at the college. Also concerning is the number of adjunct faculty teaching at the college overall. Research shows a link between adjunct-led classes and low student success and persistence outcomes (Cox, McIntosh, Terenzini, Reason & Lutovsky Quaye, 2010; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008; Gross & Goldhaber, 2009; Jaeger & Eagan, 2009; Jaeger & Eagan, 2011; Umbach, 2007). Although information related to the recruitment and hiring of faculty was most visible throughout the students, no mention was made of the ways in which CCAC strategically plans in the area of diverse employee retention.

5.1.2 Maintaining Compositional Diversity

These hiring practices have led to the presence of an overall compositionally diverse employee body. This leads to the second major finding of the study, which is that CCAC's compositional diversity commitment is not only present in most of its employee categories, but is also present in the student body. As research has shown, higher compositional diversity in college community members increases the chances of intergroup contact, which in turn, leads to improved intergroup cooperation (Chang et al., 2014; Pike & Kuh, 2006; Sanenz et al., 2007; Ross, 2014). The more that groups from different backgrounds interact, the greater opportunity there is for intergroup dialogue.

While there is diversity present in the student body, this diversity is an unintentional phenomenon. Little intentionality is placed on efforts to manage the amount of diversity present from a recruitment standpoint. However, efforts are placed into the retention of racially diverse populations. These indirect programs (which provide support for all students) and direct programs (which provide support intentionally for student of color populations) work to provide students of color with the necessary tools and support to overcome barriers to their success. Research has shown that programs and services such as these increase student retention and graduation rates.

While the study found that these programs are wide-spread and growing, very little support is given to these programs in the way of funding and/or staffing. Both direct support programs, MMI and WOM, have no definitive and consistent budget, no dedicated staff, or space. As a result, these programs that have the potential to make a great impact, do not have the capacity to affect the retention rates of students of color on a systematic level. While the presence of these programs appears to show commitment, the structural/organizational dimension of the MMDLE would categorize these programs in this way:

> These [resources] often are based on agreed upon procedures implemented by dominant groups of faculty and administrators. On the surface, they may have neutral facades but work to maintain inequity among groups (Hurtado et al., 2012 p. 60)

The indirect and direct support programs that appear, on the surface, to be an intentional institutional effort to support students of color, are really an example of faux commitment (Hurtado et al, 2012). Creating such programs without the support and resources to provide the capacity to meet their outcomes stops short of being true commitment. Wilson (2013) presents

that institution budget planning is key to the longevity of diversity and inclusion initiatives. It is therefore important that CCAC allocate proper resources to support these programs.

Lastly, related to compositional diversity, CCAC suffers from a lack of strategic system-wide enrollment management planning related to the recruitment and retention of students. Overall, enrollment and retention activity seems to occur in a vacuum with little institutional-wide planning. Research shows that enrollment management is a critical part of institutions realizing their full enrollment potential (Hossler & Bean, 1990). Therefore, without a comprehensive and system-wide enrollment management plan, CCAC will not be able to achieve positive enrollment health, not only for students of color, but for all students. While the natural existence of diversity is a good thing, the lack of a concrete and transparent plan to manage it either shows a lack of true commitment or a lack of institutional planning.

5.1.3 Diversity Conscious Decision Making

The last key finding was related to the decision making process of the colleges senior leadership. The structural/organizational dimension of the MMDLE expresses the importance of administration making diversity conscious decision-making. When commitment is present, it manifests itself in the ways in which decisions around diversity and inclusion are made (Hurtado et al., 2012). When conversations about the strategic directions of the institution occur, the institution can embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity (Hurtado et al., 2012). This was found within CCAC due to the openness and support in having conversations about diversity and inclusion when making strategic decisions for the institution. When decisions are made, if there are diversity, inclusion, and equity concerns, the expectation has been established that open and honest dialogue occurs.

This openness was supported through diversity and inclusion training conducted with the cabinet level leadership of the institution. The results of this create a cabinet level group dynamic in which all leaders are at the very least open to conversation about diversity and inclusion when considering and making strategic decisions.

What was not clear in this study was the depth to which diversity conscious decision-making occurs throughout the organization as a whole. While it is clear that certain populations of employees encountered a large number of trainings geared towards diversity and inclusion, a number of these trainings were only for administrators and did not involve faculty members, the population with the most contact with students. It is thus unclear how much diversity is considered in daily classroom decisions.

5.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

To the overarching question of CCAC's commitment, I believe the institution is committed to diversity and inclusion in certain areas. This commitment manifests itself in a number of ways that have shown positive outcomes. However, the lack of intentionality in enrollment management of students of color and the lack of support to the direct supports for students of color at CCAC present a challenge for the institution.

While this is a significant challenge, it can also be seen as an opportunity to strengthen its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Recommendations for the institution are: to create a strategic, long-term enrollment management plan that encompasses student of color populations; build capacity in its two major direct support programs for students of color through the allocation of resources and staff; and hiring adjunct faculty members with the same processes

and procedures as other employee groups. Improving in these areas would not only strengthen CCAC's commitment to diversity and inclusion, but would likely yield higher retention and graduation rates for students of color.

5.3   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings have several implications for both research and practice. Related to research, the study provides an approach to studying institutional commitment, helps to define what commitment looks like, and adds to the MMDLE model. Related to practice, the study provides institutions similar to CCAC with an example of best practices for hiring people of color; insight on how community colleges enact diversity, and illustrates the importance of a senior leader who is committed to diversity and inclusion. These implications are all discussed below.

5.3.1   Implications for Research

An implication for research is the degree to which institutional commitment can be studied. Given the case study approach employed to examine commitment to diversity and by examining the congruence between the expressed values and institutional action, community colleges can use this study as a blueprint to self-assess their level of commitment to diversity and inclusion. In order for this to be done in an effective manner, it is important that the institution conducting such inquiry take an approach rooted in realistic self-appraisal. Only then will an open and honest dialogue occur.

A second implication for research is related to defining the lines of what commitment is. This study shows, more than anything, that the phenomenon of institutional commitment is complex and subjective. As Hurtado et al. (2012) present, symbolic actions are possible ways of building at least the perception of commitment to institutional diversity. With this in mind and having conducted this study, I offer that institutional commitment is the level of which institutions strategically allocate resources, plan, and support their priorities. Misalignment between the symbolic actions of an institution's commitment and the actual allocation of resources and strategic planning, are a sign of artificial commitment (Hurtado et al., 2012). Commitment to facilitating racially diverse learning environments can thus be seen as the strategic allocation of resources, strategic planning, and support to intentionally build a climate in which college community members of color are provided with the necessary tools to reach their full potential. As Rankin and Reason (2008) articulate, evidence of true commitment occurs only when the institutional policies and practices are in line with its symbolic acts of commitment and institutional diversity expressed values. This clarity should help to provide researchers with an idea of what institutional commitment to the facilitation of diversity and inclusion actually looks like.

Lastly, this study helps contribute to the MMDLE because it adds to the conversation about institutional commitment to facilitating diverse learning environments within community colleges, whose open access mission can make it more difficult for institutions to plan such efforts. As I noted in chapter two, there is little research that studies racial climate in the community college setting. Thus, this study can start to build on the conversation as it relates to providing community college campuses with the necessary tools to be inclusive and supportive. This will ultimately aid campuses in supporting students of color.

5.3.2   Implications for Practice

The study presents a number of implications for practice. First, this study helps provide insight into how senior community college administrators view diversity and inclusion commitment within their institution. An implication for practice is related to the importance of the role of the head of an institution in setting the tone and expectation that diversity is important and should be in the forefront of our minds. CCAC's chief leader was said to be responsible for the process by being committed to developing culturally competent senior leaders. Although there may be a need to bring diversity, inclusion, and equity issues to the attention of some leaders, the reinforcement by the senior leader encourages these leaders to be open to the conversation.

CCAC presents an institution that employs strategic and comprehensive processes for hiring people of color. These strategies such as search committee training and Office of Diversity and Inclusion approval have yielded positive results as it relates to the composition of most of its employee groups. These practices should be used as a blue print for other higher education institutions that are looking to develop a process to diversify faculty and staff.

5.4   CONCLUSION

This study reveals that CCAC shows evidence of commitment to facilitating a diverse learning environment. The strengths of CCAC are its compositional diversity in most campus community groups, commitment to hiring diverse full-time faculty, staff, administrators, the existence of support programs for students of color, and the ability for the institution to make

diversity conscious strategic decisions. CCAC's challenges are the lack of enrollment planning for students of color, hiring process inconsistency, and the lack of allocation of resources to its retention and support programs for students of color. By addressing these challenges, the institution can strengthen its commitment to diversity and inclusion and improve educational outcomes for students of color.

MULTICONTEXTUAL MODEL FOR DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

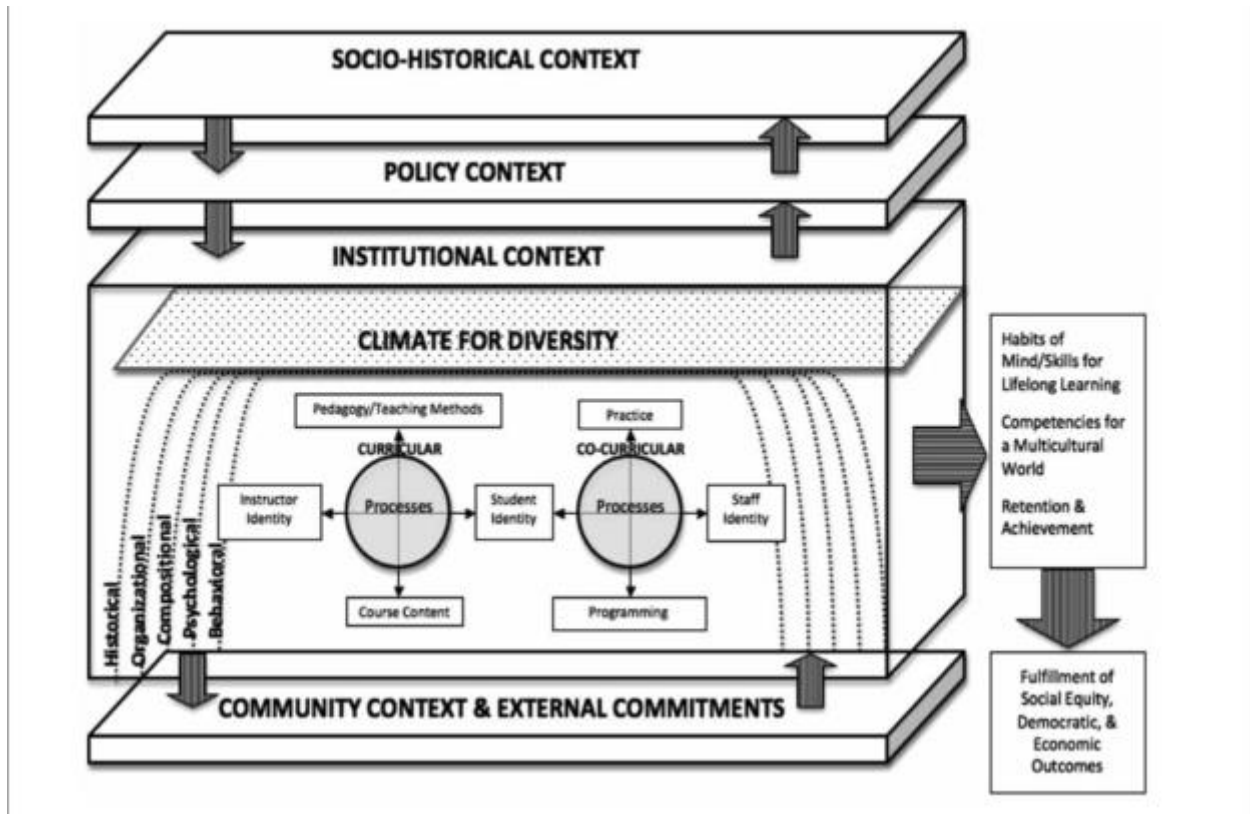**Figure 2.** Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#	Interview Question	Supporting Literature	RQ
1	What is your name and position at the institution?	n/a	
2	Tell me a little about your educational and career journey that has brought you to CCAC?	n/a	
3	What is your perception of institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion?	Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, L., 2012	Q3
3a	What evidence is there to support these perceptions?		
4	What initiatives, programs, and/or policies have been created by your division, campus, or functional area to support diversity and inclusion efforts related to student, faculty, staff, and administrator employee compositional diversity?	Hurtado et al., 2012; Pike & Kuh, 2006; Popert et al., 2013; Terenzini et al., 2001; Jones 2013 Lin et al., 2015; Lee, 2010; Garcia, 2015	Q1
4a	How do these influence cross cultural interactions?		
5	What initiatives, programs, and/or policies have been created by your division, campus, or functional area to support diversity and inclusion efforts related to: curriculum? , facilitating intergroup dialogue, or tenure?	Hurtadi et al., 2012; DiMaria, 2012; Abdule-Raheem, 2016; Lawrence et al., 2014; Enberg, 2004; Epps and Epps; Zuniga, 2010; Vaccaro, 2010;	Q2, Q3
5a	Facilitating intergroup dialogue?		
5b	Tenure?		
6	What budgetary expenditures are being allocated to support these programs?	Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, L., 2012; Wilson, 2013	Q3
7	Do you feel the institutional leadership team takes diversity and inclusion into consideration when making important strategic decisions?	Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, L., 2012	Q3

Figure 3. Interview Questions. This chart outlines the questions used during the semi-structured interviews along

with support literature to justify each question.

APPENDIX C

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND ANALYZED

#	Document	Retrieved From
1	Mission Statement	https://www.ccac.edu/College_Vision_Mission_and_Goals.aspx
2	Vision Statement	https://www.ccac.edu/College_Vision_Mission_and_Goals.aspx
3	Strategic Goals	https://www.ccac.edu/College_Vision_Mission_and_Goals.aspx
4	Strategic Plan	https://www.ccac.edu/CCAC_Strategic_Plan_2016.aspx
5	Diversity Tactical Plan	https://www.ccac.edu/About-CCAC/Diversity-Initiatives/Tactical-Plan-for-Diversity-and-Inclusion-2013---2018/
6	AFT CBA	https://www.ccac.edu/uploadedFiles/Pages/For_Faculty_and_Staff/Committees_and_Organizations/American_Federation_of_Teachers/AFT_Documents/AFT%20contract%202015.pdf

Figure 4. Documents reviewed and Analyzed. This chart outlines the documents that were reviewed and analyzed as part of the document analysis part of the study.

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

The purpose of this interview is to learn about the ways in which your institution supports its diversity and inclusion mission as articulated in its mission statement, vision statement, and strategic plan.

I do not anticipate that participation in this study will contain any risk or inconvenience to you. Furthermore, your participation is strictly voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed.

All information collected will be used only for research and will be kept completely confidential. There will be no connection to you specifically in the results or in future publication of the results. Once the study is completed, I would be happy to share the results with you if you desire. In the meantime, if you have any questions please ask or contact me directly.

If you consent to participation in the interview, please acknowledge so now, by saying I consent.

APPENDIX E

SITE APPROVAL LETTER

January 25, 2017

IRB
University of Pittsburgh

RE: Antonio Quarterman

The Community College of Allegheny County approves the dissertation research project of Antonio Quarterman to be conducted during the Spring 2017 semester at CCAC.

Mr. Quarterman's dissertation research entitled "Community College Institutional Commitment to Establishing Racially Diverse Learning Environments: A Western Pennsylvania Case Study" seeks to assess CCAC's congruency between its expresses values of diversity and inclusion presented in its mission, vision, and strategic plans, and its institutional actions as perceived by the institutional senior leadership.

CCAC welcomes the opportunity to learn about ourselves and improve our institution through Mr. Quarterman's research.

Sincerely,

Stuart T. Blacklaw, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic and Student Affairs

Figure 5. Cite Approval Letter.

APPENDIX F

CCAC MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Mission The Community College of Allegheny County prepares individuals to succeed in a complex global society by providing affordable access to high quality career and transfer education delivered in a diverse, caring, and innovative learning environment.

Vision   The Community College of Allegheny County will be the region's preferred gateway to a more prosperous future. Through our commitment to learning, innovation, and positive social change, CCAC will advance individual and community success.

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