

AT THE CROSSROADS:

**UNLV
STRATEGIC DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNLV is one of the nation's most diverse campuses for undergraduate students, yet it has not significantly invested in building a strategic infrastructure that can leverage this diversity as a powerful amplifier of learning, institutional reputation, economic development, and revenue generation. As I examined the university, I felt this overwhelming sense that it was at a crossroads, a crossroads where its past and present must come together to chart a path that takes advantage of burgeoning levels of ethnic and racial diversity; taps into the full talents of women at all levels; employs a much higher gear of inclusion for the LGBTQ, disability, and other communities on campus; and exploits a local and state economy requiring that everyone receive some form of post-secondary education.

This report is designed to assist with this time of transition and responds to campus leadership's request for guidance to support UNLV's diversity-capacity-building journey. The report is the result of a number of exploratory activities over the last year, which included the following:

1. A review of UNLV documents and reports,
2. Discussions with several committees and leadership groups on campus,
3. Individual interviews with members of diverse communities on campus,
4. Multiple visits to the campus community, and
5. Presentation of a preliminary set of reports and insights that have shaped the context and material of this final report in substantive ways.

What follows is an executive summary of (1) the strategic diversity leadership philosophy, which guides this discussion and emerges from my overall research into the area of diversity-capacity building, inclusive excellence, and change; (2) key issues identified by UNLV citizens; (3) recommendations to create enhanced infrastructure, accountability, innovation, and high-impact activities as UNLV's final diversity plan takes form; and (4) final thoughts for creating a successful and sustained change journey.

Section 1: Strategic Diversity Leadership Principles

Whether at the highest levels or the base of institutional life, strategic diversity work is the artful science of anticipating change, framing efforts in ways that others can understand, and managing the journey of change. At its core, this philosophy of leadership involves presidents, provosts, chief diversity officers, deans, department chairs, faculty, students, alumni, and other diversity champions actively working together toward one goal: to move beyond the cycle of diversity crisis, action, relaxation, and disappointment that has been replayed so frequently on college and university campuses.

Achieving this goal requires a focus on five key principles:

- **Principle 1:** Redefine issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to the organizational bottom line of mission fulfillment and institutional excellence;
- **Principle 2:** Focus on creating systems that enable all students, faculty, and staff to thrive and achieve their maximum potential;
- **Principle 3:** Achieve a more robust and integrated diversity approach that builds on prior diversity models and operates in a strategic, evidence-based, and data-driven manner where accountability is of paramount importance;

- **Principle 4:** Focus on diversity-related efforts that innovate and transform the institutional culture, not merely make tactical moves that lead to poorly integrated efforts and symbolic implementation;
- **Principle 5:** Lead with a high degree of cultural intelligence and awareness of different identities and their significance in higher education.

This discussion of strategic diversity leadership is grounded in the assumption that effecting pervasive change on issues of diversity, like any other domain, is both art and science. Diversity goals are never easily achieved. Consequently, UNLV diversity champions, regardless of their institutional role, must be sophisticated in their approach and willing to cut against the grain of tradition, artfully navigating issues both anticipated and unanticipated and applying the best diversity science possible to move the campus diversity agenda.

Section 2: Key Identified Issues

- A number of voices questioned the lack of an overall diversity and inclusion strategy that was coordinated and empowered and that existed as more than the sum of its parts. They argued that the university needed to develop a more comprehensive vision for change and to break the cycle of flawed diversity implementation efforts that existed in the past.
- A number argued that the work of diversity had to be embedded more fundamentally in the schools, colleges, and divisions of the university, with some areas like Student Affairs already leading the way in this regard.
- Many argued for enhanced chief diversity officer capacity (Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs & Diversity) that would allow for a strengthened ability to provide point leadership on campus and a more fundamental engagement of academic diversity issues. Some of these issues included continuing engagement of the faculty diversification challenge, collaboration with faculty to infuse diversity education themes into the curriculum and co-curriculum, retention and academic success of diverse students, building campus-wide accountability structures, and generally creating a more cohesive and engaged campus-wide diversity agenda.
- Some leaders spoke of a need to create a shared accountability on campus, where more faculty and staff held responsibility to proactively lead on diversity, rather than sitting back and pointing the finger toward senior administration to have sole responsibility for making campus change efforts happen.
- A consistent theme that I noted across my conversations was a strong perspective that the campus diversity effort at UNLV was inherently fragmented, with much tension between issues of race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender equity, and more. They argued that the campus needed a centralizing vision for change and coordinating structures to begin creating a more powerful diversity effort over time.
- Leaders were forthcoming in their perspective that more financial investments needed to be made in campus diversity efforts at UNLV and that an infusion of resources could be incredibly helpful to creating a spirit of energy and movement on campus.

- Finally, many leaders were jaded about the overall institutional commitment to diversity by UNLV leadership overall and felt that the university needed to create a much stronger narrative of why diversity was of strategic value and, more specifically, how the minority-serving and Hispanic-serving designations were part of the future excellence agenda of the institution.

SECTION 3: OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Like many large, complex universities, UNLV is subdivided into schools with well-defined missions and considerable autonomy that must connect and align with the central leadership of the campus. Schools and colleges respond, quite legitimately, to the outside professional and economic pressures that influence their mission and reputation, while the central administration urges attention to broader educational concerns like diversity. It's this tension between localized concerns, as well as the aforementioned belief that diversity is not a driver of excellence, that I begin to address in this set of recommendations, which call for both centralized and decentralized capacity-building efforts to handle the complexity of not only creating a change vision but establishing an infrastructure and processes for that vision to come to fruition.

Recommendation 1: Develop a UNLV Diversity Plan and Framework

UNLV should develop a 5-year multidimensional diversity plan and framework that would, at a minimum, include the following elements:

- *A definition of diversity* in broad and inclusive terms, championing the importance of diversity across myriad identities.
- *A vision and philosophical rationale* that would clarify the relationship between diversity and institutional excellence in terms of UNLV and its unique reality as a community leader in the higher education sector, serving an increasingly diverse student population.
- *A framework for developing campus diversity goals* in any number of different areas. Some typical dimensions for this section of the plan might include (1) recruitment, retention, and success of diverse groups; (2) creating an inclusive campus climate; (3) preparing students, faculty, and staff for a diverse and global world; (4) creating supportive community relationships and supplier diversity; and (5) fostering diversity-themed scholarship, research, and creativity.
- *Accountability strategies* to insure that the plan is implemented over time. I recommend accountability strategies at the institutional, divisional, and individual levels.

Institutional strategies might include an annual diversity report, regular board update presentations, external review, diversity goals embedded into the broader strategic plan, and a regular campus forum focused on diversity progress.

Divisional strategies might include a regular report, diversity embedded into divisional strategic plans, and a public report illustrating success and alignment to institutional diversity goals.

Individual strategies might include an annual performance review process, 5-year reviews, and diversity competence as part of job descriptions and search processes.

While developing a new campus diversity plan is essential, it is also recommended that issues of diversity be considered for integration into other plans, initiatives, and priorities of the institution. One specific area that emerged in conversations with a number of leaders was for UNLV to make issues of health equity, culturally competent health care, and the need to have diverse health care providers part of the conversation for a new academic health center at UNLV. To this end, diversity and inclusion are key themes in academic medical schools and present a powerful opportunity to embed diversity into the academic fabric of a new medical school, from the beginning.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the Campus-Wide Diversity Structure

Many in the UNLV community expressed a strong desire to enhance the senior diversity administrative function on campus: the Office of the Vice President for Government Affairs & Diversity Initiatives, chief diversity officer (CDO).

At the same time, there was a unified perspective that *this person and his team cannot be the only persons responsible for leading campus diversity* and that the president, provost, deans, and other senior leaders must champion the campus's diversity efforts and clear the way for the CDO to provide collaborative leadership in advancing the campus's strategic diversity leadership agenda. Indeed, among those who did express trepidation about the role, their perspective was always couched in a strong belief that the establishment of diversity, equity, and inclusion should be a shared responsibility and not the purview of one leader singularly—a point that is consistent with the literature in this area and the perspective that shapes these recommendations (Williams and Wade-Golden, 2013).

Some pointed recommendations include the following:

- UNLV should assess the Office of Diversity Initiatives (ODI) and, regardless of history, determine whether its current structure meets the institution's needs moving forward and if not, restructure the office as necessary. In addition to internal structural changes, UNLV should also consider what existing diversity-related units on campus might be incorporated into the ODI in order to strengthen the office in its new role as a centralizing force for diversity across campus, creating a more vertically integrated chief diversity officer division, similar to those that exist at the University of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania State University, University of Washington, IUPUI, UT Austin, and others;
- Consider the advisability of continuing in a *hybrid chief diversity officer model* of Vice President for Government Affairs & Diversity Initiatives. Hybrid chief diversity officer models are not inherently flawed but present a number of incredible challenges when leaders who occupy these roles have neither the time nor the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide integrative point leadership to the campus's diversity agenda. While this report cannot offer a definitive recommendation of how to evolve this particular role, at this point, it is clear that the vice presidential position will at a minimum require more substantive support within the context of the team to provide a more dynamic and engaged presence around diversity issues on campus;

- In the ODI, a new associate vice president/provost for strategic diversity leadership would bring a strong understanding of the academic diversity agenda and provide point leadership in the campus's efforts to develop a new framework and shared plan for diversity that would build from the recommendations offered here;
- This new role should have a high level of expertise on issues of diversity and inclusion, strategic planning and accountability, the shared governance culture of higher education, and leading change in a highly politicized and diffused organizational environment. Given the academic diversity focus of this role, the position could have a dual appointment by also being on the provost's senior leadership team, allowing the role to have a more integrated engagement in matters of academic diversity policy as part of the key senior office guiding policy in collaboration with faculty;
- Additional staff should be added to the ODI to help provide high-level project management and support the creation of broader and more dynamic engagement issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion institutionally. These roles might exist as 2–3 program associates or even assistant vice provosts who can help to prepare reports; execute meetings; create shared initiatives; provide strategic guidance, coaching, and consultative energy across campus; and power a new set of diversity efforts that will become an ongoing component of the campus's diversity agenda;
- I also think it important to consider creating 1–2 faculty diversity associate roles that would fulfill a 2-year appointment. This would bring a faculty leader into the ODI to even further strengthen the academic diversity agenda of the unit and give more credibility to its presence on campus. This role would be a part of the office's central team and tackle special projects on issues of diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 3: Foster Engagement, Accountability, & Diversity Innovation

Truly activating change across campus will require the development of a number of new accountability, innovation, and engagement initiatives. Some of my thoughts include the following:

- Three types of diversity accountability strategies are recommended for consideration: ((1) Develop a regular campus diversity report process that will illustrate where the campus is in its movement toward the institution's big-picture diversity goals. This might take place once at the midpoint of implementation and at the end (during a five-year planning cycle). (2) Build strategic diversity leadership into the annual reviews and appointments of all senior leaders and middle managers across campus, making it part of their regular performance review and reappointment processes. Although few institutions have evidenced a willingness to move forward in this manner, it is a common diversity and inclusion best practice in the corporate sector and one that illustrates a serious commitment to making diversity a shared institutional priority. (3) Make progress in the strategic diversity leadership arena a major aspect of the president's regular board level reporting structure, elevating issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the highest levels of institutional governance and stewardship;
- A diversity innovation fund budget is also recommended to provide the ODI with a budget line that can be used to create entrepreneurial energy on campus. The ODI could use these resources to fulfill grant requests from students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders on

campus. To achieve maximal impact, the ODI could have some of this money allocated toward one-time small grants (e.g., \$200–\$1,500) that could cover a student organization’s travel to an academic-themed conference, cosponsor a women’s history month event, or provide a building grant to help a faculty member interested in revising curriculum to emphasize issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion;

- The ODI could also use part of this budget to support one or two large grants at the level of *at least \$10,000–20,000* per year for two to three years in a given grant cycle. Though it is difficult to make a precise projection of this portion of the budget, my experience is that this aspect of the CDO budget should at a minimum begin at the \$100,000–150,000 level, laddering up over multiple years as the program matures and priorities of the campus become clearer. These larger diversity innovation grants are meant to seed new initiatives that focus on novel diversity challenges on campus and may not start until later in the planning and implementation cycle. These funds should be deployed only as matching funds that bring together one or two other partners to engage in a collective effort designed to achieve more because the groups are working together. These initiatives would need to directly flow out of the campus’s diversity priorities and goals identified in the overall plan.

Recommendation 4: Build the UNLV Diversity Brand

Put simply, your “brand” is everything that institutional citizens and the broader public think they know about your institution, both factual and emotional and whether it’s true or not. Your institutional diversity brand is a specific component of your overall brand, as it is defined by the cumulative stories, images, experiences, feelings, messages, articles, websites, myths, and beliefs associated with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at UNLV, whether intended or not. It’s the historic success of the basketball team, ugly racist incidents that become known nationally—like what is currently taking place at the University of Oklahoma—as well as targeted messages that become a part of the local and national narrative about UNLV as it relates to issues of diversity.

Some specific tactics to build the UNLV diversity brand include the following:

- Create a campus diversity website to communicate programs and priorities and provide an overall portal to connect institutional stakeholders to diversity programs, offices, policies, and reports;
- Infuse diversity themes and priorities into campus communications, reports, presidential speeches, commencement, convocation, and meetings;
- Include diverse images and perspectives in all campus media and publications;
- Host diversity-themed yield events for parents and admitted students who are members of ethnic and racially diverse groups and students with an expressed interest in issues of diversity to allow them to learn more about campus diversity issues;
- Host a diversity-themed community event that is partnered with a local diversity organization from the gender, race, equity, LGBTQ, disability, or other communities on campus;

- Establish a dedicated role in the campus communications office or Chief Diversity Officer Department to serve as a primary point person in developing campus diversity articles, press releases, and responses to requests for information regarding diversity;
- Maintain a chief diversity officer social media strategy that includes a blog, Twitter, Facebook, and e-mail groups to assist the campus's dedicated diversity leadership to maintain a strong relationship with campus community members deeply interested in issues of diversity;
- Develop a campus diversity video that can be used to showcase programs, plans, priorities, and stories of impact;
- Maintain a campus diversity blog that is regularly updated by the president, provost, chief diversity officer, campus diversity committee chairs, and others;
- Host diversity town hall meetings and symposiums to create opportunities to both communicate and learn about campus diversity priorities, successes, and challenges;
- Establish diversity brochures, newsletters, and magazines to highlight campus diversity efforts in a dedicated manner;
- Showcase the accomplishments of diverse students, faculty, staff, community members, and programs in all campus media;
- Establish diversity-themed alumni associations across the country, creating visible opportunities for these communities to participate in their institutions in both traditional and culturally relevant ways that appeal to their identities as minorities, women, members of the LGBTQ community, and others;
- Participate in national diversity awards and recognition programs like the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) awards sponsored by the leading higher education magazine *Insight Into Diversity* or the Campus Pride LGBTQ Index.^{iv}

Recommendation 5: Make Diversity a Strategic Fund-Raising Priority

UNLV must develop enhanced capacity to engage in diversity resource pursuit. This process should focus on building long-term sustainable revenue streams that can ultimately play a key role driving public and private funds to UNLV's campus diversity efforts. In my experience, I have found very few institutions that have developed high-impact diversity fund-raising tactics, let alone a comprehensive resource development strategy in this area.

This strategy should include but not be limited to the following:

- Building a UNLV diversity case statement that is used to consistently sell the university's diversity-change agenda to individuals, companies, foundations, and others;
- Developing a branded diversity fund-raising campaign targeted at companies, small and large donors, and foundations, complete with 5-year goals, tactics, and intermediary success metrics;

- Using the full complement of fund-raising techniques in the service of diversity, including grants, transformative gifts, annual calls, golf events, friend-raiser events with high-profile alumni and friends of the university, and more;
- Creating an alumni fund-raising strategy that specifically asks minority alumni to support programs and policies from which they benefitted, in addition to the overall diversity strategy of the university;
- Developing a tuition differential project to charge a higher tuition for students from more economically advantaged backgrounds to create a new diversity fund that can be used to drive strategic initiatives on campus;
- Hiring a dedicated development officer/grant writer who reports to the CDO and focuses solely on securing public and private funds for diversity efforts; and
- Diverting resources from revenue-generating sports merchandising and related agreements to partially support campus diversity efforts.

Recommendation 6: Develop a Data-Driven Graduation and Retention Understanding

Some students graduate in a reasonable time frame, begin their careers, or pursue graduate education sooner than their peers while taking out less in student loans. Their parents save money on tuition costs. The university itself proudly sends these graduates into the broader world as representatives of UNLV while gaining additional capacity for new students. Campus leaders must have a clear sense of academic performance beyond first-year retention and graduation rates.

Some pointed recommendations include the following:

- Disaggregate academic achievement patterns in the STEM gateway courses by race and ethnicity and gender, controlling for standardized test scores, to determine if there is a pattern in groups of students receiving grades of D/F/W to determine where the greatest academic challenge may exist;
- Develop targeted conversations with key faculty leaders in those courses, perhaps launching a series of classroom climate studies to determine if diverse students are experiencing these learning environments differently. The existence of underperformance while controlling for standardized test scores and differential experiences may illustrate the presence of “stereotype threat,” “fixed mindset,” or other social-psychological states that are related to underperformance (Dweck, 2006; Steele and Aronson, 2005);
- Conduct further analysis of courses, looking for grade patterns where students are taking courses in a particular combination on a particular timeline, as a way of identifying if certain groups might do better not taking courses in particular combinations. I refer to this approach as strategic advising, whereby you find the “killer-course” combination and assist students with making the best decisions possible when building their course schedules and year-over-year plans;

- If you find a pattern of negative course performance, it may be prudent to consider taking certain STEM-course sequences and breaking them into 3-part courses, versus 2-part courses;
- During my time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we conducted a series of research studies of cohort health and graduation rate projections for targeted minority populations to develop an evidence-based understanding of student success patterns.
- Consider building cohort-driven leadership and academic success programs for students in structured scholarship programs where such structures do not exist. These programs can be leveraged to insure a higher rate of student success for students receiving dedicated scholarship support. This model is also viable for diverse students that are in campus programs like TRIO and those engaged with multicultural student organizations;
- Consider conducting a study of voluntary and involuntary leavers, determine why voluntary leavers left the institution, and, in a related fashion, assess why involuntary leavers were asked to leave the institution. The best studies in this area engage in a series of institutional database studies, post-mortem surveys and interviews with students who have left the institution;
- I also recommend creating a series of 1-credit-hour “turn-around” courses for students who have been put on academic probation. I have found that a targeted course for students who have been put on academic probation and are at risk of leaving the institution is an important strategy for giving them a lifeline and a pathway back to academic success.

Recommendation 7: Develop a Robust Faculty-Diversification Initiative

The recruitment and retention of diverse employees in faculty and non-diversity leadership roles remains one of the most difficult challenges facing American higher education. Faculty, whether they are diverse in terms of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or along other dimensions, potentially add value in a number of different ways.

As part of the big-picture diversity strategy for the university, UNLV should continue to develop a *Strategic Diversity Recruitment and Retention Initiative* that is dedicated to the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff and that continues to evolve Provost John White’s work. The UNLV Faculty Diversity Hiring Initiative is built on a number of promising practices that create the type of strategic context that can maximize the possibilities of having a diverse applicant pool and the potential for a diverse hire.

Some tactics include the following:

- As the current UNLV Faculty Diversity Hiring Initiative suggests, UNLV should focus as much as possible on building the pipeline of diverse talent that considers UNLV. The earlier the action focuses on casting a broad net, the less legal risk that UNLV will incur in attempting to diversify its faculty;

- Some typical activities include advertising in diverse periodicals (e.g., *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *Insight Into Diversity*, *Hispanic Outlook*, etc.), infusing a diversity-support statement in every job description, having a designated diversity recruiter on each faculty search, recruiting at targeted academic diversity faculty meetings (e.g., National Association of Black Physicists), requiring a diversity search plan that specifically outlines an approach to identifying diverse talent, introducing post-doctoral fellowship programs, bringing in additional candidates, and continuing to search until the final slate of candidates reflects diversity. All of the aforementioned activities are low-hanging-fruit ways of enhancing the possibilities of making a diverse faculty hire;
- I recommend that UNLV consider a future faculty symposium for advanced doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows that can be used to showcase the university, build an applicant pool of future job candidates, and advance the narrative of UNLV's commitment to diversity and inclusion. This is similar to the model implemented at Rochester University, where its Faculty Diversity Symposium has become very well known as a best practice in the higher education universe;
- I also recommend establishing a robust faculty diversity training initiative that engages issues of implicit bias and the manner in which diverse candidates are often excluded from the search process in subtle ways. Some of the best training in this area has been developed by institutions such as the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, and others that have benefited from the presence of National Science Foundation (NSF) Advance Grant funding centered on expanding gender as well as racial diversity in the faculty. In the best instances, the training would become part of the ongoing leadership development work associated with strengthening academic departments in addition to conducting just-in-time training for committees launching new searches. Some promising practices for activating this tactic include developing a train-the-trainer model, leveraging emeritus faculty members as trainers, and requiring that every committee has gone through training before its search can launch;
- A powerful step in the process is to establish a faculty diversification rationale that provides the institutional, academic, educational, and societal significance of faculty diversity (Alger, 2009; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, Richards, 2004; Williams and Wade-Golden, 2013);
- In this instance, I recommend that faculty diversity is defined broadly to include (1) women in the STEM and business disciplines, (2) historically underrepresented minorities across the faculty, and (3) scholars irrespective of background who make a unique contribution to the campus's diversity capabilities in important ways (e.g., faculty teaching in LGBTQ studies, disability studies, etc.);
- While some will view this broad definition of diversity as shirking the institution's need to dramatically improve racial and ethnic diversity specifically, this broader definition is consistent with the strategic diversity leadership rationale and the expectations of the courts, while allowing the university to continue with a proactive race-conscious faculty diversification initiative (Williams and Wade-Golden, 2013).

- Allocate a diverse hiring fund. This fund might be used to assist faculty with (1) additional search activities, (2) enhancing competitive offers, (3) seeding new faculty lines, (4) target-of-opportunity hiring tools, (5) dual-career hiring, and (6) assisting with retention dynamics once diverse candidates are hired. These ideas are not meant to be comprehensive but rather to serve as an example of the type of thinking that will be required to assist members of the leadership team in their efforts toward achieving inclusion and promoting retention. Moreover, they are intended to help in developing a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

Recommendation 8: Build a Powerful Suite of Learning & Diversity Initiatives

Workplace diversity not only refers to the differences between employees but also to the acceptance and celebration of these differences at work. Diversity training, leadership development, and engagement in the curriculum are essential parts of building awareness and a cohesive work environment and of preparing all students for a diverse, global, and interconnected world.

It is recommended that UNLV consider several of the following options as it writes its campus diversity plan:

- UNLV should map diversity in the curriculum in order to understand where it has diversity curricular capacity. Is it isolated to the social sciences and liberal arts? Is there anything in the business school? hospitality school? Do any campus or program requirements exist in this important area?
- UNLV should maintain its current multicultural and international course requirements, but should consider assessing and enhancing them if possible given that they were instituted roughly fifteen years ago with little updating since that initial implementation.
- The Intergroup Dialogue Program at the University of Michigan is an example of a program that provides a powerful for-credit educational platform for students that is implemented by the Psychology Department and the Division of Student Affairs directly. This program provides an excellent complimentary offering to a general education diversity requirement and is noted as one for UNLV to consider.
- Faculty diversity training is difficult. As a result, I recommend using a more embedded approach to engaging faculty in diversity learning processes. For example, outside of classic equal employment opportunity (EEO)/compliance gender-equity-related training, which is foundational, I recommend integrating the diversity idea into relevant academic domains in which faculty are already invested—for example, searches, curricula, retention, and leadership. Each of these areas is ripe for a series of workshops, where faculty can

challenge assumptions, review the best practice literature, and develop new targeted intervention activities.

- To this end, the best way I have approached this work is to develop action-oriented research projects with faculty, where we made the topic of the research a diversity issue that required them to undergo training to get the necessary resources and ultimately engage in the challenge. For example, we created a research project centered on differential success patterns in STEM academic achievement between diverse groups. This ultimately led to multiple studies led by faculty, a series of formal learning sessions to determine what to do about the data, and ultimately, an in-depth, multi-semester process where faculty and graduate students were training to implement novel new techniques in order to increase student performance in calculus, physics, biology, and other critical-to-diversify disciplines.

These recommendations call for more than one-time diversity education for any one group. Rather, they call for the university to make a long-term commitment to providing a number of spaces for dialogue, training, and skill development. Some of these recommendations must center on more general forums and symposiums, while others call for targeted training around workplace bullying, supervising for inclusion, resolving conflict creatively, and infusing diversity and inclusion issues more dynamically into the curriculum.

Recommendation 9: Research Campus Climate & Translating Data into Organizational Learning

Examining the campus climate for diversity is an important part of a regular campus-based assessment and is the reason why I was very excited to support UNLV’s strategy in this area, as you were planning your study. As I noted in my strategic planning sessions with the UNLV campus climate team, Hurtado and associates (1999) developed a four-dimensional framework to understand the campus climate: (1) historical context of exclusion or inclusion, (2) structural or compositional dimension, (3) behavioral dimension, and (4) psychological dimension. Table 1 outlines the dimensions of the framework, which is extremely well regarded as a general way of defining the campus climate in higher education.

I integrated this framework into my writing here as a way of providing important background and context in order to help UNLV as it begins the journey of interpreting climate data and ultimately putting them into action.

Table 1. Four dimensions of the higher-education campus climate

Dimension	Definition	Potential Data Indicators
Historical Context of Inclusion or Exclusion	The broader sociological and historical contexts detailing when diverse groups are included on campus and the relevant moments that define their experience in becoming full members of the institutional community	Lawsuits Campus protests Policy shifts Changes in legal interpretation of key issues
Structural or Compositional Dimension	The absolute number of diverse groups that will in many ways determine the context for how they experience the campus	Number of minorities Number of women Number within the LGBTQ community Percentages of diverse groups Equitable percentages in various

		disciplinary areas, majors, senior leadership, etc.
Psychological Dimension	The extent to which individuals perceive conflict and discrimination on campus (and feel somehow singled out because of their background) or perceive institutional support and commitment related to diversity	Perceptions of belonging Perceptions of alienation Perceptions of conflict
Behavioral Dimension	Reports of interactions or contact experiences between and among different groups, participation (or lack thereof) in campus programs, traditions, activities, and full engagement in the institution's various systems	Experience with mainstream campus systems Experiences with diverse campus experiences Interactions with different groups

The Importance of Disaggregation

As you begin the process of analyzing UNLV's campus climate data along any number of different dimensions, it is important to reflect upon the extent to which embedded benefits may exist for some groups to the exclusion of others who continue to struggle. Campus leadership can only understand the differences in the experiences of different subgroups by disaggregating the data at every opportunity.

The campus experiences of students, faculty, and staff take place in a broader social-historical context of differences defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other dimensions of the evolving idea of diversity. Despite some positive steps, UNLV, like all institutions, has embedded processes that sustain the advantage of majority groups. Unless the campus experience is analyzed through the lens of identity and disaggregation, these advantages usually go unrecognized (Duster, 1993). Disaggregating data for women, LGBTQ, economic background, and racial/ethnic minorities is particularly important for establishing authenticity in the campus diversity scorecard. Whenever possible, it is vital to disaggregate information, although this task might not always be easily accomplished with any given data-collection activity.

Exploring and communicating the findings, however modest, will be a welcome gesture for diverse communities that have often seen their particular concerns and interests either ignored or subsumed by a homogenous discussion in the analysis.

Structured Learning Forums as Tools of Engagement

- Structured learning forums are among useful tools for leaders to cascade their campus climate data throughout their institution and create a space for constructive dialogue. Simply sharing data from the report is not enough; stakeholders should be brought together in a series of discussions in which evidence can be shared, analyzed, and used to drive new initiatives (Moynihan, 2008);
- Moynihan (2008) argues that the "gap between dissemination and use [of data] occurs partly because of an absence of routines in which data are examined and interpreted" (p. 205);

- Learning forums provide opportunities for students, faculty, and other members of the campus community to consider information from the various dimensions of the campus climate data, analyze its importance, and choose methods for using this information in order to make adjustments. Only by engaging community members in this process will individuals be empowered to take action on the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- One type of learning forum involves members of the campus diversity committee who are responsible for implementing the study in the first place, while another forum could involve senior leaders and the campus deans;
- These forums should be confidential and limited in size in order to allow for open and honest dialogue. Ideally, they would involve a blend of informal conversations and formal presentations;
- Forums should involve key participants who can play an important role in utilizing the data to create greater impact;
- The key is to expose and engage leaders with the data so that they can confront the reality that the data represent, consider new possibilities, and develop new initiatives in order to drive change.

Recommendation 10: Celebrate Diversity on Campus

As you consider how to build a new narrative of diversity on campus, it is important that you consider ways of potentially establishing a celebration of diversity's importance and significance on campus. This might include a day-long campus diversity forum hosted by the president that features (1) major speakers, (2) remarks by the president, (3) diversity awards for key contributions of leadership (determined by a working committee), (4) a space for major campus dialogue and shared thinking, and (5) a mandate that all deans, senior leaders, and academic leaders will be in attendance, as well as other leaders across the city being invited to make the event a must-see opportunity.

This space could inform the diversity brand, create a culture of recognition and celebration, and ultimately become a showcase and even fund-raising event, depending how it is executed. It is an excellent way to involve the broader Las Vegas community in the business of diversity, and it can ultimately play an important role in building an important vision for success on campus.

Every institution has work to do in this area, but they also probably have some good things going on as well. This event should create a powerful and symbolic vision for where the campus is going and serve as the president's platform to demonstrate commitment, provide a campus-wide vision for the community, and ensure that all deans, vice presidents, and appointed leaders are present and fully engaged. The event might feature a keynote speaker, presentations, and breakout sessions from around campus, creating an overall energy that shifts and evolves each year. Some years, the focus may be on gathering insights in order to drive a new campus diversity plan; other years, the focus could be on the midyear report; and still other years, the focus might be on a particularly important issue—such as educating undocumented students in Nevada, creating LGBTQ-inclusive environments on campus, or breaking through the glass-ceiling dynamics for women in senior leadership. What matters is that the campus comes

together every year at the president's invitation to engage in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strategic priority.

SECTION 4: FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

These recommendations will require resources, and the only immediate source of funding for these changes must come from fundraising activities as well as a reallocation of funds. One recommendation is for UNLV to consider a special “diversity tax” on the “general fund.” Without knowing UNLV’s specific financial infrastructure, this might include a tax on student fees, revenue-generating sport activities, licensing agreements, federal grants, capital gifts, and other revenue-generating activities. While a modest 0.5–1.5% tax will not unduly harm any of these activities’ operational infrastructure or dramatically alter a student’s ability to attend school, collectively they could lead to a sizable reallocation of resources to support institutional diversity initiatives. These funds might even be used to attract additional funds from private or public sources who could perhaps be enticed into creating a match that reflects the university’s bold commitment to diversity.

Campus leadership has appointed Dr. Rainier Spencer, and his success will depend, in part, on having senior leadership engagement and a broad-based committee to support him as the campus’s designated point leader on diversity. The more individuals take responsibility for change, the more likely it is that needed changes will occur. Furthermore, the university community may be at different levels of readiness for “new areas of concern” that emerge as a result of this set of recommendations and the recommendations that may follow. There may also be a reluctance to “experiment” with new ideas or ways of thinking that broaden diversity as an integral part of the institutional mission. Making use of this report for regular conversations and for brainstorming new areas of focus is important. Too often these reports are put on the shelf and forgotten.

As my final recommendation, I hope that you are as intentional in processing the ideas presented here as you were in asking for them to be developed. It has been my honor to serve in this manner.