Walking the Walk:
Student Expectations of Faculty in the Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore student responses to a 2011 Student Inclusiveness Survey (SIS) and to examine students' concerns about their classroom experiences, particularly the role of faculty in campus diversity and inclusiveness efforts. A mixed method approach is used, employing descriptive statistics, OLS regression, and content analysis. Specifically, the SIS constructs that relate to faculty, the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes, the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness, and students' open-ended responses to campus inclusiveness prompts were analyzed. The findings suggest that students see faculty as important brokers in diversity and inclusiveness knowledge, and that they appreciate and learn about these issues and concepts in the classroom. However, students expect faculty not only to teach about diversity and inclusiveness but also to live it in the classroom.

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The concern for diversity and institutional climate has been at the forefront of issues in higher education since the 1960s (Thelin, 2011). Institutions that fail to pay attention to diversity and inclusiveness campus issues are missing opportunities to adapt higher education practices to meet student needs. Attention to these issues has historically been housed in the co- and extra-curricular work of student affairs, but now faculty members and academic affairs are being charged with meeting inclusiveness campus goals. The purpose of this study is to explore student responses to a 2011 Student Inclusiveness Survey (SIS) and to examine students' concerns about their classroom experience, specifically the role of faculty in campus diversity and inclusiveness efforts. A mixed-method approach is used, employing descriptive statistics, OLS regression, and content analysis.

Transforming and diversifying the curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom environments are necessary to meet the learning needs of today's college students (Kasworm, 2003; Kasworm & Pike, 1994; Roberts, 2011). If diversity efforts remain focused merely on providing students with improved access to services and support structures in college, then the work only scratches the surface of ensuring inclusive learning experiences. It is not enough to increase campus diversity (Milem, 2001) or to offer courses on diverse groups of people who continue to be largely excluded from the mainstream experience of the general student population (Anderson, 2005; Rios, 2010). To be inclusive, faculty must transform what they teach and how they teach. Faculty must reflect diversity and inclusiveness practices and thinking, which means exploring their own identity consciousness (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011). Central to the transformation is a need for

faculty to have safe, honest conversations about the biases, prejudices, and assumptions that they bring to campus and into the classroom (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011; Potts & Schlichting, 2011; Ward & Selvester, 2012; Watt, 2007).

Researchers report several promising strategies to train faculty to use more democratically inclusive methods in the classroom, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a pedagogical approach to teaching that ensures access to the curriculum for diverse learners by allowing students to express their learning in a variety of ways other than just high-stakes testing (Ward & Selvester, 2012). UDL also places a greater emphasis on service-learning opportunities so students can work in their communities to enact social change (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011). Furthermore, faculty must adhere to culturally responsive practices as they plan courses if they are going to ensure inclusive classroom environments, from the course materials to the decisions and behaviors they make in the process of teaching (Saunders & Kardia, 2004). Milem (2001) reported that female, African American, American Indian, and Chicano faculty were more likely to use inclusive teaching styles that supported diverse learners, such as incorporating kinesthetic activities rather than relying on lecturing to deliver content.

Another area of need in creating inclusive learning environments is facilitating heated classroom conversations. Watt (2007) introduced the Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) model as a possible facilitation tool to work through controversial topics of power, privilege, and oppression. From this model, faculty and staff can learn how to address the problems that arise when people begin to share their biases and prejudices candidly, both in and

outside of the classroom. Additionally, deliberate prejudice-reducing strategies in the classroom are recommended to create more inclusive classrooms (Berryman-Fink, 2006). Ward and Selvester (2012) have noted that faculty members need more opportunities to engage in professional development that is critical, reflective, and constructive and that is inclusive of technology to meet diverse student needs. Furthermore, Anderson (2005) warned that without sincere efforts to create more opportunities for diverse students to enter and succeed in inclusive classrooms, the only students to benefit from campus diversity programs will be majority-White students.

Method

Research Site

This study was conducted at a public university. The university is considered a mixed residential-commuter campus and is one of the fastest growing institutions in the country. The student body includes nearly 20 percent students of color and approaches gender equity in enrollment. Additionally, 30 percent of students are eligible for federal Pell Grants. In 2012, the University Institutional Review Board granted approval for the researchers to analyze the preexisting SIS data.

Student Inclusiveness Survey

The SIS is in its second year of administration and operates under the direction of the chief diversity officer at the research site. The SIS consists of 50 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, 5 open-ended questions, and 20 demographic questions. The Likert scale questions were

divided into six scales. The two scales used in this study are the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes and the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness. Both scales were used in the previous administration of the SIS and remained relatively stable over time. The purpose of the SIS is to improve campus life by responding to student attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the level of inclusion and respect for individual and group differences as captured in the survey. In the spring of 2011, the research site's Institutional Review Board granted approval for the distribution of the 2011 SIS by the Office of Institutional Research. Individual email invitations were sent to all students with a valid email address on April 18, with a reminder sent on May 10. There was an 11.8 percent response rate (*N*=1003) between the dates of April 18 and June 9, 2011. Participation was entirely voluntary, with the typical respondent completing 77 percent of the questions. As a voluntary survey, the instrument is not a scientific sampling of the student body.

Sample

The demographic information collected from the students allows us to compare the characteristics of the survey respondents with the student population of the research site. Figure 1 shows some of the noticeable differences between the institution's student population and the self-selected group that answered the survey. We had an underrepresentation of males, freshmen, and students from Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. On the other hand, Education, Business, Engineering, and Nursing students were overrepresented. The survey sample closely mirrored the racial composition of the campus. It is difficult to gauge how representative our sample is of lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transgender students because the institution does not capture these kinds of baseline data. The full demographic

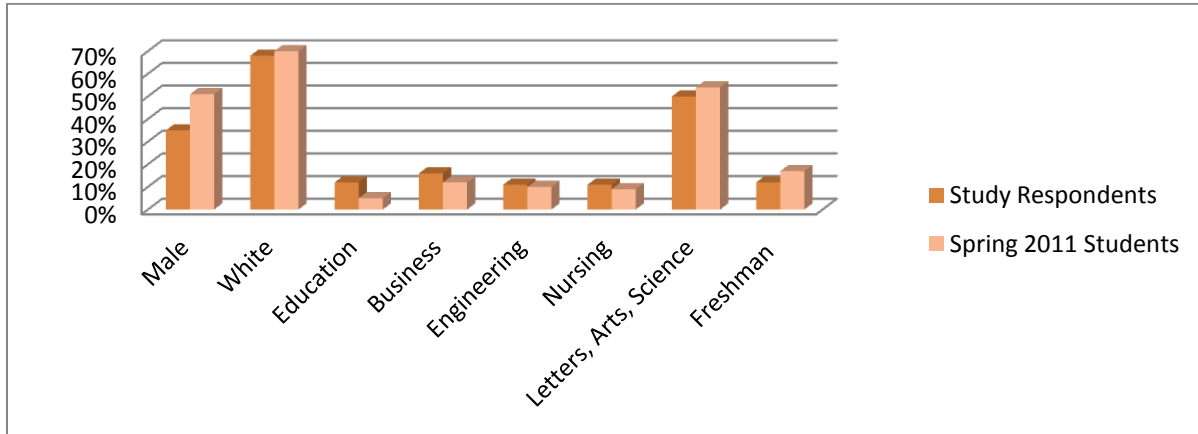characteristics of respondents are reported in Table 1.

Figure 1. Comparison of Survey Respondents with Student Population, Spring 2011

Data Analysis

Quantitative. The survey data were entered into SPSS software to conduct a descriptive analysis of the survey constructs that relate to faculty, the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes, and the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness scales. Each of these scales had elements that relate to faculty diversity and inclusiveness efforts. The response options were based on a Likert-scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The data were analyzed descriptively by collapsing Strongly Agree and Agree into "Agree," as well as Strongly Disagree and Disagree into "Disagree." Also, we measured the Chronbach alpha coefficients of the scales. And lastly, an OLS regression was used to determine if there were significant predictors for responses on the scales. All the covariates listed in Table 1 were included with race/ethnicity, major, sexual orientation, class level, and gender all dummy coded. This yielded a reference

group that was male, heterosexual, business major, freshman, studied full time, lived on campus, not first-generation, and other racial group. Based on the coding of variables, the final regression formula is as follows:

> Self-Assessment of Diversity of Learning Outcomes or Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness = β_0 + β_1(Female) + β_2(American Indian) + β_3(African America) + β_4(Latino/a) + β_5(White) + β_6(Asian) + β_7(Bisexual) + β_8(Lesbian/Gay) + β_9(Arts and Humanities) + β_{10}(Education) + β_{11}(Engineering) + β_{12}(Natural Sciences) + β_{13}(Nursing and Health Sciences) + β_{14}(Social Sciences) + β_{15}(Sophomore)+β_{16}(Junior)+ β_{16}(Senior)+ β_{17}(Master's or PhD)+β_{17}(Unclassified)+β_{18}(First-Generation Student)+β_{19}(Full-time Status)+β_{20}(Live on Campus)+β_{21}(Transgender)

Table 1
Survey Demographics

Gender		**Sexual Orientation**	
Female	60%	Heterosexual	86%
Male	39%	Lesbian or Gay	4%
Transgender	1%	Bisexual	5%
		Prefer not to Respond	5%
Race/Ethnicity			
African American/Black	4%	**Physical Disability**	
American Indian	2%	Yes	5%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	4%	No	63%
Latino(a)	7%	Prefer not to Respond	32%
White	68%		
Multi-racial	6%		
Other	9%		
First-Generation Student		**Full-time Status**	
Yes	24%	Yes	83%
No	76%	No	17%
Married		**Children at Home**	
Yes	31%	Yes	21%
No	69%	No	79%
Military Affiliation		**Live on Campus**	
Yes	25%	Yes	12%
No	75%	No	88%
Employed off Campus		**Employed on Campus**	
Yes	59%	Yes	19%
No	41%	No	81%
Class Level		**Major**	
Freshmen	12%	Arts and Humanities	16%
Sophomore	13%	Business	16%
Junior	23%	Education	12%
Senior	24%	Engineering	11%
Master's or PhD	27%	Natural Sciences	12%
Unclassified	1%	Nursing and Health Sciences	11%
		Social Sciences	22%

Qualitative. Content analysis methods were used to analyze significant statements and meanings and to develop descriptors of the essential themes that emerged from faculty-related, open-ended responses of the SIS (Creswell, 2013). Responses to three open-ended questions were analyzed: (1) "What aspects of inclusiveness on campus concern you the most?" (2) "What is the most important action the institution should take to make the campus more inclusive?" (3) "Please provide any additional comments you would like to share about diversity and inclusiveness at the institution." Nearly 20 percent of all responses cited faculty (*N*=224). In cases where clarity of the content was uncertain, grammar, sentence structure, and spelling were corrected. The researchers inductively identified significant statements and meanings through separate

coding and then collectively compared and contrasted the codes to develop emerging themes, applying the constant-comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The researchers focused on the systematic approach of this method for researcher coding credibility and dependability.

To begin, the open coding of central words and phrases was performed to develop emerging categories by the researchers separately; approximately 86 codes were initially developed, and through parsimony and refinement, 16 open codes were consensually agreed upon, and 4 emerging themes were titled through in-vivo coding: (a) concerns regarding bias in course materials; (b) faculty adhere to traditional pedagogical methods; (c) faculty training needed for facilitating difficult classroom conversations; and (d) faculty professional development is needed to foster an inclusive campus community.

The researchers then consensually agreed on an overarching idea emerging from the data:

Although the classroom experience tends to be inclusive and respectful, students expect faculty not only to teach about diversity and inclusiveness, but also to live it in the classroom through inclusive course content selection, pedagogy, and facilitation skills. Students find that faculty do not always adhere to inclusive classroom behaviors, nor is diversity appropriately woven through the university curriculum. Students recommend that the university provide faculty professional development opportunities to ensure safe classroom environments where all experiences and thoughts are appreciated and welcomed.

It is important to note that in one-third of all comments students acknowledged that classroom diversity and inclusiveness experiences were welcoming and respectful, and they hoped faculty and the institution would continue to expand upon these efforts. See Table 2 for a code mapping of the data analysis.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

The two SIS scales used in this study are the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes and the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness, as both related specifically to the role of faculty in diversity and inclusiveness efforts. The Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes scale consists of seven questions with a Cronbach alpha of .86 and .84 previously. The Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness scale consists of four questions with a Cronbach alpha of .92 and .93 during the previous administration.

Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes Scale. The Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes Scale was constructed to understand how student understanding of diversity and inclusiveness was enhanced by various activities inside and outside of the classroom (Table 3). The most powerful experiences were informal interactions with other students and with faculty who included multicultural examples in their teaching. Additionally, 48 percent of students agreed with the statement that their experiences at the institution helped them understand diversity.

Table 2

Code Mapping: Three Iterations of Analysis for Non-Traditional Student Remarks

First Iteration: Codes from Transcriptions

General content bias – race, gender, sexuality, religion, anti-military, etc.	Embrace alternate teaching styles	Faculty personal agendas pushed in the classroom	Train faculty on infusing diversity in the curriculum
Limited appreciation of alternate world views – pro-American/Western culture	Embrace alternate learning assessment methods	Encourage opposing views to be shared	Excessive concern with diversity and inclusiveness has no academic or real world value
Lack of diversity and inclusiveness content across the curriculum	Faculty display little understanding of students' lives outside of the classroom	Overt and covert discrimination is tolerated and perpetuated by faculty	Diversity and inclusiveness institutional values are not reflected in the classroom
	Disability Certificates are not honored	Foster respectful, open class dialogues	Educate faculty on being student advocates
	Unfairness in academic accommodations, and lack thereof		

Second Iteration: Emerging Themes

Concerns regarding bias in course materials	Faculty adhere to traditional pedagogical methods	Faculty training needed for facilitating difficult classroom conversations	Faculty professional development is needed to foster inclusive campus community

Third Iteration: Application to Data

Although the classroom experience tends to be inclusive and respectful, students expect faculty not only to teach about diversity and inclusiveness, but also to live it in the classroom through inclusive course content, pedagogy, and facilitation skills. They find that faculty do not always adhere to inclusive classroom behaviors, nor is diversity appropriately woven throughout the university curriculum. Students recommend that the university provide faculty professional development opportunities to ensure safe classroom environments where diversity of curriculum, thought, and experience are appreciated and welcomed.

Table 3

Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
My understanding of diversity and inclusiveness was enriched by . . .			
informal interactions with other students	12%	21%	67%
faculty who included multicultural examples in their teaching	18%	26%	56%
taking classes that focus on diversity	20%	37%	43%
participating in student organizations	16%	54%	30%
participating in community service projects	16%	57%	27%
participating in campus activities that focus on diversity	23%	52%	25%
participating in a campus inclusiveness workshop	21%	69%	10%

An OLS regression was used to determine if there were significant predictors for responses on the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes Scale. All the covariates listed in Table 1 were included, with race/ethnicity, major, sexual orientation, class level, and gender all dummy coded. This yielded a reference group that was male, heterosexual, business major, and freshman. Results are displayed in Table 4. The coefficients for the following variables were significant: female, married, African American/Black, Latino/a, White, and multiracial at $p \leq .10$. Married approached significance at $p \leq .10$. White and marital status were the two strongest standardized beta scores of .151 and -.120 respectively. White students reported higher results of .233 on the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes Scale, while being married reduced the self-assessment by .187.

Table 4

Regression for Impact of Selected Variables on Self-Assessment of Diversity of Learning Outcomes

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
	B	*Standard Error*	*Beta*	*p*
Constant	2.797	.273		.000
Female	0.114	.058	.077	.051**
Married	-0.187	.080	-.120	.011
African American	0.287	.165	.081	.082**
Latino/a	0.235	.143	.085	.100**
White	0.233	.105	.151	.026*
Multiracial	0.290	.148	.097	.050*
Adjusted R²	.007			
N	19,206			

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .10$

The Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness Scale. The Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness Scale was used to measure the respondents' beliefs regarding the values of diversity and inclusiveness at the research site (Table 5). We found broad support for the idea that the learning environment should be inclusive for college life, as well as for professional careers, and that community members from all backgrounds should feel that they belong.

Similar to the previous scale, we used an OLS regression to determine if there were significant predictors for responses on the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness Scale. All the covariates from the previous regression were used along with the same reference group. The coefficients for the following variables were significant at $p \leq .05$: female, having a physical disability, and having children under 18 at home, with gender having the highest standardized beta of 0.207. Again, women reported significantly higher positive perceptions on this scale.

Table 5
Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The institution should provide learning environments that are inclusive of students from all social and cultural identities.	8%	5%	87%
Learning from social and cultural differences should be an important aspect of a college education.	10%	3%	87%
Learning from social and cultural differences should be an important aspect of preparing for a professional career.	8%	7%	85%
Faculty and staff should assure that students from all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging on campus.	5%	14%	81%

Table 6
Regression for Impact of Selected Variables on Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness

	Unstandardized Coefficients		*Standardized Coefficients*	
	B	*Standard Error*	*Beta*	*p*
Constant	2.839	.652		.000
Female	0.352	.145	.207	.015*
Physical Disability	0.475	.209	.198	.025*
Children at Home	0.372	.175	.199	.035*
Adjusted R^2	.062			
N	812			

* $p \leq .05$

Qualitative Findings

Concerns regarding bias in course materials. References to bias in course content appear to shape many of the students' thoughts on the role faculty play in brokering diversity and inclusiveness knowledge. This perception was most apparent among students who self-identified as conservative in relation to their faculty, who were perceived as liberal. One student commented:

> *Most professors seem very liberal, and although I only consider myself a conservative independent, many other students lean very conservative. This conflict of interest I feel causes friction, and a break in connection between professor and*

student. Not everyone wants to go outside to see . . . [the trash] and hear about how we could've recycled more. Not everyone goes with the "Going Green" concept. Some aspects of the idea I understand and support. Others do not affect me that way.

Another student shared how insulted he was by course content that clashed with his religious beliefs:

> *I don't believe the campus includes people with different religious beliefs. Some of the reading material for courses is offensive. . . . It is completely inappropriate for a professor to think that every student is comfortable with reading about*

> *two females who are intimate with each other, especially when they are in a book that has pictures. It's offensive.*

And while there were many comments that focused on general content bias, there were some comments about the limited appreciation of worldviews beyond the Western culture. One student remarked:

> *I don't think that the material taught in management classes does include information about other cultures; however, it seems to take the position that the American way of doing things is superior. The American way is often compared to other cultures; however, the material seems to follow the trend that it is in defense of our way. I think it is important to not include bias when teaching, even though we are taking the class in the U.S.*

With comments like this it is clear that some students value the opportunity to learn about other cultures in a critical fashion rather than just comparative. It was also apparent that students felt that their diversity and inclusiveness content was experienced in isolation instead of infused across the curriculum. One student suggested that "diversity [should be] incorporated into all schools and classes—not just in the social science courses. Understanding inequality and differences would enhance everyone's education." Another student explained how important it is for faculty to introduce diverse materials into the classroom to broaden students' inclusive perspectives:

> *Student population consists of hard right evangelical persuasion and due to their adherence to church dogma*

> *there is a tendency of students to "brag" on their beliefs, frequently to the disparity of other religions and the gay community. Professors try to introduce inclusive scenarios, materials and discussions, and these students turn the opportunity to learn into a perceived persecution of their own beliefs. They don't seem to realize that persons sitting next to them may not agree or have the same beliefs and are therefore thrilled to have professors who introduce the class to alternate world views.*

Faculty adhere to traditional pedagogical methods. Many students voiced concerns regarding faculty adherence to traditional teaching and learning styles, such as relying on lectures to teach material and high-stakes tests for assessing learning. As indicated by one student, "Only a very few instructors allow for expressions of different perspectives. Most professors just want to plow through their PowerPoint slides. I don't consider memorization of slides and regurgitation of bullet points to be education." And furthermore, a student questioned the validity of measuring learning in restricted ways:

> *Students should be judged on their performance, grades, work ethic, and experience as well as any test that might be required. I do not suggest that instruction be any less rigorous or challenging; I merely suggest that academia creates its own form of oppression and class level by not acknowledging learning that does not come from a book or by turning simple concepts into convoluted unreadable theories.*

Although most teaching and learning comments were in this vein, there were comments that spoke to the appreciation students have for faculty who utilize a more inclusively oriented pedagogy. One student suggested that the university should "continue selecting well-rounded professors that are inclusive and open-minded in their instruction."

Besides the actual teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom, students are also interested in building relationships with faculty, and yet students tend to think that faculty have little interest and understanding of their lives outside of the classroom. There were several comments about how little empathy is displayed by faculty, and this is exacerbated when students feel that they are dealing with situations outside of their control. This lack of consideration even extended to students noting that their disability status was not always honored by faculty. One student shared:

> *Several professors have, in class or privately, said out loud or directly to my spouse that they don't believe in learning disabilities nor that those students should get extra help like extra test time. One went as far as to say he thought it was fraud. Until you have walked a mile in someone's shoes who has to deal with this, you need to be open-minded and keep your ill-conceived opinions to yourself. It seems a few professors have an empathy disability and inability to connect with students. Why are they teaching? There are a few excellent ones. Maybe the others are either overstressed, think they are better than everyone else, or just plain daft and lacking in social empathy and self-awareness.*

Although there were several comments just like this one, there were also notable instances when students felt well cared for by faculty. One student stated:

> *After transferring from schools where I didn't "fit in," [the university] has been the most accommodating and kind through my transition process. I have had great teachers who have all been flexible with my various health issues, and it is clear that they want students to succeed. I believe this kind of attitude will continue to bring diversity to the college because all students will feel welcomed and respected like I have.*

Several students also noted feelings of unfairness regarding how and when faculty made academic accommodations for some students and not others. For example, one student indicated:

> *I have encountered a professor who was not willing to work with me regarding family circumstances. However, this same professor was more than willing to work with student athletes. Students who also have families should not have to choose between school and their families.*

Situations like this are intensified when students believe and are told that accommodations can be made for their status as military personnel. A student explained that "sometimes I feel that the military have a hard time with [the university]. While arrangements state that they can be made on several syllabi, they are not always helped as far as their jobs are concerned." These kinds of occurrences leave students feeling that faculty lack

compassion when they are not responsive to their needs and demands outside of the classroom.

Faculty training needed for facilitating difficult classroom conversations. Students noted that they struggled the most in classes with faculty who pushed their own agenda rather than dealing with the difficult conversation that could have occurred in the classroom. Again, much of the concern dealt with a perceived liberal agenda that faculty were pushing on students, which was troubling and made the classroom environment uncomfortable for some students. One student commented:

> *I feel as if most faculty have a liberal political point of view and try to push those views on students. This makes students, such as myself, that do not join in the liberal political arena feel excluded and somewhat intimidated in classes.*

These types of comments were well represented in the data, but there were also comments speaking to racial microaggressions made by White faculty members. One student shared:

> *The only problems I have experienced were in the classroom where the professor made inappropriate comments throughout the course that offended most of the students. Let's just say he has a pro-White male bias that was disconcerting to most of the classes—he allowed and supported the label of "hybrid" for President Obama, and made remarks about how Europeans are more intelligent that other "races."*

Another student indicated that faculty should "teach students HOW to think not WHAT to think."

Along with comments such as these, students felt that opposing views were not always welcomed in classrooms as faculty levels of tolerance varied greatly, which stunted conversations from moving forward organically. One student explained this point:

> *I love the cultural diversity classes that you offer. I love how much you have helped open my eyes to see different points of view. Now that I have matured in my cultural identity, however, I feel unsafe in the classroom to voice an opinion that is not incredibly liberal. I am looked down upon by teachers, publicly criticized/mocked, and even graded poorly. There is a difference between being pig-headed and close-minded and having an open mind while making an informed decision about my faith and beliefs. [The university] is a wonderfully safe place to be different from the cultural majority . . . but it is not so safe to be the same as the cultural majority. I believe that both can and should exist together.*

Similarly, another student stated, "I have noticed that every idea and background is accepted except from a conservative Christian viewpoint. Traditional family values are not encouraged. Most classes involve discussions of situational ethics." To deal with these kinds of power issues in the classroom, one student remarked that "politics should be removed from the equation, or the professors must take a middle standing. If the second option is chosen, then they can express their opinions,

but they must also explain why and what the alternative view is fairly."

There were also many comments related to overt and covert discriminatory behavior tolerated and even perpetuated by faculty. One student shared how difficult it is for her to feel included by engineering faculty:

> *As a female working on an engineering degree, there is still a problem of acceptance and respect for potential and actual ability of females in these types of fields. Unfortunately, that's not specific to here, nor to age group or experience level; [I] find it from 18-year-olds to 60-year-olds, in school and in the field. It's still a learned, unconscious behavior for the most part, though getting better. I'm glad to say, most of the time it manifests only subtly, but it IS felt . . . Me, I've learned to ignore it. Eventually most come around. But I've had conversations with other women here at [the university] in my field who have mentioned feeling it too.*

Other faculty behavior was seen as less derogatory but just as insidious, particularly in regards to military members. One student noted:

> *[There is a] lack of appreciation for the military and their dedication to ensure the safety and well-being of the United States and its citizens. The military has been talked down about in several of my classes. The Armed Forces provide the freedom and safety for each of us and yet they are belittled and disrespected.*

Students want faculty to foster respectful, open class dialogues and most believe it is the faculty's responsibility to do so if the classrooms are going to be inclusive. One student indicated that "if the professors teach acceptance with their words and action, students will follow their lead." Another student explained:

> *From the top down, the attitude needs to be that all people are accepted and valued, whether or not you agree with them. That is, after all, what they are trying to teach, what they are professing with their mouths, yet it is only being extended to certain groups.*

Comments such as these make the case that if faculty can ensure tough conversations occur with a respect for a diversity of opinion and moderated effectively, meaningful discussions and even changed attitudes will ensue. There were many comments that spoke to the fact that this is a reality in many classrooms. One student shared, "The atmosphere really lends to inclusiveness—the way professors and students discuss ideas and how students feel when it comes to talking about ideas and choices that are personal."

Faculty professional development is needed to foster inclusive campus community. Students suggest that they benefit from having diversity and inclusiveness classroom experiences across the curriculum as members of a diverse country and global community. One student explained:

> *I think every major should be required to take a class on diversity since we need to know how to*

*interact with diverse populations in
our future careers. We need to
understand the issues surrounding
different facets of our population in
order to be accountable citizens.*

As noted by another student, infusing the curriculum with diversity leads to increased "awareness" and "zero tolerance for hate, discrimination, prejudice."

Several students did remark that this kind of curriculum is "tricky" for students who do not feel that they need these kinds of course requirements:

*These students who are the quickest
to jump to the conclusion that they
are being persecuted as Christians
because they may be required to
read a book about legal actions and
tolerance in the gay community, or
complain loudly that they are being
forced to read works that are
"blasphemy." I would like more of
these types of materials simply
because these very students have no
idea what the rest of the world
endures at the hands of various
majorities.*

There also was noted fear that the "majority" culture is overlooked when too much attention is given to issues of diversity and inclusiveness, even when the benefits are understood. One student shared:

*Overall, I love [the university] and I
applaud how liberally minded your
teachers are. I love the experiences I
have had in cultural classes and I
appreciate you "forcing" me to take
them. Please don't forget about us
"majority culture" students, though.*

These concerns were voiced by many other students who feel that the university is already excessively concerned with diversity and inclusiveness, in such a way that turns students off from wanting to engage in these kinds of programs willingly. One student indicated:

*I think the university has gone
overboard with trying to push the
diversity card. It's gotten to the point
where everyone is just being taught
the politically correct ideals of
today, and it isn't the university's
place to instill beliefs. It is the
university's place to educate. Some
social awareness classes are good.
However, the majority of them are
taught by professors that have such a
strong bias that you cannot pass the
course without agreeing with them.*

Additionally, the academic and real-world value of such course work was called into question. One student suggested that "this hypersensitive need to lower the standards in the name of inclusiveness [is undesirable]." And another shared that "it is not the school's job to make sure students feel a sense of belonging. It is the school's job to educate, train and prepare students for their future."

What complicates these issues is that students feel that the stated diversity and inclusiveness values of the university are not reflected in the classroom. Many suggest that a clear connection with measurable outcomes is needed, such as ensuring that students get the help they need in the classroom. One student suggested that the university ought to "explain to the professors why students have Disability Certification, in order to even out the playing field, and the importance of working with students would be very beneficial."

Others noted the importance of having greater diversity among the faculty to reflect a commitment to an inclusive campus community. One student recommended that the university should "actively recruit a more diverse faculty. All of the Master's level courses I have taken with respect to 'diversity' have been taught by White, middle-class females. See a problem here?" In general, students suggested that discriminatory behaviors of faculty in the classroom, coupled with faculty power in the classroom, leads to students feeling detached from a university that espouses inclusiveness ideals.

Accordingly, students believe faculty need to be educated on serving as advocates for students and the classroom community and knowing how to intervene when discussions are out of control. One student remarked, "If discussion turns into a diatribe against certain ideas or lifestyles, then it should be the responsibility of the professor to remain involved in that discussion as a mediator, and not an enabler." Students want faculty to be accountable to building an inclusive classroom environment and, as a student stated, "When prejudicial statements and actions occur, it can be difficult for observers to protest. It is the responsibility of students, professors, and staff to avoid being silent when they see such actions." When students see faculty perpetuate hateful language and behaviors, trust is lost. Another student noted:

> *In one of my classes a student made many jokes about gay people often during class time and the professor never said anything about it and laughed along. I am not gay, but this really bothered me. It was unprofessional for her to laugh with him.*

Discussion

Students clearly see faculty as important brokers in diversity and inclusiveness knowledge, and they appreciate and learn about these issues and concepts in the classroom. Additionally, students value an inclusive environment and believe faculty should play a strong role in fostering belonging at the campus level. And this particularly holds for females, as their responses on the Self-Assessment of Diversity Learning Outcomes and the Commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness were both significant. And although the classroom experience tends to be inclusive and respectful, students expect faculty not only to teach about diversity and inclusiveness, but also to live it in the classroom through inclusive course material selection, pedagogy, and facilitation skills. It appears that students experience this more often with faculty in social science disciplines. They find many faculty do not always adhere to inclusive classroom behaviors, nor do they find diversity content appropriately woven through the university curriculum, but believe this is an important piece of receiving a comprehensive, quality education. Students recommend that the university provide faculty professional development opportunities to ensure safe classroom environments where diversity of curriculum, thought, and experience are appreciated and welcomed. They see a need to connect the stated diversity and inclusiveness values of the institution with what is happening in the academic environment of the university but express concern about taking diversity "too far."

Several recommendations emerge from this study, consistent with prior recommendations, to address students' concerns about their diversity and inclusiveness classroom experiences. First, it

is important for the university to provide professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about and practice inclusive classroom pedagogy. This includes several elements, from selecting course content materials, to opting for progressive teaching and grading policies, to developing ground rules for managing difficult classroom conversations. Becoming an inclusive university educator takes will and commitment, but it is not a mystery as to what needs to be done to be effective with today's diverse college student population (Berryman-Fink, 2006; Kasworm, 2003; Kasworm & Pike, 1994; Roberts, 2011; Ward & Selvester, 2012; Watt, 2007). Much of this kind of work begins with faculty exploring their own identity consciousness to connect and empathize with students' learning needs (Alejano-Steele et al., 2011).

Additionally, attention to the power dynamics of classrooms is needed to increase positive faculty-to-student interactions, as well as student-to-student interactions. Watt's (2007) PIE model may be an effective tool to begin thinking about how these power issues can be neutralized in the classroom as it focuses on how to interpret and what to do when people begin to engage in open, honest ways in and out of the classroom environment. Increased campus programming that brings faculty and students together outside of the classroom may also be an optimal way of creating connections between faculty and students that minimizes issues of authority and power.

Lastly, university diversity efforts need to be streamlined inside and outside the classroom so all students can benefit from a curricular and co-curricular experience built on creating an inclusive campus community. The data strongly suggest that there is a disconnect between the stated institutional values and the classroom experience. Furthermore, a campaign to communicate anti-discrimination policies, as well as campus resources, would help raise awareness of discrimination protections and support services in place to ensure a campus community where all participants feel that they belong and are valued.

Conclusion

Findings of this study indicate the importance of faculty being engaged and trained to meet campus inclusiveness goals, as well as the needs and interests of students. It is clear that students value learning in an inclusive classroom, but it appears they are not experiencing this across the curriculum. The need to transform and diversify the curriculum is not possible without faculty ownership. These findings provide some initial evidence for the need for faculty professional development in this area, especially in academic disciplines with few diverse faculty members (Milem, 2001). All too often, the responsibility of providing diverse curriculum and student-centered learning has largely been left to diverse faculty (Milem, 2001). Without institutional intervention and support for inclusive classrooms, students may be forced to choose between partially assimilating to a campus or abandoning their studies altogether (Danowitz & Tuitt, 2011; Milem, 2001). Colleges and universities of today must understand and embrace students' diverse learning needs and wants, including experiencing diversity and inclusiveness in the classroom.

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