CHANGE AGENT STATES VISION AND FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

Demographics, the economics of a truly global society and an emerging consensus about the wide comprehensive meaning of educational excellence have converged to create a "perfect' storm" – now is the time for America to live up to the imperative of its highest democratic ideals. If America is to be herself and to succeed in the 21st century, our institutions of higher learning must rededicate themselves to providing educational opportunity and promoting educational success for all of our children.

. . . it is not sufficient to simply recruit underrepresented minorities; each campus must create an environment that embraces diversity as one of its core values, infusing every aspect of campus life and purpose, and every measure of success. . . . to address the next steps in diversity leadership, and charged with developing strategies, including working definitions, assessment and accountability guides, to help the leadership of member institutions achieve this goal.

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Now Is The Time: Meeting the Challenge for a Diverse Academy
Foreword to "A Report of the AASCU/NASULGC," October 2005
(American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges)

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Challenge of Cooperative Extension History

Historically, the land-grant university system, working in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture has proudly advertised its work in service, efficiency, responsiveness and accountability to 'all people' across the country. However, the system has historically--in some cases overtly and in others inadvertently--excluded some groups and continues to be ill-equipped to a) adapt to the societal and demographic changes impacting the country over the past two decades and b) respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele and workforce.

Some audiences, groups and communities continue to be excluded from programs due in part to an organizational reliance on traditional activities, events and policies that are often accompanied by a lack of understanding and awareness around the growing differences in our social environments, institutions and states. The workplace, too, has become more diverse, creating tension regarding traditionally accepted organizational policies, expectations and practices.

A further challenge within the Land Grant University System is its own system diversity, reflected in the 1862, 1890 and 1994[1] institutions, and the history of separation and exclusion among them. These institutions represent an enormous national asset because they offer the potential for expanding partnerships to address the issues of pluralism within the system and in the larger society.

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[1] Years land-grant universities were established

Leadership Challenges for Organizational Change

Most managers and leaders readily admit they lack the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to effectively manage an increasingly diverse organization. Not surprisingly, leaders have relied on the skills, traits, and abilities, which have led to their current success. However, traditional managerial skills often do not translate into competency for dealing with systemic organizational change around diversity issues such as race, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

Recognition of the Need for System Diversity Competence and Organizational Change

In the mid 1990's the Extension system leadership recognized that the land-grant university system needed to meet the challenges that diversity brings and address organizational needs for change. This recognition led to conversations among Directors, Administrators, and members of the national ECOP Sub-Committee on Extension Diversity (SED)[2] [now entitled the ECOP National Extension Committee on Diversity]. The system leaders, while recognizing the need for a proactive organizational response to diversity, voiced their need for guidance about how to proceed competently and effectively in this totally new leadership role. They recommended that SED create a research driven project to develop successful models and system change strategies to support greater diversity and welcoming climates within the national land-grant system. Using the *Pathways to Diversity* (1991) document as a guide, the SED spent two years developing key components of the organizational change framework, identifying assessment requirements and appropriate timelines, researching and interviewing nationally recognized consultants on diversity and organizational change, and creating a mechanism to engage states and institutions in a pilot effort to enhance diversity and effect systemic change.

Change Agent States for Diversity Project History

Since 1999 the Change Agent States for Diversity Project has been a proactive, catalytic step in moving toward the transformation of the land-grant system's participant organizations. Eight states were selected through an application process to participate in the initial multi-state consortium (Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania; Georgia chose not to continue for internal organizational reasons). In 2004, again through an application and review process, seven more states were added to the consortium (Delaware, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Washington), and they were initially called the Change Agent States for Engagement (CASE). The second wave of states was able to move to direct organizational action steps within a year of joining the consortium by using those established tools developed by the initial states in their formative working years. As a sense of community evolved among the fourteen states, the project has come to be referred to simply as the Change Agent States (CAS).

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[2] Sub-Committee on Extension Diversity (SED), a sub-committee of Cooperative State Research, Education, Extension System (CSREES) Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) and the Personnel and Organization Development Committee (PODC).

Embracing and Implementing the *Framework for Change*

By their submission of a CAS Project RFP, the participant states and institutions agree to use the *Framework for Change* as the foundation for their organizational change efforts. The consistent use of the *Framework* ensures common research benchmarks across all states as a basis for measuring the success of the project's interventions aimed at creating organizational change regarding diversity. The *Framework* has four key components that are described below.

1) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT   Engaging and training people who make or influence organizational policy is a core initiative of the CAS Project. The support and engagement of key organizational leaders is critical to the effectiveness and success of system change efforts. A significant project expectation for leaders is that they will acquire the skills and confidence to be able to speak knowledgeably about and lead organizational change with regard to diversity.

   • Corporate-quality consultants to provide the Leadership Training are a key component of the CAS Project. **Elsie Cross and Associates, Inc.,** is an organizational development consulting firm with 25 years of experience in organizational change related to diversity. This firm was strategically selected because of their vision and corporate experience consulting on the system-change level. They provide customized consultation and training, work from a conceptual framework, and provide understanding and competence in application theory.

   • **Dr. Kate Kirkham**, a consultant with Elsie Cross and Associates, Inc., has provided customized consultation and training to both the consortium and within the project states. She is Executive Director, Wm. G. Dyer Institute for Leading Organizational Change, and Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, Department of Organizational Leadership and Strategy, Marriott School of Management, Brigham Young University. The US News & World Reports ranks the Marriott School among the top 50 Best Business Programs. Dr. Kirkham works with the states and trains people in managerial positions from a Strategic Diversity Leadership Model that provides an understanding of the differences between individual prejudice and institutional discrimination.

   The Model briefly incorporates:
      • **Dimensions** that provide a lens to diagnose and move from an individual leadership role to an institutional leadership level:
         a. *Individual* leadership for **specific** diversity objectives.
         b. *Individual* leadership that **integrates** diversity into a program of work or business unit.
         c. *Institutional* leadership that **sustains specific diversity outcomes over time**.
         d. *Institutional* leadership that **creates new organizational capability to integrate diversity into the 'way we do things here'.**
      • **Key Concepts** to inform how to order and make sense of what is seen.
      • **Competency skills** that translate diagnosis into action or intervention.

2) The **DIVERSITY COORDINATORS** serve as a key liaison with Directors/Administrators, facilitate the work of the Diversity Catalyst Team, serve as an advocate for the Team's work within the system, and represent the State in the work of the multi-state CAS Consortium. Coordinators work closely with all levels of organizational leadership to support the implementation of diversity initiatives. The project expects that Coordinators will have a designated commitment of time/salary/position support for this position from their organizations in order to assure that the project has the support and resources needed to create change.

3) The CATALYST TEAM is a representative organizational task force that helps design and implement the system vision by listening, reflecting, learning, strategizing, and finally helping to implement change. These state teams are made up of diversity change agents from throughout the organization and their work is led, facilitated and supported by the state's Diversity Coordinator.

4) ASSESSMENTS provide a baseline, or benchmark, for yielding the research data that drives planning, action and evaluating outcomes. Key assessments include:

> • Organizational profiles - demographics of the organization (Extension System, College or Institution as determined by each participating state)
> • Assessment of state-specific systems that integrate diversity components such as recruitment/hiring/promotion practices, performance appraisals, professional development, program development and communication systems, etc.
> • Climate surveys - a survey to assess how effectively the organizational workplace climate welcomes and supports all of its employees.

> • **Rankin & Associates Consulting, Inc.** specializes in assisting educational institutions in maximizing equity through assessment, planning and implementation of intervention strategies. They provide institutions with a tool to survey their current organizational culture. This consulting firm was selected for its ability to develop a customized survey instrument, coordinate the administration of the survey, collect and compile data and provide a report of the results for both individual states and for the consortium. **Dr. Sue Rankin**, Senior Research Associate, has led all of the Climate Assessments for the Project and published survey results and implications for each of the 14 states.

> **Consultant for Change Agent States Project Evaluation**
> **Dr. Patreese Ingram**, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education, Pennsylvania State University, has led the Project Assessment throughout the Project. The assessment includes written surveys, phone and personal interviews of Directors and Administrators and Catalyst Team members. Project assessment outcomes and findings to-date are available upon request.

Change Agent States: Uniquely Positioned to Meet the Challenge for a Diverse Academy

The AASCU and NASULGC Task Force on Diversity Report indicates 'now is the time' for member institutions '…..*to address the next steps in diversity leadership, . . . developing strategies, . . . working definitions, assessment and accountability guides, to help the leadership of member institutions achieve this goal*.' The CAS Consortium is uniquely positioned to support that challenge.

The vision and purpose for the Change Agent States project has two primary objectives:

> • to build the capacity of the Land Grant system to function inclusively and effectively in a multicultural world; and
> • to set standards and implement a vision for supporting healthy, thriving, culturally diverse communities through Extension, research and academic programs.

The experiences of the Change Agent States Consortium have created a standard to demonstrate and measure the next steps needed to 'meet the challenge for a diverse academy'. The CAS *Framework for Change* has established a roadmap and capacity requirements for organizations to create an environment for change within the land-grant academic system – and beyond.

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