

## Modeling for Diversity: The Change Agent States

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## The Change Agent States: Selected Evaluation Results

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### Pathways to Diversity, 1991

The challenge to public educational institutions, including Cooperative Extension, is to integrate diversity into the core mission and vision; to weave pluralism into the very fabric of the organization



### Project Goals

#### Overall Goals

- To build the capacity of the Land Grant System to function inclusively and effectively in a multicultural World
- To set standards and implement a vision for supporting healthy, thriving, culturally diverse communities through Extension, research and academic programs.



### Project Framework

- Assessments (Climate and Profile)
- Leadership Training (Elsie Cross Consulting)
- Catalyst Team
- State Coordinators



### The Change Agent States

- 2001 States (CASD)
  - Arizona
  - Colorado
  - Missouri
  - New York
  - North Carolina
  - North Dakota
  - Pennsylvania
- 2004 States (CASE)
  - Delaware
  - Idaho
  - Louisiana
  - Mississippi
  - New Mexico
  - South Dakota
  - Washington



## Components of CASD Project Evaluation



- Climate assessment
- Profile assessment of workforce
- Written survey of professional development, hiring, promotion, retention, and evaluation practices
- Review organizational mission statements, strategic plans, and diversity plans
- Key extension administration interviews
- State Coordinator interviews regarding catalyst team activities

## Key Administrator Interviews



## The Business Incentive



- To meet the needs of all the people they serve in their states.
- Managing diversity is related to organizational success and fulfilling the mission of Cooperative Extension
- In 2006 – stronger expression of accountability to the public than in 2002

## The Business Incentive



- *“Being seen as an accountable steward for the resources that are provided us and those that we generate. Through diversity we cast a broader net of accountability”*
- *“If we have a store and we only served 80% of the population, you are leaving 20% of the potential business on the table and we cannot afford to do that.”*
- *Maximizing organizational productivity*

## Diversity Focused Issues



- Primary Issues
  - Need for greater diversity in the workforce
  - Need for programs and services that meet the needs of the entire population being served
  - Understanding the needs of specific populations/cultures
    - These were similar to issues noted at beginning of project

## Diversity Focused Issues



- New Issues
  - Need to develop an appreciation for the whole notion of power and privilege
  - Need for staff and clientele to understand that not all people by choice are Christians
    - *“...that we live in a very diverse religious society.”*

## Diversity Focused Issues

- Need to have ethnic minorities on the leadership team

*“That would help us be able to recruit young professionals who would see a place for themselves in the organization; a place to grow and have an impact. It would also help in developing relationships with the minority community.”*

## Extent To Which New Employees Are Expected To “Fit In”

- Similar to 2002 – most directors indicate they welcome creativity, new ideas, and differences
- In 2006 – a definite distinction was recognize between expectations for “fitting in” on campus and in local community settings.
  - Campus environment seems more open and accepting of differences.
  - Local communities tend to have more social mores to which faculty are expected to adhere

## Hiring, Retention, Development, Promotion Strategies

- **Hiring**
  - Recruiting to wider more diverse audiences
  - Including statements about diversity within position announcements
    - These strategies similar to those mentioned in 2002
- **Newer strategies**
  - Taking advantage of university minority hiring programs typically designed to recruit campus faculty

## Hiring, Retention, Development, Promotion Strategies

- **Retention**
  - Few strategies offered
  - Those mentioned included:
    - a very prestigious diversity award
    - more latitude given to educator to program in areas of interest
- **Development**
  - On-going professional development plans
  - Mentoring programs
    - Generally speaking, these strategies were available to all employees in the system

## Hiring, Retention, Development, Promotion Strategies

- **Promotion**
  - No strategies were mentioned in 2002
- **New strategies/ approaches**
  - Administrative Diversity Intern position
  - Job descriptions created to reflect populations and areas of state served by position
    - Intent to make description relevant to audiences that will be served so that evaluation is fair for promotion

## Barriers Inhibiting Employment

- Lack of minority candidates in the pool
- Ability to offer competitive salaries
- Requirement of a masters degree for entry level educator positions
- Dwindling state and federal support
- Limited recognition of extension in many diverse groups

## Barriers Inhibiting Employment



- Organizational culture of extension – in particular history and attitudes of people in traditional communities
  - *“There are organizational cultures beyond Extension in our audiences and clientele that have mind sets that we sometimes find very difficult to change – advisory boards, included.”*
- The location of the vacancy within the state
  - *“Positions in small towns do not provide the same level of embracement and recognition of differences as bigger cities. The diverse person would have some extra work to make a connection with the local folks.”*
- Perceptions of minorities, themselves
  - Some minorities question their ability to be comfortable in rural, all white communities

## Usefulness of Diversity Training



- Directors typically believed diversity training has been **“very useful”**
- As a result of training, directors witnessed *“personal change”* in their employees, and
- *“people’s understanding of and sensitivity to diversity has been enhanced or elevated”*

*“It has elevated our thinking and our understanding that diversity is as much a part of who we are, and the way we relate to people, and how we work together as an organization, as probably anything else that we do.”*

## Usefulness of Diversity Training



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## Impact of Diversity Competence in Evaluation System



- 2002 – several states included diversity in evaluation system
- 2006 – **all**, except one state, included diversity in evaluation system
- The majority of directors rated inclusion in the evaluation system as having only **“some impact”** on promoting diversity in the organization

## Ability to Manage Organizational Change on Diversity



- Most directors said their administrative teams were able to manage organizational change on diversity to a **“good”** or **“great extent”**
- Many cited the great number of training/diversity-related opportunities as reasons for their positive rating
- Upper-level administrators and County Directors in cities rated as more adept than those in other types of communities
- Turn-over in administrative staff cited as contributing to lower skill levels for some teams

## Extent of Diversity Training for Administrative Teams



- Similar to 2002, the majority of administrative teams have received training in the following areas:
  - Managing legal compliance
  - Knowledge of EEO, Civil Rights and ADA legislation
  - Conducting and overseeing bias free hiring and human resources processes

## Extent of Diversity Training for Administrative Teams



- Administrators in most organizations had received at least **some training** in areas of:
  - Creating inclusive environments
  - Managing organizational change process
  - Language of diversity that reduces barriers and builds trust and rapport

## Extent of Diversity Training for Administrative Teams



- Administrators in most organizations had received only **some, limited, or no** training in the areas of *Implementing practices to affirm people's culture in the workplace*
- **Fewer** organizations had training in the areas of *resolving conflict across cultural, social, and power differences*

## Impact of Participation in CASD on the Organization



- Seven of eight directors indicated **"high"** or **"very high"** impact
- **One** director indicated **"some impact"**
  - *"The CASD project elevated the level of activity and discussion around diversity issues."*
  - *"Without the CASD Project, we would not be focusing on diversity."*

## Impact of Participation in CASD on the Organization



- Other comments regarding the impact of participation in CASD. Participation in the project:
  - *Brought pride and prestige to the organizations*
  - *Allowed project states to be models and mentors for, and interact with, other project states*
  - *Helped some organizations to connect with the other land grants institutions in their states (1890's and 1994's)*

## New Strategies in Place to Address Diversity



- Strategies implemented across all or most organizations:
  - Increased training initiatives
  - Addressing diversity-related issues has become a systemic part of the organization
  - Changes in hiring practices to increase the structural diversity in the organization
  - Efforts to connect to the 1890's and 1994's
  - Formal organizational assessment initiatives focused on diversity

## New Strategies in Place to Address Diversity



- Selected **specific strategies** mentioned by directors:
  - Creation of a Diversity Specialist position that reports directly to the Director
  - Creation of a Diversity Administrative Intern position
  - Requiring a diverse candidate pool for high level administrative positions before interviewing is allowed to take place
  - Leveraging of financial support from the Office of the Provost to hire underrepresented extension educators

## New Strategies in Place to Address Diversity



- Selected specific strategies (continued):
  - Systematically building diversity-focused topics into the professional development plans for the organization
  - Systematically building diversity considerations into the POW
  - Establishment of a diversity endowment fund to support diversity-focused professional development
  - *Director's Diversity Initiative* – requires extension educators to document 8 hours of diversity-focused training each year as part of performance review

## New Strategies in Place to Address Diversity



- Selected specific strategies (continued):
  - Creation of a Strategic Plan for Diversity for the organization
  - Inclusion of diversity competence in the performance evaluation system
  - Establishment of diversity awards (some very high level)
  - Inclusion of diversity criteria into the series of "Director's Spirit of Extension" awards

## Looking Back – What Progress has Been Made in Building Capacity of the Institution?



- Half of Directors – organizations had made "**large steps**"
- Almost half of Directors – organization had made "**both large and small**" or "**medium steps**"
- One director – organization has made "**small steps**"
  - *"I would be amazed if any university could say 'large steps.' I just think it is a very slow process and it is not an easy process."*

## Looking Back – What Progress has Been Made in Building Capacity of the Institution?



- *"We knew the demographics were changing, but we didn't have the right lenses on. It was like looking through a lens that was not focused. CASD has allowed us to become acutely focused on what diversity means for this organization. Without that lens we would not have taken these steps. We have been very pleased to see our folks and the excitement and the enthusiasm they have brought to the table around this issue."*

## Looking Back – What Progress has Been Made in Building Capacity of the Institution?



- Finally –  
Almost all directors indicated they had **much more to do** to fulfill their goals of building the capacity of their institutions to function effectively in a multi-cultural world.

## The Catalyst Team



- Methodology
  - Face –to-Face Interviews were held with the Catalyst Teams in each of the first seven states of the Change Agent States for Diversity Project

### Data collected from the following questions will be shared:



- To what extent has your state's participation in the CASD project has an impact on your organization?
- What benefits do you feel are derived from working collaboratively as a consortium, as opposed to working as individuals?
- What have been some of the struggles your catalyst team has encountered in doing its work?

### To what extent has your state's participation in the CASD project had an impact on your organization?



- Majority indicated a **high impact** (61%)
- Many indicated **some impact** (30%)
- Fewer indicated a **very high impact** (9%)
- Type of impact – themes that emerged
  - Awareness and Validation
  - Focus and Action
  - Organization-Wide Effort
  - Future Impact

### Awareness



- Climate assessment and profile assessments created awareness

*"I would guess that the climate assessment also would impact a lot of people. They felt things were not as kosher as they thought it would be, but I think it made a lot of people aware that we are not perfect. We need some work done...It kind of opened the eyes of a lot of people. We have some things that need to be addressed."*

### Validation



*"I think the presence of this group has validated this [diversity] being an organizational agenda, not an administrative agenda."*

*"Since the Change Agent States has been organized, it has reaffirmed administration's involvement and dedication to improving related issues."*

### Focus and Action



- The Catalyst Team worked as a vehicle for focusing on *"process and structure from which recommendations could come."*

*"I think the level of deliberate effort around diversity as an organization has been enhanced by the presence of this group."*

*"It encouraged us to really be more focused on what we are doing."*

### An Organization-Wide Effort



- The Catalyst Team approach recognizes the importance of the involvement of people at various levels in the organization.
- Responsibility to address issues of diversity necessitate the involvement of county educators, faculty **and top level** administrators.

## Potential Future Impact

- Most team members saw the past work of the project as effective but as the beginning in a long-term effort.

*"I think we have started the ball at the top of the hill and I think we are going to get some momentum. We are going to move from **some impact** to **high impact**."*



## Benefits Derived From Working Collaboratively as a Consortium

- Five major themes emerged:
  - **Idea and information sharing**

*"Well the obvious thing that I see and taking an example from the national diversity conference is getting the chance to see what other states are doing and what is working for them ... allowing us to be able to share our experiences."*

*"We learn good ideas from others – no need to reinvent the wheel."*



## Benefits Derived From Working Collaboratively as a Consortium

- **Resource Sharing**

*Specifically, the collective resources of the consortium allowed states to afford bringing in outside experts – experts that the organizations and states themselves may not have been able to access on their own.*



## Benefits Derived From Working Collaboratively as a Consortium

- **A network of Moral Support**

*"It is more than just to share frustrations and successes with others that are doing the same thing because it lets us know that we are not in it alone...that other people are struggling with the same kinds of questions and cultural changes that we are. So it is a support structure and I think it has been helpful."*

*"It is helpful to see numbers of passionate people working toward the same thing. I do not feel little. I feel empowered. I got troops behind me. That keeps me going."*



## Benefits Derived From Working Collaboratively as a Consortium


- **Accountability**
  - The consortium provided a source of "**external discipline**" to motivate teams to be productive. One example of this accountability provided by interview participants was the pressure that some states received from other states within the consortium to move forward and complete their climate assessments.
- **National Visibility to the diversity initiatives**




## Struggles Encountered by Teams in Doing Their Work

- Five major themes emerged
  - **Misconceptions and resistance**
    - Stigma that accompanies the word *diversity*
      - "Using the term *diversity* in the title of a workshop may reduce the number of people who attend. Labeling it *diversity* turns people off."
    - Apathy or lack of awareness that there are issues related to diversity
      - "Why are we talking about it?"
      - "It is perceived as in your face or pushy – of making trouble where there is no trouble. [People ask] – why do we have to do this because everything is just fine?"






- **Narrow definition of diversity**
  - *“People just assume that diversity is about race. That is the first thing that comes to mind. A struggle is that diversity is bigger than just one or two things.”*
  
- **Resistance to deal with diversity**
  - *Uncertainty regarding the reaction one may get for doing diversity work. “How many poison darts are you willing to have aimed at you?”*




### Struggles Encountered by Teams in Doing Their Work

- **Structural diversity**
  - The lack of diversity in the system can make it more difficult to penetrate the system and affect it with various diversity initiatives
- **Distance**
  - Distance made collaboration and interaction within some states difficult
- **Turnover and Downsizing** - loss of team members results in:
  - Uncertainty that accompanies loss of a key team member
  - Time required to build cohesion among new member




### Struggles Encountered by Teams in Doing Their Work

- **Downsizing**
  - Hampers the ability to hire more diverse workforce
  - Failure of county government to pick up costs to support a position focused on diverse populations
- **Time**
  - Work of catalyst team often viewed as *additional work*, as opposed to work integral to the jobs of team members
  - Team members lack the time to make progress in diversity initiatives as fast as they would like



### Other comments From Catalyst Team Members

- *“Personally, I have grown tremendously by being on the team. I have grown to the point where I was a sponge at first and now I am a saturated sponge. I am leaking water. It has brought me that far.”*
- *“There is not a meeting that we hold when the Dean speaks that somehow diversity is not mentioned. I mean it is mentioned every time. It is pervasive and so it affects the system. When you hear it from the Dean, you know it is important.”*



### Finally

- **The importance of future persistence:**

*“I equate this work to dropping a pebble in the pond and the ripples going out. There are those that we may not move...there are those that we may move from A to C...there are those who will move further, but whatever movement that we get in the system is positive systemic organizational change...we have to capitalize and stay focused on it.”*