MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND MULTICULTURAL CHANGE

CREATING MULTICULTURAL CAMPUSES HAS BECOME an aspirational goal for many colleges and universities today. However, moving beyond aspirations to actual concrete steps can be a rather challenging task. When asked, most campus administrators acknowledge this quest for diversity (Levine & Cureton, 1998), yet few have the awareness, knowledge, or skills to achieve this laudable goal (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). “In light of the reality that colleges and universities are becoming more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse, extensive knowledge of diversity issues and topics related to multiculturalism are vital for higher education and student affairs professionals” (Flowers, 2004, p. 3). During the past four decades, multicultural initiatives and change efforts have become abundant in higher education. Many institutions have developed specific programs, hired uniquely qualified professionals, and made changes to the curriculum to address multicultural issues; however, many of those efforts have been inconsistent, fragmented, reactive, and based on trial and error rather than relying on well-developed scholarship, assessment data, and leadership within the institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2008; Krishnamurthi, 2003; Pope, 1992; Smith, 2009; Williams, 2013).

Williams (2013), in his extensive research study of senior diversity officers at more than 700 diverse academic institutions, provides a snapshot of the current status of many diversity efforts on college and university campuses. His research focuses on higher education diversity capabilities that he views as vital to the development of a multicultural vision and strategy. His study found that while most campuses embrace general diversity planning strategies in which diversity is part of the
campus mission statement or mentioned within some strategic or academic plans, few colleges and universities have created the commitment and infrastructure of more robust, substantial, and concrete campus diversity plans. Additionally, most campuses are not engaged in intensive or extensive accountability efforts to ensure campus-wide investment in the multicultural change effort. Instead, what often happens is that particular individuals or offices are responsible for specific diversity goals. Almost half of all campuses studied by Williams have used diversity training and education programs to educate their employees; however, senior administrators and faculty members rarely participate in such training. Although engaging in campus-wide conversations on diversity is necessary, it is not sufficient without a broader effort toward accountability. Likewise, despite the emphasis on assessment at many colleges and universities (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004), few campuses engage in meaningful and rigorous assessments or research studies to ensure that their multicultural change efforts are having the desired effect.

Remember that these multicultural initiatives are part of a longer trajectory toward diversity within higher education. “Contrary to popular belief, the deliberate, conscious effort to achieve greater student diversity on our campuses was not born in the 1960s. In fact, it reaches back to the mid-nineteenth century, when issues of racial, ethnic, and other forms of diversity were no less volatile in American life than they are today” (Rudenstine, 2001, p. 32). Fast-forward to the mid-twentieth century and the same issues of access and equity were still the centerpieces of diversity efforts on campus (Chang, 2005; Smith, 2009). Although legal battles ultimately shaped the outcome of many of these access and equity endeavors, the aftershocks of those fights remain and have evolved into ongoing conversations, sometimes debates, about curriculum, campus climate, student success, and institutional multicultural efforts (Smith, 2009). As the student body became more diverse in recent decades, many college administrators began to address issues of climate, which led to programmatic interventions and the creation of diversity-related offices (e.g., Office of Multicultural Affairs) whose task was to integrate underrepresented students into the overall student body. This dynamic also led to the growth of many student groups or organizations whose purpose was to provide support and educate the broader campus on diversity issues. Yet, even as the student body diversified, the overall culture of higher education often has not changed, frequently leading to high attrition and low satisfaction (Rankin & Reason, 2005). “While our campuses often look more diverse . . . that appearance is misleading and
can camouflage the concerns that emerge as one looks deeper into the institution” (Smith, 2009, p. 254). Despite this apparent diversity, many students still sit with their own racial groups and rarely develop deep friendships with members of another race, attend cultural functions with other races, or meet other meaningful multicultural markers (Stearns, Buchmann, & Bonneau, 2009). Instead, many students of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, and religious minorities continue to report feeling isolated, harassed, singled out, and unwelcome (Rankin & Reason, 2005).

This enduring reality led many campuses to create or expand retention efforts for underrepresented students and the recruitment of diverse faculty in hopes of halting the revolving door. Although many colleges and universities have focused on retention, with limited programmatic efforts and minimal institutional strategic planning focused on multicultural issues, extensive research evidence was generated that helped to build the case for admitting underrepresented students because of the educational value of a diverse student body (e.g., Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, & Milem, 2004; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Orfield, 2001). This scholarly direction, which became the crux of the argument supporting affirmative action in college admission cases before the Supreme Court in 2003, moved the conversation away from the notion that campuses should embrace diversity because it was the right thing to do. Instead, the new diversity rationale began to focus on the educational, social, and economic benefits of a culturally diverse student body (Chang, 2005; Chang, Chang, & Ledesma, 2005; Gurin & Nagda, 2006).

**History of Diversity Efforts in Higher Education**

In her review of the past forty years of diversity efforts in higher education, Smith (2009) identified two important themes: “great change and great unfinished business” (p. 80). From her vantage point, great change included “changing demographics, the increasing calls for inclusiveness in higher education, the expanding accountability mandates, and the growing understanding of the multiplicity of perspectives concerning identity” (p. 132). Marchesani and Jackson (2005) offered a historical analysis of multicultural change efforts that highlighted four common response patterns. First, a crisis-driven social diversity and social justice agenda has often been the fulcrum of change efforts in higher education, leading to unresolved concerns and long-standing problems. Second,
many change efforts have focused on increasing underrepresented student groups, with little attention paid to increasing underrepresented faculty and staff members or educating dominant members of the community about their privilege or contribution to the multicultural challenges facing the institution. The third response pattern is that most change efforts target individual behavior change rather than systemic structures that perpetuate monocultural values and practices. This has led to what Miller and Katz (2002) call “diversity in a box,” in which “diversity activities are pre-packaged, one-size-fits-all training exercises strictly relating to differences between people” (p. 28). Finally, the reality is that for many institutions, the individuals personally committed to creating multicultural change often exist at the margins of power within the organization. They attempt to intervene and advocate, but with limited power and influence, their efforts are often short-lived and have limited effect.

Chang (2005) suggested that whereas early diversity efforts focused almost exclusively on race and ethnicity, current discussions and interventions incorporate a very dynamic and growing collection of identities and concerns, which create challenges for many institutions. Many campus leaders are hesitant and unsure of the complexity of all these changes and often are unable to fully substantiate that their diversity efforts have made an actual difference on their campuses. This reality has led to increased calls for assessment and accountability as well as a push for heightened institutional leadership (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Kezar & Eckel, 2008; Smith & Parker, 2005). This is part of the unfinished business identified as Smith’s second theme: Diversity is no longer enough; rather, “creating the conditions under which diversity thrives will be critical to institutional success” (p. 132). Diversity as an end goal is shortsighted; instead, viewing diversity as a source of excellence within higher education has become the new direction (Williams, 2013).

How Campuses Deal with Multicultural Issues

Understanding how multicultural issues are conceptualized and addressed is essential to the process of creating multicultural campuses. First, campus leaders must undertake the task of grasping the reality of the multicultural enterprise, from recruitment to curricular changes to programmatic efforts, on their campuses on a daily basis. The need to increase the primacy of numerical or structural diversity in higher education is a well-established fact (Kezar & Eckel, 2007; Smith, 2009). The diversity of
students continues to expand; more students of color, international students, older students, and first-generation college students attend college every year. In addition, other subgroups of students (e.g., students with disabilities, LGBT students) who were previously invisible are increasingly active and vocal on campus (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009). Research has demonstrated that increasing diversity on campus has both positive and negative consequences. Positive effects, such as enhanced student engagement, measurable educational outcomes, and comprehensive academic success, have been broadly reported (Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, & Milem, 2004; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Harper, 2008; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005); however, as suggested by Smith, increasing campus diversity alone is inadequate. According to Castellanos, Gloria, Mayorga, and Salas (2007), “increasing the numerical representation of diversity is insufficient to actualize substantive changes in the practice, policy, and even attitudes within university infrastructure” (p. 644). Without attention to the campus climate and campus-wide multicultural initiatives, positive effects may be unsustainable and sometimes even harmful to subgroups of students attending (Chang, 2007; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Chang and others (e.g., Harper, 2008; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003) have suggested that increased diversity without meaningful multicultural programs and initiatives in place can, in fact, reinforce or increase stereotyping, racial microaggressions, discrimination, self-segregation, toxic racial climate, and student resistance to diversity. Therefore, how higher education addresses the increasing diversity and manages the challenges and opportunities such diversity brings is likely more important than merely increasing the structural diversity; in fact, such efforts may determine a campus’s ability to achieve success as an institution (Smith, 2009).

In addition to exploring how campuses engage with increased diversity, focusing on what effect the campus environment has on all college students and their ability to function and thrive in the increasingly interconnected and diverse world has become gradually more important in the rationale for diversity (Deardorff, 2011; Musil, 1996; Smith, 2009). Bok (2006) and others (Cox, 2001; Deardorff, 2011) strongly suggest that one of the essential roles of higher education in this global society is to matriculate students who have the sensitivity, knowledge, and skills to effectively work with and contribute to the ever-changing marketplace. According to Musil, “For higher education, then, diversity is, above all, a challenge that demands we rethink how we educate students and
for what ends; how we define our scholarship, our disciplines, and our departments; and how we organize our educational communities, both within our institutions and in relation to the local and larger communities of which we are a part” (p. 222). Not only have corporations been addressing diversity issues and their impact on the bottom line for much longer than educational institutions, they have been pressuring colleges and universities for several decades to improve their efforts to educate a student body that is multiculturally competent, composed of effective critical thinkers, and motivated to work in an increasingly changing, expanding, and demanding global reality (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1995; Bowser & Baker, 1995; Deardorff, 2011; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Such a task is well within the purview of higher education and, as Smith, Wolf, and Levitan (1994) suggest, “preparing students for the world in which they live and work has long been the role of the American colleges and universities” (p. 10).

This task of creating an effective learning environment where students can gain personal insight and gather knowledge about the world around them has fallen on the shoulders of higher education academics and administrators alike. Whether driven by faculty-designed curriculum or out-of-classroom experiences created by student affairs staff and other higher education administrators, every campus has the opportunity to assist students in the development of the essential awareness, knowledge, and skills to be successful in our increasingly complex and diverse world. Although it has often been the responsibility of student affairs professionals to specifically address multicultural issues on campus (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004), the obligation is certainly not theirs alone (Howard-Hamilton, Cuyjet, & Cooper, 2011). In the past, multicultural experts whose job it was to ensure access and success of students of color and other underrepresented students on campus (e.g., educational opportunity programs [EOPs], multicultural affairs, women’s centers) often led the multicultural efforts. However, Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller made the case that all professionals working in higher education need to develop multicultural competence to create and implement meaningful and efficacious multicultural initiatives. As long as only a few experts are responsible for addressing multicultural issues on campus, lasting and consequential multicultural change is unlikely to occur. Likewise, until a broader array of campus faculty, staff, and administrators, who directly serve the needs of students, take on the mantle of diversity, colleges and universities will continue to address multicultural issues in narrow, fragmented, and often crisis-driven ways (Smith, 2009; Williams, 2008). Because most multicultural student services
units remain the responsibility of student affairs, many multicultural change efforts fail to cross that indiscernible barrier into academic affairs or spread throughout the entire campus (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Williams, 2013).

Williams (2008) suggests, “Many institutional diversity initiatives are largely symbolic and fail to deeply influence organizational culture and institutional behavior” (pp. 27–28). According to Petitt and McIntosh (2011), Williams and Wade-Golden (2007), and Kezar and Eckel (2008), until college presidents get actively engaged with multicultural issues and demand accountability, multicultural campus efforts will flounder. In an effort to move beyond this piecemeal approach, “a new era has clearly begun with college campuses creating administrative positions—such as chief diversity officer—that assist with the promotion, creation, development, and assessment of diversity initiatives on campus” (Howard-Hamilton, Cuyjet, & Cooper, 2011, p. 18). Often tenured faculty members hold these positions, and their presence on the cabinets of many college presidents implies a level of institutional importance (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Barcelo (2007) suggests that the increasing visibility of these new positions “indicates an acceptance of diversity as a reality of this century, and an acceptance of the opportunity to bring diversity from the margins to the center of campus” (p. 5). This “increased institutional commitment to diversity” (Petitt & McIntosh, 2011, p. 202) is essential for realigning the centrality of multicultural change efforts. Through accountability measures, campus-wide leadership, strategic planning, and institutionalized approaches to diversity, more opportunities exist than ever before for the development of campus climates that affirm all students.

Why Many Multicultural Change Efforts Fail

Before implementing campus diversity efforts or initiating multicultural programs, one must understand why many diversity plans either fail or stagnate. Williams (2008) suggested that most campuses initiate multicultural change efforts after a crisis, which may increase the likelihood that they will return to their old institutional practices and models twelve to eighteen months after such a watershed moment. “To advance the agenda of diversity, institutions that truly value diversity must move toward considering wholesale changes in their underlying structures and day to day activities” (Brayboy, 2003, p. 74); however, many institutions seem unable or unwilling to make the unwavering commitment that leads to true institutional change (Williams, 2013). Williams, Berger,
and McClendon (2005) identified specific reasons for why many diversity efforts fail, including an inability to view diversity work as essential to excellence; minimal levels of consistent support from senior leadership; inadequate resources; and the absence of a unifying framework for conceptualizing diversity, tracking progress, and engaging all members of the campus community.

Part of the resistance to multicultural change is also based in the inherent power differences that exist in higher education. Reed and Peet (2005) suggest that “any change tends to surface unspoken and often unexamined beliefs as well as culture and power-related issues within an organization and among participants that can either facilitate or impede desired changes and learning” (p. 476). If institutional resistance is not addressed and limited efforts are made to garner support for lasting institutional change, multicultural change efforts will likely fail.

Chang, Chang, and Ledesma (2005) provided additional caution about the challenges facing diversity efforts in higher education. When examining Justice Powell’s reasoning for the Michigan affirmative action cases, they suggest, “the educational benefits of diversity seem to him [Powell] to just magically and organically occur if the right ingredients and environment are present” (p. 13). In particular, it has been assumed that cross-cultural contact and engagement would automatically create enhanced relationships and openness to diversity. However, much like in horticulture, planting different types of seeds in the same soil does not automatically make them all sprout. Each plant needs the proper environment and climate and must be continuously nurtured if it is to grow. The same is true for college students, and assuming that increasing structural diversity alone will be enough is overly simplistic. Many in positions of leadership easily succumb to this type of magical thinking, resulting in limited vision and a lack of appreciation of the herculean effort needed to create sustainable and meaningful multicultural change in higher education.

Contextual Realities of Multicultural Change Efforts

Attending to the realities and unique context of each institution is also essential to any diversity effort. One size does not fit all. Such attention to context must occur at both the micro and macro levels. Although increasing calls have been made for institution-wide diversity efforts rather than reliance on narrow and piecemeal attempts to address multicultural issues (e.g., Aguirre & Martinez, 2002; Harper & Antonio, 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2008; Smith & Parker, 2005), some scholars stress the importance
of attending to the specific and unique realities of environmental context. For example, Williams (2008) does not support a unified and universal approach to diversity on campus; rather, he advocates for a decentralized approach to diversity plans, suggesting that most campus-wide efforts are unable to adequately deal with the decentralized nature of higher education. Many campus-wide efforts “fail to burrow deep into the culture and overcome institutional resistance, to accrue sufficient buy-in for the change vision, to place accountability with the right people, or to develop strategies that match the environmental context in which campus change efforts must occur” (p. 30). However, rather than merely focusing on narrow domains within a campus, Williams also suggests that campuses combine centralized diversity planning with decentralized efforts that require individual divisions, colleges, and schools to develop and introduce their own plans that will supplement and enhance the campus-wide efforts. According to Williams, “The challenge is to develop an approach that will create strategic consistency and, at the same time, allow for freedom, individuality, and creativity in the planning and implementation process” (p. 30).

Using approaches that encourage individual campuses to apply lessons regarding multicultural change in higher education to their unique circumstances is also important. Different realities and environmental contexts exist in distinctive regions of the country as well as across various types of institutions. When contemplating diversity, often the campus setting (e.g., rural, urban, suburban) and region of the country shape the opportunities and challenges facing different institutions. Urban campuses often serve a very different student body than do rural or suburban campuses, and their goals and missions reflect those differences. For example, many rural and suburban areas are generally racially homogeneous and predominantly white. However, many inner city environments are equally homogeneous, with an abundance of people of color and fewer white individuals present in many urban neighborhoods. In fact, most college students arrive on campus having attended racially homogeneous high schools with limited experiences and opportunities to interact with and form meaningful relationships with individuals who represent different races and ethnicities (Moody, 2001; Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997; Quillian & Campbell, 2003). The different realities of these rural, urban, and suburban settings ultimately shape the culture of a campus. Similarly, in certain regions of the United States (e.g., Midwest), there is limited racial diversity; however, the types of racial diversity that exist on both coasts and in much of the southwest and southeast regions can differ significantly.
For example, there are higher concentrations of Latino/as on the west coast, southwest, southeast, and along the northeast coastal areas. However, in each of those areas there are different Latino/a subgroups (e.g., Cuban, Guatemalan, Puerto Rican, and Chicano/a), whose history and culture influence the region. Because the enrollment of many institutions of higher education is drawn from their surrounding region, attending to these issues is quite important. Additionally, certain areas of the country and different settings have more immigrants, openly LGBT individuals, and nontraditional students. Without knowledge of the unique circumstances of those who live in the surrounding community and who enroll at their institutions, these campuses will be less effective in their diversity efforts.

The type of institution (e.g., mission, primary populations served) likely has an impact on a campus and should be addressed when conceptualizing and implementing various diversity efforts. Historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, women’s colleges, and institutions serving high numbers of Hispanic and Asian students all have unique missions based on the primary population they serve. However, they also serve other students on their campuses representing different races, ethnicities, and genders. Addressing the needs of white students on campuses whose charters focus on students of color creates unique challenges and issues. Additionally, within-group differences that exist for the predominant racial groups on these campuses also must receive consideration. Far too often we focus our efforts on differences between groups. Attending to issues of nationality, gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, and other issues that exist within a particular group creates ongoing opportunities for powerful conversations that add depth and complexity to our understanding of diversity. Having a strategic multicultural plan that addresses how these campuses intend to address diversity on a structural and strategic level is no less vital than it is on a predominantly white coeducational campus. However, the specific goals and methods used likely will differ. Similarly, religiously based colleges and universities have values that shape their policies and practices and may affect how they relate to and accommodate LGBT students, for example. One size does not fit all; therefore, when discussing how to incorporate multicultural issues, campus leaders must attend to the unique context of their campus. If, as Hale (2004) purports and research supports, “students do best at institutions that mirror themselves, their culture, and their interests” (p. 18), then much work needs to be done.

These contextual realities can be illuminated by the Astin (1993) Inputs, Environments, and Outputs (IEO) model. Astin’s model offers a
framework for understanding the various inputs, environments, and outputs that shape and are shaped by the college experience. Inputs involve the diverse demographic background, knowledge, and life experiences that students bring to campus. Environment constitutes those experiences students have while in college that also affect them. Finally, outputs or outcomes are those results (e.g., knowledge, awareness, values, characteristics) that students exit with when they graduate from college. The unique environment where students attend college must be computed as part of the overall equation because it has a profound effect on the outcome of their college experience as well as the overall culture of the campus (Cuyjet, 2011; Strange & Banning, 2001), and administrators and leaders must focus on these issues if they want to create change.

Regardless of unique challenges and strengths resulting from the type of institution and its region of the country, many scholars have suggested that “leadership is perhaps the most important factor in ensuring institutional transformation and institutionalizing a diversity agenda” (Kezar & Eckel, 2008, p. 380). Yet, as suggested by Kezar and Carducci (2009), such leadership has to be carefully developed and actively nurtured. Leaders in higher education, both academic and administrative, need both informal experiences and explicit training opportunities to develop the essential multicultural competence to introduce, plan, and implement effective multicultural initiatives. As Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) have suggested, enhancing competence among leaders at all levels of higher education to include multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is crucial to creating educational environments that fully embrace diversity. Given that “professionals at every level of each position are faced daily with multicultural issues, concerns, and dynamics that affect their work” (Pope & Mueller, 2011, pp. 348–349), providing practitioners within higher education with the concrete insight, understanding, and tools to address these issues on both a personal and professional level must be a commitment made by all institutions. However, as Williams (2013) suggests, despite the abundance of multicultural efforts, few high-level administrators and faculty members receive multicultural training.

Connecting Multicultural Change and Multicultural Competence

Understanding what constitutes multicultural competence and how to achieve this fundamental collection of awareness, knowledge, and skills is essential to meaningful multicultural leadership on campus today. Multicultural competence, based on seminal works in the field of
counseling psychology (e.g., Pedersen, 1988; Sue et al., 1982), has been defined as the specific “awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p.13). Extending the tripartite model of multicultural competence in counseling, Pope and Reynolds (1997) specified a list of 33 competencies that would be useful for student affairs practitioners wanting to enhance their ability to serve the needs of all students and address multicultural issues on campus.

This characterization of multicultural competence has grown and developed over the past thirty years to incorporate a broader appreciation of what multicultural means (i.e., incorporating issues of social class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and others into the initial conversations, which primarily focused on race) as well as the inclusion of additional components such as how multicultural issues and dynamics affect relationships (Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994) and multicultural advocacy (Sue, 2001). Some scholars have further detailed what constitutes multicultural competence in a higher education context (e.g., Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998; Iverson, 2012; King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005), whereas others have focused more on how to create multicultural competence among college students or staff (e.g., Cheng & Zhao, 2006; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Kelly & Gayles, 2010).

Although a more thorough exploration of multicultural competence in student affairs and higher education has occurred elsewhere, having a basic understanding of the core constructs underlying multicultural competence is helpful in conceptualizing multicultural change efforts in higher education. Most commonly, multicultural competence has been described as consisting of three necessary components: awareness, knowledge, and skills. Multicultural awareness involves the essential attitudes, values, biases, and assumptions that each of us carries with us, whether we realize it or not, that influence our worldview. Our ability to be aware of diversity and our comfort with that awareness is shaped by our upbringing, education, and life experiences. Our worldview is fundamental to how we view the world around us, others, and ourselves. Of course, this lens cannot help but influence our assumptions, beliefs, and expectations for multicultural change on campus. Multicultural awareness is often viewed as personal and interpersonal in nature (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004); however, some perceive their attitudes and values in a more intellectual manner. In addition to multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge is another key component of multicultural competence.
Multicultural knowledge is our intellectual understanding or content knowledge about various cultural groups and specific multicultural constructs. This knowledge, which includes facts and information, can be obtained through books, media, relationships, and even life experiences. Unfortunately, for many of us the various sources of our knowledge may lack diversity and complexity, which diminishes our ability to know and understand others. Ironically, the self-segregation that often occurs in higher education and society as a whole can limit our knowledge rather than expand it (Chang, 2007). Multicultural knowledge also includes information about important constructs such as acculturation, oppression, identity, social justice, and privilege, which ultimately affect our understanding of others who are different from us. Without in-depth understanding of ourselves and an equally thorough appreciation of the realities of others, it is too easy to assume that our own experiences are the norm or the reality for others. This is especially true for individuals who have not examined the privileges they have as a result of their membership in various identity groups. This reality exists not only for those individuals who occupy places of privilege because of their race or gender (e.g., white men or women) but also for individuals who often view themselves as only having targeted identities (e.g., LGBT people of color or women with disabilities). None of us is completely privileged or completely targeted. Rather, we all occupy multiple locations and identities that have the potential to interfere with our ability to reflect on our reality or assumptions about the world.

Finally, multicultural skills include the ability to apply our multicultural awareness and knowledge to our interactions, interventions, and our daily lives. How do we relate to and interact with individuals whose culture and life experiences are so very different from our own? Rather than assuming all interventions have universal appeal, how do we determine which activities, programs, or opportunities resonate with which groups? First, we must recognize that we may need a broader array of skills and then we need to have diverse experiences so we can learn those skills.

When exploring multicultural competence, one must understand that all individuals—regardless of whether they are members of groups that are often the target of societal discrimination or microaggressions or groups that are born with privileges based on race, class, gender, and other social identities—need to evaluate and explore their level of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Multicultural competence is not just about understanding the other; it is also about working with issues of race, gender, and sexual orientation with people like ourselves and increasing
our understanding of within-group differences. For example, white men need to explore their race and their gender by working with other white men; just as Native American women can further their self-understanding by digging deeper into their relationships with other Native American women. The multifaceted nature of the values, identity, and life experiences of most individuals means that expanding our multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is inherently a complex and dynamic process.

Understanding multicultural competence is important because it has become the foundation on which many training efforts and educational programming for students, staff, administrators, and even faculty have been based. A brief review of the scholarly work on multicultural competence in student affairs and higher education indicates that demographics as well as multicultural education and experience variables seem to influence multicultural competence levels. Demographic categories such as race as well as identification as a member of a socially marginalized cultural group have been shown to affect multicultural competence (Mueller & Pope, 2001, Weigand, 2005; Wilson, 2011). Additionally, multiculturally oriented education, supervision, and life experiences also have predicted multicultural competence across a variety of studies (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Miklitsch, 2006; Mueller & Pope, 2001; Weigand, 2005). Although many of these scholars suggest that the multicultural competence of individual leaders within higher education is a necessary prerequisite to ethical, efficacious, and multiculturally relevant practices at colleges and universities, such competence may not be sufficient to create truly multicultural campuses (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004).

Multicultural competence is not the panacea to all multicultural challenges facing campuses today, but it can serve as a transformational tool or vital construct used to reshape and change individuals, groups, and organizational units (e.g., programs, departments, divisions) within higher education. The development of multicultural competence can occur at the micro level, focusing on the individual or group, as well as the macro level, or institutional efforts to develop multicultural competence among the students, staff, administrators, and faculty members of an institution (Flash, 2010a). Within diverse fields such as psychology, education, organization development, and medicine, there are growing discussions on creating change on the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Discussions on changing the individual have received much attention within the medical field of health psychology, often when exploring health conditions such as obesity or diabetes or encouraging healthy behavior
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such as smoking cessation (e.g., Prochaska et al., 1994; Zimmerman, Olsen, & Bosworth, 2000) or in the broader counseling profession, where change is often viewed as central to the goals or desired outcomes of therapy (Good & Beitman, 2006; Prochaska & Norcross, 2009). For example, motivational interviewing, which is a directive counseling approach focused on creating behavioral change, has been successful in treating addictions, mood disorders, and other psychological concerns (Burke, 2011). Research has shown that the more individuals discuss their needs, desires, ability, and commitment to change, the more likely they are to actually change (Miller & Rose, 2009; Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 2007). The transtheoretical model of behavior change, first introduced by DiClemente and Prochaska (1998), describes the stages that individuals traverse as they consider change (Passmore, 2011). The insights provided by these models and related research have meaningful implications for creating multicultural change on the individual level and will be explored in more depth later in this book. Creating such personal changes not only will alter how individuals view the world, themselves, and others, but also will likely profoundly influence how they relate to and interact with others on both personal and professional levels. Additionally, further discussion is needed to explore how this information and insight can be applied to program planning (e.g., workshops, programs, trainings) and curriculum across campus.

In addition to individual change, focusing on groups and how change occurs in that context has received much attention within the counseling and organization development fields. Yalom and Corey are just two of the group theorists who have offered models for understanding how change or action occurs on the group level. Yalom and Leszcz (2005) identify therapeutic factors that influence the change process at the group level. Although some of these factors may not seem immediately relevant to creating and sustaining change on a group level within a higher education context, some factors, such as group cohesion, universality, or interpersonal learning, are very applicable. Given that the change process is inherently complex and often complicated, having an understanding of the factors influencing groups is highly important and meaningful. Other theorists, such as Tuckman (1965) or Corey (2011), have focused more specifically on the developmental stages experienced by groups. Whether it is Tuckman’s model (forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning) or Corey’s exploration of how the various phases of the group (forming, initial stage, transition stage, working stage, ending stage) influence group dynamics, their work has been applied to both counseling and organization development work. Research exploring group dynamics in
a multicultural context within higher education has been expanding in recent years through exploration of the factors influencing change and group climate within intergroup dialogue programs and other group interventions in higher education (Miles & Kivlighan, 2012; Sorensen, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009).

Although exploring individual and group change has often been found in counseling-related literature, addressing issues of organizational or institutional change has typically occurred within the fields of management, business, or industrial or organizational psychology. The theories used for such work have been roundly criticized for being overly conceptual and lacking empirical evidence (Prochaska, Prochaska, & Levesque, 2001). Given the complex nature of organizational and institutional change, it is vital that such efforts move beyond theorizing to proposing and evaluating the theoretical constructs underlying such change. Whether the goal is developing a multicultural organization (Cox, 2001) or a multiculturally competent organization (Wilcox & McCray, 2005), growing literature is available on the tools, strategies, and models for multicultural change in organizations and institutions. Specifically, when focusing on creating multicultural change on the institutional level within higher education, Pope (1993) and others such as Grieger (1996) and Flash (2010a) have argued for the use of multicultural organization development (MCOD) theory as the mechanism and strategy for change. According to Wilcox and McCray, “to move an organization toward multicultural competence, the organization may need to create new policies, practices, and internal structures that support and advance cultural diversity” (p. 83). MCOD practices include targeting mission, leadership, policies, recruitment and retention, multicultural competence expectations and training, student activities and services, and physical environment and ensuring that multicultural issues are being adequately addressed at all levels of the organization or institution (Grieger, 1996).

The purpose of this book is to provide higher education professionals with the awareness, knowledge, and skills they need to help create multicultural change on college and university campuses. To achieve such a goal, it is essential to understand the available and viable theories, tools, and strategies. Learning from, enhancing, and extending existing theories and models, such as multicultural competence or multicultural organization development, is an important first step in the process. Previously we have written about multicultural competence as essential to creating multicultural campuses. Flash (2010a) suggested viewing multicultural competence as needed on both individual and organizational
levels. From her perspective, organizational multicultural competence uses assessment/evaluation, strategic planning, and training/education programing to expand talent, awareness, knowledge, and skills to build a capacity for multiculturalism within organizations. The goal of this book is to create a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices that are essential for creating campus environments that are inclusive, welcoming, and affirming for all who work, teach, and learn in colleges and universities.