Schools of Law

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ON THE COVER: Dean of the University of Houston Law Center Leonard Baynes (see HEED Award Spotlight on page 16)
At UNF, different backgrounds and perspectives among faculty, staff and students create a dynamic environment for learning and growing. This spring, UNF welcomed its sixth president to the University — Dr. David Szymanski. Overseeing a campus of six colleges, 16,500 students and 1,850 full-time faculty and staff members, President Szymanski is committed to a diverse, inclusive and respectful community where differences are embraced and celebrated. Learn more about UNF’s culture of excellence and innovation at www.unf.edu.
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The views expressed in the content of the articles and advertisements published in INSIGHT Into Diversity are those of the authors and are not to be considered the views expressed by Potomac Publishing, Inc.
RIT Recognized as Top Producer of Study Abroad Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of State for its efforts to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to study abroad.

The department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the Institute of International Education, announced the inaugural list of postsecondary schools that sent the largest number of students abroad through the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program during the 2016-2017 academic year. Supported by Congress, the Gilman Program strives to make study abroad more accessible to and inclusive of all U.S. students.

Top Producer lists — organized by institution size and type — recognize colleges and universities that have provided access to international opportunities for students who are first-generation, racial or ethnic minorities, or who have a disability, as well as students studying STEM fields. Among medium-sized colleges and universities, RIT was tied for the most Gilman Scholarship recipients with disabilities, with three in 2016-2017. The university is one of 36 U.S. institutions recognized as a Top Producer.

To learn more, visit gilmanscholarship.org.

— Alexandra Vollman

University of Cincinnati Paralegal Students Work to Make Legal System More Accessible for Non-English Speakers

Shayla Parsons, a student in the University of Cincinnati Clermont College’s (UC Clermont) Paralegal Program, has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to improving access to the legal system for non-English speakers — a population that is greatly in need of resources such as interpreters and multilingual court documents, according to the American Bar Association’s (ABA) 2016 Future of Legal Services Report.

After reading the report in her Introduction to Legal Studies course and learning more about the challenges non-English speakers face navigating the U.S. legal system, Parsons and her classmate Jane Butschie decided to go beyond simply writing a plan to address one of the report’s recommendations. They drafted a proposal to UC Clermont leaders suggesting that the school purchase translation headsets to aid this population in its pursuit of justice. A new technology, translation headsets serve as an electronic interpreter in nine different languages, allowing clients and their attorneys to have real-time conversations.

Dean of UC Clermont Jeff Bauer, DBA, along with the college’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, green-lighted the project, which was funded by the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The college plans to purchase the headsets in December to ensure access to the latest version of this technology and make them available for use by a variety of individuals — from paralegal students to law school faculty to local courthouse officials — to help them serve their clients. They will also be available to UC Clermont students for whom English is a second language.

Page Beetem, JD, Parsons’ professor and UC Clermont’s diversity officer, said that the project is just one example of how her paralegal students are making a difference in increasing the accessibility of legal services. “The ABA report calls on the legal profession to engage technology as one way to increase access to justice. UC Clermont paralegal students … [are making] that happen,” she said in a press release.

Bauer seconds Beetem’s enthusiasm for the project and says it speaks to the college’s overall focus on inclusion. “I was so impressed that Shayla’s assignment motivated her to act on her passion for social justice to help overcome language barriers faced by non-English speakers in the legal system,” he says. “This is tied to our mission of inclusion and diversity at UC Clermont, and it is inspiring to see it manifested in this way.”

— Ginger O’Donnell
**Facts & Figures**

**LAW**
- **9%**
  - the percentage of partners at law firms who are people of color
- **-22%**
  - the decrease in the percentage of minority applicants to U.S. law schools between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years

**EDUCATION**
- **+5.3%**
  - the percentage increase in minority educators teaching in public K-12 schools in the U.S. between 1987-1988 and 2015-2016

**HUMANITIES**
- **212,512**
  - the number of humanities degrees awarded in 2015 — a 5 percent decline from the previous year
- **11.6%**
  - the percentage of liberal arts and humanities graduates who go on to work as elementary and middle school teachers

**LOW-INCOME STUDENTS**
- **14%**
  - the percentage of students from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds who graduated from college in a study that tracked 15,000 students beginning in 2002.

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI**
- **-42%**
  - the percentage decrease in African American student enrollment at the University of Missouri between fall 2015 and fall 2016 — the year following campus-wide protests over racial unrest

**LEGACY ADMISSIONS**
- **3/4**
  - the approximate proportion of institutions in U.S. News & World Report's top 100 universities that offer admissions preference to relatives of alumni

Through a new teacher residency program, the University at Buffalo (UB) is taking a local approach to addressing the diversification and retention of educators in urban public schools.

Funded by a four-year grant from the Cullen Foundation, the program is called Cultivating a Racially, Ethnically, Linguistically Diverse Teaching Force in Buffalo, New York: The University at Buffalo Teacher Residency (UBTR). It is a partnership between UB’s Graduate School of Education and Buffalo Public Schools and is modeled after medical residency programs. UBTR has three goals: increase the number of learner-ready teachers in the city of Buffalo, diversify the area’s teaching workforce, and increase the number of educators who stay in the profession for a minimum of five years.

Part of a larger effort by the graduate school to foster relationships with local institutions, UBTR is designed to provide “a clinically intensive pathway” to teacher certification, says Suzanne Rosenblith, PhD, dean of the school.

“In terms of educational research on teacher preparation, teacher residencies — although still relatively new — are one of the only reform efforts that have actually shown [the ability] to move the needle in terms of teacher retention, diversification of the teaching profession, and student academic achievement,” she says.

A key component of the program is the financial assistance it provides. During the residency, participants receive a tuition scholarship as well as stipends, which Rosenblith says are key to attracting individuals from underrepresented groups to the teaching profession. In addition, she says the funds will prevent residents from having to take on burdensome student loans or hold down a job while teaching.

“This is my pitch: What if you could become a teacher, you could influence the lives of young people, and you don’t have any debt at the end of it? That becomes a game-changer,” Rosenblith says. “Too often I think people who might be interested in teaching may not want to because of the return on investment — you have debt and then you don’t necessarily have an income that’s going to help you get out of debt [quickly]. It changes the conversation when you can remove the financial constraints.”

While many details of the program still have to be worked out, Rosenblith says that Buffalo Public Schools plans to develop an agreement with residents regarding how long they will be expected to teach in the district following completion of the residency.

With the program scheduled to launch in summer 2019, Rosenblith and her staff will be working over the next year to recruit what she calls “expert teachers” — those working in Buffalo public schools who are strong and effective in the classroom and are open to a co-teaching model — as well as baccalaureate-degree holders who want to teach.

While the program is open to anyone, Rosenblith says recruitment efforts will intentionally target underrepresented populations; these include racial and ethnic minorities, individuals who are bilingual, and other populations underrepresented in Buffalo’s teaching workforce. “If we talk to the district and we find that there is an underrepresentation of women in math and science, then that would be a group that we would also seek [out],” explains Rosenblith.

Residents will work alongside teachers in the classroom for an entire year, she says, while also taking university courses to provide them the pedagogical knowledge necessary to be effective. Prior to the start of each school year, residents and teachers will participate in a five-day summer institute together to train them on the co-teaching model and help them begin to form relationships.

In addition to recruitment and preparation, another focus of UBTR is retention — which Rosenblith hopes to address via the creation of a teacher consortium.

“Once you have participated in the residency program, whether it’s as an expert teacher or as a resident, you are part of the consortium, so we’ll all share knowledge, information, and insights with each other,” says Rosenblith. “They would have a place to go where they can get support … as opposed to feeling like they’re alone. I imagine that enough times of feeling like they’re out on their own contributes to them leaving the profession.”

With UBTR, she adds, “the idea is that we don’t just prepare teachers … and then leave them out there; they are a part of UB and the consortium, and we’ll continue to support them and also call upon them to support other residents.”

Rosenblith believes that teacher residencies have the power to not only improve the recruitment and retention of diverse teachers in urban school districts, but also precipitate sustainable culture change.

“You have to understand the conventions of the particular district that you are working with, and by that, I mean its organizational structure. You have to take into account the students in those communities and what their needs are,” Rosenblith says. “I think that there are essential features that you [are likely to] see in all residency programs, but there has to be this experimental spirit to it because it has to be nimble enough to be responsive to the setting.”

— Alexandra Vollman
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development congratulates the inaugural 2017-2018 cohort of Faculty First-Look (FFL) scholars. FFL provides professional development opportunities for current doctoral/terminal degree students from historically underrepresented groups who are preparing for faculty or related scholarly careers. FFL provides on-site and virtual instructional and social engagement with Steinhardt faculty, deans, and administrators, to help participants successfully launch their career. Steinhardt is proud to announce this year’s scholars:

Sonia Alves        Jeaná E. Morrison
Americo Amorim    Walter P. Parrish III
Maria Arredondo    Nicole Perez
Alexandra G. Aylward    Fernando Plascencia
Donte Bernard      Nicole Rangel
Jalil Mustaffa Bishop    Cyrell Roberson
Douglas Brunton    Keri L. Rodgers
Andrene Jones Castro    Rose G. Salseda
Chia-Yang Chiang    Jarritt A. Sheel
Jacqueline Cruz    Michael Singh
Elizer Jay de los Reyes    Sulare Telford
José R. Del Real Viramontes    Anthony Ureña
Eric Felix
René Espinoza Kissell    Darsella Vigil
Anindyá Kundu
Keisha T. Lindsay     Devon Tyrone Wade
Gilberto Lopez       Xiang Zhou

Learn more at steinhardt.nyu.edu/site/diversity/
**NEW DIRECTIONS**

**CALIFORNIA**

Alexis Abernethy, PhD, has been named associate provost for faculty inclusion and equity at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. She retains her position as a professor of psychology at the school.

Susamma “Susan” Barua, PhD, has been appointed dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science at California State University, Fullerton. She was most recently associate interim dean of the school.

Hernan Buchelli, EdD, has been named provost and senior vice president for academic and enrollment affairs at Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont. He previously served as vice provost for enrollment and communications at Saint Mary’s College of California in Moraga.

Tracie Costantino, PhD, has been appointed provost of California Institute of the Arts in Santa Clarita. She was most recently associate provost of teaching and learning and dean of faculty at Rhode Island School of Design in Providence.

Morteza Rahmatian, PhD, has been named dean of Mihaylo College of Business and Economics at California State University, Fullerton. He previously served as interim dean of the school.

**FLORIDA**

Antonio Farias has been named the first chief diversity officer of the University of Florida in Gainesville. He previously served as vice president for equity and inclusion and Title IX officer at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn.

**ILLINOIS**

Lloyd Munjanja, PhD, has been named assistant director of graduate diversity and program climate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He previously served as director of education, outreach, and diversity at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.

James Padilla, JD, has been appointed dean of the new Francis J. Noonan School of Business at Loras College in Dubuque. He was most recently associate dean and associate professor of the School of Business Administration at Marymount University in Arlington, Va.

**KENTUCKY**

Neeli Bendapudi, PhD, has been named president of the University of Louisville. She previously served as provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

**MARYLAND**

Mickey L. Burnim, PhD, has been appointed interim president of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne. He was most recently president of Bowie State University in Maryland.

Willie E. May, PhD, has been named vice president for research and economic development at Morgan State University in Baltimore. He previously served as director of major research and training initiatives for the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences at the University of Maryland, College Park.

**MICHIGAN**

Yue Qi, PhD, has been appointed the first associate dean for inclusion and diversity in the College of Engineering at Michigan State University in East Lansing. She was most recently the graduate director for the materials science program at the university.

L. Marshall Washington, PhD, has been named president of the University of Louisville. He previously served as provost and executive vice chancellor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

**MINNESOTA**

Devinder Malhotra, PhD, has been appointed chancellor of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. He was previously interim chancellor of the system.

Robbyn Wacker, PhD, has been named president of St. Cloud State University. She was most recently provost of the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Nancy Fey-Yensan, PhD, has been named provost and vice president for academic affairs at Keene State College. She was most recently
dian of the College of Health and Human Services at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

**NORTH CAROLINA**
LaTanya Afolayan, EdD, has been appointed vice chancellor for university advancement at Winston-Salem State University. She previously served as the senior director of planning and major giving at Norfolk State University in Virginia.

**OHIO**
James L. Moore III, PhD, has been appointed vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at The Ohio State University in Columbus. He previously served as interim vice provost for diversity and inclusion, interim chief diversity officer, and executive director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male at the university.

**PENNSYLVANIA**
Elizabeth M. Z. Farmer, PhD, has been appointed dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. She previously served as a professor and associate dean for research at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work in Richmond.

** PENNSYLVANIA **
George H. Stroud, EdD, has been named vice president for student life and dean of students at Dickinson College in Carlisle. He was most recently assistant vice president for student life and dean of students at Cabrini University in Radnor, Pa.

**UTAH**
Tasha Toy, PhD, has been appointed assistant vice president for campus diversity and director of the Multicultural and Inclusion Center at Dixie State University in St. George. She was most recently director for multicultural and international student programs at Berry College in Rome, Ga.

**VIRGINIA**
Giuseppe Basili, JD, has been named executive director of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation in Lansdowne. He previously served as chief operating officer of the organization.

**WASHINGTON**
John Mosby, PhD, has been appointed president of Highline College in Des Moines. He was most recently vice president for student services at Mission College in Santa Clara, Calif.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**
Christine BN Chin, PhD, has been named dean of the School of International Service at American University. She previously served as interim dean of the school.

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Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to publish your news. Please email editor@insightintodiversity.com.
LAW SCHOOL DEANS

In each issue, INSIGHT Into Diversity features diverse professionals in higher education.

Eduardo M. Peñalver, PhD, is the Allan R. Tessler dean and a professor of law at Cornell Law School. Prior to this position, he served as the John P. Wilson Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School. Peñalver has written extensively about legal issues related to property and land use, including numerous articles in distinguished law journals and two books. In addition to his legal studies, he is a student of philosophy and theology — subjects he explored during his time as a Rhodes Scholar.

L. Song Richardson, JD, is dean and a professor of law at the University of California, Irvine School of Law. Known for her interdisciplinary research connecting cognitive and social psychology to criminal procedure and policing, Richardson has authored numerous articles as well as co-edited a book, The Constitution and the Future of Criminal Justice in America. Her expansive legal career has included serving as assistant counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, a federal public defender in Seattle, and a Skadden Arps Public Interest Fellow with the National Immigration Law Center in Los Angeles.

Sudha N. Setty, JD, is dean of Western New England University School of Law. She joined the school in 2006 and previously served there as a professor of law and associate dean for faculty development and intellectual life. Setty recently published a book on national security and has received numerous teaching awards for her work. In addition, she is the co-founder of the university’s Color of Law Roundtable Series, which allows judges and attorneys of color to share their experiences with students.

Garry W. Jenkins, JD, is dean and the William S. Pattee Professor at the University of Minnesota Law School. Before assuming these positions, he was the associate dean for academic affairs and the John C. Elam/Vorys Sater Professor of Law at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. There, he co-founded and directed the Program on Law and Leadership, an initiative that seeks to instill in law students a deep, personally significant understanding of leadership as it pertains to their careers, communities, and society at large. Prior to entering academia, Jenkins had a distinguished career in the corporate world that included serving as chief operating officer and general counsel of the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

Ronald K. Chen, JD, is co-dean and a distinguished professor of law at Rutgers Law School. In addition to his teaching and administrative responsibilities, he litigates civil rights cases through the school’s Constitutional Rights Clinic, which provides legal consultation, representation, and advocacy to residents of New Jersey. From 2006 to 2010, Chen served as the first public advocate of New Jersey, advocating for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and mental health services’ consumers. Throughout his career, he has held numerous leadership positions with the American Civil Liberties Union, and in 2007, he was named the New Jersey Law Journal’s Lawyer of the Year.

Laura Rosenbury, JD, is dean and the Levin, Mabie & Levin Professor of Law at the University of Florida Levin College of Law. Under her leadership, the college has improved its ranking as one of U.S. News & World Report’s Best Law Schools while enrolling two of the most diverse classes in the school’s 109-year history. She has also served as vice dean and a law professor at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis. Rosenbury’s scholarly interests include family law and feminist legal theory — a topic on which she has written one book, several book chapters, and numerous articles.
In today’s campus environment, every voice matters.

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ENSURING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEGAL EDUCATION

By Brooke Barnett, PhD, and Christopher M. Pietruszkiewicz, JD

Law schools have the opportunity and responsibility to create stronger and more culturally responsive legal education. Doing so should involve a robust focus on the campus culture, curriculum and pedagogy that emphasize intercultural competencies for legal professionals, and student and alumni affinity networks, with particular attention paid to groups that are underserved in and by the legal profession.

According to the 2017 American Bar Association annual questionnaire, 85 percent of lawyers are white. Additionally, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the legal profession is one of the least racially diverse in the country — less so than architecture, engineering, accounting, and medicine. However, we are seeing potential for change in the legal profession as we look at the changing demographics of the U.S. population. Despite this trend, there is still much that law schools can do to make sure they are preparing a diverse set of students to serve clients from all underrepresented groups, closing the opportunity gap to ensure success for all in the profession, and being responsive to students from a variety of backgrounds.

A law school inclusion agenda begins with understanding how different groups are experiencing the law school environment. There are many national and international conversations that influence climate more broadly — such as the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, state religious liberty laws, and the #MeToo movement — but all politics is local, as is understanding one’s campus community. Without a willingness to ask hard questions of ourselves, how will we know if there are problems that need attention or, more importantly, what those problems are that are specific to our community.

Focus groups, surveys, bias reporting mechanisms, and other avenues for sharing will help schools better understand the experience of those in their community. Disaggregating responses to the Law School Survey of Student Engagement — which provides empirical information about the law school environment — illuminates experiences across demographic groups. Once you identify problems, you should take concrete steps to mitigate them. At Stetson University College of Law, this has meant hiring consultants to address identified areas for change, such as faculty, staff and student training and the development of an inclusion plan.

Climate assessment — via surveys, for example — will identify areas for growth, some of which will be difficult to address. Be careful not to begin with areas where you are least likely to achieve success (e.g., tackling faculty diversity when you have a hiring freeze or making large-scale changes to the curriculum when, in the past, this has taken years to accomplish). Find a few goals that are achievable and can generate momentum and then begin to focus on some of the trickier areas as well.

We have found that in the law school environment, an infusion of diversity and inclusion content into existing curricular and co-curricular experiences is often successful and sustainable. For example, as career services staff prepare students to exhibit successful workplace behaviors, they can focus on the importance of fair and ethical treatment of clients, which is also required for bar membership. Furthermore, inclusive pedagogical classroom techniques that move beyond the standard Socratic method can help ensure more equitable classrooms, with students learning through exchange with one another rather than solely from faculty individually.

There are ample opportunities to flex cultural competence muscles in the legal classroom through intellectual dialogue and the selection of specific cases and topics of study. Many law schools have used the required professional rules and responsibilities class as a vehicle for discussing the needs of clients from a variety of backgrounds. This approach provides students the opportunity to consider clients whose lives, identities,
and backgrounds differ from their own and the ways in which they can best serve them.

Other substantive courses in the curriculum can also provide avenues for incorporating diverse perspectives. Contract law classes offer opportunities to discuss changes in LGBTQ legal protections with regard to real estate, adoption, or prenuptial agreements, and criminal law and criminal procedure courses allow students to learn about disparate effects on marginalized groups. To determine where these diverse perspectives may show up in your curriculum, we suggest creating a matrix of required and elective courses, paying special attention to the broad topics covered. This effort will make it easier to see where diversity and inclusion can be infused.

As you identify the needs in your community and ways to address them, share your plans with members of campus in order to maintain transparency and get buy-in from all. Law school administrators should communicate commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion explicitly in writing and speeches and by their presence at events. Students and colleagues will pay attention when a dean shows up at the part-time student organization end-of-year gathering or the panel sponsored by the Asian Law Student Association. These gestures are viewed as signs of a commitment to those communities.

A dean’s personal message on the school’s website or language in the new student welcome address are also opportunities to convey the type of place your school aspires to be. For example, Stetson College of Law added language into its orientation sessions for students and new hires that emphasizes the type of inclusive and welcoming community it strives to be and the diversity and inclusion opportunities available there.

Ensure that the school supports student and alumni affinity groups that allow for networking and connecting across a shared interest or identity, and make that clear on your website and in admissions materials. Historically black law schools have led the way with extensive and prestigious alumni networks that mentor current students and alumni throughout their careers.

If you are connected to an undergraduate institution, draw on the assets offered there as resources for the law school. Elon University offers several pathways for employee professional development, including a recently added intercultural consciousness certificate program through which faculty, staff, and administrators can participate in a yearlong cohort that helps them reflect on their identities and develop intercultural knowledge, skills, awareness, and humility. Participants create and implement individual capstone projects that will improve diversity and inclusion in their work areas.

Finally, do what university communities do best: Come together to discuss issues important in the field. Our campus communities crave outlets for conversation and connection. At Elon, many of these opportunities arise from the “Just in Time” civic engagement series. These spur-of-the-moment panels on topics such as the march of white supremacist and anti-Semitic groups in Charlottesville or the passage of an executive order that limits immigration from specific countries can address relevant legal issues and resonate with particular groups on campus.

Law schools have long discussed difficult subjects. Now, the increasing need for diversity in the legal profession requires that they broaden those topics and work to create legal education environments that serve all students, faculty, and staff.

Brooke Barnett is associate provost for academic and inclusive excellence and a professor of communications at Elon University. She is also a member of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Editorial Board. Christopher M. Pietruszkiewicz, JD, is president of the University of Evansville and former dean of Stetson University College of Law.

LAW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD COMMUNICATE COMMITMENTS TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION EXPLICITLY IN WRITING AND SPEECHES AND BY THEIR PRESENCE AT EVENTS. STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES WILL PAY ATTENTION WHEN A DEAN SHOWS UP AT THE PART-TIME STUDENT ORGANIZATION END-OF-YEAR GATHERING OR THE PANEL SPONSORED BY THE ASIAN LAW STUDENT ASSOCIATION.
As the majority of law schools struggle to diversify their student bodies, there are some that stand above the rest, eclipsing even the national minority law school enrollment of 31.4 percent. Although they benefit from the diverse makeup of the cities in which they are located, these law schools go beyond recruitment to ensure that underrepresented students have the tools not only to enter and succeed in law school, but also the legal profession.

University of Houston Law Center
With a student body that is 36.4 percent people of color, the University of Houston Law Center (UHLC) strives to paint a picture of the legal profession as one that is welcoming of all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or other characteristics.

“There are … employers that don’t just give lip service to the idea of wanting the profession to represent the overall population; they’re also taking steps to ensure that they’re getting access to talent who are [from] underrepresented populations,” says Tiffany Tucker, JD, MEd, assistant dean for career development. “I think that empowers our minority students to recognize that this profession is for them — that while right now they don’t see themselves in great numbers in law, the legal profession is very welcoming and inclusive such that they don’t have to feel that the barriers [to the profession] … are insurmountable.”

To recruit and prepare a wider range of young people for legal careers, UHLC offers LSAT preparation, introductory law classes, internships, and professional development through its Pre-Law Pipeline Program (PLPP). This annual eight-week summer experience is open to all students but focuses on members of groups underrepresented in law, such as students of color and those who are first-generation or low-income. With two tracks — which are both for undergraduates and run concurrently — the program exposes participants to the rigors of law school and provides an introduction to the profession.

“What we are doing is demystifying what law school and the legal profession are like. A lot of students come in with certain thoughts about being a lawyer; they may think, ‘I know what an attorney is; I watch Law & Order, and I see what they do in the courtroom,’” explains Kristen Guiseppi, PLPP program manager. “So [PLPP] helps them understand that there’s much more to [being an attorney] than what they see on TV.”

The first track, which is called LSAC’s DiscoverLaw.org Prelaw Undergraduate Scholars (PLUS) Program, introduces rising college sophomores and juniors to the law school experience, while the second track, known as Scholar II, focuses on helping rising seniors develop a strong law school application.

For the first five weeks of the PLUS Program, students participate in intensive courses all day, Monday through Friday, Guiseppi says. These expose them to different practice areas, ranging from immigration to family law, as well as help them develop the critical thinking and legal writing skills necessary to succeed in law school.

“At the end of the instruction component, they take a final exam,” she says. “So, we’re actually simulating the law school experience in that way; in law school, students only take one final exam at the end of their first semester.
By giving them that advanced insight into what the classroom is like, the experience mentally prepares them for their first year.”

During the remaining three weeks of the program, students complete a legal internship with a Houston-area law firm, legal organization, or court to gain experience in the area of law they’re interested in practicing. Guiseppi has fostered partnerships with law firms such as Jackson Walker LLP, Bracewell LLP, and Vinson and Elkins LLP as well as nonprofits such as the Texas Civil Rights Project and the Disability Rights Project. “Some students may be assigned their unique experiences and how those will enhance the classroom discussion.

“The diversity statement really answers the question, ‘What is the diverse component that you bring to the classroom? Is it difference in thought? Is it difference in experience? Is it the fact that you were raised in a different country?’” she says. “… It is something that we strongly encourage all of our students to submit.”

Both program tracks have several overlapping components, such as mentorship. Participants are matched with mentors based on where they are in their educational journeys, with PLUS Program students paired with a law student mentor — someone currently enrolled at UHLC — and those in Scholars II matched with practicing attorneys. “Because [students on the second track] are about to take the LSAT, their focus is more so on which field they want to go into, so they’re matched with attorney mentors who can answer a lot of those questions,” Guiseppi says.

Mentorships last a year, and mentors are required to meet with their mentees in person at least once a month during the on-site summer program. “The rest of the year,” Guiseppi says, “[it] converts to a digital mentorship because some of the participants are not local.”

Both programs’ cohorts also attend a weekly luncheon speaker series during which students gain insight into the profession from those working in the field. “The professional development is more or less the same for both tracks,” Guiseppi says, adding that these sessions address important topics from social media etiquette and professional attire to effective communication and networking.

Since PLPP began in 2015, she says 86 students have completed it — not including those who attended the 2018 summer session — and the vast majority of those have been from groups underrepresented in the legal profession. Of those 86, 22 have been accepted into law school and 11 of them have enrolled.

For UHLC students, the supports are even greater. Every entering student is assigned a career counselor — all of whom are attorneys — who provides assistance with professional development and career advice.

“We assist them with identifying employment opportunities and help them process their own practice area interests,” says Tucker. “We help them review and update their résumé and cover letters, we facilitate mock interviews, we offer help with polishing
interview techniques, and we provide salary negotiation assistance.” Councillors maintain contact with their students not just during their time at UHLC but also after they graduate, which Tucker believes can positively affect their retention in a job. “We have a postgraduation alumni counseling team that works with graduates in their first year,” she says. “We have seen, and research definitely shows, that the more graduates are supported their first year out [of law school], the more likely they are to secure a job that they will be happy with.”

Additionally, through UHLC career services, students gain access to professional mentors, apprenticeships and externships, professional organizations, career fairs and conferences, and other networking opportunities. These include the Houston Bar Association and its minority clerkship program, the Sunbelt Minority Recruitment Program, and the Lavender Law Career Fair and Conference, which is focused on the LGBTQ community. All of these career services and supports have resulted in an employment rate of nearly 88 percent for UHLC graduates.

Tucker says that what drives her staff’s dedication to this work is a desire to provide students support that they themselves would have benefited from in law school. “We have a passion for the work that we do, so we try our best to think, ‘What would I have wanted, what would I have needed, or what would my friend or classmate have wanted or needed that we didn’t get or that could have been done better?’” she says.

Southwestern Law School
At Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, Calif., a commitment to maintaining a legacy of inclusion has resulted in a student body that is 46 percent minorities.

“From its inception, Southwestern’s mission was to make legal education available to students of all backgrounds, and we’ve really worked to continue that legacy — ensuring that we not only recruit students from historically underrepresented groups but that we also support them once they’re admitted,” says Nydia Dueñez, JD, dean of students and diversity affairs.

This commitment begins during the admissions process, when Dueñez, who is also a member of the school’s admissions committee, strives to identify students who may benefit from a transitional summer bridge program. This includes applicants whose LSAT score or undergraduate GPA falls within the 25th percentile.

“If … they have other nontraditional indicators of success in their file — outstanding letters of recommendation or stories of overcoming very difficult circumstances growing up — whether … they were raised in foster care, or they are a immigrant or the child of an immigrant who faced limited educational opportunities — we try to identify those students who have achieved a lot of academic success despite those challenges,” explains Dueñez.

After interviewing these applicants, she typically will recommend them for one of two summer programs: the Academic Excellence Academy (AEA) or the Introduction to Legal Writing course. The latter introduces incoming students to legal writing to prepare them for the first-year course Legal Analysis, Writing, and Skills and law school in general.

AEA, on the other hand, dives deeper to provide a preview of and preparation for the transition to the law school environment. This optional program is open to all students but primarily targets those from groups that are historically underrepresented in the legal profession.

For nearly two weeks in the summer, AEA participants meet on Southwestern’s campus for a few hours each day. They learn about and begin to develop the skills necessary to succeed in law school, including legal reasoning and writing, as well as build relationships with other law school applicants. The most significant focus of the program, however, is on emphasizing the differences between being an undergraduate and being a law student, Dueñez says.

“In undergrad, you have participation points, quizzes, group projects, papers, and maybe a mid-term and a final exam, so the pie is composed of all these different pieces. In law school, it’s a high-stakes exam, much like the LSAT,” she explains.

Dueñez and her staff also try to convey to students’ families that law school will be trying. “We have discussions where I try to prepare spouses and families by saying, ‘This is going to be different, it is going to be a transition, it is going to be difficult,’ and to my students, I say, ‘You need to be OK acknowledging that this may not initially come as easily as college did,’” she says.

An additional component of AEA is mentorship. Interested students can sign up to be matched with a faculty mentor who shares the same professional interests and, ideally, a similar background.

“We try to pair them with a faculty member who either teaches or has some work experience in their area of interest. They will meet with their student within the first two weeks of the semester to introduce themselves and build that relationship,” says Dueñez. “The hope is that if we pair a student interested in entertainment law with an entertainment faculty member, that they could discuss the type of curriculum that would be helpful toward pursuing a career in entertainment law as well as the different approaches to securing an externship and employment in that practice area.”

Once students enter Southwestern, they are assigned an academic counselor who advises them throughout their time at the school and helps them balance coursework with home and work life. This support may include helping students transition to a different program structure based on issues they may be dealing with in their personal lives, explains Dueñez.

“We are able to offer students that ability to transition into different
programs based upon whatever life has thrown at them — if they’re having a baby, they have a family member who has become ill and they are a caregiver, or they need to get a full-time job and reduce their hours from traditional to part-time or evening,” she says. “We do a lot of that type of counseling because it’s rare that a student is not doing well just based on academic issues; sometimes it is that they are working too many hours, juggling work and school, or are dealing with family issues.”

Similarly, all first-year students are assigned an adviser in the Career Services Office (CSO). This person works with them to help determine what area of law they want to practice and to develop a plan and a timeline for achieving their career goals. CSO advisers also offer information about networking and professional development opportunities, particularly those for diverse and underrepresented students — the American Bar Association’s Judicial Clerkship Program (JCP), for example.

This three-day experience, which Southwestern pays for its students to participate in, encourages judges to consider diverse students for judicial clerkship positions.

“[JCP] allows the law students to explore legal issues, do legal research, but most significantly, have face time with judges. It’s designed to bring judges and minority law students together through structured networking and educational activities,” says Shahrzad Poormosleh, Esq., associate dean of career services. She says Southwestern has supported the program for the last three years, which has included paying for students’ airfare and accommodations. “That’s an example of [us] not only saying we’re committed to diversity but actually [putting] the financial … resources behind it,” she adds.

According to Dueñez, a large number of Southwestern’s students are the first in their family to attend graduate or law school — a population that the school does its best to support. Every fall, the Diversity Affairs Office invites all first-generation students, faculty, alumni, and administrators to attend its First Generation Mixer, where they discuss the challenges and benefits of being a first-generation law student. The event helps current students connect with on-campus resources and develop connections with people who’ve had similar experiences and can provide assistance.

For these and other students, CSO offers a comprehensive career guide that provides them information about a variety of professional and networking opportunities such as career fairs, conferences, clerkships, externships, and scholarships. It includes timelines, eligibility requirements, and application samples to make pursuit of these experiences easier. The guide also provides detailed information about available diversity-related opportunities, which Poormosleh says are very competitive.

“With respect to the diversity-based opportunities, we do our best to actively engage our students, make them aware of the resources, guide them through the process, and ensure their application materials are competitive,” Poormosleh explains.

“The fact of the matter is, law school is high-stakes and high-pressure, no matter your background,” she adds. “All the while, your academic career and employment search are parallel — they take place at the same time. Our goal is to be a strong source of support as students navigate through it all.”

Alexandra Vollman is the editor-in-chief of INSIGHT Into Diversity. The University of Houston Law Center is a 2016-2017 HEED Award recipient. Southwestern Law School is a 2012-2017 HEED Award recipient.
At many schools of education, pre-service teachers are trained on classroom instruction with little attention paid to the systemic educational and societal barriers faced by marginalized groups. However, through a focus on social justice education, an increasing number of institutions are beginning to offer programs designed to prepare both current and future teachers to better educate and empower underserved youth.

Social justice education seeks to bridge what Patrick Camangian, PhD, associate professor in the University of San Francisco (USF) School of Education, calls the “cultural disconnect” between traditional schooling and the realities that marginalized students face in their day-to-day lives. As head of the Master of Arts in Teaching: Urban Education and Social Justice (MAT: UESJ) program, Camangian helps prepare teacher candidates to remedy this disconnect, with a specific concentration on underserved schools in the Bay Area, where rates of income inequality — especially for minorities — are some of the starkest in the nation.

Camangian’s research includes a focus on understanding the social stresses faced by children in underserved urban neighborhoods. One factor that often inhibits them on their path to academic success, he says, is the sense that they have little control over their environment and their own lives. The goal of social justice education is to show them otherwise. “What we’ve tried to do [in the MAT: UESJ program] is focus on a more trauma-informed, culturally transformative, culturally responsive approach to teaching,” explains Camangian.

One of the most significant ways to do this is by recruiting teachers who are from similar backgrounds as their students, which is why Camangian conducts recruitment for MAT: UESJ in the communities that the program seeks to serve. This approach allows underprivileged students to gain exposure to role models who, despite coming from comparable difficult circumstances, were able to succeed.

Furthermore, teachers who reflect the ethnic and racial identities of their students “intimately understand the implications of oppression for students of color … and have had to navigate those social conditions and overcome those intersecting systems of oppression” to earn a college degree, Camangian says. He believes it is necessary for these candidates as well as those from more privileged groups to understand how their own cultural identities and life experiences shape the way they view issues of equality and how this understanding can inform their teaching.

With an emphasis on self-reflection, MAT: UESJ attempts to help students become more aware of the effect their background and the opportunities that have been available to them may have on their classroom instruction. Specifically, many courses require them to reflect on and examine their experiences with and understanding of difficult topics such as racism and how they personally benefit from or are harmed by systems of oppression.

Completing this kind of self-analysis and discussing determinations with classmates, Camangian says, is essential for improving pre-service teachers’ understanding of how social identifiers, such as race and class, can affect their interpretation of course content as well as their educational goals, beliefs, and differences in perspective.

Additionally, such experiences force them to think about the type of person they need to be in order to best serve, inspire, and support their future students.

Ruby Rodriguez, who is Latinx, grew up in one of the neighborhoods served by MAT: UESJ. She says being in the program has required her and her classmates to consider “the inequalities we have seen or have faced” and “[pushes] us to examine our own prejudices, mis-education [about other cultures], and the potential baggage that we might bring into the classrooms in which we teach.”

“We self-reflect, unlearn and re-learn, are vulnerable, and accept the idea that we are being pushed out of our comfort zones in order to better who we are and create community amongst ourselves while going through this process,” she adds.

Alix Snyder, who is white, discovered MAT: UESJ through her work with local nonprofit agencies. She agrees that
the learning process facilitated by the program is necessary to effectively teach underserved students through a social justice lens. “The most valuable thing that is constantly reinforced in this program, that I’ve taken with me in my practice, is the need to make education for and about my students,” she says. “This seems like a simple concept, but there are deep-rooted histories of oppression that have affected [these communities] that need to be intentionally and thoughtfully addressed.”

To teach her future classes about the culture and history of their communities, Snyder plans to use local resources such as stories and lessons from people whose lived experiences reflect those of her students.

Recent evidence indicates that such an approach can empower students to become advocates for change in their own lives and communities, both in the long and short terms. A 2016 article in *The Atlantic*, for example, tells of students at a predominantly African American high school who, after learning the history of the Black Panther movement through a social-justice-oriented literature course, were inspired to run a campaign to decrease police presence in their district’s schools. They used individual testimonies about negative interactions with police officers to illustrate how heightened police presence can be detrimental to the well-being and safety of black students.

A University of Pennsylvania study recently found that social-justice-oriented courses can inspire African American teenagers to become civically engaged in their communities and to select careers related to service and advocacy as adults. These findings reinforce the goals of programs like MAT: UESJ, which aspires to transform urban communities by empowering students to be agents for change, says Camangian.

In addition to having a positive effect in urban K-12 schools, social justice education has the potential to improve the educational experience for underserved and marginalized populations everywhere. At the University of Nevada, Reno’s (UNR) College of Education, the Equity and Diversity Education (EDE) program prepares students to work with individuals from a wide range of sociocultural backgrounds and identities. Established in 2005, the program has experienced substantial growth in recent years due to demand from professionals not only in the field of education, but also other sectors, says Lynda Wiest, PhD, professor of mathematics and educational equity at UNR. “Our original intent was to help educators learn how to work with diverse students in order to serve their learning needs better, so we were expecting primarily practicing teachers to enroll,” says Wiest, who formerly served as director of EDE and now oversees its doctoral program. “But, to our great surprise, a lot of people who aren’t educators came to us because they want better strategies and methods for working with diverse groups of people.”

Unlike USF’s program, EDE does not grant a teaching credential. Instead, students can earn a master’s degree or a PhD. Wiest estimates that half of EDE students are practicing teachers, while others come from fields such as educational services, human resources, and even the U.S. military. Many of those who enroll say they are drawn to the program because of its flexibility; students have the option to
complete their degree online and the ability to create a unique specialization. “Equitable education is learner-centered rather than content-centered,” says Wiest, explaining that while the program focuses primarily on K-12 education, its overall purpose is to help students understand the unique needs of diverse student populations. “If you want to learn how to teach geometry, you may understand the content, but you’re not going to be very effective if you don’t understand the learner.”

She notes that the program recognizes a broad definition of diversity that encompasses many different characteristics — not just race and ethnicity. As such, all EDE students are required to take four courses that explore a range of sociocultural subgroups. “Our core classes are intentionally created to allow broad exposure [to] diversity, looking at factors like race, gender, ESL, [and] social class that relate to a lot of human experience,” Wiest says.

After completing these courses, students can specialize in one or two subgroups — such as individuals with disabilities or LGBTQ youth — as well as subject areas that relate to their profession and research interests. Several UNR employees have been inspired to pursue EDE degrees because of their work with diverse students. For example, Wiest says that two of the school’s financial aid officers specialized in issues related to socioeconomic status so that they could better understand and assist low-income students.

“[EDE] opens one’s eyes to understanding the different ways the U.S. educational system operates and methods for change,” says Noelle Renee Garcia, a current EDE graduate student and career services coordinator for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. “The topics in our courses are what we are living through, and the courses show how important these [issues] are in our daily lives.”

Unlike other trends in education, Wiest believes the growing interest in social justice education will become a permanent aspect of teacher training. “This is absolutely a hot topic and for good reason,” she says. “In education, we’ll have certain fads that really catch on for a while and then fade away. Caring about diverse learners is going to endure, however, because [these issues] mirror our world.”

Mariah Bohanon is the associate editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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Modernizing the Humanities

How the disciplines can endure by becoming more inclusive of diverse perspectives

By Alexandra Vollman

In a world in which so much emphasis is placed on employability, the humanities are an outlier. The growing perspective that the purpose of a college education is solely to train for and secure a job has led to much criticism of humanities disciplines for not producing technical, employable credentials. This scrutiny, coupled with widespread budget cuts, has meant these disciplines have often been the first to get the axe.

Yet, despite declining enrollments, sweeping cuts to programs and departments, and more focus being placed on STEM fields, the humanities — if you ask many working in the fields — serve a critical function.

“The arts and humanities teach some essential things that we need in the world today,” says Bonnie Thornton Dill, PhD, dean of the University of Maryland’s (UMD) College of Arts and Humanities. “They teach empathy, they teach cultural awareness, they teach cultural competence, and they teach people to communicate clearly — both in a written form and orally. That should not be minimized because a lot of times the misunderstandings and miscommunications that occur happen because people don’t communicate clearly.”

Catherine Knight Steele, PhD, assistant professor of communication at the college, agrees. She believes the disciplines serve a vital role when it comes to communicating and fostering human connection. “The humanities provide us a mechanism to see each other in our fullness, to recognize how our history shapes our present and future, to cultivate communication practices like deliberation, to speak and think with cultural awareness and appreciation, to read and imagine a world different from our own, to see our experiences as a part of a larger human fabric, and to challenge ourselves to create a more just society moving forward,” says Steele.

These abilities in particular are crucial for navigating today’s increasingly diverse but also distinctly divided world. Yet, as postsecondary enrollment becomes more diversified, the perceived value of the humanities conferred has continued to wane. According to Humanities Indicators, a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, almost every humanities discipline experienced a decline in the number of degrees awarded from 2012 to 2015; during that time, the number of those conferred dropped nearly 10 percent.

This decline has been occurring at many schools across the country.

In 2016, Western Illinois University cut several programs, including religious studies and philosophy — a decision it blamed on low enrollments. This year, the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point is considering a proposal to eliminate 13 humanities and social sciences majors due to a $4.5 million budget shortfall — a move that is being protested by students and local lawmakers alike. To potentially be...
Humanities has also experienced a diverse curriculum. Accomplish this goal is through a more intentional efforts to recruit students and faculty. One way to achieve this is through the study of language, art, and culture. This concern has given rise to speculation that the humanities may be due in large part to minimal focus on diversity by those in the field. Although overall college enrollment has experienced a shift in demographics in recent years, the same cannot be said for most schools and colleges of humanities.

In 2015, just 22 percent of humanities undergraduate degrees were awarded to students from underrepresented groups, according to Humanities Indicators. Additionally, African Americans earned only 9.2 percent of all such degrees that same year.

The key to ensuring the relevance and sustainability of the humanities now and into the future, some argue, is more intentional efforts to recruit individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups — both students and faculty. One way to accomplish this goal is through a diverse curriculum.

At UMD, the College of Arts and Humanities has also experienced some dips in overall enrollment, but according to Dill, the number of underrepresented students has been increasing since 2010. She believes a focus on diversifying the curriculum has helped the school attract both a diverse faculty and student body.

“Diversity is embedded in all we do in the College of Arts and Humanities,” reads the introduction on the diversity page of UMD’s humanities website.

"Students need to understand that black and brown folks aren’t just subjects for the students — they are scholars, artists, and authors whose work is valuable to their education.”

Catherine Knight Steele

Key to ensuring a robust and diverse curriculum has been maintaining a multicultural faculty. “It involves diverse faculty [members] who bring a variety of knowledge bases, backgrounds, and experience to their fields of study,” Dill explains. “Having a diverse faculty that wants to teach about these issues is so important because they’re often the ones both generating new ideas as well as [injecting] new ideas into traditional courses.”

This chicken-and-egg scenario raises some questions worth considering: Does having a diverse curriculum help attract more diverse students and faculty, or does a diverse campus community result in a diverse curriculum? A difficult question to resolve, the answer may be a little of both. At UMD’s College of Arts and Humanities, the administration and faculty don’t take either for granted.

To deliver on its commitment to hiring people from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, the college requires that all search committees designate a member to monitor the outreach process to ensure a diverse pool of candidates. Additional aspects of its Inclusive Hiring Project are training for all committee members, the sharing of diversity data to use as a measure in the hiring process, and special funds for making offers to underrepresented minority candidates. “We’re monitoring the process,” says Dill. “We’re not telling people who to hire; we’re just making sure that they have as broad and inclusive a pool as possible.” Once a new faculty member is brought on, the college offers mentorship as well as teaching support to aid in retention, she adds.

This sense of the value that diversity brings to higher education pervades the study of language, art, and culture. This concern has given rise to speculation that the humanities may be due in large part to minimal focus on diversity by those in the field. Although overall college enrollment has experienced a shift in demographics in recent years, the same cannot be said for most schools and colleges of humanities.
entire College of Arts and Humanities community at UMD. For Steele, it has meant being mindful of her own identity and how it factors into her courses and the classroom.

“Becoming a better teacher … has taught me about how the facets of my identity that are privileged — for example, being cisgender — also factor into my work and how much more effort I need to put into those areas,” says Steele. “Part of growing as an educator is finding the parts of you that need retooling to provide a better classroom.” Some of this effort involves including a wide range of authors, perspectives, and topics in course content as well as focusing on issues that affect underrepresented and marginalized groups.

“Every class I teach and have taught is based on the ability of students to see themselves and the world around them in the material we discuss in class,” Steele explains. “I am intentional about my syllabus, including work from people from traditionally marginalized communities. This is especially important when teaching about [these] communities. Students need to understand that black and brown folks aren’t just subjects for the students — they are scholars, artists, and authors whose work is valuable to their education.”

Professors like Steele aren’t the only ones who have pushed for an increased focus on multiculturalism in humanities curricula; students have as well. In 2016, students at Seattle University’s Matteo Ricci College held a 22-day sit-in to voice their complaints about the curriculum, arguing that it focused too much on “dead white guys” and demanding that it be diversified.

Dill says UMD has experienced similar demands, specifically that more money be allocated to diversify the curriculum and to programs such as women’s studies, LGBT studies, and African American studies.

This experience of not having many perspectives with which one can associate is something to which Steele can relate. “I was once the only black student in many of [my] undergraduate and graduate courses and know very well what it means to see your life experience written out of your education,” she says. “We often rely too heavily on a canon of literature that excludes certain groups, not because they haven’t done important work that should be covered in the classroom but because our own training didn’t provide us the tools to recognize their value.”

Students have been playing an important role in drawing attention to such curricular disparities. At Reed College in Oregon, a heavy focus on the ancient Mediterranean in the college’s HUM 101 class — a yearlong interdisciplinary course required of all freshmen — compelled students to speak up. They staged demonstrations to voice their grievances about the syllabus, claiming that the course included too many white male, European authors.

“[HUM 101] has always been contested because it’s the only required course on campus, so it’s kind of a flashpoint for this type of thing,” says Elizabeth Drumm, PhD, the John and Elizabeth Yeon Professor of Spanish and Humanities and outgoing HUM 101 program chair. “It gives students insight into in-depth, college-level study of the humanities, of humanistic and cultural studies, of what it means to be human. These are perennial questions, and what we do at Reed is look at them through an interdisciplinary lens. But I would say, in the last four to five years, [opposition to the course] has become more vocal and more pressing.”

After the issue came to a head in August 2017, when student protestors — a group called Reedies Against Racism — interrupted the class, causing some professors to walk out, the college worked to revamp the course. According to Drumm, faculty met on 32 separate occasions over the last year and a half to revise the syllabus. The updated course will now be presented in four modules, two of which will still focus on the ancient Mediterranean. The second half, however, will explore the history and culture of 16th- through 20th-century Mexico City and Harlem in the early 20th century.

“We’ve moved to a four-module system, which I think frees us up to be a little more flexible to incorporate different traditions, different contexts, in a way that I think is exciting,” says Drumm. “Mediterranean materials are incredibly rich and … teach beautifully, and there are all sorts of reasons to keep them. But that doesn’t mean that the humanities are only focused on the ancient Mediterranean and that we can’t focus on the Americas and turn to more contemporary material.”

In June, Reed was awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to further develop HUM 101 to ensure its continued inclusion of many different cultures and perspectives.

The College of Arts and Humanities at UMD is also making a point to do this. Through a new initiative, it aims to make the digital
humanities more inclusive of African American history and culture.

The African American History, Culture, and Digital Humanities (AADHum) Initiative brings together "students, faculty, librarians, museum curators, independent scholars, and practitioners [to] work from a playing field where each is respected for the differentiated expertise they bring," Steele says.

Also made possible by funding from the Mellon Foundation, AADHum seeks to broaden the conversation around "new theories, methods, and tools to explore African American art, labor and migration" via research, according to the initiative's website. In addition to meeting a need and ensuring the future of the humanities, Steele says AADHum asks difficult questions “about who we have long considered human as a part of our study of the humanities, whose records are missing from our historical accounts, which cultures we have centered on in our work, and how our work benefits all of humanity rather than a privileged few.”

“We orient ourselves around the question of what happens when we place underrepresented groups and histories at the center rather than [at] the margins in our work,” she says. “In this case, we are intentional about centering African American history, culture, and people in the work we do, rather than as an add-on to fulfill a diversity requirement.”

If the humanities are to endure, this type of deliberate approach will be necessary to ensure a field that is welcoming and inclusive of all individuals and groups as well as one that prepares students to do the same.

“One of the things the humanities trains our students to do is to be world-wise, to be able to interact with people from a lot of different settings in a lot of different ways,” says Dill. “The diversity among the students and faculty, and within the curriculum, is one of the things that challenges people to be flexible, to be open-minded to … ideas, concepts, and beliefs that may be very different from their own — [not necessarily] … to agree with them, but to understand them.”

Alexandra Vollman is the editor-in-chief of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
CLOSING THE GRADUATION GAP:
HOW COLLEGES CAN REVERSE HIGHER EDUCATION’S GREATEST INEQUITY

By Mariah Bohanon

While many in higher education have long been aware of the disparity in dropout rates between low-income students and their wealthier peers, a number of recent studies have shed light on just how great this inequity is. At 80 percent of U.S. colleges and universities, Pell-Grant-eligible students graduate at rates lower than their more affluent peers, according to new data from the think tank Third Way.

This issue, however, is not irresolvable. Some schools and organizations have devised and implemented data-based solutions to improve the graduation rates of some of the most vulnerable students — many of which have proven effective.

Fabian Pfeffer, PhD, a sociology professor at the University of Michigan and team lead of the Inequality Lab, says that improving graduation rates for students from low-income backgrounds requires an understanding of the scope of this issue. In a recent study, Pfeffer found that those from families with a net worth in the bottom 40 percent of U.S. households account for just under 12 percent of new college graduates — a figure that has essentially remained stagnant since the mid-90s. By comparison, students from families with a net worth in the top 20 percent account for 60 percent of new college graduates — representing a nearly 15 percent increase during the same time period.

These figures demonstrate that the graduation gap is growing despite increased college access for lower- and middle-income Americans, Pfeffer says. “It is a pretty linear relationship,” he says. “With every single step on the wealth ladder, there’s an additional advantage in the education system.”

He believes the findings shed light on the relationship between educational outcomes and growing wealth inequality in the U.S. This disparity is especially concerning when considered along with race, as the average African American household has a net worth that is just 10 percent of that of the average white household.

“There’s this idea that college is the great equalizer in America,” Pfeffer says. “It can still equalize your opportunities in the labor market, but it doesn’t take away from the problem of this large and increasing inequality regarding who gets to have a college degree.”

Indeed, there is evidence to support the idea that the current higher education system is actually perpetuating economic and racial inequality in the U.S. despite large-scale efforts to enroll and support low-income students. Nearly half of the nation’s 7.3 million Pell Grant recipients, for example, fail to complete a baccalaureate degree in six years, according to the report from Third Way. By comparison, non-Pell students have a completion rate of 65 percent. This issue disproportionately affects underrepresented groups, as 60 percent of Pell recipients are students of color. Individuals who receive Pell Grants are also more likely to have dependents, be over the age of 24, and be the first in their family to attend college.

Furthermore, low-income students who drop out are often worse off economically than they would have been had they never enrolled. Eighty-eight percent of Pell recipients take out student loans, and those who fail to earn a degree are left to repay this debt while having limited access to job opportunities.

Bruce Vandal, senior vice president for implementation at Complete College America (CCA), a nonprofit that helps schools close the graduation gap, says one of the most common reasons low-income students become discouraged on the path to graduation is that they are often placed in remedial education classes. While these courses are supposed to help them prepare for college-level math and English, they also add to the time and cost it takes to earn a degree.

“Essentially, what colleges are asking these students to do is to take one, two, or even three semesters of extra math or English courses that don’t count for credit toward a degree,” says Vandal, adding that first-year students are often
placed in remedial education based on brief assessments rather than prior academic performance.

According to CCA research, 37 percent of Pell students at four-year schools are required to take at least one remedial course upon entering. At two-year schools, this figure is 69 percent, leading many to exhaust their financial aid before completing their degree. Furthermore, those who postpone taking required college-level math and English beyond their first year are much less likely to graduate. “We know from data that students who complete their math and English [prerequisite] courses in the first year are seven times more likely to earn a postsecondary credential,” says Vandal.

CCA has devised several innovative solutions to help individual schools, university systems, states, and other educational organizations address this issue. Under its Strong Start Plan, colleges replace remedial courses with specially designed tutoring services, one-credit courses, or labs. Underprepared students are required to use these supports concurrent with their enrollment in first-year, college-level math and English classes, thus allowing them to get extra assistance without prolonging the path to graduation.

In addition, the Strong Start plan is focused on changing math requirements to allow students in non-STEM-related fields to take statistics or other courses that are more relevant to their majors as opposed to algebra or calculus. The organization also assists schools with implementing a model to ensure all of their students complete 30 credit hours per academic year, which involves making sure institutions have dedicated academic advising and mentoring to help guarantee that students are taking the courses they need in order to graduate. “We actually transformed our mission to put closing [achievement] gaps at the center of what we’re doing on many levels because we recognize that we cannot dramatically increase overall college completion rates without addressing [this gap]. [The two] go hand in hand,” Vandal says.

Similar solutions are revolutionizing academic pathways for low-income students at the institutional level. Georgia State University (GSU) in Atlanta and Stony Brook University (SBU) in New York have been widely recognized for their success graduating underprivileged students. Too often, students take a “wrong turn” that can delay or discourage them, such as failing a prerequisite or registering for the wrong class, says Timothy Renick, PhD, senior vice president for student success at GSU. First-generation students, who are often also low-income, are especially vulnerable because they don’t have people whom they can consult about such issues, he says.

To prevent these setbacks, GSU has implemented an advising system that monitors every one of its nearly 51,000 students for 800 risk factors that the school has identified as increasing an individual’s chances of dropping out. When a student exhibits one of these behaviors — underperforming on a test, for example — an academic adviser is notified within 48 hours so that they can quickly intervene by contacting the student and offering solutions, such as tutoring or setting specific goals to get back on track. Since implementing this measure six years ago, Renick says GSU has conducted 250,000 interventions.

This system is one of several measures implemented by the university during the 2008 recession, when enrollment of low-income students doubled from 30 percent to 60 percent. With a student body that is nearly 70 percent African American, innovations such as this have helped GSU graduate more of these students than any other nonprofit institution in the U.S. for the last five years. It was also recently ranked 25th in the nation by the Brookings Institution for helping to advance students’ social mobility; the average GSU graduate comes from a household earning less than $25,000 per year but makes $80,000 within 15 years of graduation, according to Renick.

At SBU, where one-third of students receive Pell Grants, the graduation rate for recipients is 74 percent — a figure that is actually 3 percent higher than that for non-Pell students. Lee Bitsóí, EdD, chief diversity officer for SBU, credits the school’s Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) with helping achieve these results. Every
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The Mizzou Effect: Some Colleges Struggle to Recover from Protests Sparked by Racial Tensions

By Mariah Bohanon

A 35 percent decrease in freshman enrollment over the span of two years. Millions of dollars in lost revenue. Hundreds of job cuts. And a $1.3 million public relations expenditure to repair a tarnished image.

These figures represent the damage suffered by the University of Missouri (MU) — commonly referred to as “Mizzou” — since fall 2015, when frustrations over the administration’s weak response to racist incidents on campus sparked weeks of student protests, eventually leading to the resignations of the university’s chancellor and the president of the University of Missouri system.

The losses MU sustained, including a 40 percent reduction in African American student enrollment between 2015 and 2016 alone, have been so staggering that some have begun to refer to the impact caused by such incidents as the “Mizzou Effect.” And in the nearly three years since the protests at MU, students across the country have staged similar demonstrations in response to institutional leaders who seem indifferent to the concerns and well-being of marginalized students.

In May 2017, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., became one of the most notable examples of this after racial tensions there led to a chaotic series of student protests, campus shutdowns, and threats of violence from far-right groups. By the fall, freshman enrollment at the school of nearly 4,000 students was down approximately 5 percent, resulting in $2.1 million in budget cuts and a hiring freeze. And Evergreen is still feeling the effects: For fall 2018, it is expecting a 17 to 20 percent decrease in first-year enrollment and $5.9 million in budget cuts, according to a March 2018 memo from the president to the board of trustees. Evergreen State declined to comment for this story.

“arshithed should be responding to these events by looking at them within a broader historical perspective,” says Uma Jayakumar, PhD, an associate professor at the University of California, Riverside Graduate School of Education. She studies the effects of institutional racism on students of color. “It’s not about responding to random student whims. The conditions and harm to students of color that these students are protesting is backed by decades of research,” she adds.

Too often, Jayakumar explains, college and university leaders respond to racist events as isolated incidents rather than evidence of the continuous denigration of people of color at predominantly white institutions. When such events occur and leadership responds with anything less than explicit action, this demonstrates to the campus community that underrepresented students’ experiences are not valued. She believes this is why colleges where students have to protest to get the administration’s attention are seeing declining enrollments.

It was this lack of recognition from leadership that motivated Danielle Walker, currently a PhD candidate in education and human relations at the University of Colorado Denver, to create the #RacismLivesHere campaign when she was a graduate student at MU in fall 2015. She says it was common for black students such as herself to be harassed with racial slurs while walking across campus.

“It’s just a common shared experience that many black students can attest to — not all of them, but many,” says
Walker. While students of color and other marginalized groups had strong advocates through the school’s cultural affinity spaces, such as the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, university leadership did not seem receptive to their concerns, she says. “The directors and coordinators [of these centers] were always pleading the cases of students, but [their concerns] continued to fall on deaf ears [with] administrators and those who actually had legitimate forms of power.”

“If [an incident] did lead to any sort of action, it was typically a town hall or listening session where it was very degrading to have to be in front of a panel of mostly white leaders to plead with them to listen to all of the painful incidents you’ve experienced on campus as a black person,” she adds.

In September 2015, when a Facebook post written by Peyton Head — an African American senior and president of the MU Student Body Association — described at length the experience of a racial slur being directed at him on campus, in addition to other incidents of harassment due to his race and sexuality, Walker assumed the university might finally take action. Head’s post quickly went viral, gaining thousands of “likes” and national press coverage. Within days, the university’s then-chancellor R. Bowen Loftin issued a brief statement saying, “One bias incident on campus is too many. … We support free speech in the context of learning, spirited inquiry, and intellectual discussion, but acts of bias and discrimination will not be tolerated at Mizzou.”

For Walker and many others, the lack of action accompanying Loftin’s words indicated that MU’s administration would once again fail to address the campus climate. In response, she organized the #RacismLivesHere campaign, which included rallies and testimonies from students of color and helped spark a series of protests attended by students and faculty that lasted over two months. It wasn’t until MU’s Division I football team threatened to strike — which would have cost the school $1 million in fines — that the president of the university system, Tim Wolfe, gave in to protesters’ demand for his resignation. Shortly thereafter, Loftin also ceded to demands and resigned.

To many, including Walker, the events of that fall seemed overwhelmingly dismissive and an affront to the rights of African Americans on college campuses.

“I have a lot of fond memories of Mizzou, but there are too many negative experiences that outweigh the positive ones,” says Walker, who was honored with the prestigious Chairman’s Award by the NAACP for launching the #RacismLivesHere campaign. She says she has not stayed up to date on what progress, if any, the university has made since she graduated in spring 2016 but is aware that MU had pledged to hire more faculty of color. “My entire time there I only had three black professors, so thinking about the impact something like that has on students of color and especially retention rates, I think that is a good start,” Walker says.

One action undertaken by the university in the wake of the protests was the hiring in 2016 of Kevin McDonald, JD, EdD, as the chief diversity officer for the University of Missouri System and vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity, and equity at MU. A veteran in the field of diversity and inclusion in higher education, McDonald says his first task at MU was to listen to the concerns, experiences, and recommendations for change from students, faculty, staff, and the broader community in order to identify “opportunities to bridge gaps and create greater cohesion, understanding, and healing.”

Following this move, he created an action plan based on input from these stakeholders, who he wanted to ensure were collaborative partners rather than simply bystanders or recipients of the transformative change that MU’s board of curators and other leaders recognized as necessary. The plan included building upon the strengths of the school’s cultural affinity centers and organizations as well as the “dedicated faculty, staff, and students who had given their own blood, sweat, and tears to create a community and sense of belonging” through these groups, says McDonald.

Other steps taken on the university’s “inclusive excellence journey,” as McDonald refers to it, involved conducting a campus climate survey, creating diversity awareness programming, and collaborating with leaders in the local community.

“At any institution there’s an opportunity to reflect on what you have and what building blocks are there to support [diversity and inclusion] work,” says McDonald. “You have to ask if they are being supported to their fullest to help enhance the campus community in ways that [it can] see and not just in ways that the leadership sees.”

While MU concedes that the protests had an impact on enrollment, state budget cuts helped feed the decline. University officials have hope for the future, however, as the state’s new governor — who took office in June — has indicated his intention to reverse some of the cuts in state
funding made by his predecessor. Additionally, the university announced in May that it expects freshman enrollment to rise by as much as 14 percent over last year, which would mean an incoming class of nearly 5,000 in fall 2018.

Some attribute these changes to the fact that MU’s extensive efforts to improve its tarnished image — for example, instituting a pipeline program for African American male students in Missouri’s metropolitan high schools — are finally working. This does not mean, however, that the university has fully recovered from the events of fall 2015, when freshman enrollment was 6,200. Officials have set a goal to reach that number again by fall 2023.

For the time being, MU is taking extreme measures to aid in its recovery. In June, the administration announced $35 million in budget cuts that will result in the consolidation of 12 graduate programs into a single college and the elimination of nearly 200 jobs — most of which, according to the university, were unfilled positions.

Institutions that have taken immediate action in the face of racist incidents seem to have fared better. In March 2015, when a video surfaced of members of a fraternity at the University of Oklahoma (OU) chanting racial slurs and joking about lynching black men, university leadership responded swiftly and decisively. Within 24 hours of the video’s being leaked online, then-president David Boren released a statement personally condemning the students and asserting a zero-tolerance policy for such sentiments. He also permanently banned the fraternity and gave its members less than one day to vacate their on-campus house. Today, the structure is home to resource offices for veterans and underrepresented students.

Following the incident, OU also hired Jabar Shumate, an OU alumnus and former state legislator, as vice president for the university community — essentially making him the university’s first chief diversity officer. Shumate credits Boren’s leadership with empowering the university to transform a painful event into an opportunity to strengthen OU’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

“If you are really committed to transformational work and change, … then the commitment has to be immediate. You can’t pause when you have an incident [like the fraternity video] or one that disrupts the campus environment,” says Shumate.

Prior to the release of the fraternity video, Boren had begun meeting with the student group Unheard, which advocates for the rights of African Americans on campus. Thanks to this group and the support of the university community, OU has been able to invest considerably in programs and initiatives that have increased recruitment of and support for underrepresented students.

In spring 2015, Boren promised that OU would set the national standard for how schools should react to instances of bigotry and hatred, and Shumate believes it has succeeded in doing so. He also thinks incidents such as the one at OU and the protests at MU have prompted other institutions to be more proactive in their support for minority students. In the 2015–2016 academic year, for example, 96 U.S. colleges and universities created chief diversity officer positions.

Jayakumar sees such efforts as progress toward institutions protecting the right of marginalized students to learn in a safe environment. “It’s really complicated for institutions to strip themselves of everything [biased] and turn into completely diverse and inclusive spaces,” she says. “While these transitions happen, there has to be an acknowledgement that these problems are real and are continuing to negatively affect students.”

Walker says she hopes that colleges that have gone through similar events will consider the importance of investing in transformative change rather than just view them as public relations crises. “There has always been a history at Mizzou and many other institutions of student uprisings,” she says, “and it will happen again unless the institution becomes committed to the safety and well-being of its most vulnerable students.”

Mariah Bohanon is the associate editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. The University of Oklahoma is a 2017 Diversity Champion and a 2016-2017 HEED Award recipient.
Leading the way

JMU President Jonathan R. Alger is known internationally as a leader in diversity and inclusion in higher education. He played a key leadership role in two landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases on diversity and university admissions, and has since advised universities nationwide on how to build and sustain diversity initiatives. Alger also was the point person on developing and implementing national policies involving race-conscious financial aid and racial harassment at the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. That’s the kind of commitment you would expect from a Diversity Champion.

‘James Madison University is a visionary leader among campus communities striving for diversity and inclusion.’

— LENORE PEARLSTEIN, publisher of INSIGHT Into Diversity

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELISE TRISSEL AND MIKE MIRIELLO ('09M)
Challenging Legacy Admissions

The role America’s top universities play in perpetuating socioeconomic and racial inequality

By Ginger O’Donnell

The practice of giving admissions preference to legacy students, or children of alumni, is widespread at highly selective institutions — schools that some researchers say provide their students with more advantages than other less selective colleges and universities.

Given the benefits these institutions provide — more money spent per pupil, better retention rates, and higher projected future earnings for graduates, for example — and research showing that underrepresented minorities make up a small percentage of the legacy applicant pool, many worry that weighing an applicant’s legacy status in the admissions process impedes access to higher education for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. Their concerns resonate in the current populist political climate, in which the perceived elitism of higher education has come under attack from a variety of stakeholders.

In February, a coalition of students at 12 elite colleges and universities, including Brown, Princeton, and Cornell, wrote a joint letter to their respective institutions calling on them to publish all of their internal documents and data regarding the legacy admissions process. Organized by EdMobilizer, a nonprofit organization dedicated to equalizing access to higher education, the coalition aims to lead a review, via student and alumni panels, that could eventually end the practice.

In the letter, students cite criticism of legacy admissions by William Dudley, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, stating that “the lasting impact of these practices reaches far beyond higher education, helping to reinforce cycles of class inequity and hampering economic mobility in America.”

EdMobilizer launched its #FullDisclosure Initiative to encourage colleges and universities to re-evaluate legacy admissions in response to a report issued by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The report found, among other things, that high-achieving, low-income students are vastly underrepresented at most U.S. selective colleges and universities. Additionally, nationwide, college students have been vocalizing their discontent with the lack of transparency surrounding a practice that appears to solely benefit white, wealthy students.

According to Director of University Partnerships at EdMobilizer Mayra Valadez, a 2018 graduate of Cornell University and a self-described low-income and first-generation college student, very little institutional data or record keeping is made public about legacy admissions.

In response to students’ demands, Logan Powell, dean of admission at Brown University, wrote an op-ed in The Brown Daily Herald in which he stated that at Brown, “there is no written policy about how applicants’ status as a child of an alum may be considered in the admission process.” He also wrote that legacy status is one of several tie-breaking factors — along with having...
talent in the area of science, being the first in one’s family to attend college, or being a veteran or a student-athlete — considered in admissions decisions.

Furthermore, Powell asserted that legacy students have something unique to offer highly selective institutions: They often grow up immersed in these institutions’ values and can serve as mentors to other students on campus. Their families also tend to donate significant funds to the schools that they attend.

His main point, however, was that the controversy over legacy admissions distracts student activists from the broader issue of increasing access to elite colleges and universities.

“Presenting a trade-off between access to Brown for first-generation and low-income students and children of alums is a false dichotomy,” he wrote. According to Powell, 13 percent of Brown’s Class of 2021 is first-generation and 40 percent is students of color, while only 11 percent is legacies

Richard D. Kahlenberg, JD, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation who edited a book about legacy admissions titled *Affirmative Action for the Rich*, disputes Powell’s claims. Based on his research, he believes the practice of giving preference to children of alumni has been unjust from its inception.

“Legacy preferences have a dark and sordid history,” he says.

After World War I, Kahlenberg explains, when immigrant students — especially Jewish immigrant students — were qualifying for acceptance into colleges and universities “on traditional meritocratic criteria,” legacy preference was instituted to replace the less politically correct Jewish quotas.

Furthermore, he argues that legacy admissions is inherently un-American. Ironically, U.S. universities are the only institutions in the world that consider legacy status as part of the admissions process.

Michael Lind, JD, co-founder of the New America Foundation and co-author of *Affirmative Action for the Rich*, wrote in the book that

“legacy preferences introduce an aristocratic snake” into U.S. colleges and universities by allowing admissions decisions to be dictated by “wealth and birth.” Indeed, statistics seem to support Lind’s notion that most highly selective colleges and universities are home to an “artificial aristocracy based on wealth,” despite many of them touting initiatives that purportedly increase access for

4.1 percent of the university’s students in 2017 came from families that made $20,000 or less per year.

Kahlenberg and Valadez believe these data are proof that legacy admissions contributes to the under-enrollment of low-income students at selective institutions. They both cite evidence that white students disproportionately benefit from the practice. “At Harvard,
 remarkably thin,” he wrote, pointing to the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), which doesn’t employ legacy admissions, as an example. In 2008, Caltech raised $71 million in alumni donations, just short of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) $77 million, despite the fact that MIT admits legacy students and is a much larger institution.

Other experts question the legality of the practice. Specifically, attorneys Steve Shadowen, JD, and Sozi Tulante, JD, argue that legacy admissions violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1866; both ban preference by any institution on the basis of lineage or ancestry.

Over the years, a few politicians

convince administrators to disclose the details of the school’s legacy admissions process in order to review its legitimacy. Also in March, a majority of student government officers at Duke University voted to join the campaign, as student leaders announced their plans to discuss the issue with the school’s dean of admissions, Christoph Guttentag.

Alexis Rodriguez-Camacho, one of the co-founders and co-directors of EdMobilizer, says that the organization is “continuing to work with students, administrators, and alumni to critically reflect on the practice of legacy admissions and its validity in higher education.” The organization will also “launch and continue to support campus-wide referendums, engage alumni, and work have attempted to investigate the issue; however, the lack of legal action regarding the practice exists in sharp contrast to the number of court cases challenging the consideration of race in college admissions. In fact, the few schools that have done away with legacy admissions, such as those within the University of California System and Texas A&M University, have succeeded in making the change only as part of a broader effort to eliminate race-based admissions decisions.

Ultimately, it may be EdMobilizer’s #FullDisclosure Initiative that pushes the issue to the courts. On March 14, shortly after Powell’s letter was published, students at Brown University voted in favor of joining the initiative to

Attorneys Steve Shadowen, JD, and Sozi Tulante, JD, argue that legacy admissions violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1866; both ban preference by any institution on the basis of lineage or ancestry.

Ginger O’Donnell is a staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity. To learn more about EdMobilizer, visit edmobilizer.org.
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Promoting Diversity, Practicing Inclusion, and Driving Positive Change in the Legal Industry

By Michelle E. Phillips, JD, and John T. Cigno, JD

Issues regarding diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias have been central to labor and employment law for years. These issues have become even more important as the legal landscape and public opinion continue to evolve.

Diversity is what you have; inclusion is what you do. Diversity is a measure of the individuals with different social identities and backgrounds in a given workforce. Inclusion, on the other hand, refers to the process of removing hidden barriers and promoting unity among the individuals comprising that workforce. As a result, a law firm’s hastily posting a diversity and inclusion mission statement on its website or sponsoring diversity and inclusion events is not enough to combat issues. Furthermore, simply hiring a director of diversity and inclusion as a quick-fix solution is insufficient unless diversity and inclusion efforts are owned not only by those at the top of the organization, but by individuals at all levels within the firm or company.

In the legal industry, eliminating unconscious bias to better promote diversity and practice inclusion is a tripartite goal of immense importance. As attorneys, we have an ethical obligation to provide advice that is unbiased, objective, and sound. We should also strive to provide advice that is creative and nuanced and be able to recommend a variety of solutions. To do so, however, we must have access to a wide range of opinions and viewpoints. This, in turn, requires continuous efforts to promote greater diversity and practice inclusion within our firms and organizations. Thus, it is incumbent upon all of us to be able to overcome our own unconscious biases.

Recognizing Unconscious Bias
The first step to remedying and eliminating unconscious biases is learning to recognize them. Indeed, you need to become conscious of a bias before you can work toward overcoming it. There are several common types of unconscious bias:

Illusion of objectivity – By nature, we all have some form of unconscious bias, but most of us consider ourselves to be objective and reasonable in thought and action. Therefore, when we assume our own objectivity and ignore evidence to the contrary, we demonstrate an unconscious bias in favor of our own thoughts, views, and actions.

Affinity bias – Affinity bias is the tendency to favor individuals whom you perceive as similar to you because of physical resemblance, shared interests or views, or comparable backgrounds and experiences. Affinity bias poses a particularly significant barrier to promoting an inclusive environment because well-intentioned people think they are having a positive impact by hiring, training, mentoring, or promoting people who are “like” them. Unfortunately, however, in-group preferences often are more harmful to diversity and inclusion efforts than out-group discrimination.

Attribution bias – Attribution bias occurs when we attribute an individual’s or group’s actions to some inherent characteristic as opposed to underlying situational factors. This tendency may cause you to judge one person’s mistake more harshly than another’s or to recognize one person’s errors or successes while ignoring or excusing those of another.

Availability bias – Availability bias occurs when we overestimate the probability of events associated with a memorable, dramatic, or recent occurrence. An oft-cited example is the tendency to fear driving in a car after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic crash.

Confirmation bias – Confirmation bias is the tendency to overvalue information supporting an already-held belief or opinion while ignoring or undervaluing information to the contrary.

Tips for Driving Institutional Change in the Legal Sector
Federal and state laws prohibiting employment discrimination have existed for more than 50 years, but the underrepresentation of women and minorities in some workforces remains a significant problem. This underrepresentation is especially prominent in the legal profession, which has an unfortunate history of treating elitism as a virtue and exclusivity as a mark of prestige.

A recent study published by Law360 revealed that women comprise one-third of the attorney workforce...
despite graduating from law school in nearly equal numbers as their male counterparts for more than 30 years. Furthermore, women represent only 24 percent of all partners and just over 20 percent of all equity partners at law firms. The same study also identified firms — including Jackson Lewis — that have made the most progress toward correcting this imbalance.

Receiving recognition is great, but the value of promoting diversity and practicing inclusion extends far beyond that of receiving good press. Indeed, firms that do both will develop a workforce with a wider range of experiences, backgrounds, and opinions and, as a result, will be able to offer more creative, insightful, and nuanced advice to their clients, leading to even greater success. An essential step toward achieving this goal, however, is structuring your diversity and inclusion initiatives in ways that avoid the insidious influence of unconscious bias.

The following are a few important steps that the legal industry can take to do this.

Hold leaders accountable. Demand results when it comes to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Individuals occupying positions of authority should be evaluated based on their ability to advertise, recruit, hire, retain, and advance a diverse and inclusive workforce. At Jackson Lewis, our firm’s chairman, Vincent Cino, recently became a signatory to American Bar Association Resolution 113 on behalf of the firm. This resolution urges “all providers of legal services, including law firms and corporations, to expand and create opportunities at all levels of responsibility for diverse attorneys.” In keeping with this objective, our firm reserves a permanent seat on its board of trustees for a diverse board member and maintains a permanent diversity committee focused on establishing and achieving initiatives and concrete goals.

Expand your reach. Review your firm or company’s recruitment efforts with an eye to whether you are reaching a sufficiently diverse pool of candidates. Consider hiring recruiters who specialize in recruiting diverse candidates or Designating an internal team to work with your hiring committee to hire more diverse employees.

In addition, determine whether your firm is doing enough to make employment practical and attractive to underrepresented populations. This may involve reconsidering your family-leave and caretaker policies, whether part-time partnership opportunities are available to employees with demanding family obligations or health restrictions. Establish policies that allow employees to work from home or remotely when...
Drexel University’s Kline School of Law is working to create a community diverse in both thought and practice. For us diversity and inclusion is not an abstract concept but a day-to-day commitment.

**Future Focused**

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necessary. Plan events and conferences that focus on needs particular to one or more underrepresented communities. For example, Jackson Lewis holds an annual Women in Employment Law conference that is always highly attended.

**Encourage employees to self-identify.** While the law requires that you allow your employees to self-identify with respect to certain categories such as race, disability, and gender, go beyond what is required by the law and encourage your employees to self-identify based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Jackson Lewis encourages new hires as well as current employees at all levels and in all positions to self-identify with respect to a wide range of categories. This approach forms a crucial part of our diversity and inclusion efforts because it actively encourages all employees to feel comfortable and supported in bringing their whole selves to work.

**Mandate regular diversity and inclusion training.** Diversity and inclusion continuing legal education training is now required for attorneys practicing in the state of New York, but all firms should take it upon themselves to train employees on the importance of practicing diversity and promoting inclusion. Firms should consider planning a mandatory diversity and inclusion training, which can be offered at lunchtime or other workable times. These efforts should focus on recognizing and eliminating unconscious bias and micro-inequities in normal intra-office interactions as well as during client interactions. This training must go beyond more traditional harassment prevention (which covers the federal and state anti-discrimination statutes) to cover ageism, disablism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, transphobia, gender nonbinary bias, colorism, Islamophobia, and other biases. Developing expertise in this area will also make your attorneys more valuable and your firm more marketable. For example, Jackson Lewis has developed a team of industry-leading experts in this field and has seen benefits not only in the form of increased business, but also in the creation of a healthier, more productive work environment.

These issues are important to all industries, but especially to the legal profession. If we fail to recognize our own unconscious biases or those that may be influencing a client or third party, we may fail to consider the full range of issues affecting our clients. As a result, we may provide advice that leads to unexpected liabilities or missed opportunities. The best way to avoid these professional and legal consequences while also driving positive institutional change is to combat unconscious bias through the kinds of concrete, measurable steps identified above.

Michelle E. Phillips, JD, and John T. Cigno, JD, are attorneys in the White Plains, N.Y., office of Jackson Lewis P.C., a leading national employment law firm.
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50 YEARS LATER:
Rutgers Law Maintains Legacy of Developing Leaders Through Minority Student Program

By Alice Pettway

In 1967, an uprising in Newark, N.J., that left more than 700 people injured and 26 dead — part of a string of incidents referred to as the “long, hot summer of 1967” — sparked a conversation at Rutgers Law School: How could the school respond to the racial inequity that had ignited violence locally and across the country?
The next fall, 23 African American students walked into Rutgers Law — the first cohort in the newly formed Minority Student Program (MSP). Today, 50 years later, MSP boasts more than 2,500 alumni who hold positions ranging from U.S. district court judge to senator to executive director. And since that time, the program — which is a staple of both the Camden and Newark campuses — has expanded to serve all students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The plan, says Rhasheda Douglas, director of MSP at Rutgers’ Camden campus, was to ensure that more African American students were admitted into the law school so that when they graduated, they would return to their communities as leaders — and, she adds, that is exactly what happened.

By 1971, African Americans accounted for 20 percent of the law school student body. In 2017, 34 percent of the entering class consisted of students of color.

MSP takes a proactive, multi-pronged approach to supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Creating social support helps them navigate the law school experience, and mentoring and internship opportunities build networks that benefit them throughout their careers, Douglas says.

These two approaches are essential for students who are often the first in their families to attend college or law school. For Douglas and Yvette Bravo-Weber, assistant dean of the Newark campus MSP, this issue is something with which they both have personal experience.

“My parents only had grade school educations and spoke very little English,” says Bravo-Weber. “Although they loved and supported me, I had to navigate my education on my own, often without the support of educators who could have guided me.” Additionally, Douglas says she grew up in the inner city and was the first in her family to go to college and law school.

**Comprehensive Support**

MSP provides academic support during the first semester of law school — the time period that Douglas says is often the most challenging as students are adjusting to the rigors of a legal education and the campus community. Incoming students learn practical skills, such as how to outline case briefings and prepare for exams. They are also assigned to study groups that often end up providing them much needed support throughout the entirety of their law school career.

In addition, MSP has a formal mentoring program that matches each student with an upperclassman teaching mentor and a professional mentor. These individuals not only provide emotional and academic support, but they are also the first step in creating a professional network that can inform the students about job opportunities and even provide them with potential leads for clients once they start practicing.

MSP participants have internship opportunities as well, which vary depending on which campus they attend. Newark MSP students have access to summer internships in private law firms, public interest organizations, and government agencies — the majority of which are paid. They can also receive academic credit for interning with judges.

Camden students receive assistance with applications for internships with organizations that aim to improve diversity and inclusion within the legal profession, such as the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group and the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel.

Students who seek to complete a judicial internship during the summer following their first year of law school also qualify for a stipend.

Providing logistical and financial support for students to pursue these internship opportunities is a big part of closing the diversity gap in the legal profession, Douglas explains. She says that students from disadvantaged backgrounds often are not able to take

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### Minority Student Program Distinguished Alumni

- **Yvonne Segars, JD**, is currently a criminal justice professor at Kean University in Union, N.J., as well as executive director of the school’s Educational Opportunity Fund Program. She was the first African American woman to serve as the public defender for the state of New Jersey.

- **Robert Menendez, JD**, currently represents the state of New Jersey in the U.S. Senate, a position he has held since 2006. From 1993 to 2006, he represented the state in the U.S. House of Representatives.

- **Marcia Anderson, JD**, currently serves as clerk of court for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Wisconsin. She earned the distinction of being the first African American woman to become a major general in the U.S. Army.
unpaid summer positions because they don't have other means of financially supporting themselves during that time. Because of this situation, they may miss out on experiences that could lead them to pursue clerkships after graduation.

Douglas says she has been meeting with federal and state court judges to discuss building the Camden judicial internship program so that “students from disadvantaged backgrounds have a better understanding of just how valuable a judicial internship and clerkship are to their legal career.” She also brings judges and former clerks to campus to speak with MSP students in the hopes that they will inspire more of them to seek clerkships postgraduation and thus help address the lack of diversity that currently exists among such positions.

While Douglas says it is difficult to quantify exactly how MSP has affected the wider legal profession — particularly outside of New Jersey — she has plenty of anecdotal evidence that the support the program provides is making a difference locally. Having thousands of alumni in leadership positions in private practices, government agencies, and public interest organizations is a huge leg up for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are trying to break into the profession, she says.

Esther Salas, a U.S. district court judge who graduated from Rutgers Law in 1994, agrees that the connections students make in MSP are important. “It was camaraderie,” she’s quoted as saying in a program brochure. “From the professors to the administrators to your classmates, there was a critical sense that, together, anything is possible.”

Salas also expressed frustration at an issue Bravo-Weber cites as the biggest challenge faced by MSP: the perception that programs that support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students of color are unnecessary, or even unfair. “MSP doesn’t give you the answers on the test,” Salas said. “It doesn’t tip the scales. For first-generation students, it gives them a fighting chance. MSP generates excellence.”

In order to diffuse these sentiments and ensure internal support for MSP, Bravo-Weber says she works hard to make sure that non-MSP students, faculty, and alumni are on board with the program so that MSP students “feel there is a larger community that recognizes and values them.”

This is a concept that hits close to home for both Bravo-Weber and Douglas — and drives their commitment to this work. “[It’s about] watching someone be able to achieve their dreams and to go on continuing to pay it forward,” says Douglas. “To be able to experience that has … brought me a lot of joy, and I continue to want to help students … because they’re all talented and driven. If they weren’t, they wouldn’t have been admitted to law school.”

Alice Pettway is a contributing writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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Law Schools Update Curriculum to Reflect Emerging LGBTQ Issues

By Sheryl S. Jackson

When Nima Eshghi, JD, chose Northeastern University School of Law to pursue her legal degree, she did so knowing that the school was recognized as educating lawyers who have gone on to become leaders in civil rights law for the LGBTQ and other marginalized communities.

“The school is historically rooted in public interest law,” says Eshghi, now assistant dean of the Center for Co-op and Career Development at the school. A combination of classroom discussions about current trends and legal opinions and hands-on experience with community organizations allows students to learn about the relationship between law and social issues. And Eshghi says many of these opportunities explore issues affecting the LGBTQ community.

The law school's experiential learning model requires that students complete a public interest co-op, and it offers a wide range of clinics and initiatives for them to do so. Some of these include the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, which is focused on anti-civil rights violence and other injustices in the U.S., as well as groups that focus on matters affecting LGBTQ issues.

In addition to the co-op, first-year students work on teams to complete a one-year social justice project. Although not all of these focus on LGBTQ issues, there are always some that do, Eshghi says. Examples include the development of a legislative education plan that supports efforts to expand civil rights protections to transgender people and a plan to improve access to family law services for low-income LGBTQ families.

Social issues related to the LGBTQ community are also addressed throughout the law school’s curriculum, with discussions of recent cases and court rulings, explains Eshghi. “Professors always build topical issues into their classes, and [those] change throughout the years to reflect relevant cultural issues,” she says. “For example, in the 1990s, HIV/AIDS as related to disability laws was often discussed, but other more current topics have been added to class discussions.”

At Georgia State University (GSU) College of Law, subjects including gender identity and transgender issues — such as bathroom access in K-12 schools or access to healthcare — are part of today’s curriculum for all courses and students, says Tanya Washington, JD, a faculty member at the college. As a professor of family law, Washington has seen the curriculum change significantly as same-sex couples marry and have children. “These [issues] are discussed as a way to prepare all students to represent LGBTQ clients,” she explains.

According to Anthony Niedwiecki, JD, dean of Golden Gate University School of Law (GGU Law), raising awareness of LGBTQ issues from a legal perspective is something that applies to all law students, not just those who identify as LGBTQ. “A challenge faced by all lawyers is the lack of trust in the system that LGBTQ clients have,” he says.

At GGU Law, inclusion of LGBTQ topics in all courses, as well as internships and externships at LGBTQ nonprofit organizations, promotes greater awareness and empathy with the community — no matter how a student identifies, says Niedwiecki. “Understanding the client helps lawyers build that trust,” he says.

Washington agrees and points out that a law school’s mission is to train all students to be zealous advocates for their clients, regardless of their personal opinions. And she sees open, intense classroom discussion about LGBTQ concerns as especially helpful for LGBTQ students.

“I encourage all viewpoints to be expressed in my classroom, even if it is uncomfortable for students,” says...
Washington. “I point out that this is an opportunity to learn how to respond to opinions that make us uncomfortable and move past emotional reactions that can affect how we represent a client.”

Eshghi believes that attracting and preparing more LGBTQ students for the legal profession is also important. “Law is a powerful agent for social change,” she says, “and having representatives of a group that has previously been shut out of the protection of legal rights [who are now] practicing law breaks down barriers.” She points out that lawyers often go on to become judges and lawmakers, so training LGBTQ law students today leads to greater representation in all areas of the judicial and lawmaking system tomorrow — which may eventually lead to more inclusive and equitable policies.

Furthermore, as law schools seek to attract more LGBTQ students, it is important that they have support systems in place to address the unique challenges these individuals will face as they enter legal careers. “It is not easy to be among the first of any group in a profession, but our LGBTQ students are pioneers, just as women and African Americans were in past years,” Washington says.

Student groups such as OutLaw, an organization focused on the legal rights of LGBTQ persons, are supported by GSU and facilitate educational events as well as networking opportunities. “We don’t have a formal LGBTQ law alumni group,” Washington says, “but there are a number of LGBTQ student organizations in addition to Outlaw that provide support as students face the transition from school to career.”

At Northeastern, mentoring programs are designed to help law students move into legal careers; thus, Eshghi says, in addition to typical career advice, mentors to LGBTQ students offer advice on unique situations they may face entering the profession.

“One issue is what to wear if you are a woman but prefer to wear a suit versus a dress or skirt to an interview,” she says. “We advise men who usually wear earrings or women who

A tactic known as the “panic” defense allows defendants in criminal cases to justify brutal acts against LGBTQ individuals by claiming that interacting with victims of a particular sexual orientation or gender identity caused them to panic and react violently. It opens the door for perpetrators to excuse their actions against LGBTQ persons by ascribing their loss of self-control to the fact that the victim was gay or transgender.

The National LGBT Bar Association asserts that using this defense to fully or partially acquit crimes against LGBTQ victims devalues the lives of LGBTQ individuals. As such, the organization is working to eradicate the use of this legal argument.

In 2013, the LGBT Bar introduced a resolution to the American Bar Association (ABA) calling for an end to the panic defense, which the ABA unanimously approved. Since that time, only California and Illinois have banned its use, and New Jersey, Washington, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia are currently considering similar legislation.

According to a 2016 report published by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law, gay and trans panic defenses have been cited in court opinions in nearly half of all states despite their not being recognized as freestanding defenses under any state’s respective penal code. One such example occurred as recently as 2013 following the murder of Mississippi mayoral candidate Marco McMillian, when defendant Lawrence Reed suggested that he killed McMillian out of panic when he was confronted with unwanted sexual advances.
The First Step Toward A Legal Career

The award-winning UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Program is designed to increase the diversity of law school applicants for undergraduate students who are first-generation, low income, or members of groups underrepresented in the legal profession. The Pipeline Program provides law school preparatory resources – LSAT preparation, introductory law school classes, internships, and professional development sessions. Students participating in this program will be equipped with the tools to handle better the demands of the LSAT and their potential law school careers.

To learn more about the University of Houston Law Center Pre-Law Pipeline Program, visit www.law.uh.edu/pipeline.
ADDRESSING INEQUITIES PRECIPITATED BY THE LSAT

Schools and nonprofits strive to develop solutions to African Americans’ LSAT struggles

By Sheryl S. Jackson

According to the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), which administers the law school admission test (LSAT), the mean score of African American test-takers in 2014 was 142 compared with the mean score of 153 for Caucasians — a difference that can affect admissions.

While results for all standardized tests, including the SAT and GRE, show similar disparities between these racial groups, law school deans believe that opening the door to accept other tests as a part of admissions criteria will make law school more accessible for underrepresented groups.

In 2016, the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law began accepting GRE scores — a decision that set the review and subsequent debate about reliance on the LSAT into motion.

“Use of the GRE gives us access to a broader group of students who may not decide to pursue a law degree until later in their education or into their career,” explains Marc L. Miller, JD, dean of the law school. Because the GRE is offered online and at multiple test sites throughout the year, it is more convenient to take compared with the LSAT, which is offered only a few times a year, Miller points out. “About 700,000 students — even college juniors — take the GRE each year compared to 150,000 people who take the LSAT,” he says. “We can reach students who may be pursuing a STEM undergraduate degree but are interested in law school if they can use their GRE score.”

Miller believes the ability to reach more students will increase the diversity of the pool of law school applicants. “We want to attract a diverse group of students that reflects the community they will serve in terms of ethnicity, age, and gender, and the GRE gives us that opportunity.”

As the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates considers a recommendation to eliminate the requirement that the LSAT or a standardized test be considered in admissions decisions, most law school administrators recognize that the LSAT will continue to be used in conjunction with other tests or information. For that reason, programs like the University of Baltimore (UB) School of Law’s Fannie Angelos Program for Academic Excellence play an important role in increasing the likelihood of admission to law school.

“It isn’t that African Americans are not smart enough to do well on the LSAT — it’s that they don’t have access to people who know how to play the game,” explains Michael Meyerson, JD, a law professor and the program’s director. Fannie Angelos helps these students by increasing their awareness of and providing them access to LSAT prep courses, mentors, and opportunities to meet people working in the legal profession.

The program primarily targets students at four local historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) — Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Students apply to the program for one of two experiences: the Angelos Scholars Program or the LSAT Award Program.

For Angelos Scholars, Meyerson and his colleague Michael Higginbotham identify eight undergraduate applicants to participate in a two-week summer boot camp on UB’s campus. Students engage in classes, case studies, and writing assignments. They also visit law firms and speak with attorneys, judges, and elected officials to learn about career tracks as well as tips for law school success.

Following the summer session, Angelos Scholars enroll in a semester-long LSAT prep course, which they take while continuing their undergraduate senior year. Additionally, they are assigned a mentor to help guide them and offer advice on how to manage their time in order to be successful, says Meyerson, adding that mentors
continue working with the students even after they enroll and throughout law school.

While the full cost of the summer session and the LSAT prep course is covered by the program, the real value of Angelos Scholars is full tuition to UB’s School of Law should a student score high enough on the LSAT and maintain undergraduate grades to meet all admission requirements. The median LSAT score for a recent entering class was 152, and the median GPA was 3.18. Students, by preparation,” explains Meyerson. “Unfortunately, [many] students don’t know how to prepare, and this program offers that support.”

LSAC recognizes that attending a private LSAT prep class is not possible for all students, which is why the organization partnered with the nonprofit educational organization the Khan Academy to offer a free, online course, says Kent Lollis, executive director of diversity initiatives at LSAC. “There are two types of preparation for the LSAT:

However, can apply to and seek scholarships at any law school, Meyerson adds.

The other component of Fannie Angelos — the LSAT Award Program — covers most of the $1,799 cost of a Princeton Review LSAT prep course for 72 students who have an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.0. “We pay for all but $100 of the fee,” says Meyerson.

He believes that increasing awareness of the process for preparing for the LSAT and law school, as well as the career opportunities that are available in the legal profession, is important. “Lower LSAT scores are a barrier that can be overcome the long-term preparation of undergraduate education that teaches you to think logically and shorter-term test preparation in commercial courses,” he explains. “People who take test preparation courses tend to score higher, but we constantly hear that the cost of these courses is a barrier for many students.”

The Khan Academy’s self-paced, online course, which launched in June, diagnoses each student’s strengths and weaknesses. It guides them through lessons and practice questions, and videos, articles, and explanations cover every concept on the LSAT. As weaknesses turn into strengths, students

ABA to Vote on Recommendation to Do Away with LSAT Requirement

A recommendation to eliminate the requirement that a standardized law school admissions test be taken by all students applying to law school was approved by the Council of the American Bar Association’s (ABA) Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar in May. If approved by the ABA House of Delegates at its August meeting, the termination of this requirement would mean that law schools will be able to accept students who meet other admissions criteria, even if they have not taken the LSAT.

In addition to recommending the deletion of the standardized test requirement in Standard 503, the council voted to adopt a new interpretation of Standard 501. A standardized test would no longer be required for admission, but law schools would be expected to maintain sound, fair admission policies that allow for the admittance of students who are capable of completing the program of legal education and passing the bar exam.

While this interpretation means that a valid and reliable admissions test can still be included in a law school’s admissions requirements, it also allows for the opportunity to use other tests, such as the GRE, or information including previous academic degrees or experience to predict applicants’ capabilities.
Students at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law

track their progress toward their goal. Test-takers are also able to take the entire test from start to finish to hone their time-management skills in order to prepare for the three-hour exam.

Nearly 5,000 test-takers who were registered for the June LSAT used the Khan Academy’s Official LSAT Prep for one month prior as beta testers. “The alpha and beta tests of the course showed good results for diverse groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos,” says Lollis. “Students will have to put in the work to complete the course, review the material, and learn from the feedback, but it offers a preparation opportunity that has not existed [before] for some students,” he adds. “I even see the opportunity for students to form LSAT prep clubs or study groups on campuses to keep everyone focused and motivated.”

Lollis is encouraging HBCUs to use the Khan Academy course as a foundation for such study groups in order to prepare students to take the LSAT. “We see this resource as a valuable tool to break down barriers to LSAT preparation for all groups,” he says.

Sheryl S. Jackson is a contributing writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
To my mind, a legal education embracing a strong culture of diversity, practice preparation, and giving to others is exactly the kind of education that cultivates the kind of diverse thinkers and leaders we need as lawyers — people who truly reflect the society in which we live, embrace and celebrate individual differences, and pursue equal justice under law.”

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— Sen. Tammy Duckworth

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— Stephen Hawking, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, and author (died March 14, 2018)

“I do not have a disability, I have a gift! Others may see it as a disability, but I see it as a challenge. This challenge is a gift because I have to become stronger to get around it and smarter to figure out how to use it; others should be so lucky.”
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— Sinéad Burke, Irish writer, academic, and broadcaster

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— Aimee Mullins, athlete, actress, and fashion model

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• Believe in the promise of scale, excellence, research and partnership
• Be prepared to maintain the momentum in fulfilling the university’s strategic plan

UCF is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply, including minorities, women, veterans and individuals with disabilities. As a Florida public university, UCF makes all application materials and selection procedures available to the public upon request.

NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS
The Search Committee invites letters of nomination, applications (letter of interest, full resume/CV and contact information of at least five references), or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting UCF. Review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made.

For additional information, please contact:
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