



Hiring in Academe:

Insights on Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion

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July 21, 2015

7 Myths About Campus Diversity

By Eric Hoover

Plenty of prognosticators believe the end is near for affirmative action in college admissions. Arthur L. Coleman is not one of them.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. Coleman, a partner and founder of EducationCounsel, an education-consulting firm, offered his view of the legal landscape at a conference hosted by the American Council on Education.

Colleges, he said, should remember that the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly acknowledged that the educational benefits of diversity are compelling, and recognized the legitimacy of race-conscious admissions policies. His hunch: The Supreme Court's forthcoming ruling in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* will not erode that legal foundation.

Still, he has no crystal ball. "We don't know what the court is going to do," he said.

How should colleges with race-conscious admissions policies proceed in the meantime? Mr. Coleman offered some suggestions by explaining what he described as seven myths about campus diversity, which are paraphrased here.

1. Questions about campus diversity come down to what lawyers and judges say. That's the wrong way to look at it, Mr. Coleman said. College leaders have a responsibility to define how and why diversity is important to institutional goals and values based on their own research and internal decision-making. "The homework, in a nutshell, rests with institutional leaders and actors," he said.

2. Diversity is about admissions and nothing else. "It misses the forest for the trees," Mr. Coleman said. It's important to consider broader enrollment patterns when assessing the lawfulness of specific admissions practices. The vast experience of college begins after the admissions process ends.

3. Diversity is just about race and ethnicity. "That's not the totality of the conversation," Mr. Coleman told his audience. Colleges must look broadly at all facets of diversity (including first-generation status and family income) that relate to core educational goals. Assembling a diverse class? It's about creating learning experiences that a college wants for its students, he said.

4. A college's policies and practices are either race-conscious or race-neutral. "This notion of either-or is a false dichotomy," Mr. Coleman said. For one thing, a new report co-published by ACE's Center for Policy Research and Strategy says that strategies for achieving greater racial and ethnic diversity often go hand in hand with strategies for enhancing socioeconomic diversity. Also, he said, it's not always clear whether a given policy really is race-neutral.

5. We should stay as far away from numbers as possible when talking about diversity. Some college leaders, Mr. Coleman said, fear the perception that they are using racial quotas in admissions, a legal no-no. Nonetheless, institutions should be "numbers attentive," he said. How does your college define success in terms of its diversity goals? The answer should be

a mix of quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Courts, he said, want to know if a given college has a “contextual benchmark” by which it measures progress — and determines whether its race-conscious policies are necessary.

6. We can rely on another college’s research. Mr. Coleman urged colleges that consider race not to lean on the research and rationale behind other institutions’ race-conscious admissions practices. What worked for the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor might not make sense, legally or otherwise, on your campus. “Every institution has to roll up its sleeves and do the hard work,” he said.

7. Courts and pundits are qualified to step into admissions leaders’ shoes. “Fundamentally, people outside the academy lack the mission orientation, and, quite frankly, they lack the expertise,” Mr. Coleman said. That does not mean he thinks colleges should stand still — or run away from difficult discussions about how and why campus diversity is important. “We need to be more deliberative and transparent about what we’re doing,” he said, “not only to judges, but in the court of public opinion.”

Eric Hoover writes about admissions trends, enrollment-management challenges, and the meaning of Animal House, among other issues. He’s on Twitter @erichoov, and his email address is eric.hoover@chronicle.com.

July 20, 2015

A Liberal-Arts College Intervenes to Diversify Its Faculty

By Vimal Patel

Like the country in general, faculty members at American colleges have become more ethnically and racially diverse over the past two decades. Eighty-five percent of full-time and part-time faculty members at all colleges in 1993 were white; by 2013, the latest year for which national data are available, that figure had fallen to 72 percent. Even so, academe doesn't yet mirror the U.S. population, which was 63 percent white in 2013.

Diversifying the faculty remains a challenge particularly at liberal-arts colleges. They are typically in rural settings or located outside major cities, areas that are often racially and ethnically homogenous, notes the Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges. They also usually hire academics who have experience at other liberal-arts colleges. The job candidates are usually white and come from upper-class backgrounds, some administrators say.

The Problem

Lack of faculty diversity

In 2011, when Beau Breslin became dean of the faculty at Skidmore College, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., minority and international professors represented 21 percent of its tenured and tenure-track positions. While most institutions focus diversity efforts on hiring black, Latino, and other underrepresented minority faculty members, Skidmore wants also to recruit more Asian-American and international professors "to replicate what's out there in the world," says Mr. Breslin.

It's not just a moral issue, but also one of better preparing students for their lives after they leave college, he says. Skidmore needed a more ethnically and racially diverse faculty to remain relevant.

"We were becoming dinosaurs," he says.

The Approach

A better-informed search process

The key to making Skidmore more diverse, Mr. Breslin says, was changing how the college searched for and vetted faculty hires.

In 2012 Skidmore started offering workshops to two members of every search committee — the chair and a designated "diversity advocate." The consultants teaching the classes covered such topics as how to craft a job ad that emphasizes diversity, how to recognize implicit bias, and how to make candidates feel welcome during the campus interview.

Delivering the information in four segments, as opposed to delivering it all at once, increases the likelihood that professors will remember it, administrators say, and shows that diversity is an institutional priority.

"Lots of schools will do the one-and-done approach to training the faculty to search," Mr. Breslin says. "It simply doesn't give faculty the impression that you care about the importance of diversity and inclusion."

In addition to the educational interventions, administrators themselves step in near the end of the process to evaluate whether diversity has been properly weighed.

Once a committee begins winnowing applicants, Mr. Breslin and the associate dean meet with the chair and the diversity advocate and ask them to justify their short lists.

“If they come to me with 10 names, and nine of them are white men, and that’s not what’s represented in the applicant pool,” Mr. Breslin says, “then we tell them to go back to the drawing board.”

The Challenges **Faculty skepticism**

Some faculty members were skeptical of any involvement by central administrators or consultants in searches. Others, like John Brueggemann, chair of the sociology department, worry that the focus on race could have led the college to ignore other important types of diversity, including class, sexual orientation, and academic concerns.

“Sometimes you can end up thinking about the color of a candidate, and you may lose track of other things that have been important in the past, like teaching experience or making sure we have certain core topics covered in our curriculum,” Mr. Brueggemann says.

Mr. Breslin also hears professors say they want to hire the most qualified candidate, not the diversity candidate. That, he says, allows for a teachable moment.

Mr. Breslin, who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, acknowledges his own privilege, saying he’s a “white, male, heterosexual, upper-middle-class, Ivy League guy.”

Historically, he often explains to faculty members, applicants like him have been the main conception of a great faculty candidate — the person who went to an elite college and was able to amass an excellent publication history and teaching record, often partly because of the financial resources that allowed him to do so.

“That is one demonstration of significant chops when it comes to teaching our students,” Mr. Breslin says. “But it’s only one perspective of what makes for excellence. If we’re in the business of having a faculty that really does mirror the community, we have to have many perspectives of what constitutes excellence.”

The Results **Increases in minority and international faculty members**

In the three years since the administration took a more active role in faculty searches, 22 of the 45 tenure-line searches have resulted in the hiring of a minority or international faculty member. Moreover, in 2011, such faculty members represented 21 percent of 183 tenured or tenure-track positions. They now are 33 percent of 190 such positions.

The less-tangible results, Mr. Breslin says, are the shifts in institutional culture. He would frequently tell committees to overhaul their searches, but the need to do that has dropped in the last year. “A commitment to having a diverse faculty is the new normal,” he says.

Mason Stokes, an associate professor in the English department who has chaired four searches since the workshops began, says he has noticed a gradual change in the college’s environment around inclusive hiring.

“With each new search,” he wrote in an email, “more of my colleagues have gone through the workshops, and this productively decentralizes responsibility for hiring.”

“In other words, it was no longer just me, as chair, who had to ‘police’ the process, or even the designated ‘diversity advocate.’ I began to see a critical mass of folks invested in getting this right.”

Even Mr. Brueggemann, the sociology chair, who has voiced some concerns, says he’s pleased with the results so far. But he cautions that not all institutions will experience Skidmore’s success.

“There are people in the conversation who think diversity at all costs, at the expense of any other ideals,” Mr. Brueggemann says. “There are other people who are suspicious of any diversity effort. Dean Breslin is trying to thread the needle, and I think he’s mostly got it right so far.”

Vimal Patel covers graduate education. Follow him on Twitter @vimalpatel232, or write to him at vimal.patel@chronicle.com.

July 19, 2015

College Jobs, Never Easy, Have Become Pressure Cookers

By Jennifer Howard

W. Kent Barnds loves his job. But with all the pressures facing higher education these days, it's not getting any easier.

Mr. Barnds is vice president for enrollment, communication, and planning at Augustana College, in Illinois. He's been there 10 years but has worked in higher education since he graduated from college, in the early 1990s.

A lot has changed in those two-plus decades, and Mr. Barnds's job has expanded remarkably. Like other administrators and faculty and staff members on campuses around the country, he is learning to live in a world of tighter budgets, swelling regulations, and ever more assessment and competition.

"The pressure's greater on enrollment officers for a whole host of reasons, but we're not alone," he says. "There's increased pressure on every senior leader on a college campus."

The squeeze to do more, often with less, has been felt throughout higher education. The proportion of tenure-track jobs continues to dwindle, the precariousness of choosing the professorial life reflected in the statistic that some 76 percent of faculty members now work as adjuncts. In the sciences, researchers have been learning to deal with little to no growth in federal support for a decade now; the budget of the National Institutes of Health has fallen about 25 percent, adjusted for inflation, since 2003. Their colleagues in the humanities, meanwhile, feel the weight of increased expectations.

Kathryn A. Conrad, an associate professor of English at the University of Kansas, values the freedom to teach and research that her job gives her but worries about how to balance all the demands on her time. "I want to make a difference in the classroom, in my service, and in my writing, but it is far too easy to become bogged down in paperwork and meetings that don't have a lasting impact," she says via email.

According to Ms. Conrad, many faculty members now feel obliged to take on administrative tasks involving assessment, recruitment, or university task forces. "Most of these initiatives are well intentioned, but there is only so much time, and no new resources to accomplish them," she says. At the same time, many faculty members feel they have less say over curricular and other core questions than they did in the past.

Administrators, too — in admissions, financial aid, legal affairs, and athletics, as well as at the level of president and provost — face a growing burden, even when their jobs are secure. One bright side: Along with the added pressures come opportunities, at least for some, to become more involved in top-level planning and to help sharpen or reimagine the driving mission of their institutions.

At Augustana, Mr. Barnds has felt a substantial increase in job intensity since the recession of 2008. “There’s less margin for error,” he says. “Family income really hasn’t rebounded. People aren’t broadening their horizons.” If more students want or need to stick closer to home, that can cut into the pool of potential applicants, particularly for an institution with a small or local profile. Those students who do apply come prepared to do more negotiating over financial assistance, he says.

Adding to the pressure, it seems everyone — other administrators and faculty members, as well as trustees and development officers — is now paying closer attention to enrollment numbers than ever before. “You can’t walk across a campus without people asking you, ‘How are the numbers?’” Mr. Barnds says. For some enrollment managers, that leads to burnout. He has responded by embracing new roles: communications and marketing, giving advice about the college’s website, and strategic planning.

“I certainly feel I’m involved at a different level than I would have been 10 years ago,” Mr. Barnds says. “There’s a lot more give and take necessary.”

Being able to make that kind of big-picture, strategic contribution is not just a rhetorical or intellectual exercise but a matter of survival in a tough market, according to David W. Strauss and Richard A. Hesel. They’re principals with Baltimore-based Art & Science Group, a consulting outfit that provides market research and strategy advice to colleges.

“There’s a class system among institutions,” Mr. Strauss says. A handful of elites control their own destinies, while those at the bottom are most susceptible to market pressure. Meanwhile, “middle-class” institutions get squeezed, with public flagships as well as smaller private colleges feeling the pinch. That affects almost everybody on campus, from top administrators to junior faculty members.

“When the government of a state decides it’s going to take \$350 million out of your budget, that hurts,” Mr. Strauss says. “You have the public and political sectors beginning to impinge philosophically on the institution.”

For some public universities, like those in Wisconsin and North Carolina, budget and political pressures have been a matter of high-stakes public drama lately. In the case of Wisconsin, the faculty’s say in governing the university and even the fundamental principle of tenure have been called into question.

Even at institutions where the situation isn’t so dire, budget constrictions have set off waves of strategic rethinking and adjustments, adding new complexities to already complex jobs.

In Maryland, the state uses a formula to calculate how much money to give to its community colleges; the percentage used in that formula declined from 23.6 percent in the 2010 fiscal year to 20.6 percent six years later, says Thomas E. Knapp, vice president for administrative services at Prince George’s Community College. That doesn’t sound like a drastic drop, but it means that the colleges collectively have millions less to work with than they probably would have had the percentage at least held steady, Mr. Knapp says. His institution also receives less local support today, with the county contributing 29.7 percent of the college’s operating budget, down from 33.5 percent six years ago.

It’s not getting cheaper to run a college, either. Just keeping hardware and software more or less up to date eats up a lot of money. “Raising tuition and fees on students is the last card we want to play in building a budget,” Mr. Knapp says. “So in turn you’re having to make sacrifices in other areas.”

The challenge for Charlene M. Dukes, Prince George's president, and her staff is how to make the new numbers work without losing sight of the main goal. "We're all focused on college completion, college success," she says. "Even as we're looking at that, we're resetting priorities within the institution." That includes not always filling jobs that come open, scrutinizing academic offerings and student services to determine what students need and use most, and strengthening partnerships with businesses to help equip students for the workforce.

Keeping up with technology has become a central issue for the college, Ms. Dukes says, as wired classrooms become the norm and students clamor for more computer-lab time. Tuition and fees have risen slightly, and federal and state regulations eat up more time than they used to. "Financial-aid regulations are pressing for all of us," she says.

Financial-aid officers everywhere have seen their job definitions expand — sometimes uncomfortably, says Justin Draeger, president and chief executive officer of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. More and more they're drawn into enrollment planning — determining the makeup of their student population — and away from their traditional focus on need-based aid. The desire to be more hands-on in shaping enrollment has spread from private colleges to public ones, according to Mr. Draeger. "The strategies that have the most impact hinge on how a school utilizes its financial resources in the form of tuition discounts and scholarships, which inevitably involves the financial-aid office," he says. For financial-aid officers, "it's creating more potential conflict."

Mr. Draeger sounds a note heard throughout academe: As federal and state regulations have grown more complex, creating a culture of assessment and accountability, administrators have had to work harder on multiple fronts to meet the increased demands of their jobs.

Because colleges do not want to lose federal student-aid eligibility, "we're seeing financial-aid officers take on a much heavier role in compliance," he says. (See related story.)

Once students arrive on campus, they become the concern of people like Allen W. Groves, associate vice president and dean of students at the University of Virginia, a job he's held since 2007. Mr. Groves's predecessor was known as "the walking dean," always out and about among the students, he says. That kind of interaction is much harder to pull off now.

"I have worked very hard to make myself accessible to students," Mr. Groves says. "But the reality of the job today is you're also the CEO of a significant-size operation." His team includes seven associate deans, five assistant deans, and a number of program and area coordinators. "You're managing a lot of very sensitive issues," he says.

Some of those issues — including Rolling Stone's now-discredited account of an alleged gang rape at a fraternity house — have been painfully public for the university in recent months. Beyond the headlines, the regulatory environment has become much more intense in the past few years, Mr. Groves says. He rattles off a list of regulations that his office must be expert in: Title IX, the federal gender-equity law that's been at the center of numerous campus assault complaints and controversies lately; the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or Ferpa; and the Clery Act, which requires colleges to report crimes on campus.

That's a sea change from what the job involved a decade ago. "And I don't think the regulatory climate is going to change," he says. Mr. Groves's office also deals with free-speech issues, and he serves on the university's threat-assessment team and its athletics-oversight committee. While those are important, he says, "it severely restricts the time you have to sit down with an individual student."

Students also remain the focus of Jon Fagg's job as senior associate athletic director at the University of Arkansas, but his job has expanded and become more holistic. The son of a college coach, Mr. Fagg remembers when players were expected simply to follow directions. "Today's student-athletes want to be part of the process," he says. "We talk about preparing them for the rest of their lives."

That means being aware of what students have to deal with off the playing field, at home as well as in the classroom: learning disabilities, special dietary needs, academic and personal struggles. "It has really evolved into the era of student well-being," he says. "That's a term we use a lot at Arkansas."

As a compliance officer responsible for making sure the university follows the National Collegiate Athletic Association's rules, Mr. Fagg thinks a lot about regulations. For him, that's eased up a little as the association has revamped those rules. "The NCAA rule book for a while had been bogged down in some minute details, for instance defining how many institutional logos could be on a postcard we send to a prospect," he says. Being freed from some of those details is liberating, but it also raises expectations, he says, since he and his colleagues often don't have an easy (if sometimes arbitrary) rule to follow.

At Northwestern University, Thomas G. Cline, vice president and general counsel for almost 14 years, is also feeling an uptick in pressure. "The number of demands on our time has skyrocketed," he says. A surge in Title IX and sexual-assault cases takes up a lot of staff time, along with the usual legal activity — employment claims, real-estate actions, even lawsuits challenging grades — that universities get drawn into.

"No. 1 on everybody's list is this issue of compliance," Mr. Cline says. The agencies making the rules don't always make them clear. "We get precious little guidance, and there are a lot of competing pressures," he says. "It's a pretty daunting task."

Not daunting enough to make him want to quit — he says he loves the variety and working for one client whose mission he believes in. Nor does he have trouble finding job candidates for his legal team. It helps that university lawyers have good support networks, he says.

For instance, he and a group of fellow lawyers from the Midwestern consortium known as the Committee on Institutional Cooperation meet regularly to talk about issues of common concern. When something bad happens, he gets calls of support from colleagues.

"We all know these issues run across the country, and it's just a question of who's going to have one pop up at any given time," he says. "There are times when it seems pretty overwhelming, but then you catch your breath and you go on, because it's a great job."

Jennifer Howard writes about research in the humanities, publishing, and other topics. Follow her on Twitter @JenHoward, or email her at jennifer.howard@chronicle.com.

July 19, 2015

To Find Happiness in Academe, Women Should Just Say No

By Rena Seltzer

I work with some of the most brilliant women on the planet: academics at leading colleges and research universities.

My coaching clients succeeded early in their careers by working hard and saying yes when opportunities came their way. But by the time they come to me, their schedules are killing them. A case in point is Dierdre, who called in despair, exclaiming, “I’m surrounded by great colleagues, I have smart, motivated students, and I can study topics that excite me, but it’s just too much. Every day I’m sure I’ll be able to work on my writing tomorrow, and then my day is completely full and I fall into bed exhausted, and I still haven’t opened my manuscript.”

Dierdre’s difficulty in finding time for research and writing is a challenge that confronts academics at all career stages — and women in particular. Other academic duties come with near-term deadlines. The lecture must be written before class on Monday, the applications must be read and ranked before the meeting on Wednesday, the report must be submitted to the granting agency next week. Professors put off work on their own articles or books until they can find the time, but the time never comes.

My previous career as a therapist in a college town led me to coach professors. When I work with someone like Dierdre, who is drowning in commitments, the first thing I do is issue a challenge to find 10 things to say no to. I explain that they can accept, decline, or counteroffer. Dierdre agreed to try for five. How many would

you be able to find? In addition to obvious ones, like turning down an invitation, you can use delaying tactics. Thus a decision not to rework last year’s lecture, sitting on your hands when the department chair asks for a volunteer to pick up a cake, or postponing a student meeting all count as no.

When she called the following week, Dierdre had found four times to say no and was contemplating a fifth. She told her students they could skip a reading, which meant that she didn’t have to reread the article herself; she decided not to travel over a holiday break; she decided against attending a conference; and she skipped parts of a department-sponsored program. She was also considering postponing a collaborative project with a local company, although it would provide opportunities for her students.

Dierdre struggled with each decision. The class reading would have illustrated something valuable. She had recently moved for this job, and she missed her family back home. The collaborative project depended on connections that had taken time to forge, and she wondered if those relationships would hold up.

It helped for Dierdre to identify what each no would allow her to say yes to: yes to writing, yes to getting settled in her new town, yes to a strong start on other projects before adding a new collaboration. Although she grappled with how to set priorities for competing demands, she was motivated to change, since her job and her physical and emotional health depended on it.

There are trade-offs. A management professor told me I had to be the most expensive coach on earth, because after we talked about the need to let some projects go, she turned down a lucrative consulting gig to create time to write. Someone else confessed that she had skipped a meeting and, as a result, missed her surprise baby shower. However, my clients wanted the long-term career benefit of time for their research more than they wanted the things they gave up. Setting the boundaries needed to achieve one's career goals while maintaining life balance requires awareness, skills, and practice.

Time-use studies have revealed that the difficulty Dierdre faced in preserving her research time is common among female academics. Compared with their male counterparts, women spend more time on teaching, mentoring, and service. Although men and women do similar amounts of professional service, which often carries visibility and prestige, women spend more hours doing service to the university, and are more likely to serve in time-intensive lower-status positions such as director of undergraduate studies.

Women are less conditioned to ask for what they need, and when they do speak up, they are more likely to face social sanctions. Students expect female faculty members to be more nurturing. Women of color and those from other underrepresented groups must also contend with biases related to race, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

The good news is that female academics can take steps that will help them to succeed. Here are eight crucial steps to leading a balanced life:

Keep your eyes on the prize. A strong research profile puts you in position to support students and gives you a greater say in the future of your department, college, and profession. Saying no to small requests allows you to say yes to things that matter.

Beware of gender-role conflicts. One female professor, despite being under tremendous pressure to publish, was planning to take time off when her in-laws came to visit. When she summoned her courage and asked if they could babysit while she worked, they immediately agreed, and were delighted to have time alone with their grandkids. Take time for things that fill your heart, but avoid burdening yourself out of a gender-based sense of duty.

Negotiate — the right way — for your needs. Women need to ask for what they want, but they risk sanctions for being too aggressive. Research suggests that framing the request as good for the organization mitigates this bias. For example, a professor requesting funds for conference travel might frame the trip as important for recruiting, or as giving her institution a presence on the national stage.

Negotiate at home as well as at work. Academic women value their own and their partners' careers equally, but male academics value their own careers ahead of those of their wives.

Working mothers in general put in about five hours more a week on paid and unpaid work than working fathers do. In addition to tasks such as picking up the kids, women must make sure their spouses also handle their share of such responsibilities as coordinating the carpool.

Use tools like rubrics to keep grading manageable. This is both a time-preserving and pedagogically sound practice, because feedback is most useful when it is timely.

Ask more of your helpers. When I asked one professor if her students could be doing more to move their joint research forward, she worried about protecting their time. She noticed, though, that the advisees of a demanding colleague were completing their degrees with more publications on their CVs. After realizing the benefit to her students, she asked them to do more.

Take time to recharge. I worked with a professor who couldn't remember at the end of a proposal what she had read at the start. She asked me if there were brainteasers she could practice to strengthen her memory. After a long-planned two-week vacation, not only was she more relaxed, but she told me, "I'm no longer having trouble retaining what I've read." It wasn't brainteasers that she needed, but rest and recovery.

Don't go it alone. A professor who spent months gathering additional data in response to a reviewer's comments later realized that a simpler response would have sufficed. When faced with a difficult dilemma, ask a trusted colleague for input. The most successful academics are in support networks.

Female professors face a set of challenges that can be difficult to navigate but are not insurmountable. Most of the academics I coach experience their work as not simply a job or a career, but a calling. If you've lost the sense of joy you once found in your work, you can take heart that others have found ways to reconnect with the things they value most. The strategies of these successful academic women can serve as a road map to create the meaningful and balanced work and personal life you long for.

Rena Seltzer is president of Leader Academic, a national coaching and training business in Ann Arbor, Mich. This essay is adapted from her new book, [The Coach's Guide for Women Professors: Who Want a Successful Career and a Well-Balanced Life](#) (Stylus).

July 19, 2015

How Great Colleges Distinguish Themselves

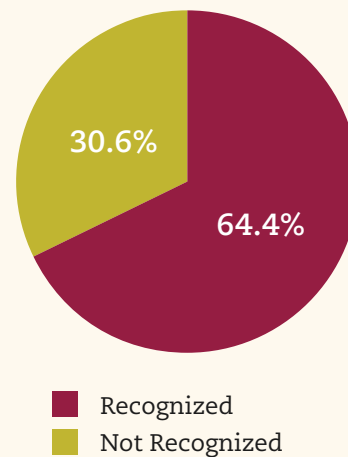
By Eileen Filliben Edmunds and Richard K. Boyer

Back in 2008, The Chronicle of Higher Education and ModernThink LLC partnered to create the Great Colleges to Work For® program. The top goal was to conduct research that would help leaders understand and leverage the key success factors that differentiate great places to work in academe. In 2015 the program attracted 281 institutional applicants from across the country.

Out of all of the applicants this year, 86 colleges and universities were highlighted in one or more of 12 recognition categories. Each category represents a key driver of workplace quality (e.g., Collaborative Governance, Senior Leadership, Job Satisfaction, etc.). Forty-two of those 86 recognized colleges received accolades in multiple categories, thereby distinguishing themselves as the best of the best and earning a spot on the Honor Roll.

While it is true that even great colleges cannot please all of their people all of the time, the Honor Roll institutions have won the hearts, loyalties, and discretionary efforts of the vast majority of their faculty and staff members. Here we examine what distinguishes the recognized colleges, especially those on the Honor Roll, from the other 195 institutions.

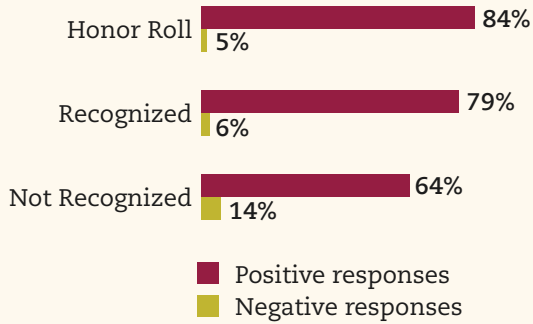
Out of 281 applicants, 86 colleges were recognized for workplace quality



In short, by investing in their people, great colleges create a culture of engagement. Faculty and staff members understand and support the institution's mission, are provided with the tools and authority they need to contribute their best, and consistently go the extra mile for colleagues and students.

This investment in culture pays off. When responding to the statement "This institution's culture is special — something you don't find just anywhere," the Honor Roll colleges indicated a much higher level of agreement (84 percent, a combination of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses) than did the unrecognized colleges (64 percent). In addition, the unrecognized colleges had a dissent rate of 14 percent, nearly triple that of the Honor Roll institutions.

“This institution’s culture is special—something you don’t find just anywhere.”

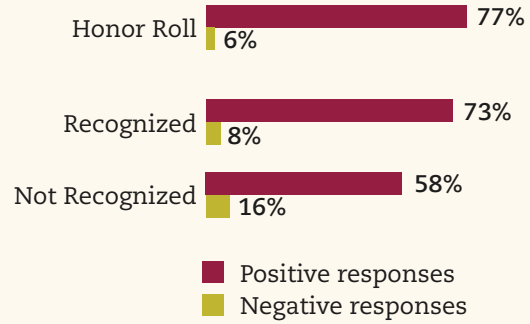


Cultures of engagement are distinct, differentiating, cohesive, and empowering. This year’s Honor Roll institutions proved that they excel in each of the four strategic pillars upon which great cultures are built: leadership, communication, alignment, and respect.

Senior leadership: When assessing their senior leaders, faculty and staff members look for two traits: credibility and capability.

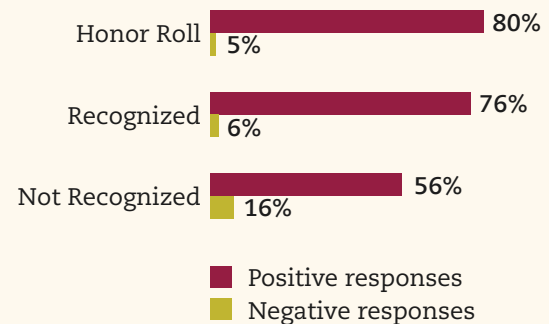
Senior leaders establish credibility through interactions that build trust and through behaviors that are consistent, reliable, and reflect integrity. When responding to the statement “I believe what I am told by senior leadership,” Honor Roll scores indicated a high level of agreement (77 percent) compared with scores from colleges that were not recognized in any categories (58 percent).

“I believe what I am told by senior leadership.”



Faculty and staff members are also looking for leaders who show capability. They must demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills, and experience to effectively lead the institution. Responding to the statement “This institution is well run,” employees of Honor Roll colleges answered far more favorably (80 percent positive) than unrecognized institutions (56 percent positive). Additionally, the dissent at the unrecognized institutions was more than triple that at Honor Roll institutions.

“This institution is well run.”

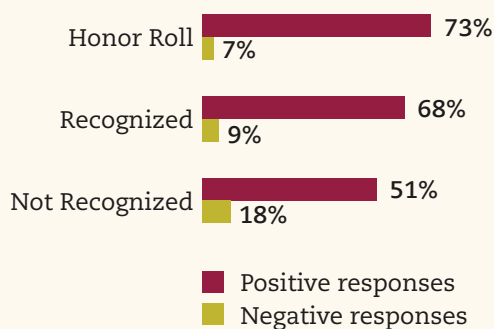


At Honor Roll colleges, the senior leaders delivered.

Communication: Employees rely on transparent and interactive communication to understand what’s going on, solve problems, get ideas across, and fuel progress.

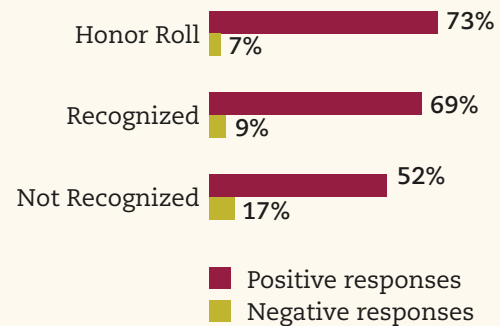
Regarding transparency, it is vital that institutions remain open concerning both good and bad news, provide the context and rationale for decisions, and ensure that the campus community receives regular and timely updates. Honor Roll scores on the statement “There is regular and open communication among faculty, administration, and staff” were 73 percent positive, 22 percentage points higher than the scores at unrecognized colleges.

“There is regular and open communication among faculty, administration, and staff.”



In addition to modeling transparency, it is important to foster interactive communication that creates opportunities for two-way exchanges. Healthy dialogue will help employees feel that they can provide input and be heard. Looking at the statement “At this institution, we discuss and debate issues respectfully to get better results,” Honor Roll responses were 73 percent positive, 21 percentage points higher than at unrecognized colleges.

“At this institution, we discuss and debate issues respectfully to get better results.”

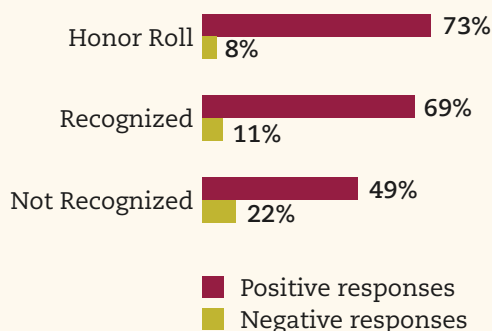


Communication is a high priority in great workplaces.

Alignment: Great colleges demonstrate alignment in their people practices in two key areas: collaboration and contribution.

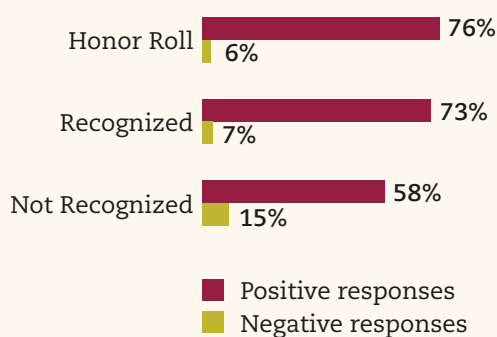
When collaborating, faculty and staff members are aligned to further a goal. They support and are supported by one another, enabling them to do their best work. They solicit input from one another and pay little attention to who gets credit for what. One of the greatest distinctions we saw on this year’s survey had to do with collaboration, specifically the statement “There’s a sense that we’re all on the same team at this institution.” At Honor Roll colleges, responses were 73 percent positive, 24 percentage points higher than at unrecognized colleges. Furthermore, the negative responses from unrecognized colleges reached 22 percent, versus 8 percent from Honor Roll institutions.

“There’s a sense that we’re all on the same team at this institution.”



Great colleges position people to contribute at their highest level. They have the right people in the right jobs and provide them with the training, tools, and resources to succeed. Responding to the statement “I am provided the resources I need to be effective in my job,” faculty and staff members at Honor Roll institutions were 76 percent positive; their peers at unrecognized institutions were 58 percent positive.

“I am provided the resources I need to be effective in my job.”

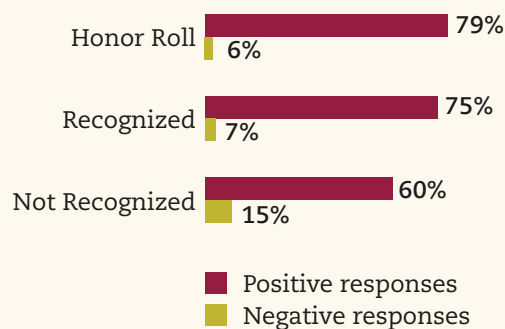


People within great workplaces collaborate and are supported to do their best work.

Respect: The hallmarks of respect within a workplace are fairness and acknowledgment.

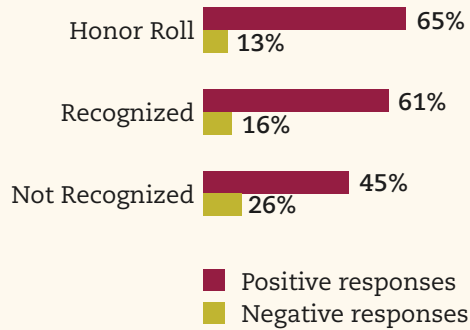
Institutions with an intentional focus on building an equitable culture treat employees fairly regardless of personal attributes or position. When considering whether “This institution’s policies and practices ensure fair treatment for faculty, administration, and staff,” Honor Roll responses were 79 percent positive, compared with 60 percent positive from their unrecognized counterparts.

“This institution’s policies and practices ensure fair treatment for faculty, administration, and staff.”



In addition to being treated fairly, people want to be acknowledged. Therefore it is important that rewards, recognition, and feedback are specific and regular, and that they motivate faculty and staff members to treat one another well and do their best work. Honor Roll institutions significantly outperformed their unrecognized peers in their responses to the statement “Our recognition and awards programs are meaningful to me.” Honor Roll colleges scored 65 percent positive; unrecognized colleges, 45 percent positive.

“Our recognition and awards programs are meaningful to me.”



In great workplaces as in life, respect breeds respect.

An institution's path to creating a culture of engagement does not have to be long or complicated. As your college continues on its journey toward greatness, we hope that it will leverage this report as the resource that it is. Learning from the best of the best — especially in the areas of leadership, communication, alignment, and respect — can provide great insight and motivation.

Eileen Filliben Edmunds is managing partner, and Richard K. Boyer founding partner, of ModernThink, a management-consulting firm specializing in workplace quality, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning. The authors thank Harry Shenton and Lena Eisenstein for their assistance with this article.

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