A Content Analysis of Historical Diversity Documents at Teachers College
Carter & Oyler, 2010

As part of a multiyear, mixed methods study of the diversity climate at Teachers College, we conducted a content analysis of diversity documents in order to gain an understanding of how diversity has been framed historically within the institution. We began our inquiry by collecting and analyzing documents that dealt explicitly with diversity throughout the previous 10 year period.

Documents are frequently used within qualitative research to give researchers a sense of the larger research context. By examining various documents such as policies, memos, reports, power point presentations, and position papers, we get a sense of not only the salient issues of the time, and within that particular context, but also begin to uncover which topics have held importance for various stakeholders and to what extent. We may also begin to uncover which issues are taken up, and in what ways, by examining documents within a collection of other documents and institutional events.

The methods for our study can be found in Appendix A.

Findings

Authors of these historical documents included members of the TC community as well as external consultants. Single author documents were written exclusively by professors, senior administrators and outside consultants. Group authored documents were written by individuals serving on various committees charged with tasks related to diversity issues at the College.

Please see Appendix B for Table 1 (inventory of historical documents) and Figure 1 (matrix of major areas of concern) for a listing of which documents were reviewed and the frequency with which categories of concern were discussed across the documents.

Eleven themes emerged as major areas of concern. They are listed below; in parentheses is the number of documents in which the concern was discussed. (We did not count how many times within documents it was mentioned, just the number of documents which mentioned the concern). Following this list is a brief explanation of each concern. Unless otherwise noted, concerns and recommendations came from all three author groups: faculty, senior administrators, and outside consultants.

- address issues of race and diversity in curriculum and instruction (16)
- support for research on diversity (10)
- foster cross-unit relationships (11)
- improve communication and procedures (11)
- develop accountability regarding implementation of diversity and equity initiatives (12)
- implement systematic procedures to track diversity trends (8)
recruit and retain faculty of color (13)
recruit and support students of color (8)
respect and support for staff (7)
hold people accountable for culturally insensitive/offensive behavior (5)
address issues of race and diversity in institutional settings (10)

Address issues of race and diversity in curriculum and instruction

Ten authors across fifteen documents raised concerns or made recommendations that we categorized as the need to address issues of race and diversity in curriculum and instruction. Documents suggested the following strategies over the years:

- evaluating course curriculum for content that supports multiculturalism (a curriculum audit);
- changing the formal course evaluation instrument so that it includes assessment about both course content (the extent to which multicultural content is included or infused) and instructional competency with engaging in classroom interactions related to race and diversity;
- create a foundations course for all students on multiculturalism and diversity;
- faculty could work with colleagues to review readings w/ a lens on diversity of paradigms, perspectives, and authors;
- establish a lecture series on diversity--its discontents and virtues--in higher education, learning, and teaching;
- increased academic efforts oriented to study and teach the educational issues facing specific historically underrepresented groups (including ethnic and racial groups, as well as immigrants, the disabled, and sexual minorities).

Concerns were raised in a variety of documents that faculty do not know what to do about race and race relations at the College and that faculty who have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and equal education opportunity in their teaching, service, mentoring could use more support.

Support for research on diversity

Six authors across nine documents included the need for the College to provide institutional support for research related to diversity and multiculturalism for both professors and for students. Specific suggestions were offered such as: establishing a rewards initiative for faculty who promote and/or research diversity in their work; continuing to support the Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME); tie funding to specific marginalized groups, rather than the more general category of diversity.

A number of documents noted the importance of approaching the issue of research on diversity, race, and multiculturalism with an eye towards including diverse research paradigms which may offer insight into the experiences of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups. Various documents raised the issue of students who feel they are discouraged from researching topics deemed controversial.
**Foster cross-unit relationships**

Seven authors across nine documents raised concerns or made recommendations that we categorized as the need to foster cross-unit relationships. By cross-unit, documents mentioned the following: between offices at TC; between TC and Columbia; between academic departments; and with research centers and institutes. Various concerns were offered detailing the ways that communication between units suffers and affects the work that is done here by undermining collegiality, productivity, and institutional efficiency. The need to work across boundaries, and break down silos was a common recommendation. Documents detailed specific ways to foster cross-unit relationships and other documents detailed initiatives designed to foster such relationships such as initiating more face-to-face meetings, town meetings, and retreats.

**Improve communication and procedures**

Seven authors across five documents also raised concerns and/or made recommendations related to improving communication and procedures. Various documents described how in the absence of standard procedures for making institutional decisions (such as resource allocation, employee hires, and employee promotions), interpersonal relationships gain more influence. Documents provided both recommendations for how communication and procedures could be improved as well as examples of initiatives that have been implemented to address this concern.

The types of communication highlighted within the documents included town meetings, widely distributed emails (including increasing email accessibility for the TC community), orientations, and WebPages that would communicate to the Teachers College community topics ranging from communiqués about incidents occurring on campus to College policies, procedures, and expectations. The documents also reflected the need for communication to be more inclusive and sensitive to community members with disabilities.

By procedures, authors referred to the need to document and make widely accessible policies and rules that articulate expectations for performance and working conditions. Additionally document authors recommended that the College develop systematic methods for awarding promotions, tenure, and salary increases.

**Develop accountability regarding implementation of diversity and equity initiatives**

Within the category develop accountability regarding implementation of diversity and equity initiatives; we identified twelve documents written by seven different authors. The documents called for accountability at the individual, unit/department, and institutional levels. Accountability was defined within the documents as reflecting commitments to diversity initiatives financially, within written policies such as strategic plans, the diversity mission statement, diversity and anti-discrimination action plans, and evaluation methods. Authors also recommended that constituents be held accountable by sharing plans with the larger community and with their respective supervisors or governing bodies. Authors defined diversity as including multicultural ideas within curricula and in
teaching, and as structural diversity within the numbers of student and faculty of color at TC. A major concern reflected within the documents was that without a system of accountability, the timeliness and overall effectiveness of diversity initiatives would be compromised.

**Implement systematic procedures to track diversity trends**

Seven authors across eight documents made recommendations and raised concerns that we coded as implement systematic procedures to track diversity trend. Similar to how diversity was defined within other categories, diversity within this category related to structural diversity – numerical representation of ethnic minority groups. Concerns expressed by authors included an inadequate representation of underrepresented groups amongst faculty, staff, students, and the board of trustees. Suggested trends for tracking included: (a) harassment, discrimination, and grievance patterns; (b) faculty, staff, student, and board of trustee composition; and (c) the institutional climate as measured by students’ and employees’ level of satisfaction and attitudes about the College. One suggestion for tracking trends was to use operating systems such as the Applicant Tracking software that has been purchased by the College.

**Recruit and retain faculty of color**

Across thirteen documents and seven authors, there have been continued calls to hire more faculty of color and to attend to issues of climate in order to retain those hired. In a number of documents, specific examples were given of individual faculty member’s racialized experiences that were painful and persistent. One document noted the significance of the department chair in creating a positive climate for retention and support. Some strategies were occasionally offered, such as targeted advertising and increasing the number of minority faculty in searches through mentoring networks.

Although the call to recruit and retain faculty of color was the most frequently noted concern or recommendation in our entire coding system, there were few rationales developed across the documents outlining the underlying theory of action for this call. Perhaps most document authors considered the call for more faculty of color to be so obvious as not to require a fully developed rationale. In any case, we thought it important to note this difference with other categories of concern in our analysis.

**Recruit and support students of color**

Nine documents, written by eight authors have called for more recruitment and support for students of color. Sometimes authors specified the recruitment of more Black and Latino students and the fostering of an equity and access agenda which would both draw and support students. Specific proposals include:

- the development of multi-year packages for financial aid with needs-based criteria
- establishing mentoring programs specifically for students of color, including peer mentoring and faculty mentoring
- teaching students to develop skills to handle challenges in the classroom and
hallways with faculty and colleagues

*Respect and support for staff*

Noted in six documents across five authors is the issue of respect and support for staff. By staff, we include both union and professional staff. Problems noted over the years range from “mistreatment of blue-collar workers who are predominantly people of color” to staff being talked down to and having service demanded of them by disrespectful and rude students in varied offices in the College. One author noted that racial problems existing at the College, fall most heavily on the staff. Few solutions were proposed in the documents, although one call was made to provide mentoring for new employees.

*Hold people accountable for culturally insensitive/offensive behavior*

Within this category, authors were much more explicit about concerns regarding insensitive and offensive behavior, but provided very few recommendations and statements about what has been done to address this issue. Five different authors across five documents spoke to this issue. Culturally insensitive/offensive behavior was defined within the documents as racist jokes and statements told without regard to how they may offend members of the community. Incidents given within the documents ranged from statements and jokes made during faculty and department meetings to emails containing jokes that were perceived as racist sent to a large number of members of the TC community. The absence of initiatives developed to address this issue corroborated with authors’ sentiments that there is a lack of efforts/mechanisms for improving the issue and that it was often viewed as the responsibility of those who were offended to address the issue. The two plans that were given to address this concern were offered by administrators; one document pointed to the need to investigate concerns about discrimination against community members with disabilities and the second communicated the expectation that all members of the TC community take responsibility for his or her words and actions.

*Address issues of race and diversity in institutional settings*

Eight different authors across ten documents raised concerns and offered recommendations that we coded as address issues of race and diversity in institutional settings. Institutional settings were identified within the documents as environments such as department and faculty meetings and larger-scale community events involving community members across units and roles. There were two major concerns expressed within the documents: 1) the perception that there are no spaces where those who are traditionally excluded may discuss issues of racism, sexism, ageism, sexual harassment, and heterosexism; and 2) the perception that faculty do not know what to do with race or race relations. Authors also believed that by developing such spaces, traditionally marginalized groups would feel more accepted, valued, and supported. Initiatives named that aimed to address these concerns ranged from student, staff, and faculty trainings on microaggressions and engaging in difficult dialogues to community-wide presentations and discussions about race, gender, sexual orientation and other differences. One
document, authored by an administrator, was intended to serve as a tool to initiate discussions about diversity with community members.

Discussion

We think it is important to share with the community the analyses and observations that various stakeholders have offered throughout the previous 10 years so we can highlight and discuss the most common concerns raised over the years. We want to use these prominent themes as we proceed in both our research study and also as a catalyst for further planning and work coming from the Provost’s Office, the FEC Subcommittee on Race, Culture, and Diversity, the President’s Office for Diversity and Community, and all other groups/units who have a stake in this work (including the Management Network and the Student Senate, for example).

Furthermore, the document summaries offer a brief chronology of some of the more public diversity conversations from this period and in this way serve as a (partial) historical record. To this end, we have created a timeline placing the documents within a few of the more prominent events directly related to diversity. (See Appendix B.)

It is important to note that since the time many of these documents were written there have been programs offered, policies put in place, and initiatives undertaken which do address some of the concerns raised. We did not attempt to analyze or evaluate which concerns have been addressed by more recent offerings at the College.

Assumptions about diversity

Within the documents there were some generally shared assumptions about diversity, which some authors stated. These assumptions are important to explain and are listed below:

- Our shared goal as a graduate and professional school is to prepare graduates to work effectively and without bias in varied settings, with diverse learners, and across the lifespan.

- Diversity across various roles and statuses within the College enhances the work conducted at the College by attracting talented scholars, students, and employees and by maximizing the talents present within the community.

- Increased opportunities for interaction between groups and units improves the work environment and/or transforms the institution. Through such improvements and transformations, the work itself is changed.

- Equity, trust-building and subsequently the work that is achieved within the College is contingent upon transparency and the inclusion of various voices within the work taking place throughout the College. Underlying these concerns is the assumption that trust cannot be established within environments that are
perceived as hostile or where concerns are not received with openness, respect, genuine concern, and responsiveness.

Connecting historical document analysis with research on campus diversity climate

We read these historical documents within our current conceptual framework for studying our own climate for diversity here at Teachers College. Building upon the research conducted by Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, and Allen (1998) and Gonzalez (2002), we have adopted a multi-dimensional approach to understanding diversity within institutions. This framework includes attention to structural, physical, epistemological, psychological, social, and historical dimensions of diversity.

Researchers interested in exploring campus climate as it relates to diversity have utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the influence that various variables (such as numerical representation of historically under-represented groups, curricular diversity, and social relations within the college community) have on members’ perception of the inclusiveness of the institution. Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, and Allen (1998) argue that researchers and institutions must also consider an institution’s historical legacy of inclusion (such as admission policies) and exclusion (such as school-wide observations of religious holidays). This consideration was reflected within some of the documents in the categories of concern: develop accountability regarding implementation of diversity and equity initiatives and implement procedures to track diversity trends. Adopting measures such as reporting the demographic composition of the faculty, staff, board, and student body goes beyond simply reflecting numerical diversity, but also introduces transparency in an effort to reverse past patterns of exclusion and inclusion. A continued concern stated in the documents was that focused attention must be given to recruitment and retention so as not to continue to reproduce social inequities present within society.

Another aspect of the campus community which should be considered when evaluating the diversity and racial climate is what Gonzalez (2002) calls the social and epistemological worlds. Theorized to influence how individuals perceive and experience the diversity climate within an institution, Gonzalez argues that the social world extends beyond the physical numbers of racial and ethnic groups within an institution to the political power wielded by these groups and their interactions with one another. This understanding was expressed within documents that drew attention to not only the need for a representation of bodies of historically marginalized individuals, but also a representation of their voices within the decision making and governance within the College. This social world is also reflected within the concern for how members of the Teachers College community interact with one another, including whether or not people are held accountable for offensive and insensitive behavior.

Lastly, the epistemological world (Gonzalez, 2002) is understood as the knowledge and ways of knowing that are validated and exchanged within an institution. What is valued within the institution is also communicated by which topics are researched and discussed, and what is included and excluded in both the curriculum of the classroom as well as the curriculum outside the classroom (special events, what is on the walls, what is featured in
official publications, etc.). As was reflected within documents across several categories, some faculty and students of color over the years stated that research and curricula focused on the experiences of marginalized groups was viewed as “me search” and was not part of mainstream research and curricula at the College.

Taken together, the utilization of this framework to describe the concerns and recommendations reflected within the historical document analysis points toward how these areas may intersect within the lives of members of a community to communicate messages of inclusion and exclusion. Having read these documents many times we realize they offer very little evidence of a framework or agreed upon diversity mission or vision. As is common in the wider culture, society, and nation, the actual focus and understandings conveyed by the authors vary. These TC authors refer to a range of different, but inter-related concepts, including: multiculturalism; anti-discrimination; structural diversity; as well as the importance of minority representation and voice.

The documents display a wide range of both anecdotes and analysis about people’s understandings and experiences related to race and diversity, but there is little evidence that the stakeholders are often in conversation with each other, or build upon previous conversations. The documents offer either very basic demographic data or highly impressionistic “snapshots.” Therefore, what we can know from these documents is quite limited. We have a lot of small “weather reports,” and not much information about overall climate. There is little evidence of accountability and follow-through; rather, each document seems to begin a new conversation.

As we finalize this report and return these documents to the archives, we want to conclude with some final observations regarding both the importance and the difficulty of understanding multiple perspectives and the experiences of others. These documents attest to the ways that people at Teachers College have worked to both relate the experiences of those members of our community who have been marginalized and also to advocate for systemic change on behalf of the institution. The documents are a testimony to the energy and commitment various stakeholders have brought to the umbrella task of diversity and provide evidence of the important work that needs to be undertaken in the years ahead.
APPENDIX A

Methods

(A) We worked with the Offices of the President, Provost, and Vice-Provost to collect documents related to diversity dated 1999 through 2009.

(B) We inventoried all the documents: attached a numeral to each and also recorded the title, author, date and genre.

(C) Data Analysis
1. We used a grounded theory approach to data analysis.
2. We designed a first-round document analysis template to synthesize and summarize each individual document. Categories on the template included: genre and purpose; brief summary; critical incidents reported/data; problems named/identified; solutions or recommendations made/initiated; additional comments/reflections/issues.
3. Two researchers working independently read each document and filled out the template.
4. We reached agreement on the genres/purposes of each of the documents, which included:
   - documents that create or report on policies, such as: Affirmative Action handbook
   - hired consultants’ reports
   - internal reports or memos for wide distribution
   - summary narrative that reports on events or programs
   - analysis/call to action
   - internal reports, memos, or emails intended for limited distribution
   - public relations documents, such as “Student of color brochure”
5. We decided to exclude public relations documents from our analysis.
6. Reading across the documents, the researchers then used a grounded theory approach to code the documents for the most prominent stated issues, concerns, problems, recommendations.
7. Taking all these concerns we then organized the categories thematically, moving back and forth between the examples and the larger theme (concern) until we arrived at our final nine categories of concern.
8. These categories are worded in the form of recommendations.
9. We used these categories and individually and independently re-read the documents and coded each document using the categories.
10. The researchers then met and compared our coding of each document, discussing and resolving the discrepancies of our analysis. In the process, we ended up adding an additional category.
Limitations

1. Diversity is a large concept. There are different perspectives and understandings about diversity throughout the world. We can infer that the twelve authors of these documents hold different assumptions and commitments regarding what IS diversity and WHY diversity matters. In this document analysis, we did not attempt to account for authors’ implicit framings of diversity; nor did we analyze these in any way.

2. There were many emails, policy documents, and public relations documents that were circulated throughout this 10 year period. We did not analyze these documents.

3. An important aspect of these documents analysis is the underlying issue of authorship, representation, and voice. That is: What is the role of the person who authored the document, for whom do they claim to speak, and what are the sources of their claims. These documents range from single authors claiming only to speak for themselves, to group authored documents with concerns and recommendations based on a systematic process that is made transparent in the document. Our analysis did not attempt to account for any of these interwoven factors.

4. There is a bit of a flotsam and jetsam feel to our collection of documents. We imagine there must be other important documents that were written but did not survive to make it onto our original spreadsheet.
APPENDIX B

Table 1

Historical Document Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Document No.</th>
<th>Type of Document</th>
<th>Date Produced</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Response to Levine memo</td>
<td>HD-2</td>
<td>memo</td>
<td>3/15/1999</td>
<td>Linda Powell</td>
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<td>Dove Report</td>
<td>HD-1</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>4/12/1999</td>
<td>Barbara Wallace</td>
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<td>Levine letter to TC community regarding diversity and community</td>
<td>HD-3</td>
<td>memo</td>
<td>4/29/1999</td>
<td>Arthur Levine</td>
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<td>TC Diversity &amp; Community Inventory Executive Summary</td>
<td>HD-4</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>7/10/1999</td>
<td>Diversity task force</td>
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<td>Office of Diversity and Community Pamphlet</td>
<td>HD-7</td>
<td>informational pamphlet</td>
<td>10/1/2002</td>
<td>Office of Diversity and Community</td>
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<td>Treatise on Diversity and Affirmative Action at TC</td>
<td>HD-8</td>
<td>essay/treatise</td>
<td>6/11/2007</td>
<td>Barbara Wallace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee for Community &amp; Diversity Initial Recommendations to Pres. Fuhrman</td>
<td>HD-9</td>
<td>memo</td>
<td>10/26/2007</td>
<td>Janice Robinson</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Walking the Talk: Improving the Climate for Diversity at TC</td>
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<td>memo</td>
<td>12/4/2007</td>
<td>Susan Fuhrman and Tom James</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEC - Subcommittee on Race, Culture and Diversity Summary and Next</td>
<td>HD-10</td>
<td>committee findings summary and recommendations</td>
<td>12/6/2007</td>
<td>FEC Subcommittee on race, culture, and diversity</td>
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<td>Steps for First Generation, Working Class Students of Color</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Report from June 19, 2008 TC Community Building Event</td>
<td>HD-12</td>
<td>report</td>
<td>8/1/2008</td>
<td>Jeanne Bitterman</td>
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<td>College-wide Diversity and Community Initiatives Summary</td>
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<td>memo</td>
<td>11/25/2008</td>
<td>Janice Robinson</td>
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<td>Overview of Faculty-related Diversity and Anti-discrimination Initiatives at TC</td>
<td>HD-14</td>
<td>summary</td>
<td>2/1/2009</td>
<td>FEC Subcommittee on race, culture, and diversity</td>
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<td>Executive Summary of Research on Racial Microaggressions</td>
<td>HD-16</td>
<td>executive summary</td>
<td>2/9/2009</td>
<td>Derald Wing Sue</td>
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<td>Race, Culture, and Diversity at TC: An Agenda for Moving Forward (faculty meeting)</td>
<td>HD-17</td>
<td>power point presentation</td>
<td>4/5/2009</td>
<td>President Susan Fuhrman, Provost Tom James, FEC Subcommittee on RCD</td>
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<td>Creating an Institutional Plan for Diversity and Anti-Discrimination</td>
<td>HD-21</td>
<td>report??</td>
<td>8/21/2009</td>
<td>Thomas James</td>
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Figure 1

Major Areas of Concern

- address issues of race and diversity in institutional settings
- hold people accountable for culturally insensitive/offensive behavior
- develop accountability re. implementation of diversity and equity initiatives
- implement systematic procedures to track diversity trends
- foster cross-unit relationships
- improve communication & procedures
- address issues of race and diversity in curriculum
- respect and support for staff
- recruit & support students of color
- recruit & retain faculty of color
- support for research on diversity

Frequency
Figure 2

Experiencing Diversity Historical Document Timeline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event 1</td>
<td>Faculty email triggers discussion of racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 2</td>
<td>Levine call for input</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 3</td>
<td>Irvine Consultation Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 4</td>
<td>Creation of Diversity &amp; Community Taskforce</td>
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<td>Event 5</td>
<td>Creation of Office of Community &amp; Diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 6</td>
<td>Diversity and Community Initiatives Grant Established</td>
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<td>Event 7</td>
<td>Student Research and Diversity Grant Established</td>
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<td>Event 8</td>
<td>TC Diversity Mission Statement Adopted</td>
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<td>Event 9</td>
<td>New Fac. Orientation Includes Matters of Diversity including Racial Microaggressions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 10</td>
<td>Students of Color Presentation to FEC*</td>
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<td>Event 11</td>
<td>Noose &amp; Swastika Incident</td>
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<td>Event 12</td>
<td>Price Consultation Visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 13</td>
<td>Creation of VP for Diversity and Community Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event 14</td>
<td>New Faculty Orientation Includes Matters of Diversity including Racial/Cultural Microaggressions</td>
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References
