

MEMORANDUM

To: Dean Janet Steverson
From: Joe Langerman
Date: August 22, 2016
Re: WSJ Article Memo

I. QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. What are the differing views in regards to whether the diversity programs and initiatives being instituted in American Colleges and Universities throughout the United States are effective in creating an environment where most members are collegially working and interacting with those from whom they differ?
2. Of the viewpoints discussed, are the diversity programs that are being put in place actually effective? If the programs are not effective, what actions should Universities and Colleges take to meet the rising concerns of students in regards to issues of diversity?

II. INTRODUCTION

In May 2016, the Wall Street Journal released an article titled “Hard Truths About Race on Campus.”¹ The article was in response to several protests on college campuses throughout the United States. The protests were over concerns about how these colleges and universities were addressing race and diversity. Students would present formal demands to college administrators. Such demands included “[i]ncreased affirmative action, more diversity training, more funds to support scholarship and teaching about race and social justice.”² How the colleges and universities responded to the protests and concerns varied. Two ivy- league colleges (Brown and Yale) pledged millions of dollars for diversity initiatives (\$100 million from Brown and \$50

¹ Jonathan Haidt and Lee Jussim, *Hard Truths About Race on Campus*, WALL ST. J., May 6, 2016.

² *Id.*

million from Yale).³ The President at the University of Missouri resigned after controversies arose on his campus.⁴

Lewis & Clark was and has not been immune from issues regarding race on campus. In response to racist postings on Yik-Yak and the assault of an undergraduate student, administrators at Lewis & Clark received a host of demands from students. The demands are listed on a website, the name of which appears to mock Lewis & Clark President Barry Glassner.⁵ There were a variety of demands: creating an exclusive, full time position for the Chair of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, increasing the hiring of faculty members of color, President Glassner apologizing for what students felt was a failure in leadership in response to the incidents and acknowledging that Lewis & Clark benefits from “[t]he legacy of Anglo-American white supremacy,” among other demands.⁶

In light of the protests at Lewis & Clark and other college campuses across the country, several issues remain to be addressed? What are the differing viewpoints in addressing race and diversity across college campuses? What viewpoints/ diversity programs are most effective in addressing issues of race and diversity on college campuses? What actions should college administrators take to address student concerns and demands? These are among the issues that will be addressed in this memo.

III. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERING VIEWS RE: EFFECTIVENESS OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES BEING IMPLEMENTED ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES?

Social psychologists Jonathan Haidt and Lee Jussim published their views about the effectiveness of diversity programs on college campuses in the Wall Street Journal, concluding

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ www.barryglassdoor.com/vision

⁶ *Id.*

that “existing research suggests that such reforms will fail to achieve their stated aims of reducing discrimination and inequality. In fact, we think that they are likely to damage race relations and make campus life more uncomfortable for everyone, particularly black students.”⁷ They explained that the most common demand by those seeking more diverse campuses is to hire additional African-American faculty members and admit more African-American students but, due to inequality in K-12 education, the pool of similar achieving students of color is limited. Schools respond by using differing standards, and other affirmative action tools.⁸ As a result, the “message” to students from the use of differing admission standards is that race conveys information about the academic capacity of peers.⁹ As research supports that students tend to befriend those who are similar to themselves in academic achievement, the end result is increased racial self-segregation that becomes even more visible, “with even stronger feelings of alienation among black students.”¹⁰

As a result of the current ethnic and racial unrest that exists on college campuses, a “coddling” culture has arisen at college campuses. The “coddling” culture refers to the culture of oversensitivity at college campuses.¹¹ The coddling culture “[i]nvolves the shouting-down of speakers, disinviting speakers, telling people what they can say, [and] telling people what they can wear.”¹² The coddling culture seems to be a phenomenon among individuals under the age of 35, whereas individuals over the age of 35 seem to frown upon the coddling culture.¹³ In addition, women seem to be more in favor of the coddling culture because many of the ideas surrounding the coddling culture arose out of feminist theory in the 1990’s.¹⁴ As a result of the

⁷ Haidt, *et. al.*, *supra*.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Dominic Bouck, O.P., *The Revenge of the Coddled: An Interview with Jonathan Haidt*, FIRST THINGS, Nov. 18, 2015, at 1.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.* at 2.

coddling culture, a fear of having open and honest conversations with college students about race has developed among some college professors.¹⁵ In the words of Dr. Jonathan Haidt, a professor at New York University- Stern School of Business, “[p]rofessors are much safer these days speaking at other campuses than on their own because it’s only on your own campus that students are going to file harassment charges and drag you before the Equal Opportunity Commission if you say one word that offends someone.”¹⁶

So, if the perception is that diversity programs are not working to address racial and cultural issues on college campuses and such culture has resulted in an atmosphere of fear to even discuss race relations for fear of offending someone, what should be done? First, it is important to actually look at some of the programs being implemented to address diversity issues and whether they actually are effective.

IV. WHAT IS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES BEING IMPLEMENTED ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES?

One of the primary “demands” of those raising diversity issues on college campuses is increased admission of ethnically and racially diverse students. Some universities use affirmative action tools or differing standards to increase the diversity of their student body. The “benefit derived from student diversity [does not] merely depend on the racial composition of the student body, but also the frequency and intensity of social interaction and friendship among students of different races.”¹⁷ Similar to the conclusions of Haidt and Jussim above, The Centre for Economic Performance found that affirmative action policies at selective universities drove a

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ PETER ARCIDIACONO, ET. AL., RACIAL SEGREGATION PATTERNS IN SELECTIVE UNIVERSITIES (Centre for Economic Performance, May 2013).

“wedge between the academic characteristics of different racial groups.”¹⁸ The Centre found that similarities in academic background was instrumental in friendship formation and, as a result, one of the potential “costs” of affirmative action was to “lower the rate of interracial friendships * * * by introducing a mismatch between academic backgrounds of different groups, interaction between these groups is discouraged.”¹⁹

Others who have looked at “diversity responses” agree that the hoped-for responses have not materialized. The increased racial and ethnic diversity on university campuses has not “increased ethnic heterogeneity leading to a broad intermixing and blending of different cultures and ethnic traditions on campuses.”²⁰ Instead, “it has led * * * to the tendency for students from different ethnic groups to remain relatively segregated and isolated from one another.”²¹ One factor that stirs up the ethnic and racial segregation “is the prevalence of ethnic and racial student organizations, primarily consisting of member students from minority groups.”²² Increased participation in ethnically and/or racially oriented student organizations, “will contribute to enhanced rather than attenuated levels of interethnic bias and conflict.”²³ The segregationist effect of ethnic and racial organizations is worsened by a similar effect in sororities and fraternities that “tend to serve as ethnic enclaves for white students.”²⁴ Importantly, in one study, participation in these “ethnic enclaves” increased minority students’ sense of victimization and perceived group conflict, and increased “interethnic bias and social distance to ethnic others” among the white members of fraternities and sororities.²⁵

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at 2-3.

²⁰ Jim Sidanius, et. al., *Ethnic Enclaves and the Dynamics of Social Identity on the College Campus: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, 87(1) J. OF PERS. AND SOC. PSYCH., (2004).

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.* at 96.

²³ *Id.* at 97.

²⁴ *Id.* at 100.

²⁵ *Id.*

Simply increasing the numbers of ethnically or racially diverse students doesn't appear to change the culture on college campuses or the feelings of victimization felt by minorities. One study of two colleges found, however, that differing approaches on college campuses designed to shape student's experiences and feelings about diversity can affect outcomes. At a university that took the "power analysis and minority support approach, minority students active in diversity programming on campus [felt] empowered by an understanding of privilege, power, and the historical roots of oppression in society, while many white students and some minority students [felt] alienated from diversity-related campus programming."²⁶ On the other hand, at a university that followed the "integration and celebration approach, most students [felt] satisfied with their individual experiences with diversity, yet [did] not question the power differences between groups in society and the historical roots of enduring racial inequality in American Society."²⁷ Because the outcomes were different, the programs are analyzed in more detail below.

The "power analysis and minority support" approach involves focusing on the needs of minority students. Examples of programs that focus on minority needs include a voluntary orientation program for students of color, a "student of color Peer Counseling Program," placing counselors trained in diversity issues in all freshman dormitories, and offering themed housing that students can select to live in, including housing oriented toward African and Hispanic Cultures.²⁸ The mission of these programs is to "orient first year students to campus resources and support services" and to "challenge them to explore systems of oppression that are present in the United States even today."²⁹ The university has a center that offers a variety of programming each year that focus on the heritage of minority students and various cultural groups. There is a

²⁶ Natasha Warikoo, et. al., *Beyond the Numbers: Institutional Influences on Experiences with Diversity on Elite College Campuses*, SOCIOLOGICAL FORUM, 2014 at 3.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.* at 8-9.

²⁹ *Id.* at 8-9.

significant emphasis at this university on “supporting minority students and their racial and ethnic identities, by providing opportunities to develop in-group solidarity and to confront racial oppression.”³⁰ Students at this university who were active in diversity programming developed in-group solidarity while those who did not participate, mostly white students and some students of color, “expressed dissatisfaction and disagreement with the racial separately they perceived”.³¹ These students felt excluded, and believed that the programs were polarizing and sources for campus divisions along racial lines.³²

The “integrationist and celebration approach” focuses on making decisions that “emphasize improving race relations between black and whites and foregrounding the goal of inter-cultural understanding over support for and solidarity among minority students”.³³ At the university following this approach, a Bureau for Cross-Racial Understanding was established instead of a minority-run center focusing specifically on the oppression of minority students, as the “university’s administration feared signaling segregation instead of an integration mission.”³⁴ The mission of this center is to “improve understanding and relations among racial and ethnic groups * * * in order to enhance the quality of our shared life”.³⁵ The center does sponsor programs and activities that are designed at “promoting intercultural and cross-racial understanding and awareness in the university community.”³⁶ At this university, first year students are required to participate in “Community Talk,” a small-group discussion on racial and class diversity, designed to “build a cohesive and inclusive community in addition to promoting conversations about diversity.”³⁷ This program is mandatory for all incoming students and held

³⁰ *Id.* at 10.

³¹ *Id.* at 11.

³² *Id.* at 20-21.

³³ *Id.* at 9.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

during orientation.³⁸ Housing and residential life programming is centered on cross-cultural awareness; housing policies were switched from ones based on student preference to random housing assignments in order to promote diversity.³⁹ The administrators also crafted intentionally diverse freshman rooms and suites through a complex matching process.⁴⁰ Overall, this university focuses on supporting racial integration, with less emphasis on providing minority students separate programming. Students at this university expressed “more satisfaction with campus diversity and less critique of systemic issues of inequality.”⁴¹ Specific components of the programming, however, were felt to be less successful. Students interviewed felt that the “Community Talks” were somewhat forced and had a limited impact on their views.⁴² Some of this was based on the differences in facilitators and variation in race frames that facilitators presented.⁴³ Others felt that an extended discussion was not feasible in a 90 minute action-packed orientation schedule.⁴⁴

Many colleges and universities have implemented a swath of diversity workshops.⁴⁵ Examples of the workshops given are B’nai B’rith’s “A World of Difference,” which has been offered on more than 300 college campuses and the National Coalition Building Institute model, which has been offered on over 80 campuses.⁴⁶ Participants in these workshops “engage in exploration and sharing of attitudes towards various groups, air negative and positive feelings, share personal experience of injury or discrimination, role play, and practice management

³⁷ *Id.* at 22.

³⁸ *Id.* at 10.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 9.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 11.

⁴² *Id.* at 22.

⁴³ *Id.* at 23.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 24.

⁴⁵ Clark McCauley, et. al., *Diversity Workshops on Campus: A Survey of Current Practice at U.S. Colleges and Universities*, 34(1) C. STUDENT J., March 2000 at 1.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 2.

intergroup conflict.”⁴⁷ While traditional academic methods are used in these workshops (readings, lectures), the main methods involve group activities that revolve around discussions about actual campus incidents, group exercises to explore ethnic differences, role playing or behavioral training.⁴⁸ “The effectiveness of these activities, particularly sharing experiences of bias, will depend upon substituting norms of openness and honesty for the norms of good manners and emotional control that usually govern interactions in a group of strangers.”⁴⁹ Administrators who were surveyed about these workshops reported that they were positively received by students.⁵⁰ Students surveyed after these workshops also generally reported positive responses although there was a small percentage who felt hurt as a result of the training.⁵¹ While the results were generally positive, there was no follow up to determine the impact of workshops on intergroup relations on campus.⁵²

Another program that has been implemented is the Multi-Racial Living Unity Experience (MRULE), a race relations program on the campus of a large Midwestern university.⁵³ This program, created in 1996, was designed to promote integration among students by building a multi-racial community of students from diverse backgrounds, based upon three pillars: social justice, human agency and action research.⁵⁴ Rigorously trained peer leaders facilitate the dialogue using peer education principles.⁵⁵ Peer education employs individuals who are similar to the target audience in order to implement different instructional or behavior change interventions on campus.⁵⁶ Peer Education can “[d]irectly affect the social environment, provide positive role

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 6.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 8.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 1.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 7.

⁵² *Id.* at 9.

⁵³ Nithya Muthuswamy, et. al., *Interaction-Based Diversity Initiative Outcomes: An Evaluation of an Initiative Aimed at Bridging the Racial Divide on a College Campus*, NAT. COMM. ASSOC., January 2016, at 108.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 108.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 109.

models, and help change social norms.”⁵⁷ Peer education has been helpful in particular on the issue of race relations because “[r]esearch suggests that people are more likely to change their attitudes and behaviors if they believe the messenger is similar to them and faces the same concerns or pressures * * *.”⁵⁸

At MRULE, diverse groups of students come together to engage in round table dialogues held in their dormitories once a week throughout the year. They discuss, learn and debate racial issues, and in doing so relate them to their own lives.⁵⁹ In addition to the round table discussions, MRULE students engage in monthly socials designed to offer an opportunity to interact with their peers and build relationships.⁶⁰ This helps to build community. In order to strengthen their interracial friendship networks, and to learn about multicultural history, students make trips to a metropolitan area once a year, which blends education, entertainment, enthusiasm, in addition to furthering community building.⁶¹ Students participate with each other in community service, in order to “give back” to the community and to have more time for intergroup bonding.⁶² The three things that separate MRULE from other programs are:

1. A holistic approach that goes beyond spreading awareness or changing attitudes – it is designed to build community and emphasize genuine intergroup communication and relationships.
2. The methodology used encourages participants to apply race-related facts and issues to their own lives and to connect the racial history of this county to their day to day experiences.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 108.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 109.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² *Id.* at 110.

3. MRULE uses students to educate participants fostering close ties and allowing participants to identify with each other and their student leaders, who serve as role models.⁶³

A comparative study of students participating in MRULE and those that did not revealed significant attitudinal differences. Those participating in MRULE were significantly more positive towards racial issues, more aware of facts related to racial history and current events, and had more multi-racial and multi-ethnic interactions.⁶⁴ The results indicated that the MRULE model of creating interactional diversity was highly successful.⁶⁵ The authors of the study admitted that there may have been selectional bias as the MRULE program is voluntary and those joining may have been predisposed to the desired outcomes whether they had participated in MRULE or not. Nevertheless, a comparison between new MRULE participants and those who had participated throughout the duration of the program, revealed more positive attitudes and behaviors for those who had completed the program than those who had just joined.⁶⁶

V. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD COLLEGES TAKE TO ADDRESS STUDENT CONCERNS AND DEMANDS RE: RACE AND DIVERSITY?

College diversity programs need to be grounded in current theory and empirical evidence.⁶⁷ Instead of lecturing students about diversity issues, professors should “use active learning techniques so that participants will engage with course content,” such as problem solving and group discussions.⁶⁸ It is critical to “avoid assigning blame or responsibilities to participants for the current diversity issues” by having facilitators use language “indicating that

⁶³ *Id.* at 110.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 117.

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 118.

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 119.

⁶⁷ Corinne Moss-Racusin, et. al., *Scientific Diversity Interventions*, SCIENCE MAG., Feb. 7, 2014, at 616.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

we all share responsibility for diversity”.⁶⁹ Facilitators can present and analyze the evidence concerning implicit bias and its impact.⁷⁰

Programs that focus on minorities or ethnically diverse students exclusively seem to be counterintuitive to the desire for cross-cultural integration and may promote more feelings of polarization. Changing the focus of programming offered to support cross-cultural integration and to celebrate diversity seems more likely to have more positive impacts on most students. At the same time, however, providing programming that allows students of color and white students to think deeply and critically about racial inequality, discrimination, social justice and power, and giving both groups the tools for engagement and dialogue across racial lines is important in promoting a more accepting, diverse community.⁷¹ Cherry-picking from the various approaches discussed in the research reviewed, some ideas include:

1. Promoting cross-cultural diversity in residential living situations through random roommate selection.
2. Freshman orientation programs introducing students to campus resources and beginning the discussion about cultural diversity, implicit bias, etc. These orientations should insure racial and cultural diversity among groups as many friendships are formed during this time.
3. Training peer educators as mentors, role models and employed as leaders to plan activities to foster inter-group friendships.
4. Educating all students through active learning, group discussion, informed readings, in culturally diverse freshman seminars, where extended discussion can be guided by trained facilitators. Including education about implicit bias and historical and

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.*

⁷¹ Warikoo, et. al, *supra*, at 34.

institutional bias/racism but focusing on celebrating diversity and differences. While words do matter, “universities themselves should try to raise consciousness about the need to balance freedom of speech with the need to make all students feel welcome,”⁷² to avoid the “micro-aggressions” that have occurred – students feeling uncomfortable by something said that was benign but interpreted as discriminatory (e.g. asking an Asian-American, “[w]here were you born?” which might imply that he/she is not American). “Talking openly about such conflicting but important values is just the sort of challenging exercise that any diverse by tolerance community must learn to do”.⁷³

5. Reducing centers/clubs/organizations that are historically racially or ethnically segregated and promoting cross-cultural organizations and activities/programming, such as a “Unity Fest”, which can include a performance showcase where students dance, play music and perform martial arts from various cultural heritages, and a food festival highlighting specialties from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.⁷⁴

VI. CONCLUSION

Diversity programs on college campuses must actually be diverse and promote inter-group communication and friendships. Separate programming for racial and ethnic minorities promotes an “us against them” mentality, creates polarization, and fosters bad feelings. Open and honest round table discussions, in dormitories and in classrooms, that weave historical information about racism and bias, encourage open exchange of personal experiences, and relate both to ongoing issues on campus and in the community at large, are important first

⁷² Greg Lukianoff, et. al., *The Coddling of the American Mind*, THE ATLANTIC, September 2015, at 21.

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ Warikoo, et. al, *supra*, at 29.

steps to perspective taking and empathy. University sponsored activities that celebrate diversity and promote cross cultural integration will hopefully help promote the atmosphere and outcomes desired.