The question of who should be admitted to the nation’s four-year colleges and universities is regaining the public’s attention with the recent decision of the Supreme Court striking down the University of Michigan’s point system for increasing diversity on its campus (Berkowitz & Ladika, 2003). Prestigious colleges such as Michigan have made commitments to admitting qualified students of color in proportions equal to minority groups’ representation in their states’ populations. The success of students of color admitted to these schools is not an issue but the selection methods are because these schools use techniques other than high school grades and test scores to make admissions decisions. The plaintiffs in the Michigan case would like to see grades and test scores as the only criteria for admission, but the counter-argument is that these measures often underestimate the talent of students who must overcome adversity and discrimination to achieve academic success. Although the Michigan case deals with students at the highest levels of college qualifications, there are important implications for developmental education in this controversy. Specifically, do standardized tests serve any useful purpose for developmental educators and their students?

Moore, Jensen, Hsu, and Hatch (2002) argue that college entrance exams, especially the SAT, are biased against students of color. They imply that students with low SAT scores are misidentified (i.e., are false negatives), that students of color should be allowed to enter four-year colleges regardless of their academic qualifications, and that students of color placed in remedial courses are unjustly served no matter what their standardized test scores are. We will counter those arguments in three ways. First, we will very briefly review the literature on the validity of achievement tests suggesting they are as useful for students of color as they are for White students. Second, we will argue that community colleges are a reasonable option for many students who have not scored well on entrance exams or have high school grades below the admissions threshold for the four-year colleges of their choice. Third, we propose that a challenging and supportive multicultural curriculum will do more to address educational access and success than eliminating standardized tests. In sum, we argue that standardized tests can play a useful role in creating educational opportunities for all students.
Evidence for the Validity and Usefulness of Achievement Tests

Some educators are categorically opposed to the use of standardized tests. This position is exemplified by Moore et al. (2002) and the anti-test sources they cite. Their central argument is that the SAT and, by implication, other such standardized academic achievement tests, are invalid, biased, and hinder the progress of students who score low—particularly when they are students of color. However, this position fails to take into account the complex literature on standardized testing in general and the SAT in particular. For example, Jensen (1998) reported that there are on the order of 11,000 studies on the relationship between educational success and standardized test scores and that they consistently show that this relationship is positive. In his analysis of the records of a national cohort of students followed from 10th grade to age 30, Adelman (1999) found that a 12th grade SAT-like test predicted college matriculation and baccalaureate degree achievement extremely well and was actually better than any other predictor, even income level, at the lower ranges of student performance levels. This research suggests that the SAT accurately reflects how much students have learned in high school regardless of their grades or class standing.

Using the SAT to Identify Talent

Moore et al. (2002) also argued that the SAT is inconsistent with the developmental education principles of giving students access to higher education and the chance to develop their talents to their fullest. However, the history of the test suggests that its purpose is very consistent with what developmental educators strive to do in their work. Ackerman (1995) describes how the impetus for changing the SAT in the 1940s from essay tests to the standardized, objective approach used today was twofold. First, many educators were concerned that the subjective judgments of teachers affected high school grades and might not reflect the true abilities of some students, particularly those from ethnic minority groups. They believed that objectively scored tests would protect students from discrimination. They also believed that traditional IQ tests had limited ability to predict educational success and were confident that new instruments springing from advancements in testing theory and research would be much better predictors.

Second, Ackerman (1995) detailed how the successful experience with the AGCT during World War II as a valid predictor of achievement in army training schools revealed that the academic potential of large numbers of Americans was not being utilized. Many high scoring individuals had neither attended college nor aspired to it. The President’s Commission assigned to examine the issue of how to identify talent for an increasingly technological society that demanded college educated individuals concluded that many otherwise talented people were being denied opportunities for higher education and that standardized tests would help identify them. A familiar, diametrically opposed interpretation echoed by Moore et al. (2002), characterizes the SAT as undemocratic. However, Ackerman describes the Educational Testing Service’s (ETS) approach quite differently. Many educators in the 1940s believed that the old essay exams used to assess college potential were biased because they favored students who had attended elite prep schools. The opponents of ETS’s approach were educational conservatives holding on to the traditional liberal arts curriculum for traditional students. Objective, standardized tests were designed to democratize higher education. We assert that it is useful to view them similarly today: as a means to help students be successful.

The refinement of the psychometric properties of aptitude tests and reconceptualizations of abilities in the mid 20th century moved much of the research and thinking about human abilities away from single property IQ conceptualizations to Thurstone’s specific abilities approach that recognized and measured specific talents (Ackerman, 1995). Ackerman asserted that the Army General Classification Test (AGCT) was the embodiment of this approach as its’ components predicted success in a variety of different training areas. Most researchers in this field today believe intelligence consists of more than just one overarching ability (e.g., Gardner, 1999; Sternberg, 1985). In fact, Jensen (1998), one of the foremost researchers of the past three decades in this area, argues that the concept of “intelligence” has lost most of its meaning and that we should discard it and replace it with a focus on specific abilities. The SAT and ACT have moved further in this direction over the years as they adapt to reflect what is taught in the standard high school curriculum (e.g., Powers & Rock, 1999).
A related criticism echoed in Moore et al. (2002) is that SAT preparation courses with expensive price tags give unfair advantage to students whose parents can afford them. This argument implies that the same income advantage that allows students from higher socioeconomic classes to pay for and attend elite prep schools invalidates the SAT’s capacity to accurately identify talent. Here too, the research on this issue presents a different picture. More than two decades ago Jensen (1980) reviewed the research on SAT preparation programs and concluded that their effect on test scores was marginal at best. Since then Kulik, Bangert-Drowns and Kulik (1984) performed a meta-analysis on SAT coaching effectiveness studies and found an effect size of +.15 standard deviations, a significant but small advantage to taking these courses. Messick and Jungblut (1981) reviewed coaching programs and found that this effect is primarily a function of coaching time. They concluded that SAT scores increase as the coaching regimen approaches actual instruction time. That is, as the coaching programs become more like the curriculum, they improve SAT scores more. It seems clear from this that good schooling and more of it does improve SAT scores. This has several important implications, as we will discuss below. In any case, the fairness issue may be effectively moot as recent research (Powers & Rock, 1999) continues to show the coaching effect is small while ETS provides preparation materials free to anyone (College Board, 2003) and many high schools have SAT preparation books in their libraries and provide SAT coaching courses for a nominal fee.

The history of the SAT is one of identifying talent to provide broader educational opportunities. Tests such as the ACT and SAT are used more today to measure students’ educational preparation. The basic principle remains however—to help institutions, educators, and students decide on appropriate educational venues and interventions.

**The SAT and Ethnic Minorities**

As Moore et al. (2002) point out, standardized aptitude tests have been used in the past to make false claims about the abilities of various ethnic groups. The waves of immigrants in the early 20th century were the targets of misguided attempts to classify non-Northern Europeans as mentally defective. People of color are rightly concerned by allegations that periodically arise of racial inferiority on the basis of test scores. There are plenty of reasons to question the validity of IQ test score differences between ethnic groups. However, most psychologists would accept the assertion that ability tests can provide useful information about individuals, especially when we have appropriate norm groups available. On the other hand, psychologists have also long recognized that taking a standardized test such as the SAT is a stressful experience (Sternberg, 1985). For example, Steele (1997) has demonstrated that “stereotype threat” makes minority students taking standardized tests feel the weight of representing their ethnic groups. Steele’s research demonstrates that test situations are threatening and thus depress minority group members’ scores.

The reality and implications of group differences on standardized tests is complex, and it is not our goal in this chapter to review reasons for main effect group differences on them. The reader can consult a comprehensive overview of research on group differences and what they mean in Neisser et al. (1996). The important question about standardized academic aptitude and achievement tests is whether or not they accurately predict college performance for all students who take them.

In his review of the potential sources of bias in standardized testing, Jensen (1980) pointed out that the SAT overpredicts college achievement for African American students. Lynn and Mau (2001) recently showed this effect for Asian and Hispanic students as well as for African Americans. This means that these groups’ SAT scores predict higher college GPAs than they actually achieve. Instead of the SAT discriminating against minorities, this view of the data suggests it does the opposite. That is, the SAT gives minority students an advantage in admission decisions over a procedure that would accurately predict their college performance.

We argue that the SAT is identifying college potential as it was originally designed to do, but also that the real concern for educators should be that students of color are not performing as well as the test predicts they should in college. Our goal as developmental educators should be to find ways to bridge this gap. Two areas of research are informative in this regard.

First, Ackerman (1995) reports that during World War II many illiterate men were rejected for service on the basis of their low AGCT scores. Because many of
them were presumably African Americans who were functionally illiterate due to that era's grossly unequal educational opportunities, the army was “under pressure from the black community” (p. 293) to do something about the high rejection rate for these individuals. Ackerman reports the success of an intensive 12-week course that enabled 250,000 men to raise their standardized AGCT test scores and benefit from further army training. This illustrates the importance of effective educational interventions for those whose scores on a standardized test probably had more to do with the lack of prior education than their ability to ultimately profit from an adequate educational intervention.

Second, Fleming (2000), no advocate of standardized testing, reports provocative research results on the overprediction issue with African American students. Her data shows that the SAT overpredicts for African American students attending predominantly White colleges but predicts accurately for African American students attending predominantly Black colleges. Fleming’s research again highlights the importance of felicitous educational environment. It supports the hypothesis that historically Black colleges provide an environment that makes it more likely for African American students to be successful.

Admission to Four-Year Versus Two-Year Colleges

Research on college students in general (Adelman, 1999) and minority students in particular (Miller, 1990) has consistently found that they are more likely to persist to a bachelor’s degree if they begin their studies at four-year colleges. However, four-year colleges typically cannot serve everyone who applies. Research, including studies reviewed in this chapter, has also demonstrated that students with better high school grades and higher test scores are more likely to persist to graduation than students with lower grades and scores. When admission choices must be made, choosing the best-qualified students on the most accurate measures available makes sense. Admitting students with strong high school preparation allows college faculty to set high expectations for student performance, which preserves the quality of the curriculum (Grubb, 1999; McCabe, 2000). Although highly selective colleges can and do successfully provide intense academic support for small groups of underprepared students (Wambach & Brothen, 2002), admitting large numbers of them would change the character of these colleges. For students whose academic credentials are weak, beginning postsecondary education at a two-year school is often their only choice. Many students who begin at two-year colleges, persist there, and are committed to baccalaureate degree completion, successfully transfer to four-year colleges (Adelman).

Community colleges admit the broadest possible range of students, and do not require students to take the SAT and ACT before admission, so they use placement tests, which are a type of achievement test, to identify students’ academic strengths and weaknesses and develop interventions to assist them (cf., McCabe, 2000). Although it is reasonable to argue what form these interventions should take and whether or not they should be mandatory, their use acknowledges the fact that students are different from each other in their preparation to do college level work. Both research on the validity of achievement tests and experience in the classroom tell us that a student who scores in the 10th percentile and one who scores in the 90th percentile on a reading test are likely to have different experiences when reading college textbooks. Tests such as the SAT, ACT, COMPASS and Accuplacer provide important pieces of the information students need to make realistic academic plans, and faculty need to help students learn. Using such tests has become standard for all students matriculating at college. The real question is not whether the tests should be used, but how they should be used.

We have long had questions about the practice of using standardized tests to place developmental students in skills courses (Wambach & Brothen, 1990; 2000). Much research suggests that when students are required to take remedial courses in more than one skill area, their chances of persistence decrease (c.f., Boylan & Saxon, 1999). Others, however (e.g., Behrman, 2000; McCabe, 2000), assert that when students who are placed in remedial courses complete them, their chances for success in future courses equal those of other students. They also argue that skill remediation is worthwhile even for students who do not persist. This is a complex argument over the way tests are used, the kinds of interventions available to students, and the educational values reflected in these practices. We have argued against using achievement tests as the sole basis
for mandatory placement into remedial courses for two basic reasons. We think that tests can only be used for placement in remedial courses when accompanied by other relevant information about students’ preparation. We also think that stand alone pre college-level courses in reading and writing may not be the best way to develop these skills. However, we believe the use and development of valid and reliable assessment procedures should continue. At the very least, current tests can provide information to advisors and students about appropriate course selection and to teachers about what their students’ needs are. They can also be highly useful as measures to evaluate program effectiveness.

A Challenging and Supportive Multicultural Curriculum

Our own theory of developmental education (Wambach, Brothen, & Dikel, 2000) suggests that students coming to college need to feel they are being challenged intellectually. If they do not, they are likely to become discouraged and drop out. This means they should receive challenging course material and we have described an approach to providing that (Brothen & Wambach, 2000). Our approach is consistent with Adelman’s (1999) findings on challenging curricula. Although he found that standardized test scores predicted college access and achievement well, he found that quality of high school preparation predicted even better. This has important implications for improving the educational success of students of color. For example, he showed that if African American students had access to the top 40% of high schools, their baccalaureate degree achievement would increase by over 27%. Clearly, improving both college and high school curricula is where our attention should be devoted.

Because curricular improvement interacts with students’ particular histories, all developmental students as well as students of color will need support to meet academic challenges in college. First, students need to believe that the “remediation” in skills courses is significant and important to their future. Thus, a reading course, for example, must seem important to students’ goals. Second, students need to think the entire curriculum is relevant to them and to their futures.

Developmental educators must find effective ways for students to acquire in as short a time as possible the important and relevant skills they need to be successful. Standardized aptitude, achievement, and placement tests including the SAT are useful in helping students understand what skills they need to improve to be successful in college (c.f., Behrman, 2000). These tests can also be particularly useful for institutions as evaluation measures to determine whether their interventions are effective.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to define multicultural developmental education. The reader should consult the multicultural education research base, which is large and getting larger all the time. For example, Banks et al. (2001) provide teachers with the latest research, theory, and practical advice for creating a multicultural curriculum. These authors also state a basic principle that many developmental educators might agree with about tracking students on the basis of prior performance and measured ability, that it “has a negative effect on the achievement of many students in the lower tracks, and does not particularly benefit those in higher tracks” (p. 7). Because the overwhelming bulk of research in this area is based on primary and secondary school students, the relevance of this statement to developmental education is questionable. The concept of “tracking” has a very different meaning and history in higher education. Much of developmental education is a form of tracking on the basis of test scores and prior performance. Fortunately, the application of multicultural education research and practice to developmental education at the postsecondary level is only in its beginning stages (cf. Bruch & Higbee, 2002) and we have many choices to make to create the best environment for all of our students. Discovering what our students need and designing curricula to provide it can be facilitated by the objective data provided by standardized tests.

Evidence is growing that a multicultural curriculum is important for all students and may be crucial to students of color. If we can extrapolate from Fleming’s (2000) results that suggest a better fit for African American students at historically Black colleges, students of color need to recognize in the curriculum something about themselves and their concerns. As we build a multicultural developmental curriculum, we need to be aware of the limits of testing but not dismissive of the information that tests provide us about our students and how we can help them achieve their goals.
References


The Multicultural Concerns Committee in the General College at the University of Minnesota has 15 years of experience fostering an awareness of multicultural issues and transforming curriculum to reflect the diversity of our society. The committee has sponsored a wide variety of public programs, created an ample supply of multicultural resources, and initiated several significant research projects. In the process, the committee has gradually overcome individual opposition and institutional inertia in the effort to promote a more inclusive learning and working environment.

Administrators, faculty, and staff who are seeking to promote a more inclusive environment at their college or university may benefit from the experience of the MCC at General College. As with any organization, the MCC has gone through various stages in its 15 years in existence. The fervent efforts of the committee’s founders resulted in a flurry of activity designed to educate and inspire the faculty and staff, transform the curriculum, and establish the committee’s role in the college. Based upon the successes and frustrations of these early years, the committee shifted its program focus to enlightening students while continuing to advance the systematic transformation of the college through incremental changes. In recent years, the committee has augmented its college and university activities by addressing national audiences through conference presentations and publications.

General College, established in 1932, was originally designed as an opportunity for nontraditional students and underserved high school students to attend the University of Minnesota. The General College had no specific research mission and offered a general education curriculum, adjusted periodically to the perceived needs of the student population, leading to a variety of associate and baccalaureate degrees. The college had the most diverse student body on the university campus, and many faculty and staff attempted to provide a supportive educational environment for students of color. Even though the educational concept of multiculturalism had not yet
emerged, some faculty incorporated content or perspectives into the teaching of their courses that reflected the diversity among their students. The emergence of community colleges in the 1960s and 1970s provided other postsecondary options for nontraditional students and initiated a period of uncertainty for the college. Many critics contended that the General College was no longer necessary to the mission of the university (Taylor, 2002).

The college experienced fundamental changes in its mission and in the work of its faculty and staff in the late 1980s. The university decided to terminate the college’s associate and baccalaureate degree programs, which were seen as redundant; students seeking associate degrees could pursue this goal at local community colleges, while baccalaureate degrees are offered through other colleges of the University of Minnesota. Concurrently, General College was reconceptualized as a developmental education program for “at-risk” students, leading to transfer into one of the degree-granting colleges in the university. The college’s new teaching mission was to incorporate active learning teaching methods and academic skills development into freshman-level content courses that would enable students to achieve academic success in the wider university. The college was also given a research mission, utilizing its students and classrooms, to become a national leader in the research, theory, and practice of developmental education. The work scopes of existing faculty and staff were renegotiated and the expectations for new faculty and staff revised, resulting in a dramatic metamorphosis of the college to conform to these new missions. It was in this context that the Multicultural Concerns Committee emerged (Taylor, 2002, 2003).

**Early Years: 1987-1992**

The interest in establishing a multicultural concerns committee developed during the 1987-1988 school year within a small group of staff and faculty committed to developing a more inclusive collegiate environment. A number of advisers recognized that the student body consisted of increasing numbers of students of color who were having difficulty adjusting to the university community. Members of the instructional staff recognized that the curriculum displayed limited cultural diversity, both in terms of specific focused courses and the content within typical freshman courses. Staff of color were particularly aware of these two issues, and many felt marginalized professionally. These various individuals began meeting informally to share their concerns, analyze problems, consider solutions, and generate plans of action (Multicultural Concerns Committee, 1991).

This group saw multiculturalism as central to the college’s new teaching and research missions in developmental education and advocated the merging of developmental and multicultural concepts into a coherent program. They believed that multiculturalism could provide the philosophical basis that would enable the college to succeed in its developmental education mission. The transition period to the college’s new mission provided the most opportune time to accomplish the goal of integrating multiculturalism throughout the college. These advocates wanted the Multicultural Concerns Committee to be a fully recognized standing committee of the college with the mission of ensuring that the guiding documents, governance system, and academic policies of the college, as well as the formation of the curriculum and teaching of classes, were adequately infused with multicultural concepts and perspectives (Gardner, 2003).

Opposition to the formation of the Multicultural Concerns Committee stemmed from a variety of perspectives. Some saw little relevance of multiculturalism to their teaching content or considered the issues unimportant in general. Some feared that the committee would take extreme positions and become a divisive force in the college. Others thought that the General College already dealt successfully with the most diverse student body on campus and had a long history of addressing issues of multiculturalism in the curriculum and classroom. Some perceived the committee as a place where members would engage in self-congratulatory talk about their liberalism while others were busy doing the work of providing multiple perspectives to their class content (Amram, 2003; Gardner, 2003; Kroll, 2003; Taylor, 2003).

Dean David Taylor envisioned multicultural education as complimentary to the developmental mission of the college and vital to the future role of the college within the university. He designated the MCC as a dean’s ad hoc committee in 1989, and challenged it to consider the appropriate organization, functions, and responsibilities for the committee, as well as to assess the current interest in and practice of
multicultural education in the college. Committee members wrote a GC Survey on Multicultural Education which was distributed in April, 1990. This survey elicited responses concerning the definition, objectives, pedagogy, and socio-political purposes of multicultural education, as well as current examples of multicultural practices at GC and the possible dilemmas posed by a college commitment to multicultural education. The survey was analyzed during the summer, and a report was disseminated to the GC faculty and staff in September, 1990.

A flurry of MCC activities were initiated to meet the needs of the GC community that the committee had identified. In July, 1990, several committee members facilitated a week-long GC Multicultural Education Seminar, and the 18 participants completed projects integrating multicultural concepts and perspectives into their courses. Distinguished scholars in multicultural education were brought in to make university-wide keynote presentations as well as to conduct workshops with the faculty and staff. The series included Ronald Takaki (1993), author of A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America, in Fall, 1990, and Deborah Rosenfelt, Director of the Curriculum Transformation Project at the University of Maryland, in Winter, 1991. James Banks (1996; Banks & Banks, 2001), Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, was a visiting professor for the entire Spring quarter in 1991 and presented a week-long seminar for faculty and staff. There were a number of other smaller workshops and presentations by scholars or university personnel (Multicultural Concerns Committee, 1991).

This period also saw the production of some very impressive multicultural education source books and bibliographies. A research assistant was hired by the dean’s office to compile multicultural resources, which resulted in two General College publications. A 270-page compilation of multicultural articles titled Towards a Multicultural Curriculum was produced in October, 1989, and a 268-page curriculum guide for multicultural education titled Developing an Inclusive Curriculum was published on November 12, 1990 (Lewis, 1989, 1990). The GC Multicultural Education Seminar also prompted the production of a 600-page compilation of multicultural materials in July, 1990, titled Multicultural Education Seminar for General College Teaching Faculty & Student Services Personnel (Albrecht & Peralez, 1990). In September, 1991, a 66-page study titled The Effect of Ethnic Background on General College Student’s Views of the Campus Climate was produced based on a survey completed by GC freshmen in the spring of 1991 (Schmitz & Hickey, 1991). These works provided both the committee and the college with an abundance of multicultural materials that were utilized during the following decade.

The MCC prepared a final report and recommendations in May of 1991 after two years as a dean’s committee. This summarized the committee’s activities, provided recommendations for implementing multicultural education at the college, and proposed the composition and functions of the committee. The report also provided the definition below, which had been adopted after the committee had researched the academic literature and solicited ideas from the GC community.

Multicultural education is a process of teaching and learning that promotes an awareness of and knowledge about cultural differences and the recognition and validation of human achievement. It is a conceptual framework that seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of the contributions that racial, religious, socio-cultural groups, and women have made to the total culture in a variety of ways. As a result, it will likely challenge a long history of ethnocentrism and will identify how we relate to and accept diversity and how we define social justice. (Multicultural Concerns Committee, 1991, p. 2)

The report also recommended that the MCC become a subcommittee of the college’s Policy and Planning Committee. MCC advocates would have preferred the status of a standing committee, which would have recognized the centrality of multiculturalism to the college’s mission and enhanced the authority and scope of the committee. The exercise of that power would have required an elected membership representative of the college community, but the committee had been spawned by the interest, motivation, and commitment of individuals. MCC members were torn by this dilemma between an elected standing committee and a volunteer activist committee while opponents sought to limit the committee’s stature and power. The recommendation in the report was thus a compromise position resulting in the MCC becoming
Middle Period: 1993-1998

The Minnesota Legislature in 1994 decided that the University of Minnesota, and thus the General College, should convert from a quarter system to a semester system. A four-year transition process was established for the revision of courses, the creation or elimination of other courses, the revamping of graduation requirements, and the determination of the graduation requirements satisfied by each course in preparation for the initiation of a new offering in Fall, 1999. The MCC monitored this process to ensure that multicultural issues and perspectives were not lost during this transformation of the curriculum. The MCC also recognized this transition period as an opportunity for faculty to incorporate more multicultural issues and perspectives into their courses. The committee provided various programs and materials to assist faculty in accomplishing that goal (Ghere, 2003; Kroll, 2003, Stewart, 1998).

The transition to semesters created disagreement within supporters of multiculturalism. Some writing instructors wanted to have all sections of the required composition course focus on multicultural issues and be recognized as satisfying the student graduation requirement for one cultural diversity course. This would ensure that every student in General College would be introduced to multicultural education. However, other members of the MCC were concerned about the quality and consistency of this multicultural education considering that most writing courses were being taught by graduate students whose longevity was limited. Moreover, the committee had fostered the development of an array of multicultural courses providing a variety of cultural diversity experiences that would be threatened if every student had already satisfied the graduation requirement for cultural diversity with the required writing course. After some acrimony, the MCC recommended that although all writing courses should contain multicultural materials and perspectives, only those sections that were designed around multicultural themes and focused on the analysis of diversity issues should satisfy the cultural diversity requirement. The writing faculty and college ultimately accepted this recommendation (Gardner, 2003; Ghere, 2003).

The program emphasis of MCC shifted in the middle 1990s to focus more on student issues, with presentations and discussions directed towards a student audience. In the 1993-1994 school year, a series of programs focusing on the college environment and classroom climate were provided. The following year, college forums focused on the issue of stereotypes and their effects on relationships between students. In 1995-1996 a project titled “Multicultural Conversations” facilitated a series of small student group conversations concerning multicultural relations in the General College. These conversations were videotaped for use as discussion prompts at college forums. Many programs provided in 1997 and 1998 were focused on curricular issues related to semester conversion, but there were also forums for students addressing multicultural communication styles and dialogues about race. Also in 1998, members of an MCC subcommittee produced a video project based on their personal experiences, titled “Women’s Voices on Race, Class and Gender,” which was presented to a university audience (Stewart, 1998).

One issue that spanned the mid 1990s was the MCC’s continued efforts to seek greater institutional recognition. Several proposals were initiated during these years that would have established the MCC as a regular standing committee in the college, but each proposal failed to secure enough votes for passage. The MCC was successful in placing a nonvoting delegate on the Policy and Planning committee to voice multicultural perspectives and raise diversity issues. However, repeated efforts to secure voting rights for that position were deemed contrary to the elected representative nature of that committee. The middle 1990s was a period of significant turnover in faculty and staff due to retirements and new hires. MCC members served on search committees to ensure that new faculty and staff were committed to multiculturalism and contributed to the diversity in the college. Some members identified prospects at conferences and actively recruited their application for positions in the college. By the end of the 1990s, General College’s commitment to multiculturalism had increased significantly due to the strong support of new faculty and staff (Gardner, 2003; Stewart, 1998).

MCC continued to seek institutional change by supporting its members in election to the three standing committees that engaged in faculty governance. Those
representatives were able to ensure that appropriate language addressing multiculturalism was incorporated into college materials, curricular guidelines, search documents, and student, faculty, and staff handbooks. In the mid 1990s, the University of Minnesota initiated college mission statements and annual compacts clarifying both the college’s commitment to various goals and the expectations of central administration for their completion. MCC ensured that these documents also incorporated appropriate language that emphasized multicultural issues and perspectives (Gardner, 2003; Ghere, 2003).

Growing support for multiculturalism at the General College led to a decision in 1998 to recruit a senior scholar in multicultural education who would bring the college instant national recognition and assist GC faculty and staff to publish and present in that field. Although the search attracted a number of impressive applicants, it ultimately failed to secure a scholar of the status desired. Most leaders in multicultural education reside in colleges of education training teachers or in ethnic studies departments preparing students for those majors. Despite GC’s sincere interest in multicultural education, the college had neither the students nor the programs that would attract distinguished leaders in the field. The search was cancelled when it failed to produce an applicant pool of nationally recognized senior scholars (Ghere, 2003).

Recent Endeavors: 1999-2003

The struggle for formal recognition of the centrality of multiculturalism to the General College culminated in the 1998-1999 school year. First of all, with the financial support of the dean, MCC established the General College Multicultural Recognition Award, which was first awarded in the spring of 1999. This award recognizes the contributions of GC staff to multiculturalism and social justice and is announced at the annual General College Awards Banquet. Secondly, General College funded MCC members to attend national conferences where they addressed the role of the MCC at the General College and the manner in which multiculturalism had been integrated into the General College curriculum. These first steps at national dissemination of MCC activities have spawned a new aspect in the role of the MCC (Ghere, 2003; Taylor, 2003).

After more than 10 years of a wide variety of programs, the MCC determined that additional faculty and staff might become interested in multicultural issues if the discussion was directly applicable to General College. Therefore, MCC issued a call for the writing of case studies by instructors, advisors, and staff that conveyed actual experiences in General College that raised multicultural issues. Thirty case studies were eventually submitted, which a subcommittee of MCC edited. The subcommittee also developed pertinent discussion questions related to these cases. They were utilized by MCC in a college forum, and the interest generated resulted in their use as the major activity at the 2001 General College Fall retreat. Workshops utilizing these cases were conducted at four national conferences during 2002 and 2003, and a paper focusing on six cases was published in the Symposium Proceedings of Keeping our Faculties: Addressing the Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color (Jehangir et al., 2002). These disseminations attracted the interest of publishers and, since February, 2003, several MCC members have been collaboratively writing an article, and a subcommittee has been organized to produce two books, one for use in the classroom and one for staff development (Ghere, 2003).

In 2001 the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington Banks et al. published a survey to assess the climate for multiculturalism in schools. MCC recognized a need for a similar tool in higher education and received permission to adapt the University of Washington survey for that purpose. With support from the GC dean’s office, MCC initiated the Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation (MAP IT). In Fall, 2001, a subcommittee of MCC revised the original checklist, adapted it for an online format, and conducted a pilot survey of all GC employees and graduate assistants. The results were analyzed the following spring and presented at college forums in May and November, 2002. The concept and survey findings were disseminated at three developmental and higher education conferences in November 2002 and February 2003. The subcommittee has continued to revise and adjust the survey in preparation for its future publication while projecting the publication of several related articles and the development of a grant proposal for a multi-phase, multi-site research project mapping the national geography of perceptions of multiculturalism in higher education (Miksch et al., 2002).
Members of the MCC have been in the forefront of recent efforts to examine the congruent and complementary natures of multicultural education and developmental education. The similarities in theoretical and practical approaches to the two have been addressed in conference presentations and published articles. In November 2002 General College sponsored a conference titled “Future Directions in Developmental Education” which focused on the theme of “Diversity and Multiculturalism in Developmental Education” (Higbee & Pettman, 2003). The planning for a number of future articles and presentations on these topics was initiated at that meeting. The Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy’s monograph Multiculturalism in Developmental Education is in part a continuation of those MCC activities (Ghere, 2003).

The MCC has continued to promote the integration of multicultural perspectives into the General College curriculum and to increase the multicultural awareness of faculty, staff, and students. The significant turnover in faculty during the 1990s and the interest of many new faculty in multiculturalism prompted MCC to shift its program focus back to faculty development. In recent years, the MCC, with the financial support of the dean, has sponsored visits by distinguished scholars in multicultural education: Joseph L. White (White & Cones, 1999), author of Black Man Emerging: Facing the Past and Seizing the Future in America in 2001; James Banks (1996; Banks & Banks, 2001), Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, in 2002; and Christine Sleeter (1996, 2001), author of Multicultural Education as Social Activism, in 2003. Each of these visits included a keynote address to the wider University of Minnesota and regional audience, a workshop with GC faculty, and an interaction with GC students. Other multicultural programs have been presented in the form of guest speakers, open forums, and case studies. Multiculturalism has also been the focus of several General College retreats where all members of the college community participated in discussing these concerns, assessing current activities, and planning future endeavors (Ghere, 2003).

Conclusion

The Multicultural Concerns Committee has achieved significant changes within the General College and the University of Minnesota. MCC has not been as aggressive or officially powerful as some had hoped, nor as domineering and divisive as others had feared. Instead, through persistent pressure and deliberate decisions, MCC has been able to respectfully confront individual resistance and gradually overcome institutional inertia to effect significant changes in the General College. For 15 years, MCC has educated faculty, staff and students concerning multicultural issues, insured consideration of diversity in college decisions, and integrated multicultural perspectives and language into college documents and literature. Concurrently, MCC has facilitated the hiring of a more diverse college faculty and staff, has fostered the expansion of multicultural course offerings, and has promoted the inclusion of a wider variety of perspectives in other college courses. The committee has also matured as an institution, having passed through three distinct stages in its development.

One indication of the success of the Multicultural Concerns Committee is in the shift away from concern for the committee’s official status. When the committee was first formed its members thought status as a standing committee would be necessary to exercise the power required to achieve significant change at the college. That status would also be an official recognition of the importance of the issue to the college and to the field of developmental education as a whole. For several years the committee struggled unsuccessfully to achieve that status while working through the existing college governance structure and being actively involved in the recruitment and hiring process. Faculty and staff support for multiculturalism increased gradually through education of existing staff and hiring of new staff. In Fall 2002 the MCC was offered standing committee status by the Policy and Planning Committee, but the MCC rejected this offer, choosing to retain its voluntary membership and activist role. The real success of the committee had eliminated the perceived need for official status.

References


Multiculturalism
For over a decade, the United States has seen dramatic changes in the fabric of our workplace. An increasing percentage of our workforce is now comprised of women, people of color, and immigrants. As the workplace and marketplace continue to change, more and more organizations are educating their employees about cultural diversity awareness. An understanding of the issues that arise due to people of different genders, ages, religions, lifestyles, beliefs, physical capabilities, and cultures is needed to bring out the best in all of us. The creativity, flexibility, and commitment gained from our interactions with other cultures and peoples will empower us all.

The workplace is changing, and we are called to strengthen the fabric of our organizations and of our lives by “Sharing Diversity.” “Sharing Diversity” is a trademarked concept developed by Dr. Lakanwal, Executive Director of the MultiCultural Development Center (MCDC), which promotes the sharing and understanding of multicultural resources as a means for all of us to prosper. The MultiCultural Development Center (MCDC) is a leader in the area of education regarding cultural diversity. Formerly called the Minnesota Cultural Diversity Center (MCDC), the change in name signals a new global direction for MCDC. As a leader in raising diversity awareness and serving as a catalyst to advance diversity-related issues in Twin Cities workplaces and communities for over a decade, both the executive leadership and board of directors of MCDC recognized the need to extend the organization’s reach beyond its local boundaries. Thus a change was made in the name as well as the mission statement.

MCDC’s mission is to promote cultural understanding and inclusiveness to enhance workplace performance and community relationships. Through its many programs, thousands of participants gain new understanding and knowledge regarding the many, yet very rich cultural and ethnic heritages that make up the world in which we live. The goal of MCDC is to help build a culture of acceptance and celebration where the attitudes and actions of people foster mutual respect so that people of all different backgrounds can fully participate in the workplace as well as in the community. In learning about our “differences,” MCDC
believes we will see and understand our similarities, giving us a new foundation to build relationships based upon respect and understanding, not fear, intimidation, or guilt. Underlying all services is an emphasis on respect for individual and cultural difference, including people of every nationality.

History of the MCDC

MCDC is a result of efforts in early 1991 to find a method to address the difficulties of diversity in employment, communications, misperceptions of cultures, and misunderstandings of historical characterization. A concept of solving resistance to cultural diversity in the workplace and in the community was developed. Out of adversity and diversity came the forces for change. Through discussion with the ethnic Chambers of Commerce and several major corporations, MCDC was established as a non-profit organization. From this start the program of “Sharing Diversity” through education and cultural communication was formed.

The MultiCultural Development Center (MCDC) has grown from seven initial members to over 300 members in 2003. Due to adversity issues in the workforce related to cultural differences, communication misperceptions, and the lack of understanding of various cultures, MCDC was established as a resource for business, government, and educational institutions to help foster understanding. MCDC emerged out of the need to educate and help individuals and organizations promote inclusiveness and multicultural understanding through cultural learning, workshops, seminars, conferences, sharing diversity resources, and by providing networking opportunities. Over a decade later, it has grown into an organization that continues not only its educational activities, but also provides consultations and support services to organizations that are starting their own diversity initiatives. MCDC has helped many organizations by leading them into the various phases of the diversity process.

Executive Director

MCDC’s Executive Director, Dr. A. Ghafar Lakanwal, was one of the original founders of the organization. Holding a Ph.D. in situational analysis, Lakanwal was formerly the head of the delegation from Afghanistan to the United Nations. He served as Minister of Agriculture of his country and was under house arrest for two years because of his opposition to the former Soviet-backed government. Dr. Lakanwal is a practitioner, event coordinator, and a speaker in the area of cultural diversity. He has traveled to over 30 countries and speaks English, German, Russian, Persian, and his native language, Pashtoo. Dr. Lakanwal serves as a Board Member of the Council of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans. In 1997 Dr. Lakanwal was presented with the Exemplary Practices Award from the American Society for Public Administration. In 2001 he was the recipient of the Omar Bonderud Award given by the Human Rights Commission of the City of Bloomington, MN. In 2002 Mayor Kelly appointed him to lead an advisory committee on cultural relations in St. Paul.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of MCDC is comprised of a variety of experts in all areas related to diversity in the workplace, ethnic diversity issues, cultural activities, and socio-economic and political structure. All Board members are committed to understanding each other’s differences and respecting the values and customs to ensure that what makes everyone different can also bring everyone together. There are currently 11 elected Board members. Board members are encouraged to attend the monthly cultural learning events, and participate in other MCDC-related activities and events. The MCDC Board consists of people with diverse backgrounds, including African Americans; Asian Americans; Chicano-Latino(a)s; European Americans; Native Americans; gays and lesbians; women; persons with disabilities; and public, private, and non-profit sector employees.

One of MCDC’s Board members and volunteers, Holly Choon Hyang Pettman, came on board with MCDC as the youngest member in 1997 and became a Board member in 1998. Ever since that point of time, Holly has provided her expertise and energy toward promoting unity among all people regardless of their diverse background through volunteering at MCDC’s various events and activities. However, one contribution that made her unique is she brought forth some very important issues that addressed the future of the next generation. As a student, Holly thought it was critical that MCDC should be more aware of working with young people and help bridge the gap that exists.
between educational institutions and the workplace. She was instrumental in establishing a new initiative, “Practicing Diversity in Schools” (PDS), which will promote the work in multicultural education and practice among educators, teachers, administrators, and students within all levels of the educational system. As a Korean American adoptee who was raised in a small, rural Minnesota town, Holly has had many positive role models and mentors in her life who have helped her along the way. Holly currently works full-time in the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL) in General College at the University of Minnesota and is pursuing her Bachelors of Art degree in Sociology with a minor in Psychology. She recently received MCDC’s 2002 “Sharing Diversity” Volunteer of the Year award and the 2003 President’s Student Leadership and Service Award at the University of Minnesota. She has also facilitated various partnerships and activities between MCDC and departments on the University of Minnesota campus as well as in the community.

Programs

MCDC offers a variety of programs including monthly cultural events, workshops, and seminars. Participants experience different cultures by learning about their food, music, art, literature, geography, socioeconomic and political structures, and more. The impact of these programs is felt throughout the community. Many large, Fortune 500 companies, as well as many private and public businesses, state and local government, and education and community organizations have participated and benefited from MCDC services.

Monthly Cultural Learning Events

Food, music, art, literature, geography, and history blend together to focus on a single aspect of diversity. These events are open to members and nonmembers as well as students. An event that was coordinated by Holly Pettman, MCDC Board Member, was the Korean Heritage Celebration that took place in May 2002. This event included a panel of Korean adoptees to talk about their experience with adoption as well as an array of music, food, and dance. A Tae Kwon Do exhibition and a spoken word performance by local Korean Americans were also a few highlights of the program. Approximately 200 individuals from various corporate, business, and community organizations were in attendance.

Quarterly Workshops and Seminars

These educational events focus on a wide variety of workplace- and community-related issues and are also open to members, nonmembers, and students. Recent workshops included “Cultural Complementarity,” “Unlearning Racism,” and “Measuring Diversity.” All workshops and seminars are conducted by individuals from the local community as well as the national community.

The Annual MCDC Diversity Conference

Broadcasted live via satellite, MCDC partners with public and private sponsors to bring the Annual MCDC Diversity Conference to the public. For example, on October 10, 2002, the Ninth Annual Diversity Conference was broadcasted live throughout the state and nationally from the Minnesota World Trade Center in St. Paul. The title of the conference was “Conquering the Fear, A Process for Healing,” featuring Dr. Joseph L. White, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Psychiatry from the University of California, Irvine. The purpose of the MCDC diversity conference is to help increase viewers’ awareness of diversity issues within organizations as well as the communities in which they live. Annually, over 1,500 participants view the conference in over 30 locations nationwide.

Chronology of World Cultural Events Poster and Pocket Calendar

The colorful, 12-month calendar of events is used by organizations as an effective tool for creating awareness of the many events that are important to people from cultures around the world. Schools have begun using it in social studies classes to illustrate national and international celebrations, religious holidays, and other special days.

Organizational Assistance

MCDC facilitates successful implementation of diversity initiatives or programs. This assistance includes supplying information on ethnic and cultural groups and events, providing referrals or connections to many resources, as well as organizing artists and speakers.
**Connections**

MCDC is connected to ethnic organizations throughout the community. MCDC has a program that provides relocated employees with connections to their ethnic communities.

**Publications**

MCDC publishes items such as the *MCDC News*, a newsletter focusing on cultural diversity, and the *Cultural Diversity Almanac*, a resource bulletin.

**Partnerships with Colleges and Universities**

MCDC has formed partnerships with various community-based organizations and educational institutions. For the past 12 years, MCDC has worked with the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) system, University of St. Thomas, and Hamline University to bring many educational activities such as conferences, workshops, seminars, and public forums to their campuses. We have a formal long-term relationship with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to bring the annual video conference to its over 30 technical and community colleges. We have also worked with General College, a leader in developmental education, and other units of the University of Minnesota to broadcast MCDC’s annual conference to University sites.

MCDC has recently partnered with the General College at the University of Minnesota under the leadership of Dean David Taylor in many areas including sharing multicultural resources, speakers, and presenters in different areas of diversity. Both organizations will share research and information on multicultural education, participate in cultural learning events, and provide other multicultural services to promote cultural understanding and inclusiveness on campus as well as in the community at large. Both organizations are focusing on actions that will bring tangible results, which will encourage others on campuses to follow.

**Future**

Moving forward, MCDC is committed to continuing its work providing the opportunity for learning through the various educational and training programs including the new initiative “Practicing Diversity in Schools,” with the hope of transforming cultural difference into strengths, a process from which everyone can benefit. Through collaborations with General College and other educational institutions, more visible learning events will be planned to reach broader audiences. Further information is available at www.mcdc.org.
Summary Report on the Third National Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education: Grants, Research, Diversity, and Multiculturalism

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This report summarizes the proceedings and outcomes of the third Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education. On November 16-17, 2002, 40 participants met in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to follow up on the initiatives of the first two national meetings. The meeting followed two theme tracks: brainstorming grants and research, and promoting diversity and multiculturalism research in developmental education. Outcomes included developing ideas for grants and research and a national initiative for diversity and multiculturalism in developmental education.

In a continuation of two past meetings on “Future Directions in Developmental Education,” co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota-General College and the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL), 40 regional and national leaders met a third time on November 16-17, 2002. This summary report outlines the background, proceedings, and outcomes of this meeting, with a focus on future initiatives for the field.

The first meeting in October 1999 included 20 regional and national leaders with expertise in access issues for students transitioning into postsecondary education programs. They identified 16 themes, including histories of developmental education, future research, and theoretical frameworks. Participants met to brainstorm and create recommendations. Four major themes emerged in the first meeting: research, policy and practice, collaboration and community partnerships, and theoretical perspectives. A second meeting was held in April 2001 to expand upon those and recommend future action. Proceedings of past meetings are available on CRDEUL’s web site (http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/publications.htm).

At the third meeting in November 2002 participants continued conversations around two themes: grants and research, and diversity and multiculturalism. This time 40 leaders from a variety of subject areas and organizations met to develop specific action plans for the coming year. The meeting’s outcomes included identifying grants and research topics as well as future directions for multiculturalism and diversity in developmental education. Action plans were also developed as part of this meeting, intended to focus more specifically on the means toward achieving change in these defined issues.
Grants and Research

In an increasingly conservative political climate that continues to erode away at progressive programs and policies, such as developmental education and higher education student access initiatives, a group of 20 leaders at the third Future Directions Meeting met specifically to address future needs in the areas of grants and research. Facilitators of this session were David Arendale, David Caverly, and Dana Britt Lundell. This theme track focused on brainstorming topics, prioritizing interests, defining potential grants collaborations, and developing significant research questions.

Topics

In the brainstorming session, participants developed the following list of potential topics for future grants and research. This list is intended to provide ideas for future studies, while simultaneously demonstrating the rich cross-section of research interests represented by leaders from across the nation and from various developmental education organizations. Participants recommend that these kinds of studies be developed, with particular attention paid to responsively and creatively addressing current political trends and involving a range of program types where appropriate. The list is presented here in full to provide a broad range of ideas broadly to anyone interested in engaging in meaningful work in the field.

- Access and Urban Literacy
- Diversity and Multiculturalism
- Adult Literacy
- Assessment, Evaluation, and the Culture of Assessment
- Partnerships (two- and four-year, P-16 programs)
- English Language Learners and Developmental Education
- Research Methodology
- Evaluation Models, their Adaptability, and Dissemination of Local Research
- Defining and Assessing Learner Outcomes
- Training and Professional Development
- History and Information Gathering about the Profession
- Certification Initiatives, Dissemination and Archiving
- National Dissemination Tools, Evaluation Documents, Resources, Databases
- Faculty Development and Teaching Certification
- Disability Research
- Developmental Education across two- and four-year Programs
- Role of Administration, Attitudes and Knowledge, Professional Development
- Developmental Education and its Impact on Students’ Lives In and Out of Programs
- Qualitative Studies About Students and Programs
- Access Research in the Sciences
- Mentoring and Developing New Professionals
- Developmental Education and Connections to Higher Education Initiatives
- Cognitive Processes and Instructional Methods
- Economic Impact of Developmental Education
- Development of a National Center for Student Learning
- Institutional Research, Policy and Funding
- Connection of Developmental Education to Mainstream
- Academic Professionalism and Disseminating Information about Best Practices
- Politics and Data-Driven Decisions (Trend Towards Evidence-Based Policies)
- Increasing Numbers of Developmental Education Students Nationally

Priorities

In the next session, grants and research participants prioritized these lists and identified patterns that related more specifically to their own areas of interest and expertise. These included partnerships, dissemination and information, assessment, national studies, training, status of the profession, and interdisciplinary research.

Partnerships. There is a need to develop multi-site, multi-regional partnerships in future grants and research. There have been no broad-based national research studies in the field conducted since the National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997), and this scale of project is important to continue to update information and knowledge about student learning and the profession. It will be important to add to the recent work on best practices (Boylan, 2002) by providing updated
information about the impact of these practices on students. Additionally, the formation of multi-level (two-year, four-year, P-16) collaborations are important to develop, specifically in response to current and future political trends that target various portions of this continuum. Researchers and partners must also become more informed about the trends in federal and state funding, as well as learning about private foundations and their role and history of supporting access initiatives.

Dissemination and information. The collection and archiving of paper and electronic documents central to the field’s work is becoming increasingly important to address. The changing definitions and evolving nature of the work of educators challenge the act of gathering and disseminating information, especially as it relates to grants and research. Areas such as evaluation, history, theory, resources, research, and best practices are some examples of the kinds of issues at the foundation of access education. Determining the best way to consolidate and make this information useful and accessible in a variety of formats is a challenge that needs to be addressed. There are presently a variety of sites that house statistics on higher education (e.g., U.S. Department of Education), centralize and categorize research [Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)], and historical works (Martha Maxwell Library at National Louis University), as well as publications sponsored by various organizations [(National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE), CRDEUL, and the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition]. However, there is no central place to help navigate, organize, or locate a seminal collection of documents that inform and define the past and present work of developmental educators at this point in time. Finding appropriate models and establishing the need for this kind of resource base may include developing a national, electronic database or clearinghouse for developmental education and access research and continuing collaborations across institutions to discuss the future of this concept.

Assessment. There is a need to establish developmental educators as national resource experts on assessment. This would require creating more opportunities for professional development related to evaluation and assessment. Given the current political situation, with “standards” and “evidence-based practice” at the forefront, developmental education as a field needs to become more proactive in evaluating itself and also responsive in addressing these concerns. Developing an initiative that would simultaneously help centralize resources and train educators can enhance the field on multiple levels. Additionally, formulating a response to the current language about assessment is an appropriate step for the field to address.

National studies. It is time for the field to develop more research that connects with the larger conversations and organizations in higher education, as well as international access education. Terms like “access” also need to be revisited as a central concept for developmental education as it relates more specifically to social issues, multicultural education, and political trends. Studies can be devised that connect developmental education programs, theories, and pedagogies to this broader conversation, demonstrating the strength of developmental education work for all of higher education. More research also needs to be designed to assess student standpoints on the impact of postsecondary access programs, especially focusing on diversity issues across the curriculum. Finally, the strengths, design, and wide visibility of projects such as the National Center for Developmental Education’s research studies (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997) need to be continued and complemented with current investigations into access issues for students, teachers, administrators, and student support services.

Training. Another interest in the grants and research group was professional development and mentoring issues. New professionals in the field require mentoring along the continuum of their work in developmental education, from graduate school through their various professional positions. Establishing models for mentoring that can support individuals and also enhance the quality of students’ education and higher education programs is an important step for future work in the field. Specifically, mentoring is a concept that is advocated widely for students entering higher education and in high schools, but it is not as widely accepted or enacted for developing professionals. The positive models we apply to our students should also be part of our discussion about emerging professionals. Mentoring also needs to be assessed and implemented, and effective structures need
to be developed for professionals as well. Another discussion about training revolved around certification of professionals in developmental education, focusing on the status of the profession and future of the field. These activities have been explored, but perhaps more discussion is needed about the appropriateness and desirability of establishing more certification opportunities for developmental educators.

**Status of the field.** Another key issue is the ongoing exploration of the field’s status and definition, particularly in these conservative political times. How do we maintain our visibility as a profession in higher education? What is our connection to other higher education organizations? Should the individual professional organizations in developmental education consider more collaboration or a possible future merger? These are not simple questions with easy answers, but they remain a priority for leaders in the field. Specifically, finding ways to influence policy makers who must consider difficult legislative questions related to budgets and programs in higher education is an ongoing concern. Through the visibility of larger grants and national research projects, information can be gathered that addresses larger questions about students and the impact of these programs.

**Interdisciplinary research.** Another priority among participants was a conversation about increasing the interdisciplinary research in the field, particularly across content areas and also across other domains in higher education that focus on access research. For example, creating collaborations across science programs that emphasize teaching and learning strategies for students in two- and four-year programs can provide a way to articulate the applicability of sound pedagogies in fields that are not traditionally viewed as providing developmental education. Promoting examples of how the processes used to support student learning can effectively span the continuum and cross disciplines is an important future step for the field to begin to articulate its own connection to other areas of higher education. Expanding theoretical frameworks about teaching and learning is a central component of this kind of initiative, and this is an example of a strength that developmental educators have to offer higher education. Designing cross-institutional, multi-regional research studies and model demonstration projects is an important step for educators to take in forwarding the work of the field and increasing its visibility among policy makers.

**Collaborations**

After participants in the grants and research strand prioritized these ideas, they formed work groups from across institutions and programmatic types to brainstorm and develop significant researchable, and potentially fundable, questions. Six groups formed, including the following: (a) teaching and learning in the sciences, (b) assessment and evaluation, (c) student learning and professional development, (d) P-16 collaborations, (e) national studies, and (f) dissemination and information.

They developed their topics around five questions:

1. What is the idea?
2. What is the need?
3. What are the benefits?
4. What is the cost?
5. Who is the audience?

Action plans were developed in each of the six groups, emphasizing the need for investigations of future funding opportunities and national, cross-institutional research collaborations. The Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL) will continue to follow up with participants and pursue relevant projects in partnerships at the regional and national levels.

**Diversity and Multiculturalism**

During the November 2002 Future Directions Meeting, a second thematic strand met to discuss diversity and multiculturalism, with the goal of developing an action plan for a national initiative on these issues. Facilitators in this theme track were Jeanne Higbee, Karen Mikesch, Rashné Jehangir, and Holly Choon Hyang Pettman. The focus points for this group included the following questions:

1. How do we define multiculturalism and diversity for developmental education?

2. How do we foster the principles of multiculturalism according to Dr. James Banks (Banks, 1994, 1997; Banks, Cookson, Gay, Hawley, Jordan Irvine, Nieto, Ward Schofield, & Stephan, 2001) in
developmental education programs (e.g., positive intergroup relations, prejudice reduction, developing equity pedagogies, knowledge construction, content integration, empowering school and social structure)?

3. How do we promote the centrality of theory, research, and pedagogies of multiculturalism within developmental education?

4. What issues are most salient for our student, faculty, and staff populations?

5. How can we enhance the visibility of multicultural issues in national organizations?

6. What kinds of multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary collaborations can develop to promote these issues in our field in the areas of grants, research, teaching, and professional development?

7. What are some barriers and challenges for promoting multiculturalism in the field?

Participants in this strand brainstormed these questions as a whole group and then broke into work groups around topics they established related to developmental education. As a result of the conversations in the diversity and multiculturalism sessions, a national initiative, titled Future Directions Multicultural Initiative (FDMI), was launched by Jeanne Higbee, CRDEUL’s Faculty Advisor, with the assistance of graduate research assistant Kwabena Siaka. This project focuses on information dissemination, curricular transformation, and research.

**Conclusion**

In addition to Higbee’s FDMI project, Dana Britt Lundell will lead the CRDEUL Advisory Board in the development of future research and best practices in developmental education, following up on the initiatives from the grants and research group. Specifically, the focus will be on encouraging collaborations with institutional partners across the nation. Future versions of the 2002 Future Directions meeting will include follow-ups as needed with a small group of leaders to continue the work and assessment of the action projects.

In conclusion, CRDEUL would like to thank the participants at the Third Future Directions Meeting: Carol Bader, Lois Bollman, Nancy Bornstein, Hunter Boylan, Thomas Brothen, Patrick Bruch, Martha Casassa, David Caverly, Herbert Chambers, Frank Christ, Carl Chung, Terence Collins, Mary Deming, Irene Duranczyk, Shevawn Eaton, David Ghere, Susan Hashway, Jeanne Higbee, Leon Hsu, Nancy Hugg, Walter Jacobs, Rashnè Jehangir, Karen Kalivoda, Ann Ludlow, Dana Lundell, Barbara Lyman, Ross MacDonald, Karen Miksch, Randy Moore, Jane Neuberger, Emily Miller Payne, Holly Choon Hyang Pettman, Bruce Schelske, Sharyn Schelske, Norman Stahl, Gretchen Starks-Martin, David Taylor, and Cathrine Wambach. We also thank all CRDEUL Advisory Board members and CRDEUL staff for their work and contributions to this meeting.

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Multiculturalism
In November 2002, a group of developmental educators from throughout the United States convened in Minneapolis at the Future Directions Meeting sponsored by the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL). A primary goal of this meeting was to discuss the centrality of multiculturalism to the practice of developmental education. During previous Future Directions Meetings (Lundell & Higbee, 2000, 2002) this topic had emerged as one of vital concern to the profession. Representing multiple professional organizations, including the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), and the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA), as well as regional and state organizations, these educators perhaps posed more questions than provided answers, but the questions raised are critical to the field. The group began with a brainstorming session to generate specific questions and issues to be addressed during the meeting.

Among the initial questions were:

“How do we define multiculturalism?”

“What is the difference between diversity and multiculturalism?”

“How does diversity benefit higher education? Who benefits?”

“Given changing demographics, how do we redefine terms like ‘minority’? What new terminology will be used to describe the new majority?”

“Who determines how we identify ‘the brightest and the best’? The best at what? In what way the brightest?”

“How do we avoid bestowing power and privilege only to those who fit the academy’s preconceived notion of what it should and always has looked like? How do we change perceptions of what the academy should look like?”

The group proposed that we need to reconsider the term “inclusion.” What do higher education institutions, and developmental education programs in particular, do to enable students to feel included? How do we communicate that we welcome diverse voices and that we value the contributions of all students? How do we determine who has access, who is included? Are traditional measures such as standardized admissions tests valid indicators of students’ potential? How do we recognize the breadth of students’ abilities, their multiple “Discourses” (Gee, 1996; Lundell & Collins, 1999), and their ways of knowing?

Another important and related topic for this conversation was how to make learning and knowledge accessible to diverse learners. Several questions arose around connections between academia and other
aspects of society. For example, why are higher education institutions so unwilling to validate the successes of popular culture? Why are educators averse to facilitating learning by following the example of pop culture? Why do academics belittle teen culture instead of attempting to meet students half way? Why do many faculty members consider their own, traditional path to be the only legitimate road to understanding? Instead of providing access, some developmental education programs erect additional barriers for students. What policies and practices in developmental education facilitate diversity, and what policies and practices serve to exclude students disproportionately on the basis of race, ethnicity, home language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or any other factor used to categorize human beings? This meeting provided a launching point for developmental educators to begin identifying about the politics and practices of diversity and multiculturalism for programs and their students, faculty, staff, and administrators. What can the profession of developmental education draw upon to enhance its own work in diversity and multiculturalism while also making connections and contributing to the work of other educators?

The Multicultural Mission of Developmental Education

Developmental education can place itself at the forefront as a leader in promoting equality in higher education. Right now politicians around the country are critical of developmental education costs and outcomes (Saxon & Boylan, 2001), and in several states have been successful in eliminating developmental education from public four-year institutions. Developmental educators need to unite to create a vision that places developmental education at the center of efforts to keep the democratic promise of education for all. Given shifts in the distribution of labor, postsecondary educational opportunity must become a reality, and not just for those who are already privileged. Developmental educators must speak with a unified voice, and that voice must advance the centrality of multiculturalism, not only within developmental education, but within every other aspect of our daily lives. Some of the same arguments and language that are currently used in opposition to the provision of developmental education programs and services (e.g., terms like “standards” and “excellence”) must be used in support of creating systems of higher education that are accessible and inclusive. Elitism in higher education is counter-productive, not only to the stated goals of the democratic ideal in the U.S., but from a global perspective as well, in an era when nations should be working together to eradicate illiteracy.

How do we establish a unified voice when there appears to be so much disagreement both within and between professional organizations in developmental education and learning support? Participants decided on three interrelated agendas: (a) articulating and communicating a multicultural vision for developmental education, with both an informational and a political agenda; (b) developing a model for curricular transformation; and (c) creating a plan for research and publications to educate a variety of constituencies about the centrality of multiculturalism to developmental education and to higher education in general.

Guiding Principles as a Starting Point

The Multicultural Awareness Project for Institutional Transformation (MAP IT; Miksch et al., in press) subcommittee of the University of Minnesota General College’s Multicultural Concerns Committee (MCC) has adapted Banks et al.’s (2001) Diversity Within Unity: Essential Principles for Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural Society to higher education. With permission, the group had modified Banks et al.’s 12 “essential” principles for elementary and secondary (K-12) education to create nine “guiding” principles for postsecondary education. Although participants in the Future Directions Meeting found the new set of principles to be timely and relevant, they pointed out that the principles failed to address the question of access. All children in the U.S. are supposed to have access to K-12 public education. Our current President’s well-publicized motto is “Leave no child behind,” but for some reason it is acceptable to leave our adolescents behind. How can we abandon our young people at this critical juncture? The MAP IT group agreed to develop a tenth guiding principle, which later was prioritized to appear first, to reflect the necessity of providing access in order to ensure multicultural learning experiences in higher education. This addition reflects an important statement that access is not only central to developmental education, but across the entire K-16 continuum as well. The revised guiding principles
Future Directions Multicultural Track

(Higbee, Bruch, Jehangir, Lundell, & Miksch, 2003; Miksch, Higbee, Jehangir, Lundell, Bruch, & Barajas, 2003) are as follows:

Institutional Governance, Organization, and Equity

1. The educational institution should articulate a commitment to supporting access to higher education for a diverse group of students, thus providing the opportunity for all students to benefit from a multicultural learning environment.

2. The educational institution’s organizational structure should ensure that decision making is shared appropriately and that members of the educational community learn to collaborate in creating a supportive environment for students, staff, and faculty.

Faculty and Staff Development

3. Professional development programs should be made available to help staff and faculty understand the ways in which social group identifications such as race, ethnicity, home language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, and disability influence all individuals and institutions.

Student Development

4. Educational institutions should equally enable all students to learn and excel.

5. Educational institutions should help students understand how knowledge and personal experiences are shaped by contexts (social, political, economic, historical, etc.) in which we live and work, and how their voices and ways of knowing can shape the academy.

6. Educational institutions should help students acquire the social skills needed to interact effectively within a multicultural educational community.

7. Educational institutions should enable all students to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enhance academic participation and foster positive relationships within a multicultural educational community.

8. Educational institutions should provide support services that promote all students’ intellectual and interpersonal development.

Intergroup Relations

9. Educational institutions should teach all members of the educational community about the ways that ideas like justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion, and charity are valued by many cultures.

Assessment

10. Educational institutions should encourage educators to use multiple culturally sensitive techniques to assess student learning.

This discussion led to a broader conversation about institutional mission statements. How many institutions of higher education address multiculturalism when considering their overall mission? One reason that institutions might avoid any mention of diversity in their mission statements is the belief that affirmative action is no longer necessary, that the era has supposedly passed when we needed to work to overcome the effects of past discrimination in employment and segregation in education. Participants agreed that, considering prevailing attitudes, another approach might be for institutions to make a commitment to serving all groups of students. One challenge facing developmental education programs is how to serve underprepared students without segregating them.

Three Task Groups

On the second day of the meeting three groups were formed to develop action plans, with the goal of using these plans as a road map for future work in developmental education.

Political Action

The political action group proposed developing position papers related to the centrality of multiculturalism within higher education and developmental education in particular. The group suggested that the American Council of Developmental Education Associations (ACDEA) could take the lead in coordinating this effort with the leaders of member national professional organizations in developmental
Another idea generated by this group was to link educational goals to economic impact. Research supports the relationship between educational attainment and economic success. When attrition rates are unequal across different segments of the population, the entire community, whether local (e.g., Taylor, Schelske, Hatfield, & Lundell, 2002) or global, suffers. We need to identify leaders in the business community who can describe how they benefited from developmental education and will serve as role models for today’s youth. On the other hand, it is important not to lose sight of the personal benefits of higher education as well, to consider the social and political as well as economic outcomes.

Curricular Transformation

This group discussed the idea of education as a meritocracy in which only a narrow range of skills and knowledge is valued. The entire educational process needs to be more inclusive. The group distinguished between three dimensions of multiculturalism in the curriculum: (a) the celebratory dimension, which may recognize many different cultures and traditions, but often does so through “add-ons” (e.g., African American History Month) rather than by embedding multiculturalism in the curriculum; (b) the critical dimension, which critiques the status quo and examines power differentials; and (c) the transformative dimension, which integrates multiculturalism into the curriculum (i.e., everything should be taught from a multicultural perspective). Members of this group have developed a separate manuscript elucidating these ideas (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghere, 2003).

Research

The research group identified numerous ideas for research and publications, including (a) a synthesis of the history of developmental education and its role in promoting cultural pluralism in higher education, to be published in a high-visibility periodical like the Chronicle of Higher Education that reaches a broader audience; (b) a piece that traces access to higher education in the U.S. from its origins to the present, with recommendations for the future; (c) a review of changing demographics and their impact on higher education; (d) an analysis of high school graduation standards and state-mandated testing programs and their relationship to college preparedness; (e) an exploration of meaningful access to higher education; (f) articles related to multicultural theory and the work that has already been done by multicultural educators; (g) a compilation of best practices in multicultural education and developmental education; (h) interdisciplinary articles; and (i) a study of whether cultural diversity courses make a difference, whether they change attitudes or behaviors. Members of this group have already developed a number of manuscripts based on these ideas (e.g., Bruch, Higbee, & Lundell, 2003, in press; Higbee, in press; Miksch, 2002, 2003, in press) and initiated new research projects. The final chapter (Barajas & Higbee, 2003) of Curriculum Transformation and Disability: Implementing Universal Design in Higher Education (Higbee, 2003), a recent publication of the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, proposes Universal Instructional Design as a potential model for the multicultural transformation of higher education. Responding to a recommendation from the group, CRDEUL has chosen “Best Practices in Access and Retention in Higher Education” as the theme for its next monograph. A call for submissions is available at the end of this publication.

Continuing the Conversation

The Future Directions Meeting was intended as a first step for developmental educators to initiate a meaningful conversation about the intersection of diversity and multiculturalism with current theory, research, and practice within the field. David Taylor, Dean of the General College, has allocated funds to continue the work begun at the Future Directions Meeting through the Future Directions Multicultural Initiative (FDMI). A session proposal titled “Embracing Multiculturalism: A Critical Conversation” has been accepted for the CRLA conference in October 2003 in Albuquerque, and a similar session has been proposed for the 2004 NADE conference in St. Louis to invite broader participation in this conversation. Meanwhile, NADE has established a special committee to explore the future of its Cultural Diversity and International Access Committees (Higbee & Offiah-Hawkins, 2003) and has invited feedback related to the mission and
continued existence of these committees. Further 
information will be provided throughout the year via 
the NADE Newsletter. Updates on FDMI and MAP IT 
will be available on the CRDEUL Web site: 
www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul.

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We encourage and invite educators to contribute to the fifth independent monograph in a series sponsored by the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy (CRDEUL). The goal of these monographs is to build strong research and theoretical foundations in the field of developmental education, learning assistance, and access education from the perspectives of teachers, researchers, support services specialists, and students.

The fifth monograph will feature theory, research, and best practices related to promoting access and retention in higher education. Priority will be given to manuscripts that address achievement among populations traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Articles for this monograph might explore and expand the following questions:

- How can institutions enhance diversity among students, faculty, and staff?
- What factors most consistently contribute to the success of students from traditionally underrepresented populations?
- What types of programs, courses, and services contribute to student retention?
- What kinds of research can address access issues in higher education?
- Which program models best serve students entering college and promote access?
- What practices do students say contribute most favorably to their transition to college?
- What kinds of policy decisions can positively or negatively impact access?

Submissions (see attached form) must be postmarked by February 1, 2004.

Manuscripts will be forwarded to the editorial board for peer review. Authors will then be notified regarding the status of their proposals and receive recommendations and feedback by April 15, 2004. Manuscript revisions will be due by June 15, 2004. The final publication goal for this monograph is winter 2004.

Refer to the attached guidelines for authors for further information related to manuscript submission. This information is also available online at www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul

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Multiculturalism
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2. Manuscripts must be typewritten, double-spaced, minimum one-inch margins, regular type face/font, preferably 12 point, no right justification. Do not use boldface type or special fonts. Italics are used instead of underlining for titles and emphasis, including subheadings and in the reference list (see APA handbook, 5th edition, pp. 100-103).

3. The subject must be relevant to the monograph theme.

4. Manuscripts must not duplicate previously published works or articles under consideration for publication elsewhere. All authors will be required to sign a non-duplication agreement.

5. The title page must include the title of the chapter (not to exceed 12 words); the name(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all authors; and the address, telephone numbers (work and home), and fax and e-mail information, if available, for the lead author. All correspondence will be with the lead author, who is responsible for all communication with any additional author(s).

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7. The body of the chapter should begin on the third page, and may range in length from 10 to 30 pages, including all references, tables, and figures. Each page should include the running head and page number in the upper right corner, as described in the APA manual.

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