

## Preface

This volume serves to launch a call for interdisciplinary workforce diversity programs, curriculum, and degree offerings in higher education. The inter-discipline of workforce diversity as advanced by Dr. Jeannetta D. Sims in 2014 acknowledges the multiple disciplines that have forged scholarship in workforce diversity. This scholarship also calls for a comprehensive set of key constructs and a coherent system of theories and theoretical frameworks among scholars and practitioners that can advance workforce diversity scholarship, advance the Academy toward degree-granting programs in workforce diversity, and advance workforce diversity career development, which is a relatively new term and concept coined by Dr. Chaunda L. Scott in 2013. Appropriately designed curriculum is at the heart of forging a unified inter-discipline (Scott & Sims, 2015). This is because unless higher education reaches consensus on the types of workforce diversity courses and supporting programs that should be required to advance student learning, neither the sanctioning of workforce diversity degree programs, nor workforce diversity career development offerings can be successfully accomplished. This publication broadens the scope of workforce diversity to the level of an inter-discipline, which is something that no other publication has accomplished to date.

Workforce diversity refers to a strategy that promotes and supports the integration of human diversity at all levels and uses focused diversity and inclusion policies and practices to guide this approach in work environments. While this concept is not “new,” publications which outline the programming, curriculum and degree demands that should exist in higher education presently for equipping students to enter and succeed in workforce diversity careers is missing. In fact, the construct of workforce diversity career development in higher education has only recently been argued by Scott & Sims (2015) as it relates to the need for adequate curriculum and support programming along with the need for transformative learning experiences (Sims, Scott, Lai, Neese, Sims, & Barrera-Medina, 2014). The existence of these concerns makes this edited volume very timely since currently no comprehensive volume exists to guide this activity in higher education. The landscape of this publication includes scholarly voices on this topic from a variety of academic disciplines and institutional areas including: human relations, marketing, organizational leadership, communication, management, counseling, adult education, medical education, disability education, enrollment management, student affairs, and training and development. Thus, this edited volume accomplishes an interdisciplinary perspective that underscores the need for more workforce diversity programs, curriculum, and degree offerings in higher education.

This publication provides key insights for those inside and outside the Academy, especially as they may be seeking to identify a necessary set of workforce diversity course, program, training, or degree ideas from an interdisciplinary perspective. The target audience associated with this publication includes scholars, researchers, business leaders, business professionals, practitioners, entrepreneurs, faculty,

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researchers, and college students working in or studying aspects of workforce diversity in all professional fields. In addition, this publication offers interdisciplinary perspectives from faculty, researchers, administrators, and organizational leaders on the key content areas, theoretical frameworks, policies and practices that are most germane to stimulating workforce diversity career development and thus are vital for consideration in curriculum design. Moreover, this anthology presents a collection of interdisciplinary chapters that integrate workforce diversity concepts and strategies across the landscape of academia.

While the contributions in this volume are exceptional, the editors acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive account of interdisciplinary workforce diversity activity. The volume does indeed aim to stimulate interest and begin a much-needed conversation on workforce diversity programs, curriculum and degrees. Our hope is for scholars, educators, and professionals to continue moving the conversation forward. Ideally, these future conversations with research will promote greater scholarship on this topic.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This volume is divided into three sections: (1) workforce diversity programs; (2) workforce diversity curriculum, teaching, and instruction; and (3) future direction for workforce diversity in higher education. These sections are related to the book's emphasis on promoting future workforce diversity degrees in higher education.

The first section on workforce diversity programs offers a variety of existing workforce diversity programs that can stand alone or be attached to more broad-based educational institutional initiatives related to workforce diversity or related to workforce diversity degree programs. In *Chapter 1*, the authors share an online diversity course being used in the professional development of faculty and staff. In *Chapter 2*, the authors offer insights on how to design and implement a black male diversity initiative at a metropolitan university. In *Chapter 3*, the author offers suggestions for diversifying the professoriate through professor-student mentorship programs. In *Chapter 4*, the author shares a program that provides a forum for students and the community to learn and speak out on human diversity issues. In *Chapter 5*, the authors explore how a faculty member's undergraduate research program can advance workforce diversity learning. Each chapter can directly enhance institutional efforts to improve workforce diversity learning and programming.

The second section on workforce diversity curriculum highlights a variety of workforce diversity instructional strategies that can be implemented and that can be further explored for insertion in curriculum or for enhanced teaching in the area of workforce diversity. In *Chapter 6*, the author explores how narrative and team-teaching can be used in teaching about racial dynamics. In *Chapter 7*, the author offers considerations for diversity certificates and study abroad experiences. In *Chapter 8*, the authors highlight how workforce skills across generations can be enhanced through an intergroup communication intervention. In *Chapter 9*, the author offers a perspective on how counseling curricula can enhance workforce diversity practices. In *Chapter 10*, the authors share a social justice-oriented workforce diversity concentration in a human relations program. In *Chapter 11*, the author makes the case for experiential learning by linking organizational socialization and workplace diversity. These chapters demonstrate the breadth of interdisciplinary examples that are germane to workforce diversity curriculum.

The final section on future direction for workforce diversity in higher education explores foundational concepts and topics that can be used as a springboard for advancing future workforce diversity efforts and in particular that need to be incorporated into the future development of workforce diversity degrees. In

*Chapter 12*, the author examines numerous issues related to and experienced by transgendered identities in higher education. In *Chapter 13*, the authors offer insights for maximizing meaningful professional development program and initiatives. In *Chapter 14*, the authors share perspectives on using virtual technology as a tool to promote workforce diversity learning. In *Chapter 15*, the authors highlight the importance of disability and diversity in workforce development education and practice. In *Chapter 16*, the authors examine organizational culture and climate through an undergraduate medical school lens. Finally, in *Chapter 17*, the authors shed light on future workforce diversity curriculum direction using a case study. These chapters demonstrate the promise of what can be included in an interdisciplinary workforce diversity degree program.

We are very pleased to share this edited volume with you, particularly since it grew out of our earlier workforce diversity teaching and scholarly research. We put forth this call in hopes that future discussion, higher education curriculum, and strategic planning will make this call a reality.

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## **REFERENCES**

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