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## Engaging Diversity in the Classroom

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## Engaging Diversity in the Classroom

As recently as in 2005, American students of color amounted to fewer than 4% of the CSB/SJU student body.<sup>1</sup> The majority of our students—white, middle-class, mostly suburban—came from Minnesota. Today, the majority of our students still come from Minnesota (78%), are still white, middle-class, and mostly suburban (about 60% of our Minnesota students come from the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area), but our student profile is beginning to look distinctly different. The 2015 figures reported by Institutional Planning and Research show that nearly 16% of our current enrollees are American students of color. More noteworthy is the fact that 57% of those students are from Minnesota. While we still lag behind Minnesota private colleges in terms of the racial/ethnic diversity of our student population (the average is 17.6%), the recent figures show a heartening upward trend. The profile of the 2015 entering class is especially impressive: 23% of the entering class of CSB and 18% of SJU are American students of color—the highest ever enrolled in either college. A dedicated recruiting staff is no doubt responsible for this rise, aided in large measure by the changing demographics of Minnesota. “[W]e know that over the next five years our student body will become more racially, ethnically, culturally, geographically, and socio-economically diverse than ever,” Presidents Hinton and Hemesath have declared in Strategic Directions 2020. Preparations, therefore, are under way to receive and retain this new mix of students. For their part, the faculty are working to create a new general education program which recognizes these shifting demographics and prepares our students to “understand and integrate multiple perspectives and methods as they persevere in working toward the common good” (“Making Connections”).

In this essay, we hope to re-ignite the conversation about engaging diversity in our courses and in our classrooms. We realize that this is not a new conversation at CSB/SJU; it has been going on at least since the first Core Curriculum was adopted in the 1980s. However, in light of the irreversible trend in our enrollment profile, and, indeed, in light of the urgent questions arising out of systemic inequities (both national and global) that we cannot afford to ignore, we propose a re-examination of our commitment to integrate diversity in our curriculum. A 1990s-style multiculturalism, with its emphasis on recognizing and embracing diversity, is no longer sufficient. We have to *engage* diversity in ways that will foster collaboration and reveal new ways of addressing issues that affect us locally and globally.

## **A Different Classroom**

Changes in the CSB/SJU student body reflect, albeit with a lag, changes in the racial/ethnic composition of the national population, as well as the state-level population in Minnesota. While only 5.9% of Minnesotans are Black, 5.1% Hispanic, and 4.7% Asian, and the share of the non-Hispanic white population remains considerably higher than the national average (see Table 1), a quick comparison of figures between the two most recent years of data presented by the United States Census shows that racial/ethnic diversity in Minnesota is rapidly rising. Comparing growth rates between 2010 and 2014, we see that the Black, Asian, and Hispanic populations in Minnesota have grown at rates of 13.4%, 17.5%, and 8.5%, substantially above the national growth rate of these groups at 4.7%, 12.5%, and 6.7%, respectively. The implications of these national and state-level demographic changes are clear: the student body at CSB/SJU will continue to grow more diverse.

Given the composition of the state's racial and ethnic diversity, Minnesota faces some particular challenges integrating its immigrant communities. In recent years, Minnesota has become home to large numbers of people of Hmong, Somali, and Mexican ancestry, as well as immigrants from other parts of the world. While some immigrant groups undoubtedly possess substantial economic prosperity, especially the skilled immigrants

attracted to the state's many lucrative labor market opportunities, a rather large percentage of minority groups, including the refugee immigrant groups, faces a considerable economic disadvantage in Minnesota. This disadvantage, largely unaddressed until now, has recently ignited conversations both at the state and national levels that question the supposed prosperity and high living standards in the state (Sepic; Guo). A recent study based on data from the U.S. Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics claims that Minnesota has one of the nation's highest median household income gaps, homeownership gaps, and poverty gaps between whites and racial minorities, cumulatively placing the state among the highest in terms of racial economic disparity (Bernardo). These findings closely correspond with Johnathan M. Rose's 2013 study of the disparities between white Minnesotans and populations of color in health, criminal justice, education, jobs, and economic opportunities; the study, conducted by the State of Minnesota Council on Black Minnesotans, found that there was no significant reduction in the disparity rates in all four areas since 2000. The Minnesota State Government itself has acknowledged that it is among the top states with regard to racial disparities in criminal justice (Rose). The cumulative effects of an increasingly diverse demographic and persistent socio-economic gaps are inevitably experienced in growing racial tensions state-wide and especially in the Central Minnesota region, where the population is relatively more diverse. Concern for building a more cohesive and tolerant community in Minnesota has led to a variety of state-wide initiatives (see Lopez). Because educational institutions are uniquely positioned to influence children and young adults in creating awareness about diversity, schools and colleges play a critical role in preparing the next generation to function—and excel—in the racially/ethnically diverse society they will experience in the future. This, of course, is where we come in—with our twin responsibilities of teaching *to* an increasingly diverse student body, and teaching *about* the importance of engaging with diverse perspectives.

Table 1: Racial Composition of Minnesota and the United States, 2010 and 2014

	Minnesota		United States	
	2014	2010	2014	2010
Black or African American alone	5.9	5.2	13.2	12.6
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.9
Asian alone	4.7	4	5.4	4.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1	Too small to be reported	0.2	0.2
Hispanic or Latino	5.1	4.7	17.4	16.3
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	81.4	83.1	62.1	63.7

Source: Quickfacts, U.S. Census.

## A Different Educator

When we speak of institutional preparedness for maintaining a diverse campus, we usually look to Admissions or Student Affairs or Academic Advising to come up with appropriate measures and programs. But what is the responsibility of the faculty to deliver a curriculum that is not alienating or exclusionary? “The classroom was a jail of other people’s interests,” Ta-Nehisi Coates recalls in his recent memoir *Between the World and Me* (48). If Coates experienced that kind of alienation at Howard University, how many of our African American or Hmong or Latino students feel imprisoned by our curriculum? It is imperative to keep such questions in mind as we develop a new general education program. It is also critical that we, as teachers, re-imagine our classroom space: no longer contained by its walls, nor by its textbooks, our classroom is increasingly part of a network of diverse and often competing interests, histories, and viewpoints that we, along with our students, strive to make sense of.

According to the Center for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Southern California, “knowing who your students are, as a group and as individuals, is an important part of good teaching” (“Teaching in a Diverse Classroom”). This requires institutions to make their diversity data available (which CSB/SJU does) to departments and individual instructors as they move toward increasing cultural and social awareness in an effort to increase student preparedness for the workplace. The data gathered by institutions can serve a more instrumental purpose in teaching, as it can make both faculty and students more cognizant of the increasing diversity that exists among learners and may encourage the instructor to use the information in order to better serve students and their learning, improve class dynamics, and foster more gender, racial, and cultural sensitivity.

Further, important value can be added to disciplines via instructors who are conscious of the need to accommodate diversity in their teaching methods and the learning styles of students. A perennial concern among educators and policy-makers has been in the persistently low number of female students majoring in most STEM disciplines, as well as in some of the social sciences (such as Economics), notwithstanding the sharp rise in female college attendance and graduation rates. In the case of Economics, for example, some studies suggest that making the discipline “less dry” and characterizing it as one which studies human behavior rather than making money could attract more female students, who otherwise flock to related disciplines like psychology, sociology, and political science (Zhu 7). Women could feel more comfortable with the discipline when it extends to incorporating behavioral issues and concerns which affect them directly, such as the labor market or family economics, which are addressed within the discipline but accessible only to students who persist through the lower level courses. The same argument can be employed for diversifying course content to attract students of color or of other genders who might be unable to relate to the existing content of the course or a textbook (Feigenbaum 11-12).

### **A Different Discipline?**

The kind of changes described above will inevitably lead to a re-configuring of disciplinary boundaries. Does the history of science belong to history or

to science? Across the nation, colleges and universities have begun to muddle those boundaries by implementing bold and often controversial programs within (or alongside) traditional disciplines. The University of Georgia has developed a “forum and a resource for mathematics educators . . . who are interested in teaching mathematics reflecting contributions of many cultures and in teaching students who bring cultural diverse backgrounds to mathematics learning” (“Multicultural Perspectives in Mathematics Education”). Harvard University has an entire department devoted to the history of science that claims to “employ historical, textual, ethnographic, and social scientific methods to ask larger questions about how the various sciences work in practice, the basis of their authority, how ethical and political decisions are made about their regulation and applications, how they relate to larger intellectual, cultural, social, and political trends and changes” (Dept. of the History of Science homepage). The math department at MIT offers a course on the Cultural History of Mathematics. Clark University, University of Colorado, Florida Atlantic University, Texas A & M University, Rowan University, and Rutgers University also offer courses on the history of mathematics which include the contributions of various cultures, as well as contributions made by women.

Such curricular diversification can lay the foundations for attracting a more diverse group of students. Purdue University cites “poor preparedness” and “lack of diverse representation” for the persistence of low enrollment of women and minority students in STEM and STEM-influenced fields. To address the problem, the University proposes—among other strategies—to attend to the needs of diverse students and to reform faculty development (Weaver, et al.). In her article “Mind the Gender Gap,” Helen Shen draws attention to another persistent problem in STEM departments: the low number of women professors in these fields. “According to the US National Science Foundation,” she points out, “women earn about half the doctorates in science and engineering in the United States but comprise only 21% of full science professors and 5% of full engineering professors. And on the average earn just 82% of what male scientists make in the United States—even in Europe” (Shen 2013). The statistics indicate not only the diminished opportunities for women scientists in academia, but also the perilous future of prospective female students in STEM. If the visibility of successful women

in STEM attracts prospective female students to these disciplines, how can this population grow if women don't receive equitable pay, funding, or promotions? How can female scientists mentor female students if they aren't engaged in teaching?

In December of 2010 *Forbes* magazine examined colleges and universities across the United States to determine the "Best Colleges for Women and Minorities in STEM." Ranked at the top was Westminster College in Pennsylvania, whose success, according to one chemistry professor is the "result of prospective students interacting with successful women faculty and seeing lots of women students in the science classrooms and labs." Harvey Mudd College, a private liberal arts college in Claremont, California, which ranked fourth on the list, has put "increasing the diversity" as a top priority and this has in part succeeded in attracting women in STEM. Ranked first for enrolling minority students in STEM, St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota, attributes its success to the Lasallian tradition whose founder valued imparting education to poor. Though St. Mary's does not have a large number of minority students, 35% of those students graduate in STEM, 25% above the median among all colleges ("Best Colleges for Women and Minorities in STEM").

Adapting the classroom and pedagogy to attract more women and minority students is also urgent in some social science fields. Economist Lisa Saunders provides useful and implementable guidelines for modifying pedagogies in a diverse classroom to make an apparently abstract discipline like Economics, with an emphasis on assumption-based models to understand the world, become appealing to minority groups and women (Saunders 13-14). For example, Saunders suggests that Introductory Economics classes, which use basic tools like demand and supply to teach students the concepts of surplus and shortage in economies, and which often seem meaningless or uninteresting to many students, could use appropriate examples for better communication with diverse students. Instructors often use examples of commodities to illustrate concepts of economic necessities and luxuries (Saunders 14). The example of condoms, Saunders points out, could be used to address economic inequality (condoms are necessities [small share of the budget] for some, and luxuries [large share of the budget] for others), as



well as gender inequality (while men may be culturally less inclined to use them, unprotected sex increases the risk of pregnancy for women and the risk of STDs for all). This might open up a discussion of intersectionality between socio-economic class, race, and gender that an otherwise “dry” microeconomics class might not. Teachers, therefore, have ample space to include conversations on race, gender, and ethnicity, thus breaking the myth of de-gendered objective sciences or social sciences, which might seem appealing in narrow contexts, but discourage learning especially among women and minorities who find themselves unable to relate learning to their own experiences.

In many ways the humanities have led academia in bringing about curricular transformation to highlight historical and cultural differences, to recover suppressed and marginalized voices, and to challenge Eurocentric worldviews. It has been several decades since the western canon—be it literary, historical, or philosophical—has been deconstructed. While attention to diversity (of gender, race, class, nationality, etc.) and its integration into pedagogical practices have become more or less “standard” in most humanities departments, the challenge today comes from a perceived irrelevance of the humanities and its attendant problem of declining enrollment. In an attempt to re-define the role of the humanities in higher education, some programs have turned “global.” Global Humanities, a concept currently being promoted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, takes as its starting point the skills fostered in the humanities (critical analysis skills, for instance, and openness to multiple perspectives) and directs them towards an engagement with global problems. “Our goal is to create curricula that guide students in critical contemplation of and humanistic response to the globalized world,” write the authors of “Awakening Global Awareness in the Humanities.” An internationalized humanities curriculum, they maintain, will help students become “engaged, humane, and ethical participants in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world” (Bronstein, Jones, and Neuwirth). A globally focused curriculum that teaches students to navigate the complex and interconnected human histories, worldviews, and cultural exchanges might indeed be the future of the humanities.

## Engaging diversity in our classes

We do not claim to possess the secret of effective engagement with diversity in all our classes. Perhaps, as Barbara Gross Davis reminds us in *Tools for Teaching*, “There are no universal solutions or specific rules for responding to ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity in the classroom. . . . Perhaps the overriding principle is to be thoughtful and sensitive” (57). An inclusive curriculum is one feature of that thoughtfulness and sensitivity; fostering a habit of dialogue and collaboration is another. We do not claim to have any better insights than that. The ideas we discuss below are based on some pedagogical practices that we have found to be effective in classes that we have taught recently or teach on a regular basis. They are widely different in scope and content. What they have in common is an intentional process that:

- a. examines the historical and political contexts of the construction of difference and its connections with power;
- b. identifies different perspectives that complicate our understanding of problems and discourage easy answers; and
- c. emphasizes the connections between academic content and deeper “lived” realities and establishes their relevance by linking them to ongoing current events.

These three steps can be conducive to a better understanding of the social and political contexts of diversity. Students learn to recognize the differential treatment of minority groups in different contexts, analyze the relationship between cultural diversity and the politics of cultural identity, and develop of a more nuanced understanding of why diversity matters.

The following discussion of our courses is not meant to prescribe any particular method of engaging diversity; it offers, rather, a rumination on how we have attempted to incorporate the three elements described above.

## **GEND 180: Gender and Culture (Ecuador), Patricia Bolaños-Fabres**

This gender studies course established in 2010 takes a small group of students to Otavalo, Ecuador where they study gender across cultures but focus on the Hispanic articulations of gender (masculinities and femininities) and sexuality in this country. In preparation for our trip, during a series of four orientation meetings students put the linguistic and ethnic diversity of this country into historical context and discuss the effects of colonization upon the natives of Ecuador. Subsequently, we also grapple with the intersection of gender with poverty and ethnicity that students anticipate seeing among the community members of Yambiro, particularly with the exodus of males seeking employment abroad. Once on site, the theoretical component (readings and discussions) allows students to connect the gender theories and readings with what they observe on site. The discussions that ensue during classes on site revolve around the construct of gender as constituted in this community in the activities associated with family life, work, childrearing, education, sports, health, among other aspects of the daily experience. Students are subsequently able to extrapolate from their observations how the role of women, for example, varies among the mestizo in Otavalo and the indigenous in Yambiro.

Contact with the indigenous communities permits students to compare and contrast the mestizo (of mixed European and indigenous extraction) gender construct they experience in the city of Otavalo to what each student understands gender to be in their own communities in the U.S., and to consider the way that power is distributed between races, genders, and sexualities. While this course examines closely the intersection between gender and race, it also takes into account the connections between race and social class both in Ecuador and the U.S. The visit to a local cemetery and other cultural sites facilitates these discussions. The visit to the Intiñan Museum, for example, introduces the students to some of the ethnic groups and tribal groups of Ecuador and its history. This historical background allows students to think more deeply about the connections of race and power and how in time these may explain the varying access to resources by mestizo and indigenous peoples and the roles that men and women have within these groups.

The service-learning component, which helps students connect with individual indigenous community members, personalizes the historical and cultural narrative that they have read about and learned through their visits. Students become familiar with the work of Yambiro women who not only take care of the household chores and the childrearing but must also toil in the vegetable patch and embroider to earn income to support the family. Moreover, while doing one of the sustainable community projects (most recently building bathrooms and digging a septic tank), students came to the realization that the minga (a pre-Incan form of taxation in the form of labor extracted from all families for community projects) is most often carried out by women.

All of these components to the course fuse into a collective narrative that elucidates an understanding of gender among the indigenous people of Yambiro which is then compared to that of the mestizo people of Otavalo and lastly, to those of the U.S. and their minority groups and current events.

### **ENGL 381: Literature by Women, Madhu Mitra**

The focus of this course is determined by the faculty member who teaches it. When I teach it, I focus on non-Western women writers. The most recent version of the course that I taught focused on Middle Eastern women writers. The challenges I faced, both in determining the scope of the course and in contextualizing the course material for my predominantly white, middle-class, Minnesotan students, illustrate the need for more mindfulness in the way we teach “diversity” in our courses. My first problem was the title of my course. I had no doubt about the primary goal of this course: to humanize a part of the world known to most Americans only in terms of suicide bombers, veiled women, IEDs, and collateral damage. But what to call it? “Arab Women Writers,” a suggestion thrown up by the Internet, was out because I wanted to include a Pakistani and an Iranian writer. “Muslim Women Writers” was similarly out because most of the writers I had in mind did not consider religion a primary feature of their identity. (Besides, would anyone dream of calling a course on Euro-American women writers “Christian Women Writers”?) “Middle Eastern Women Writers” was problematic because the Middle East itself is a fuzzy concept. Does it include

Libya? Pakistan? (Does anyone care?) It is also a concept born of what Nira Yuval-Davis calls “standpoint epistemology.” The region known to America as the Middle East is almost always called West Asia in India. In the end, I went with “Women Writers of the Middle East” because it allowed me to use “standpoint epistemology”<sup>2</sup> as a framework for the course. The concept would become central to the way I taught the course.

For me, teaching a course like ENGL 381 is as much about confronting our biases, our blind spots, as it is about illuminating something unfamiliar. When asked why they were taking the course, almost all the students said one or both of the following: 1) they wanted to learn about the “cultures” of this part of the world, and 2) they wanted to know more about the oppression of Muslim women. So I started the course by situating their desires/expectations in the history of the West’s obsession with an exotic and *inferior* Orient. We read and discussed Leila Ahmed’s “Discourse of the Veil” (1992) and “The Veil Debate Again” (2005). This helped us understand the historical context that has shaped a particular image of the Muslim woman (and the Muslim man, for that matter) to flourish in the West. More importantly, it enabled us to probe the resurgence of this figure in the years leading up to the war in Iraq and what that might reveal about *American* culture. The question before us was no longer only about the oppression of women in the Middle East, but also about how the question itself—raised in a classroom in Minnesota—is already implicated in a geo-political history of domination and resistance. The point is not, of course, to diminish the importance of understanding the causes of oppression, nor to discourage students from raising the question, but to recognize that our questions are neither neutral, nor innocent—that they are “heard” differently in another part of the world.

This awareness is what “standpoint epistemology” is all about: our questions, already inflected by our location, can only hope to arrive at partial answers; the rest of our understanding must come from dialogues with others *differently* located. Hence the importance of reading the works of authors and scholars from the Middle East. My students understand that, but this is where I face my biggest challenge: how to move them from a mere appreciation of difference (*embracing* diversity) to a recognition of different location

(*engaging* diversity). For instance, my students read Nawal El Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist writer, an activist (who was imprisoned by the Sadat regime), a physician, president of Arab Women's Solidarity Association, and co-founder of Arab Association of Human Rights. Her fiction is a relentless exposé of the brutality of Egyptian patriarchy, both at the familial and the national level. My students read her novel (I usually teach *God Dies by the Nile*) and all their preconceptions about the oppression of Muslim women appear to be confirmed (confirmed, no less, by an Egyptian woman!). They come away from the novel feeling sorry for Egyptian women. It seldom occurs to them that the novel itself is a product of feminist resistance (which has a long history in Egypt), that the very fact of its writing is evidence of some other agency that should, at the very least, complicate their easy relegation of Egyptian women to unmitigated victimhood. I try to highlight the ways in which the novel's different location can illuminate our blind spots and, perhaps, send us off to revise our initial questions.

Since much of what I teach is culturally (and often historically) distant from the world most of my students inhabit, I worry about their perception of the relevance of the material they study. So I try to address the matter intentionally. At the end of the semester (the last two class periods) I ask the students to choose a topic for discussion, one that they consider relevant in their world. The students of ENGL 381 wanted to go back to the veil debate, specifically to the debate in France, and why there wasn't one in the USA. The discussion moved sluggishly until someone asked "Is this a cultural issue or a political issue?" What followed was an amazing conversation about the intersections of culture and politics, about gendered public discourse, and about minority rights; I couldn't have asked for a better ending.

## **ECON 362: Economic Development, Sucharita Mukherjee**

Economic Development is one of the upper division courses in the Economics major. At present I am the only instructor who offers this class in the Economics department. The course in its present form has afforded me freedom and flexibility to expose students to aspects of social life and identities such as gender, race, and nationality that may have escaped their

considerations as vital factors affecting human behavior and decision-making when learning economics in a more traditional neoclassical economic framework. Neoclassical economic analysis engages in a study of market-based choices being made by “rational economic agents” irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, or sexuality. Though Marxist, Institutional, and Feminist perspectives provide ample alternative frameworks to understanding the complexity of economic decision making by incorporating, for example, issues like power, which creates institutional barriers to *accessing* resources, thus limiting the scope of market-based solutions, the “mainstream” approach has in effect hijacked and made invisible these approaches, reducing them often to “heterodox” methods that barely make their way into undergraduate economics curricula. While consciously engaging in exposing students to some of these alternate ways of approaching economic problems was a goal for me from my very first offering of the course, the other goal, described next, came with greater familiarity with the perceptions of the specific sets of students I engaged with in the classroom.

A study of economic development involves the use of economic theory and empirical analysis to study economic experiences of poverty, inequality, lack of education, etc. The focus of study, not surprisingly, gravitates to examples from developing economies predominantly located in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. While my initial semesters of teaching the class focused on exposing students to developmental outcomes and experiences in developing economies, I quickly revisited that approach in the context the typical CSB/SJU economics classroom, characterized by a minority of women and an almost or complete absence of racial heterogeneity with the exception of an occasional international student. The standard approach to teaching economic development, which usually works well in larger universities with a relatively more diverse population, quickly led to the supposition of economic development as a concern of developing nations, still often referred to by many students as “Third World,” which is in economic terms an outdated concept. This made me realize the importance of defining the “other” carefully and in some ways place the “other” on an equal footing when addressing issues in a less diverse class room. I have accordingly, in more recent semesters, shifted focus to domestic (American) developmental concerns and policies and

emphasized on the differential experiences of poverty, inequality, health, or education among women and men as well as racial minorities. While we also discuss the concerns of developing countries, focusing on the multifaceted dimensions of economic experiences within the United States has helped students understand the complex problems of conceptualizing economic development, the dilemmas which make developmental problems like poverty or inequality or globalization ongoing struggles from which the U.S. is far from immune. More importantly, in my opinion, it broadens the scope of Economics as a discipline by exposing students to the complexities of policy making. For example, a policy lowering the property taxes across the board, while benefitting the middle class, would have the most detrimental effect in impoverished neighborhoods, often populated by racial minorities, where schools need the highest financial assistance to reduce educational achievement gaps. While choice and decision-making is indeed at the heart of economic analysis, by no means are choices free of the institutional constraints defined by race/ethnicity and gender.

This sort of “non-traditional” approach undoubtedly has challenges in terms of finding texts and level-appropriate study material. While a plethora of journal articles undoubtedly exists, some of these may often be beyond the expected level of expertise for students who are both trying to grasp a concept, study different methodologies, and then see its applications. Most mainstream texts on the subject concentrate heavily on examples from developing countries when they discuss concepts like poverty and inequality, thus obliterating, for the most part, the diversity of human experiences as elaborated above. I have found ways to supplement texts with other additional readings, news articles, and even videos. While some of these latter sources may not seem sufficiently “academic,” they continue to impart important connections students would not have made on their own.

## **Conclusion**

The College of St. Benedict’s mission to foster “integrated learning, exceptional leadership for change and wisdom for a lifetime,” and St. John’s University’s mission to instill “the values and aspiration to lead lives of significance and principled achievement” must include cultural competency if students are



to function outside of these institutions, living and working in the diverse community that surrounds us. To foster the ideals of responsible citizenship and ethical leadership, we must purposefully adopt educational initiatives (both curricular and extra-curricular) that address the importance of engaging with diversity. It is not enough simply to appreciate cultural diversity in our midst; we must promote a deeper, more complex understanding of the value of multiple perspectives in trying to solve a problem—the value of informed dialogues across real and perceived borders.

## Notes

1. All the numbers in this paragraph come from the reports of CSB/SJU Institutional Planning and Research. We thank Karen Knutson for her help in retrieving and verifying some of this information.
2. Standpoint epistemology recognizes that “from each positioning, the world is seen differently, and that any knowledge based on just one positioning is ‘unfinished’—which is not the same thing as saying it is ‘invalid’” (Yuval-Davis 94-95).

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