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Abstract

The authors describe a process of self-assessment attuned to equity and justice in the policies and practices that affect student diversity, namely, those associated with the selection of candidates. The disproportionate rate of rejection for applicants from underrepresented groups and the unsystematic process of applicant selection operated as *hidden curriculum* affecting the opportunities for the program to enhance meaningful relationships among diverse groups of students. The authors describe institutional and sociopolitical conditions, and individual actions reflecting a faculty's *will to policy*. Faculty efforts supported and challenged systemic change to increase racial and ethnic diversity among aspiring educational administrators.

Keywords

candidate diversity, hidden curriculum, leadership preparation, student selection

Diversity has been understood as a factor impacting the practice of educational leadership (Coleman, 2012). For instance, one's disposition toward human diversity can inform the views and values of individuals which can then affect the culture of the organization i.e., processes, structures, and policies (Lumby & Coleman, 2007). Yet, many of those in school leadership positions neither reflect the diversity of the children in schools (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002) nor do they tend to articulate an approach to increasing diversity among school leaders (Greenlee, Bruner, & Hill, 2009; Young & Brooks, 2008). Although the identification and preparation of school

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leaders from diverse underrepresented racial/ethnic groups has been recognized as an essential element in successful school reform (López, Magdaleno, & Reis-Mendoza, 2006), the profile of administrators working in districts and schools points to a leadership pool that is stratified by race, ethnicity, and gender.

In 2000, U.S. superintendents consisted primarily of White (95%) men (86%) (Glass, Bjork, & Brunner, 2000). Most principals are White men as well (Blackmore, 2009; Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001). The lack of racial and ethnic diversity among principals in particular (men and women) has been attributed to insufficient incentives, job-related disincentives, and structural obstacles (Chenoweth et al., 2002) such as the homosocialization of the leadership pool that occurs through the selection of principals during the hiring process (Blackmore, Thomson, & Barty, 2006). However, in this article, we point to the selection of candidates reflecting diverse social groups (along with identification, recruitment, and retention) into leadership preparation programs as a critical point in the development of educational leadership (McKenzie et al., 2008). Whitaker and Vogel (2005) have also raised concerns about the limited number of participants from racial and ethnic minority groups in preparation programs and recommended that educational leadership programs devise mechanisms to increase racial and ethnic diversity.

We argue that the selection process operates as a hidden curriculum in which the valuing or devaluing of human diversity is communicated. This hidden curriculum can be actualized in the experiences of students in whether they are afforded the opportunity to participate, learn, and work in the context of diversity with multiple and intersecting social identities or not. In a discussion of how the hidden curriculum operates in higher education, Margolis (2001) posed the following question to which this article responds: How do institutions of higher education produce stratified outcomes? More specifically, our focus is on educational leadership preparation programs in higher education and how the presence of underrepresented students from racial and ethnic groups (with particular attention to women of color) was mitigated during the selection process. The purpose of this article is to illustrate how faculty at Baystream University (a pseudonym) mediated the construction of the hidden curriculum to reduce stratified outcomes in the selection of applicants and describe how these attempts were met with opposition.

When faculty in our department began the selection process described in this article, we (the first two authors) were in the process of conceptualizing a model of self-assessment for equity (SAFE; Karanxha, Agosto, & Bellara, 2013). We had not anticipated so early in the conceptualization process that we would conduct the first study of programmatic equity around the department's policies, procedures, and practices involving applicant selection. As professors in a program that asks students to conduct equity audits of their work sites (i.e., schools), it was our turn to conduct an equity audit of our program. Thus, this case study addresses the gap in the literature on candidate selection with regard to diversity and responds to the call for internal assessments of leadership preparation programs. In addition, as a program that is also externally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), we (the unit and its representatives) are expected to provide candidates the

opportunity to learn with diverse candidates. NCATE defines diversity as “[d]ifferences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area” (NCATE, 2010, p. 34).

We begin with a literature review on candidate diversity, selection, and the preparation of leadership for social justice; we describe leadership focused on equity and fairness as ethically oriented toward justice, or social justice leadership. We describe the theoretical framework and methods of data collection and analysis as well as the context and conditions in which policy decisions affecting applicant diversity were deliberated. We present findings, discuss their implications for leadership preparation programs, and make recommendations for departments interested in conducting equity audits in response to their institutional data. The actions of faculty members in our department to engage the issue of student diversity in applicant selection process can inform other educational leadership departments, programs, and faculty.

Literature Review

The literature review situates the issue of diversity in the selection of students into leadership preparation as a social justice issue with implications for students in the context of the program, namely, their socialization, and their practice in schools as part of educational leadership. The strands of literature addressed include candidate/student selection as an issue concerning social justice leadership, diversity in educational leadership, and student socialization. These strands place the issue of student selection in conversation with what educational leadership programs teach (explicitly and implicitly) about racial and ethnic diversity.

Candidate Selection as a Social Justice Issue

According to Theoharis (2007), administrators with a social justice orientation value diversity, deeply learn about and understand diversity, and extend cultural respect. Studies show that programs committed to social justice have been successful in recruiting students from diverse cultural/racial backgrounds even in regions where racial diversity is minimal (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; McKinney & Capper, 2010). The literature on social justice leadership places importance on diversity in candidate selection (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; López et al., 2006; McKenzie et al., 2008; McKinney & Capper, 2010; Rodriguez, Chambers, Gonzalez, & Scheurich, 2010). McKinney and Capper (2010) underscored the necessity of increasing the diversity of students through the recruitment and selection of students. Educational leadership programs and their “faculty hold some responsibility for developing school leaders who hold a social justice agenda and are prepared to forge democratic communities, attack inequitable treatment, and champion advocacy-oriented action” (Greenlee et al., 2009, p. 45). Advocacy of social justice and equity can occur through admission processes that align with efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity (Shin, 2008).

According to Orr and Barber (2009), there is also a dearth of research on program evaluation. They found that “[f]aculty interest and commitment to learning more about best practices and the effects of preparation on leadership practices remain the primary drivers for advancing program evaluation research in our field” (p. 491). More specifically, the knowledge base on the evaluation of leadership programs is especially thin on internal assessment and the access that racial and ethnic minority applicants have to leadership programs. Capper et al. (2006) chastised social justice oriented programs of educational leadership preparation for not engaging in internal or self-assessment. Internal assessments can inform policy concerning applicant diversity in the periods between the external evaluations that are conducted by accreditation organizations.

Candidate Diversity in Educational Leadership

Despite the noted importance of student selection in the literature and studies conducted on leadership preparation programs with a social justice framework, there is little research that deliberately examines the selection of students as an institutional process affecting the movement of students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups of color into educational leadership. In a discussion of studies on selective admissions into educational leadership programs Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2009) noted that few studies published between 2001 and 2007 contained demographic information about program participants. While several studies failed to report racial demographics, others suggested that there was a disproportionate number of students across racial and ethnic groups, with fewer students who were African American, Hispanic, and Others (Native American, Pacific Rim) in comparison with their Caucasian/White counterparts. Furthermore, the benefits of diversity-related experiences to college outcomes have been well documented (Loes, Pascarella, & Umbach, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As the next section presents, an increased representation of students from a broad range of diverse racial and ethnic groups provides opportunities for positive intra- and interracial and ethnic engagements among all candidates and shapes the learning environment, curriculum, and instruction in classes and the field.

Socialization in the Context of Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Important to the development of intra- and interracial and ethnic engagements among students is the process of socialization. According to Saenz, Ngai, and Hurtado (2007), of college students across all racial/ethnic groups, “a student’s propensity to socialize (as defined by hours per week socializing) appears to be one of the strongest predictors of positive interactions across race after accounting for all other institutional- and student-level factors” (p. 36). The propensity to socialize across racial and ethnic groups is mediated by the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, a critical mass of students who are predisposed to engaging with others across a broad range of diverse groups in institutions helps to avoid situations in which students from underrepresented groups are so few that they are without support in a program where the critical

mass consists of students who are intolerant or insensitive in their encounters with regard to racial and/or ethnic diversity and difference.

In educational leadership programs, students of color have expressed limited opportunities to address issues of race and racism throughout their program (Boske, 2010). Other graduate students from various programs have complained of dehumanizing conditions in their daily experiences of doctoral education (Gildersleeve, Croom, & Vasquez, 2011). Daily encounters that graduate students from underrepresented racial and/or ethnic groups have with cultural insensitivity or racial microaggressions can reduce their achievement (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Despite the concerns for providing a critical mass of students underrepresented in higher education, contestation in courts of law over affirmative action policies (Taylor, 2000) has led to a sense of ambivalence about securing diversity in higher education.

Justice Powell's opinion on diversity in education that helped to uphold race-conscious admissions policy during the affirmative action case in higher education—*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)—is worth citing here. In Justice Powell's written opinion, the attainment of a diverse student body broadens the range of viewpoints collectively held by those students and subsequently allows an institution to provide an atmosphere that is “conducive to speculation, experiment and creation—so essential to the quality of higher education” (p. 312; cited in Chang & Ledesma, 2011, p. 76). Furthermore, he explained that the future of the nation depended on leaders who were trained through exposure to the ideas and mores of students as diverse as the people in this nation. To that, we might expand this focus on diversity to include students as diverse as the people across the globe.

Theoretical Framework

The major guiding theoretical concepts informing our discussion of the power dynamics associated with student selection and diversity are the hidden curriculum and will to power. Both concepts concern the norms and values that operate in the practices and deliberations among faculty engaged in decision making that affects students. Also, both are informed by critical sociocultural approach to curriculum and policy.

The hidden curriculum is a theoretical framework based on critical theory that is useful for exploring the social functions of education. Although much has been contributed to understanding the life of students in K-12 schools (Jackson, 1968), little has been written about the hidden curriculum of higher education (exceptions are Margolis, Soldatenko, Acker, & Gair, 2001; Snyder, 1973) and more specifically, educational leadership. The hidden curriculum is often understood to represent the conscious and unconscious or intentional and unintentional socialization of students through the “norms, values, and belief systems embedded in the curriculum, the school, and classroom life, imparted to students through daily routines, curricular content, and social relationships” (Margolis, 2001, p. 6). The absence or presence of aspiring principals from diverse ethnic and racial groups in a program can send enrolled students the (intentional or unintentional) message or lesson that institutional commitment to diversity is weak or irrelevant to leadership preparation and practice.

The socialization of students in a learning context is captured by the term *hidden curriculum*. The socialization of aspiring principals to work well in schools and communities with students and staff representing a broad range of diverse ethnic and racial groups can occur intentionally as part of the hidden curriculum as the norms, values, and belief systems imparted through social relationships. The underrepresentation of students in educational leadership from a broad range of diverse racial and ethnic groups limits the opportunities of enrolled students to engage in professional learning activities, grapple with course material, and construct knowledge in the absence of diverse perspectives and experiences (Vygotsky, 1986). Faculty who participate in the selection of students into educational leadership either facilitate and/or hinder the opportunities that students will have to socialize within the program.

According to Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead (2009), policy is “a complex, ongoing social practice of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse contexts” (p. 770). However, policy typically “codifies and extends the interests of those who disproportionately wield power” (p. 769). Given that policy is a process of power, policy formation is the practice of wielding power. This lens helps us to look beyond our individual sense of power or will to the institutional context for support and established norms and values that encourage change aimed at increasing student diversity while decreasing inequity and disparity with regard to student selection. However, the formation of policy “must be warranted institutionally, and by the social-political conditions obtaining in and around an institution; it must also be facilitated by such conditions, and by the personal qualities of those involved” (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 771). They describe policy as “the formation of a binding normative discourse,” and the set of warranting and facilitating conditions as the “will to policy” (p. 771). In other words, policy is created by the conditions and effects of power that precede it. In this particular case, policy change concerning the selection of students representing diverse social groups is warranted by conditions and power effects associated with the interest among faculty to continue earlier efforts to understand how students participate in the program and take their learning into practice. For instance, Baystream’s exit surveys (2006–2007) of graduates (12) and principals (50) working with graduates revealed that students rated diversity as an area of weakness in their preparation. Such results warrant further exploration into the diversity of the cohort.

Another condition of significance with power effects involves the program’s status as nationally accredited. In recognizing the power of institutions to shape its student body composition, the NCATE lists candidate diversity as an important criterion for professional preparation programs. It expects a leadership program to operate in a caring, nondiscriminatory, and equitable manner, and to understand the impact of discrimination across social differences (NCATE, 2010). This expectation links diversity to issues of equity. The will to policy approach to understanding how informal policies are developed helps to expose power dynamics and critique existing forms of domination that otherwise seem natural or inevitable, clearing “the way for a possible world of social justice and nondomination” (Levinson et al., 2009, p. 769). Institutional power enacted through the will of faculty in higher education shapes the diversity of

students who are selected for admission. Members of candidate selection committees are in positions of power to facilitate change warranted by prior and current conditions of the institutional context (i.e., social, political, economic, cultural).

Method

The research design is a case study of the selection process of a master's degree program for educational leadership preparation. Case studies help to shed light on a phenomenon (the processes, events, persons, or things) of interest to the researcher (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This case study is informed by assessment approaches used in higher education (Dressel & Dietrich, 1967; Harvey, 2004; Kells, 1980) in accreditation processes (self-study or self-assessment) and in K-12 schools (audits) related to equity, diversity, policy, and curriculum. Self-assessment, as defined by Harvey (2004), is the process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own performance and provision and involves a process of self-reflection by the institution or subinstitutional unit and the preparation of an illustrative document. This case study provides an illustrative document for self-reflection and quality review from an equity perspective.

Data Sources

With IRB approval, we accessed data from the department's database on the applicant pool ($n = 80$) from the fall of 2009; applicants who sought admission into the leadership program (its two cohorts) during the Spring of 2010. Drawing data from the online admissions process managed by the graduate school admissions office, the student advisor for the leadership department developed a spreadsheet on applicants for the faculty to use during the selection process that included information on gender, race, ethnicity, grade point average (GPA), Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, university attended, academic major, certification area, number of years of teaching experience, school level of teaching, and place of employment. To decide on whether to accept or reject applicants, the master's degree committee used information on the spreadsheet as well as additional artifacts submitted by the applicants such as cover letter, letters of reference, and resume. The direction provided for the faculty was as follows: Write the names of candidates you want to reject. Four of the faculty examined the full set of candidates' application packages while one faculty looked into only the applicants who were tied at two "yes" and two "no" votes for the remaining slots available for the Fall 2009 admissions cycle.

Additional data sources consisted of field notes and emails ($n = 40$) that were generated over two selection cycles spanning 5 months. The email exchanges varied in frequency with the majority occurring immediately after the results of voting to select and reject students were reported. For example, during one morning in early April 2010, 23 emails were exchanged among six faculty members and a student advisor. Field notes and minutes were generated during meetings (four faculty meetings and four masters committee meetings) held (during and after) the two student selection

cycles. In addition, results from the program's exit survey (2006-2007) provide some insight into the students' perspectives on their preparation with regard to diversity.

We refer to these data sources to recall the order of events, ensure accuracy of information used in this article, and document the discussions that took place in the master's degree committee meetings throughout the process. For example, the minutes of one meeting assisted us in recalling the discussion that focused on minority representation among students in the program and the divergent perspectives on the obtained outcomes. Overall, these sources of data assisted us in assembling the details and descriptions of our lived experiences as participants enacting our will to policy concerning student selection.

Data Analysis

This case describes the reconceptualization and application of the equity audit within the context of educational leadership programs, thereby extending its use beyond a tool faculty teach others to use to a tool we use. The equity audit (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004) is a tool based on a history of auditing in civil rights, curriculum auditing, and state accountability policy systems and its areas of concern for evaluation include: teacher quality equity, programmatic equity, and achievement equity with each of the areas consisting of several indicators. Furthermore, Skrla et al. (2004) recommended the following steps for using equity audits as part of a change process: creating a committee of stakeholders, presenting the data to the committee for them to graph, discussing the meaning of the data (possible use of experts, led by a facilitator), implementing solution(s), monitoring and evaluating results, and celebrating if successful. The equity audit as described by Skrla and colleagues (2004) and Scheurich and Skrla (2003) targets school-based data and data-driven change and has been provided to educational leadership students as a tool for translating social justice leadership theory into practice (Harris & Hopson, 2008). Although equity audits typically focus on K-12 schools or districts, McKinney and Capper (2010) utilized equity audits when conducting a case study of a graduate counseling education program's preparation that included the selection process. We also find audits to be useful tools to examine issues of equity in higher education.

We utilized a variation of the above steps of the equity audits as suggested by Skrla and colleagues (2004) and focused the programmatic equity indicator on the denial of access to programs as the point of inquiry. As is typical in the use of equity audits, we used descriptive statistics such as percentages and ratios (Skrla et al., 2004). These data were used to determine whether there was a disproportionate (i.e., under or over) representation of racial/ethnic groups in the candidate selection process. Overall, this case reflects the convergence of the equity audit focused on programmatic equity and facets of curriculum. Akin to Huckaby's (2009) use of the equity audit, we focus on faculty in educational leadership and how their understandings of equity and power shape the hidden curriculum through efforts to change departmental level policy.

First, we analyzed the spreadsheet for applicant pool demographic data collected by the university. Based on votes by four of five faculty members, the list of applicants

was reconfigured into a category of either accepted, rejected, or tied (two “yes” and two “no” votes). The reconfiguration of applicants across the three categories (by the academic advisor) as opposed to the previous organization of applicants by alphabetical order made the pattern of outcomes related to the applicants’ race and gender more visible (to the fifth faculty member). The reconfiguration showed a disproportionate rate of rejection by race and gender with applicants being sorted in the three categories (accept, reject, tied). In the next level of analysis we paid particular attention to the available data for the applicants of color who received two “yes” and two “no” votes from the faculty. We inquired and tried to understand the particularities of the applications from these candidates that would lead to such divergent decisions among the four faculty members on whether to accept or reject them.

The analysis of these data is complemented by other components of the equity audit, including narrative contextualization of the processes related to programmatic equity. A purpose of the equity audit is to understand the particular context under consideration. Furthermore, the small sample represented in this study also limits the generalizability beyond the particular case described herein. While we caution others from attempting to generalize the findings of this study to other contexts, we present the details and findings of the case so that others may translate the equity audit process into higher education contexts which may not be identical, but analogous. The hidden curriculum framework provides an analytical tool for exposing how the culture of the program reflects the norms and values of its faculty, and how they negotiate proposed changes to a selection process that centers racial and ethnic diversity. We used these analytical tools in analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data (including field notes) in this case study.

We took multiple steps to establish the trustworthiness of the study by triangulating the interpretations of the process. First, we shared our initial draft of the manuscript with another faculty member who served on the selection committee to seek verisimilitude among our accounts of the process. This colleague agreed with our description of the process and accuracy of the findings. Second, we sought and received feedback from another critical friend (college administrator) who was familiar with the department and had done similar scholarly work on issues of diversity in higher education. This critical friend read the manuscript and commented on its accuracy, fairness, and characterization of the issues. Third, we consulted with a data management administrator who verified the accuracy of the data presented in this article. Finally, we (the first two of the authors) referred to field notes and email correspondence that reflected our lived experiences and interpretations during the selection process. These data sources served as additional sources of discussion that helped to confirm or disconfirm our shared understandings and recollections of the process and findings.

A characteristic of equity audits involves taking action based on the findings. Thus, descriptions of the context and conditions that warranted an internal assessment of the selection process and policy deliberation concerning diversity and candidate selection provide the substance of the equity audits: the actions taken in response to the quantitative findings. The following qualitative and quantitative descriptions of the context

through a will to policy framework provide insight into the social and political conditions, including how negotiations amid resistance occurred among faculty who had recently acquired the responsibility for selecting candidates into an educational leadership preparation program.

Will to Policy Context

The *will to policy* framework describes democratic attempts to change policy by drawing on preexisting conditions that warrant and facilitate the proposed change(s) to policy (Levinson et al., 2009). Through this lens, we view the conditions and context in which the dynamics behind faculty efforts to examine the candidate selection process unfolded as well as the preexisting efforts that paved the way for the deliberations over how students should be selected.

Baystream University Conditions

Policy change concerning the selection of a racially and ethnically diverse pool of candidates is warranted institutionally as the goals of the Baystream University Equity Report (2009), college of education's framework, NCATE accreditation, and efforts of various departments that present diversity as a key element in shaping the climate and resources that are necessary to providing a quality education. According to Baystream University's diversity statement, a "diverse campus environment, in which differences are respected and appreciated, promotes more effective teaching and learning" and "consequently, the University is committed to maintaining a diverse student body at the undergraduate and graduate levels" (Diversity Statement, 2010). The importance of diversity across the student body is articulated in the university's equity report and "serves as a reaffirmation of the commitment of the University" "toward improving the representation of women, minorities and other underrepresented groups" in the University's "undergraduate, graduate and professional programs" (Baystream University Equity Report, 2009, p. 4). The term *underrepresented groups* refers to people from the following ethnic/racial groups: Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic (or Latino). "While the *numbers* of underrepresented graduate students have increased over the previous year, the *percentage* [italics added] of underrepresented graduate students has increased only moderately" (Baystream University Equity Report, 2009, p. 28), and therefore, "university needs to continue to improve and coordinate recruiting efforts for underrepresented graduate students" (Baystream University Equity Report, 2009, p. 28).

College Conditions

According to the revised framework (2009) of the college of education, the faculty has three important roles related directly to diversity. The most relevant to candidate selection is the second: "A commitment to helping create a diverse corps of education professionals mirroring the demographics of the nation's schools and who possess

skills and competencies appropriate for the diverse students in America's classrooms" (COEDU, 2009, p. 32). In many instances, collaborative inquiry between faculty, administrators, and students has been modeled in the practice, research, and service using frameworks such as multicultural education, critical theory, cultural competence, and social justice (e.g., Elam, Robinson, & McCloud, 2007; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; McHatton, Keller, Shircliffe, & Zalaquett, 2009; Mitcham, Portman, & Dean, 2009).

Program Conditions

Our attempt (as authors) at internal assessment concerning diversity, equity, and social justice continues the efforts made by some faculty members in the department who have attended to the quality of the program such as the development of its mission statement (2008-2009) and also through research on diversity of the candidates applying to the program. These efforts at the program level indicate a measure of the *will to policy* among faculty to use their power to assess and improve the program. Several faculty have presented or published their findings (e.g., Black & Karaxha, 2013; Bruner, 2008; Bruner, Greenlee, & Hill, 2007; Greenlee & Karaxha, 2010). Greenlee et al. (2009) found discrepancy in the program between the realities of candidates in the department, the ideals toward which the program aspires, and its practices. For instance, candidates in their study noted that issues related to diversity were included in some courses rather than systematically integrated throughout the curriculum. Although several faculty members have required students to perform critical tasks, such as equity and curriculum audits of their schools, none of the faculty members were modeling the use of these self-assessment tools to explicitly scrutinize their work. The efforts and products of faculty in the department warrant further investigation of the program and practices related to candidate selection that is facilitated by the literature and the program's mission statement.

Additional institutional conditions that warrant and facilitate the current study of the selection process included a change in the program's administrative staff which led faculty to acquire responsibility for the selection of candidates (providing recommendations to the graduate school for their acceptance into the program). Moreover, the continued demand for the program was due in part to its central location within a large metropolitan school district that provided an applicant pool larger than the program's capacity to serve all applicants who met minimum requirements established by the university. Those immediate market demands helped to create the conditions that allowed the department to focus its attention on the quality of the candidates rather than quantity. Another social and political condition that incited our *will to policy* was the tension between the push for increased accountability in K-12 schools and institutions that prepare professionals to work in them and the pull toward ethical and equitable excellence for all (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Providing our candidates (who are generally practicing teachers) opportunities to engage in professional collaboration across racial and ethnic diversity is made

difficult by the overrepresentation of White teachers in the surrounding largest district which in 2008, made up approximately 75% of the teaching force in the district (State Department of Education, 2009). In our program, between males and females, females typically comprise a majority. For example, enrollment for females in 2007 was 71% (Bruner et al., 2007). In the applicant pool of Fall 2009, females continued to comprise a great majority of the applicants while the applicants from racial/ethnic minority groups (Asian, Hispanic or Latino/a, Black or African American or Native American, with one listed as O reflecting needed documentation to verify citizenship) comprised only one fifth of the candidates. A close look at the data at the intersection of race and gender revealed trends regarding the acceptance/rejection of women of color.

Findings: Constructing the Hidden Curriculum

Fall 2009 marked the first time the educational leadership department's application and admission data were generated apart from the other campuses allowing us to begin identifying the trends of our program. In addition, this was the first semester that faculty had assumed the responsibility of selecting applicants to recommend to the graduate school for admission into the program. In previous years, this process (or lack thereof) was the purview of the department's student advisor who accepted applicants on a first come first served rolling application basis admitting those meeting the minimum requirements which were a 3.0 GPA or a GRE score of 1000, and 2 years of certified teaching experience.

Four junior and senior faculty members (three White females and one White male) began the process of selecting applicants for rejection without collective discussion and agreement on the basis for rejection. Furthermore, evaluations of materials such as letters of recommendation or written statements if conducted by committee members were neither shared nor used to justify decisions about rejection and selection of applicants. The academic advisor compiled an excel sheet with the names of applicants and number of "yes" and "no" votes. A total of 80 applicants sought admission into the educational leadership master's degree program. The program's maximum capacity was 50 candidates across two cohorts with 25 students each. However, the program had three students who were previously admitted but had deferred enrollment which meant that only 47 slots were available and at least 33 applicants were to be rejected. We excluded the three previously admitted students from the sample and analysis. Therefore, the applicant pool size was 80 with 62 (77.5%) females and 18 (22.5%) males. The majority of the applicants ($n = 59$; 73.75%) identified themselves as White, 17 candidates (21.25%) identified themselves as Black ($n = 9$), Hispanic ($n = 5$), Asian ($n = 2$), Native American ($n = 0$), and Other ($n = 1$), with 4 (5%) candidates who identified as "Undecided."

Table 1 shows the applicant pool by gender and race. The first two columns show the total number and percentages of applicants, the second two columns include the applicants who were admitted outright (received three or four "yes" votes), the next two columns contain the applicants who received three or four "no"

Table 1. Demographic Breakdown of Candidate Selection.

Number of applicants	Accepted outright						Rejected outright						Tied at: 2 rejections 2 approvals						Tie-breaker acceptance						Total accepted						Total rejected					
	F		M		N (%)		F		M		N (%)		F		M		N (%)		F		M		N (%)		F		M		N (%)		F		M		N (%)	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)			
Total	62 (77.5)	18 (22.5)	33 (84.62)	6 (15.38)	16 (64)	9 (36)	13 (81.3)	3 (18.7)	8 (88.9)	1 (11.1) ^a	41 (87.23)	6 (12.77)	21 (63.6)	12 (36.4)	2 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		
Asian	6 (7.5)	3 (3.75)	2 (5.13)	1 (2.56)	2 (8)	1 (4)	2 (12.5)	1 (6.2)	1 (11.1) ^b	0 (0.0)	1 (2.13)	0 (0.0)	1 (3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		
Black	5 (6.25)	0 (0.0)	3 (7.69)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (22.2) ^a	0 (0.0)	2 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		
Hispanic	0 (0.0)	1 (1.25)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.56)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		
O	4 (5)	0 (0.0)	3 (7.69)	0 (0.0)	1 (4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		
White	45 (56.25)	14 (17.5)	25 (64.1)	4 (10.3)	12 (48)	8 (32)	8 (61.5)	2 (12.5)	3 (33.3) ^{b,c}	0 (0.0)	29 (61.70)	4 (8.51)	18 (54.5)	10 (30.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		

^aThree yes votes and one no vote.

^bAccepted but cohort not available.

^cAccepted but did not have appropriate certificate and ended up being rejected.

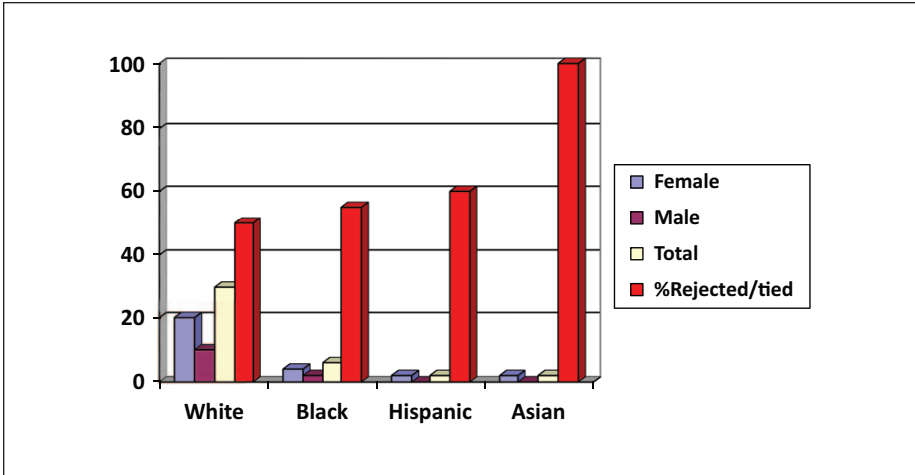


Figure 1. Comparison of applicants' rejection/tied status by race and gender.

votes, and the fourth pair of columns reveal the applicants who received two “yes” votes and two “no” votes. The fifth pair of columns displays the outcome of the decision of one female faculty member of color who only looked at the pool of applicants who had received votes that led to a tie, and the sixth set of columns presents the total number of applicants who were accepted into the program after the completion of the entire selection process. The final set of columns shows the total number and percentages of applicants the selection committee rejected access into the program.

The majority of faculty accepted outright 39 applicants (33 females and 6 males) because they did not receive any rejection votes. Of the applicants accepted outright 29 (74%) identified as White, 3 candidates identified as Black, 3 as Hispanic, 1 identified as Other (17% of the accepted outright for all students of color), and 3 (9%) as Undecided. Similarly, the majority of the faculty rejected outright 25 applicants (16 females and 9 males). Of the rejected outright applicants 20 (80%) identified as White, 3 identified as Black, 1 identified as Asian (16% overall), and 1 (4%) as undecided. Finally, 16 applicants (13 females and 3 males) were tied at two “yes” votes and two “no” votes. Ten (62.5%) identified as White, 3 identified as Black, 1 identified as Asian, and 2 identified as Hispanic (37.5%; see Table 1).

When looking at the combined columns of rejected and tied applicants, 66.67% ($n = 6$) of Black candidates were in the rejected and tied category, 40% ($n = 2$) of Hispanic, and 100% ($n = 2$) of Asian applicants were in one of these two columns compared with 50.85% of White applicants (see Figure 1). Overall, when we combined all applicants of color, 62.5% (10 out of 16) of these applicants were in either rejected or tied status. In other words, the acceptance rate for students of color was at

37.5% while that of White applicants was at 49.15%. The rejected and tied applicants were on the same list (of those not accepted) which was only revisited after a fifth junior faculty member (female of color) asked to participate and was directed to decide on approval or rejection of only the 16 applicants who were tied, instead of the whole sample.

When the selection committee completed the process, the faculty accepted a total of 47 applicants (41 females and 6 males), of which 33 (70.20%) identified as White, 5 identified as Black, 5 identified as Hispanic, 1 identified as Asian, (23.40% for all students of color), another 1 as Other (2.1%) and 3 (6.38%) identified as Undecided. The faculty rejected 21 females and 12 males, 4 were Black, 1 was Asian, and 1 Undecided, and 28 were White (see Table 1). Overall, after the tie-breaking vote, the acceptance rate for applicants of color exceeded the percentage of accepted White applicants (64% for applicants of color and 55.93% for White applicants). In the end, the fifth faculty's votes resulted in six additional applicants from underrepresented groups being placed into the accepted column. It should be noted that the tie-breaking procedure was not planned. The tie-breaking process evolved when a new faculty member requested to review the files after returning from a conference and was told by the committee chair to fill the remaining slots by selecting students who had received an equal amount of "yes" and "no" votes (2 and 2) from committee members. Efforts to intervene in the selection process, analyze the disproportional rates of rejection across racial groups, and increase the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the students reflected a *will to policy* among faculty.

Five of the six applicants from underrepresented groups who were on the tied-category list exceeded each of the minimum requirements (GPA, years of teaching experience, letters of recommendation, written statement) of the department. Three females who identified as Black ended up in the tied category. One of the females had 5 years of teaching experience and a 3.46 GPA; the second female had 3 years of teaching experience and a GPA of 3.32; and the third female had 9 years of teaching experience with a GPA of 3.17. Two self-identified Hispanic females were also on the tied list. One had 6 years of teaching experience and a GPA of 3.77, and the other had 2 years of teaching experience and a GPA of 3.67. A female who identified as Asian had 5 years of teaching experience, National Board certification, and a GPA of 3.18. The resulting faculty votes placed her in the tied category when Asian Masters students were an underrepresented group across the college of education that showed no growth in their enrollment from the previous year (Baystream University Equity Audit, 2009). On one hand, while five of the six underrepresented students made it into the tied category, the second Asian female who received three "no" votes had a GRE score just barely (970 instead of 1,000) under the requirement so as to exclude her from further consideration during the tie-breaking process. On the other hand, four White females who did not meet the GPA requirement received one or two "yes" votes. Those two White females with two "yes" votes were placed into the tied category to vie for the remaining eight seats.

Resistance as a Will to Policy

Once we associated disproportionality in the selection process, practices, and policies with race we faced a number of responses that supported or deterred further examination and intervention. For instance, as the first selection process occurred and policy concerning admission to the program was being drafted in preparation for the following selection cycle, there were indicators of resistance to crafting and implementing policies that acknowledge and challenge barriers to racial and ethnic diversity. We present and discuss two somewhat contradicting acts of resistance: (a) a call for literature to support the qualities in the rubric and (b) withholding information about a state statute sensitive to universities' efforts to achieve a diverse population of students and on targeted selection.

Although it may not be considered unusual for academics to rely on literature to support program development, we (the authors) perceived that a call for literature to support a change was used as a stalling technique rather than a commitment to securing more equitable processes and outcomes. The call for supporting literature came during the development of the rubric as a committee member recommended that research should be identified to support each criterion. In other words, some questioned whether multilingualism or leadership experiences across cultures and contexts were valuable resources that students could offer a district with families that speak numerous languages and dialects, and argued that these qualities were going to be recognized on the rubric as desirable. We (the authors) suspected that a call by two committee members for more literature to support each criterion was an act of resistance as they made other statements which suggested they were displeased with the rubric. More pointedly, they commented that if they were applying to enter the program based on the rubric they would probably be rejected and that in the past they had even considered creating an all Black cohort. Such statements suggested to us that the identities and histories of committee members were meaningful in how decisions were being made about who should (not) and would (not) be included in the program as a point of entry into the leadership pipeline. The tendency of people to select/elect people just like themselves has been described in the literature as homosociability (Blackmore et al., 2006), a construct typically describing the selection of principals rather than aspiring principals.

Another strategy of resistance was withholding information. Although a committee member expressed knowledge of the state statute (referred to as the 10% rule) allowing colleges to relax admission criteria to accept a more diverse group, this information was not provided until after the first selection cycle ended. However, during the second selection cycle, the faculty member who had provided the information on this very rule dismissed it as an option when one of the coauthors suggested the committee use this rule to increase the number of women of color in the program. At the time, the department's applicant pool consisted of only two applicants who identified as Black females and they were in the tied category of "yes" and "no" votes (one had met and exceeded the admission criteria and the other had academic records that were over 10 years old).

In another example, a committee member offered to provide literature on targeted selection to be used in developing practices and policy concerning candidate selection. However, this committee member did not provide any information on targeted selection during the next or subsequent meetings and remained silent on the topic when delivering an update to faculty about the committee's work on the selection process. The resistance described above reflects a will to policy that minimizes racial and ethnic diversity as a compelling interest in the selection of students into the program.

Discussion

In our program, this first opportunity for faculty selection of candidates (Fall of 2009) was not an automatic process of enacting policy and practice that aligned with a mission statement rooted in social justice and equity. A disproportionate number of applicants from underrepresented minority groups were either rejected outright or placed in a tied category. As qualified applicants, their status was doubly suspect given the challenges that the program faces in trying to establish a diverse pool of candidates. Such a finding was concerning as the department had recently reframed its mission to reflect a social justice orientation; the conditions seemed ripe to model social justice in its policies and practices. The actions taken by faculty to structure a selection process and create policy attuned to the disproportionate selection/rejection of applicants across racial groups were neither swift nor smooth. The data from the selection process suggested there were inconsistencies in how committee members decided who to reject or accept. While some faculty cast their votes to reject highly qualified candidates of color, we were most surprised by the finding that four White females who did not meet the GPA requirement were still on the list of the candidates to be considered for admission. It is a finding that we still cannot fully explain, as none of the faculty members were asked to comment on their decisions. We also learned that while the collection and interpretation of data through an equity audit approach can provide basis for further inquiry, change in response to the findings can come only from the will to challenge the status quo.

The Will to Expose and Change the Hidden Curriculum

Taking action to change policy and practice that is more inclusive (from procedure to outcome) reflects a *will to power*. The low number of students of color in the program became an issue for discussion during one of the faculty meetings. The above discussion reveals divergent views on the meaning of and regard for disproportionality in the racial diversity among students in the program. One faculty member seemed satisfied that the program's students were representative of the teaching force in the area (which was approximately 75% White female), while another faculty supported the idea of the program's students to be reflective of the student population (of which students of color comprised approximately 52%). Upon further deliberation, and based on the

findings from the first selection cycle, faculty recommended that the department revise the policy and procedures that guide the application and selection of a diverse pool of candidates in our program. As members of the master's committee and faculty in the department, we began to assess the need for a more systematic approach to the application and selection process for which we had just accepted responsibility. According to Chenoweth et al. (2002), "[i]deally, the faculty at each institution develops a philosophy that is used as criteria for decisions about admission" (p. 10), and students should be admitted mainly based on their philosophical compatibility with that of the program. The department mission statement offers social justice as a guiding ethic around which to negotiate changes in policy and practice.

Some master's committee members drafted a prompt to which applicants were required to respond in a written statement of interest to describe their leadership experience, related aspects of the mission statement, interest in the program, and professional goals. In addition, these same faculty members developed a rubric that would help in interpreting or deciphering applicants' materials as artifacts representing diverse knowledge, skills, and dispositions of value to the field and to the learning environment (Agosto & Karanxha, 2012). The rubric allowed faculty to record their impressions of applicants as gleaned through their written statements of interest and experience. The development and piloting of the rubric provided a method of collecting data that informed how the selection unfolded and how the qualities that selection committee members found were worthwhile among applicants. In several ways, our process mirrored recommendations in the literature on social justice leadership preparation concerning the selection and evaluation of candidates. For instance, we required candidates to respond to written materials on social justice (i.e., describe their leadership experiences, attitudes, and assumptions about school leadership) to understand their orientation to social justice, an expressed value in the program's mission statement. Committee members conducted a pilot test to reach interrater reliability on our interpretation of the statements concerning the qualities of applicants. This practice aligns with the recommendation that "[t]he faculty selecting the students need to ensure, though, that they are generally looking for the same qualities in the prospective students and that there is some faculty work on interrater reliability" (McKenzie et al., 2008, p. 121).

The development and piloting of the rubric with attention to interrater reliability reflects recommendations in the literature on leadership preparation with attention to diversity and social justice as well as values in the program's mission statement (i.e., cultural competence, social justice). Such systematic yet flexible efforts can include the use of writing prompts and rubrics to interpret applicants' letters of recommendation and personal statements while supporting faculty in their communication about aspects of the program (i.e., diversity among students) and documentation of the selection process.

Minimum criteria also need to be agreed upon in consideration of diversity as a compelling interest for relaxing stringency. For instance, the state allows programs to waive minimum admissions requirements (2.5 GPA) for up to 10% of the students admitted to the college (10% rule). We recommended the master's degree

program selection committee consider such similar waivers in the admission process to attain a critical mass of students from all of the underrepresented groups that apply. In addition, among the University's list of affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity recruitment strategies to facilitate hiring of faculty (University, 2009), there are many that can translate for use in the selection of candidates. One strategy that speaks directly to flexibility is: *Extend deadlines for application whenever the representation of women and minorities in the pool of candidates is less than 80% of the availability* (Baystream University, 1999). As the limited racial/ethnic diversity in educational leadership continues to be a critical issue for our program, extending the application deadline is an option in need of consideration. Originally the committee approached the task with the intent to provide a list of applicants to be rejected and initially compiled a list of 33 candidates for denial. A different approach would be to use an assets perspective and select applicants we want to accept instead.

Overall, we recommend concerted efforts to expose that which constructs the hidden curriculum in the form of policies and procedures that guide the application and selection of a diverse pool of candidates for acceptance into educational leadership preparation programs. Despite resistance and tensions, the committee developed a prompt that sought to determine the applicants' orientation and compatibility with the department's mission grounded in social justice leadership. In addition, the department adopted the rubric (see the appendix) that values diverse experiences and backgrounds of applicants. According to minutes from a meeting (May, 2010) some committee members (who valued the rubric), reorganized the criteria under the following categories: Reflective Practice, Leadership Capacity and Experience, Commitment to Educating All Students, and Preparedness to Lead across Diverse Contexts and Communities.

As the faculty assumed responsibility for the selection of applicants, the selection process has been reconfigured due to changes in department membership and acquisition of a grant that necessitates working closely with the surrounding school districts to select one cohort per year. Gaining a department chair the following year, (as opposed to having an interim during the first selection process), who is attentive to diversity and equity, brought changes to the committee membership and selection process. These changes included having applicants respond to a case rather than a prompt while using the same rubric for the overall evaluation of each applicant, and the reassignment of members with competing racial ideologies onto different committees. However, tensions and changes continued into the next selection cycle as we began to engage with the diverse perspectives of faculty during discussions of selection and racial disproportionality of student acceptance into the program.

Conclusion

The selection process points to the will of faculty and their efforts to construct policies mindful of diversity. Faculty serve as models to future school leaders and communicate

what they value through what they teach implicitly and explicitly, in the program they help to construct. Research on student selection can inform how we think about the role of diversity among faculty preparing educational leaders. In our department, faculty diversity manifested in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that informed our engagement in difficult dialogues required sensitivity to various dimensions of the issues of student selection. In addition, the process was informed by faculty's multiple perspectives and contextual factors (i.e., personal and professional histories, targeted selection, differential professional status, district demographics, state statutes, university policy, and program mission statement).

Faculty who engage in flexible processes toward increasing the range of diversity among students consider many factors when assessing student potential. They take into account personal qualities, special talents, creativity (Sternberg, 2008), socioeconomic status, geographic origin, leadership potential, and the projected makeup of the cohort as a whole (Davis, 2002; Sedlacek, 2005; Shin, 2008). Our department continues to entertain more thoughtful admissions policies. Meanwhile, there is the possibility that those who hire our graduates as administrators will not value leaders who advocate for social justice and overlook them during the selection process, and instead seek "preferred applicants" that "fit" particular local and systemic dispositions (Blackmore et al., 2006). Social justice leaders who climb up the administrative ranks and continue to value equity and justice can participate in selecting administrators into positions in schools and districts who also demonstrate an ethic of social justice. Educational leadership programs can provide the field with a more racially and ethnically diverse pool of aspiring principals who reflect an ethic and propensity to advocate for social justice across an array of different ethnic and racial groups.

The internal assessment process described here contributes to the study and the empirical research base on racial and ethnic diversity in the admissions process of educational leadership preparation programs. This case reflects faculty efforts to model educational leadership for social justice so as not to reproduce a hidden curriculum of racial and ethnic group exclusion or give the appearance that (racial and ethnic) diversity is irrelevant to learning and leading. As such, this case illustrates our approach to institutional change at the intersection of leadership, equity, diversity, and responsibility. A challenge for educational leaders and faculty preparing them is to recognize and respond to injustice and inequity by providing redress, remedy, or relief from their cumulative and continuing effects through an advocacy approach to leadership that neither ignores the cumulative effects of past and present injustice nor allows systems of inequity to remain unchallenged. In the end, those who sit at the metaphorical table of decision making are a primary influence on who is accepted or rejected into the leadership pipeline. We have witnessed how changes in policy, rubrics, curriculum, and program evaluation are influenced by the norms, values, beliefs, interests, identities, positions, and power of those attempting to shape institutional culture at the micro level. The difficult dialogues that occurred and intensified in the subsequent selection cycle reminded us that racial (in)equity is still an incendiary taboo subject even in academic settings (Agosto, Karanxha, & Bellara, 2010).

Appendix

Minimum and preferred requirements: Teaching experience in a K-12 school setting, leadership experience (broadly conceived), teaching certification, letter of support (recommendation) from supervisors, evidence of academic success (GPA, GRE, GRADES) and the values, commitments, dispositions, knowledge, and skills that align with the department’s Mission Statement.

Candidate Name: _____

Committee Member Name: _____

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

+

Has reflected on a domain of the profession (list) = _____

Is thoughtful about the meaning of teaching and/or learning

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE

Has unique and valued talents or leadership experiences

Brings unique expertise to the leadership domains, cohort, or program

Demonstrates resiliency (persists despite unusual hardships, circumstances, disadvantages)

COMMITMENT TO EDUCATING ALL STUDENTS

Is motivated to apply by a commitment to professional improvement, school improvement, or student success

Is preparing to work for the benefit of children/youth

Advocates justice for traditionally marginalized groups of students

Quality/ies is/are congruent with the mission statement of the program

Has experienced a leadership role with students, families, or organizations, historically underserved in schools

PREPAREDNESS TO LEAD ACROSS DIVERSE CONTEXTS AND COMMUNITIES

Speaks two or more languages and/or has 2 or more cultural backgrounds/ identities

Has worked or volunteered outside the United States

Quality of writing

Other asset:

Total +:

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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