

**The Purchase College Diversity Plan:  
Strengthening Inclusive Excellence**

**Fall 2015**



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## Executive Summary

Diversity is a core value of Purchase College. No member of the college community needs to be convinced of the social and moral imperative of diversity, and through bridge programs, community service, the success of the EOP and MAP programs, and various initiatives, Purchase College has demonstrated its commitment to the issue. Given the impact of the emerging global economy, dramatic shifts in demographics, and growing social and economic inequality as well as the academic and financial benefits of a diverse college population, the importance of diversity is clear. Purchase College is now in position to strengthen its efforts and enhance its accessibility and inclusion to a more diverse population of students and scholars.

*The Purchase College Diversity Plan: Strengthening Inclusive Excellence* endorses diversity strategies and implementation specific to the needs and values of the institution and addresses the factors that affect student retention, such as background, money and finances, grades and academic performance, social factors, bureaucratic factors, external environment, institutional fit, and student intentions (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 29). Under the direction of the Chief Diversity Officer, the plan seeks first to establish what Purchase already does effectively and then how to build the resources to support, expand and refine those efforts in sustainable and strategic ways.

Diversity at Purchase College necessitates contributions from all areas of the college to integrate various cultural and social perspectives in attaining academic excellence and student success. To align with best practices and to create a cornerstone for community-based diversity efforts, Purchase College has established an institutional definition for diversity:

*Diversity at Purchase College is the commitment to a community of equity and access to its academic and artistic promise through the acceptance of all aspects of human difference. This includes but is not limited to age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression and identity, language heritage, learning style, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, status as a veteran and worldview. Through collaboration, creativity and inclusion, Purchase College integrates various cultural and social perspectives to engender excellence in the arts and liberal arts and sciences.*

This definition was created through a collaborative process with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Chief Diversity Officer to provide institutional direction for this plan. With an established definition, Purchase College can focus its attention on the single diversity goal recommended by the 2010-2015 Purchase College Strategic Plan, Middle States Self-Study and the findings of the Middle States Evaluation Team from 2012: *Increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff of Purchase College.*

To achieve this goal, the institution should take an intentional approach by instituting broad Institutional Strategies and pragmatic Implementation Steps for these strategies. The plan establishes Institutional Strategies that focus on refining established student retention programs,

developing diversity resources to promote faculty diversity, and identifying accessibility issues. Each of these broad strategies will have identical Implementation Steps: 1) Communicate the role of the Chief Diversity Officer, 2) Identify existing support programs for first-generation students and students from underrepresented minority groups and establish them as “Signature Diversity Programs,” and 3) Assess diversity efforts, particularly through a Diversity Dashboard (refer to p. 6).

To develop funding for new and existing diversity programs, the Chief Diversity Officer will research various grants, awards, and programs from internal and external organizations, including the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Purchase College Association, Purchase Student Government Association, National Science Agencies such as the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and other entities (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 238). Fundraising options for diversity will also be explored at the direction of the Office of Institutional Advancement. Funding for scholarships and other financial retention tools for students must take priority as pricing and aid is one of the most influential factors in time-to-degree.

While increasing funds for diversity is a necessary component of any diversity plan, *The Purchase College Diversity Plan* concentrates more immediately on refining existing diversity efforts as opposed to depending on new money. Developing new and sustainable funds for diversity will be an ongoing endeavor and realistically may take a significant amount of time to establish.

Strengthening the sense of community for students of color, first-generation students and various underrepresented minority groups is a priority, and the plan will focus on institutionalizing ways to achieve this. The Chief Diversity Officer will work closely with student clubs and organizations focusing on diversity and issues important to students of color while developing training to facilitate conversations that foster inclusion in the community.

The plan would also try to bring more attention to the issues and matters important to Purchase’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer population by establishing an LGBTQ Resource Coordinator. Nationally, LGBTQ issues have become more prominent, and more Americans are self-identifying as part of this community. In the state of New York, the institute found that there were 48,932 same-sex couples as of 2010 and admitted that the figure could be higher as some couples may not have self-identified out of privacy concerns (Williams Institute, 2012).

Focusing on LGBTQ issues also aligns with supporting efforts for ethnic and racial diversity as well as supporting many traditionally aged college students. According to a 2012 Gallup Poll of 120,000 Americans, 4.6% of African-Americans, 4.0% of Hispanic/Latinos, and 4.3% of Asians in the U.S. identify as LGBT, and in the 18-29 age demographic, 8.3% of women and 4.6% of men in the United States identified as LGBT. The LGBTQ Coordinator position proposed in the plan would focus on the outreach, retention and support of this cohort while also providing assistance and expertise in other gender-related college matters, such as Title IX and compliance with the Violence Against Women Act.

As a core value of Purchase College, strengthening diversity efforts cannot wait for more financially convenient times. As the demographics and needs of the students, faculty and staff evolve, diversity needs to be ingrained into the day-to-day functions of the institution, and the plan strives to accomplish this. *The Purchase College Diversity Plan* has different complexities and facets, and implementation will require an institutional effort, but the premise of the plan is simple: Diversity leads to success, and everyone must contribute.

## Overview

As an institutional priority, Diversity at Purchase College necessitates contributions from all areas of the college to integrate various cultural and social perspectives in striving for academic excellence and student success.

### Institutional Definition of Diversity:

Diversity at Purchase College is the commitment to a community of equity and access to its academic and artistic promise through the acceptance of all aspects of human difference. This includes but is not limited to age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression and identity, language heritage, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, status as a veteran and worldview. Through collaboration, creativity and inclusion, Purchase College integrates various cultural and social perspectives to engender excellence in the arts and liberal arts and sciences.

Goal: Increase the diversity of the faculty, staff and students of Purchase College.

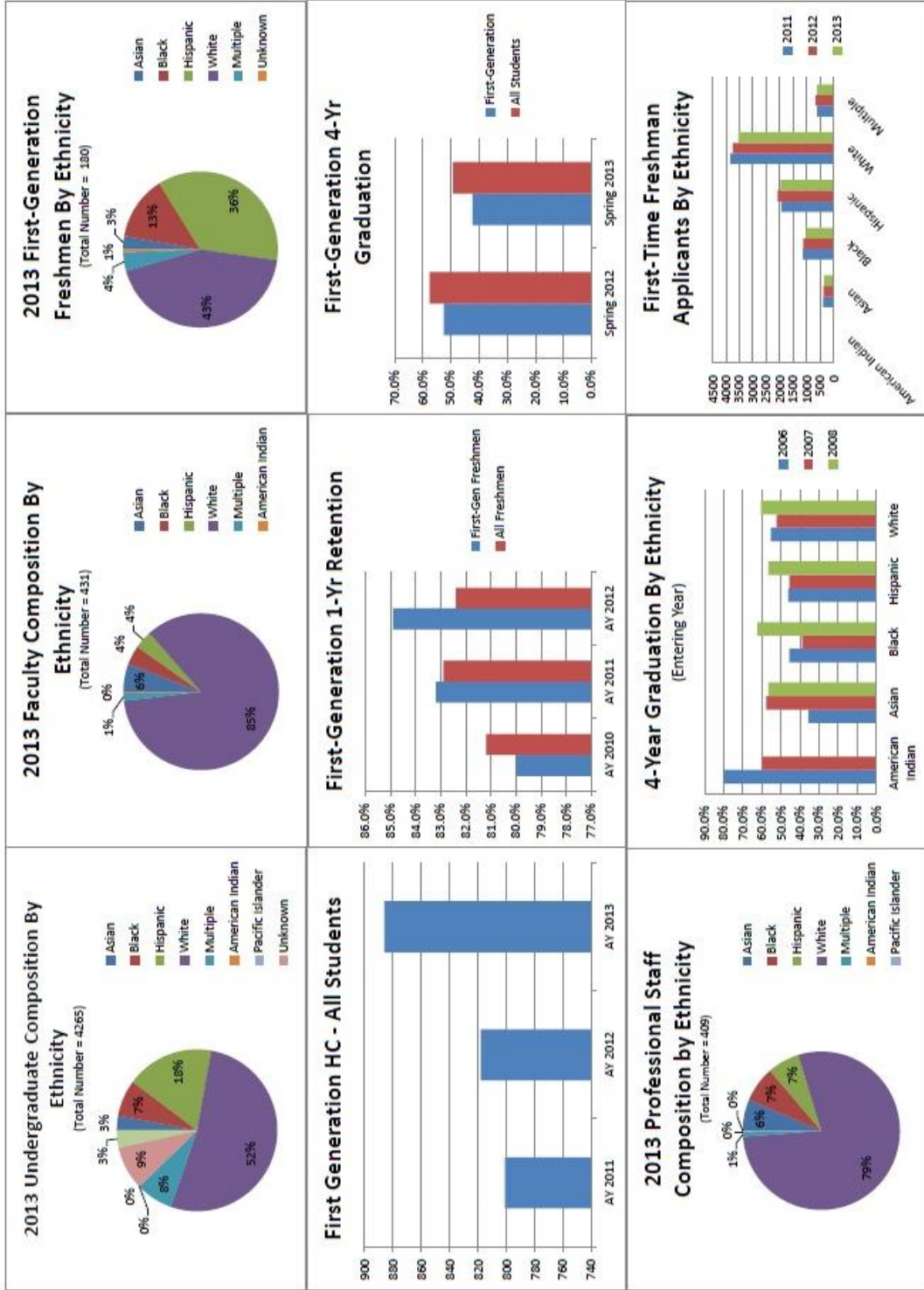
### Institutional Strategies:

- I. Increase the diversity of the student population by refining established retention programs and services and streamlining their delivery to targeted populations.
- II. Foster an environment conducive to faculty and staff diversity by developing funds to support diverse faculty and staff recruitment, mentoring, research and scholarship.
- III. Identify accessibility issues for veterans, individuals with disabilities and all members of the campus community to the curriculum, resources and educational opportunities and collaborate with support offices for solutions.
- IV. Develop administrative processes and financial resources to create new diversity efforts in outreach, programming, recruitment and retention and strengthen existing ones.

### Implementation Steps:

- A. Communicate the role and responsibilities of the Chief Diversity Officer in each institutional strategy.
- B. Identify and strengthen existing retention and engagement programs and resources for First-Generation Students and Underrepresented Minority Groups.
- C. Develop diversity performance indicators, dashboard and assessment tools.

# The Purchase College Diversity Dashboard



To Add: Diversity Money  
Lang/Culture Courses



## **Timeframe for the Purchase College Diversity Plan**

Fall 2014:

- Introduce Diversity Plan to the Purchase College community for discussion.
- Attend various committee and departmental meetings for feedback.
- Request brief introduction at Faculty @ Large.

Spring 2015:

- Finish receiving feedback and make necessary revisions.
- Bring to Senate for a vote by the end of April.

2015-2016:

- Update Diversity Dashboard.
- Consult with departments and Boards of Study about identifying Signature Diversity Program or developing new programs.
- Collect rationales from departments and Boards of Study who request a one-year moratorium (refer to p. 17).
- Encourage piloting programs and promotion of them during this year if possible.

2016-2017:

- Launch Signature Diversity Programs.
- Work with departments and Boards of Study who requested a delay.
- Collect assessment data and update Diversity Dashboard.
- Identify individuals to serve on a sun-setting committee to draft new Diversity Plan for 2019.

2017-2018:

- Launch remaining Signature Diversity Programs.
- Consult with Boards of Study and department who request help.
- Collect assessment data and update Diversity Dashboard.
- Convene drafting committee.
- Start organizing and writing new Diversity Plan

2018-2019:

- Launch remaining Signature Diversity Programs.
- Consult with Boards of Study and departments who request help.
- Collect assessment data and update Diversity Dashboard.
- Finish drafting Diversity Plan and introduce to the community.
- Request vote if necessary.

## **The Purchase College Diversity Plan: Strengthening Inclusive Excellence**

### Introduction

Purchase College is resolute in its mission to offer its unique education in the liberal arts and sciences and the conservatory arts, and exploring the true meaning of “Think Wide Open” has never been more relevant to the students, faculty and staff than it is today. Purchase College has endured the economic downturn of the past several years and an influx of change, but the members of the community through their strength of character emerged stalwart in their educational charge. With this focus and vigor, Purchase College can now enhance its accessibility and inclusion to a more diverse population of students and scholars. As an institutional priority, Diversity at Purchase College necessitates contributions from all areas of the college to integrate various cultural and social perspectives in attaining academic excellence and student success.

Diversity has always been one of the top priorities of the school. Through bridge programs, community service, the success of the EOP and MAP programs, and various initiatives, diversity is a core value of Purchase College. However, these efforts must be expanded as the import of diversity, while founded in moral responsibility, has evolved into an essential component of a changing and more competitive society (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 247). The emergence of a knowledge-based global economy and changing demographics along with persisting political, social and economic inequalities increase the immediacy for Purchase College to engage diversity in every aspect of the institution (Williams, 2013, pp. 34-35).

Diversity is not a separate ideal or a supplemental goal to the mission of the college. To engage in the issues of diversity is to engage in academic excellence and student success. A racially diverse campus can often have a positive impact on GPAs, student self-confidence and self-efficacy, and leadership and problem-solving abilities (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 76). An environment such as this also leads to increased creativity and critical thinking (Williams, 2013, p. 2).

By supporting diversity in the faculty and staff through grants and resources for scholarship, research, programs and recruitment, faculty and staff can engender student success through their expertise as well as mentoring and serving as role models for first-generation students and students from underrepresented minority groups. Diversity is at the core of institutional success.

In these renewed efforts, one must recognize that Purchase College already contributes substantively to this ideal, and refocusing on diversity does not mean the automatic creation of new programs and services that may strain the time and resources of a hardworking and dedicated community. The Purchase College Diversity Plan endorses strategies and implementation specific to the needs and values of the institution and aims to address the factors that affect student retention, such as background, money and finances, grades and academic performance, social factors, bureaucratic factors, external environment, institutional fit, and student intentions (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 29). Under the direction of the Chief Diversity Officer, the plan seeks first to establish what Purchase already does effectively and

then how to build the resources to support, expand and refine those efforts in sustainable and strategic ways.

In the ever-changing landscape of education, demographics and the economy, nothing is more fundamental to success and creativity than a diversity of ideas and perspectives. The academic and artistic promise of Purchase College has never been more in reach for a broader population of students, faculty, and staff, and taking the step to commit to diversity now ensures the sustainability of institutional excellence in the present and in the years to come.

### National Demographics and Trends

The following are relevant demographics, statistics, and trends relating to the national and educational landscapes regarding diversity:

- From 1980 to 2009, Latino students pursuing an undergraduate degree rose from 4 to 13 percent, and African American students pursuing a degree rose from 10 to 15 percent; however, during this time, White students fell from 83 to 62 percent (Williams, 2013, p. 47).
- “Between 2004-05 and 2014-15, the nation’s public schools are projected to produce nearly 197,000 fewer white non-Hispanic high school graduates (a decline of 11 percent); over this same period, the public high schools will produce almost 207,000 more Hispanic graduates (an increase of 54 percent)” (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 8).
- “Between 1997-1998 and 2007-2008... bachelor’s degrees awarded to Hispanic students increased 86 percent, from 66,000 to 123,000; and the number awarded to Black students increased 55 percent, from 98,300 to 152,000 (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). In 2007 - 2008 Blacks earned 10 percent and Hispanics 8 percent, of all bachelor’s degrees, up from 10 years earlier when they earned 8 and 6 percent, respectively” (Williams, 2013, p. 51).
- “Specifically, enrollment is expected to grow more rapidly among part-time students (+15.9 percent), women (16.4 percent), graduate students (+17.7 percent), and non-Caucasians (+31.2 percent)... The growth in non-Caucasian students is driven by projected 45.5 percent increase in Hispanic students and 24.5 percent in Asian/Pacific Islanders (NCES, 2011)” and slower growth rates among undergrads, Caucasians, males, and full-time students (Hundreiser, 2012, p. 5-8). (between now and 2020)
- “The U.S. Department of Education’s latest annual status report illustrates the lack of diversity among full-time faculty: 4.9 percent are non-Hispanic African American, 2.8 percent are Hispanic, 5.8 percent are Asian American/Pacific Islander, and 0.4 percent are American Indians (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2012)” (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 283).
- Non-Hispanic white Americans currently account for 66% of the population will only account for 46% by 2050 (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 9).

- In a poll of 120,000 Americans, 4.6% of African-Americans, 4.0% of Hispanic/Latinos, and 4.3% of Asians in the U.S. identify as LGBT (Gallup Politics).
- In the same poll, among traditionally aged college students in 2012, ages 18-29, 8.3% of women and 4.6% of men in the United States identified as LGBT (Gallup Politics).

For more, please refer to the Purchase College Diversity Dashboard and Appendix A (NY State Demographics).

### Defining Diversity

To align with best practices and to create a cornerstone for the next phase of diversity efforts, Purchase College has established an institutional definition for diversity:

*Diversity at Purchase College is the commitment to a community of equity and access to its academic and artistic promise through the acceptance of all aspects of human difference. This includes but is not limited to age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression and identity, language heritage, learning style, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, status as a veteran and worldview. Through collaboration, creativity and an inclusive environment, Purchase College integrates various cultural and social perspectives to engender excellence in the arts and liberal arts and sciences.*

This definition was created through a collaborative process with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Chief Diversity Officer to provide institutional direction for the Purchase College Diversity Plan. For traditional definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion and multiculturalism, please refer to Appendix B. In establishing this definition, there is a clear institutional focus on aspects of access and inclusion for a broad range of groups to foster excellence and success

### Diversifying Purchase and Institutional Strategies

The 2010-2015 Purchase College Strategic Plan, Middle States Self-Study, and the findings of the Middle States Evaluation Team from 2012 establish one primary diversity goal: ***Increase the diversity of students, faculty, and staff of Purchase College.***

The goal is clear and direct, and the Purchase College community has worked diligently to achieve this goal, but the contributions and work of many of its members can now be harnessed and refocused by setting four institutional strategies for diversity to achieve this goal:

- I. Increase the diversity of the student population by refining established retention programs and services and streamlining their delivery to targeted populations.
- II. Foster an environment conducive to faculty and staff diversity by developing funds to support diverse faculty and staff recruitment, mentoring, research and scholarship.

- III. Identify accessibility issues for veterans, individuals with disabilities and all members of the campus community to the curriculum, resources and educational opportunities and collaborate with support offices for solutions.
- IV. Develop administrative processes and financial resources to create new diversity efforts in outreach, programming, recruitment and retention and strengthen existing ones.

Following these institutional strategies, every division, department and Board of Study has the ability to contribute to diversity without overextending or drawing from their operational responsibilities. In fact, many offices already align with one or more of these strategies in their respective missions, but there is now an opportunity to formalize and measure these efforts to ensure the necessary populations are benefitting from this work.

### Implementation Steps

The definition of diversity and the institutional strategies provide sound direction and parameters for how to expand diversity on campus. However, implementing new diversity initiatives and sustaining successful ones require communication, coordination, and a clear sense of actions and projects departments can execute to coincide with their daily responsibilities, performance programs, and fields of expertise. There are three main implementation strategies:

- A. Communicate the role and responsibilities of the Chief Diversity Officer in each institutional strategy.
- B. Identify and strengthen existing retention and engagement programs and resources for First-Generation Students and Underrepresented Minority Groups.
- C. Develop diversity performance indicators, dashboard and assessment tools.

These implementation strategies will help operationalize both the definition of Diversity at Purchase College and the three broader institutional strategies to guide the efforts of every office and Board of Study throughout the institution.

### The Role of the Chief Diversity Officer

Communicating and clarifying the role and scope of the Chief Diversity Officer is a necessary first step to coordinate existing diversity initiatives and develop resources to create or sustain programs. This cross-divisional position will monitor the diversity work of various offices and boards and offer support and resources while also eliminating inefficiency and redundancy in programming. The Chief Diversity Officer will centralize all diversity programs, policies, and services into the college's diversity website to help streamline communication of these programs to first-generation students, underrepresented minority groups, the campus community and external constituencies. Over the span of the next five years, the responsibilities of the position will include the following:

- Collect information on departmental diversity initiatives, programs, services and assessment data and create a system to communicate this information to targeted cohorts.
- Assist with acquiring disaggregated statistics to provide transparency and accurate data for grant and award applications.
- Develop financial resources to support diversity initiatives, programs, research, scholarship and diverse faculty and staff recruitment in collaboration with the Purchase College Association, Purchase College Student Government Association, Sponsored Funds, Sponsored Research, and the Office of Institutional Advancement.
- Identify diversity funds for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to oversee to ensure input and guidance from faculty governance on how to award resources.
- Establish a strong working relationship with student clubs and organizations focusing on diversity, cultural awareness and education, and issues important to students of color.
- Manage a Coordinator of LGBTQ Resources to create and review policies and practices to support the college's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning faculty, students, and staff as well as collaborate with various offices to develop effective LGBTQ programming.
- Consult with the Office of Access and Accommodations, Ombudsmen, Learning Center and the Division of Operations to identify and resolve accessibility issues, physical barriers, and areas of concern on campus for individuals with disabilities.
- Create external marketing materials and revamp the diversity webpage with the Office of Communications and Creative Services to increase visibility of diversity efforts to relevant constituencies.
- Present at specific Admissions events and pre-enrollment programs to help welcome students of color, first-generation students and their families to the Purchase College community.
- Build strategic partnerships with external agencies and organizations to create more opportunities for community service, service learning, and diversity funding.
- Inform the campus community of the college's diversity capabilities and communicate progress through publishing diversity performance indicators.
- Monitor the involvement of Minority or Women-Owned Business Enterprises on campus.
- Coordinate efforts between the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the Professional Staff Committee to support diverse staff projects, recruitment and research.

- Develop diversity training for faculty, students, and staff to facilitate discussions on race, privilege, intersectionality, and language and pilot it during the 2015-16 academic year.
- Establish a system to sustain relevant diversity-related training to faculty, staff and students.

Pushing and clarifying administrative and support services as well as helping first-generation students establish support networks are essential (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 81). However, an integral component of the CDO framework is to ensure the proper resources and support to foster diversity on campus. Consistent with best practices as well as the established Three Organization Models for Diversity (Appendix C), the role of the modern Chief Diversity Officer contributes substantively to all areas of the college from student success to faculty scholarship to resource development and external partnerships.

### *Developing Financial Resources for Diversity*

One of the most important responsibilities for the Chief Diversity Officer is to develop financial resources and support to first-generation students and students from underrepresented minority groups. In terms of student success, research suggests that family income is the primary factor in the connection between students of similar socioeconomic backgrounds and time-to-degree (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 71). This is problematic as many first-generation students and students from underrepresented minority groups come from low-income households. Nationally, the median family income for black and Hispanic families is approximately 43% less than the typical Caucasian family (Hundreiser, 2012, p. 9).

In his book, *Strategic Diversity Leadership*, CDO and Vice Provost at University of Wisconsin – Madison, Damon Williams states: “Demographically, low-income students are more likely than their higher-income peers to be African American, Hispanic, and female, and to be the first in their families to go to college” (Williams, 2013, p. 54). In their book, *First-Generation College Students: Understanding and Improving the Experience from Recruitment to Commencement*, authors Lee Ward, Michael J. Siegel, and Zebulun Davenport agree with this assertion, adding that some of these families also have bad credit and significant debt, limiting financial options (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 70).

To increase funding for new and existing diversity programs, the Chief Diversity Officer will research various grants, awards, and programs from internal and external organizations, including the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Purchase College Association, Purchase Student Government Association, National Science Agencies such as the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and other entities (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 238). Fundraising options for diversity will also be explored at the direction of the Office of Institutional Advancement.

Depending on the nature of the grant or program, the Chief Diversity Officer may apply to a specific source directly or help others develop competitive proposals. However, one of the main

goals is to create an internal diversity funding source for Purchase College faculty and staff modeled after the Student Engagement Grants.

While the Chief Diversity Officer and various offices will develop financial support for a variety of diversity initiatives, including diverse faculty and staff recruitment and development, funding for scholarships and other financial retention tools for students must take priority to aid students in graduating in four years. Given the financial constraints of many the backgrounds of these students, a fifth year may not be an option. Efficient administrative processes for streamlined delivery is also very important as even the slightest delays can be detrimental: “Pricing and aid have an even greater impact on time-to-degree, a finding of importance for policy and one that makes a great deal of sense, because even temporary financial disruptions are likely to prove real setbacks for students seeking to graduate in four years who are struggling to make ends meet” (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 184).

The Purchase College Diversity Plan concentrates more on refining existing diversity efforts as opposed to depending on new money. Developing new and sustainable funds for diversity will be an ongoing endeavor and realistically may take a significant amount of time to establish, but as diversity is a core value of Purchase College, strengthening diversity efforts cannot wait for more financially convenient times. As the demographics and needs of the students, faculty and staff evolve, diversity needs to be ingrained into the day-to-day functions of the institution.

### *Supporting Faculty Projects and Research in Diversity*

Supporting faculty research, publications, projects, performances, and exhibitions is a vital tenet in fostering diversity throughout Purchase College. With a strong reputation for academic and artistic excellence, providing resources to faculty can help with diversity in the curriculum, independent studies, Senior Projects, and recruitment of faculty and students.

There are various ways this support can help with faculty recruitment. It is recommended that “resources like funding for travel to conferences that facilitate exposure to more diverse candidates, sponsoring presentations by faculty members who have led candidate searches, and providing class buyouts for those leading the effort to diversify the candidate pool” (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 288). Given the potential to raise the profile of Purchase’s diversity efforts, faculty members are strong partners in helping diversify not just the composition of the faculty but of the students as well.

Guidance for how diversity resources for faculty can be best allocated should also emanate primarily from faculty governance, and there is already a standing committee in the faculty governance structure through which these decisions can be made: The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, formerly known as the Affirmative Action Committee, is an established committee in the faculty governance structure and has already done substantive work in exploring diversity topics, issues, and initiatives, including input on the definition of Diversity at Purchase College.



Through close work with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, it is one of the top priorities of the Chief Diversity Officer and the institution's broader diversity efforts to invest in this level of faculty support.

*Coordinator of LGBTQ Resources (pending budgetary approval)*

Another necessary step for both the Chief Diversity Officer and the institution is establishing a dedicated staff member to focus on issues, policies and programs related to LGBTQ students, faculty and staff. In 2009, the Williams Institute of the University of California - Los Angeles Law School estimated that roughly 4% or nine million American describe themselves as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. An estimated 19 million American have engaged in same-sex behavior, and almost 25.6 million "acknowledge at least some same-sex attraction. They also estimated that there are "high concentrations of same-sex couples within communities of color" (Williams, 2013, p. 41). According to a 2012 Gallup Poll of 120,000 Americans, 4.6% of African-Americans, 4.0% of Hispanic/Latinos, and 4.3% of Asians in the U.S. identify as LGBT.

Among traditionally aged college students in 2012 in the same Gallup poll, ages 18-29, 8.3% of women and 4.6% of men in the United States identified as LGBT. In a study published by National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute in 2003, 14 institutions found that "27% of faculty and staff and more than 40% of LGBT student hid their identity to avoid discrimination, and that 36% of students said that they had experienced harassment on campus in the previous academic year" (Williams, 2013, p. 269).

In the state of New York, the institute found that there were 48,932 same-sex couples as of 2010 and admitted that the figure could be higher as some couples may not have self-identified out of privacy concerns (Williams Institute, 2012).

Despite the continuing growth of this cohort, harassment and fear of discrimination persist, and while Purchase College has cultivated a reputation as an LGBTQ-friendly institution, there is no central administrator or office that advocates solely on behalf of the College's LGBTQ students, staff and faculty. This position would focus on the outreach, retention and support of this cohort.

There are courses throughout the Purchase College Catalog that focus on LGBTQ issues, especially in the Gender Studies Board of Study. There are also some non-academic programs and services designed for the College's LGBTQ student community, but the efforts are limited. The Office of Community Engagement and the PSGA offer a variety of programs, including two student clubs in Complexity and LGBTQ, and the Counseling Center offers targeted support to students undergoing emotional and psychological issues specific to the LGBTQ community. However, there is no assessment of how these services contribute to the retention or success of this population, nor is there a measure of the overall level of outreach.

The scope of the aforementioned programs and services is limited to students. There seems to be no official campus community, organization, or support programs specific to LGBTQ faculty and staff. Given the shifting legal and social landscapes affecting the LGBTQ community as well as growing attention to issues of transgender people and gender identification, this position's

support for the College's LGBTQ personnel has the potential to protect many members of the college community and contribute significantly to faculty, staff and student retention.

In communication with the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the issue of students voluntarily being able to identify as an LGBTQ student for general tracking purposes as well as for retention and success is a pressing concern. The Coordinator of the LGBTQ Resources would have the initial task of creating a comprehensive overview of the College LGBTQ-community, including any data collected when SUNY determines a unified policy to implement on campus. This position could also provide assistance and expertise in other gender-related college matters, such as Title IX and compliance with the Violence Against Women Act.

### Retention and Engagement Programs for First-Generation Students and Students from Underrepresented Minority Groups

Fostering diversity is an institutional effort, and the contributions of the Chief Diversity Officer have their limits. The growing population of entering first-generation students requires the attention of the entire community as 60% of this cohort leaves higher education without graduating (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 32). In the book *Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*, noted scholars and researchers William G. Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos and Michael S. McPherson provide perspective and data regarding the factors affecting first-generation students: "Both parental education and family income are strongly associated with graduation rates even when considered simultaneously and after controlling for related differences in student characteristics, particularly academic preparation" (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 42). The corresponding figures from their study and additional graduation information are in Appendix D.

Given the negative impact when parental education, cultural capital and financial resources are lacking, attempting to neutralize the effects on first-generation college students, students of color and underrepresented minority groups provides a course of action for how many offices can contribute to diversity on campus.

Focusing primarily on expanding resources and providing cultural capital, every department and Boards of Study in Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs should identify an existing program, service or resource it offers and document it with the Chief Diversity Officer as the department or board's "Signature Diversity Program."

All of these programs and services must be sustainable, implemented at least annually, planned and documented with the Chief Diversity Officer during the 2015-2016 academic year, and incorporated into the financial planning of each office or Board of Study.

Programs should be implemented no later than Fall 2016, but Boards of Study and departments can apply for a one-year moratorium on implementation to be reviewed by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The Chief Diversity Officer will collect data and reports on these programs at the end of each academic year from 2016 to 2019.

In determining which program to choose, departments and Boards of Study should select an initiative or program that fulfills at least ONE of the following criteria:

- Strengthens a sense of community for students of color, students from underrepresented minority groups, first-generation students, first-year commuter students or international students through targeted outreach, resource programs and inclusive social events.
- Educates first-generation Accepted Students and/or their families to the expectations and rigor of their declared majors prior to their first semester at Purchase.
- Develops funding sources to contribute to scholarships or new or existing diversity programs.
- Provides additional instruction, tutoring, or mentoring to first-generation students, low-income students or students in the EOP or MAP programs.
- Increases curricular, programmatic, physical, or scholarly access for Purchase College students and personnel with disabilities.
- Provides alternative support options for students who cannot attend faculty or administrative office hours due to work.
- Serves a local at-risk community through an independent study, internship, community service program or service-learning opportunity.
- Establishes collaboration between faculty or students from the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of the Arts in an issue of social justice, such as access, equity, privilege, discrimination and other related topics.
- Increases recruitment efforts for first-generation students by Board of Study.
- Clarifies financial processes and resources to help students realistically determine how to pay for their education in the short and long terms.
- Provides opportunities for students to assist faculty and staff research in diversity-related projects and scholarship.
- Affords parents and family members of first-generation students and students from certain underrepresented minority groups the opportunity to connect to the college community through promoted events and performances.
- Strengthens advising, financial and transitional processes and resources for students who are veterans.
- Assists students of color in pursuing advanced degrees

Departments and Boards of Study have the option to create a new diversity program or initiative if they choose, and the Chief Diversity Officer can provide support in developing this if requested. If a department or Board of Study cannot identify one program or initiative that can fulfill one of the criteria mentioned above, it is strongly recommended that the board or department develop one that does fulfill one of the criteria above but is also realistic to the resources and time-commitment it can afford. Once again, the CDO can help develop such a program in collaboration with the department or board if it chooses.

The designated program does not have to be exclusive to first-generation students, students of color or students from underrepresented minority groups. In fact, many students who are not from these groups will benefit from these programs and services and should be allowed to participate in many of them. However, in programs and services that are open to all students, it is important that communication and promotion of them are reaching the targeted cohort.

It is always important to remember in these programs that to target first-generation students in a balanced and empowering way, institutions must not overdramatize their needs or “create a stigma for them in the campus community” (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 115).

### *Early Intervention*

The first priority in helping first-generation students is to “erase the cultural capital deficit of first-generation students as soon and as completely as possible,” resulting in the need to incorporate retention and engagement programs and resource awareness throughout not just their freshman year but earlier in their recruitment phases as well (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 106). Research shows that “improving the first-year experiences of students from low-income families and those of black and Hispanic men may have the potential to narrow modestly -- although not eliminate -- disparities in graduation rates...” (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 56). Given the criteria above many departments and Boards of Study may find a natural entry point of communication for both first-generation students and student from underrepresented minority groups in recruitment programs, Summer Orientation, First-Year Seminar, academic advising, financial aid advising, and the residential curriculum.

It is important to emphasize that these interventions should not be exclusive to residential students as there is a population of first-generation students who live at home and must commute. First-generation students of traditional age who live at home can encounter difficulties in finding time or space to study, prioritizing school over family issues or precollege friends, and expressing new thoughts, vocabulary, styles, and music from the college environment (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 73). There is a great deal of potential to refine or revise current retention and engagement programs to meet the needs of this group, but for both groups, entry activities and rituals that focus on academic socialization and expectation need to be highlighted just as much as social and ritualistic ones (Davenport, Sigel, and Ward, 2012, p. 29).

### *Student Financial Awareness*

As much as more funding for financial aid and scholarships will always be immensely helpful for many first-generation students and numerous other student cohorts, increased financial awareness of existing resources and the effects of fees, tuition changes, and student loan debt will also have a very positive effect. For students at flagship universities, a net increase of \$1,000 for students in one year can be strongly "associated with a decline of 4.5 percentage points in four-year graduation rate for students in the lowest income group" (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 184).

For many students, "reliable, simple, and predictable provision of financial aid is important not just to initial access to college but to success in graduating" (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 189). This suggests that short-term financial planning is useful, but in terms of graduation, knowing how every semester and year will be paid for will be more valuable in the long term.

Increased financial support will be best utilized if it is helping students decrease their work hours to a more manageable level: "Hours of work and employment rates among traditional students... have been growing, and work is no doubt a more important source of funding for student from less affluent families. There is also evidence that working long hours while in school is associated with less study time, lower grades, and lower college completion rates -- and probably has a negative influence on other parts of the college experience as well" (Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson, 2013, p. 174)

### Diversity Performance Indicators and Assessment

The targeted retention programs and services above will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the retention and success of Purchase's first-generation students and students from underrepresented minority groups, but to ensure the effectiveness of these processes, it is necessary to assess the relevant data and outcomes of this effort. This information will help with the intentionality of the institution's efforts.

To align with current diversity theory, programs and services should be "intentional, evidence-based, and grounded in best practices. These best practices include developing strategic diversity leadership scorecards/dashboards, campus climate studies, program evaluations, diversity audits, performance reviews, learning forums, and collective decision-making processes to define new organizational possibilities and approaches to leading change and transformation" (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 249). Of these assessment methods, the following are the most appropriate for Purchase College at this time:

- The Purchase College Diversity Dashboard (see page 6)
- Documenting current diversity efforts or "Signature Diversity Program" with the Chief Diversity Officer using the PACE Model (see below) and providing a narrative of the outcomes after the program.

- Including the results of the “Signature Diversity Program” and other diversity programs in the respective Annual Reports.
- Community Forums on Diversity Topics

The Purchase College Diversity Dashboard provides a broad, institutional view of the college’s diversity efforts through metrics and performance indicators specific to Diversity at Purchase College. These include the composition of the student body, faculty, professional staff and first-generation students by ethnicity, student success indicators for certain groups, and other factors related to diversity. The dashboard will be updated every year and compared to previous dashboards by academic year to monitor progress and trends.

To help organize the individual responsibilities of a “Signature Diversity Program,” “responsibility charting” using the PACE Model is recommended. The PACE Model is particularly helpful “for maintaining a viable diversity vision during economically challenging times” and clarifies the CDO’s role in projects where applicable (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, pp. 125-126). The following are roles in the PACE Model:

- P = Process Leader: The process leader is the individual or office that is responsible for overseeing the process and making sure the proper personnel are involved.
- A = Approver: The approver determines whether the process is executed.
- C = Contributor(s): A contributor provides advice or guidance on the project and may help with the execution; however, contributors are not always required.
- E = Executors: Executors finally implement and deliver the outcome of the project.

Every “Signature Diversity Program” should have a faculty or staff member assigned to one of these roles. At the discretion of the department or Board of Study, an individual can assume more than one role of these roles in the same program.

With renewed efforts towards institutional diversity, an organized and data-informed approach is required. This assessment will also be very helpful in displaying quantitative connections between diversity efforts and issues of student success.

### Conclusion

No member of the Purchase College community needs to be convinced of the social and moral imperative of diversity, and Purchase College has always been willing to engage this issue and has a demonstrated record of commitment to the issue. A sense of social justice is ingrained in many of the students, faculty and staff of the college, and they have expressed as much through their research, scholarship, forums, programming, activism, community service, performances and exhibitions.

The educational case for diversity has never been clearer: “the presence of a diverse student body, particularly an ethnically and racially diverse student body, helps to create the type of rich learning environment that colleges and universities need to prepare students for a diverse and global world” (Wade-Golden & Williams, 2013, p. 364). Diversity is not supplemental. It is no longer optional to introduce students to curricular, cultural, ethnic, racial and social diversity, and now is the time to harness and expand the institution’s efforts.

The Purchase College Diversity Plan has different complexities and facets, and implementation will require an institutional effort, but the premise of the plan is simple: Diversity leads to success, and everyone must contribute.





## Appendix B: Definitions<sup>1</sup>

Diversity – *Diversity* refers to all of the ways in which people differ, including primary characteristics, such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, mental and physical abilities, and sexual orientation; and secondary characteristics, such as education, income, religion, work experience, language skills, geographic location, and family status. Put simply, *diversity* refers to all of the characteristics that make individuals different from each other, and in its most basic form refers to heterogeneity.

Equity – Historically, *equity* refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of underrepresented and oppressed individuals and groups. Equity is about ending systematic discrimination against people on their identity or background.

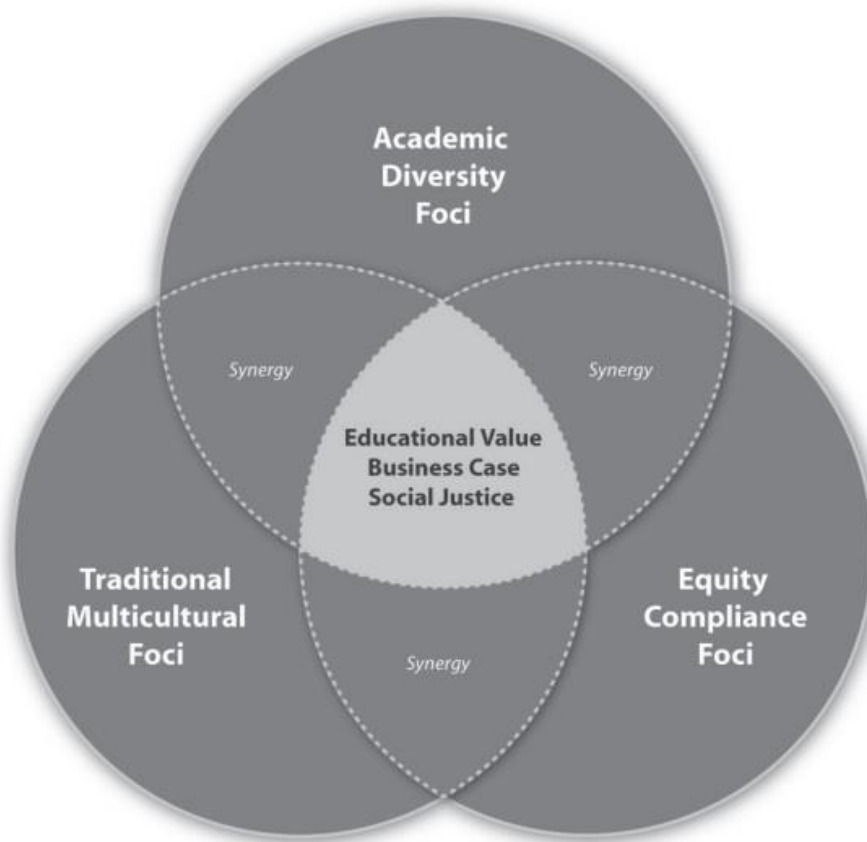
Inclusion – Inclusion exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways.

Multiculturalism – Multiculturalism acknowledges and promotes the acceptance and understanding of different cultures living together within a community. As such, multiculturalism promotes the peaceful coexistence of diverse races, ethnicities, and other cultural groups in a given social environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, Damon. (2013). *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education*. pp. 90-91. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

## Appendix C: Three Models for Organizational Diversity<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 2. Three Models of Organizational Diversity in Higher Education**

Academic Diversity Foci (ie. Learning, Diversity, and Research Model) - main areas include diversity in the curriculum, Language and Culture courses, supporting research and scholarship related to diversity, living-learning communities, Boards of Study related to culture, ethnicity, gender, and race, study abroad, and civic, global, inquiry, integrative, and service learning.

Equity/Compliance Foci (ie. Affirmative Action and Equity Model) - main areas include access, affirmative action, compositional diversity, race-sensitive admissions, and discrimination complaints.

Traditional Multicultural and Inclusion Foci - main areas include cultural understanding of ethnic and racially diverse minorities, LGBT support, identity programs, multicultural centers and offices, campus climate, and general diversity clubs, programs and services (Williams, 2013, p. 135-152).

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<sup>2</sup> Williams, D. and Clowney, C. "Strategic Planning for Diversity and Organizational Change: A Primer for Higher-Education Leadership." *Effective Practices for Academic Leaders*. (2007). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

**Appendix D: Graduation Rates by Parental Education, Family Income, Race/Ethnicity & Gender and Selectivity Cluster<sup>3</sup>**

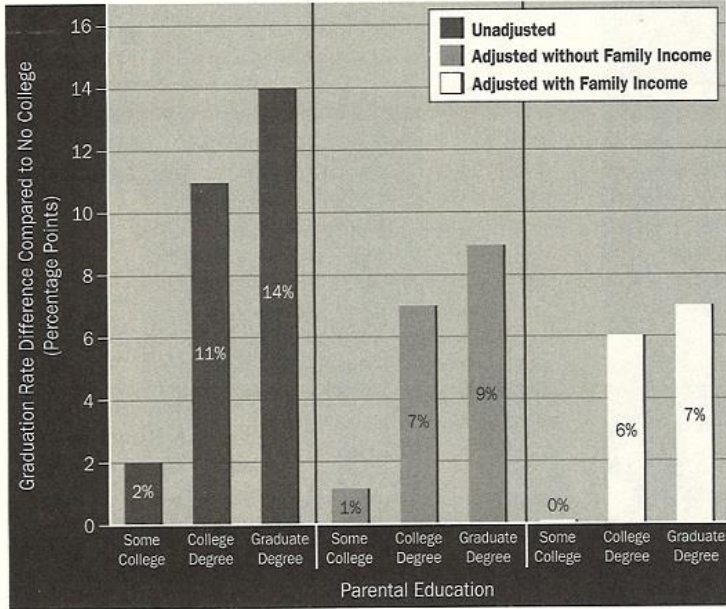


Figure 3.8. Differences in Six-Year Graduation Rates by Parental Education (Compared to No College), 1999 Entering Cohort, Flagships, Unadjusted and Adjusted

Source: Flagships Database.

Note: Adjusted differences control for SAT/ACT scores, high school GPA, state residency status, race/ethnicity, gender, and university attended.

<sup>3</sup> Bowen, W. G., Chingos, M. M., & McPherson, M. S. (2009). *Crossing the Finishing Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities*. pp. 42-44. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

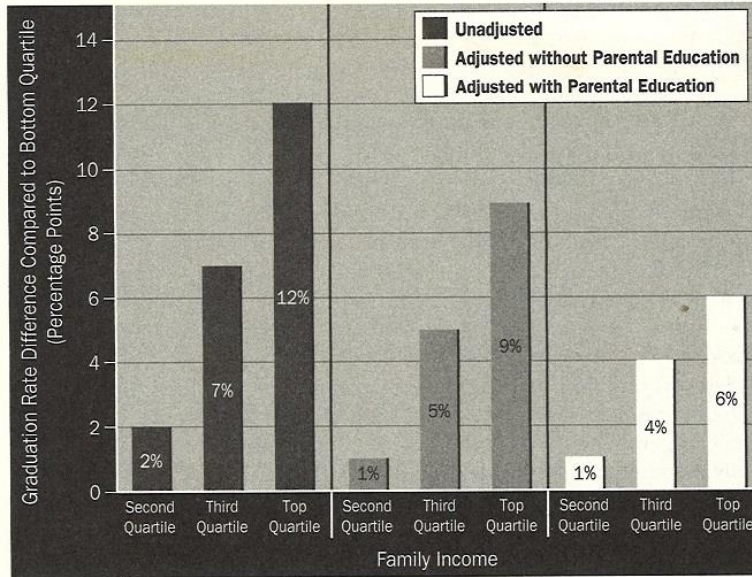


Figure 3.9. Differences in Six-Year Graduation Rates by Family Income (Compared to Bottom Quartile), 1999 Entering Cohort, Flagships, Unadjusted and Adjusted  
 Source: Flagships Database.  
 Note: Adjusted differences control for SAT/ACT scores, high school GPA, state residency status, race/ethnicity, gender, and university attended.

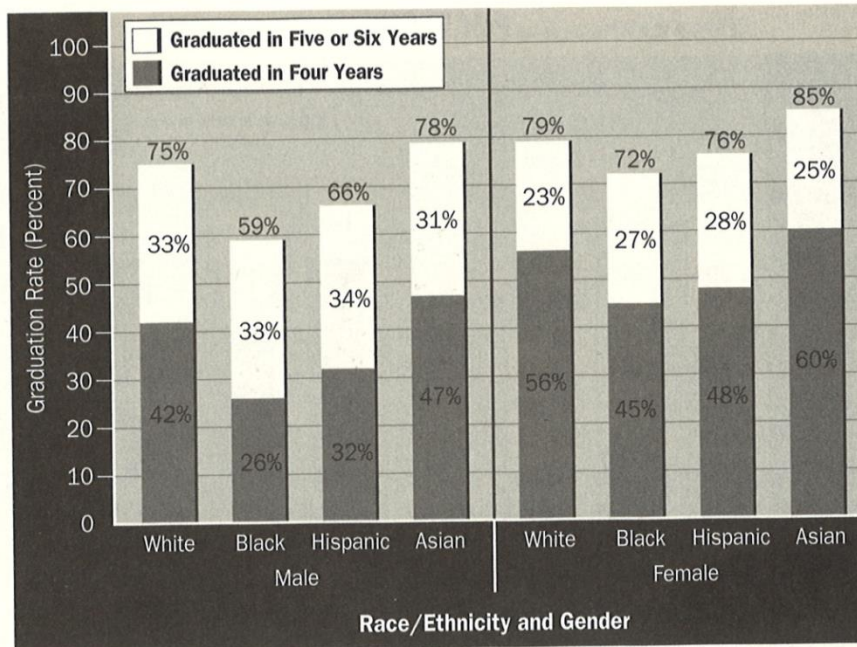


Figure 3.12a. Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 1999  
 Entering Cohort, Flagships  
 Source: Flagships Database.

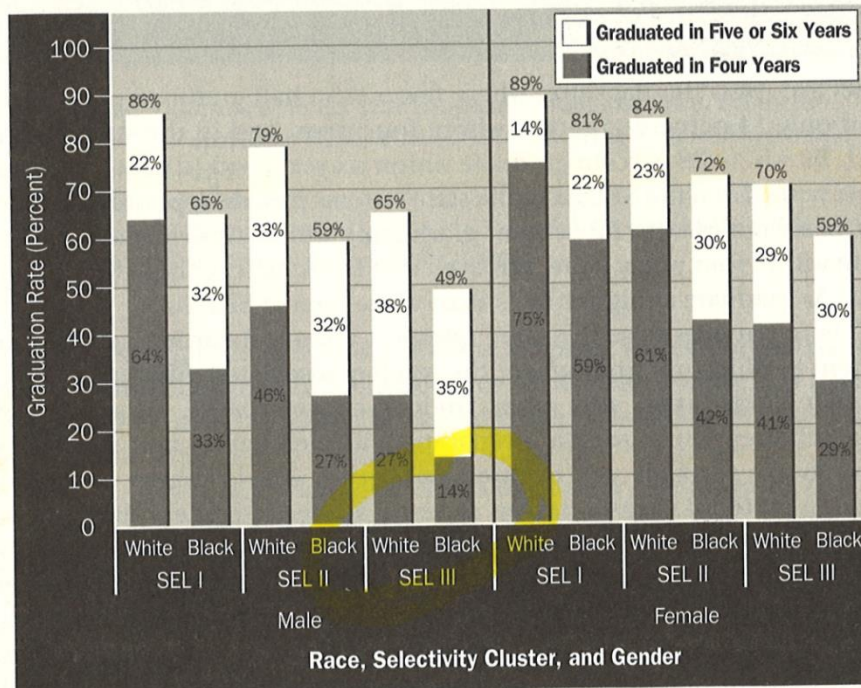


Figure 3.12b. Graduation Rates by Race, Selectivity Cluster, and Gender, 1999  
 Entering Cohort, Flagships  
 Source: Flagships Database.

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