

Perceptions on Diversity in a Multicultural Setting

Laurentian University

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Abstract: This research is a survey of two samples, one among the 450 Faculty and the other among the 5, 200 full-time and 2, 200 part-time students of a bilingual and multicultural university located in Ontario, Canada. Diversity characteristics that are examined include ethnicity, gender, age, job status, marital status, study program, faculty, and disability. The variables under study include inclusiveness, class atmosphere, perceived behavior of students and faculty, support for research, working environment, safety, organizational image, and performance expectations.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Diversity Training, Higher Education, University Professors, Human Resources Management

Introduction

AS PART OF their local diversity initiatives, several U.S. universities have conducted surveys in the recent years. This research proposed to examine how both students and faculty members perceived diversity in a Canadian university setting. Since its foundation in 1960, Laurentian University has been recognized as a multicultural institution whose faculty and student bodies comprise not only Aboriginals (mainly from Ojibway/Chippewa First Nations), Anglophone and Francophone students but also growing proportions of foreigners. This research will describe how students and faculty perceive the Administration, themselves, and each other with respect to a number of factors related to diversity.

Definition

While multiculturalism refers to the presence of people with several different cultures in a specific setting, diversity is also defined as a set of human characteristics by which people are perceived, or perceive themselves, as different from each other. These include: age, gender (male, female), sexual orientation (heterosexual, or "GLBT" i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or questioning/not sure), diagnosed disability (learning disability, psychological disability, and physical disability), ethnicity (European origin, Asian origin, African origin, Aboriginal or Native), citizenship (Canadian or "International" for citizens of other countries), religious affiliation, ideology and politics, marital status, job classification, rank, income and socioeconomic, as well as geographic and regional differences. The choice of categories varies between different countries, particularly for ethnicity (the term "race" will

not be used here, as it has no scientific basis, see Gould, 1996, Cohen, 1998): for example, in Germany, Turkish immigrants would represent an ethnic category in diversity surveys, while, in the United States, Hispanic people due to their large historic presence in formerly Mexican states and to the large level of immigration from Latin America are also designated as an ethnic group in diversity studies.

Diversity in the Corporate World and Public Sector

The adoption of Equal Employment Opportunity legislation in the United States has obliged employers in both the public and private sectors to hire and accommodate minorities. Similar legislations have also been adopted in several industrialised countries (Egan and Bendick, 2003). It is also a fact that societies in developed countries, through immigration from several parts of the world, become more diversified (Schraeder, 1999; Statistics Canada, 2003) and render diversity a challenge for employers. In countries like Germany and France, for example, since the 1970's, changes in the workplace have been brought about by the presence of Muslim workers wishing to practice their religion during their working days.

Several studies have demonstrated that developing practices leading to proper diversity management can either become a problem (Arai, Wanca-Thibault, and Shockley-Zalabak, 2001) or a strategic advantage (Cox, 1993; Baytos, 1995; Perks and Sanderson, 2000; Richard et al., 2004). Wentling and Palm-Rivas (1998, 2000) studied eight multinational corporations headquartered in the United States and found international success dependent in part on planning diversity initiatives both at headquarters



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and within business units. They found that firms who implement diversity management procedures see improvements in productivity, remain more competitive, see better work relationships among employees, enhance social responsibility, and address legal concerns such as Equal Employment Opportunity legislation at the same time.

Some researchers (Johnson, 1995; Clair, Beatty & Maclean, 2005) argue that it is desirable to include all types of differences in a definition of diversity because it allows everyone to feel part of a valuable workforce, but others (Thiederman 1991; Morrison, 1992) see attempts to cover all differences as a risk of weakening efforts to reduce racism and sexism. For Tomervik (1995) and Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1998) it might be appropriate for organizations to define diversity according to their specific problems and needs, as diversity is an evolutionary social process for which no definition can fully describe the broad range of differences it encompasses.

Both inside and outside North America, there are debates about how to manage diversity (Busby, 1993; Mead, 1994; Thatcher 1995; Canen and Canen 2001; Distefano and Maznevski (2000); Beamish, Morrison, Inkpen, and Rosenzweig, 2003; Hodgetts and Luthans, 2003; Mott, 2003; Bartlett, Goshal, and Birkinshaw, 2004). Thomas and Ely (1996) advocate a connection between diversity and organizational goals through a well-articulated and understood mission, a non-bureaucratic structure, and a culture that encourages openness, stimulates personal development and fosters high standards of performance. According to Thomas and Ely, the leaders of the organization must also value variety of opinions and recognize the challenges presented by the expression of different perspectives.

For Rosenzweig (1998), diversity must come with consistency, where key tasks are performed in the same manner across the firm and across the world: while diversity needs to be fostered, consistency needs to be maintained as part of the execution of a successful global strategy. Ivancevich and Gilbert (2000) advocate more examination of employees' interactions among samples of varying degrees of diversity, and beyond the traditional categories such as gender and color or "race". Broome *et al.* (2002) describe a process called *Interactive Management (IM)* whereby large multinational technology companies make use of a set of workshops to help work groups identify barriers to effective communication in culturally diverse environments. To them, "diversity management techniques often place too much emphasis on superficial manifestations of systemic problems, without sufficient attention to the forces that drive them".

Bendick, Egan, and Lofhjelm (2001) and Egan and Bendick (2003) report that three out of four of

the United States' largest corporations have some kind of diversity management program and are moving to implement them in Europe and other regions of the globe. Several other studies have described a wide array of training techniques and workshops aimed at dealing with diversity in the workplace in various settings (Gardenswartz, 1998, Miller, 1998, Sonnenschein, 1998, Cross, 2000, Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000, Kirby and Harter, 2001, Nixon and Dawson, 2002, Swanson, 2002), but a study by Gomez-Mejia and Palich, (1997) among Fortune 500 firms between 1985 and 1994 reveals no significant cultural effects on firm performance, thus suggesting that firms who keep becoming more active internationally tend to experience a sustained performance, possibly as a result of their adaptability to diverse cultures.

Diversity among Universities

Fostering diversity has become the objective of many institutions of higher education. For example, in the spring of 2003, the United States' Council of Graduate Schools reaffirmed an existing policy pertaining to diversity as follows:

"By bringing diverse individuals together to engage in intellectual activities, graduate education engenders respect for intellect, regardless of source, and builds a community whose members are judged by the quality of their ideas." Many universities in the U.S. have conducted diversity surveys in the recent past in order to assess their situation in that respect and develop action frameworks and programs aimed at improving equal opportunities for diverse groups (McCauley, Wright, and Harris, 2000; Aguirre and Martinez, 2002).

In a plural society, and in the context of economic globalization, dealing with diversity is no longer a choice for higher education institutions, whose responsibilities include the training of the next generation of leaders, teachers and scholars in all walks of life, from politicians, to business people, scientists and professionals. Graduates will have no choice but to work for organizations comprised of individuals displaying the whole gamut of diverse characteristics listed above (and more). Students now need the opportunity to be trained along with individuals belonging to the historically underrepresented groups, which will allow them to witness the fact that minority students can succeed when universities act to help them fulfill their aspirations in a safe and positive environment by recognizing and nurturing intellectual ability wherever it is present (Brown, 2004). Some researchers are also advocating adapting pedagogy to student diversity (Nelson, 1996; Stumpf, 1996; Prideaux, 1999), while others worry that political swinging such as California's Proposition 209 (ef-

fectively banning EEO from the public sector) might jeopardize efforts to improve diversity within universities (Scott, 1991; Friedl, 1999).

Diversity surveys conducted among students in U.S. universities generally asked questions related to the following diversity characteristics: ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship and program of study. Among the results reported, sexual orientation and ethnicity stand out as two factors showing discrepancies between heterosexual and GLBT students on the one hand (Engstrom and Sedlacek, 1997; Bowen and Bourgeois, 2001), and between European origin and students from visible minorities on the other (McIntosh, Ridzi, and Grogan, 2002). The presence of people belonging to diverse groups has also been shown as having positive effects on majorities as well as minorities (Smith and Schonfeld, 2000).

Diversity surveys among faculty, such as Newman and O'Leary-Kelly (2003) revealed differences of opinion on diversity and work-related issues according to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and citizenship. Minority members generally felt that more attention should be paid to diversity issues in general through the university's mission and the administration's commitment to welcome diverse perspectives. They also felt that it was equally important to implement these goals through specific aspects such as the hiring of underrepresented minority members, the development of courses and pedagogies to train students and create a welcoming climate for minorities (Slaughter, 2003).

While most universities in the United States have successfully (Bowen, Bok, and Burkhart, 1999) created a diversity program as a result of affirmative action legislation, Canadian universities such as Laurentian do not have a specific diversity program, except for a set of policies as listed in the introduction. Under Canadian legislation (the federal Employment Equity Act of 1987, amended in 1995) four groups of workers are targeted as minorities warranting particular attention: women, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and Aboriginals, also called Natives in Canada (Agocs, 2002; Thomas & Jain, 2004). In the past 40 years, the demography of Canada has changed significantly, as the country now has a greater ethnic diversity than ever, more women as part of the workforce, and a larger proportion of older people are still at work due to better health and life expectancy (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Since 1997 there is a course on Diversity Reporting at Ryerson University's School of Journalism in Toronto (www.diversitywatch.ryerson.ca). As Laurentian University moves towards greater diversity in its student body (faculty members have come from the world over since the institution was formed in 1960), it is perhaps time to prepare it to

become a "Star Trek" community to paraphrase Boyd and Halfond (2000). Before doing so, it is important to understand the patterns of diversity existing within the institution and what are the perceptions of the students and faculty regarding diversity variables.

Following-up on a study by Ely and Thomas (2001), Hau Siu Chow and Crawford (2004) propose a conceptual framework linking social diversity variables to work-related task and maintenance functions such as committee membership, help from colleagues, work feedback, advice, commitment and atmosphere, as well as outcomes such as promotions. This framework was adapted to students and faculty as shown in figure 1. The administration of the university is responsible for defining and fine tuning the mandate and strategies of the institution towards diversity issues (in the ambit of collegial decision-making). These strategies or the lack thereof, regarding some diversity issues, impact on perceptions about diversity on campus. The teaching and research environment of faculty, as well as their attitude and behaviour are affected as well as the students' learning environment, their attitudes and behaviour with respect to diversity groups.

Research Method

Hypotheses

Drawing on the literature, the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Students from visible minorities will differ significantly from students of European origin on their perceptions about the administration, faculty, other students, and the learning environment at the university in general.
2. GLBT students will differ significantly from heterosexual students on their perceptions about the administration, faculty, other students, and the learning environment at the university in general.
3. Students with diagnosed disabilities will differ significantly from students without disabilities on their perceptions about the administration, faculty, other students, and the learning environment at the university in general.
4. Faculty from visible minorities will differ significantly from faculty of European origin on their perceptions about the administration, students, other faculty, work-related issues, and the university in general.
5. Female faculty will differ significantly from male faculty on their perceptions about the administration, students, other faculty, work-related issues, and the university in general.

6. GLBT faculty will differ significantly from heterosexual faculty on their perceptions about the administration, students, other faculty, work-related issues, and the university in general.
7. Faculty with diagnosed disabilities will differ significantly from faculty without disabilities on their perceptions about the administration, students, other faculty, work-related issues, and the university in general.

These hypotheses will be considered as verified if at least half of the variables are significantly different between the groups, i.e. 24 variables for students, and 29 variables for faculty.

Data collection

Instruments

Data were collected through two questionnaires based upon the aforementioned conceptual framework, one for students and one for faculty. Both questionnaires were pre-tested with 12 faculty members, 15 students and 8 university officials interested in diversity issues and improved as a result. Sample questions appear on appendix 1.

The questionnaire for students asked on five-point Likert scales their perceptions of the attitudes towards diversity of the university administration (12 variables), other students (13 variables), and faculty members (13 variables). Ten other variables were about the learning environment, including students' experience at Laurentian in terms of how they perceived their interactions with other students in class, their perception of feeling connected to Laurentian, their attitude towards completing a degree at Laurentian, and their overall satisfaction with the university. A set of ten questions were about demographic and diversity characteristics.

The questionnaire for faculty members, also made of five-point Likert scales, included 34 questions on faculty perceptions about the administration's attention to diversity issues, the mandate of the university, hiring diversity groups, the teaching and research environment, pedagogical goals, and the need for a mandatory multicultural/diversity-related course for all undergraduate students. 13 questions were about the students' attitudes towards diversity and towards faculty, and 11 questions regarded other faculty members. Finally, a set of 12 questions focused on job classification such as rank and tenure, demographic and diversity characteristics.

Procedures

Between November 15 and November 22, 2004, 300 Faculty questionnaires were placed in individual

faculty mail boxes, with a letter requesting them to fill out a questionnaire and send it back to the researcher in an envelope with the author's departmental letterhead. 98 questionnaires were distributed among the Faculty of Professional Schools, 112 in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, 81 in the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering, and 9 in the Desmarais Library. 116 or 38.7% of the questionnaires were returned, 5 of them blank, 4 from Librarians (44.4%), 37 from Professional Schools (37.8%), 30 from Science and Engineering (37.0%), and 33 from Social Sciences and Humanities (29.5%); seven questionnaires were unidentified as per their faculty of origin.

Student questionnaires were deposited in various "contact offices", including Special Needs, L.U. International, Native Students' Services, Commerce, and S.G.A. for a period of four weeks from mid-November to mid-December, 2004. Posters were put in several buildings on campus to invite students to fill out the questionnaire and bring it to one of the contact offices. The author also made a public presentation on the topic of Diversity on November 17th, 2004, as one of the International Week's activities. Questionnaires were collected from the contact offices after mid-December, 2004 or were returned by internal mail. Several Faculty members volunteered to pass the questionnaire within one of their classes, as well as a group of core-year commerce students who used the questionnaire as a basis for a class project in human resource management. A total of 840 questionnaires were distributed and 509 were filled, while 11 were spoiled. As of December 15, 2004, the university reported having 5 279 full-time students, of which about 4 800 were on campus in Sudbury, including 428 international students. Therefore, the total sample of 520 respondents represents 10.8% of the available student population, and the 45 international respondents represent 10.5% of the international student population on campus.

Data analysis

Data were analysed using the SPSS package version 12.0. General descriptive statistics such as frequencies were performed. Diversity attitudes, perceptions of the administration and teaching/learning and research environment variables were analysed with T-tests. The presence of diversity groups among the faculties and some cross-tabulations were submitted to Chi-square tests.

Results

Student Sample Diversity Characteristics

Ethnicity

82.1% of the students in the sample were of European descent, 6.5% described themselves as Native (Status, Non Status, Inuit, Metis), 4.3% as Asian, 2% as African, 1% each as East Indian and from the Middle East, 0.8% from Latin America, and 1.2% from mixed origins. 1.2% did not answer the question.

89.8% of the students identified themselves as Canadian, while 8.8% reported to be International students; 1.4% did not answer. For the purpose of this analysis, Ethnicity was divided into three groups: European descent or White students, Native, and non-European students.

Age, gender, sexual orientation, and ability/disability

Regarding their age, 40.7% of the respondents belonged to the 15 to 19 age group, 46.2% were between 20 and 24 years old, 11.5% were 25 and older, and 1.6% did not answer. 59.6% of the respondents were female, 38.8% male, while 1.6% failed to answer. As of November 1, 2004, 64.2% of the total students at Laurentian were female, and 35.7% were male, including part-time students. While 96.9% reported being heterosexual, 2.9% self-identified as GLBT, and 3.1% did not answer the question. 6.4% of the students declared having a diagnosed disability, a close percentage to that of Faculty members in that category, at 7.2%.

Religion, marital status, and languages spoken or understood

In terms of religion, 59.2% adhered to a Christian religion, 28.1% to no religion, 9.3% to another religion; 1% were Jewish, and 0.8% Muslims, while 1.6% declined to answer. 86.1% of the students were single and 10.5% married, while 0.8% were divorced and 0.6% remarried; 2% did not answer. 50.5% of the students spoke, read and/or understood two languages, 33.6% were unilingual, 12.1% were trilingual, and 3% were multilingual; 1.6% did not answer.

39.3% of the students responding came from the Professional Schools faculty, 35.0% from Humanities and Social Sciences, and 25.3% from Science and Engineering. There were no current official university statistics available to compare these proportions.

Faculty and Librarian Sample Diversity Characteristics

35.6% of the faculty and librarians responding came from the Professional Schools faculty, 35.6% from Humanities, the Library, and Social Sciences, and 28.8% from Science and Engineering.

Rank and tenure

2.8% of the responding faculty were lecturers, 28.4% were assistant professors, 31.2% associate professors, 35.8% full professors and 1.8% belonged to other categories. Actual faculty proportions according to rank as of January 2005 were as follows: 4.8% lecturers, 30.4% assistant, 31.9% associate, and 32.8% full professors. The over-representation of higher ranks in the sample is consistent with the fact that faculty members recently arrived could be assumed to feel ill-informed or having limited experience at this university to properly answer. 88.3% of the respondents were on a tenure stream, 9.0% were on limited term contract, and 2.7% did not answer.

Ethnicity and citizenship

75.7% of the faculty sample were of European descent, 5.4% African, 5.4% Native, 3.6% East Indian, 3.6% Middle Eastern, 2.7% were Asian and 1.8% from mixed origins, while 1.8% did not answer the question.

In terms of citizenship, 67.6% of the faculty identified themselves as Canadian citizens, while 28.8% reported to be non-Canadian citizens, the other choice in the questionnaire being labelled as "International"; 3.6% did not answer.

Age, gender, sexual orientation, and ability/disability

13.5% of the faculty respondents were between 25 and 39 years of age, 31.5% were between 40 and 49, 34.2% between 50 and 59, and 16.2% were over 60, and 4.5% did not answer. 40.5% of the respondents were female, 58.6% male, while 0.9% failed to answer. While 90.1% of the faculty reported being heterosexual, 7.2% self-identified as GLBT, and 2.7% did not answer the question. 7.2% of the faculty members reported having a diagnosed disability.

Religion, marital status, and languages spoken or understood

In terms of religion, 44.1% reported to be Christian, 38.7% had no religion, 9.0% practiced another religion, 4.5% were Muslims, while 3.6% declined to answer. 74.8% of the faculty were married or remarried, 12.6% were single, and 10.8% were divorced; 1.8% did not answer. 51.4% of the faculty spoke, read and/or understood two languages, 10.8% were unilingual, 23.4% were trilingual, and 12.6% were multilingual; 1.8% did not answer.

Student Attitudes and Differences towards Diversity and towards the University Setting (hypotheses 1 to 3)

T-tests comparing differences between means for each category of variables were performed. It is important to note that absolute mean numbers did not vary greatly across the diversity groups, with mean ranges below 0.5 on scales of one to five; for example, the lowest mean on the variable measuring the commitment of the Administration to making the university friendly regardless of ethnicity is 3.84, and the highest mean 4.02 (both corresponding to "agree" with the statement). However, the proportion of students having specific diversity or minority characteristics varied across faculties within the university.

For Hypothesis 1, Table 1 confirms that visible minorities differed from students of European origin on 21 to 41 variables. The latter is the largest number of significant differences found in this research. However, again, the absolute mean numbers are small (extreme ranges for the two sets of questions with one to five scales were as follows: 1.06 was the lowest mean for Canadian respondents and 2.20 was the highest mean for International students for questions on a scale from "almost never" to "almost always" as 1 and 5, with 2 for "sometimes", and 3.22 for International students to 4.29 for Canadian students for questions on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" as 1 and 5, with 4 for "agree" and 3 for "neither agree nor disagree"). Native and International students were more likely to be pressured by their friends not to associate with others, more often hearing negative comments from students and from faculty about their ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, and other diversity characteristics. Native and International students were also less inclined to believe that the administration was committed to make the university friendly regardless of gender. International students felt less secure on campus than Canadian students, were less interested in working with others, less committed to stay at the institution, and were satisfied with the university to a lesser degree. The International student sub-sample (n=45) included 31 students of non-European origin, and 14 students of European descent.

Regarding Hypothesis 2, it is only partly confirmed, as GLBT students showed 12 significantly different variable means when compared to heterosexuals (ranges: 1.10 to 2.27, and 3.47 to 3.93), none of them on the perception of the Administration (Table 2): they rated their experience at Laurentian University as slightly less positive, were more likely to report having felt pressure from people within their own ethnic group not to socialize with members of other ethnic groups, and had more often heard

negative remarks from students regarding their sexual orientation, their language, their political opinions, their gender, and their marital status. They were also more likely to have heard negative remarks from faculty regarding their ability or disability, their age, their marital status and program of study.

The proportion of reported GLBT students varied greatly across groups: while only 1.8% of the White males classified themselves in this category, 2.4% of the White females did, as well as 3.8% of the non-European students, 18.2% of the Native students, and 16.7% of the students with a diagnosed disability.

To test Hypothesis 3, disability diagnosed students were compared to their non-disability counterparts (Table 2) and showed only 16 significant mean differences (ranges: 1.07 to 2.25, and 3.41 to 4.14), again none of them in the perception of the Administration category; hypothesis 3 is, therefore, only partially confirmed. Disability diagnosed students had a lower degree of satisfaction with the university (3.41 to 4.14 out of five), were less likely to be committed to stay at Laurentian University to finish their studies and were not as positive as able students regarding their experience in class. They were also reported hearing more often negative remarks from other students about their sexual orientation, their religion, their political opinions, their country, and their disability, as well as being threatened or refused to work with by other students more often than non-disabled students (differences between mean extremes were 1.07 vs. 2.25). They also had a tendency to hearing negative remarks from faculty more often about their ethnicity, their sexual orientation, their political opinions, their disability, their age and their marital status.

Other comparisons were performed to explore whether other variables yielded significant differences. Comparisons between the 15 to 24 years age groups and the 25 years and older age groups showed 12 variables with significant mean differences (ranges: 1.09 to 1.73, and 3.46 to 4.26): three variables focused on the administration's commitment to make the institution friendly relatively to gender, political opinion, and ethnicity, where older students were slightly less in agreement with the statement than younger students. Older students were also slightly more likely to having been pressured not to associate with individuals having other religious beliefs and were slightly more likely to having heard negative remarks from other students about their marital status, as well as slightly more likely than their younger peers to having heard negative remarks from faculty on diversity characteristics.

Student comparisons on gender only showed eight significant mean results (ranges: 1.21 to 1.91, and 3.46 to 4.08). Compared to male students, female

students were more apt to strongly agreeing that the administration was committed to make the university friendly regardless of ethnicity; they were less likely to feel pressure not to socialize with members of other ethnic groups or with people of a different sexual orientation, and reported being either threatened or refused to work with less often than male students. Female students liked to work with International students at a higher degree than male students, and heard negative comments about their political opinions less often than their male counterparts.

Religion did not appear to divide students on diversity issues, as only four variables were significant when comparing students who declared having religious beliefs to those who responded they did not. Similarly, married students differed from single students over only four variables: they liked working with Canadian students at a lower degree (3.88 vs. 4.29) than single students and were more likely than them to hear negative comments from students and from faculty about their marital status (range: 1.11 to 1.33). They also were slightly less convinced than single students of the administration's commitment to make the university friendly regardless of marital status.

Faculty Attitudes and differences Regarding Diversity

The four remaining hypotheses were about faculty members. Table 3 presents the number of differing categories of variables for each of the four diversity groups by order of hypothesis.

Faculty Members from Visible Minorities

Hypothesis 4 is only partly verified, as visible minorities have 18 significantly different means than European origin faculty out of 58 variables. 13 of the variables were about the teaching and research environment. Faculty who belonged to visible minorities were less clear about tenure procedures, had less opportunities to collaborate with other faculty, did not have as often someone as a mentor as European origin faculty. They also were more convinced than European origin faculty that hiring faculty belonging to minorities and female faculty should be a priority for the university, but were significantly less inclined to recommend it as a good employer for minority group members. Visible minority faculty were also more likely to have heard negative comments from students and other faculty members about their ethnicity and their country of origin than their majority counterparts.

Female Faculty Members

Hypothesis 5 is largely verified, as 34 variables had significantly different means for female faculty as compared to their male counterparts: 19 of these variables were related to the university teaching and research environment, 9 to students, and 6 to other faculty. In terms of work environment, female faculty were rather dissatisfied with the balance between their professional and personal life, while males were, on average, somewhat satisfied. Similar perceptions were reported for the respective levels of research funding of both genders. Female faculty reported more often having had to minimize their characteristics to fit in, and had a stronger perception that their colleagues had lower expectations of them. They also perceived the tenure and promotion procedures within their department as not being as clearly defined and understood as men did.

Male and female faculty's differences were also centered around their opinions on the importance of diversity issues at the university, and their experiences with students and faculty in terms of negative comments heard about diversity characteristics. However, they were not significantly different on their views about their teaching, interactions with students, and interactions with their colleagues and dean in terms of research, mentorship, and research interests. It is also notable that faculty members who were less than 45 years of age had a lesser number of significantly different mean results, with a lower level of significance than their older counterparts. However, younger female faculty members felt significantly less safe than both their male counterparts and older female colleagues.

Male faculty were of the average opinion that diversity-related issues at Laurentian University are given almost enough attention, but female faculty believe it is a little level of attention that is currently given to these issues. While male faculty, on average, do not agree or disagree with the statement that too much emphasis on diversity can lower the quality of the university, female faculty show a significant level of disagreement with the statement. Female faculty agree much more strongly than males with the statement that Laurentian should have as part of its mandate helping students develop the ability to function in a multicultural/diverse society. They also agree in significantly stronger terms than males with the hiring of faculty and librarians belonging to ethnic minorities, and with the hiring of female and male faculty in disciplines in which they are under-represented.

With regards to training students in a diverse society, female faculty members were significantly more in favour of creating a mandatory multicultural/diversity-related course for all undergraduate students. While male and female faculty do not differ in their

evaluation of the university administration's commitment to create an environment welcoming many different ideas and perspectives, the average perception of the administration by faculty (mean=3.21) is significantly lower ($p<0.001$) than the students' perception (mean=4.02).

Male faculty were significantly more inclined than females to recommend Laurentian as a good work place to people of colour, females, and GLBTs, while female faculty agreed more strongly than men with the idea that hiring qualified individuals with disabilities should be a priority of the university.

Female faculty were more often than males hearing negative comments from students and faculty about their sexual orientation, gender, ability, age, and marital status, as well as negative comments from students about their ethnicity, and from faculty about their language and religion. A few of them reported having been threatened by students. On average, female faculty did not perceive receiving as much respect from students in the classroom as male faculty did.

The significantly larger number of women in the Professional Schools faculty, as compared to a significantly smaller number of them in the Science and Engineering faculty had the result of producing a larger number of significant results between these two faculties.

GLBT Faculty Members (Hypothesis 6)

Of 58 total variables in the faculty survey, 29 were significant for GLBT faculty compared to heterosexual faculty, or half of the variables, thus confirming the hypothesis. The differences between means among heterosexuals as compared to GLBTs are often large, but the size of the GLBT faculty sample ($n=8$) calls for caution with the interpretation of statistics. As for female and visible minority faculty members, the largest number of significant variables was in the teaching and research environment category. GLBT faculty members believed that little attention was paid to diversity issues at the university, while heterosexuals were much closer to the "just about right" mark. As compared to heterosexual faculty, GLBT faculty members felt less safe on campus, were less likely to recommend Laurentian University as a good workplace for people of color, and were strongly more in favour of making the hiring of minorities a priority.

For what regards teaching and research, GLBT faculty were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (1.75) with the balance between their professional and personal life, while heterosexual respondents were "somewhat satisfied" (3.03). As compared to the latter, GLBT faculty felt their research interests and teaching methods were less valued, felt more pres-

sure to minimize characteristics of themselves, were more rarely invited to join research projects, and were not as sure that tenure and promotion procedures in their unit were clearly defined and understood by everyone. GLBT faculty were less in agreement with the statements that most students behave in ways that are respectful of opinions that differ from their own and that students treat professors with respect in the classroom. Finally, GLBT faculty had more often heard negative remarks about diversity characteristics from students and faculty than their heterosexual counterparts.

Faculty Members with Diagnosed Disabilities

Hypothesis 7 was not verified, with only two significant variables. It is noteworthy that most faculty members with severe disabilities are on leave under a Long Term Disability insurance plan to which all faculty contribute. Therefore, it is likely that diagnosed disabilities among faculty present on campus are of lesser seriousness, and lesser visibility, than among students. As an invisible minority, they likely attract fewer comments from students and faculty, but also are less impaired for doing their teaching and research. It is also likely that some of them have had their workloads modified in order to accommodate their situation.

Other Diversity Characteristics

The differences observed with other diversity characteristics were almost all related to the specificity of these variables: for example, non-tenure track faculty members, who are also younger than tenure-track members, were significantly hearing more negative comments from students about their age.

Discussion

Diversity is a multi-faceted phenomenon, by which one individual might belong to majorities and minorities at the same time. Male students are a minority in the university overall, a majority in the Commerce program, and a minority in the School of Nursing, while female students are a minority in the School of Engineering and a majority within the whole Science and Engineering faculty. However, non-white students are a visible minority everywhere, while gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students and faculty are an invisible minority. Some respondents belonged to several minority groups at the same time.

Out of seven hypotheses, one was not verified (on faculty members with a diagnosed disability), three were partly confirmed (GLBT students and students with diagnosed disabilities, and faculty from visible

minorities), and three were strongly confirmed: Among students, visible minorities differed significantly from students of European origin, thus confirming earlier findings in the literature. A survey by Statistics Canada (2003) reported that 20% of the members of visible minorities had faced discrimination or unfair treatment over the past five years because of their ethno-cultural characteristics; this compares to 5% among non-visible minorities.

Among faculty, women and GLBT members had many different points of view than men and heterosexuals, particularly on work-related and diversity-related issues. Occupational gender differences are the object of a vast body of literature which will not be discussed here. The working conditions of faculty are the ambit of collective bargaining, which is part of the normal functioning of Laurentian University, between the Administration representing its Board of Governors and the Faculty union. The results for these three groups, however, show that various forms of action must be taken in order to improve their learning and work environment. Measures regarding minority student groups are mentioned at the end of this discussion.

The wide variation in answers for being GLBT amongst various student diversity groupings can be explained, at least in part. The higher level (18.2%) reported among Native students correspond to documented facts about gender diversity roles among more than 150 North American Native cultures (Roscoe 1993, 1998; Lang 1999). Widely integrated into societies, men-women and women-men were performing distinct third and fourth gender roles long before the arrival of Europeans in North America. These gender differences were accepted as third/fourth gender individuals specialised in areas such as crafts, warfare, sexuality/matchmaking, and religious/spiritual experiences. These roles were reported among cultures present in Canada such as the Ojibwa (Landes 1969), the Potawatomi (Landes 1970), the Inuit (Saladin d'Anglure, 1986, 1992) and the Iroquois (Bacqueville de la Potherie, 1722). The notion of Two-Spirited person was valued in many Native communities according to Tafoya (1992), where many Two-spirit people, having the gift of seeing the world through both male and female eyes, became leaders, shamans, and diplomats.

The significantly low level of GLBT among white male students (1.8%) is consistent with reports on the presence of homophobia among young males (Kimmel and Mahler, 2003) as a way of asserting one's masculinity. A number of studies in Western countries (Kimmel, 1987; Epstein, 1995, 1998; Van de Ven, 1995; Herek, 1998, 2000) describe homophobia as the fear male heterosexuals have of being labelled as gay. In that perspective, homophobia therefore becomes a norm among males, who tend

to repress and refuse to admit even doubting their heterosexuality. Females displayed no significant differences in proportions of GLBT across ethnicity groups.

The 7.4% proportion of GLBT among responding faculty members is within the range suggested by Wilson (1978), however, the proportion of responses from female faculty was much superior to that of male faculty. Leap (1998) reports that younger GLBT scholars in particular fear to be at risk in terms of employment and job status within universities in the U.S. In Canada, discriminating for cause of sexual orientation is illegal, but it is likely that more subtle forms of discrimination take place against several minority groups.

High proportions of GLBT were found among both student and faculty reporting having a diagnosed disability (16.7% of the students and 12.5% of the faculty). There is a burgeoning body of literature on sexuality and disability in relation to sexual identity (Hingsburger, 1993; McAllan and Ditillo, 1994; Shakespeare, 1996, 1997; Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, and Davies, 1996; Tremain, 1996; O'Toole, 1996; Cambridge, 1997, 2001; Cambridge and Melan, 2000). Erevelles (1996) noted that disability advocates must deal with situations where persons with disabilities can also experience oppression for reasons of ethnicity, social rank, and sexual orientation, while Cambridge, Carnaby and McCarthy (2003) made the comment that lesbian sex remains invisible as compared to men's homosexuality among services to persons with learning disabilities. However, Thomson, Bryson, and Castell (2001) observe that GLBT people with disabilities must constantly struggle to affirm their identity. The authors reaffirm the need for a community to be built for GLBT people with disabilities, echoing Brodrigg (1992). They suggest that social workers and professionals who provide services to people with disabilities, as well as those working with GLBT persons, be sensitised to issues such as homophobia and heterosexism and examine their own biases about homosexuality and disability. They also advocate listening to what GLBT people with developmental disabilities are saying and creating support groups for them.

It is to be also noted that challenges related to diversity in postsecondary institutions occurred with the arrival of the Y generation born between 1977 and 1999. Eisner (2004) observes that students belonging to that age group may require new pedagogical approaches adapted to their lifestyle and experience, where the media play an important role. In a context where social diversities increase, universities have no choice but to train students to live within, and manage diverse organizations. Avery and Thomas (2004) propose a number of tools to develop a diversity management competency among business

school students, while Patterson (2004) argues that diversity is a contributing factor to create harmony in the postsecondary educational setting.

Since 2000, Laurentian has actively recruited students from abroad and endeavoured to respect the diversity of students, faculty and staff through Collective Agreements with three different unions and official policies. There are policies to ban racism on campus (1988), to deal with special needs (1989), on employment equity (1992), and on generic terminology (1997). In the province of Ontario, retirement is mandatory at age 65, but this has been challenged several times in courts and the current provincial government is studying the possibility of eliminating this source of discrimination.

In terms of improving the campus atmosphere for minorities, a number of measures can be taken to support the needs of the students, such as supporting organisations, supporting connections with faculty and students, counselling services, and safe housing. In terms of overall benefits, research has demonstrated that diversified campuses create more opportunities for students and increase the effectiveness of learning as well as the overall satisfaction and student retention rate (Smith and Schonfeld, 2000).

Conclusions

The discrepancies observed between majority groups and some diversity minorities need to be addressed. Among faculty, female faculty as well as GLBT and visible minority faculties need to see issues addressed by the university's administration in terms of the teaching and learning environment as well as in terms of in-class relationships with students. In Ontario, the employer has, in fact, a legal obligation to maintain a safe working environment. The collective agreement between the university's board of governors and the faculty association contains at least two articles asserting such an obligation. The faculty

association also has the duty to ensure that these articles apply equally to all members. It is possible that the results of this study may in fact be likely to serve as legal proof that, under the current conditions, these three faculty groups do not enjoy the same work environment as the majority groups do.

Five minority groups of students were found to have significant numbers of issues distinguishing them from the majority groups. These groups include students with disabilities, GLBT, Native, International, as well as Non-Native Visible Minority students. The university administrators have to improve the living conditions of these groups on campus in order to keep attracting their members at the university. A number of the issues involved are attitude-related, nothing that cannot be changed through proper training and education of students, faculty, and support staff.

Recommendations for Further Research

The survey conducted among faculty and students has revealed that diversity issues were different for students as compared to faculty members. It would be useful to continue studying these issues at Laurentian university among non-academic staff members.

Another issue which is relevant to the reality of Laurentian university is the presence of a large Francophone minority representing about 35% of the student and faculty components, while a vast majority of the support staff belongs to the Franco-Ontarian minority group. It, therefore, would be relevant to survey the Francophones in order to compare them as a group to the Non-Francophones.

Further studies could also be conducted in order to compare the results obtained at Laurentian to those from other universities in Ontario and other Canadian provinces.

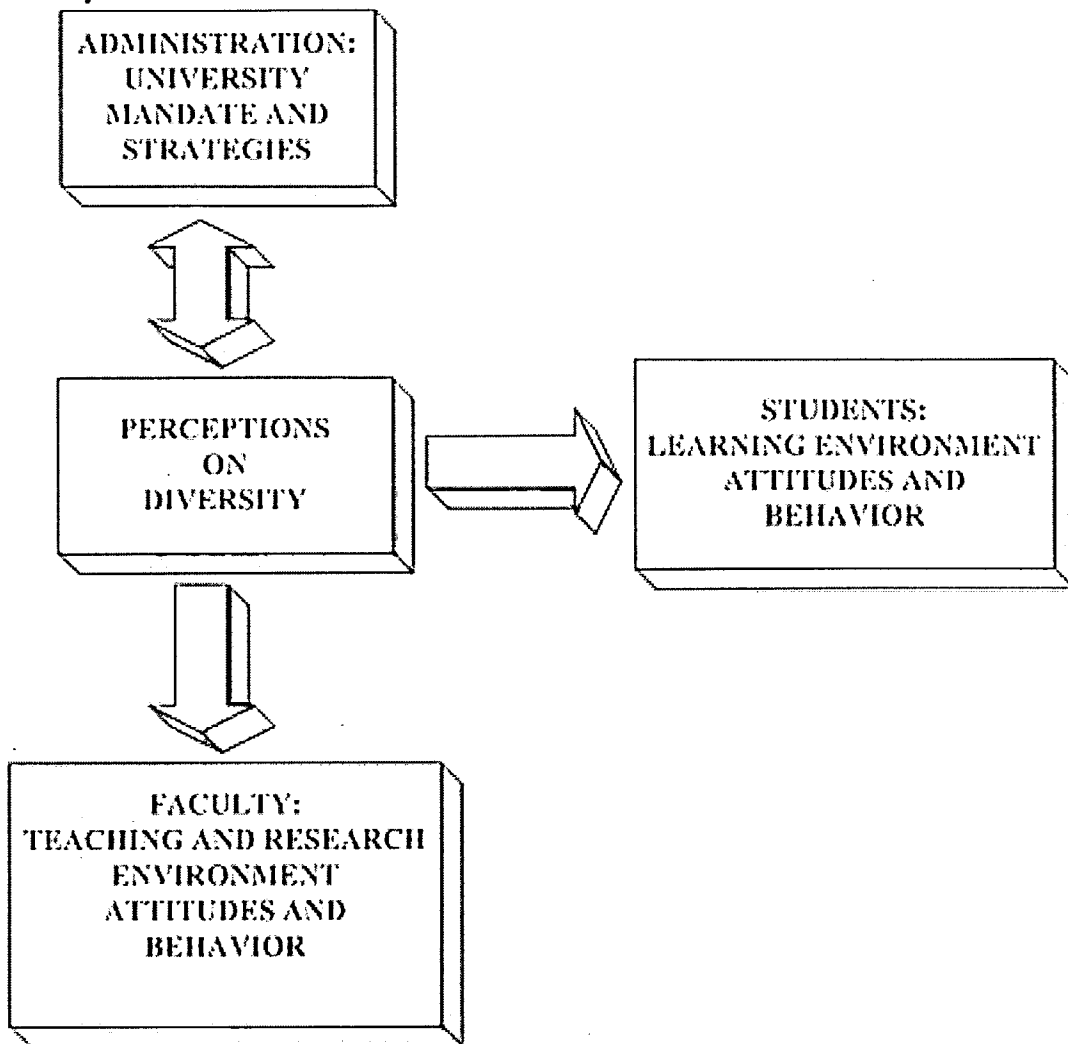


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 1: Hypothesis 1 - Visible Minority Students vs. Students of European Origin.

Visible Minorities (n)	Number of Significant Variables ¹			
	Perception of the Learning Environment 10 variables	Perception of the Administration 12 variables	Perception of other Students 13 variables	Perception of Faculty Members 13 variables
Natives (33)	4*	1*	5*	11*
Non-Natives Visible minorities (52)	6***	2*	12***	12***
International Students (45)	6*	10*	13**	12***

¹Lowest significance levels for t-tests in each variable category: * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 2: Hypotheses 2 and 3 - GLBT vs. Heterosexual Students and Students with Disabilities vs. Students without Disabilities.

Diversity Groups (n)	Number of Significant Variables ¹		
	Perception of the Learning Environment 10 variables	Perception of other Students 13 variables	Perception of Faculty Members 13 variables
GLBT (15)	2*	5*	5*
Disability (32)	3*	7*	6*

¹Lowest significance levels for t-tests in each variable category: * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 3: Hypotheses 4 to 7 - Differences among Faculty Diversity Groups.

Diversity Groups (n)	Number of Significant Variables ¹		
	Perception of the Teaching/Research Environment 34 variables	Perception of Students 13 variables	Perception of other Faculty Members 11 variables
Visible Minorities (25)	13*	2*	3*
Female (43)	19*	9*	6*
GLBT (8)	12*	10*	7*
Disability (8)	1*	1*	0

¹Lowest significance levels for t-tests in each variable category: * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

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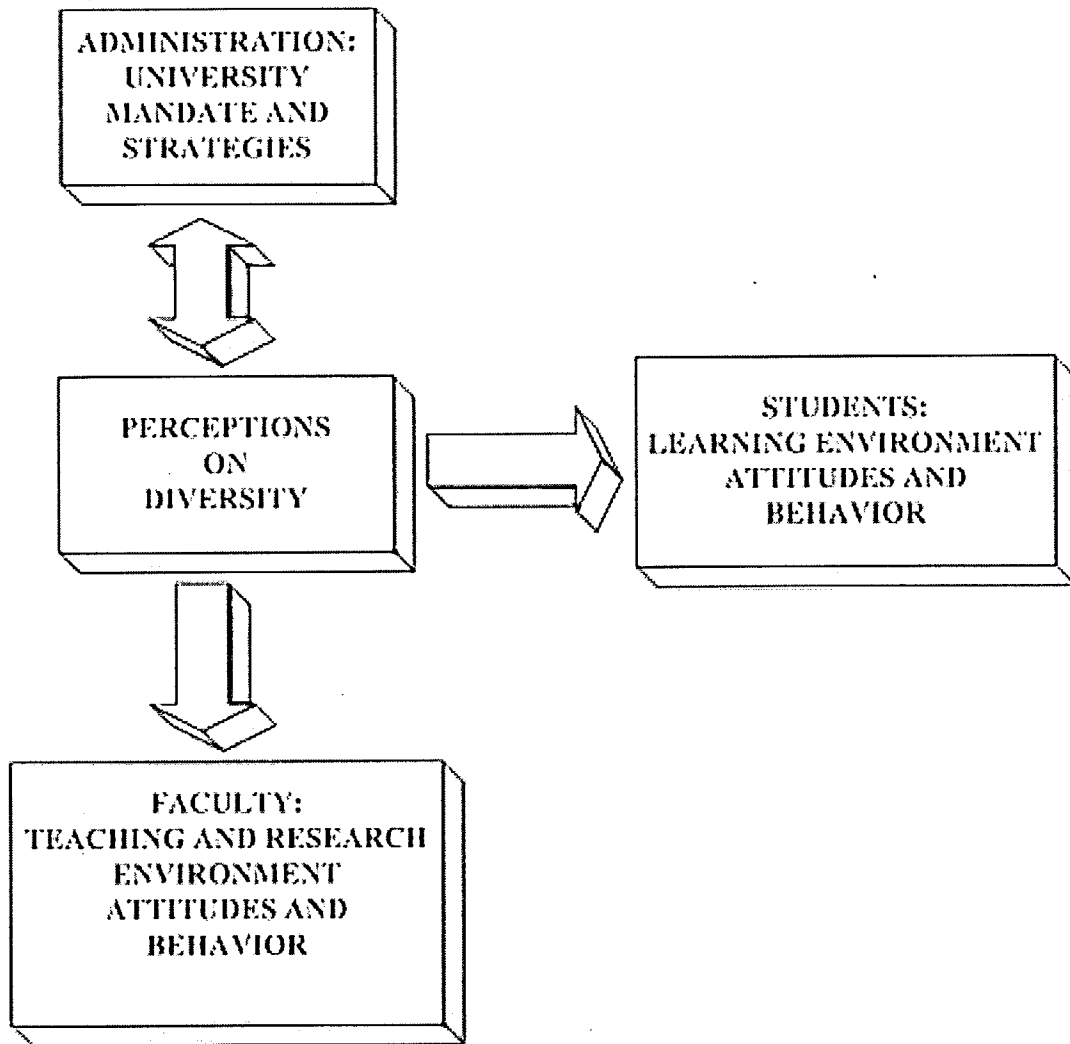


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

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Non-Natives Visible minorities (52)	6***	2*	12***	12***
International Students (45)	6*	10*	13**	12***

¹Lowest significance levels for t-tests in each variable category: * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

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Appendix 1 - Sample questions

The Administration is committed to making Laurentian a friendly university for all categories of students regardless of:

Ethnicity; sexual orientation; language; religion; political opinions; country of origin; gender; ability/disability; age; marital status; study program/major.

In general, I feel as physically safe on Laurentian campus as anywhere else in Sudbury.

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree.
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Questions on student and faculty perceptions about each other:

To what extent has another student (faculty member) directed negative remarks related to:

Ethnicity; sexual orientation; language; religion; political opinions; country of origin; gender; ability/disability; age; marital status; study program/major.

To what extent has (another student-a faculty member) directed threats against your physical safety?

To what extent have other students refused to work with you?

1 almost never	2 rarely	3 sometimes	4 frequently	5 almost always
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Rate your overall satisfaction with Laurentian so far:

1 very dissatisfied	2 dissatisfied	3 somewhat satisfied	4 satisfied	5 very satisfied.
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Questions specific to Faculty and Librarians

How do you assess the level of attention currently given to diversity-related issues at Laurentian?

1 think it is too little	2 think it is little	3 think it is about right	4 think there is quite a lot	5 think there is too much.
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Helping students develop the ability to function in a multicultural/diverse society should be part of Laurentian's mandate.

The hiring of faculty and librarians belonging to ethnic minorities (other diversity groups) should be a priority for Laurentian.

The Administration at Laurentian is committed to creating an environment that welcomes many different ideas and perspectives.

I would feel comfortable recommending Laurentian as a good place to work to faculty and librarians of color/female/GLBT/persons with disabilities.

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree.
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About the Author

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