Book review

Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work
Daryl G. Smith
Johns Hopkins University Press
Baltimore, Maryland
2nd ed.
2015

The Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations
Edited by Regine Bendl, Inge Bleijenbergh, Elina Henttonen, Albert J. Mills
Oxford University Press
Oxford
2015
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In *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making it Work*, Daryl Smith debates how diversity is practiced today and proposes new recommendations for the implementation of meaningful change. To develop viable and effective diversity strategies, her thoughts and opinions offer both administrators and researchers the benefits of her creative and innovative approaches to her topic.

The book is divided into four parts. The first section comprises Smith's own perspectives on the framework for and perceptions of diversity. She presents a comprehensive overview of diversity in its historical context nationally, as well as globally, and she illuminates a variety of facets that are encompassed by the concept of diversity. Besides this, the present attention by the author is on the roles that individuality and uniqueness play in diversity, nationally and globally. The intersecting, multiple and complex dimensions of human diversity are age, gender identity, cultural identity, ethnic group, physical and mental aptitude, political and intellectual perspectives, spiritual and religious identity, and socioeconomic status. These relationships are made more intricate, as Smith emphasizes, after adding workplace layers of interaction, for instance, institutional cultures and identities, microaggressions, privilege, and organizations' beliefs about what comprises critical accumulation.

In the second part of the book, the review of diversity is continued by focusing on its advancement in postsecondary education in the United States. Smith (2015) envisioned her framework by positioning an institution mission at its core alongside other correlated issues, e.g. campus climate, access and success, intergroup relationships, education and scholarships, and institutional vitality and viability. This section contains an assessment of the past 50 years' data. She focuses on the historic concerns of inequity by making clear the relationship between equity and diversity and answers recent criticisms of on-campus diversity initiatives. She argues that higher education institutions must implement diversity as a central element for research and teaching. Despite the statistical analysis of the differences between racial and ethnic groups being exhaustive, the research quantifying the significant differences in commencement among the minority populations still needs to be directed.

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The third section pulls together research from the diverse branches of knowledge to discuss important areas, which may help to develop institutional competences for diversity. She argues credibly, from the investigation of faculty diversity, about hiring processes with their enumerated troubles, giving an evaluation of the conditions for hiring and retaining the faculty staff, and discusses what she reckons excellence is. In this part, Smith (2015) investigated the need for faculty diversification, particularly in terms of ethnicity, race, and gender at higher educational institutions. In the selection procedures for educational advisors and policies for their retention, this knowledge can be applied by institutions, particularly postsecondary institutions, to enhance their diversity.

The final part of the book contains theoretical recommendations regarding the capacity for building diversity. Due to the dissimilarities in the cultures and the uniqueness of the missions of postsecondary institutions, the highly distinct advice offered may be impractical for some establishments to implement. This concerning issue was certainly addressed by the outline of general recommendations given that is related to the assessment of the progress that has been made contrasted with the specific ways recommended to bring about change. Smith's proposed practices and framework could be helpful for administrations, advisors, and faculties to heighten their diversity by considering it as a tool to attain institutional success. She also acknowledges that, in the present era, changes made in response to diversity's implications have the potential to influence organizational outcomes substantially.

The growing heterogeneity and diversification in workplaces has attracted the interest of organizational researchers who have a wish to uncover projections based on the influence of diversity. In this regard, another book titled, *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations* – edited by Regine Bendl *et al.* (2015) – is a significant contribution to the literature that endorses a multiethnic and critical understanding of workplace diversity.

The *Oxford Handbook*, divided into six parts, aims to characterize the diversified theories, empirical methods, contexts, and practices underpinning diversity studies, along with the topics that intersect with the issues and the perceived future theoretical challenges. Parts 1 and 2 are most stimulating since they emphasize a more balanced and comprehensive historical synopsis of the theoretical and applied changes in the context of organizational diversity. Simultaneously, they recommend some original ideas for where future research may be directed. Part 3 of the *Oxford Handbook* ponders methodologies, such as the quantitative and qualitative, and comprises of chapters concerning reflexivity and ethnography. Part 4 contains data and case studies that highlight international perspectives, for instance, from India and Pakistan. Part 5 simultaneously discusses several diversity topics and is dedicated to the emergent interest in intersectionality, and Part 6, the final section, focuses on how to research, implement, and spread diversity by adopting an intersectional approach.

A comparative assessment of Daryl Smith's *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work* and *The Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations* emphasizes the substantial need for and use of diversity as a managerial tool to augment performance and creativity as part of teamwork. Since Smith concentrates on higher educational institutions, which have their own unique and more diversified cultures, the context and advised methodologies for diversity implementation slightly differ from those of the *Oxford Handbook*, which focuses on corporate organizations. However, the outcomes are alike, since both seek to improve workplace cultures and promote inclusion and harmonization. To conclude, these two books are enormously worthwhile for researchers and students of diversity as they enrich the extant theoretical and practical knowledge. These are entrenched in a

deep-rooted field, and provide a wide-ranging perspective on diversity at both the micro and macro levels.

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