

Problem Statement Examples¹

Taken from Antonio, A. I., Chang, M. J., Hakuta, K., Kenny, D. A., Levin, S., & Milem, J. F. (2004). Effects of racial diversity on complex thinking in college. *Psychological science*, 15(8), 507-510.

Previous research has found that racially diverse educational environments are associated with positive intellectual and social outcomes for college students (Astin, 1993; Chang, 1999; Gurin, 1999; Smith & Associates, 1997). Racial diversity in the student body is linked to the likelihood that a student will interact with someone of a different race or ethnicity and engage in discussions of racial or ethnic issues. Frequent interaction across racial lines and discussion of racial and ethnic issues positively predicts student retention, intellectual and social self-concept, and overall satisfaction with college (Gurin, 1999; Smith & Associates, 1997). The existing evidence, however, is based largely on quasi-experimental or correlational designs using self-report data. No study to date has randomly assigned students to conditions of racial diversity and directly examined cognitive outcomes. (p. 507)

Taken from Umbach, P. D. (in press). The contribution of faculty of color to undergraduate education. *Research in Higher Education*.

At the same time that the United States is becoming more diverse, colleges and universities find they must defend themselves against attacks on affirmative action. In response to lawsuits brought against affirmative action in college admissions, many have argued that diversity is a “compelling interest” in that it enhances higher education through the benefits it brings to individual students (Astone and Nunez-Wormack, 1990; Duster, 1993; Hurtado et al., 1998; Liu, 1998; Smith and Associates, 1997; Tierney, 1993). In a climate where affirmative action is under increased scrutiny, it is important that researchers extend this line of inquiry to all levels of higher education. One avenue that is beginning to emerge is the positive impact that diverse faculty have on student experiences.

Taken from Umbach, P. D. & Kuh, G. D. (in press). Student experiences with diversity at liberal arts colleges: another claim for distinctiveness. *The Journal Higher Education*.

Hu and Kuh (2003) found that students in private institutions more frequently interacted with students from different backgrounds and that students at large doctoral-extensive universities and liberal arts colleges had more experiences with diversity than their counterparts at other types of institutions. It is not surprising that students at large universities would have more exposure to diversity, given that these institutions typically enroll more students from different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Somewhat unexpected is that students at smaller liberal arts colleges would report equally frequent experiences with diversity. Historically, small liberal arts colleges have claimed to have distinctive missions, especially when compared with large public universities (Clark, 1970; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; Townsend, Newell, & Wiese, 1992). But they also tend to be located in rural and less racially diverse locations. Even so, it appears that a distinctive dimension of contemporary liberal arts colleges is their ability to expose students to diversity in educationally purposeful ways. How they do this is not clear.

¹ Note that these examples are direct quotes taken from the references cited.

Taken from Umbach, P. D. (2005). *Equity in the Academic Labor Market: An Analysis of Academic Disciplines*. Excerpt from a grant proposal awarded by the Association for Institutional Research and National Center for Educational Statistics.

Although affirmative action has been portrayed as a way form increasing the number of faculty of color and women faculty in higher education, it has done little to substantially increase their representation in the academe (Aguirre, 2000; Higgerson & Higgerson, 1991; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998). In fact, even with the rapid increases in diversity in America, the racial diversity of faculty changed very little in the last 30 years (Perna, 2001; Trower & Chait, 2002). Additionally, while women outnumber men among undergraduates, women still are under-represented in the faculty ranks. The small number of women and people of color in particular disciplines, such as science and engineering, is even more striking.

Taken from Umbach, P. D. (2005). *Off the tenure track: Understanding the effects of contingent faculty appointments*. AERA/NAEd Fellowship proposal under review.

Higher education researchers have become increasingly concerned with the changing mix of tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty appointments (American Association of University Professors, 2003; Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Benjamin, 2002; Chait, 2002). Between 1975 and 1995, the number of part-time faculty increased by 103%, and the number of full-time tenure-ineligible faculty by 93%. Meanwhile, the number of probationary, tenure-track faculty decreased by 12%. The most recent estimates suggest that more than half of all instructional staff are contingent faculty in that they work in tenure-ineligible positions, either in a part-time or full-time capacity (Baldwin & Chronister, 2002; Gappa, 2001). While there are various reasons for the increases in the number of contingent appointments, few scholars have examined the consequences of employing large numbers of tenure-ineligible faculty.