When the state isn't there: a historical case study of innovation in the face of state budget cuts

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In the United States, as state support for higher education continues to decline, student affairs practitioners must grapple with the fallout of large budget cuts - or worse - programme elimination. Diversity programmes and initiatives are particularly vulnerable to budget shortfalls in state and institutional funding. Drawing from innovation theory, this historical qualitative case study provides a snapshot of one programme's struggle to survive in 2002, amidst a contentious political climate for race-conscious admissions and programming. Lessons gleaned from one senior-level Vice-President of Student Affairs for Multicultural Affairs and Director of Multicultural Affairs who oversaw a hallmark diversity programme facing drastic state budget cuts will be highlighted. The results demonstrate the ways in which changing socio-political climate and policies can initiate new opportunities for student affairs practitioners by providing a detailed example of how programme administrators can adjust to crisis and engage in innovation. The data is relevant to diversity higher education researchers and administrators who are interested in programme sustainability. Implications for future practices and research related to Multicultural Affairs Administrators who manage diversity programmes will also be provided.

Key words: programme sustainability; innovation; multicultural affairs; administrators, student affairs

Introduction

United States' state spending on higher education overall has decreased in terms of real costs due to cutbacks and inflation (Oliff, Palacios, Johnson and Leachman 2013). This significantly influences the quantity and quality of student affair services, especially for multicultural affairs (Wilson 2013). Multicultural affairs is a student affairs area which focuses on programming and support for populations that are historically underrepresented and/or marginalised (Patton 2010). The multicultural affairs administrators (hereafter MAAs) managing these departments often face unique challenges associated with budget instability and socio-cultural politics both within and

outside of their institutions (Cheston 2012; Williams 2003). While there is ample research about innovative organisational change and successful strategies higher education institutions can use to survive an impending crisis or prevailing challenge (Christensen and Eyring 2011; Clark 2003); there is much less research and discussion about the ways in which MAAs can engage in innovation to sustain their programming. This study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) What role did strategic planning and leadership play in the process of innovation?; and 2) How did programme administrators choose this particular new behaviour, idea, or strategy?. The answers to these questions will provide clear steps and additional insight for MAAs and student affair researchers about how MAAs can use a moment of crisis to engage in innovative actions towards sustaining their diversity programming.

Using innovation to sustain diversity programmes

Programme survival is a significant issue for educational programmes designed to increase diversity and cultivate inclusion. Historically, in the United States, the area of multicultural affairs depends on institutional funding to sustain its programmatic efforts, and consequently, in times of economic hardship and recession, institutions are more likely to cut financial support for programmes and activities in this area (Albert and Barker 2012; Wilson 2013). MAAs often make difficult decisions about decreasing expenditures, reducing financial support and services, limiting the number of students served, and/or completely eliminating programming (Stewart and Bridges 2011). The diversity programmes, initiatives, and activities sponsored by multicultural affairs are for the most part not institutionalised, meaning they are not a permanent and fixed component of the institutional structure or budget (Author masked 2000; Walker et al. 2010). Thus, multicultural affairs administrators often have to wrestle with the challenge of long-term sustainability for their programmes and initiatives (Choi and Rainey 2014). However, there are very few studies that examine the challenge of long-term viability and development of innovation as a mechanism to sustain diversity programmes. Research by Minkoff (1999) shows how MAAs managing women and minority programmes deal with change, including the unique challenges they experienced internally and externally, such as scrutiny for using race-specific guidelines and resistance from within the institution to support race and gendered programming. Similarly, a 2007 study conducted by the UCLA-based Harvard Civil Rights Project describes the politics and other complexities MAAs faced when they chose to open a

formerly student of colour-targeted *Meyerhoff programme* to students of all races (Maton, Hrabowski, and Özdemir 2007). Their findings demonstrate that although these challenges can be overcome, it takes strong leadership and strategic planning on the part of MAAs to address the needs of the original population while expanding services to other groups. These provide some understanding of the unique challenges faced by MAAs, however there is very little literature that addresses the process of dealing with crisis and developing innovative responses that will sustain programming.

The literature about student affairs also emphasises the need for student affair administrators to be innovative and prepare for contextual change in a strategic way (Dalton and Gardner 2002). In fact, there have been increased calls for administrators to be more entrepreneurial, pre-emptive, and inventive about securing resources in preparation for organisational change, in other words, more innovative (Barr, McClellan and Sandeen 2014; Newman, Olson, Laws and Whitney 2010). There are, however, very few examples of how student affair administrators, particularly MAAs, can be strategic about engaging in innovation.

Conceptual framework

There is very little in the literature to draw upon to investigate how outreach programmes adopt innovation to target underrepresented students under the veil of race neutrality. While other theories such as institutional theory, resource dependence, and organisational change may be helpful towards understanding the influence of external changes on programmatic needs and operations, more analysis is needed about the ways in which programme leaders can take proactive measures to responding to their external environment. In particular, during transitional periods where many diversity programmes must re-examine how they structure and communicate their efforts to reach underrepresented students of colour. Consequently, I chose to use the theory of innovation as a conceptual framework for this historical case analysis.

The concept of innovation has varied meanings depending on the school of thought from which it emerges and the perspective of the researcher. The public administrative and political science perspectives define innovation as a new idea, process, product, service, or behaviour adopted by an organisation (Hage, 1999; Rowe and Boise 1974).

There are variations of this definition within the literature. Thompson (1965) incorporates the idea of acceptance and implementation where the innovation must be agreed upon by members of the organisation adopting the change and it must move from the abstract to the applied. Becker and Whisler (1967) add that a certain degree of organisational risk must be involved and that the organisation must be the first to initiate the change before others do so. Other definitions require that the new idea or process be *successfully* applied and eventually become institutionalised (Rowe and Boise 1974; Utterback 1971).

Rowe and Boise (1974) add another component to these definitions: the requirement that the organisation make a choice to implement the new idea and or behaviour *without* external pressure or command. This requires the skill of predicting a pending crisis or change in order to adapt. In examining the process of innovation, Knight (1967) defines three areas that are involved in developing an innovative idea or behaviour. These are a) problem recognition; b) search process; and c) problem-solution innovation. In the problem recognition stage the organisation must recognise a potential or current challenge they aim to grapple with and then seek ways to address that problem within the search process stage. Finally, the problem-solution innovation occurs when a suitable solution is found that deals with the problem in the most efficient and beneficial way possible. Knight points out that non-innovators see problems in confined pre-set dimensions which limit their available solutions, while those that innovate look past these boundaries which allow them to expand their selection of solutions. Innovators therefore develop solutions by using new ways of conceptualising problems.

From a sociological perspective, innovation has been described as a critical way in which organisations respond to market challenges (Hage 1999). Heywood (1965) depicts innovation as planning or a planned change. She emphasises that change is inevitably and occurs without planning, so what distinguishes innovation from ordinary change is its intentionality.

With this intentionality as a feature component of this study's conceptual framework, I chose to draw from Rowe and Boise's (1974) Five Broad Stages of Innovation: 1) Knowledge Accumulation; 2) Formulation of an Innovation; 3) Decision; 4) Implementation; and 5) Diffusion. This conceptual framework holds the underlying

assumption that the interaction between the organisation -in this study, the programme -, the campus environment and external forces help initiate innovation on the part of programme administrators. Archival reports and interview data were thematically coded according to the categories of the Rowe and Boise's innovation stage theory (see Table 1 below). This process of coding allowed for operationalising the categories in ways that both tested the fit of the data and analysed the features of this particular historical case. The outcome is a model featuring two analytical categories that highlight both leadership (actions taken by the primary actors) and the stages of innovation.

Table 1. Analytic Categories

Codes	Thematic Category	Operationalised Definition of Thematic Category
Reading and listening to news Sharing information with information from professional networks Programme assessment	Knowledge Accumulation	Gathering information about the health and performance of the programme and well as the political, economic, and social context affecting policies and funding for programming
Reading scholarship and reports on other diversity programmes Strategic Planning	Formulation of an Innovation	Brainstorming and developing a design for a new intervention/programme that will accommodate and thrive in the current political and social context
Reporting previous programme performance Networking Fundraising Bargaining and negotiating	Decision	Embracing the new intervention and making definitive plans for moving from an idea to implementing it into action
Identifying and creating new allies Collaboration Reorganisation Recruitment	Implementation	The process of establishing and carrying out an intervention
N/A	Diffusion	

Methodology

Diversity programmes are overwhelmingly self-contained with little to no external reporting; consequently, it can be difficult to gain insight into the inner workings of a diversity programme and the practice of MAAs who oversee them. A historical qualitative case study design was chosen to describe the lived experience of a unique intervention or phenomenon and the particular context in which it occurred (Yin 2009). According to Hernandez (2015), historical case studies "isolates a historical event and submits it to critical enquiry from various perspectives using the available sources of information". In this way, historical case studies are particularly useful because they allow researchers to draw lessons from an interesting set of circumstances. Additionally, using a historical case analysis shows a particular example of how strategic planning and leadership can play a role in the innovation process for responding to the challenge of contentious and evolving diversity policies that continue to affect the work of many diversity administrators in higher education today. This historical case study focuses on the experiences of two MAAs, the Vice President of Multicultural Affairs and the Director of Multicultural Affairs, who created a sustainable Bridge Programme at Woodsville University (WU)[1] in spite of drastic state budget cuts. While two persons may appear to be an exceptionally small sample size, it is important to remember that in qualitative research, the goal is not to establish generalisability, per se, but to provide a rich description of experiences, perspectives, and phenomenon (Crouch 2006). Additionally, due to historical single-case study design, it was important to focus on those most privy to the design and implementation of the innovation.

Regardless of the qualitative nature of this study, I was careful to attend to issues of trustworthiness and rigor. To reduce bias and ensure credibility, I employed triangulation through the use of document analysis and member checks. Archival state programme reports, grant guidelines, and institutional handbooks were utilised to construct a historical overview of the institution, the Bridge programme, and socio-political climate.

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[1] All real names of institutions and persons have been masked using pseudonym.

The data collection was relatively brief; both interviews were conducted within two weeks of each other. Based on an analysis format suggested by Sam Larson (1997), transcripts were reviewed and identified anything that may fit the code which were then grouped into concepts or themes and put into the conceptual framework based on the five stages of innovation and transformation theory. Open coding methods were then used to capture new and unexpected themes (Creswell 2007). Finally, both the previous longitudinal study on the WU Transition Programme and a current study on the new programme that replaced the former programme were analysed to construct a historical overview and illustrate the description provided in the interviews.

Table 2. Data Sources

Data Sources	Details
Literature review	Scholarly literature on diversity programme outreach, programmatic sustainability, and innovation
Interviews	Two MAAs, the Vice President of Multicultural Affairs and the Director of Multicultural Affairs, at Woodsville University (WU)
Historical and archival data	a) State House Joint Legislation Resolution (2002) b) State higher education reports (1978, 1979,1980, 1981) c) State budget summary (2000) d) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Funding Federal Civil Rights Report (1995) e) State higher education memorandum addressed to presidents, Board of Visitors, and the state's public colleges and universities (2000) f) State Bridge Program reports (1988, 2000) g) WU student handbooks (2000-2003) h) WU Bridge Program Report (1995, 2000) i) WU New Leader Proposal j) Secondary periodicals (1999-2002)

Using a semi-structured interview protocol that had been tested and revised after an informational interview with a veteran Multicultural Affairs Director in the state, each of these MAAs was interviewed twice for two reasons: 1) To address questions and in gaps identified by document analysis; and 2) to conduct extensive member checks to verify previous statements made by both participants. The interview protocol was developed to address the following research questions:

1. What role did strategic planning and leadership play in the process of innovation?

2. How did programme administrator choose this particular new behaviour, idea, or strategy?

Limitations of study

The primary limitations of this study lie in the in the structure of doing single case study research. WU is an institution with its own culture and challenges, and the experiences of its programme administrators may not apply to other programme administrators. However, because WU is a classified as a Master's College and University according to Carnegie Classification, it is representative of many other US higher education institutions in this category. Moreover, regardless of institutional culture and challenges, the struggle of sustaining diversity programmes in times of fiscal and political crisis is a very common phenomenon.

Researcher perspective

I have intimate knowledge of the WU Transition Program because I previously studied the original programme and was a former employee of the coordinating board that formerly funded the programme. This intimate knowledge of the programme, however, provides the researcher with the ability to explore a topic that has been ignored in the literature. In 1999, I conducted a longitudinal review of a Bridge programme's ability to retain underrepresented students of colour for Woodsville University. The study revealed that the Bridge programme was highly effective in retaining students. Since that study, state funding for the Bridge programme and others like it have been cut, which ultimately impacted the existence of these programmes throughout the state (Zimmer 2003). Woodsville University is the only institution surveyed throughout the state that had created an entirely new programme in place of the previous Bridge programme.

A story of crisis, innovation, and survival

It is important to note that the case of the WU innovation arose directly from an economic and political upheaval stemming from the conclusion of a decades old agreement between the state in which WU is situated and the Office of Civil Rights

(Springer 2005). The details of this upheaval will be specified below, however, a timeline for the events of this case analysis can be found in Table 3.

WU is a public four year residential Master's College and University (larger programmes) and is located in a rural area within a southern state. The 2002 mission of WU, as stated in the 2001-2002 student handbook, was that the institution was "committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who will lead productive and meaningful lives" (2002). In 2002, there were over 13,000 degree-seeking undergraduate students with over 1400 students who identified themselves as being multi-ethnic. At the time, WU's multi-ethnic population was comprised of almost 400 African American students, 700 Asian/Pacific Islander students, 250 Hispanic/Latino students, and almost 30 Native American students (WU Student Handbook, 2002).

Origins of the Woodsville University transition programme

According to public federal state documents, the state in which WU was located came to an agreement with the federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in 1973 (State Higher Education Governing Board 1978; 1979; 1980; 1981). This agreement was struck so that the state would be compliant with Title VI and applicable federal law. The agreement stipulated that the state would set aside appropriations for campus-based programmes designed to encourage increased racial diversity in public institutions of higher education (Office of State Government Relations 2004; State General Assembly 2000). After two amendments to the agreements, one of the programmes created to fulfil these agreement was the Student Transition Program, also known as "the Bridge programme". Approximately $125,000 was set aside for all of the Bridge programmes.

The primary objective of the original WU Transition Program was identify 'other race' students, mostly Black, through the admission process who show evidence of being academically under prepared and to provide these students with the necessary curriculum and academic support services to realistically prepare them for academic life at WU. From 1988 to 2002, the WU programme was awarded between $50,000 and $92,000 annually from the state to operate their Bridge programme (State Higher Education Governing Board 1988; 2000). The programme was administered by the WU Center for Multicultural Student Services and lasted six week with all course offerings

offered credit towards graduation. Follow up activities included comprehensive academic year support services that include study groups and tutoring to aid participants in their academic covalent. WU stated in its original programme initiative that 'this programme is representation of a strong commitment of the university to provide the necessary channels for successfully academic attainment and achievement to an ethnically diverse student body" (Multicultural Student Services of WU 1995).

Table 3. Timeline of Events

Key Dates	Events
1978	The state adopted a detailed plan for redressing conditions that OCR identified as traceable to the prior dual system of higher education. This plan included undergraduate student recruitment and retention initiatives and programmes
1987	The state higher education board established and sponsored its first statewide transition programme under the detailed OCR plan. This programme special pre-college summer Bridge programmes for "other-race" students
1995-2001	OCR's investigatory team and State Commission on Diversity conduct an exhaustive review of public records pertaining to historical and current practices in higher education system
1998	The Center for Equal Opportunity heavily scrutinizes public institutions that sponsor race-conscious programming and scholarships. Several institutions pull or alter race-conscious programmes and funding
2000	Report on the state's Bridge programmes finds that the programme is widely successful and should be continued and expanded
September 2001	September 11th terrorists attacks and severe economic downturn
November 2001	New agreement reached between the State and OCR. Attorney General's office issues a strongly worded statement of support for race-neutral policies
December 2001	State governor signs an executive order reducing state spending by all agencies to keep the state's budget balanced during the economic downturn
April 2002	Office of the attorney general issues a memorandum to the state's college presidents, governing boards, and attorneys stressing the liability risks of using race conscious policies and programmes
July 2002	The Center for Equal Opportunity cites overwhelming of racial-preferences in the admissions and support in the state's public colleges and universities
August 2002	WU MAAs began discussing plan for a new programme
December 2002	Budget allocations for the state's Bridge programme are eliminated and shifted into other, race-neutral college access programmes in the State's budget
Spring 2003	Two of the state's previously funded Bridge programmes announce they will be eliminating the programme completely

Spring 2003	WU announces support and plans to continue supporting its Bridge programme
Summer 2004	WU implements a newer version of its Bridge programme, and call it the "New Leaders" programme

The little bridge programme that could

Both administrators conveyed strong feelings about the large role the WU transition programme played in fulfilling the diversity goals of the institution. It became evident through the interviews that the transition programme was the primary and most significant contributing campus initiative for diversity.   As the Vice-President of Multicultural Affairs explained:

> *In terms of helping diversifying the campus climate and bringing in ethnically diverse students to campus I think it was a very much a part of the mission in terms of educating students. The programme was an educationally based programme. It directly entwined into what the institution was all about.*

Indeed, the WU Bridge programme was highly successful with an overall graduation rate of 65% compared to a graduation rate of 56% for similar non-Bridge Programme students (Author Name Masked 2000). However, the programme's success did not shield it from becoming a target of state political battles.

Enter crisis: political upheaval and budget cuts

In April 2002, on the cusp of the landmark *Gratz v. Bollinger* affirmative action Supreme Court decision, the state in which WU is situated reached an agreement with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that they had satisfied their efforts to remedy formerly segregated systems of higher education (State General Assembly 2002). Shortly after the agreement was struck, the State Office of Attorney General urged that state race-conscious programmes to be eliminated. The Director of Multicultural Affairs recounts the way this decision unfolded below:

> *When it originally started the Office of Civil Rights {OCR} said that all [the state's] schools need to do a better job of recruiting other race students. The programme was designed to increase the enrolment of other race students. At some point OCR reviewed what the schools had done and they dropped the requirement that they do these programmes.*

Subsequently, State appropriations for race-conscious campus-based programmes and scholarships were reduced by $6.8 million (Hurd 2002). As a result most of the state's race-conscious Bridge programmes severely cut activities, and in two cases, the programmes were completely eliminated. Both WU MAAs expressed the heightened sense of anxiety and frustration created by the state's budget cut for the WU Bridge programme staff and participants:

> *I can't say I didn't see it coming. People always seem to have questions and reservations about programmes designed for particular groups. However, this particular legislation really posed a threat to the future of the programme. There was a lot of history and pride associated with the way we designed the programme to support and celebrate the history and culture of Black students, and the state clearly had a problem with support programmes of that nature.* - Vice-President of Multicultural Affairs.

> *We saw the writing on the wall. There had been whispers of it months before it happened, and everyone knew sort of knew the way the program operated before would have to change dramatically without state funding* - Director of Multicultural Affairs

Both MAAs described a contentious state climate towards overt outreach designed to support racial minorities. However, as the Vice-President of Multicultural Affairs indicated, this was not entirely surprising. In fact, both interviewees revealed that the seeds of innovation were planted before state funding for the programme was cut; recounting that pressure from the state and institution to adhere to race-neutral guidelines and the potential loss of funding spurred them to action.

Analysis revealed that the environmental catalyst of state reduction in appropriations to the WU Bridge programme motivated the MAAs at WU to engage in four out of five stages of innovative planning to sustain WU Bridge programming (see Figure 1 below). The remaining section of my findings will illustrate the steps these MAAs took to engage in innovation in order to save the heart of the WU Bridge programme.

Accumulating knowledge

Both the Vice President of Multicultural Affairs and the Director of Multicultural Affairs discussed the process of accumulating knowledge about the fiscal and political circumstances that would affect the future of the Bridge Programme. The Vice President of Multicultural Affairs described gathering feedback about how the Bridge Programme was regarded by institutional members. He quickly discovered that WU's executive administration viewed the Bridge Programme positively and felt it played a significant role in fulfilling the diversity goals of the institution.

In examining what prompted the change that led the MAAs to engage in innovation, both MAAs stated that if state funding remained stagnant, not increasing with the rate of inflation costs, the programme's growth will require more funding from the institution to sustain the programme. As the Vice-President of Multicultural Affairs explained:

> *The institution's commitment regardless of the state commitment impacted the programme. In its last two years, the institution fully funded the programme. WU still puts that same money and more towards that mission and similar programme. Institutional commitment was greater than the state's.*

The Multicultural Affairs Director also illustrated how declining state fiscal support over the years alerted him that his office would be unable to fully fund the programme, despite the programme's high retention and graduation rates.

Formulation of innovation

As a result of the aforementioned state cuts to the WU Bridge programme, WU MAAs began to work together to formulate a innovative solution. This new programme had broader appeal that aligned with institutional goals and justified a campaign for additional institutional funding. The MMAs had to be creative while staying faithful to their goals of cultivating diversity. Since financial barriers remain formidable to limiting access and choice for underrepresented students of colour, they chose to target low-income students. Given the race-neutral climate in the state, developing a class-targeted programme was more politically viable. This strategy would not only ensure the inclusion of underrepresented students of colour in critical mass (albeit not at the levels of the former programme), but would expand the definition of multicultural to

create more buy-in, win financial backing from senior administrators and donors, and align with the state's mandate for race-neutral outreach. Finally, they retained the successful components of the past programme (i.e. mentoring, tutoring, and intensive follow-up), and discarded elements that were no longer viable to continue (i.e. explicit racially targeted recruiting methods, field trips, guest speakers). As one administrator explained:

> *WU is the only institution in the state that created an entirely new programme in place of the previous Bridge programme. The New Leaders Program (NL) was designed to attract underrepresented[2] students and offers social and academic support. Students   accepted into the programme are expected to participate in a structured mentoring   experience, monthly cohort meetings, community service, and educational enrichment workshops. The NL also provided each participant with a financial aid grant that covers the full tuition cost to attend WU.*

Decision and implementation

Both MAAs described making a definitive decision to present their plan to the executive administration. The timing for their decision to act was fortunate. Right on the heels of state funding cuts for the Bridge Programme, WU senior administration established the first Presidential Commission on Diversity and declared an annual pledge of $100,000 of in-kind institutional funding for WU's Office of Multicultural Affairs to continue programmatic efforts previously offered by the Bridge programme. Shortly after, the decision to implement NL was made. As the Director of Multicultural Affairs elaborated:

> *We have [the programme] in our strategic plan now but before the institution didn't. Now [the programme] is tied with an admissions goal so that [the institution] funds their priorities while also supporting our own priorities.*

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[2] The term *underrepresented* was broadly used to refer to students from low socioeconomic status and various ethnically diverse backgrounds, including African Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, White Appalachians, and Native Americans. The ethnic breakdown of this group was 42.22 percent African American, 17.78 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 15.56 percent, Hispanic, 22.22 percent Caucasian, and 2.22 percent unidentified (WU Office of Multicultural Student Services, 2000).
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While four out of five steps for innovation were identified in this case, there was no evidence of the final step - diffusion. Like its predecessor before, the NL programme was self-contained and the MMAs did not express any interest in expanding or replicating it. However, while there was no diffusion of the newly created NL programme, an argument can be made that its creation and implementation demonstrates innovation at work in this case.

Discussion

This historical case analysis demonstrates that the MAAs at WU engaged in innovative approaches to sustain the WU Bridge programme by using strategic planning and assuming leadership over the development of an alternative, and politically more viable programme. These findings provide hope for MAAs who create and manage diversity programmes. Unexpected political and fiscal upheaval such as drastic cuts of state funding can present both a challenge and new opportunities for engaging in innovation that will sustain programmatic efforts. As in the case of the WU, MAAs must give consideration to external and internal political and power structures that influence policies and funding. By accumulating knowledge about these areas, MAAs can take strategic steps towards developing innovative mechanism that will make their programmes more viable.

Williams (2013) describes how diversity leaders like MAAs can use strategic planning to manage the process of expected and unexpected change. MAAs cannot effectively adapt to a changing environment without flexibility and foresight. Although external contextual forces affected WU, the changes the MAAs created were initiated and sustained through strategic planning and strong leadership. The support of senior administration for these efforts also underscores the importance of the commitment and role of executive leadership in planning change.

More research needs to be done to examine the inner process of change, especially within multicultural affairs, where programme development may be constrained by fiscal and/or political challenges related to state and institutional policies. While case studies such as this one are designed to inform better practices, additional comprehensive studies that seek to compare and contrast the experience of MAAs based at multiple institutions are needed. Finally, more collaboration among

senior level administrators, programme administrators, and state level policy makers needs to take place so that institutional and state diversity goals are adequately supported.

Ultimately, this study shows that state budget cuts did not deter the MAAs. Instead it prompted them to engage in knowledge accumulation, strategic planning and idea development, and making the decision to implement a new programme in place of the WU Bridge Programme. MAAs dealing with similar challenges should take note of the multifaceted approach used by the WU MAAs in this case. Significant shifts in the fiscal climate can be devastating for diversity programmes, many which are already financially underfunded and understaffed (Puma 2013). MAAs need to develop a hyper-sensitivity to external forces and conduct regular environmental scans of their campuses to keep abreast of the political climate of their state, especially as it relates to diversity. This will help MAAs become more proactive about aligning themselves politically with administration to garner support for new innovations. MAAs should also be prepared to develop viable alternatives, network, form new allies, and secure support from senior administration to support their new plans. The survival of some of their best programmes may depend on it.

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