

# The Effect Of Diversity Mandates: The Case Of Mississippi Institutions Of Higher Learning

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## ABSTRACT

*After more than 40 years since the University of Mississippi integrated its student body and the passage of civil rights and affirmative action legislation throughout the United States, universities are confronting the issue of developing not only a diverse student body, but also a diverse faculty, staff, and administration. In the intervening years, much research has been conducted in the area of diversity within universities. Past research focused on the attitudes towards diversity, necessity and benefits of diversity, and student initiatives to address these issues. However, the vast majority of diversity research centers on human resources issues. In 2006, Commissioner Tom Meredith of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) charged the Mississippi higher education institutions with increasing the diversity of faculty, staff, and students. The purpose of this study is to investigate the diversity among these institutions and to determine the effect of the mandate by the IHL on the diversity of employees and students at these universities. Data analysis includes a report of the current diversity status and analysis of change based on the mandate. This study concludes with a discussion of the results, implications of these results, and directions for future research.*

**Keywords:** Diversity, mandate, student, employee, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Traditionally White Universities (TWUs)

## INTRODUCTION

The field of education focuses on the advancements in learning and providing generalized and specialized knowledge to groups of people with common interests. This field, while recognized to be a vital factor in society for imparting knowledge and improving individuals and civilizations, has not “practiced what it preaches”. More specifically, higher education institutions regularly offer courses that are specific to the history, laws, culture, and dynamics of the United States that are not adequately addressed in K-12 and emphasize the challenges this nation has faced in providing equality, fairness, and structure to all people. Educators in these institutions are tasked with informing and molding future leaders that understand and appreciate the importance of a diverse society. However, these institutions have failed in many regards to demonstrate this as role models to their students.

In the state of Mississippi, this issue was recognized and the importance of a diverse workforce became essential through a mandate issued in 2006 by Commissioner Tom Meredith of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). In the mandate, Meredith charged the higher education institutions with increasing the diversity of faculty, staff, and students (Rogers, 2006) to provide critical examples to the future leaders of the state and nation. Specifically, these institutions were charged with increasing both ethnic and gender diversity (IHL System Profile, 2009). The eight public universities in the state have adopted this mandate and it is believed making strides to improve the diversity of their institutions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the diversity among these institutions and to determine the effect of the mandate by the IHL on the diversity of employees and students at

these universities. For this research, changes in both gender and ethnic diversity will be investigated in order to determine the impact of the IHL mandate.

## **REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE**

Research conducted provides insight into the various measures higher education has explored in efforts to diversify. Avenues for expanding the ethnic and gender composition of universities' groupings encompass consideration of the attitudes towards diversity, necessity and benefits of diversity, student initiatives, and human resource issues. A review of the available literature in these areas provide insight into the impact the diversification efforts of higher education have had on the resulting make-up of faculty, staff, and students.

Diversity provides institutions of higher education with several challenges, including the attitudes of the people on campus. Given that individuals are ingrained with their attitudes towards others based on personal history, changing those established viewpoints provides an enormous problem. Methods to overcome or alter those instilled beliefs to allow for a more diverse student population and workforce is the responsibility of the institution and must be accomplished prior to a smooth transition. The 2007 ASHE Higher Education Report states "the challenge for university leaders and administrators today is to recognize and make visible the invisible forms of discrimination (pp. 43-44)." The report further explains that invisible forms of discrimination adversely impact the educational institutions in the areas of retention of talent, program quality, and ability to compete as a result of the input of diverse employees. Johnsrud, Turner, and Myers' studies (as cited in ASHE Higher Education Report, 2007) provide insight into the invisible forms of discrimination university administrators need to consider: the feelings of isolation, being undesirable, being useless, being underemployed, being unacknowledged, and respect minimization.

The 2006 ASHE Higher Education Report presents the attitudes of students, faculty, and staff towards diversification. The studies conducted by the Center on Diversity and Community, Thernstrom, and Rothman, Lipset, and Nevitte (as cited in ASHE Higher Education Report, 2006) identified students' beliefs towards diversity in higher education as being in strong support of a variety of races and an appropriate balance between genders. More specifically, students shared through these studies that they have not witnessed a recognition by their university to diversify, do not believe that minority input is sought for curriculums, do not believe minority issues are addressed on campus, do not agree that minority applicants should be admitted through a relaxation of admissions standards, believe that minority students are treated similarly to white students, and believe academic standards remain unaffected by special admissions policies for minority students.

Additionally, research by Rothman, Lipset, and Nevitte (as cited in ASHE Higher Education Report, 2006) found faculty to share similar beliefs to students regarding diversity. Faculty viewpoints shared through the research include minority faculty are believed to be treated similarly to white faculty, minority students are believed to be treated similarly to white students, and minority applicants should not receive preferential treatment with regards to admissions standards or job applications. Faculty opinions pertaining to the hiring process in higher education provided unexpected insight into their attitudes towards diversity; white males are often more challenged to be considered for employment as compared to minority females, minority males, and white females.

The attitudes of staff, specifically administrators, are explored through the research of Rothman, Lipset, and Nevitte (as cited in ASHE Higher Education Report, 2006). Staff viewpoints included the beliefs that minority faculty and students are treated similarly to white faculty and students, the admissions policies should not be adjusted to benefit lower achieving minority students, and the hiring process should not be specialized for minority faculty. As in the faculty opinions, staff agreed that white males experience additional obstacles when searching for a faculty position as compared to minority males, minority females, and white females.

Additional research explores the essential need for educational facilities to diversity as well as the benefits to these entities as a result of employing and admitting various ethnicities and genders. The necessity of diversification in institutions of higher learning presents outcomes that can lead to future success in creating a well balanced workforce and student body. Gallagher and Trower (2009) state "an institutional commitment to diversity is integral to creating a welcoming and supportive culture for new faculty members" (p. 1). Gallagher and Trower

also clarify that success of a diversification strategy is dependent upon the available support, both monetarily and administratively. Furthermore, according to Eckes (2005) it is imperative for faculty to be diverse so race relations can improve. As the world becomes more global and communities exist in both virtual and physical environments, the need for a diverse workforce and student body is imperative. In addition, the faculty role model theory states minority students seeing minority faculty in such high positions becomes a motivational catalyst for success for minority students, as well as increasing student enrollment at a school where the majority attends (Eckes, 2005). Institutions of higher education have recognized a need for a diverse faculty as a critical component of meeting the mission of the institution. Success of some institutions, such as MIT (Hopkins, 2007) and Gonzaga University (Lombard, 2006), provide encouragement and positive frameworks for the Mississippi institutions working to diversify.

Universities commonly assume the task of diversification, which results in little or no expectations for students to become involved in the process. Fortunately, students' passion for equality, enthusiasm for learning, and desire to socialize has led to the development of student initiatives designed to increase diversity on campuses and provide opportunities for various ethnicities and gender to work together to reach goals. These student lead programs can benefit the institutions as they seek to recruit a diverse workforce and student body. For example, Durfee and Foote (2009) found an increase of cultural based student organizations on campus increase the ability to recruit student minorities to universities.

Research on the effort to diversify includes the consideration of the attitudes of faculty, staff and students, the need and benefits of diversification, as well as student lead programs, however, the vast majority of diversity research centers on human resources issues. One example to consider is the fact that many universities receive federal funding; therefore those institutions are impacted by affirmative action programs (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2007). Another human resources issue that universities must consider is the length of time individuals remain a part of the campus community. Specifically, Park and Denson (2009) found that individual students are a temporary fixture on the campus, but faculty is enduring. Therefore, it is the faculty who are vital to successful diversity advocacy initiatives throughout university campuses. These factors affect human resource issues such as hiring policies (Wilson, 2001), retention policies (Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009), and legal implications (Igwebuike, 2006).

As the Mississippi institutions of higher learning work to diversify their workforces and student bodies, it is imperative to consider the challenges and successes associated with their efforts. Remembering to take into account the impressions and beliefs of those involved, the need and benefit to the universities as the appropriate steps are taken, allowing and promoting the involvement of students, and human resource issues that can impact the outcome, should result in an improved ethnic and gender diversity on campuses.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data was collected from the National Center for Educational Statistics, IPEDs Data Center. Data collected for the eight IHL universities included position, gender, and ethnicity. The position types included students and employees. Student data was collected based on current students and new students; employee data was based on current employees and new employees. Furthermore, both current and new employees were noted as administration, faculty or staff. Gender was noted as male or female. Ethnicity was noted as white, African-American (AA), Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. Since the total number of Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students and employees was so small, these three ethnic groups were added together and titled "HAN" for the purposes of this research.

The size of the institution creates problems when comparing one institution to another. For example, one large university may hire 100 employees in a given year while a small university may hire 20 employees in a given year. Due to the size discrepancy and the effect on the analysis, gender and ethnicity were calculated as a percent for each university. The subsequent analysis was based on percent change, rather than actual number change. Data was then grouped according to data reported during the pre-mandate years and data reported during the post-mandate years. ANOVAs were conducted comparing pre-mandate averages with post-mandate averages based on the IHL institutions as a whole, individual institutions, and gender and ethnicity based on position type. Analyses

were also conducted on institutions based on size and type. Size was noted as large or small universities based on a mean split. Types of universities included Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Traditionally White Universities (TWUs).

## RESULTS

Although the diversity mandate strives for changes in the gender and ethnic make-up of the eight Mississippi IHL universities, as with many mandates, changes may be slow to occur. This study seeks to investigate what changes have occurred in the three years since the mandate was issued. ANOVA was used to conduct the analysis. Since the data collection consisted of population data, a cut-off point of  $p \leq .10$  was used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the pre-mandate ( $M_{Pre}$ ) years and the post-mandate ( $M_{Post}$ ) years.

First, overall changes were investigated. For students, the only significant difference found, overall, was for HAN ( $M_{Pre}=1.4791$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.921$ ,  $F=3.501$ ,  $p=.066$ ). There were no significant differences, overall, for employees.

Next, differences for students and employees were analyzed based on the size of the university, the type of the university, and for the individual institutions. These results are divided based on student or employee and are noted in the subsequent sections.

### Students

Overall, only changes in HAN ethnicity was noted ( $M_{Pre}=1.4791$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.921$ ,  $F=3.501$ ,  $p=.066$ ). Additionally, significant differences were found in both HBCUs and TWUs ( $M_{Pre}=.6308$ ,  $M_{Post}=.9561$ ,  $F=5.180$ ,  $p=.030$  and  $M_{Pre}=2.2849$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.8.83$ ,  $F=19.682$ ,  $p=.000$ , respectively). Only small universities noted a change in HAN ethnicity ( $M_{Pre}=.9729$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.4811$ ,  $F=2.928$ ,  $p=.097$ ). No differences were indicated in large universities.

Individually, all institutions noted some significant difference in either gender or ethnic composition, or both. One small HBCU indicated a significant difference in males ( $M_{Pre}=36.8798$ ,  $M_{Post}=33.7493$ ,  $F=10.633$ ,  $p=.017$ ). However, this change is in opposition to the mandate as the institution became less diverse based on gender. Two small HBCUs noted an increase in HAN ethnicity ( $M_{Pre}=.4721$ ,  $M_{Post}=.6611$ ,  $F=10.243$ ,  $p=.19$  and  $M_{Pre}=.2605$ ,  $M_{Post}=.4996$ ,  $F=6.375$ ,  $p=.045$ , respectively). Significant differences were found in one large HBCU. These differences are as follows: males ( $M_{Pre}=36.9446$ ,  $M_{Post}=35.3856$ ,  $F=14.040$ ,  $p=.007$ ), white ( $M_{Pre}=3.731$ ,  $M_{Post}=5.034$ ,  $F=4.462$ ,  $p=.073$ ), AA ( $M_{Pre}=95.6167$ ,  $M_{Post}=94.0885$ ,  $F=5.162$ ,  $p=.057$ ), and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=1.1066$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.6730$ ,  $F=28.474$ ,  $p=.001$ ). All of these groups, except for males, resulted in increased diversity for this institution.

Of the small TWUs, one noted significant changes with males ( $M_{Pre}=37.7088$ ,  $M_{Post}=36.0562$ ,  $F=5.916$ ,  $p=.045$ ), yet this finding resulted in less diversification. Two small TWUs indicated changes in the following ethnic populations: white ( $M_{Pre}=64.166$ ,  $M_{Post}=56.211$ ,  $F=15.361$ ,  $p=.006$  and  $M_{Pre}=68.728$ ,  $M_{Post}=64.714$ ,  $F=7.586$ ,  $p=.028$ , respectively), AA ( $M_{Pre}=34.7277$ ,  $M_{Post}=42.1159$ ,  $F=13.945$ ,  $p=.007$  and  $M_{Pre}=29.3198$ ,  $M_{Post}=32.4357$ ,  $F=7.026$ ,  $p=.033$ , respectively), and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=1.1066$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.6730$ ,  $F=13.945$ ,  $p=.007$  and  $M_{Pre}=1.9521$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.8460$ ,  $F=7.134$ ,  $p=.032$ , respectively).

Significant differences were also indicated in large TWUs. Two large TWUs noted changes in male population ( $M_{Pre}=52.3028$ ,  $M_{Post}=50.9494$ ,  $F=3.633$ ,  $p=.099$  and  $M_{Pre}=39.2685$ ,  $M_{Post}=38.8353$ ,  $F=6.531$ ,  $p=.038$ , respectively). Based on these results, the first TWU resulted in more gender diversity while the second TWU indicated less gender diversity. Three large TWUs noted significant differences in the ethnic diversity. Each of these TWUs indicated a decrease in the white population ( $M_{Pre}=84.636$ ,  $M_{Post}=83.295$ ,  $F=19.845$ ,  $p=.003$ ,  $M_{Pre}=78.543$ ,  $M_{Post}=76.648$ ,  $F=35.768$ ,  $p=.001$ , and  $M_{Pre}=73.761$ ,  $M_{Post}=69.825$ ,  $F=15.956$ ,  $p=.005$ ), an increase in the AA population ( $M_{Pre}=13.2917$ ,  $M_{Post}=14.1032$ ,  $F=8.021$ ,  $p=.025$ ,  $M_{Pre}=18.9298$ ,  $M_{Post}=20.4775$ ,  $F=58.405$ ,  $p=.000$ , and  $M_{Pre}=23.6500$ ,  $M_{Post}=27.2633$ ,  $F=14.400$ ,  $p=.007$ , respectively), and an increase in the HAN population ( $M_{Pre}=2.0722$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.6013$ ,  $F=16.040$ ,  $p=.005$ ,  $M_{Pre}=2.5267$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.8744$ ,  $F=5.638$ ,  $p=.049$ , and  $M_{Pre}=2.5890$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.9116$ ,  $F=18.738$ ,  $p=.003$ , respectively), indicating an increase in diversity at each of these institutions.

## **New Students**

As the mandate is implemented in the IHL universities, it is expected that diversification will increase as students enter the university. The current students may have been admitted to the university prior to the mandate and these students remain at the university unless they choose to leave or their grades do not allow them to remain. Since the data did not allow for the collection of gender and diversity by class rank, the subsequent analysis investigated the change in diversity of new students based on university size, type, and individual institution. This analysis found no significant changes overall or by university size. Based on university type, the only significant difference found post mandate is within HBCUs. HBCUs noted a change in AA ( $M_{Pre}=97.6512$ ,  $M_{Post}=96.0786$ ,  $F=3.637$ ,  $p=.072$ ) and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=4.930$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.0831$ ,  $F=3.588$ ,  $p=.074$ ) ethnic groups, indicating an increase in diversity

Only four individual institutions were found to have significant differences in the diversity of new students. Two small TWUs indicated changes in both white ( $M_{Pre}=67.5415$ ,  $M_{Post}=60.5021$ ,  $F=4.351$ ,  $p=.091$  and  $M_{Pre}=69.2663$ ,  $M_{Post}=57.8504$ ,  $F=14.013$ ,  $p=.013$ , respectively) and AA ( $M_{Pre}=30.6917$ ,  $M_{Post}=37.4056$ ,  $F=7.323$ ,  $p=.042$  and  $M_{Pre}=28.5490$ ,  $M_{Post}=39.5549$ ,  $F=12.108$ ,  $p=.018$ , respectively) ethnic composition, indicating an increase in diversity at these institutions. One large HBCU noted changes in its white ( $M_{Pre}=64.65$ ,  $M_{Post}=1.9492$ ,  $F=66.237$ ,  $p=.000$ ), AA ( $M_{Pre}=99.035$ ,  $M_{Post}=97.3635$ ,  $F=60.319$ ,  $p=.001$ ), and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=3.220$ ,  $M_{Post}=6.873$ ,  $F=9.208$ ,  $p=.029$ ) ethnic composition, indicating an increase in diversity at this institution. A significant difference for the HAN ethnic group was found in one large TWU ( $M_{Pre}=2.5339$ ,  $M_{Post}=3.2213$ ,  $F=5.314$ ,  $p=.069$ ), indicating an increase in this ethnic group.

## **Employees**

Compared to students, fewer employees join a university each year. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be fewer gender and ethnic changes comparatively. However, since the mandate was issued in 2006, it is anticipated that some changes will be found if the institutions are following the mandate. Employees were divided into three groups: administration, faculty, and staff. Within each of these groups, both current and new employees were evaluated. As with the student population, it is expected that more changes will be noted with the new employees.

When considering the IHL member universities as a whole, the only significant differences were found in the administration group. The differences were noted for gender (males  $M_{Pre}=51.1933$ ,  $M_{Post}=45.5496$ ,  $F=3.510$ ,  $p=.064$ ) and the HAN ethnic group ( $M_{Pre}=2.7083$ ,  $M_{Post}=3.4488$ ,  $F=2.990$ ,  $p=.087$ ). No significant differences were noted within the faculty and staff employees. When evaluating diversity differences based on the size of the university, only large universities indicated a difference in the HAN ethnic population ( $M_{Pre}=2.6547$ ,  $M_{Post}=4.4517$ ,  $F=10.122$ ,  $p=.003$ ) within administration. No significant differences were found within the faculty and staff employees. Diversity changes were then investigated based on university type. In this instance, differences were noted within the faculty composition at TWUs for white ( $M_{Pre}=91.5406$ ,  $M_{Post}=89.5180$ ,  $F=5.407$ ,  $p=.029$ ) and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=3.6884$ ,  $M_{Post}=6.1497$ ,  $F=7.808$ ,  $p=.011$ ) ethnic groups.

Investigating each IHL institution individually noted significant differences for several member institutions. Although no differences were noted for small HBCUs, one large HBCU indicated the following changes: administration AA ( $M_{Pre}=88.6547$ ,  $M_{Post}=86.4663$ ,  $F=6.751$ ,  $p=.027$ ), faculty white ( $M_{Pre}=15.8981$ ,  $M_{Post}=17.8381$ ,  $F=7.042$ ,  $p=.077$ ), and faculty AA ( $M_{Pre}=70.0850$ ,  $M_{Post}=67.3135$ ,  $F=7.439$ ,  $p=.072$ ). Differences were found in two small TWUs. For one small TWU, administrative differences were noted for the HAN ethnic group ( $M_{Pre}=1.9233$ ,  $M_{Post}=6.990$ ,  $F=6.862$ ,  $p=.040$ ), but these results indicate a shift toward less diversity. This same TWU indicated a change in faculty white ethnicity ( $M_{Pre}=91.5934$ ,  $M_{Post}=89.6341$ ,  $F=47.094$ ,  $p=.092$ ), an increase in diversity. Another small TWU noted a difference in faculty gender ( $M_{Pre}=37.8996$ ,  $M_{Post}=35.7497$ ,  $F=9.678$ ,  $p=.053$ ), indicating a decrease in diversity. Differences were also found in three large TWUs, yet only one was found within administration for the white ( $M_{Pre}=91.0692$ ,  $M_{Post}=88.0502$ ,  $F=3.287$ ,  $p=.095$ ) and HAN ethnic groups ( $M_{Pre}=1.5837$ ,  $M_{Post}=2.7351$ ,  $F=8.817$ ,  $p=.012$ ), indicating an increase in diversity. Two large TWUs noted differences for white faculty ( $M_{Pre}=90.9795$ ,  $M_{Post}=85.7237$ ,  $F=238.610$ ,  $p=.001$  and  $M_{Pre}=92.4307$ ,  $M_{Post}=89.5868$ ,  $F=11.451$ ,  $p=.020$ ), while three large TWUs noted differences for HAN faculty ( $M_{Pre}=4.0965$ ,  $M_{Post}=5.5438$ ,

F=8.425,  $p=.044$ ,  $M_{Pre}=5.2606$ ,  $M_{Post}=10.3306$ ,  $F=158.270$ ,  $p=.001$ , and  $M_{Pre}=3.9907$ ,  $M_{Post}=6.4145$ ,  $F=7.770$ ,  $p=.039$ ) indicating an increase in diversity for these universities.

### **New Employees**

Overall, the only significant shift in diversity was noted in gender ( $M_{Pre}=51.9293$ ,  $M_{Post}=42.0193$ ,  $F=9.327$ ,  $p=.003$ ), a finding that more females were hired after the mandate than before the mandate. Gender differences was also seen for administrative hiring ( $M_{Pre}=56.1919$ ,  $M_{Post}=38.3058$ ,  $F=9.072$ ,  $p=.003$ ) while there was an increase in HAN faculty hiring ( $M_{Pre}=6.0178$ ,  $M_{Post}=11.3129$ ,  $F=6.052$ ,  $p=.018$ ).

Administration hiring at small universities noted an increase in female hiring ( $M_{Pre}=56.5708$ ,  $M_{Post}=34.4446$ ,  $F=5.460$ ,  $p=.025$ ). Administration hiring at large universities noted and increase in both female ( $M_{Pre}=55.9078$ ,  $M_{Post}=42.3702$ ,  $F=3.169$ ,  $p=.082$ ) and HAN ( $M_{Pre}=2.9711$ ,  $M_{Post}=6.6152$ ,  $F=3.196$ ,  $p=.081$ ). Faculty hiring increased for the HAN ethnic group ( $M_{Pre}=7.9076$ ,  $M_{Post}=14.0456$ ,  $F=6.519$ ,  $p=.018$ ).

Administration hiring at HBCUs increased for females ( $M_{Pre}=53.5023$ ,  $M_{Post}=35.5431$ ,  $F=6.236$ ,  $p=.018$ ). Staff hiring at HBCUs decreased for the white ethnic group ( $M_{Pre}=8.0374$ ,  $M_{Post}=3.9799$ ,  $F=3.655$ ,  $p=.075$ ) and increased for the AA ethnic group ( $M_{Pre}=88.5300$ ,  $M_{Post}=93.5320$ ,  $F=4.104$ ,  $p=.061$ ), indicating a decrease in diversity.

Administrative hiring for TWUs increased for females ( $M_{Pre}=57.8471$ ,  $M_{Post}=40.4405$ ,  $F=3.889$ ,  $p=.055$ ), decreased for whites ( $M_{Pre}=90.5493$ ,  $M_{Post}=82.8727$ ,  $F=3.353$ ,  $p=.074$ ), and increased for HAN ( $M_{Pre}=1.3789$ ,  $M_{Post}=4.9765$ ,  $F=4.363$ ,  $p=.042$ ). Faculty hiring at TWUs decreased for whites ( $M_{Pre}=89.6929$ ,  $M_{Post}=83.2701$ ,  $F=6.598$ ,  $p=.017$ ) and increased for HAN ( $M_{Pre}=5.5064$ ,  $M_{Post}=10.3748$ ,  $F=4.027$ ,  $p=.056$ ).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Changes in diversity have occurred since the mandate issued by then Commissioner Meredith in 2006 for both the student and employee populations, yet these changes have been small. However, that is to be expected in that population shifts are usually slow. Student and employee diversity often mimic the state's population. In 2000, the US Census found that the Mississippi male population was 48.3% and the female population was 51.7% while the ethnic population was 61.4% white, 36.3% AA, and 2.3% HAN. The US Census Bureau found, in 2008, that the male population was 48.5% and the female population was 51.5%. For this same year, the ethnic population in 2008 was 60.6% white, 37.2% AA, and 2.2% HAN (see US Census Bureau, 2010). With such minor change in both gender and ethnic diversity over those eight years, years which encompass the pre-mandate and post-mandate time period, changes noted in this study are significant, since these changes cannot be attributed general changes in the population.

For students, overall gender diversity was found in five of the eight IHL universities. In all instances, there was a decrease in the male population. However, in only one institution did this result in an increase in diversity as overall, more females attend these universities. There were no changes in gender diversity for new students.

Ethnic diversity was found in all eight institutions. Specifically an increase in HAN enrollment was noted in all eight institutions. Additionally, in six of the universities, a shift in the white/AA population was noted. An increase in the AA population and a decrease in the white population were noted for each of these institutions, regardless of whether they were a HBCU or a TWU. Three universities also found the same increase in the AA population and decrease in the white population for incoming students. Two universities noted an increase in HAN population for new students.

When evaluating diversity for employees, administration, overall, increased in the number of female employees and HAN employees while no changes were noted for current faculty and staff employees. Specifically, one institution increased the number of female faculty, but since this institution had a higher percentage of female faculty before the mandate, this change did not improve gender diversity. Three TWUs saw a decrease in white faculty and an increase in HAN faculty. A decrease in HAN administration was noted in one TWU, but an increase

in HAN administration was noted in another TWU. One HBCU noted a decrease in AA administration and faculty while finding an increase in white faculty, showing a change in diversity. No changes in staff diversity were noted.

For new employees, diversity changes were noted in several areas. An increase in the number of administration female new hires was found as well as an increase in the number of HAN faculty new hires. There was a decrease in the number of white administration and faculty new hires in the TWUs, but no changes were noted in the HBCUs. However, there was a decrease in the number of white staff new hires and an increase in the number of AA staff new hires in the HBCUs.

The diversity changes in the student and employee populations indicate that there is an effort being made by the IHL universities to, on the whole, become more diversified. In spite of the stableness found in the population from 2000 – 2008, diversification is occurring. Due to the economy, several of the IHL universities have seen a decrease in overall enrollment and have enforced hiring freezes. Since this downturn of the economy occurred as the mandate was being implemented, optimal diversification may not be reached immediately.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Although the economy did not limit the research in and of itself, the economic downturn may have impacted the results noted at this point. Therefore, one direction for future research is to collect the data when the economy improves and discover whether or not diversification is still found.

The data was collected using the National Center for Educational Statistics data. Although it is assumed that all IHL institutions reported the data identically, this cannot be verified.

Additional limitations of the study regard attitudes. At no point were student and employee attitudes regarding diversification measured. Attitudes may affect which university a student wishes to attend as well as where employees choose to seek employment. Attitudes toward the mandate itself were also not evaluated. One area to investigate in the future is to determine whether or not the attitude toward the mandate influences outcomes.

The mandate was only issued by the Mississippi IHL and effects only the IHL universities. Therefore, future research should include the diversification of non-IHL institutions in Mississippi as well as institutions in other states. Furthermore, one area to investigate is whether student and employee populations are simply a reflection of the state's population or whether they are more or less diversified compared to the state as a whole.

### **AUTHOR INFORMATION**

**Dr. Rebecca Hochradel** received her PhD in Business Administration from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. Her current position is Assistant Professor of Marketing at Delta State University. Her research interests focus on consumer behavior and issues whereby the production or service provider influences consumer behavior or the effect of the consumer on the production and service provided by the organization. In addition to research, she teaches upper-level marketing, management, and applied decision science courses and serves as lead instructor in the integrated MBA program at Delta State University.

**Dr. Jamye Long** is an Assistant Professor of Management at Delta State University. Her research interests span the field of human resource management to include diversity, recruiting and maintaining workforces, and training. In addition to teaching in the integrated Master's program, Dr. Long instructs undergraduate management majors in upper level courses and graduate students in the traditional Master's program.

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