Excerpts from
Bridging the research to practice gap: Achieving mission-driven diversity and inclusion goals
A Review of Research Findings and Policy Implications for Colleges and Universities 2016

The Many Benefits of Peer Support and Connection:

"Studies have also shown that underrepresented students' sense of belonging on campus and opportunities for leadership can increase through engagement with other students from their own cultural groups.[158] For example, one study of focus groups of African-American and Asian-American students found that "ethnic student organizations constituted critical venues of cultural familiarity, vehicles for cultural expression and advocacy, and sources of cultural validation for participants."[159] Another study of multiple racial/ethnic groups found that participation in ethnic student organizations is positively linked with higher rates of cross-racial interaction.[160] Another found that participation in a racial/ethnic student organization was "significantly and positively associated with numerous civic behaviors and attitudes after graduation."[161] p.27

"Peers can have a significant impact on persistence and success, particularly for certain disciplines. A study of the experiences of 1250 women of color and 891 white women attending 135 institutions nationwide found that "women of color who persisted in STEM frequently engaged with peers to discuss course content, joined STEM-related student organizations, participated in undergraduate research programs, had altruistic ambitions, attended private colleges, and attended institutions with a robust community of STEM students."[162] (Notably, and somewhat in contrast to general studies that positively link institution-wide persistence rates with more selective admissions, this study also found that negative predictors of persistence include attending a highly selective institution.[163])" p.27

"There have been studies that show positive effects of cross-racial friendship. For example, racial diversity in friendship groups has been found to have positive effects, particularly for students of color.[156] Another study of students at Berea College found that white students randomly assigned to black roommates have a significantly larger proportion of black friends than white students who are randomly assigned white roommates.[157]" p.27

"A growing body of research confirms the importance of alignment based on mission across programs, functions, and offices to create the greatest potential for achieving diversity goals.167 ...Enrolled students are then handed off to student affairs professionals, who help students establish peer groups and engage in student life programs." p.29

"Research has shown that the more an institution encourages students to interact beyond the classroom, the more likely students are to experience the benefits of diversity. Peer or affinity groups can also have a significant impact on the quality of students' interracial interactions.[147]" p.26

Research on the Benefits of Diverse and Inclusive Learning Environments:

"An influential study of the U.S. Air Force academy found that the academic benefits of diversity increase when students live, study, and participate in co-curricular activities together.[150] (Similar observations were a foundation of the amicus brief effort from retired military leaders to the U.S. Supreme Court in Grutter and Fisher I and II, which also underscored that fostering teamwork and collaboration among diverse groups was a significant national security interest for the military.[151])" p.26

"A recent national study, for example, found that students who had interacted regularly with diverse peers in college were 2.2 times more likely to believe that their degree was worth the cost after graduation.[52]" p.14

"While a diverse student body can lead to interactions with peers who hold different views of the world, studies have consistently shown that the mere presence of minorities and co-existence of diverse groups is not enough; what matters most is what an institution does with its diverse student population.[117] Curriculum and course offerings, faculty engagement, mentoring, and student peer and affinity groups can all play a role.[118]" p. 24

"It is important to note that the benefits of diversity do not necessarily flow to all students in the same way. Studies have shown, for example, that white students may benefit more from exposure to diverse ideas and information and exposure to diverse peers, but African-American students may benefit more from their interactions with diverse peers and exposure to close friends of their own race.[19]" p.9

References:
Taylor, T. E., Milem, J. F., & Coleman, A. F. (2016). Bridging the research to practice gap: Achieving mission-driven diversity and inclusion goals. *A Review of Research Findings and Policy Implications for Colleges and Universities*. Retrieved from http://aacu.org/sites/default/files/BridgingResearchPracticeGap.pdf

Related Endnote References from above publication:
[19] Expert Report of Patricia Gurin, supra note 9, (noting that while all students benefited from the exposure they had to students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, it was also important for students of color to have opportunities for same-race contact); Chang, Does Racial Diversity Matter?, supra note 3.

[52] STEPHANIE MARKEN, GALLUP, GRADUATES EXPOSED TO DIVERSITY BELIEVE DEGREE MORE VALUABLE (Oct. 28, 2015), http://www.gallup.com/poll/186257/graduates-exposed-diversity-believe-degree-valuable.aspx.

[117] Laird, supra note 8; SHAW, supra note 3; Chang, Denson, Sáenz, & Misa, The Educational Benefits of Sustaining Cross-Racial Interaction, supra note 8; MILEM, CHANG, & ANTONIO, MAKING DIVERSITY WORK ON CAMPUS, supra note 14, at 4 (observing, "even on campuses that appear to be quite compositionally diverse, there can be significant problems associated with the campus racial climate – especially when specific racial and ethnic groups are dramatically underrepresented in the environment").

[118] Gurin et al., Diversity and Higher Education, supra note 3, at 336; MILEM, CHANG, & ANTONIO, MAKING DIVERSITY WORK ON CAMPUS, supra note 14, at 6-9, 24, 28-29; Pike and Kuh, supra note 30; Denson & Chang, Racial Diversity Matters, supra note 3; HURTADO & RUIZ, supra note 33.

[150] Scott E. Carrell, Richard L. Fullerton, & James E. West, Does Your Cohort Matter? Measuring Peer Effects in College Achievement, 300 J. LABOR ECON. 439 (2009), available at http://www.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/scarrell/peer3.pdf

[151] Brief of Lt. Gen. Julius W. Becton, Jr., et al. as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents at 28-31, Fisher v. Univ. of Texas, 133 S. Ct. 2411 (No. 11-324), available at https://www.utexas.edu/vp/irla/Documents/ACR%20Military%20Leaders.pdf; Brief of Lt. Gen. Julius W. Becton, Jr., et al. as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents at 14, 17-30, Gratz v. Bollinger, 539. U.S. 244 (No. 02-516), Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 309 (No. 02-241), available at http://diversity.umich.edu/admissions/legal/gru_amicus-ussc/um/MilitaryL-both.pdf.

[156] Anthony Lising Antonio, Diversity and the Influence of Friendship Groups in College, 25 REV. HIGHER EDUC. 63 (2001).

[157] Braz Camargo, Ralph Stinebrickner, & Todd Stinebrickner, Interracial Friendships in College (CIBC Centre for Human Capital and Productivity Working Paper 2010-6), available at http://economics.uwo.ca/people/stinebrickner_docs/interracialfriendships.pdf.

[158] Kimberly A. Griffin & Kadian L. McIntosh, Finding a Fit: Understanding Black Immigrant Students' Engagement in Campus Activities, 56 J. COLL. STUDENT DEV. 243-260 (2015); Samuel D. Museus, The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominantly White institutions, 49 J. COLL. STUDENT DEV. 568 (2008); Shaun R. Harper & Stephen John Quaye, Student organizations as venues for Black identity expression and development among African American male student leaders, 48 J. COLL. STUDENT DEV. 127 (2007); Douglas A. Guiffrida, African American student organizations as agents of social integration, 44, 49 J. COLL. STUDENT DEV. 304 (2003).

[159] Samuel D. Museus, Understanding the Role of Ethnic Student Organizations in Facilitating Cultural Adjustment and Membership Among African American and Asian American College Students, 59 J. COLL. STUDENT DEV. 568 (2008), available at https://portfolio.du.edu/downloadItem/268578.

[160] Nicolas A. Bowman & Julie J. Park, Interracial Contact on College Campuses: Comparing and Contrasting Predictors of Cross-Racial Interaction and Interracial Friendship, 85 J. HIGHER EDUC. 660 (2014).

[161] Nicolas A. Bowman, Julie J. Park, & Nida Denson, Student Involvement in Ethnic Student Organizations: Examining Civic Outcomes 6 Years After Graduation, 56 RES. HIGHER EDUC. 127 (2015).

[162] Lorelle Espinosa, Pipelines and Pathways: Women of Color in Undergraduate STEM Majors and the College Experiences That Contribute to Persistence, 81 HARV. EDUC. REV. 209 (2011).

[163] Espinosa, supra note 162; Mitchell J. Chang, Oscar Cerna, June Han, & Victor Saenz, The Contradictory Roles of Institutional Status in Retaining Underrepresented Students in Biomedical and Behavioral Science Majors, 31 REV. HIGHER EDUC. 433 (2008).