

ADVANCING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE SOCIETY

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When I received an email from Gary Briers requesting that I give this lecture and focus on *Advancing Agricultural Education Within the Context of An Increasingly Diverse Society*, I was both stunned and perplexed. I read his message 2-3 times and then told my wife, Cathy, that I had been asked to give such an important lecture that I assumed was reserved for superb scholars who are nearing the end of their careers. Being the dutiful and loyal wife who keeps me humble, Cathy gave me that you certainly do not meet those criteria look that only a spouse can give. I then had major doubts about meeting these two criteria. First, I have not contemplated retirement. Second, I do not consider myself among the greats who have delivered this lecture. For 20 years, I have listened to scholars who met both criteria. Why, then, did I decide to give the lecture? Well, I have several years left in the profession and trust that my thoughts might have some impact on your functioning. Perhaps more important, whatever thoughts and recommendations I offer you will also be for Blannie Bowen.

When I read the topic Gary asked me to address, I felt more comfortable given my passion for this important subject. Diversity is high on the agendas of many Americans and our profession. And yet, we have extreme difficulty discussing this topic with meaningful dialogue. We can talk about sex in mixed audiences and with less emotion than we can about diversity within the agricultural education profession. Why? We understand diversity and its importance given America's demographics. But, most of us are ill-equipped and uncomfortable dealing with this topic that evokes considerable emotion while testing the soul and depth of our value systems. Some confession and history will perhaps place this statement in the proper context.

My first 11 years of public education were in an all-black school where I did not have a single white teacher. We had only one white teacher in the school. During my senior year, our school board merged my black school, another black school, and a predominantly white high school into a new high school with a 55% white, 45% black enrollment. The merger resulted in me having two white teachers during my senior year and many white classmates. The summer after my senior year, another African American and I were elected North Carolina's 2nd and 3rd black state FFA officers. Ironically, both of us enrolled that fall at predominantly black North Carolina A&T State University. After graduating from North Carolina A&T, I taught in two racially mixed high schools before enrolling in the Ph.D. program at Ohio State that had no minority faculty. It was not until I became a Mississippi State faculty member in 1980 did I learn, out of necessity, what is required to function in an integrated and inclusive academic environment. Mississippi State was evolving rapidly under its deeply committed president (James McComas, another Buckeye and agricultural education graduate) who was trying to remove some of the negativity associated with the fact that in 1965 MSU was the last 1862 land grant university to admit black students. One indicator of his effectiveness was measured in 1985, the year I left Mississippi State. In a span of 20 short years (1965-1985), MSU was transformed from being a virtually all white institution to an inclusive university whose percentages of black students and black faculty were among the highest of the predominantly white land grant institutions.

This amazing transformation resulted for many reasons including legal and economic imperatives. However, genuine commitment to serving the educational

needs of contemporary Mississippi certainly must not be overlooked. My five years in that environment were excellent and yielded the foundation that led to many of my professional successes. We graduated many African American undergraduates and graduate students who are still making major contributions to society.

Our international students are doing likewise in their countries. I will forever be proud of the fact that we graduated two of the first women doctoral students who were hired as agricultural and extension education faculty. In many respects, my Mississippi State experiences explain how I now function as a faculty member and administrator. Consequently, I must thank Jasper Lee, who as department head, hired me as a faculty member. Similar appreciation must be extended to my faculty colleagues: Glen Shinn, Ron Brown, Ben Byler, and David Kittrell. They provided valuable socialization and mentoring. But, if this is the worst lecture you have experienced, blame Jasper, Glen, Ron, Ben, and David. Against this backdrop, fast forward to Penn State where I have spent the last 14 years.

Background and Relevant Scenarios

My position as a Department head requires me to provide leadership for an academic unit that includes 21 faculty members, 10 of whom are women. We have four African American faculty members, one native of Turkey, and one from India. My position has provided many experiences that are germane to this lecture, but two other administrative positions yielded some more relevant to this lecture. These positions provided scenarios and problems that hopefully will not surface as we bring more ethnic and gender diversity to our profession. I share the following to illustrate how our behavior must change from simply tolerating diversity (and occasionally not tolerating it) to incorporating it into our routine functioning. As Associate Dean of the Penn State Graduate School from 1996-98, I had the privilege of solving various problems that occurred from the time students were admitted until they walked across the stage to receive their degrees and

have the Nittany Lion paw stamped on their foreheads. Consider my position within this context. With over 10,000 graduate students and each graduate committee requiring at least 3-4 committee members, there was a high probability that a few disagreements would result. Consider the possibilities for headaches when 30,000+ faculty decisions were made about 10,000 students. Graduation day became my favorite time of the semester. I observed every commencement service carefully because I wanted to be sure that some students did receive their degrees and leave. Here's why.

Our conflict resolution process was structured in this manner. The Graduate School accepted problem cases only after the advisor, graduate officer, department head, and dean would not or could not resolve them. Against this backdrop, I soon learned three lessons. Lesson #1 was that some highly educated students, faculty, and administrators cannot resolve their differences. Lesson #2 was that many problem cases that reached my desk were potentially explosive nightmares that could (a) damage the careers of faculty and students, (b) become public relations disasters, and (3) have serious legal implications. Lesson #3 was an education in how academic administration really works. The posture of our President and Graduate School Dean was that I should inform them of how I solved the problem cases without public relations damage and going to court. Fortunately, while serving as Associate Dean, we did not have a single case that reached the courts.

In addition to being Associate Dean, I held the position of Senior Faculty Mentor in the Office for Minority Faculty Development. This position required me to (1) help our tenured and tenure track minority faculty (African Americans, Hispanics, and Native American Indians) achieve promotion and tenure and (2) stay at Penn State (Atwater & Lyons, 1993). Our Office provided various services including receptions, workshops, activities, and one-on-one mentoring to socialize these faculty into the academy. The Office's services were strictly voluntary and consultative. We were not involved with promotion and tenure decisions or annual evaluations. We

consulted with department heads and deans only when requested by the faculty member.

Collectively, these two wonderful positions yielded several experiences involving serious issues of gender and ethnicity. I will share five examples to illustrate how explosive and difficult these issues can become when you operate at the tolerance (in some cases intolerant) level instead of elevating your functioning to the appreciation and proactive behavior domains.

Scenario #1. A white returning adult male with a military background enrolled to complete a master's with certification. I will say that this example involved teacher certification so you cannot possibly identify the parties involved in this example. The student's advisor was a new white female assistant professor. Problems were obvious from the time the student enrolled. The advisor, graduate officer, department head, and dean quickly concluded that the student was too rough and militaristic to be a good teacher. The student said his situation was another example of a white male being discriminated against simply to fulfill the University's politically correct diversity agenda. The approach used by the advisor, graduate coordinator, department head, and dean was to hope that the student would go away. This student was allowed to complete all requirements except student teaching because a teaching certificate was required to receive the master's. But, this student would not go away. Instead, he took courses at another university, completed student teaching, and received his teaching certificate. He then returned to Penn State and demanded that he receive the master's. He sent our President a wonderful audiotape detailing his case. His advisor, the graduate coordinator, the department head, and the dean were furious and refused his request. But, this student received his degree and then left. He later sent me a wonderful letter indicating that it took an African American male to help a white male navigate this politically correct diversity mess.

Scenario #2. An attractive female African American Ph.D. student reported to the Graduate School that her advisor was harassing her. The advisor was a white former administrator and a nationally

renowned researcher. The student said that her advisor had required she and a white male to attend a research conference in a western state. The male was given an airline ticket and flew to the conference. The advisor and the female drove so they could visit other research universities along the way so he could introduce her to potential employers. During their travels, the advisor said he did not have enough money for two motel rooms. The student was furious and paid for a room. Upon returning from the conference, the student said her advisor began threatening her boyfriend. He also started calling her at home asking her to come to the lab late at night to check on her experiments. He also said that he was lonely and enjoyed her company. Being a creative type, the student recorded his calls. Armed with this evidence, the student presented her case to the graduate coordinator, the department head, and her dean. The problem was not resolved. After we received the case, the student graduated on schedule with a new advisor. Her former advisor resigned to pursue other opportunities.

Scenario #3. I was asked by the provost of another university to serve on an outside team to help resolve a problem involving a male African American faculty member who was a former football player with a deep voice. A department had hired this faculty member, a white male, and a white female about the same time. Problems among the three quickly erupted over the allocation of resources, office space, teaching schedules, and other issues. On one occasion, the African American male and the white female arrived to teach their courses at the same time in the same classroom. An argument occurred over who had control of the classroom. The female called campus security. The African American faculty member was charged with engaging in harassing behavior. He then filed counter charges of racial discrimination. Our team studied the situation that was further complicated by the involvement of the faculty union. A financial settlement was reached and the African American male left the university.

Scenario #4. I was asked by the Affirmative Action Office of a university to help investigate a racial discrimination complaint after a Hispanic faculty member was denied tenure. The faculty member charged that he had been caught in a holy war within his department. His complaint was that the Jewish faculty and the faculty of Arabic and Asian decent were polarized. The investigation confirmed that most votes and decisions had occurred in a polarized manner. And the Hispanic faculty member had been caught in the crossfires. He had refused to side with either group. The university president reviewed our report which concluded that the environment was tainted as the Hispanic faculty member had alleged. However, because no procedural errors had occurred, the president let that the tenure denial stand.

Scenario #5. During our orientation for new graduate students, I met an outstanding African American male who was starting his Ph.D. program. This person had been attracted to Penn State because his department had recently hired several excellent African American faculty. About six months later, I ran into the student while eating lunch. The student looked like a child whose favorite toy had just been broken. He told me that he was transferring. Two African American faculty members in his department were leaving and the student said that he could not complete his degree. I asked him if he was serious. Yes, the student replied without hesitation. After pausing and giving him a puzzled look, I told him that I had to return my Ohio State Ph.D. He asked why. I said using his logic, I could not have earned a Ph.D. because all of my professors at Ohio State had been white. The student remained at Penn State and graduated.

Diversity in Agricultural Education

These scenarios illustrate how routine academic problems can erupt when ethnicity and gender are injected as moderating variables. Most of the principals in these scenarios functioned on a scale that ranged from intolerance to mere tolerance. Later in this lecture, I will present a model that

moves beyond tolerance to the appreciation and desired behavior levels that produce civilized behavior and positive interactions. Fortunately, none of the scenarios involve our profession which, like much of society, continues to struggle with diversity issues. In the early 1990s, our professional organization created a Population Diversity Work group that conducted a series of workshops and inservices. Our group produced a monograph entitled *Enhancing Diversity in Agricultural Education* that I edited (Bowen, 1993). I encourage you to review that document again because much of its content is still relevant. I will provide an electronic copy for individuals who joined the profession after it was published. The monograph focused on issues such as coping with embedded biases (Whent, 1993), model programs to recruit undergraduates (Larke & Talbert, 1993), and a faculty mentoring program and a mentoring program for graduate students (Atwater & Lyons, 1993). One of the programs in the monograph (AgJUMPSTART at Texas A&M University) has since been declared illegal via the Hopwood vs. Texas court decision (Personal communication with Alvin Larke). This decision has spawned considerable debate within higher education about the legality of various approaches to bring more diversity to higher education.

Two similar cases involving minority admissions programs at the University of Michigan made the news last week (*USA Today*, 2001). These cases have reached an appeals court and will probably be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court. The article also indicated that the University of Georgia will not appeal a federal court's decision declaring its race-based admission policy unconstitutional. Texas has also dropped its appeal of the Hopwood vs. Texas decision. How the Michigan cases will be resolved is open for debate. What is not open for debate are the U.S.'s emerging demographics. The U.S. Census indicates that California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida must already deal with situations where ethnic minority groups are increasing rapidly (McGeeveran, 2002). Other states are following the same demographic pattern to a lesser extent.

Thus, regardless of what legislation and programs state and federal courts deem legal, prudence dictates that these realities will not go away and cannot be summarily dismissed. Proactive efforts must continue if we wish to serve contemporary America. I am optimistic that our profession is responding. I will address agricultural education's progress in terms of only gender and ethnicity. Time does not permit me to delve into all dimensions of diversity, some of which are quite elusive and divisive. For example, it is apparent that I am an African American male. What is not so apparent is that I am also a heterosexual United Methodist. Without this confession, you would not know my religious affiliation and sexual orientation. Thus, the complexities of diversity are such that I will focus on only ethnicity and gender.

Most of the diversity progress that our profession is enjoying revolves around the issue of gender. When I attended my first

American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture conference here in New Orleans in 1980, few women faculty attended. A scan of today's audience will reveal considerable progress. Half of our Department's faculty are women because the teacher education program exists in an academic unit that focuses on three program areas: (1) agricultural and extension education, (2) youth and family education, and (3) communications and leadership. Many other universities are facing similar realities as academic units are merged to provide the critical mass that L.H. Newcomb discussed during his 1992 Distinguished Lecture (Newcomb, 1993). Similar gender-based progress will be revealed if one reviews the supply and demand studies that William Camp and his Virginia Tech colleagues conduct for the profession. The latest study (Camp, 2000) indicates that almost 16% of the secondary agricultural education are women (see Table 1).

Table 1
*Race and Gender of Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers as of September 1, 1998**

| | Males | Females | Total | % |
|------------------------|------------|------------|-------|--------|
| African American | 144 | 20 | 164 | 2.10 |
| White | 6115 | 1155 | 7270 | 94.90 |
| Native American | 63 | 12 | 75 | 1.00 |
| Hispanic | 122 | 20 | 142 | 1.85 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 8 | 4 | 12 | .15 |
| Total | 6452 (84%) | 1211 (16%) | 7663 | 100.00 |

* - From Camp, 2000.

In addition, MeeCee Baker served as the first female president of the National Association for Agricultural Education (NAEE) during 1996-97 which indicates that this organization is incorporating more women into its functioning. Similar progress among the high school teacher force will continue given the enrollments in most of our universities. For example, at Penn State almost half of our agricultural and extension education undergraduates are women. On the secondary level, the gender issue is also evolving because the number of female students continues to increase. Given this enrollment reality, the National FFA organization is mirroring this trend as evident by females accounting for 35% of

the 457,278 members even though girls could only become members since 1969. Perhaps more significant, females hold 47% of the state leadership positions and several have been National FFA officers (National FFA, 2001).

Permit me to now address ethnicity and our profession. Our very good gender progress has not been matched on the ethnicity issue. A scan of today's audience and the AAAE directory will indicate that several African American and Hispanic faculty have joined the profession in the last 20 years. However, few international faculty are members of the profession. Much of the improvement on the ethnicity issue has occurred because of minority

faculty hires by predominantly white 1862 land grant universities and nonland grant institutions. But, this increase has been offset by declines in the number of African American agricultural education faculty in the historically black 1890 land grant institutions. In terms of secondary teachers, the supply and demand study (Camp 2000) indicates that 2% of the teachers are African Americans, another 2% are Hispanics, and 1% are Native Americans. Enrollments of minority students within agricultural and extension education programs remain low. If Penn State is a valid indicator, our profession is enjoying marginal success in graduating ethnic minorities who join the profession. During the 14 years that I have been at Penn State, we have graduated few minority students who were certified as secondary teachers. Ethnic enrollments at the secondary level are difficult to assess, but when FFA membership is used as an indicator, the profession has achieved mixed progress. On a positive note, Hispanics now account for 17% of the FFA's membership. However, only 4% of FFA members are African Americans (National FFA, 2001). This must be contrasted against the number of African Americans who were New Farmers of America (NFA) members when the two organizations merged. In 1965 when the NFA-FFA merger occurred, there were 52,000 NFA members. Today, African Americans account for only 4% of the FFA's membership (National FFA, 2001). The reality is that the African American FFA membership in 2001 is one-third what it was in 1965 (18,291 members in 2001 vs. 52,000 in 1965). One reason for this disturbing decline can perhaps be traced to the decline in the number of African American secondary teachers that occurred when segregation ended in the 1960s. With fewer African American teachers to serve as role models, the white teachers who replaced them have not maintained the African American presence even though FFA chapters are now located in 10 of America's largest 15 cities, most of which have significant African American populations. During yesterday's National Agricultural Education Research Conference, Dexter Wakefield and Allen Talbert (2001) gave an excellent paper on

the history of the NFA and many of these issues.

How might this situation be changed? Recent research by Kenneth Jones, one of my master's students, delved into this complex question (Jones & Bowen, 1998a; 1998b). Kenneth used both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide some answers. To collect data for his thesis, which was part of a longitudinal study I am completing, Kenneth visited 11 racially balanced high schools in Virginia, North Carolina, and Mississippi. In addition to surveying agricultural science and biology students, he collected qualitative data about school climate and other elusive variables. Kenneth developed a discriminant model that provides one clue about what might be at work. He studied 10 variables, but the final model included only three that explained 24% of the variance in why students enrolled in agriculture courses: gender, the perceived future value of the courses, and the attitude of the teacher. Males taught by teachers who had positive attitudes and students who perceived that the courses offered them future value tended to enroll (Jones & Bowen, 1998a). The qualitative aspect of the study provided other answers to the enrollment question. Programs that had teachers who were positive about teaching and could relate well to all students tended to have higher African American enrollments. Also, schools that had high technology, science-based curricula had higher enrollments than schools with a traditional production focus. Finally, schools that had an African American teacher had higher African American enrollments (Jones & Bowen, 1998b).

Building a Climate for Diversity

Earlier I provided five scenarios to illustrate how explosive the issues of gender and ethnicity can become when we operate with a tolerance mentality. When we function with only a bipolar scale that ranges from intolerant to tolerant, there is a high probability that negative scenarios will emerge. This level of functioning is insufficient for an America that is becoming increasingly diverse. Thus, I propose an ITAP

model that ranges from intolerance to proactive behavior. This model includes four dimensions: (1) intolerance, (2) tolerance, (3) appreciation, and (4) proactive behavior. Permit me to address each dimension.

Intolerance. Many examples of intolerance abound even though countless laws and policies exist to avoid such behavior. Most laws and policies focus on sexual harassment and ethnic intimidation. For example, the sexual harassment of the female African American student had serious legal implications that eventually operated. This example required strong intervention because well-educated academics did not deal with the matter. To cite another example, this spring Penn State experienced several terrible acts of intolerance that attracted national media attention. Many leaders of our Black Caucus student organization and several other students received death threats that were communicated via letters and email. These incidents prompted a sit-in that occurred in our student union building. Unfortunately, legal authorities, including the FBI, have not been able to identify the source of the threats.

Another example of intolerance caused consternation for our secondary teachers and our Department. When I was our interim Department head from 1990-92, I attended our agriculture teacher conference. After the conference banquet ended one year, I was invited by several prominent male leaders of our teachers' organization to come into a room. I had no idea what was about to occur. Several other males and I were inducted into the all-male Yellow Dog club. The initiation ceremony was demeaning to women, gross, and extremely offensive. As I hurriedly left the room, I encountered a group of our women teachers. They were extremely upset that I had participated in such a blatantly sexist activity. Within days, I sent a letter to all teachers and the Department apologizing for my conduct and condemning the existence of the Yellow Dogs. Virtually all of the letters and comments I received supported my very strong stance. But, the president of our teacher organization and I subsequently engaged in a heated discussion not about my

intent, but how I had handled the situation. We agreed to disagree because I would not compromise my principles. If the Yellow Dogs exist today, it is certainly more of a covert and underground club. Countless other examples of intolerance can be cited, but I prefer to focus on more acceptable behavior. This brings me to the second dimension – tolerance.

Tolerance. This dimension falls into the acceptable category and is the minimum level of functioning being sought by most elements of society, including colleges and universities. I must share a humorous example of tolerance that is laced with cultural dimensions. When I was at Mississippi State, I invited our faculty and staff (all whites) to my home for lunch. The main item on the menu was *chittlins* - that wonderful delicacy that many African Americans treasure. My goal was to have my colleagues understand what chittlins are and perhaps get them to appreciate them. You can only imagine the look on Glen Shinn's face when I announced that I had prepared chittlins five different ways. Most of my colleagues tried the chittlins, but I don't believe they learned to appreciate them enough to eat them again. I must confess that I did provide other foods for the squeamish.

Permit me to share another example of tolerance that is more serious. This fall we held our annual Departmental dinner. One of our graduate students came to my office several days before the dinner. This student was most respectful and apologetically said that she did not want to cause trouble. She is Jewish and we have several other Jewish students as well as a non-practicing Jewish faculty member. We may even have other Jewish faculty, but we do not force our faculty to declare their religious affiliation. The student was concerned that we might say a grace that offended her religion and those of our international students who come from about 10 countries. Her request was somewhat uncomfortable for this Southern guy who was raised in a family that followed very strict Baptist practices. During the dinner, we observed a moment of silence and asked each person to bless the food in a manner consistent with his or her religion. This act of tolerance will hopefully

encourage our faculty, staff, and students to learn more about other religions and perhaps even learn to appreciate their teachings.

Appreciation. I will now focus on appreciation, the third dimension, which is somewhat abstract. Several examples will be presented. In the early 1980s, a white male doctoral student at Mississippi State got a new hairstyle that resembled a curly Afro. Glen Shin and I were impressed that this student would value this hairstyle so much that he went to this extreme. Glen and I vowed to join the student and do something radical. Glen promised to grow an Afro and I would get a crew-cut. Looking at Glen's hair and mine, it is obvious that we did not complete our promises. At a minimum, however, we learned to appreciate diverse hairstyles.

Another example illustrates the merits of appreciating diverse cultures. Many of our Mississippi State undergraduates, including the African Americans, loved country music and wore cowboy boots. These students thought that the music of Michael Jackson, Cher, and Elton John was performed by aliens. I quickly learned to appreciate the soft country music of Alabama, Kenny Rogers, and Willie Nelson. But that Hank Williams, Conway Twitty, and Loretta Lynn music was simply too radical. I must note that one African American student I advised wore cowboy boots. His family farmed the 1,000+ acres that Charley Pride, the famous African American country singer, owned. When the 1984 Southern Agricultural Education Conference was held in Oklahoma City, I confess to visiting a famous boot store to learn more about cowboy boots. I never bought a pair of boots, but I certainly learned to appreciate how much they cost.

In the 1990s, our University became serious about demonstrating publicly that it valued and appreciated affirmative action and diversity. The University engaged in two noteworthy actions to make this apparent. First, our Faculty Senate added a statement to our promotion and tenure policies that allows faculty to list and describe their activities that further the University's commitment to this ideal. Second, in the early 1990s, our Senate implemented a requirement that all

undergraduates take a 3-credit diversity course. This requirement was recently modified to include global awareness and cultural competence. Another example of appreciation can be found through the FFA's creation of the H.O. Sargent award that honors individuals for their diversity activities. The act of creating the AAAE Population Diversity work group demonstrated that our profession appreciates diversity. Collectively, these items demonstrate appreciation, but do not necessarily lead to proactive behaviors. Merely having an award, a publication, or a policy is necessary, but not sufficient to achieve the desired results. This statement leads to the final dimension of the ITAP model.

Proactive Behavior. This is the dimension that I wish to address extensively because it focuses on sustained behavior needed to function in an increasingly diverse society. Completing diversity activities and then listing them in a P&T dossier illustrates the desired level of functioning for faculty. Publishing the *Desert Rose* newsletter for women agriculture teachers is tangible evidence that Billye Foster appreciates diversity within our profession and that she behaves in a proactive manner. I trust that you saw her NAERC paper yesterday that detailed the plight of women in agricultural education (Foster, 2001). Also, the creation of and support of magnet high schools such as W.B. Saul in Philadelphia, the Chicago High School for the Agricultural Sciences, and other such institutions in inner cities reflect proactive behavior.

For the last few years, Tom Bruening and Tracy Hoover, two of our faculty members, Gary Briers of Texas A&M, and several faculty in other institutions have secured resources to support college students so they can spend a semester at Moscow State University in Russia. These students learn Russian, experience the culture of that country, and become future professionals who appreciate a different culture and behave in a proactive manner. This program is expensive and would not exist without faculty who generate the needed funds. Other universities conduct similar programs around the globe that are achieving comparable results.

I would be negligent for not highlighting a significant opportunity to engage in substantive proactive behavior through a rapidly expanding organization. In the late 1980s, the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) organization was created to help expand the minority presence within the agricultural sciences (Bowen, 1993). Most land grant universities and several nonland grant institutions have MANRRS chapters. The annual national conference has grown so rapidly that several universities do not have the capacity to host the conference. Some erroneously perceive that this organization is of, by, and exclusively for minorities. This perception is far from accurate. Many whites are members, leaders, and strong supporters of the organization that has both student and professional membership categories. A white Penn State student attended the national meeting so she can better function in an increasingly diverse society. Several AAEE members are active on the national level. I note the activities of Curtis White from Clemson University and Willie Rawls of Southern University who have been the national president. Robert Flores of California Polytechnic-San Luis Obispo has held various leadership roles. In total, however, our profession is missing a golden opportunity to advance the minority agenda through MANRRS. I challenge you to become a MANRRS member and then become active in the affairs of your MANRRS chapter. The national conference is a golden opportunity to interact with minority professionals from across the agricultural sciences. Also, an exchange program involving 1862 and 1890 land grants, a tribal college, and nonland grant institutions could provide valuable lifelong experiences that lead to cultural sensitivity and enhanced capacity to function in our increasingly diverse society. Harold Crawford of Iowa State University, a white faculty member, has been active in MANRRS for years and is a leader in furthering the involvement of Native Americans through his excellent work with the tribal colleges. To participate substantively in MANRRS will perhaps

require you to leave your comfort zone, but the benefits will be worth the effort.

A final example of proactive behavior was initiated during my tenure as interim Department head. Our Graduate School started a program to support graduate assistantships for minority students if colleges provided a year of support. Our faculty readily agreed to participate in this program because we could secure a minority master's student without expending ANY funds. However, I also proposed a somewhat risky idea. I approached our faculty about committing one of our permanent assistantships to this effort so we could support three (3) minority Ph.D. students for the cost of one (1) AEE assistantship. How could we pull off this financial wizardry? Well, we typically provide doctoral students with three years of support. If the Graduate School paid the first year and our College of Agricultural Sciences the second, we would have to pay only the third year. But, why let our funds sit idle for two years? Our faculty readily agreed and we have since supported three minority doctoral students each year for the cost a single assistantship. Your university probably has a similar program that you can tap to support more minority students.

Recommendations for Strategic Action

As I prepare to conclude, permit me to offer six recommendations for strategic action. Intolerance of gender and ethnic diversity is unacceptable yet tolerance produces only comfortable inactivity and limited advancements. My hope is that the following the recommendations lead to higher levels of appreciation and more proactive behaviors:

1. Support the creation, development, and functioning of magnet schools such as Philadelphia's W.B. Saul and the Chicago High School for the Agricultural Sciences.
2. Because you get what you reward, work to incorporate gender and ethnic diversity into your institution's promotion, tenure, and reward policies.

3. Provide culturally expanding opportunities and programs for your students.
4. Engage MANRRS to expand your horizons and those of your students and teachers.
5. Recruit, graduate, and then place minority doctoral students as faculty who advance the diversity agenda.
6. Engage in sound, contemporary research that addresses complex gender and ethnicity questions. In doing so, move beyond what subjects think that they perceive, believe, and know. Focus on performance, knowledge, and proactive behaviors.

Finally, when confronted with diversity questions, subscribe to the right vs. fair standard that Ben Cartwright offered during one episode of *Bonanza*, the legendary t.v. western. Ben taught his sons that laws make things right, but fair is a different and much higher standard. Also, right is subject to the whims of lawyers, politicians, and judges. As a consequence, concepts such as civil rights, freedom of choice, equal opportunity, and affirmative action have questionable shelf life. Given this reality, you should subscribe to and behave according to the fair standard. For example, enrollments, faculty compositions, and participation levels should conform to the population of your state. Almost 10% of Pennsylvania's population is African American and half are women. The fair standard dictates that our agricultural and extension education programs, activities, and staffing conform to these figures. Also, the fair standard cannot be achieved by pretending to be both colorblind and deaf. Immigrants with a thick accent do not sound like Dan Rather and Dr. Laura. And most individuals of Asian, Hispanic, and African descent do not look like them either. America is a salad bowl, not a melting pot. Consequently, the ITAP model that ranges from intolerance to proactive behaviors should enable you move beyond mere tolerance so you can channel your professional energies toward the appreciation and proactive behavior dimensions.

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