



Campuses and Viewpoint Diversity: Why It Matters and How to Foster It

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Plan



- Part 1
- Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campus?
- Part 2
- What do we do about it?

Part 1



- Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campuses?

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- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
- Having a wide range of political perspectives represented
 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices

Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campus?



- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
- Having a wide range of political perspectives represented
 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices
- 2006 and 2017 data show that about 60% professors are left of center
 - Distribution shifted to the left
 - Variation by discipline

Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campus?



- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
- Having a wide range of political perspectives represented
 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices
- 2006 and 2017 data show that about 6% professors are left
 - Distribution to the left
 - Variation by discipline
- ***Political diversity matters, but it's not everything!***

Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campus?



- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
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 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices
- No self-censorship by political orientation

Is there a problem with a lack of viewpoint diversity on campus?



- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
- Having a wide range of political perspectives represented
 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices
- No self-censorship along political orientation
- What percent self-censor?
- 2019 survey:
 - 32% reluctant to give their views on politics
 - More Republican students than Democrats
- **Important, but even without self-censorship, there's still a problem!**

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- Recognizing variation in how people think about identity

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- No self-censorship along political orientation
- Recognizing variation in how people think about identity
 - How salient is race, ethnicity, gender, etc...?
 - How salient should it be?

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- What do we mean by *viewpoint diversity*?
- Having a wide range of political perspectives represented
 - Usually refers to non-progressive voices
- No self-censorship along political orientation
- Recognizing variation in how people think about identity
- Criticizing ideas

Criticizing Ideas



- Certain ideas treated as though they're above criticism
- Some should be!
 - Earth is spheroid
 - Earth revolves around the sun
 - Water turns to ice at 32 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Others?

Criticizing Ideas



- Certain ideas treated as though they're above criticism
- Some should be!
 - Earth is spheroid
 - Earth revolves around the sun
 - Water turns to ice at 30 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Others?
 - What about colorblind racism, microaggressions, white privilege?

Criticizing Ideas



- Case study: Colorblind racism

Criticizing Ideas



- Case study: Colorblind racism
- Two questions
 1. Can students describe it?

Criticizing Ideas



- Case study: Colorblind racism
- Two questions
 1. Can students describe it?
 2. Are students able to critique it?

Criticizing Ideas



- Upshot
- Ideas are meant to be criticized
- Not revered or placed in a china cabinet

Part 1



- Summary
- Lack of viewpoint has four components
 - Diversity of political orientations
 - Minimizing self-censorship
 - Recognizing variation in how we think about identity
 - Criticizing *ideas*

Part 2



Now what?

Reframe the discussion

Shift the conversation with:

1. Students
2. Instructors
3. Administrators and staff

How do we reframe the discussion?



- Humility
- Curiosity
- Frank conversations

How do we reframe the discussion?



Humility and curiosity

Distinction between facts and beliefs

- Blurry line between the two shapes our feelings towards others
- Examples:
 - What percent of men would commit sexual assault if they knew they could get away with it?
 - What percent of white U.S. adults are racist?

How do we reframe the discussion?



- These don't have factual answers:
 - What percent of men would commit sexual assault if they knew they could get away with it?
 - What percent of white U.S. adults are racist?

How do we reframe the discussion?



- Humility
- Curiosity
- Frank conversations
 - Intent
 - Sensitivity

Thank you!



For more information about my work, please go to:

www.diverseperspectivesconsulting.com

Link to "Beyond Bigots and Snowflakes" video series is there, as is a link to my co-authored book "Unassailable Ideas: How Unwritten Rules and Social Media Shape Discourse in American Higher Education"

Please help spread the word!