

ASTC Equity & Diversity Toolkit

ESTABLISHING, IMPLEMENTING, AND MONITORING DIVERSITY AND EQUITY POLICIES

Processes and Issues in Developing, Implementing, and Mentoring Diversity Programs

The Association of Science-Technology Centers' (ASTC) Equity and Diversity Plan (EDP) launched an organization-wide initiative to offer a number of helpful ideas and resources for member organizations. This toolkit is one of the ways in which member organizations will be resourced in the areas of: leadership support, assessment, communication, professional development, career pipeline, and implementation roles and responsibilities. ASTC members' responsibilities include:

- Make a commitment to equity and diversity.
- Set goals that reflect parity.
- Develop and implement a plan for meeting those goals.
- Share information and, because ASTC is a learning community, communicate results of this effort.

ASTC's Equity and Diversity Committee recognizes that its board and staff play a pivotal role in the success of the initiative. Likewise, member organization boards will ensure local diversity success if they:

- Set the diversity agenda.
- Position diversity so it is reflected throughout the organization.
- Modify their mission statements to reflect the commitment to diversity.
- Review and approve the diversity plan.
- Allocate resources to advance and support the plan.
- Monitor the implementation of the plan in each board committee.

Staff responsibilities could include:

- Adapt the ASTC case statement to provide a rationale for their institution's plan.
- Support leadership development.
- Provide tools, resources, and opportunities for professional development.
- Provide tools/mechanisms for center self-assessment.

- Implement a communication plan.
- Promote dialogues on diversity.
- Assemble and disseminate information.
- Secure funding.
- Organize a distinguished panel of diversity advisors who are science center advocates.

The Diversity Diamond

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The Diversity Diamond is offered as a way to coordinate how an ASTC organization develops, implements, and mentors its diversity programs and policies. The four points of the diamond are mission, resources, policies and procedures, and power:

- A center’s mission—what it does and with whom—and its values—how and why it does its work—must be integrated, explicit and aligned with diversity mission and values. If a center’s mission statement does not explicitly include diversity, e.g. serving diverse audiences, it should be recast. Each center should be an intentionally multicultural, race, class, ability, age and gender inclusive organization.
- Resources include the time, expertise and money needed to do a center’s diversity work.
- Power is shared decision making and influence.
- Policies and practices are flexible, supportive, and responsive.

Mission

- Train staff and community leaders concerning existing and emerging diverse cultures in the region that a center serves.
- Identify and build mutually beneficial networks and relationships with diverse external community groups of people of color, older citizens, and poor people.
- Develop inclusive diversity activities for staff and community partners.
- Implement best practice strategies for creating an inclusive environment.
- Realign publications, web, and other key institutional messages to demonstrate openness to diverse populations.

Resources

- Develop budget, time, training, and other resources needed to create a diversity infrastructure.
- Encourage administrators to develop and pilot diversity climate and other initiatives.
- Utilize external consultant(s), particularly diverse persons, to assist with alignment of diversity and climate issues, including diversity strategic planning, assessment, and training.

Power

- Empower every member of the organization, regardless of status or title, to play a role in the diversity initiative.
- Hire diverse senior administrators and staff.
- Apply diversity as a key experience indicator in position descriptions.
- Develop regular forums and other strategies for giving staff input and influence in diversity matters.
- Discuss diversity and privilege issues with board and staff.

Policies and Practices

- Review policies and practices for covert bias and barriers to inclusion.
- Include diversity in institutional decision-making, committees, policy development, and planning.
- Establish assessment strategies for diversity plan and activities.
- Develop and implement a diversity plan to evaluate prospective candidates.
- Develop and implement recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies based on diversity best practices in high-performing organizations.
- Align diversity with performance review process.
- Implement human rights legal training for senior staff.
- Develop and implement diversity coaching for senior staff.
- Actively recruit minority, female, and disabled vendors.
- Develop, implement, and publish methods and processes for dealing with and bringing closure to racist, sexist, etc. behavior quickly and fairly.
- Develop and implement regular, engaging diversity training for all staff.

Benchmarking

In order to understand whether an institution is making reasonable progress towards its diversity goals, benchmarking with other like institutions should be undertaken. In order to compare “apples to apples,” organizational efforts must be compared to those of other institutions of similar size, mission, and demographic profile. The institutions involved in benchmarking should create a committee to design the survey matrix for all the institutions. A caveat: It is very important that institutions conduct surveys at the same time and communicate their results to their home institutions. Benchmarking serves a very useful purpose in not only comparing progress, but sharing successful strategies.

Diversity Committees

Diversity committees are an important tool for helping organizations focus and resource their diversity efforts. The most important issues for diversity committees are:

- Who serves on a diversity committee—Diversity committees need the support of the most senior executive who can also be a committee member if desired. One caution: Managers and other powerful staff members should not dominate the council, and staff members from entry-level jobs should also be asked to serve.
- What skills are needed by committee members—Committee members need to be committed to diversity and inclusion and willing to collaborate with others. Good communication, excellent interpersonal and mediation skills, and cultural competency are desirable characteristics for diversity council members.
- How committee members are selected—There should be a well-publicized process for selecting committee members. All too often, managers and supervisors who have diversity portfolio responsibilities are simply appointed to councils, while others have to survive a selection process. All prospective members should be selected through the same process, so that a privilege hierarchy is not established from the very beginning.
- What decisions are made—The work of the committee must be mission driven and aligned with other strategic initiatives. The decision must be made prior to establishing the committee, whether the committee is advisory or has decision-making power. All committees should be safe places where employees can talk about climate and discrimination issues.
- What resources are needed—Organizations must provide the necessary resources, e.g. time, money, training, and space, as needed to support the work of the diversity committee. Committees need a budget, facilitators, education plans, and resources to attend conferences.

- How to keep advancing the diversity work—Committees need to have a work plan that is feasible and measurable. In addition, committee members should receive not just time off, but performance evaluation credits for their work on diversity committees. Their work should be seen as an asset to the organization and rewarded.

Organizing Models

There are several prevalent models for organizing diversity efforts, and they basically revolve around centralization of diversity efforts, decentralization, or a combination of both. In the centralization model, there is usually a diversity officer whose work it is to lead the diversity efforts in the organization. Usually that person is located in either the chief executive's office or human resources. Because human resources has the dual purpose of hiring and firing, diversity offices are usually more effective if they are located in a separate, more neutral environment. A weakness of this model is the propensity of other staff to see diversity as the responsibility of this person while they do business as usual. Decentralization is the notion that every manager will take responsibility for diversity in his or her area, and strategies have a diversity component. While laudable, this model lacks focus and accountability.

Some organizations have a diversity board, committee, or taskforce with a staff council that is connected to affinity groups (i.e., cultural or gender groups). The best use of affinity groups is to have their leaders be a part of diversity councils; this empowers and connects these groups to the organization's mission work. All diversity councils need an organizational home and senior executive sponsors. Many affinity groups have executive sponsors as well.

Accountability Strategies

Accountability strategies for diversity and inclusion must extend from the bottom to the top of organizations. Senior executives, managers, and supervisor compensation must be tied to diversity success in a significant way in order to ensure accountability. Other rewards such as awards, events, and celebrations for excellence in diversity are also useful in creating incentives. Also, failure to meet goals of serving diverse communities and creating diverse work groups must be treated as seriously as any other organizational failure. Transparent communication about diversity efforts and successes builds accountability.

Annotated Resources

❖ **Assistive Listening Systems (ALS) Help You Communicate Effectively.**

Association of Science–Technology Centers, **2003.**

Web site available at www.astc.org/ap/issues/ald/index.htm.

This site gives advice on how to help people with hearing impairments get the most out of their museum visit. Having the right equipment is the first step, but it is important to have the audience that you are trying to reach test the equipment before your organization purchases it. At the same time, the organization can get input on how to most effectively market this new visitor service. It is important to have ongoing training for the staff and volunteers so that they are able to show guests how to use the equipment. Finally, patrons have the right to expect that the equipment will be in working order; therefore, proper maintenance is discussed.

Resource Category

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Community Participation
- ✓ Exhibit, Program, & Audience Inclusiveness
- ✓ Planning & Implementation

Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ All Managers
- ✓ Educators
- ✓ Visitor Services Managers
- ✓ Exhibit Designers
- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Making Accessible Parking Count.** Association of Science–Technology Centers, **Accessible Practices Exchange, January 2003.**

Web site available at www.astc.org/ap/issues/parking.htm.

This is an excellent quick resource on what the required parking accommodations are for persons with disabilities. Includes a chart with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Helpful summaries are provided on location, route to and from the parking, signage, how to notify the public, and enforce any restrictions on who is allowed to use the parking places. Users may read others' experiences and share their experiences online.

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- ✓ Boards

❖ **Accessible Practices Exchange, Association of Science-Technology Centers, 2003.**

Web site available at www.astc.org/ap/issues/ald/index.htm.

This site provides an excellent online newsletter guide for making your institution physically accessible. Links to topics include: Parking, entrances, the danger of protruding objects, evaluating any restaurant space, providing an accessible

information desk, making restrooms and gift shops accessible, providing Assistive Listening Systems (ALS), and finally, getting advice on how to make your space overall more accessible.

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❖ **Accessible Practices: Museums' Legal Obligations.** Association of Science-Technology Centers, 2004.

Web site available at www.astc.org/resource/access/obligations/.htm.

This site provides an overview of accessibility laws with the needs of museums in mind. There are brief summaries of relevant federal laws. In addition, users will find links to many sources where they may read the actual language that is written in the laws. Also there is an information line to the U.S. Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act, including a line for Teletype users.

Resource Category

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- ✓ Leadership
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- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Betances, Samuel. *Communicating Diversity: Powerful, Practical, Persuasive Pointers to Get the Job Done.* New Century Forum, Inc., 1999.** (audiocassette)

Samuel Betances earned both a master's degree and a doctorate at Harvard University and taught sociology for over 20 years. Dr. Betances teaches the alphabet of respect in the context of groups, teams, and organizations. He answers questions about leadership, qualified personnel, and diversity of thought in the workplace. There are some caveats when using this set, as more than diversity of thought is necessary for organizational success. Be cautious of a model that maintains the status quo by excluding other forms of diversity in favor of strictly diversity of thought. This caution also extends to meritocracy arguments for the hiring of people of color, women and persons with disabilities.

For further information:
510/527-0700

Resource Category

- ✓ Communication

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- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖❖ **Nelsen, Vivian Jenkins and Lela Porter. *The Diversity Curriculum: Diversity Leadership—A Trainers Manual*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Hypatia Trust Inc., 1997.**

This manual outlines objectives and types of training. It instructs on the philosophy and methodology of training and provides a step-by-step guide to conducting successful training and conflict resolution. Included is a guide on how to use *The Diversity Curriculum* and the proper role of each publication in the series. This book leads the way in planning and implementing training, analyzing issues, and managing conflict.

For further information:

INTER-RACE
600 21ST Avenue S.
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612/339-0820

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❖❖ ***Equity and Diversity: Promising Practices*. Association of Science-Technology Centers, 2004.**

Web site available at www.astc.org/resource/equity/practices.htm.

This site suggests that if your organization is doing a good job of inclusion, it should share whatever strategy is employed with other members of the field. This is done through a submission and selection process with the end result being a posting on the Equity and Diversity website. ASTC suggests seven areas for organizations to consider when “doing diversity”. Included are Planning and Implementation, Communication Strategies, Professional Support and Development Strategies, Leadership Support, Assessment, Inclusiveness in Exhibits, Programs and Audiences, and Community Participation Strategies. Submissions are due for the first round on February 13, 2005.

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Resource Category

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Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ All Staff

- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Planning & Implementation
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- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination Questions and Answers. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.** (ongoing updates)

Web site available at www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) offers information on Federal anti-discrimination laws in employment. It covers such information as hiring and firing, harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. Also covered are the processes used when an individual wishes to file a complaint with the EEOC. Finally, individuals can get information on what remedies are available if and when it is found that they have been discriminated against. This website is very current and is helpful if the reader is able to understand legal language and phrasing.

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- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Findlaw Employee Rights Center. Eagan, MN: Thompson West.**

Web site available at www.employment.findlaw.com.

Offers information and resources about legal issues pertaining to employment. Topics include the hiring process, wages and benefits, family and medical leave, discrimination and harassment, and termination. Includes links to federal laws like the Americans With Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, etc. Provides useful summaries of the law without using a lot of jargon or legalese.

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- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Bunch, Lonnie G. *Flies in the Buttermilk: Museums, Diversity, & the Will to Change.* Washington D.C.: Museum News, 2000.**

Written from the perspective of a person of color, this article addresses the lack of diversity in museum staffing. There are few people of color in curator or upper

level management positions. Bunch points out that there are many African-Americans, Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Americans who would gladly work in cultural institutions that value diversity and offer challenging careers. Bunch further argues that it is time to put diversity at the top of the list of priorities for museums. He proposes a comprehensive scheme, for networking institutions that would leverage resources, build upon proven successes and foster collaboration and communication among professional organizations, funding sources, and universities.

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- ✓ Visitor Services Managers
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- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Lavine, S. and P. Myers. *Museums and multiculturalism: Who is in control? Museum News, 1989: 37-42.***

Views the nature of exhibitions as a “contested terrain,” where various multicultural groups throughout the world “challenge the right of established institutions to control the presentation of their culture.” Provides a brief case study of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s 1984 exhibit of art from New Zealand’s Maori people that illustrates the delicate cultural balance curators must maintain. Discusses the role of museum as temple versus museum as forum. Concludes by urging experimentation in the design of exhibits in order to reflect diverse perspectives or to “admit the highly contingent nature of the interpretations offered.” Uses examples of Native American, Hispanic, and African American exhibits across Canada and the United States to enhance understanding of the sensitive challenge facing curators. A refreshing perspective on a major issue.

Resource Category

- ✓ Exhibit, Program, & Audience Inclusiveness
- ✓ Planning & Implementation

Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ Exhibit Designers
- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Karp, I., C.M. Kreamer, and S. Lavine. *Museums and communities: The politics of public culture. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.***

Comprised of essays centered around three themes presented at a conference on museums and cultural diversity at the Smithsonian in 1990, this volume’s underlying premise is that museums have an ethical obligation to listen to the multiplicity of needs and demands in the communities they serve. The organizing rubric is:

1. On Civil Society and Social Identity
2. Audience, Ownership, and Authority: Designing Relations between Museums and Communities
3. Defining Communities Through Exhibiting and Collecting

In the opening essay on civil society and social identity, Karp argues that the omission of cultures of color by mainstream museums creates a cultural hierarchy where the achievements of people of color are ignored and sends “implicit messages about their worth...large, historically important museums...now have to face the consequences of their history of silence. Communities are often no longer content to remain passive recipients of museum activities.” This volume suggests that museums must enlarge their notion of cultural diversity to include other communities, such as people with physical and/or mental impairments. An interesting essay on audience, ownership and authority describes the Chinatown History Museum’s efforts to ‘document, reconstruct, and reclaim’ Chinatown’s history without reducing it to a mere nostalgic exercise. Instead, the museum has addressed the larger issue of “why and how life has become the way it is’.”

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Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ Exhibit Designers
- ✓ Development Staff
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Fragale, Michael, and Joann Stevens, eds. *Racial Legacies and Learning: How to Talk About Race*. Alexandria, VA: PBS Adult Learning Service, 1999.**

A teleconference co-sponsored by San Francisco University and the local public television station used a town hall format with 300 downlinks across the country with businesses and educational institutions. *How to Talk About Race* is an excellent video that could use some judicious editing and is about half an hour too long. It is very well done—the speakers are interesting, the video is technically well-produced, and the moderator is outstanding. But the film is too ambitious and tries to cover too much ground; there are interviews with people on the street and a religious dialogue group that don’t add much. Overall, though, this is a sensitive and helpful discussion on how to get beyond shame and blame toward purposeful dialogue and action.

Why is it so hard to talk about race? Fear, shame and blame are the culprits. Whites have a personal history that needs to be part of the conversation but seldom is. Questions like, “When do you first remember race?” are suggested as non-threatening openers. (See *The Diversity Discussion Guide*.) There are models, such as study circles, that provide answers on “how to get started.” Panel members agree that facilitation is needed to manage the thorny and emotionally daunting elements of cross-cultural conversations. America is so racially segregated that no natural forums exist for people to engage in dialogue. Also, higher education is putting out students lacking diversity competencies, and it is costing businesses millions of dollars to train them. Another panelist says, “It’s like trying to rebuild a plane in mid-air, and you can’t land to fix it.”

A senior executive from Denny’s Restaurant is on the panel, and the restaurant

chain is pointed to as an example of how a company can turn things around. How did they do it? Denny's success is based on a quintessential list of well-known diversity "best practices":

- Denny's new CEO is committed to diversity and role models effective behaviors—the first of which was to find an inside senior leader to put in charge of leading and monitoring change.
- The organization looked at system, structures, policies and practices for barriers to diversity and set about dismantling them.
- It rewarded and recognized diversity "champions" and tied 25% of bonuses to diversity advancement by supervisors and managers.
- Denny's trained over 70,000 people in diversity over a five-year period in their system.
- Senior leaders are now diverse and Denny's leads the country in having the largest number of diverse board members—43%. The number of managers and senior managers has become increasingly diverse.
- These changes have linked diversity and excellence, with the result that diverse teams are outperforming same-sex, same-color teams.

Further, class needs to be part of racial discussions, according to panelists, as there are differences within all groups and class is one of them. For some whites, religion may be a way to enter this conversation.

Resource Category

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Particularly Useful to:

- ✓ All Managers
- ✓ Educators
- ✓ Visitor Services Managers
- ✓ Facilities Managers
- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Dickerson, A. *Redressing the balance. Museums Journal, 91(1991): 21-3.***

A brief ideological discussion by Dickerson, former administrator at both the Chicago Historical Society and DuSable African American Museum, on museums' obligation to collect materials "against the backdrop of years of curatorial neglect" in order to eliminate a strong bias against "non-Western achievements in science, art, literary of scholarly endeavors." Stresses critical nature of cross-cultural dialogue between museum staff and various communities to achieve a "bond of trust." Offers a brief section on semantic pitfalls surrounding such dialogues; presents a list of terms to be avoided. Concludes with a practical list of beginning "action steps" for attaining increased museum diversity; checklist includes internal self-study specifics, complete with goals, timetables, perspectives, and research "of a different kind" that will help museums with sound suggestions for staff training.

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- ✓ Boards
- ✓ Senior Leaders

❖ **Spitz, J.A. and M. Thom. *Urban network: Museums embracing communities*. Chicago: The Field Museum, 2003.**

A highly recommended reader based on a consortium of ten major urban museums: Art Institute of Chicago; Field Museum; American Museum of Natural History; Brooklyn Museum of Art; Exploratorium; Oakland Museum of California; Science Museum of Minnesota; Walker Art Center; Houston Museum of Natural Science; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Network members share best practices, strategies, and resources to “advance a national dialogue on community engagement... points the way to future initiatives, and offers a practical help to others on the same path.” Three brief essays set the context for promoting access and equity. Offers full-blown program development blueprint that covers context for program planning, institutional self-assessment, audience assessment, relationship building, program development, sustaining institutional commitment of all partners, and operational tips. Individual museum case studies present cleanly organized and comparable information about program activities, goals, key resources, key factors leading to community engagement, internal collaboration, and learning from evaluation and experience. Especially useful is the evaluation section, which presents an evaluation rubric, methods for measurement and communication of results, key questions for using this rubric; easily replicated material for building questionnaires used both in internal and external evaluations.

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❖ **Sandell, Richard. *The Strategic Significance of Workforce Diversity in Museums*. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3: 213-230. UK: Taylor & Francis Group Ltd.**

This article considers the increasing international interest and the implications and strategic significance of workforce diversity. It explores efforts in the UK museum sector to increase cultural diversity through the use of positive or affirmative action. Sandell argues that workforce diversity will become increasingly important as a response to changing socio-political agendas. Museums must be able to act as agents of social inclusion. Finally, Sandell concludes by discussing “diversity management” and presenting a museum-specific model for diversity management.

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❖ **Attitudes Toward Differences. Minneapolis, Minn.: The Professional Development Group, Inc., 1993-1999.**

This video begins with participants getting a mental snapshot of people with whom they enjoy working and people with whom they have trouble working. The video continues by having participants do some analysis about what might be behind the choices they made in the first exercise. Participants are shown the Tolerance Scale, which is a numerical method of ranking their feelings about others. The highest level of tolerance is appreciation, next is acceptance, third is tolerance, fourth is avoidance and finally the lowest level of tolerance is repulsion. The instructor then shows a series of close-up photographs and asks participants to rank the photos on the tolerance scale. This is the “first look”. The instructor then shows the wide angle of the photos and the participants rank their tolerance once again. The results are often startling and are very helpful to participants in identifying their biases. The video also discusses behaviors and the impact of biases and assumptions. An excellent resource for any area of the organization, the video comes with both an instructor’s and a participant’s manual with the entire presentation taking about two hours.

For further information:

One Main Street S.E., Ste. 200

Minneapolis, MN 55414

800/651-4093

progroup@progroupinc.com

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❖ **Nelsen, Vivian Jenkins. Beliefs & Behaviors That Help or Hinder Intercultural Relations. Minneapolis, MN: Hypatia Trust Inc., 2004.**

Offers the user a way of assessing whether his or her beliefs and behaviors are helping or hindering intercultural relations. This survey allows the user, whether a person of color or European American, to evaluate his or her beliefs about racism and cultural superiority. In addition, it provides affirmation for beliefs and

behaviors that encourage positive intercultural relations. Best used as a confidential survey so that the user may reflect and benefit from it without fear of reproach by others.

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❖ *ASTC Dimensions, A Common Vision: ASTC's Equity and Diversity Initiative.* Washington D.C.: Association of Science-Technology Centers Inc., January/February 2002.

This issue of *Dimensions* includes articles on diversity by various authors and on various topics. Included titles are:

- *Confronting Demographic Denial: Retaining Relevance in the New Millenium* (Jolly, E.J., January 2002)
- *Moving Toward Inclusion: A Model for Change* (Bennington, S. & Smith, A.L., January 2002)
- *Walking the Talk: The Importance of a Diversity Plan* (Ellis, D.W., January 2002)
- *A Question of Truth: Dialogue in Action* (Lewis, L., Marville, C., & Spencer, C., January 2002)
- *Quantifying Change: The Case for Equity/Diversity Metrics* (Peterson, J., January 2002)
- *Who Works in Science Centers? ASTC's 2001 workforce Survey* (Pollock, W. & Nash, A., January 2002)

Additionally, a complete Equity and Diversity initiative has been published by ASTC. This is an excellent resource for those seeking to understand the ASTC vision for diversity and equity and is an essential starting place for gaining this understanding.

For further information:

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