

PRELIMINARY REPORT

**Law School Faculty Views on Diversity
In the Classroom and the Law School Community**

Richard A. White

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Introduction

This report presents the results of a preliminary analysis of a survey of law school faculty on diversity issues. The survey was sent to a representative sample of faculty at U.S. law schools. The purpose of the study was to examine whether faculty members believe that racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom contributes to the educational environment for law school students and faculty. The study addresses the following research questions: (1) Do faculty members believe that their law schools and universities value racial and ethnic diversity? (2) What do faculty members believe the benefits and costs of diversity to be? (3) Do they believe that diversity has lowered the quality of the institution? (4) Who do faculty members believe benefits from diversity? (5) Do faculty members' beliefs about the value of diversity affect their classroom behavior?

Survey Design

The Association of American Law Schools modified a survey instrument designed for a survey conducted by the American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors. The substance of the questionnaire was not altered and only minor language changes were made for the survey of law professors.

A random sample of 1,000 law school faculty was selected from the 6,424 faculty with professor, associate professor, or assistant professor titles listed in the *AALS Directory of Law Teachers, 1998-99*. The *Directory* includes all faculty at the 182 law schools approved by the American Bar Association. Questionnaires were sent to the 1,000 law professors in March 1999. Follow-up mailings to non-respondents were sent in April, August, and September 1999.

Survey Response

Twenty-four surveys were returned unopened or with some explanation making it impossible or inappropriate for the person to participate in the survey (e.g., deceased, retired, no longer at this school, joint appointment not teaching in law school), reducing the sample size to 976. Completed questionnaires were received from 558 (57%) of the 976 remaining in the sample. Women faculty responded at a higher rate (approximately 63%), compared to men (approximately 51%); and white faculty responded at a slightly higher rate (approximately 59%), compared to minority faculty (approximately 57%).¹

1. Ethnic/racial information is not known for 8% of the sample. The response rates for minority and white faculty are calculated as percentages of those for whom ethnic/racial information is available. Thus, the rates are higher, but the approximations serve to compare response rates of the two groups.

Results

Responses to the questions asked in the survey have been organized into eleven groups of questions, each addressing a particular aspect of law faculty experiences with diversity in the classroom and law school community. The eleven areas include: (1) university values about diversity, (2) law school values about diversity, (3) importance of a diverse population to the law school, (4) effects of diversity on classrooms, (5) negative effects of diversity, (6) diversity benefits for all students, (7) diversity benefits for white students, (8) effects of diversity on research, (9) effects of diversity on teaching, (10) how well prepared respondents are to teaching in a diverse class, and (11) whether respondents address diversity in their teaching. Responses to all questions are measured on a five-point scale (e.g., 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Factor scores have been created by taking unweighted averages of the questions included in each group, providing a single score to measure respondent views in each of the eleven areas.

University Values about Diversity

The majority of respondents agree that diversity is valued at their university (Table 1A). When asked how high a priority do you believe it is in your university to create a diverse university environment, more than half (58%) of the sample selected "highest priority" or the next highest response option (5 or 4 on the 1-5 scale). An even higher percentage felt strongly that the university is committed to enhancing the climate for all students; 65 percent selected "strongly agree" or the next highest option.

TABLE 1A University Values about Diversity		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Priority of diverse campus environment	1=lowest priority 5=highest priority	14	3.2	54	12.4	116	26.6	173	39.7	79	18.1	436	3.57
Committed to enhancing climate for all students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	9	2.1	39	9.1	103	24.0	152	35.4	126	29.4	429	3.81

TABLE 1B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
University Values about Diversity	0.88	0.04	411	3.69

Law School Values about Diversity

Respondents feel even more strongly that having a diverse campus environment is valued at their law schools (Table 2A). More than 60 percent selected the highest two options for the question of priority of a diverse campus environment to the law school. And 70 percent selected the highest two options for the question on commitment to enhancing the climate for all students at the law school. Over 60 percent also agreed that their law schools sponsor extra-curricular activities that promote cultural awareness and racial understanding among students.

TABLE 2A Law School Values about Diversity		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Priority of diverse campus environment	1=lowest priority 5=highest priority	11	2.0	51	9.4	147	27.2	220	40.7	111	20.6	540	3.68
Committed to enhancing climate for all students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	14	2.5	36	6.5	93	16.8	180	32.6	229	41.5	552	4.04
Extra-curricular activities that promote cultural awareness	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	28	5.2	64	11.9	123	22.9	188	35.0	134	25.0	537	3.63

TABLE 2B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)										STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Law School Values about Diversity										0.83	0.04	523	3.78

Importance of Diverse Population to the Mission of the Law School

Law faculty respondents felt strongly that having both a diverse student and faculty population is important to the mission of their law schools. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents selected the highest or next highest option for these two questions (Table 3A).

TABLE 3A Importance of Diverse Population to Law School		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Importance of having a diverse student body	1=not important 5=extremely important	13	2.4	24	4.4	104	18.9	202	36.8	206	37.5	549	4.03
Importance of faculty diversity	1=not important 5=extremely important	15	2.7	33	6.0	100	18.2	210	38.3	191	34.8	549	3.96

TABLE 3B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)										STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Importance of Diverse Population										0.95	0.04	548	4.00

Effects of Diversity on Classrooms

Table 4A provides information about the effects of diversity on classrooms. A substantial number of the respondents felt that classroom diversity broadens the variety of experiences shared, has students confront stereotypes on social and political issues as well as racial and ethnic issues, exposes students to different perspectives, and allows broader variety of experiences to be shared (over 50% selected one of the top two response options for each of these items). A high percentage

(50% or more) of the faculty also felt strongly that having a critical mass of students of a particular racial/ethnic group is important to their participation in the classroom and that minority students raise issues and perspectives not raised by others. A little less than one-third of the respondents agreed that racial and ethnic diversity encouraged students to confront stereotypes tied to substantive issues and 42 percent agreed that diversity encouraged students to confront stereotypes tied to personal experiences.

TABLE 4A Effects of Diversity on Classrooms		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Raised new issues and perspectives	1=never 5=all the time	44	8.0	137	24.9	127	23.1	185	33.6	57	10.4	550	3.13
Broadens variety of experiences shared	1=never 5=all the time	28	5.2	71	13.1	132	24.3	198	36.5	114	21.0	543	3.55
Confront stereotypes on social and political issues	1=never 5=all the time	48	11.0	69	15.8	89	20.4	163	37.4	67	15.4	436	3.30
Confront stereotypes on racial and ethnic issues	1=never 5=all the time	44	10.0	63	14.4	73	16.7	164	37.4	94	21.5	438	3.46
Confront stereotypes on substantive issues	1=never 5=all the time	75	17.1	114	26.0	112	25.6	97	22.1	40	9.1	438	2.80
Confront stereotype tied to personal experiences	1=never 5=all the time	50	11.8	82	19.4	111	26.3	119	28.2	60	14.2	422	3.14
Interaction exposes students to different perspectives	1=never 5=all the time	36	7.0	93	18.1	116	22.6	187	36.5	81	15.8	513	3.36
Allows broader variety of experiences to be shared	1=never 5=all the time	39	7.5	68	13.1	86	16.5	195	37.5	132	25.4	520	3.60
Critical mass of a particular group is important to their participation	1=never 5=all the time	65	13.3	82	16.8	97	19.9	150	30.7	94	19.3	488	3.26
Minority students raise issues/perspectives not raised by others	1=never 5=all the time	49	9.4	102	19.6	82	15.7	182	34.9	106	20.3	521	3.37

TABLE 4B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Effects of Diversity on Classrooms	0.99	0.05	372	3.39

Negative Effects of Diversity

Table 5A addresses the possible negative effects of increasing diversity and the assertions that the quality of law schools has been reduced by racial and ethnic diversity. Law faculty show little agreement with the statements that diversity has lowered the quality of the law school, lowered the quality of students admitted to the law school, impedes the discussion of substantive issues in the classroom, and creates tension and arguments along racial/ethnic lines. The statement that generated the most agreement, the lowering of the quality of students admitted to the law school, had only 11 percent of the respondents selecting one of the top two response options. The vast majority of law faculty respondents do not believe that diversity has had negative effects.

TABLE 5A Negative Effects of Diversity		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Focus on diversity has lowered the quality of the law school	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	359	66.9	99	18.4	36	6.7	21	3.9	22	4.1	537	1.60
Lowered the quality of the students admitted to the law school	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	321	59.8	110	20.5	45	8.4	35	6.5	26	4.8	537	1.76
Diversity in the classroom impedes discussion of substantive issues	1=never 5=all the time	402	73.1	118	21.5	17	3.1	9	1.6	4	0.7	550	1.35
Interaction among diverse students creates tension and arguments	1=never 5=all the time	188	34.5	247	45.3	90	16.5	17	3.1	3	0.6	545	1.90

TABLE 5B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Negative Effects of Diversity	0.65	0.03	521	1.66

Diversity Benefits for All Students

Approximately three-quarters of the law faculty respondents felt strongly about the importance of diversity in developing student willingness to examine their own perspectives and for exposing students to new perspectives (Table 6A). Nearly half of the respondents felt that diversity is important for developing student leadership and 42 percent felt that it is important for developing critical thinking. The results show that the law faculty respondents believe that diversity has substantial benefits to all students.

Diversity Benefits for White Students

Table 7A shows that respondents felt very strongly that diversity has a positive effect on the issues that white students consider (72% selected one of the top two options). One-half or more also said that diversity has a positive effect on how white students collaborate on group projects and on their critical reading of course material. Faculty felt less strongly that diversity has an effect on the issues that white students research through class projects, however, 38 percent felt that there is also a positive effect in this area.

TABLE 6A Diversity Benefits for All Students		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Importance for developing critical thinking	1=completely unimportant 5=very important	84	16.0	101	19.2	117	22.3	122	23.2	101	19.2	525	3.10
Importance for developing student leadership	1=completely unimportant 5=very important	56	11.3	69	13.9	129	26.0	146	29.4	96	19.4	496	3.32
Importance for developing willingness to examine own perspectives	1=completely unimportant 5=very important	25	4.7	34	6.4	81	15.3	164	30.9	227	42.7	531	4.01
Importance for exposing students to new perspectives	1=completely unimportant 5=very important	22	4.1	33	6.2	73	13.7	147	27.6	257	48.3	532	4.10

TABLE 6B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)		STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Diversity Benefits for All Students		1.07	0.05	486	3.63

TABLE 7A Diversity Benefits for White Students		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Effect on the issues they consider	1=very negatively 5=very positively	3	0.7	5	1.2	104	25.8	225	55.8	66	16.4	403	3.86
Effect on the issues that they research through class projects	1=very negatively 5=very positively	5	1.6	5	1.6	180	58.6	99	32.2	18	5.9	307	3.39
Effect on how they collaborate on group projects	1=very negatively 5=very positively	2	0.7	8	2.7	139	46.6	116	38.9	33	11.1	298	3.57
Effect on critical reading of course material	1=very negatively 5=very positively	4	1.1	6	1.7	137	38.2	158	44.0	54	15.0	359	3.70

TABLE 7B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Diversity Benefits for White Students	0.64	0.04	257	3.60

Effects of Diversity on Research

A relatively small percentage of respondents felt that diverse classes and faculty affect their own research (Table 8A). However, nearly half agreed that having a diverse research team increases their own learning and almost two-thirds agreed that their views about diversity have been affected by diversity in their classrooms. A substantial percentage (42%) also felt diversity leads students to work on different research projects.

TABLE 8A Effects of Diversity on Research		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Diverse classes affect research	1=not at all 5=extensively	241	51.0	88	18.6	65	13.7	55	11.6	24	5.1	473	2.01
Diverse faculty affect research	1=not at all 5=extensively	231	50.0	86	18.6	75	16.2	53	11.5	17	3.7	462	2.00
Diverse research team increases my own learning	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	49	20.8	28	11.9	46	19.5	62	26.3	51	21.6	236	3.16
My views about diversity have been affected by class diversity	1=very negatively 5=very positively	5	1.0	16	3.3	147	30.3	166	34.2	151	31.1	485	3.91
Diversity leads students to work on different research projects	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	44	16.5	52	19.5	59	22.2	72	27.1	39	14.7	266	3.04

TABLE 8B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Effects of Diversity on Research	1.02	0.08	144	3.03

Effects of Student and Faculty Diversity on Teaching

Table 9A shows that faculty believe student diversity has had little effect on their teaching, relative to the effect it has had in other areas. The strongest effect is that faculty believe student diversity has prompted them to raise racial/ethnic issues in their classes (39% selected one of the top two options). One-fourth of the respondents said they were prompted to adjust their courses to include racial/ethnic issues and 28 percent said that they were prompted to change their pedagogy to encourage discussion among students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Only 17 percent said they were prompted to reexamine criteria for evaluation of students and 13 percent said they were prompted to develop new course offerings.

Although student diversity is seen to have had less effect on respondents' teaching than it has had in other areas, it may be viewed as a positive finding that law faculty do not lower their standards or change their criteria for evaluating students in response to increased diversity in the classroom. Also, the findings that 25 percent of the respondents have adjusted their courses, 28 percent have changed their pedagogy, and 13 percent have developed new courses in response to student diversity may actually be viewed as positive in a setting where curriculum tends to be fairly stable and change tends to come at a moderate pace.

Fewer respondents report that faculty diversity has had an effect on their teaching (Table 9B). However, some did agree with the statements about faculty diversity having an effect on raising issues in class (28%), changing pedagogy to encourage discussion among diverse students (20%), adjusting courses to include racial/ethnic issues (18%), examining criteria for evaluation of students (12%), and developing new course offerings (11%).

TABLE 9A Effects of Student Diversity on Teaching		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Prompted to raise racial/ethnic issues in your classes	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	104	19.3	109	20.2	118	21.9	122	22.6	86	16.0	539	2.96
Prompted to adjust course to include racial/ethnic issues	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	170	32.1	126	23.8	103	19.4	85	16.0	46	8.7	530	2.45
Prompted to develop new course offerings	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	246	50.0	112	22.8	70	14.2	35	7.1	29	5.9	492	1.96
Prompted to re-examine criteria for evaluation of students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	220	42.6	130	25.1	80	15.5	56	10.8	31	6.0	517	2.13
Prompted to change pedagogy to encourage discussion among diverse students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	138	27.4	107	21.2	117	23.2	96	19.0	46	9.1	504	2.61

TABLE 9B Effects of Faculty Diversity on Teaching		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Prompted to raise racial/ethnic issues in your classes	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	149	28.8	119	23.0	103	19.9	93	18.0	53	10.3	517	2.58
Prompted to adjust course to include racial/ethnic issues	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	198	39.0	129	25.4	92	18.1	58	11.4	31	6.1	508	2.20
Prompted to develop new course offerings	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	253	52.8	117	24.4	57	11.9	29	6.1	23	4.8	479	1.86
Prompted to re-examine criteria for evaluation of students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	243	48.1	128	25.3	75	14.9	37	7.3	22	4.4	505	1.94
Prompted to change pedagogy to encourage discussion among diverse students	1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree	181	35.8	123	24.4	100	19.8	68	13.5	33	6.5	505	2.30

TABLE 9C Factor Score (unweighted average of items in two previous tables)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Effects of Diversity on Teaching	0.97	0.05	412	2.18

Prepared to Teach in Diverse Classes

Law faculty report that they are well prepared to teach and comfortable teaching in a diverse environment (Table 10A). Nearly two-thirds of the respondents say they are prepared to teach in a diverse environment (65% selected one of the top two options) and 88% say they are comfortable teaching in a diverse environment.

TABLE 10A Prepared to Teach in Diverse Class		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Prepared to teach in diverse environment	1=not prepared 5=very prepared	9	1.6	37	6.7	148	27.0	204	37.2	151	27.5	549	3.82
Comfortable teaching in a diverse environment	1=not comfortable 5=very comfortable	.	.	7	1.3	57	10.3	170	30.8	318	57.6	552	4.45

TABLE 10B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)	STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Prepared to Teach in Diverse Class	0.75	0.03	548	4.13

Address Diversity in Teaching

Table 11A shows that over half (53%) of the respondents often initiate discussion of racial/ethnic issues in their classrooms and one-third attempt to have students work across racial/ethnic lines in class assignments and group presentations.

TABLE 11A Address Diversity in Teaching		1		2		3		4		5		N	MEAN
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Initiate discussion of race/ethnic issues in classes	1=never 5=very often	40	7.3	99	18.0	120	21.8	182	33.1	109	19.8	550	3.40
Have students work in diverse groups	1=never 5=very often	136	27.0	83	16.5	112	22.2	104	20.6	69	13.7	504	2.78

TABLE 11B Factor Score (unweighted average of items in previous table)		STD DEV	STD ERR	N	MEAN
Address Diversity in Teaching		1.10	0.05	504	3.09

Comparison of Minority and White Faculty

Table 12 shows that minority faculty views differ significantly from those of white faculty. Minority faculty view the climate for diversity at their law school as less positive and see the effect of diversity on classrooms, benefits for all students, and benefits for white students as more positive. Minority faculty are more likely to agree that diversity affects research and teaching, that they are prepared to teach in diverse classrooms, and that they address diversity in teaching. Also, minority faculty are less likely to agree with statements suggesting the negative effects of diversity.

Comparison of Men and Women Faculty

Differences in the responses of women faculty compared to those of men faculty are similar to the differences in minority faculty responses compared to white faculty responses (Table 13). Women see the climate for diversity at both their law school and their university as less positive. Women view the effect of diversity on classrooms, benefits for all students and for white students as more positive, and are more likely to agree that diversity affects research and teaching, that they are prepared to teach in diverse classrooms, and that they address diversity in their teaching. As with minority faculty, women are less likely to agree with statements suggesting the negative effects of diversity.

TABLE 12 Comparison of Minority and White Faculty			MEAN	STD DEV	STD ERR	N
University Values about Diversity	not significant	minority	3.50	1.01	0.13	62
		white	3.71	0.85	0.05	347
Importance of Diverse Population	not significant	minority	3.96	1.03	0.12	78
		white	4.01	0.94	0.04	467
Law School Values about Diversity	t-value=-3.43 (p<.01)	minority	3.48	1.02	0.12	76
		white	3.83	0.78	0.04	444
Effects of Diversity on Classrooms	t-value=3.89 (p<.01)	minority	3.86	0.76	0.10	56
		white	3.31	1.01	0.06	316
Negative Effects of Diversity	t-value=-2.91 (p<.01)	minority	1.45	0.45	0.05	73
		white	1.69	0.67	0.03	447
Diversity Benefits for All Students	t-value=4.80 (p<.01)	minority	4.17	0.76	0.09	73
		white	3.54	1.09	0.05	412
Diversity Benefits for White Students	t-value=3.54 (p<.01)	minority	3.92	0.61	0.10	41
		white	3.54	0.63	0.04	214
Effects of Diversity on Research	t-value=3.81 (p<.01)	minority	3.66	0.91	0.17	29
		white	2.89	0.98	0.09	114
Effects of Diversity on Teaching	t-value=4.11 (p<.01)	minority	2.76	1.10	0.17	41
		white	2.12	0.93	0.05	368
Prepared to Teach in Diverse Class	t-value=5.98 (p<.01)	minority	4.58	0.55	0.06	79
		white	4.05	0.76	0.04	465
Address Diversity in Teaching	t-value=3.24 (p<.01)	minority	3.47	1.05	0.12	75
		white	3.02	1.10	0.05	428

TABLE 13 Comparison of Men and Women Faculty			MEAN	STD DEV	STD ERR	N
University Values about Diversity	t-value=4.28 (p<.01)	men	3.80	0.84	0.05	298
		women	3.39	0.90	0.09	112
Importance of Diverse Population	not significant	men	3.96	0.99	0.05	371
		women	4.07	0.88	0.07	177
Law School Values about Diversity	t-value=3.40 (p<.01)	men	3.86	0.82	0.04	350
		women	3.61	0.81	0.06	172
Effects of Diversity on Classrooms	t-value=-5.09 (p<.01)	men	3.22	1.00	0.06	253
		women	3.76	0.88	0.08	119
Negative Effects of Diversity	t-value=3.90 (p<.01)	men	1.73	0.68	0.04	356
		women	1.50	0.53	0.04	165
Diversity Benefits for All Students	t-value=-5.98 (p<.01)	men	3.44	1.11	0.06	328
		women	4.03	0.86	0.07	158
Diversity Benefits for White Students	t-value=-4.28 (p<.01)	men	3.50	0.65	0.05	186
		women	3.87	0.53	0.06	71
Effects of Diversity on Research	t-value=-3.01 (p<.01)	men	2.88	1.04	0.10	105
		women	3.44	0.83	0.13	39
Effects of Diversity on Teaching	t-value=-4.41 (p<.01)	men	2.05	0.93	0.05	295
		women	2.50	0.98	0.09	117
Prepared to Teach in Diverse Class	not significant	men	4.15	0.73	0.04	371
		women	4.09	0.81	0.06	176
Address Diversity in Teaching	t-value=-5.23 (p<.01)	men	2.91	1.07	0.06	340
		women	3.45	1.08	0.08	164

Differences Associated with Background Characteristics of Respondents

In addition to the differences associated with the racial/ethnic background and gender of the respondents, a number of background characteristics and prior experiences with diversity have been identified as being correlated to faculty views on diversity. The characteristics include: years in law school teaching, rank, political views, the largest percentage of minority students in a class taught by the respondent, the percentage of minority students the respondent feels would constitute a diverse class, the amount of participation by the respondent in diversity related activities, and time spent on lecture-centered teaching.

Two background characteristics, number of years in law school teaching and rank, both show that more senior faculty tend to have less positive views about diversity and are less likely to address diversity in their teaching.

Years in Law School Teaching

The number of years that respondents reported having taught in law school ranged from one to 53. Those with more years of teaching experience saw both their law schools and their universities as valuing diversity more strongly. More senior faculty were less positive about the effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, and effects of diversity on teaching. They saw more negative effects of diversity and were less likely to address diversity in their teaching.²

Rank (Full professor or Not)

Seventy-two percent of the respondents reported that they are full professors. Most of the remaining respondents (25%) are associate or assistant professors. A few have some other rank designation. Full professors say their law schools value diversity more strongly and have less positive views on the effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, the effects of diversity on research, and effects of diversity on teaching. They saw more negative effects of diversity and were less likely to address diversity in their teaching.³

Political Views

Law faculty respondents tended to hold liberal political views. Nine percent considered themselves as far left, 55 percent as liberal, 30 percent as moderate, and six percent as conservative. No respondents characterized their political views as far right. Liberal faculty were less positive about university values about diversity and saw fewer negative effects of diversity. Liberal faculty were more positive about the importance of a diverse population, effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, effects of diversity on research, effects of diversity on teaching, and were more likely to address diversity in teaching.⁴ However, 59 percent of faculty who identified themselves as moderate and 35 percent of conservatives agreed that diversity benefits all students.

2. Correlations ranged from .11 to .23.

3. Correlations ranged from .11 to .17.

4. Correlations ranged from .11 to .46.

Largest Percentage of Minority Students in a Class

One of the ways faculty experiences with diversity was assessed was by asking them what the largest percentage of minority students had been in one of their classes. Responses were positively related to the importance of a diverse population, effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, effects of diversity on teaching, feeling prepared to teach in a diverse class, and addressing diversity in their teaching.⁵

Views on the Percentage of Minority Students that Would Constitute a Diverse Class

Respondents were asked what proportion of minority students that they would consider to constitute a racially/ethnically diverse classroom. The larger the proportion viewed as defining a diverse class, the more positive were the respondents' views on the importance of a diverse population, the effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, effects of diversity on research, effects of diversity on teaching, and addressing diversity in their teaching. Faculty selecting larger proportions also saw fewer negative effects of diversity.⁶

Participation in Diversity Related Activities

Law faculty were asked if they had engaged in any diversity related activities during the past five years. The activities included: taught a race or ethnically focused course, taught a course that included issues on racial or ethnic minorities, conducted research or writing focused on racial or ethnic minorities, taught a gender focused course, taught a course that included issues on women or gender, conducted research or writing focused on women or gender, attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop, participated in a faculty curriculum development activity designed to integrate women's and minorities' perspectives into courses, and participated in a faculty development activity focused on teaching racially/ethnically diverse students. Faculty involvement in diversity issues was measured by the number of different types of activities in which they had participated. Participation in diversity related activities was positively related to law faculty views on the importance of a diverse population to the law school, the effects of diversity on classrooms, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, effects of diversity on research, effects of diversity on teaching, feeling prepared to teach in a diverse class, and addressing diversity in their teaching. Faculty more involved in diversity related activities saw their university as valuing diversity less strongly.⁷

Time Spent on Lecture-Centered Teaching

It has been suggested that lecture-centered or other teacher centered methods offer less opportunity for the benefits of diversity to be realized. If this is true, it might be expected that faculty members using these techniques would have less favorable views about diversity. The time respondents spent on lecture-centered teaching varied widely, ranging from zero to 99 percent. Faculty members who spent more time lecturing were less positive about the value of diversity in the law school classroom, diversity benefits for all students, diversity benefits for white students, and the effects of teaching on diversity. They were also less likely to address diversity in their teaching and more likely to see negative effects of diversity.⁸

5. Correlations ranged from .17 to .30.

6. Correlations ranged from .13 to .32.

7. Correlations ranged from .13 to .55.

8. Correlations ranged from .13 to .28.

Summary

Overall, the survey results show that law school faculty members value racial and ethnic diversity and believe that it also is valued by their law schools and, if applicable, their universities. Faculty feel strongly that having both a diverse student and faculty population is important to the mission of their law schools. Diversity is seen by faculty to have positive effects in the classroom, contributing to the educational experience of their students in a variety of ways. It is interesting that law faculty respondents felt that white students in particular, as well as the student population in general, benefit from diversity. Very few see any negative effects of diversity and there is little support for the assertion that diversity has lowered the quality of their law schools or the quality of students admitted to their schools.

While faculty were less likely to agree that diversity has had an effect on their teaching, it is notable that more than one-third of the respondents said that student diversity has prompted them to raise racial and ethnic issues in their classrooms. Also, one-fourth or more said they were prompted to adjust their courses to include racial and ethnic issues and to change their pedagogy to encourage discussion among students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Thirteen percent of the law faculty respondents said that they had been prompted to develop new course offerings. In a setting where curriculum tends to be stable and change comes at a moderate pace, these findings may be viewed as quite positive.

As would be expected, minority faculty, compared to white faculty, and women faculty, compared to men faculty, had more positive views on diversity. This suggests that as law schools become more diverse, support for diversity is almost certain to increase.

Several background characteristics have been shown to be correlated to faculty views on diversity. The value of diversity in the law school community is viewed less positively by faculty with more years of law school teaching experience, those with higher rank, and those who spend more time on lecture-centered teaching. Diversity is viewed more positively by those with more liberal political views, those with experiences teaching classes with higher percentages of minority students, those who think a higher percentage constitutes a diverse class, and those who participate more in diversity related activities.