

# HOW I SEE IT:

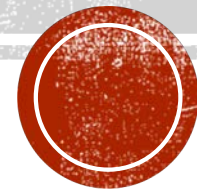
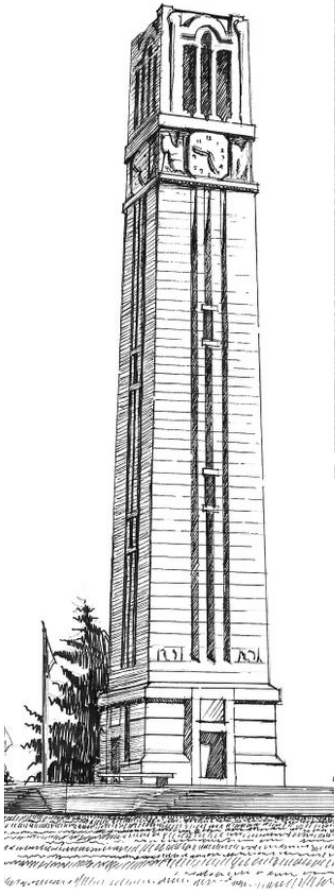
A PHOTOVOICE PROJECT IN UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCING  
DIVERSITY AT A MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Marshall A. Baker, North Carolina State University

Sarah Gordon, Arkansas Tech University

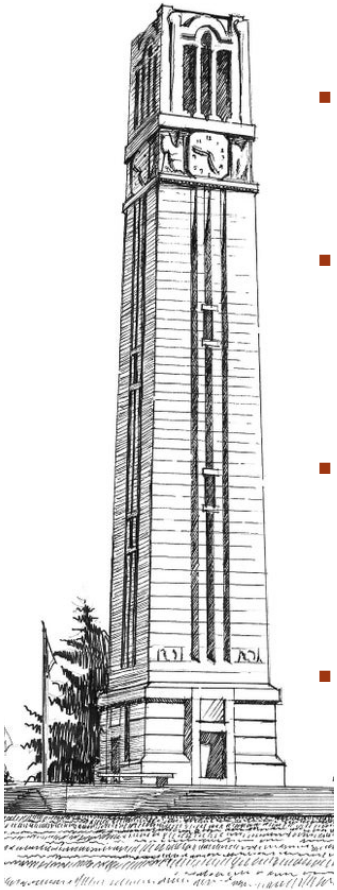
Precious D. Elmore-Sanders, Oklahoma State University

Denise Blum, Oklahoma State University



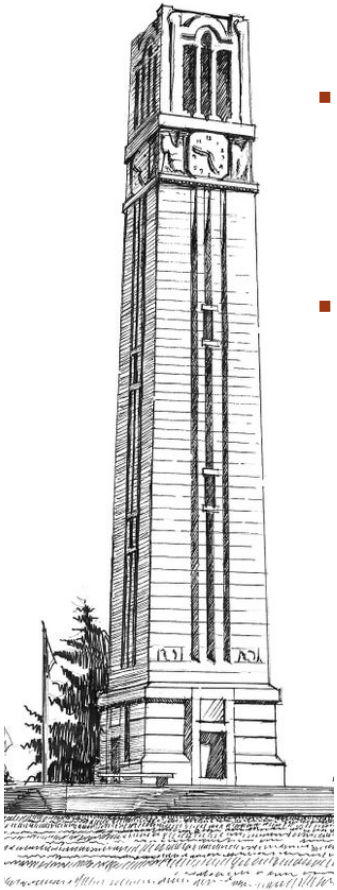
# INTRODUCTION

- Since the 1970s, universities have increasingly been tasked with helping students become adept at navigating a multicultural and global society (Bardhan, 2003).
- Key to student development is diversity, which Clayton-Pedersen et al. (2009) defines in a college campus context as “the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement” (p. 6) with differences in a purposeful manner so as to increase one’s diversity-related competencies.
- Nevertheless, the longstanding US history regarding diversity and the conservative nature of higher education institutions have made it challenging for institutions to fully embrace diversity and multiculturalism (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002).
- As a result, students of all races are not attaining the educational benefits of diverse learning environments (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Milem et al., 2005).



# NEED FOR THE STUDY

- In response, there has been growing concern on college campuses about the ways in which “acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity” (Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2006, p. 4) have been understood and evidenced in higher education.
- Most US higher education institutions seek ways to incorporate general education courses, as well as develop campus organizations, activities, and practices to demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and a desire for intercultural competence. However, effective and accurate ways to measure these concepts as learning outcomes has consistently been challenging (Lake & Rittschof, 2012; Lee, Williams, & Kilaberia, 2012).



# Assessment Plan for Diversity General Education Courses

## Oklahoma State University

This assessment model is built upon the premise that diversity education occurs in a context much broader than the lecture hall of a course holding a "D" designation. The campus experience serves as a laboratory for the application of diversity concepts presented through course curricula.



### Primary Objective

Undergraduate students at Oklahoma State University will be purposefully challenged to grow in their understanding and appreciation of diversity through a holistic campus experience.

Measurable Outcome:  
Graduates will understand and respect diversity in people, beliefs, and societies.

### Practices to Accomplish Objective

**Practice 1: Diversity Courses**  
Diversity (D) courses emphasize one or more socially constructed groups (e.g. racial, ethnic, religious, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation) in the United States.

**Practice 2: International Courses**  
Contemporary international culture (I) courses emphasize contemporary cultures outside the United States.

**Practice 3 – Broadening Your Horizons:** The university environment encourages students to examine diversity through language, art, music, and human interaction. OSU is committed to significantly increasing the number of students participating in short and long-term international and study abroad experiences. The ability to live and work with people with different ideas and experiences enhances employment in all fields.

- These include but are not limited to:
- Residential Life
  - Greek Life
  - Fine Arts
  - Study Abroad Experiences
  - Courses including diverse student populations
  - Professors of diverse backgrounds
  - College/School Clubs and Organizations
  - Campus Life Events
  - Student Government

### Goals of Practice

1. Prepare students to critically analyze historical and contemporary examples of socially constructed groups in American society or culture and the distribution of political, economic, and/or cultural benefits and opportunities afforded to these groups,
2. To understand how these groups relate to the student's academic discipline and American culture,
3. Demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills.

1. Prepare students to critically analyze one or more contemporary cultures external to the United States to understand how these groups relate to the student's academic discipline and American culture,
2. Understand how contemporary international cultures relate to complex, modern world systems,
3. Demonstrate their understanding through written work that provides them the opportunity to enhance their writing skills.

1. Provide relevant settings where students are able to transfer the abstract concepts of diversity taught in classes to real-life situations.
2. Provide motivation for students to engage and interact with diverse populations.
3. Highlight the broad array of people, opportunities, talents, beliefs, lifestyles, and cultural backgrounds at OSU.
4. Move student tolerance towards acceptance and appreciation.
5. Nurture organic experiences leading to discourse around current paradigms.

### Assessment Strategy

**Institutional Portfolios:**  
Assesses Practices 1 & 2

Student artifacts are collected from courses holding a "D" or "I" designation to be analyzed using the university diversity rubric.

**Student Focus Groups:**  
Assesses Practices 1, 2, & 3

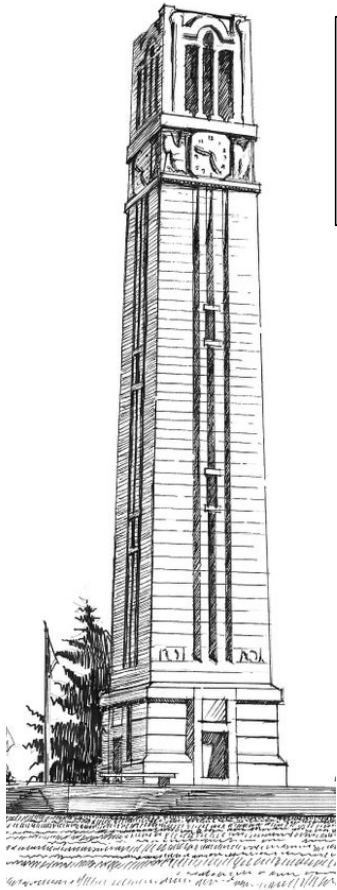
Student focus groups will be facilitated by a team of faculty seeking to understand students' experiences with diversity issues during their time at OSU.

**Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI):**  
Assesses Practices 1, 2, & 3

The GPI will be administered, once every three years, to a random sample of first-year students and seniors to measure:

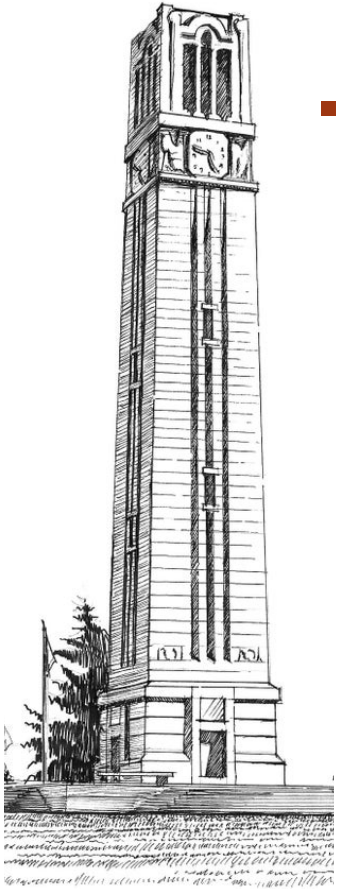
1. Global and holistic student learning and development.
2. Student experiences and perceptions of their campus environment.

[www.gpi.hs.aisstate.edu](http://www.gpi.hs.aisstate.edu)



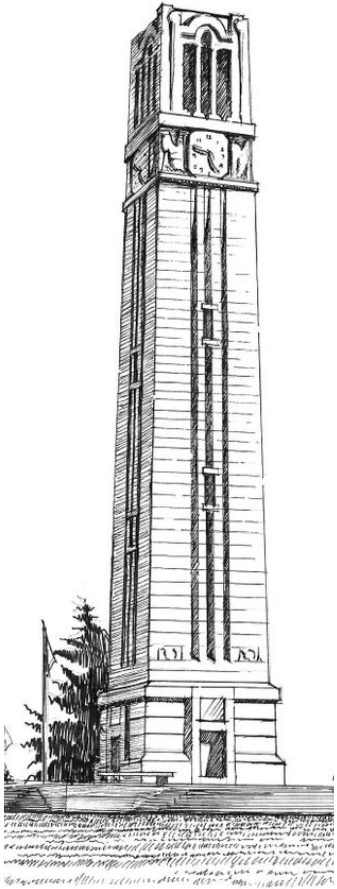
# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- The purpose of this study is to assess OSU students' experiences with learning about diversity issues during their time at OSU. This study is meant to complement the assessment process already in place for the general education outcome of diversity; it is specifically meant to give students an opportunity to share their experiences in and out of the classroom and reflect on what they have learned with regard to diversity during their time at OSU.



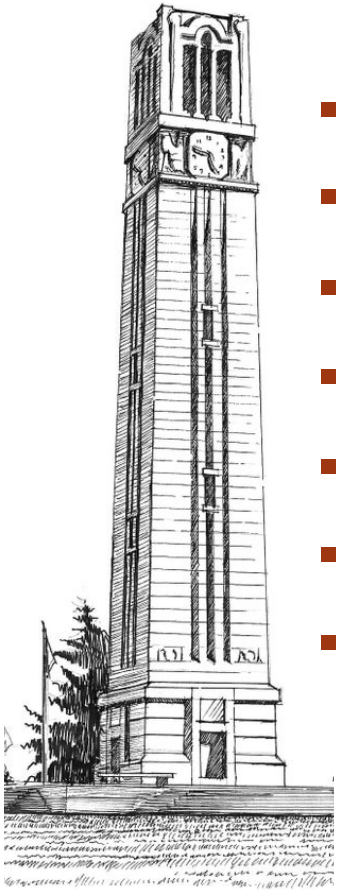
# METHODOLOGY: PHOTOVOICE

- Photographic Technique (Wang & Burris, 1997)
- 25 students participated
- Attended a workshop and were given the following prompt:
  - *Take pictures that represent your experience(s) with diversity while you have been a student at OSU. Specifically, include photos that represent your knowledge/understanding of diversity based on a) your OSU coursework and b) your experiences outside the classroom.*
- Rigorous qualitative methods to code the data:
  - Initial coding – *In Vivo* coding – crystallization (Saldaña, 2013; Tracy, 2010)



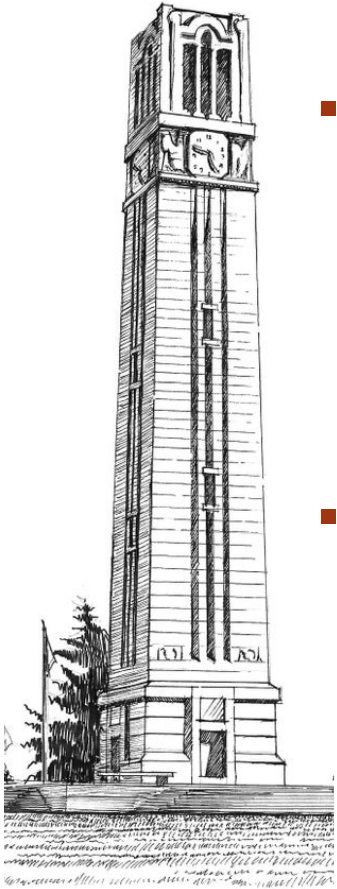
# RESULTING THEMES:

- 1,080 individual codes – 74 categories – six themes
- Course Quality
- [Institution] Experience
- Spaces and Places
- Grouping
- Responsibility for Diversity
- Hesitation



# PRAXIS – THE TOUGH PART

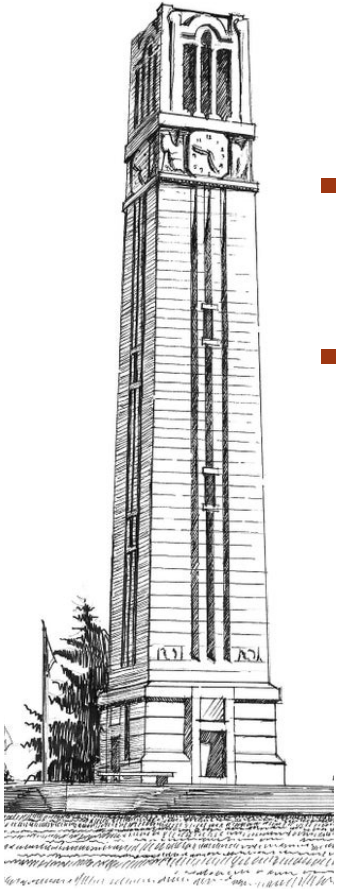
- **Instructor/faculty training is necessary to help those teaching these courses create safe spaces, handle controversial issues, provide resources, create helpful and meaningful assignments, and facilitate discussion that does not single anyone out or silence any one perspective.**
- **There must be institution wide support and serious action taken to create a safe environment for diverse populations.**





# PRAXIS – THE TOUGH PART

- **Providing spaces and places for authentic conversations for all students is critical.**
- **How a course is taught matters—whether or not a course carried a ‘D’ or ‘I’ course designation seemed to be of minimal importance.**



# QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

Marshall A. Baker, North Carolina State University

[mabaker6@ncsu.edu](mailto:mabaker6@ncsu.edu)

