Transforming the Campus Climate through Institutions, Collaboration, and Mentoring

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The university counts among its greatest strengths and a major component of its excellence the diversity of its faculty, students, and staff. It is committed to equal educational opportunity. It strives to hire a diverse faculty and staff of exceptional achievement through affirmative action, to celebrate diversity in all of its programs and activities, and to recruit and retain qualified graduate and undergraduate minority students.

—University of Maryland Mission Statement, 2000

In 2004, a National Academy of Sciences report acknowledged the growing recognition and appreciation of interdisciplinary scholarship that facilitates intellectual collaboration (The National Academies, 2004). Institutional climates are often changed through faculty leadership and collaborative partnerships. This case study of the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity (CRGE) at the University of Maryland (UM) illustrates the ways faculty engagement in institution building, intellectual collaboration, and mentoring has contributed to transformation in one institution of higher education. The consortium focused its approach to fostering change on faculty-led collaborative intersectional and interdisciplinary scholarship. Nevertheless this process encountered a number of challenges because essential resources were not always readily available. Faculty leaders on other campuses who have pioneered institution building around intersectional scholarship encountered such problems as: university systems’ unwillingness to allocate grant dollars to multiple departments and colleges; continuing doubts among faculty colleagues about the rigor of collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship; disagreements about how to assess individual contributions to coauthored articles or books; and fewer outlets for publication and dissemination of their work (Dill, McLaughlin, & Nieves, 2007).
In spite of these challenges, innovative and under rewarded campus leaders have continued to devote their time and energy to ensuring recognition of this work as valuable and transformative. Faculty leaders at the University of Maryland faced many of the same challenges. Nevertheless CRGE has had a significant impact on the diversity climate in Maryland by promoting the use of an intersectional approach to scholarship that is linked to social change.

Using a case study approach to examine this process, multiple data sources are drawn upon. These include: (1) oral history interviews with the founding director focused on the development of her scholarship and of events that contributed to the creation and support of a transformative organization; (2) interviews with other faculty collaborators and campus organization leaders; (3) annual reports, grant applications and journal articles that were written and outline CRGE's contribution to the growth of intersectional scholarship at UM; and (4) additional interviews conducted with CRGE affiliated faculty.

The third author of this chapter conducted the interviews with the founding director and six well-known campus leaders. Because the work of CRGE is intertwined with several key diversity initiatives on campus, leaders familiar with those initiatives were chosen. Interview questions focused on three major themes: leadership in interdisciplinary scholarship and collaboration; mentoring and training the next generation of scholars; and activism and lessons learned in fostering institutional change.

This chapter explores how and why CRGE was created, the innovative programs that move our work forward and showcase an intersectional approach, and the challenges and strategies learned in this process. The findings illuminate one set of processes of social and institutional change.

Institutional Context: Diversity at the University of Maryland

As the flagship campus of the University System of Maryland, UM, located in College Park, is currently showcased as a model, setting the standard for excellence, innovation, and success. The university's history, however, was shaped by policies and practices of segregation that were law and custom in the state. UM enrolled its first Black undergraduate, Hiram Whittle, in 1921 after the University of Maryland Board of Regents was advised that they could not defeat his racial discrimination lawsuit and voted to admit him. (Mr. Whittle did not finish his degree, leaving at the end of his second year.) In 1954 after the landmark Supreme Court ruling, the board voted to admit qualified African Americans at all campuses. Nevertheless the university system remained segregated in practice, if not in law, for three decades. It was not until 1985 that the university finally presented an acceptable plan to the Office of Civil Rights for compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At that time, Chancellor

John Slaughter, himself African American, made significant progress in recruiting African American faculty and students. His successor, William "Brit" Kirwan, insisted on the connection between excellence and diversity, and continued to build the numbers of Black faculty, staff, and students throughout his tenure. Later the pursuit diversity was broadened to include age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, social class, national origin, and ethnicity.

Transformative change cannot occur without commitment at the very top and the University of Maryland is no exception. Here we briefly review milestones of change at UM that contributed to the creation of CRGE. Kirwan is widely recognized as the leader who, following Slaughter's initiative, transformed the campus climate by devoting significant resources to institutionalizing a commitment to diversity and by expressing his own commitment in public statements. Under his leadership, a campus climate initiative was instituted to study and remediate a documented "chilly climate" for women and for racial ethnic minorities. The women's studies and African American studies departments were strengthened and a Curriculum Transformation Project, focused on integrating material on women and minorities into the curriculum throughout the campus, was initiated with generous university funding. Through these years, Maryland gained national recognition for its leadership around campus diversity issues. A pivotal event was UM's ultimately unsuccessful defense of the Banneker Scholarship Program for African Americans. The program was launched under Slaughter and targeted academically talented incoming African American students. The Supreme Court's 1995 refusal to review a lower court's ruling that the program was unconstitutional effectively terminated it as a university recruitment tool. Yet the act of defending this program by publicly documenting the residual harm of UM's segregationist past to the state's African American population demonstrated the strength of the university's commitment to diversity in higher education. President Kirwan also provided support for an activist Office of Human Relations Programs, which launched several initiatives designed to improve the campus climate and assist in the coordination of diversity efforts across campus. Of note was the collaboration between the Office of Human Relations Programs, the Ford Foundation, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities to create a Diversity Blueprint: A Planning Manual for Colleges and Universities (Brown, 1998), which provided guidelines for diversity. The guidelines called for: accountability to ensure that programs meet their diversity goals; inclusiveness of all dimensions of diversity to be represented campus-wide; shared responsibility among all UM faculty, staff, and students to work toward diversity goals; evaluation to maintain continuous feedback on the success of the efforts; and institutionalization to incorporate diversity efforts into the university structure. Although the Diversity Blueprint marked Dr. Kirwan's determination to institutionalize diversity, its usefulness as a resource and a consistent plan for change was limited by his departure.
In 1998, C. D. Mote, Jr., was appointed UM president. A series of initiatives in the 1990s and early 2000s were designed to address the university’s legacy, and to make “excellence through diversity” an actual principle governing campus policy. Indeed a 2000 panel on diversity convened by President Mote found that diversity work on campus had become fragmented and was rarely evaluated and that “there is no accountability for lack of progress in implementing diversity on our campus” (UM Report and Recommendations of the President's Diversity Panel, 2000). In the wake of Kirwan's departure, it appears that social change is dependent on the commitment of leaders; support that is not institutionalized into the daily operations of university offices, departments, and programs can shift as leadership changes.

Accordingly President Mote has emphasized broad access to the university’s enriched undergraduate curriculum programs and launched the Baltimore Incentive Awards Program to recruit and provide full support to high school students of outstanding potential who have overcome extraordinary adversity during their lives. While the grade point average of entering students, the amount of grant monies secured, and the success of special honors programs are indisputably higher, racial diversity still lags.

The University of Maryland still prides itself on its reputation for having a diverse student population, staff and faculty, and a curriculum that incorporates dimensions of difference. Nevertheless there continue to be both challenges and opportunities at Maryland for expanding this work. Thus one of the diversity goals identified for the university includes achieving a critical mass of 35 percent minority undergraduate students on campus by fall 2009. As of 2006, 33 percent of the undergraduate student body is racial-ethnic minority (down 2 percent from 2000), and the university ranks fifth nationally in the number of African American baccalaureates graduated from predominantly White institutions—figures to be proud of (UM, 2005). UM faculty is more diverse racially at the assistant professor level than at the full professor level. More than fifty years after desegregation, UM’s percentage of African American and Hispanic faculty remain disproportionately low compared to their representation nationally and in the state of Maryland (UM, 2005). Similarly the pipeline of graduate students of color also does not reflect our diverse society. Thus there is still a need to improve the recruitment, promotion, and retention of both faculty and graduate students from historically underrepresented minority groups.

Intellectual Collaboration as an Institutional Intervention

Established in 1998, CRGE receives support from the Colleges of Arts and Humanities, Maryland Population and Research Center in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, the Graduate School, and the Office of the Provost. CRGE seeks to: support, coordinate, and facilitate the activities of the outstanding faculty, graduate students and academic units at Maryland engaged in scholarship that focuses on intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity; and to build visibility both on and off campus of our exceptional wealth of resources. The consortium is an association of academic units and individual faculty on the University of Maryland campus whose mission is to promote, advance, and conduct research, scholarship, and faculty and student development that examines the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity with other dimensions of difference. It accomplishes its goals by facilitating intellectual collaboration among units, individual faculty, and graduate students as it seeks to train the next generation of intersectional scholars. Finding this niche was a defining feature of CRGE’s development and one that was strategically chosen as a way to unite and strengthen race-gender scholarship at the university and change the intellectual climate to make this scholarship more central to the university’s mission.

An intersectional approach to research and scholarship that emerged from the intellectual and professional experiences of the founding director was elemental in the development of the mission of CRGE. The first joint project was developed on the recommendation of a Ford Foundation Program Officer who suggested that a collaborative and coordinated approach of three related projects would be a more effective intervention in the climate and institutional practices of the campus and provide a model more consistent with the foundation’s funding preferences.

CRGE in collaboration with two other campus institutions: the Department of African American Studies (AASD) led by Dr. Sharon Harley and the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) led by Dr. Deborah Rosenfelt submitted a grant to the Ford Foundation entitled, Collaborative Transformations in the Academy: Re-Constructing the Study of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Nation. The project emphasized the unique expertise of each program but also the shared commitment to scholarship at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions of difference.

These three scholars had each been engaged in campus change efforts for many years, sharing a number of similar experiences in their early training as graduate students and as junior faculty and maintaining a strong commitment to diversity throughout that time. Dill had learned early in her career that collaboration could be an important strategy for overcoming intellectual isolation as well as enhancing knowledge production. In the interview, Dill recollected:

[When I was in graduate school] I started looking for other young scholars who were doing similar kinds of work, who I could really talk to about my work. I really didn’t feel that there were people immediately around me who could read it critically; because they didn’t know the race literature … I wasn’t sure I was getting a good critical reading on those aspects of my work.
Dill acknowledges that these early experiences in collaboration developed into an intellectual approach to promoting intersectional scholarship and creating campus change. Dr. Harley, in a separate interview, shared a similar story, “We would go to these conferences and there was almost nothing about Black women’s history … [After a while] we decided to stop complaining about the errors of the scholarship and presentations on Black women’s history, and to do something about it.” She and her fellow graduate students collaboratively wrote an anthology entitled: The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images (Harley & Terborg-Penn, 1978), and after contacting over 100 different presses, managed to finally get it published. It is not surprising therefore that a focus of the CRGE, AASD, CTP collaboration would be the creation of an institutional site to promote new knowledge to transform thinking, teaching, and research in the academy.

The confluence of these personal histories in the context of a university that was actively pursuing a mission of diversity increased Dill’s belief that major institutional change was possible at the University of Maryland. She, along with Harley and Rosenfelt, saw an exceptional opportunity and wanted to capitalize on it. Dr. Harley, who arrived on campus in 1981 and had initially found little support for faculty of color, described the impact of Drs. Slaughter and Kirwan’s leadership on how she saw herself in relationship to the university: “I think it helped me to shift … to College Park as my primary center of academic thinking as these two men developed a strong interest in diversity and academic excellence.” Dr. Rosenfelt came to UM in 1989 to direct the Curriculum Transformation Project, which was being funded by the provost’s office recognizing that at that time it was rare that a university would commit resources toward diversifying the curriculum. The excitement for her was that “this would be a project that would help faculty [throughout the university] become equipped to incorporate this new scholarship into their classroom.”

Dr. Dill, arriving in 1993, was impressed to discover a core group of Black women scholars and states, “I had this sense of a community and felt that it represented a unique and historic moment.”

Building Alliances and Networks

In a climate where diversity was a stated goal, CRGE had a unique opportunity to establish alliances and networks among a relatively large group of researchers and teachers. Those alliances enhanced UM’s reputation for expertise in intersectional scholarship at the same time that CRGE was creating a new kind of intervention into campus culture that placed knowledge at the forefront of understanding inequality based on social difference.

Over the past eight years, CRGE has instituted a number of programs aimed at capitalizing on the presence of the many talented scholars at UM. Each program is designed to promote and advance exemplary intersectional scholarship, develop collaborative projects that can attract external grant monies, and leverage those resources to gain additional financial commitments from senior administrators within the institution.

One way CRGE facilitates intersectional research is by administering interdisciplinary Research Interest Groups (RIGs). RIGs are collaborative interdisciplinary assemblages of faculty and students that share an interest in a particular topic and use an intersectional focus in their work. These groups examine such issues as race, poverty, material and visual culture, health of low-income women and children of color, and qualitative methodologies. They meet regularly to share research and teaching information, hear and interact with guest speakers, and promote research activity among participants through grant review, seed grant initiatives, conversations with funding agency representatives, and so on. Additionally they help create a sense of community among faculty and graduate students with shared research interests. Research Interest Groups (RIGs) have included over sixty faculty, graduate students, and community members participating.

CRGE appeals to faculty and graduate students from around the campus. It has become uniquely adept at building interdisciplinary collaborative ties with faculty from various departments and colleges including ARHU, BSOS, the School of Architecture, the College of Education (EDUC), and the School of Public Health (SPH). It hosts a monthly colloquium designed to foster and disseminate graduate student and faculty intersectional work across the campus. Over thirty UM faculty members have participated in the sessions, with an average attendance of twenty-five students from approximately fifteen departments. The sessions help graduate students identify peers and faculty from across the campus who are using an intersectional lens to guide their scholarship. Past colloquia have covered such topics as “What is a Public Intellectual?” “Black and Latina Feminist Thought,” “Intersectional Methodology,” and “Combining Research and Activism.”

CRGE uses its Web site (www.crge.umd.edu) not only to inform the campus community and beyond about research products, programs, and symposia but is also building an online community of scholars to help cultivate and increase access to its resources on intersectional scholarship. The centerpiece of these resources is the Intersectional Research Database, a searchable database on intersectional scholarship that includes annotated citations of research by scholars in the social sciences, arts and humanities, law, medicine, and many other fields. Additionally CRGE’s Diversity Web-Calendar is the one cyber-location at UM that provides information on all events with an intersectional focus that take place on campus. All of the online initiatives are fueled by a goal to create a distinct space on the Internet for intersectional information. The resources on the site are available to not only members of
the University of Maryland community, but to the greater population of scholars interested in work on intersectionality. CRGE stays in touch with our affiliates through a frequently disseminated email listserve of 160 subscribers and a mailing list with approximately 360 contacts, 40 percent of which are off-campus. The homepage receives nearly 12,000 hits per week.

In addition, CRGE has raised the national profile of the University of Maryland in relation to intersectional scholarship through several symposia that have drawn scholars from throughout the nation, and within the UM, academic community. Over the past five years, CRGE has had three campus-wide events that centered on our findings in specific crucial areas: Push-outs In the Schools: A Policy Briefing; Tools for Social Justice: UM at the Intersection of Community and Social Justice; and Tools for Social Justice: Katrina One Year Later. These gatherings impressively identified the University of Maryland as a place that fosters scholarship about race, gender, ethnicity, and their intersections. The symposia drew crowds of over 200 and the policy briefing was attended by approximately fifty faculty, educators, and parents.

CRGE has developed an exceptional record of program development and high name recognition based on innovative programs with strong intellectual content. The nationally distributed newsletter, Research Connections, continues to highlight the multiple collaborations CRGE engages in with faculty across campus and beyond.

**Mentoring: Developing the Next Generation**

Maryland's efforts to improve the recruitment of underrepresented faculty and students, which began in the 1980s, set the stage for the founding of CRGE. Its contribution to continuing that process is to focus on training the next generation of scholars in intersectional theory, methodology, and pedagogy making mentorship a crucial aspect of our mission. The dearth of scholars of color in the pipeline is of particular concern at CRGE because this group of scholars includes those most likely to engage in intersectional interdisciplinary research. New and promising scholars will have the opportunity to influence the future directions and meanings of higher education particularly on issues of diversity. As the current cohort of senior professors begin to retire, the intellectual leadership of these emerging scholars will become increasingly important. Faculty in CRGE have engaged in mentoring junior faculty of color through the Office of Academic Affairs and the Provost, developed a CRGE Faculty Affiliate Program, and engaged in individual mentoring of new junior faculty of color. They also developed a specific program for entering graduate students interested in intersectional approaches to research.

Scholars of color, especially junior scholars, still confront many obstacles including: tenure and promotion; exploitation and self-sacrifice; multiple affiliations; and lack of family resources (see chapter 10). In addition, their limited presence in higher education institutions maintains and reinforces their minority status (Fong, 2000; Johnsrud, 1993; Alexander-Snow & Johnson, 1999; Jarmon, 2001; Garza, 1993). In fall 2006 at the University of Maryland, as shown in table 11.1, slightly more than 5 percent of tenure track faculty are African American, 9.7 percent Asian American, 3.3 percent Hispanic, and 0.13 percent Native American. These numbers are better than those at many previously White institutions (PWIs) but are still far lower than one would expect based on the proportion of these groups present in the general population. For graduate students, 7.5 percent are African American, 7.6 percent Asian American, 3.7 percent Hispanic, and 0.2 percent Native American (see table 11.2). The numbers are even more striking when examining Ph.D. degree completion rates for 2007: 6.1 percent African American, 5 percent Asian American, 1.8 percent Hispanic, and 0.15 percent American Indian graduate students received Ph.D.s. At CRGE, we acknowledge that the ultimate success of our leadership depends on preparing and mentoring the next generation of scholars to confront and conquer the many challenges that they will face.

Mentoring includes such support as critical feedback, introductions to senior faculty and administrators, and acting as a resource for up and coming scholars. Literature on mentoring details how in general faculty of color has different experiences than their White colleagues upon entering the academic workforce and therefore requires different strategies to ensure their retention. As observed by Boykin, Zambrana, Williams et al. (2003), "effective mentoring of historically under-represented women includes: a trusting relationship, understanding of the mentoring experience, positive regard/ validation of individuals and availability of time" (15). Most new faculty members experience tremendous anxiety about survival and success in the academy. Levinson et al. (1991), found that women (medical) faculty members with mentors published more, spent more time on research activities, and were more satisfied with their careers. Added stress experienced by faculty of color often hinders their progress toward achieving tenure and reduces their potential to produce excellent scholarship and be effective professors. Faculty of color are more likely to feel undervalued and unwelcomed (Fong, 2000; Johnsrud, 1993; Alexander-Snow & Johnson, 1999, Jarmon, 2001, Garza, 1993). In order to avoid such outcomes, universities must be committed to providing extra support for the retention of ethnic minority faculty. Mentors should be able to bolster motivation, socialize their protégés to their new environment through revealing what Jarmon (2001) calls the "hidden rules," provide emotional support, be aware of extra demands and the need to protect the time of faculty of color, and ensure that additional demands placed on faculty of color are rewarded.
### TABLE 11.1
University of Maryland Tenure/Tenure-Track (FTE) Faculty by Race/Ethnicity and Rank, Fall 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Associate Professor</th>
<th>Assistant Professor</th>
<th>Other Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian (1%)*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/P.I. (9%)*</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American (5%)*</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (3%)*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (78%)*</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known (1%)*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (100%)</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * The overall percentage of faculty excludes the category “Other Faculty” from the calculation; it is based solely on tenure track faculty.

Indeed research bears out that these faculty members, especially faculty of color, often experience an overload of demands on their time. In addition to being highly sought after by students because of their minority status, faculty of color are usually placed on committees more often, taking time away from their research and scholarship commitments (Johnsrud, 1993; Fong, 2000; Garza, 1993; Howard-Vital & Morgan, 1993). Alexander-Snow and Johnson (1999) suggest that faculty of color experience “cultural taxation.” Rather than being allowed—and indeed encouraged—to concentrate on their academic work, many are sucked into a plethora of activities often unrelated to their competence and interests” says Banks (1984, 327). In addition, faculty are rarely rewarded for their mentoring work. As Professor Harley points out, “the campus is more likely to recognize somebody with a major grant who’s done nothing in the mentoring area than somebody who does the multiple things that we do.” And yet she continues to make plans within her own projects to “expand the mentoring component and bring in younger scholars. I’d like to expand [the program] and replicate it around the country.” The challenge is in obtaining the institutional support needed to create these broadened programs and to add them to the already heavy workload.

Mentorship is an area of growing concern at the University of Maryland. Although UM gives a system-wide mentoring award, which in 2006 was awarded to the founding director, Bonnie Thornton Dill, the recognition for
these efforts remain minimal. In 2006, the faculty senate passed a set of mentoring program guidelines, which require that all new faculty be assigned mentors within their department and also includes a recommendation to create a network of faculty from underrepresented groups to be available to mentor with recruited faculty (UM Senate Task Force Report, 2006). These recommendations disregard prior findings: that underrepresented faculty of color do not feel welcomed in many academic departments as their experiences are not understood or validated, and that underrepresented faculty already experience overload as mentors to graduate students and other faculty of color.

CRGE continues its commitment to mentoring in spite of the many costs involved. Senior faculty in CRGE read grant applications, manuscripts, and other materials and also meet with faculty of color interested in intersectionality. Senior CRGE faculty have mentored several junior scholars from across the campus that have since received tenure. If this work receives any recognition at all it is through the mechanism of CRGE. Mentoring junior scholars cannot be accomplished without administrative support and resources and these energies must be directed toward assistant and associate professors as well as among graduate students. To support and extend the mission of collaborative interdisciplinary research, CRGE proposed to formalize and extend a faculty mentoring program to create a multilevel mentorship program. UM junior faculty, with research interests in dimensions of difference, will be invited to apply for funding that will allow them to pursue their intersectional research in CRGE for a semester. As faculty with these interests tend to be faculty of color, they would be mentored by senior CRGE faculty in research, pedagogy, and in the process learn how to mentor future scholars of color. The CRGE Interdisciplinary Scholars Program (CriSP) will benefit from their participation and the faculty will learn how to train and mentor graduate students without adding permanent students to their advisory load. However, institutional support has not been provided.

Institutionalizing programs that preserve and maintain the ability of faculty of color to continue to produce new knowledge is a key to a vibrant and inclusive academy. If that academic pipeline is diminished, diverse perspectives in knowledge production will be severely curtailed.

Mentoring Graduate Students: Description of the CriSP Program

CRGE's work is aligned with the University of Maryland's mission of achieving excellence and diversity in areas of research, scholarship, teaching, and community service by providing an apparatus to facilitate the university's ability to attract and retain graduate students. In collaboration with academic departments, the Graduate School, and the dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, CRGE implemented a special program to provide intensive training and mentoring for a select group of graduate students with a commitment to intersectional scholarship. Since fall 2002, the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity has offered fellowships for graduate students interested in the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity. The goals of this exciting program are to:

- Attract exceptionally talented graduate students who have an interest in interdisciplinary ideas, a desire to study issues of race, gender, and ethnicity, and the ability to creatively utilize the breadth of faculty and research resources available on the campus.
- Increase the visibility and impact of research and scholarship on these issues by enhancing affiliated departments' resources for recruitment and support of highly qualified graduate students.
- Create an innovative training program for the next generation of UM scholars who are helping to reconceptualize epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches to the study of the intersections of race, gender, and ethnicity, with other dimensions of difference, identity, and inequality.

CRGE Interdisciplinary Scholars Program (CriSP) provides graduate students with an opportunity to learn firsthand the processes of research, administration, and publication through a mentoring relationship with CRGE faculty. CriSP scholars are first- and second-year incoming graduate students from departments affiliated with CRGE. In spring 2007, the sixth cohort of students for the academic year 2007-2008 was selected, and the first and second cohorts have completed their fellowship years. The CriSP program follows a specific academic course for all the scholars selected. First year students enroll in a training seminar that focuses on intersectionality—examining theoretical and methodological insights into the current work in the field. This seminar has been developed as an interdisciplinary enterprise that will provide the foundation for the scholars to use in their work, regardless of home department. Because the scholars come from different departments (CriSP scholars have been enrolled in MA/PhD programs in the following departments: women's studies, American studies, history, sociology, education policy and leadership, public health, and urban planning), the seminar discussions can truly examine how an interdisciplinary approach provides a flexible and useful tool for understanding the construction of identities, power, privilege, policy, and social institutions across disciplines.

After completing the seminar, the students then meet as a group with the second-year cohort and continue professionalization seminars every three weeks throughout the remainder of the year. The professionalization seminars focus on socializing the students to an academic environment and ensuring they receive adequate information and support about the hurdles and opportunities they will face throughout their careers. At the same time, students
continue to work with their assigned faculty advisor, receiving direct feedback about their work.

Evaluation is an important developmental aspect of this training program. Students are evaluated twice during the first semester and at the close of the second semester. The first evaluation is a session where the students receive feedback about their work, their participation and engagement in the training and professionalization seminars, and have an opportunity to provide feedback about their experience. This first evaluation is crucial for assuring that the scholars understand what is expected and are receiving adequate instruction and support. The second evaluation occurs at the end of the semester and is shared with the graduate director in their home department; this is done so that the department is aware of what the student is learning and it helps strengthen the collaborative relationship between CRGE and the participating departments. The third evaluation at the close of the spring semester is also shared with the graduate director in the home department.

Second-year CRISPs are expected to take a leadership role in regard to incoming scholars. They may be asked to lead a session of orientation, and to help the new cohort whenever possible. The staggered design of the program (three incoming, three returning) has helped the students connect across department lines and provided a very useful peer support network.

Although the long-term impact of the program cannot be yet assessed due to its relative newness with students still pursuing their doctoral education, in personal anecdotes students attribute much of their early success in their graduate education to their experiences with CRISP. The fifteen students who have participated in the program through 2007 have come from five different departments and examples of their scholarly interests include: Black women’s spirituality and hip-hop; disability, inequality, and identity; race, nation, and gender in public health discourse; Latina feminist thought; and meanings of work among immigrant nurses. Each year students are asked to provide written evaluations of their experiences in the program and they each highlight different aspects of it.

One student wrote, “Through the CRISP program, I have access to formal and informal mentorship, research training, and a foundation in intersectionality that is critical to my present and future work.” Another wrote, “CRGE provides me with a rare opportunity to engage in intersectional scholarship. I have benefited greatly from the work that CRGE has produced and events that they have sponsored, such as their colloquia, research seminars, and research interest groups as well as CRGE’s research and scholarship day.” A third student stated, “I appreciate having the opportunity to meet faculty from different departments all over campus. I don’t think the other first-year students in my cohort are able to have that experience so early in their graduate programs.”

The CRISP program has enhanced the students’ graduate experience by providing both intellectual and emotional support in their adjustment to a new academic environment. Although still engaged in the work of completing their Ph.D., four have obtained the masters degree and six of the students have passed their general exams and are beginning their major field and dissertation work. Four are currently participating as the 2007–2008 cohort.

Although the financial arrangements have changed over the years, due to a reduction in support from the graduate school, CRGE provides one year of fellowship support and enhanced funding for two years in the form of an assistantship. Departments then fund the students for one year of fellowship and two additional years on assistantship.6 Students receive a full university fellowship and an additional half-time assistantship from CRGE that qualifies them for health insurance. In return, students work ten hours a week at the consortium. Although we do not grant degrees, CRGE works with seven different departments6 from four different colleges providing an interdisciplinary mentorship program to attract and recruit graduate students. The focus of this exceptional program is twofold: rigorous training and dedicated mentoring. CRGE faculty are available to work with the students’ departmental advisor to help design a course of study complimentary to the students’ interests and departmental expectations.

CRGE has struggled to maintain funding for the CRISP program negotiating with several different deans and a number of departments. Because the program is designed for entering students and has facilitated departmental recruitment by offering enhanced funding, it has been an important tool for building and sustaining departmental alliances.

Achieving Institutional Support: Challenges and Lessons Learned

Institution building in higher education is not easy because one must compete in a constantly changing intellectual and institutional environment. What some may see as “cutting-edge,” visionary scholarship poised to change a field; others may label a passing trend and argue against investments in it. These differing intellectual perspectives are compounded by continuous institutional shifts and the need to negotiate and renegotiate agreements as administrators change and seek to implement their individual vision. A second complicating factor is that faculty and graduate students of color are still likely to find themselves in settings where they are isolated and often misunderstood. A program like the CRISP program may provide a safe and supportive environment for a student interested in issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity, but that same student may not have that level of support or understanding within their home department. This disjuncture makes it difficult to assess the impact of the program and to use those data as leverage for increased funding. As this case study
indicates, there are many challenges in continuing this work and the costs, in terms of time and energy of senior faculty are high and inadequately compensated.

The overall methods of the university, and the bureaucracy that supports it, affect this program in other important ways. UM, as is true of higher education, generally does not exist in a vacuum and as the external climate changes, so do the funding priorities of the university, particularly when the majority of funds are state funds. According to Dill:

[UM has] changed in some ways with the changes in society. I mean the society has become less progressive. This institution is more focused on the bottom line, corporate, managerial metrics you know... measuring things in countable ways. . . . Units are all encouraged to get out there and get funding, and you know you have to compete in a really small market.

In a climate where entrepreneurship is encouraged and an increasingly important measure of value is the amount of external grant dollars generated, it is becoming more challenging to secure funding for institutional transformation projects. Because UM is a state institution that is generally acknowledged as under-resourced, internal funds are limited and the drive for external dollars is great. Although collaborations are increasingly recognized as a valuable way to address many research and scholarly questions, collaborative aspirations are vulnerable because the university's system of tracking achievement is through the progress of individuals and units (a department or a college). Thus collaborative activities can get pushed aside or bureaucratically fall through the cracks and languish or be dismissed. The time and energy invested in ensuring that adequate credit is given requires taking time and energy away from the production of research and scholarship. Current director Zambrana observes:

The scarcity of resources at the University places programs in competition with one another rather than in cooperation. The price of institutional change continues to be paid by the few faculty who invest in pursuing social change often at the cost of their scholarly production, time spent away from their personal lives, and lack of adequate compensation from the University. (2007, 3)

Consistent with this observation, the founding director Dill comments: "We don't want to be in competition with other units doing intersectional work; we want to be in support, but it becomes challenging to do that when the resources are limited and you're all eating at the same trough." The current funding climate outside the university has changed considerably in the past ten years and there are many indications that it will not improve in the near future (Dill, McLaughlin, & Nieves, 2007; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000). If diversity research and scholarship continues to be under supported, it will be increasingly difficult to engage junior faculty in ways that will support their research agendas and advance their progress toward tenure.

Attention to and support of collaborative work is further complicated by institutional location. Because intersectional work takes place across traditional boundaries it may be difficult to coordinate and obtaining resources may require multiple negotiations. According to Dill:

I think one challenge for the consortium is that we really don't sit squarely anywhere in terms of the bureaucratic and institutional structure of the university and the flow of resources; because resources flow to departments, and we're not a department. So for us the struggle for resources is compounded by an institutional location that is outside that loop and by our desire not to compete for the same resources that women's studies and African American studies are competing for.

Both Dill and Zambrana acknowledge that having the support of senior administrators committed to diversity who understand that this work contributes to the university mission has been pivotal in gaining university resources. They also acknowledge that receiving external grants was an important signal to these administrations that the work was worthy of their support. In addition, Dill says:

If you have people in places that can be influential, who support what you are doing and who are willing to be your advocates behind the scenes, you won't even know about it necessarily. But you have to be prepared to build from whatever opportunities you have. . . . We have been able to sell this work to the administration in a way that resonates with them, but we have also had people on the inside who keep our efforts on the radar screen, and say positive things about it.

Christine Clark, of the Office of Human Relations, argues that support for this work would be further facilitated by diversifying senior leadership on campus. Andrea Levy, formerly in the Provost's office, adds, "[we must] recognize that diversity has a positive impact on educational outcomes—we cannot separate diversity/inclusiveness from any other part of students' education."

These challenges are formidable and make success stories all the more laudable. And yet they point to significant concerns for the future, namely, how can institutional transformation continue when these data show how change thus far has depended on the leadership of faculty whose own life experiences and scholastic work has motivated them to devote significant portions of their energy and time to improving the campus climate at significant cost to themselves, often without adequate compensation or recognition?
While there are no easy answers, and the lessons from this institution are not applicable to all others, several useful approaches have emerged.

CRGE has carved out a unique niche with intersectional scholarship and has worked to make itself the source for expertise in that specifically defined area. This focus helped gain the attention of the president and his Commission on Diversity that charged CRGE with developing a report on diversity research on campus. The report, *Research on Race, Gender and Ethnicity at UM: Perspectives on Diversity* (Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity, 2004) lists all the names and research interests of faculty on campus with an interest in diversity/intersectional issues and is maintained in an active, on-line database. The report served an administrative need and in highlighting UM’s expertise brought recognition to CRGE. In addition it helped facilitate one of CRGE’s major goals, that of promoting collaboration and exchange around ideas of intersectionality.

Collaboration, despite the challenges, remains an important way that CRGE has generated alliances and support across the campus. Its leadership has worked hard to ensure that the university developed ways to acknowledge the primary participants in these projects. CRGE faculty have also worked hard on projects designed to enhance recognition of mentoring and teaching activities, especially the increased workloads of scholars of color and to enhance the inclusion of diversity scholarship in the undergraduate curriculum.

Ultimately, however, units like CRGE, in order to be successful, need a level of financial stability that does not require that the administrative faculty spend a majority of their time each year seeking funding. Long-term funding and inclusion in state budgets and capital campaigns are the primary means to this kind of stability. Zambrana’s words cogently summarize the challenges, accomplishments, and lessons learned from the CRGE case study. She writes:

We acknowledge that our achievements have had an impact at UM; but we continue to struggle with many of the challenges that hinder our ability to expand our efforts to a truly transformative institution on campus. . . . Diminished funding from external grants in these conservative political times has also seriously challenged our ability to engage in social justice research. . . . Increasing access to higher education has long been one strategy to improve the social capital of [historically] underrepresented groups and improve life chances. Unfortunately, progress has been slow. In the academy itself, we still observe major disparities in the professorate of color at full professor or in high-level administrative positions and in the distribution of resources. Our work continues to provide voice to these disparities and to promote small but significant changes. (2007, 3)

In conclusion, the social changes that have resulted from the work of CRGE are tied to individual leaders at CRGE and within the institution itself. If these interventions are not institutionalized within the university, they are likely to dissipate as senior administrators change. CRGE and other interdisciplinary social justice oriented programs on campus challenge the university structure and make the collaborative process visible through the many accomplishments outlined above. New ways of knowing, the production of new knowledge, their dissemination through pedagogy, and the development of the next generation of scholars, who will continue the struggle for the work of social justice and social change, is a primary motivation for this work in institution building. It is only through the creation and sustaining of these smaller institutions within large institutions that changing the climate of the university and creating a place that can be truly inclusive of and beneficial to scholars committed to intersectional scholarship can occur.

**NOTES**

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The authors have been engaged in the development and direction of CRGE for the past eight years. Amy McLaughlin is former associate director and was the primary researcher on the project that led to this chapter. Bonnie Thornton Dill serves as founding director and Ruth E. Zambrana is the current director.

2. Additional interviews were conducted with Dr. Sharon Harley, chair of African American studies; Dr. Deborah Rosenfelt, director of the Curriculum Transformation Project; Dr. Christine Clark, director of the Office of Human Relations Programs; Ms. Andrea Hill Levy, J.D., associate vice president of Academic Affairs; Dr. James Greenberg, founder of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE); and Dr. Angel David Nieves, assistant professor of Historic Preservation, who arrived on campus in 2004 and has engaged extensively with CRGE, CTP, and other avenues of campus diversity work.

3. The term RIG (research interest group) was adapted from the work of the Center for the Study of Women in Society (CSWS) at the University of Oregon.

4. At the University of Maryland, graduate fellowships carry no work requirement while assistantships are tied to a work assignment.

5. The departments are: women’s studies, American studies, history, education, policy and leadership, curriculum and instruction, sociology, and family sciences.

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