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### Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs): The Relationships Between Organizational Structure, Institutional Commitment to Inclusive Excellence, and CDOs' Perceptions of Their Performance in Facilitating Transformational Change

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# Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs): The Relationships Between Organizational Structure, Institutional Commitment to Inclusive Excellence, and CDOs' Perceptions of Their Performance in Facilitating Transformational Change

## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and chief diversity officers' (CDOs) perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study also sought to examine CDOs' perceptions of their institutions' commitment to inclusive excellence and CDOs' perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Semistructured interviews were conducted with nine CDOs, who were employed by the State University of New York system, to identify under which model the CDOs were working, using the archetypes of vertical structure, either collaborative, unit-based, or portfolio-divisional. Data was analyzed by reviewing audio tapes of every interview and coding written transcripts to identify Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership. Narrative analysis was applied to tell the unique stories of the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. The results of this study revealed that CDOs operating in the portfolio-divisional archetype were most likely to facilitate transformational change based on their ability to effectively apply the five practices of exemplary leadership. The findings also indicate that the CDOs functioning in the portfolio-divisional model received higher levels of institutional commitment based on consistently implementing five of the seven indicators of inclusive excellence. The researcher concluded that all CDOs, regardless of type or size of their institutions, would be more likely to facilitate transformational change if they were operating within the portfolio-divisional model with a high level of institutional commitment.

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Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs): The Relationships Between Organizational Structure,  
Institutional Commitment to Inclusive Excellence, and CDOs' Perceptions of Their  
Performance in Facilitating Transformational Change

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

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## **Dedication**

I humbly and appreciatively thank everyone who played a role in helping me accomplish this academic achievement. These last 4 years have taught me many lessons about being a leader, how to be an effective communicator, and the importance of being patient. First and foremost, I want to thank God for keeping me healthy, focused on accomplishing this goal, and watching over my family in my time of sacrifice. Keeping faith in the plan and purpose You have designed for my life will always be my motivation, and I dedicate this successful endeavor as a part of that process.

I want to sincerely acknowledge my wife and best friend, Rachel, for her personal and professional sacrifices that enabled me to dedicate the necessary time and effort required to complete this degree. We share together in this accomplishment, and you are the driving force behind the success God has blessed us with. To my kids, Gabrielle and Gabriel, Jr. (Cristian), your patience and understanding when I was gone or could not attend certain events or family outings means a lot. The time has come for Dad to be fully engaged in everything you do, and that excites me more than you can possibly imagine.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Jason Berman and Dr. James Evans, for providing thoughtful feedback and perspectives that enabled me to develop a study that would contribute to the literature that already exists about chief diversity officers. I could not have asked for a better committee. I genuinely thank the two of you for your expertise, your guidance, and for challenging me to produce a product that would benefit professionals within the field as well as organizations in other fields.

I want to express gratitude to Dr. Horace Smith, my executive mentor, for his leadership, patience, wisdom, friendship, and understanding throughout this process. My professional development and this research evolved due to the many professional and life lessons you taught me over the past 6 years. Our bond means the world to me and the role you have played in my life has truly helped me develop as a man and as an administrator.

Special thanks to my Dream Team, Dr. T. J. Marquez, Dr. Lisa Durant-Jones, and Dr. Shirley Sommers, for your constant encouragement, guidance, and support throughout this academic and professional process. Your willingness to listen and provide sound counsel is much appreciated. The roles you have played over the years have helped me truly understand the importance of having a strong support system.

To my family, I dedicate this dissertation to you. To my Grandmother, AnnieBelle, and my Aunt Bernice, I know you are smiling down from heaven watching over me. To my mother, your unconditional love and consistent support pushed me over the finish line. The long discussions, warm hugs, and check-ins were a constant reminder that you always have my back. To my father, your encouraging words and thoughtful messages during our morning conversations always helped. To my brothers, your willingness to listen to my frustrations and offer sound advice helped more than you may know. To my sisters, your timely check-ins and understanding when I was not available were appreciated.

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You all have motivated me in different ways to be the best version of myself and a leader in various respects. I love you all and thank you for the role you've played in my life and helping me accomplish this goal.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Gabriel Marshall, Sr. is currently the Director of Student Access and Achievement Programs at Nazareth College. Mr. Marshall attended Daemen College from 2002 to 2005 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2005. He attended The College at Brockport from 2005 to 2008 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in Education in 2008. He returned to The College at Brockport from 2012 to 2013 and graduated with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Mental Health Counseling. Mr. Marshall came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2015 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. He pursued his research on chief diversity officers and transformational change under the direction of Dr. Jason Berman and Dr. James Evans and received the Ed.D. degree in 2019.



## **Abstract**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and chief diversity officers' (CDOs) perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study also sought to examine CDOs' perceptions of their institutions' commitment to inclusive excellence and CDOs' perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

Semistructured interviews were conducted with nine CDOs, who were employed by the State University of New York system, to identify under which model the CDOs were working, using the archetypes of vertical structure, either collaborative, unit-based, or portfolio-divisional. Data was analyzed by reviewing audio tapes of every interview and coding written transcripts to identify Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership. Narrative analysis was applied to tell the unique stories of the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

The results of this study revealed that CDOs operating in the portfolio-divisional archetype were most likely to facilitate transformational change based on their ability to effectively apply the five practices of exemplary leadership. The findings also indicate that the CDOs functioning in the portfolio-divisional model received higher levels of institutional commitment based on consistently implementing five of the seven indicators

of inclusive excellence. The researcher concluded that all CDOs, regardless of type or size of their institutions, would be more likely to facilitate transformational change if they were operating within the portfolio-divisional model with a high level of institutional commitment.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

By the year 2050, the number of underrepresented students prepared to enter college will be far greater than White students (Betts, Hartman, & Oxholm, 2009). As defined by Bangs (2016), underrepresented students include individuals from low-income families, students of color, and/or first-generation college students. For this reason, and as America faces a new order, it is critical that colleges and universities prepare all students to live and work in diverse communities because they will interact with people from different cultures and countries. The opportunities and challenges of changing demographics, global interdependence, and cross-cultural competencies illustrate the need for diversity and inclusive excellence to enrich learning experiences for all.

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) have stressed the urgency for more deliberate attention to campus-wide diversity and inclusion (Brown, 2004). Similarly, the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) and the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) have highlighted the responsibility of higher education institutions to develop sustainable strategic plans for diversity and inclusion, particularly in light of the ongoing challenges and current national discourse on changing demographics of higher education. For the past two decades, the need to diversify students, faculty, and staff at institutions of higher education has been trending nationally (Clayton-Pederson, Parker, Smith, Moreno, & Teraguchi, 2007; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008).

Efforts to increase diversity and inclusion nationwide have been renewed and expanded over the last decade. Higher education institutions have individually defined diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence as they assume new challenges engaging campuses in this construct. According to Nazareth College's *Strategic Plan for Diversity & Inclusion* (Nazareth College, 2017), diversity is defined as a "continuum of individual, group, and social differences, both visible and invisible" (para. 2). Diversity can be engaged to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and administrative and support services. Diversity is also "concerned with, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual belief, ability, national origin, veteran status, age, and those individual characteristics that have been historically underrepresented and underserved" (Nazareth College, 2017, para. 2).

Inclusion is defined by Nazareth College (n.d.) as the "active pursuit of conscious and sustained practices and processes that value and respect differences" (para. 3). Furthermore, inclusion is the intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity – in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities with which individuals might connect. Inclusive excellence was defined by Nazareth College (2018) as the demonstration of a

commitment to advancing institutional goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion as defined in the Nazareth College Statement for Diversity and Inclusion. The individual... promotes inclusivity by creating programs (curricular and/or co-curricular) that encourage meaningful engagement within and across difference. These qualities are reflected in their daily practice (i.e. teaching, mentoring,



programming, work, support and advocacy) that aim to create a sense of belonging for all constituents in the Nazareth College community. (Nazareth College, 2018, para. 10)

The researcher chose to use the Nazareth College definitions of diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence in this study because they represent the full gamut of the meaning.

Historically, institutions of higher education have been slow and reluctant to promote organizational change and increase diversity efforts (Aguirre & Martinez, 2002). In an effort to respond proactively to these concerns, many higher education institutions have sought to find the proper organizational structures that support their diversity and inclusion goals. To achieve these goals, many higher education institutions have followed the trend of appointing senior-level administrators to lead their diversity efforts. Formal titles of these executives may range from vice chancellor and vice provost to special assistant to the president, or dean, but, ultimately, the individual serves as the institution's chief diversity officer (CDO) (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

Assuming CDOs are aligned in administrative hierarchies to provide transformational leadership leading to institutional transformational change, this position is intended to help all constituents (faculty, staff, students, alums, trustees) understand and appreciate the value of inclusive excellence. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), transformational leadership is defined by demonstrating five practices of exemplary leadership: (a) modeling the way, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) challenging the process, (d) enabling others to act, and (e) encouraging the heart.

Modeling the way, in Kouzes and Posner (2012), is characterized by clarifying values by finding your voice, affirming shared values, and setting an example by aligning

actions with shared values. Inspiring a shared vision is categorized as envisioning the future by imagining exciting, ennobling possibilities, and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Challenging the process is classified as searching for opportunities by seizing the initiative, looking outward for innovative ways to improve, experimenting and taking risks by constantly generating small wins, and learning from experience. Enabling others to act is described as fostering collaboration by building trust, facilitating relationships, strengthening others by increasing self-determination, and developing competence. Encouraging the heart is defined as recognizing contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence, and celebrating the victories by creating a spirit of community.

Higher education institutions that are dedicated to diversity and inclusion demonstrate their commitment by employing a CDO to provide leadership over their diversity and inclusion strategic plans. Support from the campus community is essential to ensuring the success of a CDO if transforming the campus culture is the expected outcome. Developing this support involves a study of the campus to determine the needs of the campus community, a method of communicating with all stakeholders throughout the campus community to keep them informed, and the backing from campus senior leadership to support the process. Reluctance from the campus community to accept the strategic initiatives of a CDO is a potential threat to his or her effectiveness (Wilson, 2013). Without transformational leadership, shifting the culture of an institution is not likely to occur. Being able to institutionalize diversity and inclusion likely depends upon the commitment of campus leadership, the work of the CDO, and potentially the archetype of a vertical structure the CDO operates within.

The term “archetype” results from Williams and Wade-Golden’s study (2013, p. 118) wherein they created the chief diversity officer development framework (CDODF), which describes CDOs’ span of control including mission, scope, and priority areas upon which CDOs should focus their efforts. *Vertical structure* describes the CDOs’ range of responsibilities and the institutional system of support needed by a CDO to achieve desired outcomes (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The concept of having a vertical structure for an organization means that the organization or institution would best respond to the transformation of such institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Several states operate state-regulated systems of higher education. New York State represents the largest state-regulated system with respect to the number of campuses and student enrollment in one system; thus, creating an ideal environment to conduct this study. According to the State University of New York (SUNY) *September 2015 Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees, all institutions in the system are required to have strategic plans to increase diversity among faculty, staff, and students (Zimpher, 2015). In addition, the SUNY Board of Trustees, required that all institutions to employ a CDO no later than August 15, 2017. The charge for the CDOs is to serve as a member of the president’s administration, reporting directly to the president or provost; to work collaboratively with offices across campus to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, regarding recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and senior administrators; and to serve as a part of the statewide network of CDOs to support SUNY’s overall diversity goals (Zimpher, 2015).

This research study examined the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study focused on CDOs who were employed at SUNY colleges and universities, operating in collaborative, unit-based, and portfolio-divisional archetypes of a vertical structure. The SUNY system has a range of institutions to examine these relationships. Although New York State employs a statewide CDO to provide leadership over the entire state system, this researcher chose not to examine the multi-institutional, vertical structure based on only one CDO operating within this archetype.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Diversity and inclusion have been problematic for educational institutions in America for some time (Hurtado, 2007). A more diverse student body has forced higher education institutions to confront their anxiety over racial and social differences and deal with the realities of inequality in American society (Hurtado, 2007). However, leaders appear more focused on protecting their self-interests rather than advancing social progress (Hurtado, 2007). Despite colleges and universities working to develop diversity and inclusion strategic plans and acknowledging the importance of infusing diversity into their campus culture, transforming their campuses, or achieving their desired goals, it is not common (Chun & Evans, 2008). This research study was intended to apprehend the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structures and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Furthermore, this researcher sought to understand the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to

inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

Within the last decade, at least 60 institutions have created a CDO position to provide leadership for their diversity efforts (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Increases in the numbers of CDO appointments in higher education demonstrate the commitment of institutions to focus on diversity and inclusion (Leon, 2014). However, having a CDO to support increased numbers of diverse faculty, staff, and students is just the first step in the process, and it is not the solution for an institution's challenges (Morris, 2015).

Regardless of the documented diversity and inclusive strategic plans outlined at various institutions, many have not been able to achieve their desired goals. Providing effective leadership on the part of a CDO requires the appropriate organizational alignment, along with the appropriate goals to achieve optimal outcomes with clearly defined roles and objectives, which are agreed upon by the institution, with proper institutional rank, and with an understanding of the reporting relationships to the CDO (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). The archetype concept is essential in defining how institutional leaders create the CDOs' formal authority, financial and staff resources, and ultimately determine their effectiveness (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Recognizing past diversity and inclusion efforts, and implementing previously successful initiatives helps build rapport with community members and demonstrates a willingness to collaborate in future efforts (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2011).

CDOs find themselves in unique positions as they face the challenges of campus politics while attempting to infuse diversity and inclusion as the norm on college campuses. These challenges are based on the traditions of most institutions that are

antithetical to change. In addition, the roles of CDOs have been loosely defined, causing confusion among the campus community. Based on a number of the factors outlined above, many colleges and universities have failed to accomplish their diversity and inclusion goals—regardless of the strategic plans that guide their decision making. Therefore, given this paradigm, CDOs are instrumental—as well as needed—for administrative leadership to ensure transformational change.

### **Role of a CDO**

Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and affirmative action in 1965, state and federal organizations associated with social justice and higher education institutions openly practiced discrimination (Dobbin, Kalev, & Kelly, 2007). In the mid-1970s, these organizations began developing equal opportunity programs as a method of legal defense for the various complaints submitted to the federal government (Dobbin et al., 2007). By the 1980s, and based on the increased numbers of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and women entering the workforce, corporate America transitioned to diversity managers who were responsible for specialized recruiting strategies, race-relation workshops, and programs designed to attract qualified minority and women candidates (Dobbin et al., 2007).

Colleges and universities adopted minority affairs offices in the 1970s, mainly in response to the large number of African American students enrolling at predominately White institutions (PWIs) (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). These circumstances set the stage for future developments in diversity within higher education institutions. As a result of the history of inequality in America, the backgrounds, the perspectives, and the individuality that Black students brought with them to college campuses was responded to with fear (Hurtado, Clayton-Pederson, Allen, & Milem, 1998). Administrators and

faculty were faced with the responsibility of understanding how those influences shaped student growth and development (Hurtado et al., 1998).

Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) posited that infusing ethnical, racial, and socioeconomic diversity as a valuable component to student learning and development is essential. The need for strategic diversity leadership and establishing CDOs is directly related to the Civil Rights Act, affirmative action, and the need to develop students holistically (Gurin et al., 2002). Because of these dynamics, CDOs have become vital components in fostering a more diverse, productive, and inclusive learning and work environment (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Before CDOs can prepare a plan of work and begin implementing changes within any institution, they have to gain a thorough understanding of the campus culture in which they reside (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2011). Identifying the importance of diversity; how it is intertwined in the fabric of an institution's mission, goals, values, objectives; and other operational aspects informs the CDO of the challenge that is ahead (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2011). A general definition and a grounded definition emerged when examining the role of the CDO (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The general definition reflects the highest ranking diversity administrator, regardless of rank and job description, whereas the grounded definition incorporates all fundamental aspects of the role (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Confusion between these definitions has led to numerous institutions titling an existing campus leader as their CDO, although their designated role is inconsistent with the *chief* role of being responsible for providing executive leadership in a specific area (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Without a clear role, description, and institutional support, many colleges and universities have designated the institutions highest ranking diversity administrator as their CDO—regardless of the CDO’s duties and rank (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). These discrepancies in understanding the role have led to misperceptions and failure to achieve objectives at various institutions. These misperceptions, on occasion, are the result of some campuses naming a program coordinator, who has limited resources, as their CDO; whereas, at a different institution, the CDO may be at a vice president level, with a substantial budget, with robust reporting relationships, and with a position that reports directly to the chancellor or president.

This general definition, without definitions of specific responsibilities, is directly responsible for the struggles at some institutions to formulate a CDO position as a part of their strategic plan. Defining the role in this manner negates to include best practices and theoretical frameworks that should be applied by institutions that have successfully adopted the CDO role on their campus (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) defined the grounded role of the CDO as:

A boundary-spanning senior administrator that prioritizes diversity-themed organizational change as a shared priority at the highest levels of leadership and governance. Reporting to the president, provost, or both, the CDO is an institution’s highest-ranking diversity administrator. The CDO is an integrative role that coordinates, leads, enhances, and in some instances supervises formal diversity capabilities of the institution in an effort to create an environment that is inclusive and excellent for all. (p. 32)



As the principal leader in institutional-wide diversity efforts, Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) advised that CDOs should serve as change agents, strategically developing, implementing, and coordinating initiatives for faculty, staff, and students to improve the campus culture. CDOs should heavily rely on their ability to collaborate and navigate across vertical and horizontal networks to build relationships necessary to implement the desired institutional outcomes (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). The NADOHE outlines 12 standards of professional practice in which CDOs must be proficient, and the NADOHE simultaneously assists institutions in clearly defining the role of the CDO, and it helps institutions to better understand the range of the CDO's work so the institution can effectively support the CDOs on their respective campuses (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, 2014).

**Organizational structure in higher education.** William and Wade-Golden (2007) recommended that a CDO be viewed as a senior leader and a valued administrator in line with the mission of the institution. The researchers identified four organizational archetypes (or models) of the vertical structure in which CDOs operate within the academy: (a) collaborative officer model, (b) unit-based model, (c) portfolio-divisional model, and (d) multi-institutional model (Leon, 2014; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, 2013). Each model has distinctive characteristics, and based on the diversity and inclusion strategic plan, an institution must decide which organizational archetype will enable its CDO to be most effective. It is important to note that some CDOs may operate within a hybrid model that incorporates aspects of two or three of the archetypes.

***Collaborative model.*** The collaborative model is the most basic of the four archetypes. As a result of limited resources, the collaborative model is characterized by a

CDO, possibly another full-time staff member, a shared assistant, or student workers working collaborative with other offices to implement initiatives (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Typically, these individuals are restricted in their ability to hire additional staff and manage or assess the work of others who report directly to them (Galbraith, 2002). The one exception in this model is in institutions that enable their CDO with room in their budget to subcontract additional staff work in support of their initiatives (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Officers operating within this model depend heavily upon their ability to impact change and build relationships, based on their personalities, sharing the financial resources available to them, and with the help of other senior administrators (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Based on the inadequate support and various demands to participate in many capacities on campus, limiting the responsibility of CDOs and focusing their attention on specific matters may be more beneficial to their position (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

*Unit-based model.* The unit-based model of the four archetypes is more thoughtful and developed because it encompasses a staff of other diversity professionals, administrative support, and specialists in various disciplines (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Given the unique expertise of the staff members, CDOs in this model have the opportunity to generate institutional changes in a variety of ways (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Officers working in this model may not lead the institution's diversity agenda, but they have the luxury of increased staff, bigger budgets, and the flexibility to be better situated if a task is assigned (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Building meaningful vertical and horizontal personal relationships on campus to assist with buy-in and support from colleagues is a major component of this model (Leon, 2014). Planning

and implementing diversity programs and initiatives is more likely in the unit-based model than the collaborative model, but it is typically done through collaborations with other diversity units throughout the institution (Leon, 2014). In the unit-based model, the CDO has no direct reporting structure in place from other offices, therefore, it limits the CDO's span of authority (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

CDOs working within the unit-based model have typically served previously as an affirmative action officer, and they have restructured their previous positions to accommodate changes in the institution's strategic plan, thereby making their role more prominent (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). These changes are often reflected in the mission statement of the newly developed unit for which the CDO would be responsible to oversee various areas (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Changes of this nature often allow the CDO to have more financial flexibility and resources by their collaboration with other departments to address tougher diversity matters. As a result, newly appointed CDOs develop a stronger support structure to lead institutions' diversity efforts under their authority (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

***Portfolio-divisional model.*** The portfolio-divisional model incorporates aspects of the collaborative and unit-based models, but it provides CDOs with the vertical authority that others lack (Leon, 2014). This vertical authority empowers CDOs because of their relationships with direct reports as well as with senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other campus stakeholders (Leon, 2014). Institutions organized to have a CDO function within the portfolio-divisional model must understand it will require the CDO to change the perceptions of what the norm has always been, and he or she has to be prepared to deal with criticism (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Some institutions

may disapprove of this model because it has been known to demotivate others working on diversity initiatives, and it places more responsibility on the CDO (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). This model is the least used of the three models, and it is typical at institutions that enroll 10,000 or more students (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) suggested that the portfolio-divisional model produces significant benefits when observed structurally versus symbolically including: (a) creating a consistent diversity leadership structure, (b) generating synergy between relevant diversity units, (c) enhancing financial efficiencies and achieving economies of scale, (d) extending the academic and administrative diversities capabilities of the institutions, and (e) perhaps bringing together domestic and international diversity capabilities under the same organizational structure. The portfolio-divisional model encompasses more changes to the institution's organizational structure than the other models, and it challenges historical perspectives (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). CDOs operating in this model depend on their ability to collaborate with others and gain institutional support to implement their vision and strategic plan (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Although CDOs operating in this model enjoy the privileges of vertical authority, see potentially more benefits to the institutions, and they have more reporting relationships, it is the most cost-intensive model (Leon, 2014).

***Multi-institutional model.*** The multi-institutional model, or the *meta-archetype* comprises characteristics from the collaborative, unit-based, and portfolio-divisional models. Multi-institutional CDOs may have limited staff and little resources to support their institutional goals, which is similar to the collaborative model; or they may provide diversity leadership across the campus while supervising a team of diversity planners,

researchers, support staff, and policy analysts, like unit-based model CDOs; or they may lead an integrated portfolio of units, which is comparable to the portfolio-divisional model (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

The multi-divisional model is most commonly associated with public, statewide higher education systems, but it is also used in health centers or large corporations that are responsible for providing leadership for multiple organizations (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). The multi-divisional CDO reports directly to the president or chancellor of the organization and provides diversity leadership throughout various institutions within the statewide system of colleges and universities (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Providing leadership throughout a statewide system is more demanding and challenging than leading one institution. Multi-institutional CDOs have to account for the differences in mission, culture, priorities, resource base, diversity infrastructure, and history of all institutions under their scope of leadership (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). This span of focus is often difficult as these CDOs and their teams must balance institutional, diversity, and statewide concerns. Furthermore, these CDOs are responsible for developing a shared campus diversity framework and executing collaborative initiatives designed to advance campus diversity efforts in a myriad of ways (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). It is important to note that multi-institutional CDOs must have the support of the statewide president to make sure diversity efforts at the institutional level are respected and adhered to (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

**Need for the institutional rank of the CDO.** Where the CDO ranks within the institution speaks volumes about how the campus values diversity and inclusion.

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) argued that solely using the CDO title without coupling it with a vice president, vice provost, or associate vice chancellor title can cause confusion in relation to the position within the administrative organization. Furthermore, because the chief title is typically associated with the corporate sector, it is imperative to provide CDOs with a formal title that represents their institutional and political presence as a valued member of the decision-making processes within the institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Presenting CDOs with a dual title that is accompanied with academics signifies that they are not only a resource for diversity issues, but it also demonstrates their interconnectedness between diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Being ranked among senior leaders provides a platform for CDOs to incorporate diversity into the discussion, but it does not ensure other leaders will buy-in or support their work (Leon, 2014). The hierarchy that exists within higher education institutions is evident, and placing the CDO at a rank beneath other senior administrators diminishes the authority of the position and could result in less institutional support for the position (Leon, 2014).

Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) suggested CDOs reside at the vice provost or vice president level, sending a clear message to the campus community about the value of the position. By being ranked at this level, the CDO has the ability to be influential at the highest levels and be a key player in changing the institutional culture (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Without ranking a CDO at the highest level, it encourages the campus community to question the significance of the position and whether the institution is serious about changing its culture. Rank is essential in terms of what it symbolizes to the campus community, but most important is that the *chief diversity*

*officer* term that defines the role and responsibilities of the position (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) cautioned institutions about simply renaming senior officers as the CDO if their previous role or experiences are inadequate to provide the necessary leadership of a CDO. Developing a hybrid role of this nature should only be done after conducting a thorough investigation of the needs of the institution and the best ways to address them (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Failure to carefully examine the institution's needs may result in having an individual with a CDO title whose focus is extensive, and it diminishes the importance of diversity (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

**Reporting relationships.** It is essential for the CDO to have a direct reporting relationship at the highest levels of the institution, but who reports to the CDO is vastly important in working to change the institutional culture. Reporting to the president or provost symbolizes the importance of diversity to the campus community and enables the CDO to have direct access when communicating about access, equity, and the overall impact of diversity throughout the institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Units that might report directly to the CDO include:

1. Minority and multicultural affairs
2. Cultural centers
3. Ethnic and gender studies
4. Retention and pipeline initiatives
5. Community outreach
6. Affirmative action and equity

7. Training and development
8. Student support services
9. Research centers and institutes
10. International affairs
11. General administration and student support services. (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, p. 42)

Without the proper reporting structure, CDOs can be high ranking officers without the ability to impact change (Leon, 2014). Reporting to an administrator at a lower level could result in diversity matters not being properly communicated—ultimately having a negative effect on the institution’s strategic diversity plan (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Having a strategic reporting relationship with units that are aligned with similar missions assists the CDO in building valuable relationships across campus and achieving the goals outlined in the institution’s strategic plan (Leon, 2014). Professionals within reporting units play a vital role in helping the CDO’s vision permeate across campus and transform institutional cultures (Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Leon, 2014). Evans and Chun (2007b) articulated the importance of leaders forming support systems at all different levels of the institutional hierarchy to enhance their leadership. Building a culture of shared responsibility helps to facilitate change, and it empower individuals on all levels to make a difference in changing the institutional culture for the better (Leon, 2014). Defining the institution’s organization such that the CDO is complimentary to change will increase the likelihood of success (Leon, 2014). Given the complexities of this problem, these issues are further examined in Chapter 3.



## **Theoretical Framework**

Higher education institutions are complex, multifaceted, and constantly evolving organizations. Changing the culture at any college or university is a long, slow process; change within higher education is often complicated due to politics, the lack of cooperation, and closed mindedness—especially changes related to diversity (Williams, 2013). Shared values, transformational leadership, organizational support, and communication are essential factors leading to institutional changes (Ghazali, Ahmad, Uli, Suandi, & Hassan, 2008). For these reasons, it helps if CDOs are dynamic leaders with the ability to build meaningful relationships and effectively communicate with all stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes of their respective institution's strategic plans (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

When colleges and universities are expecting to change the culture at their institutions with the addition of a CDO, there are specific problems and challenges that have been identified and strategic solutions for suggested improvements. CDOs are charged with providing leadership for diversity and inclusion initiatives while working to create and sustain an inclusive environment for all students, staff, and faculty (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2012).

As change agents in environments that value history, tradition, and the status quo, this study examined the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study also examined the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their performance in facilitating transformational change.

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leadership was not recognized as an important approach to leadership until James McGregor Burns focused his work around political leaders in 1978 (Northouse, 2016). Burns developed the theory by linking leadership to followership and distinguishing between two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is characterized by followers receiving praise or some other form of positive reinforcement for their hard work and dedication. Whereas, transformational leadership involves a process by which leaders and followers are intertwined, working to achieve goals that boost the motivation of the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2016). In 1985, Bernard Bass expanded upon the work of Burns by identifying ways for leadership to be measured as well as the impact leadership has on its followers' performance and motivation (Northouse, 2016).

Effelsberg, Solga, and Gurt (2014) defined transformational leadership in relation to a leader's ability to get followers to shift their goals from an individual focus to focusing on the organization's goals. Kouzes and Posner (2012) identified transformational leadership through five behaviors: (a) challenging the process, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) enabling others to act, (d) modeling the way, and (e) encouraging the heart. According to Northouse (2016), transformational leadership is a process of engaging with others and creating a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. "If we are going to change the culture of higher education, we must be honest with ourselves that it will take changes in attitudes with administration and faculty" (Hrabowski, 2017,).

Transformational leadership was widely known for being used in the corporate sector before it became popular in higher education. Based on the missions, visions, and

the goals of both organizations, leadership strategies between corporations and higher education differ (Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013). In business organizations, missions and visions revolve around increasing the investors' value, being a leader in the market, and innovative ideas (Walton & Galea, 2005), while colleges and universities frame their missions on developing and preparing students for after graduation (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985). Furthermore, businesses set specific, tangible, short-term goals, whereas goals within academia tend to be achieved over a longer period of time, and they may be intangible (Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013).

Tomlin (2016) stated that prior to recruiting a CDO, it is imperative that the senior administration create an environment for success, prioritize what is reasonable for the CDO to accomplish, align the responsibilities of the CDO to the institution's diversity and inclusion plan, clarify the reporting structure, provide the necessary resources to accomplish the desired outcome, and allow time for change. Hiring a CDO as a senior administrator is a symbol that the institution is serious about their commitment to inclusive excellence (Tomlin, 2016). Providing the CDO with the support, resources, and the right organizational alignment to achieve the goals outlined in the strategic plan is reassurance that a successful cultural change at an institution is the priority (Tomlin, 2016).

Transformational change is altering the culture of an institution by changing select assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and outcomes (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Likewise, Johnson (1987) viewed transformational change as systematically shifting organizational philosophies, traditions, and structures while changing morale.

Over time, transformational leadership has the potential for changing institutions to become more diverse and inclusive.

This study examined the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. The researcher sought to understand the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. These questions were explored and answered through a series of semistructured interviews with SUNY CDOs. These relationships are described in greater detail in Chapter 4. Creating transformational change at any college or university is a lengthy and engaging process that requires diversity trainings, financial resources, and collaborative efforts designed to build a supportive and inclusive environment (Williams, 2013).

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study also sought to examine CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change at SUNY institutions. Not all colleges or universities in the SUNY system employ a CDO, which was required by the SUNY Board of Trustees' deadline of August 15, 2017; however, some searches are currently underway. For institutions that have this position available, the multiplicity of structural context can directly impact the CDOs' ability to achieve diversity and inclusion goals and transform their respective institutions (Zimpher, 2015).

Exploring the dynamic of the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change can provide insight for current and future leaders of diversity initiatives and the institutions they operate within. Examining the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change can involve the campus community in producing expected outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

In an effort to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change as well as the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change at SUNY institutions, the following questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?
2. What is the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

This study made the assumption that institutions vary in their level of institutional commitment toward achieving inclusive excellence; however, CDOs operate within an

archetype. This study focused on CDOs operating within three archetypes of vertical structure: collaborative, unit-based, and portfolio-divisional.

As senior level administrators charged with providing leadership to spearhead change, CDOs are likely be presented with the difficult task of working with various constituents to transform their institutions while implementing the vision outlined in their strategic plan. This study adds to the body of knowledge that already exists about CDOs in higher education and why this position is emerging as a prominent role within the hierarchy of colleges and universities. Furthermore, the research highlights how cultures change on college campuses as a result of CDOs' campus engagement, and this research highlights the benefits to institutions that accommodate CDOs to achieve their goals associated with diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence.

### **Significance of the Study**

Not every institution employs a CDO to provide leadership for their diversity and inclusion goals. Transformational change does not occur because institutions initiate an interest in changing, but, rather, because stakeholders within the institution demand that change occurs. Similar to other societal institutions, colleges and universities are often forced to react to social conditions, thus change occurs. It is important to note that the population that creates the circumstances forcing change must also adjust to the new character of the institution. If some degree of integration between students, staff, faculty, and the institution occurs, transformational change and inclusive excellence are more likely to be the result.

This study examined the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change and

the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. The role of a CDO is to provide leadership over institutional diversity and inclusion efforts to create transformational changes, to improve the institution, and to provide better experiences for all stakeholders. Therefore, examining these relationships can assist in providing an understanding for CDOs, higher education institutions, and other organizations considering employing a professional in this role.

In understanding the significance of this study, it is essential to recognize the challenges brought about by the Donald J. Trump administration at this time in history. Under the current presidential administration, colleges and universities are being impacted by the U.S. Department of Justice investigations, the U.S. Department of Education regulations, and "Congressional Action – or Inaction" (Mulhere, 2018, para. 15). Orders and actions implemented under this administration have raised concerns about free speech, affirmative action policies, early admissions decisions, student loans, and for-profit colleges (Mulhere, 2018). Based on impending decisions that have the potential to change current policies and practices, the future of education remains uncertain (Mulhere, 2018).

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this work, the following terms are defined.

*Diversity* – used to describe the individual differences and group/social differences that can be engaged to achieve excellence in teaching learning, research, scholarship, and administrative and support services. Diversity is concerned with, but not limited to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual

orientation, religious and spiritual belief, ability, national origin, veteran status, age, and those individuals with cultural characteristics that have been historically underrepresented and underserved (Nazareth College, 2017).

*Inclusion* – the active pursuit of conscious and sustained practices and processes that value and respect differences. Inclusion is the intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities with which individuals might connect (Nazareth College, 2017).

*Inclusive Excellence* – the demonstration of a commitment to advancing institutional goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion. The individual promotes inclusivity by creating programs (curricular and/or co-curricular) that encourage meaningful engagement within and across difference. These qualities are reflected in an individual's daily practice (i.e., teaching, mentoring, programming, work, support, and advocacy) that aim to create a sense of belonging for all constituents (Nazareth College, 2017).

*Institutional Commitment* – the obligation of senior leaders (identifying measurable goals and outcomes that contribute to the transformation of the culture at their respective institution) toward achieving the goal of the inclusive excellence (Nazareth College, 2017).

Based on the researcher's review of the literature, the following are examples to be considered as evidence of an institution's commitment to inclusive excellence:

- increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty;
- increasing cultural activities related to diversity and inclusiveness;
- increasing budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities;



- regularly planned meetings of underrepresented faculty and staff to discuss their concerns about diversity issues within the campus community;
- committing additional resources for the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion activities and space;
- creating an environment in which inclusiveness is evident by committee meetings, underrepresented faculty and staff interacting with each other, and syllabi that included elements of diversity; and
- enabling the CDO to work collaboratively with human resources to ensure that all open searches produce a diverse pool of candidates from which to select.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced the changing demographics on college and university campuses as well as the challenges, needs, and rationale for constructive campus-wide diversity and inclusion efforts. It also provided the statement of the problem, role of the CDO, organizational structure in higher education, need for institutional rank of the CDO, and the reporting relationships of those under the supervision of the CDO. This chapter also supplied the theoretical framework, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, and it now concludes with a summary of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relating to the epicenter of transformational change, the future of education, CDOs working in other fields, and Williams and Wade-Golden's (2013) archetypes of vertical structure. It also examines the

reasons why diversity and inclusion continue to be a problem on college campuses throughout the country.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and justification, methodology of the study, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study as well as the researcher's interpretations of the data as they relate to the benefits associated with accommodating a CDO to provide leadership for the diversity and inclusion goals at higher education institutions. Chapter 4 also presents the findings of how organizational structure impacts the effectiveness of a CDO, and Chapter 5 concludes the study with implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This research study is important to understand how transformation can occur in institutions that wish to become more inclusive. Although many colleges and universities have established strategic plans for diversity and inclusion, many have been unsuccessful in their quest to create an inclusive environment that transforms their campus. While various institutions of higher education have employed CDOs to administer their diversity and inclusion efforts, it is also important to compare the changes in higher education by recognizing how senior executives in other fields have adopted a similar leadership structure and have been successful in transformative change. Since the future of higher education rests on embracing diversity and inclusion, methods to achieve this outcome should be carefully examined.

The goal of this research was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational changes in higher education institutions. The researcher also sought to apprehend the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Furthermore, the researcher sought to understand the organizational structure needed to enable CDOs to develop a transformed campus while accomplishing the goals associated with comprehensive diversity and inclusion. Within this concept, the purpose of this research was to also educate campus communities and CDOs about the importance of the relationship between the archetypes of vertical

structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitation transformational change. The review of the literature that follows provides the information needed to increase our understanding of the dynamic of this relationship.

Changing campus climates requires a transformation process of which the CDO is a critical component. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how CDOs lead institutions in achieving a more inclusive environment, this review explores:

1. The epicenter of transformational change
2. The future of education
3. CDOs working in other fields
4. Williams & Wade-Golden's (2013) archetypes of vertical structure

Depending upon the institution or organization in which it is placed, the position of CDO varies to some extent. This literature review distinguishes these positions and explains the various components associated with the role of the CDO.

### **Epicenter of Transformational Change in Higher Education**

The epicenter of transformational change in higher education is the convergence of a variety of components that contributes to the likelihood of a desired change occurring. Those components include the institution, senior leadership, the CDO, and buy-in from faculty, staff, and student stakeholders. Jurow (2002) stated that when engaging a broad range of stakeholders, it encourages continuous learning and facilitates relationship building, which is vital for transformational change to occur. It is important to note that prior to a successful change, the role of assessment leading to change cannot be ignored. By assessing an institution's ability and capability for change, a strategic plan

can be developed that is specific to the distinctive characteristics that make every institution unique (Jurow, 2002).

For transformational changes to achieve the desired result of inclusive excellence, diversity and inclusion have to be campus-wide priorities. Without diversity being incorporated at the highest levels of institutional governance, policy, and leadership, the desired changes will not likely occur. The chancellor or president of an institution is generally responsible for establishing this priority. A growing body of literature suggests transformational change depends on senior leadership and the ability of leaders to inspire a shared vision (Ayad & Rahim, 2016; Basham, 2012; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013; Wilson, 2013). Furthermore, the organizational structure in which leaders operate is directly linked to the desired outcome because resource distribution and decisions are made based on organizational priorities. When aligned properly, the structural components have the ability to produce transformational changes, but deficiencies in any area could make it difficult to achieve the desired environment.

Having the proper organizational structure within an institution is essential to the effectiveness of a CDO in producing inclusive excellence. Including a CDO as the senior leader of campus diversity demonstrates the institution's commitment to change as CDOs advise the president and other senior leaders on how to enhance the institutions diversity and inclusion missions (Williams, 2006). In addition, CDOs assist in decision-making processes; provide leadership over various campus initiatives, such as strategic plans for recruiting and retaining more diverse faculty and staff; establish relationships with international colleges and universities; and/or facilitate the design of new diverse academic curriculums (Williams, 2006). Although every stakeholder within the

institution plays a role in the desired transformational change, CDOs spearhead the change process and serve as the institution's figurehead for diversity (Williams, 2006).

Witt/Kieffer (2011) conducted a national survey of over 1,800 CDOs on the nature and structure of the CDO position, tenure, skills, and experience required for success. Of the 1,800 possible participants, 94 CDOs from public and private institutions participated. As institutions look to employ CDOs, responses from the Witt/Kieffer (2011) survey provide benchmark data regarding the position and what institutions can expect as they pursue talented, skilled, experienced professionals. Eight themes can be drawn from the Witt/Kieffer's (2011) study of CDOs:

1. CDO titles and reporting relationships vary from institution to institution.
2. CDOs represent a range of backgrounds and responsibilities.
3. The field is rich with experienced professionals with varying levels or resources.
4. Strategic opportunities drive CDO career decisions.
5. Successful CDOs possess specialized skill sets.
6. Implementing accountability and reporting system tops the list of CDO challenges.
7. CDO compensation varies.
8. There is a broader, strategic role in diversity leadership.

Witt/Kieffer (2011) indicated that CDOs experience significant turnover as they look for expanded roles or want to be in senior management roles. One recommendation for future study was to examine the challenges of CDOs associated with implementing an

institution-wide accountability and reporting system with limited resources (Witt/Kieffer, 2011).

Wilson (2013) used semistructured interviews to assess the multicultural leadership impact of CDOs at their respective institutions. Participants were recruited from attendees at the 2009 NADOHE conference in Washington, D.C. Seven CDOs participated, representing a cross section of various geographic regions and different Carnegie classifications. The CDOs were chosen based on their respective institutions' commitment to creating and maintaining diversity efforts as outlined in their mission statements. Three themes emerged from Wilson's (2013) study of impactful leaders:

1. The CDOs had a personal connection and commitment to diversity.
2. They were interested in responsible leadership while gaining visibility on campus.
3. They were intent on preparing their schools for changing demographics facing campuses now and in the future.

Wilson (2013) implied that CDOs could become trailblazers using innovative strategies to achieve transformative results. One noted limitation was that as CDOs engaged in promoting diversity on campus, their overall effectiveness for implementing diversity or inclusiveness initiatives could not be measured or determined (Wilson (2013).

When reviewing the structural and geographic positioning of any institution, the location of the CDO's office speaks volumes about the institution's commitment to diversity. By location, the placement of the CDO's office in relation to the president's office communicates to the campus community the importance of the role and its value to the president as a change agent. Structurally, from the top down, diversity has to be

engrained in the fabric of the institution, and senior leadership must be willing to hold others accountable to the goals outlined within their strategic plans for diversity and inclusion. To be most effective, the CDO has to be a member of the president's cabinet with the vertical authority to accomplish the desired goals of the institution. Whether viewed structurally or geographically, the CDO has to be afforded the best opportunity to produce the desired changes and have unwavering support from the senior leadership is the first step.

Students, staff, and faculty also play a vital role in bringing about transformational change (Berman, 2013). Berman (2013) noted that it is necessary for students to understand their roles as change agents throughout the process because their professional and public work as citizens will restructure the world and not just improve policies. Staff is instrumental in providing support services for students in various capacities to inform, understand, advocate, and facilitate necessary changes that impact the experiences of students on campus (VanDerLinden, 2014). According to VanDerLinden (2014), faculty being aware of their own needs to learn and change can spearhead efforts to provide unique opportunities for students to develop and understand the different perspectives and experiences of others, which lead to better learning. The relationships students, staff, and faculty develop with the institution and senior administration, and in particular with the CDO, further shapes their experiences and establishes the tone for their desire and role in bringing about transformational changes (VanDerLinden, 2014).

For transformational changes to occur at any college or university, it takes a willingness to examine the culture and a desire for change. Having a senior-level CDO



lead efforts to produce the desired transformation is essential for a campus to evolve because the person is in that position to facilitate change, using students, faculty, and staff as supportive agents for transformation. More important, it may be the archetype of vertical structure the CDO operates within that determines his or her ability to produce change. Through surveying campus needs, effective strategic planning, and buy-in from all stakeholders, transformational change is possible; yet, without aligning the proper vertical structure for the CDO's specific institution, many colleges and universities will fall short of their CDO achieving the preferred inclusive environment.

### **Future of Education in America**

To fully appreciate the evolution of diversity in institutions of higher education in America, it is imperative to understand the historical context. Dating back to slavery, death was the penalty for learning to read and write. Being prohibited from learning violates the fundamental rights of any American, but it sheds light on the disparities that exist among racial groups (Allen & Jewell, 2002). Efforts to provide access and opportunity in education for African Americans led to the establishment of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the southern United States. While persevering through various challenges, HBCUs operated as complex institutions, providing education, social, political, and religious leadership for the African American community (Allen & Jewell, 2002).

Throughout the 1920s and 30s, segregation in the southern United States made it difficult for Blacks to secure the necessary funding to provide educational opportunities at the secondary level (Allen & Jewell, 2002). However, between 1834 and 1836, James William Charles Pennington was allowed to take classes at Yale Divinity School in New

Haven, Connecticut, becoming the first Black man to attend the institution (Reifsnyder, 2017). Yet, he was not officially enrolled or allowed to borrow books from the library, and he was required to sit in the back of the room and only listen (Reifsnyder, 2017). This breakthrough at Yale in desegregation set the stage for examining the need for integration on the national level (Reifsnyder, 2017).

The much needed breakthrough emerged in 1954 when the Supreme Court unanimously voted in favor of *Brown v. Board of Education*, declaring state laws to establish separate schools for Blacks and Whites to be unconstitutional. The lack of inclusive environments and racial and ethnic diversity on many college and university campuses is related to the historical impact of desegregation because institutional policies, attitudes, and behaviors often prevent meaningful interactions (Hurtado et al., 1998). Thomas and Brown (1982) identified the goals of desegregation:

1. To achieve a certain student faculty racial mix;
2. To increase minority achievement;
3. Improve race relations;
4. Promote the access and retention of minorities at the college and advanced higher education levels; and
5. Increase the quality and diversity of job opportunities of minorities.

(p. 163).

The 1950s marked a significant time in America's history regarding educational policies and procedures, and the 1960s would continue that quest with efforts to establish equal rights as the norm.

Compliance with federal regulations forced institutions of higher education to recognize their responsibility in response to affirmative action policies. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the first meaningful legislation that made segregation in public facilities illegal. The introduction of Title VI prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs or activities that received federal financial assistance (Skog, 2007). Furthermore, Title VII made discrimination illegal in employment and hiring practices. Regardless of affirmative action being the law, it was not supported by many Americans, as it was perceived as a system to empower African Americans for past acts of discrimination (Evans, 1997).

Contrary to popular belief, the Civil Rights Act had a significant impact on other discriminated groups to a greater extent than it did Blacks. For example, the women's movement was significantly supported by the laws of affirmative action. Affirmative action is directly responsible for the increased numbers of White women hired in colleges and universities (Evans & Chun, 2007a). Hispanics and other ethnic groups have also benefitted; yet, the sensitivity targeted Blacks on the premise that they were afforded opportunities that were reserved for more qualified Whites (Evans, 1997).

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued an executive order for *affirmative action* requiring federal contractors to provide equal employment opportunities. By the 1970s, affirmative action had expanded to impact education. The 1978 *Regents University of California v. Bakke* decision changed perspectives on affirmative action regarding diversity in higher education (Gamson & Modigliani, 1994). The Supreme Court nullified the admissions plan of the University of California Medical School, which denied a qualified White student admission on the basis of reserving a certain number of

seats for minority students (Gamson & Modigliani, 1994). The Supreme Court's majority vote decision acknowledged that affirmative action can be used when making admissions decisions, but only when being used in a positive manner (Gamson & Modigliani, 1994). Instead of becoming more unified after the *Bakke* decision, diversity and inclusion remained separate.

During the 1980s and 90s, the advent of higher participation in Division I sports and recruitment of diverse students spearheaded increased interests in greater diversity in higher education institutions (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017) With greater enrollment of diverse students came increased demands for programs and services that were relevant to their experience (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017) For example, programs like African American studies emerged as a result of the demand from students to have more academically relevant programs, which resulted in more scholars enrolling in the academy (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017). The growth of African American and Latino studies in academic programs required larger numbers of diverse faculty and staff to support the academic programs (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017).

The turn of the century produced more students of racial and ethnic backgrounds enrolling in colleges and universities (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017). Higher education institutions began contributing more financial aid to encourage underrepresented students to apply to PWIs (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017). Likewise, the 2000s saw an increase in the number of conferences and publications related to the future of higher education and the systematic changes that could be implemented to accommodate the changing demographics (Teichler, 2003). The

reality of changing demographics and strategic methods to address diversity and inclusion within institutions of higher education has led to new policies, changes in organizational structures, and CDOs becoming key members of senior leadership at some of the most prestigious institutions in the United States (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017). These changes had a major impact on all aspects of the institution, but state and federal governments were faced with challenges of sustaining education funding efforts during tough fiscal times (H. Smith, personal communication, October 17, 2017).

In 2008, the United States elected its first African American president, a decision that created unparalleled enthusiasm amongst diverse populations (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). Between 2008 and 2016, under the governance of President Barack Obama, the most diverse, knowledgeable, and inclusive leadership team was assembled, setting a new standard for all organizations (Dexter, 2010). Furthermore, based on the belief that postsecondary education is necessary for all individuals and is an essential part of this country's social and economic well-being, higher education thrived during the Obama administration (Lederman & Fain, 2017). To make this belief a reality, President Obama invested millions of dollars to provide students with educational and training opportunities to re-establish America as the country with the highest number of college graduates (Lederman & Fain, 2017).

The change in presidential leadership in the United States after the 2016 election modified the views of diversity and inclusion within many organizations, and this had a significant impact on higher education. Unlike the Obama administration, President Donald Trump and his administration reduced diversity and inclusiveness among his staff

and created a national division among racial groups that appears to have been an intentionally executed plan. The present administration, at the time of this publication, has demonstrated its lack of commitment to diversity and thus prompted the national debate relating to social justice, which is occurring across the nation. Regarding higher education, Savage (2017) stated that “the Trump administration is planning to redirect resources of the Justice Department’s civil rights division towards investigating and suing universities over affirmative action admissions policies deemed to discriminate against White applicants” (p. A1). The future is yet to be determined under this administration, however, the 2018 elections could produce new directions.

In the past, diversity efforts focused on enhancing opportunities and protecting the rights of historically disadvantaged individuals or groups by federal regulations and administrative directives (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). Since the Reagan administration, this support for civil rights in all institutions receiving federal funds has enabled underrepresented persons to gain greater participation. Within some institutions of higher education, diversity focuses on achieving academic and institutional excellence while positioning American colleges and universities to compete and thrive in a global market (Williams, 2013). On the contrary, some institutions understand diversity and inclusion as a means to promote programming and activities to bring the campus community together (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). To achieve the desired goals of transformation, higher education institutions must plan with intentional mandates and have an understanding of the expected outcome (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017).

Understanding diversity and implementing the necessary strategies to produce transformational changes in higher education institutions takes courage, consistency, institutional commitment and possibly the CDO working in the appropriate vertical structure (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). Emerging changes in demographics will force higher education institutions to accept and embrace diversity and inclusion and all the advantages that will result (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). All stakeholders within the campus community may potentially have to acknowledge personal biases and be willing to have meaningful conversations to achieve the desired outcome (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017). Although the CDO will be responsible for providing strategic leadership over diversity and inclusion initiatives, senior leadership, students, staff, and faculty represent key constituents that must be aligned with the shared vision in order to achieve a successful transformation process (H. Smith, personal communication, October 18, 2017).

### **Chief Diversity Executives in Other Fields**

Regardless of the professional field, the historical roots of the CDO position originated from positions that were focused on affirmative action, equal opportunity employment, and minority affairs issues (Metzler, 2008; Petersen et al., 1978). These roles were first created in response to legal and political changes—not to enhance organizational excellence, but to avoid claims of discrimination and expensive lawsuits (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). From its inception, the role was designed to focus on the needs of women and African Americans. Since the cultural framework of diversity has shifted and institutions have developed an appreciation for the benefits of

comprehensive diversity and inclusion, the CDO position can be seen as one of the most prominent roles on campus (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

In the 1960s and 70s, businesses began establishing human resource positions to function as CDOs to address workforce development (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). These positions were created in response to federally sponsored, equal employment laws that prohibited workplace discrimination on the basis of race, age, disability, veteran status, color, religion, gender, and national origin (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Furthermore, these roles were established to facilitate organizational change by providing equal opportunities for members of diverse groups (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Companies created equal employment opportunities, affirmative action, and minority business development roles to change the profile of their organizations and to reflect the look of their consumers, labor force, and vendors (Metzler, 2008). Additionally, CDOs were hired to provide training for compliance and legislation and to assist in helping companies avoid lawsuits (Anand & Winters, 2008).

CDOs in the late 1970s and 80s were positioned in human resource offices, and their roles focused mainly on compliance and informing employees at their respective institutions of the affirmative action policies (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). They spearheaded efforts to make sure affirmative action and equal opportunity employment processes were followed regarding job searches, hiring processes, and other employment activities. In the late 1980s, *Workforce 2000*, a report published by the Hudson Institute, was released and revealed there would be an increase in the number of women and minority workers, causing companies to be more mindful and prepared for the ethnic and gender diversity that awaited them (Anand & Winter, 2008). Data from *Workforce 2000*



shifted the focus of companies from compliance over legal mandates and struggles with affirmative action hires to ways of assimilating new employees with the dominant group and any negative impact of the groups working together (Anand & Winter, 2008).

Between the mid-1980s and late 90s, there was an increase in the number of CDOs in corporate America as they were called upon to provide leadership to improve the diversity profile of organizations by recruiting and developing the talent of diverse individuals. However, the CDO role within business was not seen as a prominent role, and it offered no path toward career advancement; it was merely a low-level human resources position that was far down on the company's organization chart and one that lacked power (Dexter, 2010). In the eyes of many companies, affirmative action served its purpose because minorities and women were provided opportunities to level the imbalance that was tipped in favor of White men, but the goal of diversity was to provide an environment in which everyone could be seen and treated equally (Anand & Winters, 2008). As the 1990s neared an end, the focus of companies shifted from compliance, women, and minorities to concentrating on diversity training for all employees, valuing and respecting differences, and finding a balance between the intensity of the training (Anand & Winters, 2008). While the debate about which methods will best promote social justice within institutions, the country is now trending toward a more diverse population.

Dexter (2010) conducted a study to assess the roles of diversity executives among Fortune 500 companies. Of the 490 companies examined, 307 had senior-level executives specifically focused on diversity. These companies identified three developments that promote the importance of diversity:

- a growing recognition of the business value of diversity,
- its importance in innovation, and
- its role in creating a vibrant and productive company culture (Dexter, 2010).

These companies shifted their diversity focus as they were aware of the impact diverse leadership had on success in domestic and global markets (Dexter, 2010). As organizations realize the importance of diversity and the value of diverse perspectives, creating a culture in which diversity is a central component to the operation and success of their companies will become essential (Dexter, 2010).

Dexter (2010) found seven essential competencies that correlate to successful CDOs working in the field. The seven competencies are:

1. business acumen,
2. leadership,
3. change management
4. results orientation,
5. building and maintaining credibility,
6. ability to influence, and
7. commitment to diversity. (p.1)

It is important to note that successful CDOs consistently exhibit each of these behaviors, and those who do not, produce a variation of results (Dexter, 2010). A unique perspective provided by the Dexter study examined the role of CDOs as strategic business partners. The results revealed that CDOs interact within organizations in a multitude of valuable roles by understanding what the organization is doing and why, helping develop strategic

initiatives, holding others accountable, and assisting with how results are measured (Dexter, 2010).

Within health care, many organizations have turned to CDOs to promote inclusive workplaces. The role of the CDO in health care is to assist the organization in recruiting and retaining talent and to make sure the organization reflects the changing population it serves (Castellucci, 2017). CDOs in health care are becoming increasingly more popular as health systems have expanded their focus to the populations and communities they serve. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2044, more than half of the nation is expected to be made up of minority groups or races (Castellucci, 2017).

At Jefferson Health, a 13-hospital network based in Philadelphia, PA, inaugural CDO, Joseph Hill, wanted input and contributions from all 28,000 employees—regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or age—to improve the organization’s culture and to help each other appreciate their differences and move the organization forward (Castellucci, 2017). Hill believed the employees representing Jefferson Health should reflect the population being served, and having an understanding of their community would assist them in meeting the needs and challenges of those in the area. Similarly, Dr. Ronald Copeland, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, at Kaiser Permanente, in Oakland, CA promoted the value of their people and the unique perspectives they contributed as internal advisers and external ambassadors (Castellucci, 2017).

In 2015, the Institute for Diversity in Health Management (IDHM) conducted a national survey of hospitals and health systems to quantify the actions of organizations to promote diversity in leadership and governance and to reduce health care disparities.

Surveys were mailed to 6,338 CEOs at U.S. registered hospitals, and researchers received a 17.1% response rate (IDHM, 2015). Data collected were used to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in providing the highest level of care for patients. The researchers found cultural competency training and having a leadership and governance team that reflects the community being served facilitates engagement with the community and builds trust. Additionally, results revealed that hospitals have done very little to increase the diversity of their senior leadership, but they are making progress for mid-level positions (IDHM, 2015).

As health care organizations continue to serve increasingly diverse populations, the IDHM (2015) study shed light on the need to have more diversity among the senior leadership and shared governance because it is also important for administrations to reflect the population being served. CDOs' roles and responsibilities differ between higher education, business, and health care, but the organizational structure in which they operate ultimately determines their ability to facilitate transformational change. On college campuses, CDOs have become vital members of senior administrations, but they typically work in one of three vertical structures, and depending on the institution, the structure may not be conducive to the desired transformational change. In business and health care organizations, the numbers of CDOs are increasing, but the literature does not identify specific vertical structures in which business and health care organizations operate.

### **Williams and Wade-Golden Archetypes of Vertical Structure**

Achieving success as a CDO starts with having the appropriate resources within the position and the assigned responsibilities. As leaders of strategic diversity, Williams

and Wade-Golden (2013) posited that CDOs should be able to provide collegial, formal, and symbolic leadership while also developing lateral relationships, thinking integrative, and being charismatic. Regardless of institutional size, vertical structure is a key element of the CDO position, and it enables the CDO to provide strategic diversity leadership.

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) found that there is no direct link between institutional size and the vertical structures CDOs operate within. However, the vertical structure of the CDO speaks volumes about an institution's commitment to inclusive excellence, messages sent to the campus community, power configuration, and the institution determines what resources are allocated and coordinated.

When designing a CDO's role, most higher education institutions wonder about the best way to structure the position in order to produce the desired transformational change. The initial curiosity lends itself to various other questions about the proper reporting structure, span of control, and supervisory responsibilities. According to the chief diversity officer development framework (CDODF), vertical structure is a vital component to guarantee an effective CDO role and a strong campus diversity infrastructure (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). However, it is important to note that CDOs are not solely responsible for transforming an institution's culture, but the CDO is one of several key stakeholders who play an important role in advancing the institution's diversity agenda. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) acknowledged that when aligned with different dimensions of the CDODF, an array of vertical structure designs can provide solutions, but failure to align a structure with the CDODF will make it almost impossible for the CDO to provide integrative leadership.

When higher education institutions are deciding on the role of their CDO and which vertical structure will produce the desired institutional transformation, many factors contribute to finalizing the decision. The main factors include the institution's diversity and inclusion goals, the values of senior administrators and individuals in shared governance positions, the geographic and cultural setting of the institution, and the social context of the institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). According to the CDODF, the institution's vision for diversity and inclusion should guide its decisions about vertical design. Based on what is important to the institution, those values will determine the role, budget, reporting relationships, and vertical authority of the CDO position (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) recommended that an institution's diversity infrastructure should be directly aligned with its long-term goals for diversity and inclusion. If an institution values infusing diversity within all aspects of the student experience and improving retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students, those values should be reflected within its diversity structure (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). In order for an institution to build an effective diversity infrastructure, it requires a financial commitment to provide the necessary resources. Institutional values and commitment to diversity are noticeable, daily, regarding vertical structure, based on the CDO's involvement with committees and boards and who makes the major decisions when an issue arises that is under the responsibility of multiple leaders (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

The values put forward by senior leadership play a significant role in providing strategic diversity leadership, the diversity planning process, and holding others on

campus accountable for their role in moving the diversity and inclusion agenda forward. It is possible for transformational changes and the effectiveness of the CDO to be disrupted upon hiring a new president or provost who has a different commitment to diversity or a desire to alter the organizational structure to fit his or her leadership style (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). These challenges typically result in diversity and inclusion efforts becoming stagnant and scarce (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

All institutions are shaped by their historical, political, and social status quo, which makes up the fabric of the institutions. Geographic location and cultural setting are also essential components of developing an institution's diversity and inclusion capabilities. The race and ethnicity of students, staff, and faculty have a big impact on shaping the diversity efforts at any institution. Current diversity and inclusion efforts derive from the foundation built during the civil rights movement (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Historical efforts revolved around the rights of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders students, but most institutions now embrace diversity from a wide perspective including matters of race, ethnicity, LBGTQ, disabilities, gender, and military status.

Leon (2014) used a multi-case method to examine three CDOs working in PWIs in the midwestern United States. Participants were identified through a review of the institution's websites, organizational structures, job descriptions, and membership status with the NADOHE. The CDOs were selected based on their respective institutions working on a diversity strategic plan at the time of the study. These CDOs were preferred because they represented each of the vertical structures. Leon's study of CDOs at PWIs in the Midwest revealed:

- all three were inaugural CDOs at their respective institutions,
- all three were from underrepresented groups
- all three had previously been faculty members,
- two had previously held CDO positions prior to their employment during Leon's research study, and
- only one CDO was considered a senior-level administrator.

Leon (2014) observed that the institutions served large student populations, but the one school with the newest CDO had the highest percentage of students and faculty of color. Based on the archetype of vertical structure being used and the transformational change strategies for education, communication, symbolic, research, accountability, entrepreneurship, recruitment, and diversity scholarship, "there were only two categories (educational and communication strategies) where all CDO models executed a similar number of tasks" (Leon, 2014, p. 81). One recommendation for future research was to study how the configuration of a CDO model can support or prevent the implementation of diversity strategies (Leon, 2014).

Stanley's (2014) self-examination of CDO models and strategies at Texas A&M University revealed that operating in a unit-based model has many advantages. She was given the freedom to design her own reporting structure in which she decided to report to the provost who had responsibility for overseeing the chief academic officer but had a dotted line to the president (Stanley, 2014, p. 103). Based on Stanley's institutional rank, she could influence diversity goals, accountability measures, faculty hiring and retention, student recruitment and retention, course and curriculum development, climate, faculty and staff equity, and assessment. Her appointment to the president's cabinet enabled her



to develop meaningful working relationships with the president, provost, and other administrators on campus (Stanley, 2014).

Stanley (2014) found that there was no direct connection between having a staff to help with the CDO's responsibilities and successfully meeting the demands of the position. Stanley suggested that personal experience, campus climate, differences in roles and responsibilities, and working toward standards of professional practice and competence help CDOs develop strategies for institutional change and help CDOs address questions of why and how. The researcher acknowledged that recruitment and scholarship strategies will continue to be the focus of higher education institutions, which will present opportunities for CDOs to produce transformational changes. Stanley (2014) recommended future study to examine the impact CDOs have on other stakeholders as the beneficiaries of their efforts.

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) found that 90% of the CDOs using the portfolio-divisional model were employed at institutions with at least 10,000 students. Of those officers, 42% held titles of vice president, vice provost, or vice chancellor, and 28% were identified as associate vice president, associate vice provost, or associate vice chancellor (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Large universities often have more robust reporting structures that allow for integration across disciplines and departments. Stanley (2014) found that operating out of the unit-based model provided the "opportunity to bring diversity at higher levels of discussion within the institutional hierarchy" (p.103), but it is important to remember that all CDOs will not necessarily have a similar situation.

As a follow up to their 2011 study about the changing role of CDOs, Witt/Kieffer (2014) conducted another study focused on CDO succession planning. Participants were recruited from public and private higher education institutions. Sixty-nine chief diversity executives answered questions about whether CDOs and their organizations were grooming successors and taking steps to ensure continuity upon the CDOs' eventual departures. This 2014 publication was unique in the sense that it highlighted what CDOs must do to prepare future leaders and ensure the sustainability of the CDO position.

Witt/Kieffer (2014) acknowledged that CDOs mentor other colleagues, but they also suggested that succession planning for CDOs is not getting the appropriate level of attention to ensure smooth transitions from one CDO to the next. Additionally, the investigators found succession planning was done on an as-needed basis, but 19% of the institutions had strategies linked to their succession plan to continue their long-term strategic vision. According to one CDO in the Witt/Kieffer (2014) study, "with the nation's changing demographics and the globalizing of the workforce, it becomes even more imperative to have the CDO position. Diversity and inclusion success is not a static goal; it is ongoing progress and not a fixed achievement" (Witt/Kieffer, 2014, p. 7). Another CDO stated, "Diversity is more important than ever before, especially with a projected decline in racial demographics entering in the college pipeline. Success from a numerical standpoint isn't indicative of an inclusive or embracing climate" (Witt/Kieffer, 2014, p. 7). One limitation of the Witt/Kieffer (2014) study mentioned that the expanding role of CDOs has provided CDOs with more opportunities for career advancement, thus elevating the importance of having a formal succession plan process.

The quotes from the CDOs in the Witt/Kieffer (2014) study demonstrate their understanding of the demographic changes in America and how important the CDO role is in providing leadership for others to fully understand the transformation that must take place to accommodate this new wave of students. With America's changing demographics, colleges are serving larger numbers of diverse students, requiring many cultural changes on campuses. The CDO position represents a significant leadership role if an institution is committed to diversity, inclusion, and transformational change; failure to include this position among senior administration could result in turmoil and delayed response to the changing demographics, thus inviting campus unrest.

This chapter provided a literature review of the epicenter of transformational change, of the future of education in America, of CDOs working in other fields, and of Williams and Wade-Golden's (2013) archetypes of vertical structure in order to better understand how transformational changes are facilitated. The researcher examined the topics necessary to better understand the importance of organizational structure and its impact on the CDO's ability to produce transformational changes and a more inclusive environment.

### **Summary**

CDOs are increasingly playing a vital role in leading transformational change within various institutions. However, every institution does not identify the specific structure its CDO will operate within—which creates challenges for CDOs to be most effective. The research from this review suggests that CDOs tend to be dedicated professionals with a personal connection to diversity; CDOs are interested in preparing their organizations for changing demographics; the CDO position has evolved from an

entry-level position to a senior administration position; and the success of CDOs may be determined by institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and the archetype of vertical structure that the CDO operates within. Although CDO positions are becoming more common in numerous professional fields, there is not a long track record of their success. Therefore, the information shared thus far led the researcher to conduct a study to further understand how the archetypes of vertical structure and institutional commitment to inclusive excellence impacts CDOs' abilities to facilitate transformational change. The central questions remain:

1. What is the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?
2. What is the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

This study addressed these questions directly as it explored how the different archetypes of vertical structure are related to CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational changes. To date, no specific hypotheses have been generated in the literature about the most-effective archetype of vertical structure.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology**

A more diverse student body has forced higher education institutions to confront their anxiety over racial and social differences and deal with the realities of inequality in American society (Hurtado, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), between the fall of 1976 and the fall of 2014,

The percentage of White students fell from 84 to 58 percent, while the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 4 to 17 percent, Asian/Pacific Islander rose from 2 to 7 percent, Black students increased from 10 to 14 percent, and American Indian/Alaska Native rose from 0.7 to 0.8 percent. (NCES, 2016, p. 478).

These demographic shifts necessitate that educational institutions consider the ways in which they prepare and support a more diverse student population. Providing strategic diversity leadership, CDOs have been identified as the key administrators in higher education to pioneer overcoming the challenge of change and campus transformation for more inclusive environments.

Various studies have examined CDOs working in vertical structures and the impact they have on their respective campuses; however, the nature of the relationship between vertical structures and producing transformational change has not been examined empirically (Leon, 2014; Stanley, 2014; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, 2013; Wilson, 2013; Witt/Kieffer, 2011, 2014). Scholars have researched institutional commitment, but that obligation varies by the institution, and it may be the most

important factor. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) developed a theoretical framework and the archetypes of vertical structure to warrant a strong campus diversity infrastructure and provide the CDO with the best opportunity to achieve success with institutional support.

According to the Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) theory, the CDODF, and specifically the archetypes of vertical structure, are vital for CDOs to be effective in producing changes leading to inclusive excellence. However, for the purposes of this research, the investigator sought to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change and the relationship between CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

The process of transforming a college or university to achieve inclusive excellence is a lengthy and engaging process. Higher education institutions have the responsibility to provide opportunities and experiences for all stakeholders to interact with diverse populations and develop the skills and abilities necessary to be productive citizens in a global society. This responsibility compels institutions to create environments that model the society in which they are preparing students to enter. The position of CDO was created to assist in this process by strategically implementing academic, administrative, cultural, and social activities and events that enable the campus community to achieve the desired campus transformation. These officers also serve to facilitate the process by involving all members of the campus community.

## **Problem Statement**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Furthermore, the researcher sought to better understand the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study assumed that the changes occurring at SUNY institutions will happen in much the same way at other institutions, given similar administrative procedures. It also assumed similar variations in institutional commitment to inclusive excellence. It is important to note that since mandates from chancellors' offices directs campuses to respond to diversity needs, it is more likely in the future that CDOs will be given proper authority and administrative support.

Understanding that all CDOs operate within some structure, this research compared the structures CDOs operate within to determine which vertical structure best describes the context in which they work and if that vertical structure relates to their performance in facilitating transformational changes. An important question relevant to this study is, *What is the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perception of their performance in facilitating transformational change as manifested in a complete transformational change?* Throughout the study, the researcher remained sensitive to testing the assumption that change of the transformative type requires a certain level of institutional commitment to the work of the CDO.

The number of CDO appointments at colleges and universities has increased over the past decade, yet many institutions are still experiencing issues related to diversity and inclusion. The goal of this research is to understand why some campuses are successful in diversity implementation and others are not. CDOs can provide strategic diversity leadership, but transforming an institution is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Although the literature discusses the importance of defining the CDO role, organizational design, institutional rank, reporting relationships, and vertical structures, a gap remains in how we understand the organizational place of CDOs and the prospects for their effectiveness in facilitating transformational change.

### **Research Context**

The research context and location for this study was the SUNY higher education system. The SUNY system comprises 64 institutions: 34 four-year institutions, 14 university centers, 14 university colleges, and 7 technology colleges as well as 30 community colleges (SUNY, 2017). State universities are located in the Northern, Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern Regions of New York State, enabling students to continue their education on small or large campuses, in urban or rural settings from Buffalo to Long Island (SUNY, 2017).

This study was conducted with nine CDOs, and the researcher identified the CDOs working in the unit-based, collaborative, and portfolio-divisional models or archetypes of vertical structure within the SUNY system. Although the SUNY higher education system employs a statewide CDO, the multi-institutional model was not examined in this study because there is only one CDO who operates within that archetype.



The researcher reviewed institutional organizational charts to determine which institutions employed a CDO; however, if there was something systematically different at each institution, there was nothing in the literature that suggested the strategies differed based on location. At the time of this study, 37 of the 64 institutions employed an individual to oversee their diversity and inclusion efforts with a range of titles and responsibilities.

The SUNY system was selected for this study because it represents one of the largest higher education systems in the United States. Furthermore, the system's administration supports placing intentional resources in planning for a more diverse student population (SUNY, 2017). Under the terms of SUNY's September 2015 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, all institutions in the system are required to have strategic plans. Additionally, the policy emphasizes using leadership search firms that have demonstrated they value diversity and customized cultural competency training (SUNY, 2017). Based on this policy, SUNY has emerged as a leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion planning and preparation.

The literature surrounding CDOs and the archetypes of vertical structure in the SUNY system was undetectable to the researcher. However, findings from other studies are intended to generate a hypothesis about the efficacy of CDOs in facilitating transformational changes. By conducting this study within the SUNY system, the researcher sought to better understand the efficacy of CDOs and how SUNY institutions demonstrate their commitment to transformational change through strategic practices. Thus, this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in

facilitating transformational change as well as the relationship between CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perception of their performance in facilitating transformational changes that produce inclusive excellence was the goal.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?
2. What is the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

### **Research Design**

This study used a qualitative design to better understand the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change and CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. A qualitative method was chosen because it enabled the researcher to collect data, analyze it, and articulate the perceptions of participants in a manner that provides valuable insight for others (Creswell, 2014). The use of a pre-interview survey was beneficial as it allowed the investigator to gather preliminary information to maximize time during face-to-face interviews. Conducting semistructured interviews in the natural environment of the participants assisted the researcher in

collecting data that were genuine because the CDOs were able to maintain a level of comfort in a familiar setting (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative methods are frequently used when researching CDOs because their personal and professional experiences provide a valuable understanding about the positions they hold. Using this approach enabled the researcher to deeply analyze, interpret, validate, and present the data in a unique way specifying potential results of the study. Qualitative research also allowed the researcher the opportunity to make comments about the role of the CDOs and the strategies they used to produce results (Creswell, 2014).

The CDOs were informed of the study and invited to participate through an introductory letter (Appendix A) that was accompanied by a consent form (Appendix B) and a pre-interview survey (Appendix C). The introductory letter detailed the significance of the study and how it could positively impact their work and the work of others. The consent form educated the participants about their rights as contributors to the study, and the pre-interview survey enabled the researcher to gather preliminary information prior to the interviews. Based on the number of responses received from the initial inquiry, the letter and additional forms were sent to the responding possible participants in two iterations. One week after the letters were received by each CDO, the researcher sent a follow-up email to inquire if the possible participants had received the initial letter and, if so, the letter asked them to respond with their willingness to participate by a specific date. After sending the follow-up email, the researcher was prepared to make phone calls to discuss the importance of this research and its impact on establishing new standards for inclusive excellence as well as operational paradigms.

## **Research Participants**

Prior to this study being conducted, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John Fisher College to conduct the study and received signed consent forms from all participating CDOs. The researcher produced documentation for the IRB, dissertation committee, and the participants detailing information about the procedures being implemented for the purposes of this study. The researcher electronically delivered and collected from all participants a signed informed consent form specifying the name of the researcher, the sponsoring institution, permission to electronically record the CDO interviews, an understanding that excerpts from the interviews may be included in the dissertation, the procedures to protect participants' identities, the reassurance that the participants could withdraw from participating at any time, and the contact information of individuals to communicate with if any issues surfaced (Creswell, 2014). Information obtained from pre-interview surveys and interviews will remain confidential and stored in a locked cabinet in the home office of the researcher, and 5 years after publication of this work, all information will be destroyed.

For this study, the researcher solicited participation from 26 CDOs working in the SUNY higher education system. Through reviewing organizational charts, the researcher worked to identify their structure in hopes of accurately detecting unit-based, collaborative, and portfolio-divisional models. This research focused on the unit-based, collaborative, and portfolio-divisional models because they are the most commonly used models within institutions of higher education. In the pre-interview survey, the participants were asked to identify their name, institution, job title, whether or not they

were the inaugural CDO at their institutions, and the amount of time they had been in their positions. This preliminary information assisted the researcher in gaining an understanding of each participant, and it was instrumental in developing the semistructured interview and follow-up questions.

For this descriptive study, the researcher looked for stratifications in identifying the participants. The CDOs approached were from institutions that enrolled under 5,000 undergraduate students, between 5,000 and 10,000 undergraduate students, and over 10,000 undergraduate students with a focus on the archetype of vertical structure within which the CDOs operated. By identifying the CDOs based on the schools' institutional student undergraduate enrollment, the researcher was able to represent the full breadth of the SUNY institutions. From those institutional groupings, the researcher intentionally reached out to the CDOs with the lowest undergraduate student enrollment, the highest undergraduate student enrollment, and various other CDOs in each enrollment category were identified.

Of the CDOs identified, the researcher conducted semistructured interviews with the expectation to discover at least two CDOs who were working in the unit-based, collaborative, and portfolio-divisional models. Based on the preliminary nature of this study, no hypotheses have been generated at this time. This study does not address whether or not enrollment status had an impact on the archetypes of vertical structure and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

Through the preliminary searches, and based on the outcomes the CDOs had been asked to achieve, the researcher hoped to identify five CDOs who were working in each of the three models. While the ability of the CDOs to facilitate transformational changes

at their institutions may have varied, their successes and failures may have ultimately been determined by their vertical structure, their ability to operate within it, and the institutions' commitment to inclusive excellence. A critical part of the analysis in this study was based on the performance of the CDOs in these archetypes in relation to the desired outcomes.

The researcher examined CDO job descriptions, institutional organizational charts, and institutional strategic plans for diversity and inclusion to identify five CDOs who were working in each archetype of the vertical structure. By gathering this information, the researcher was able to make an educated guess regarding within which archetype of vertical structure each CDO operated. By identifying five CDOs working in each of the three archetypes of vertical structure, it was easier for the researcher to establish the relationship between the organizational structure and functionality of the CDO. The researcher was intentional about not including CDOs who worked in a hybrid model or who had other responsibilities outside of their CDO role, however, the number of CDOs willing to participate ultimately determined the CDOs included in this study.

The researcher requested participation from each CDO with a formal letter and a follow-up email. The CDOs interested in participating in this study were asked to complete and return the consent form and pre-interview survey before scheduling a day and time for the researcher to visit their campuses for face-to-face interviews. After completing the interviews, the CDOs received a thank you email, and they were assured they would receive a copy of the results of the study.

## **Instruments Used in Data Collection**

The primary instrument in this qualitative study was the semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews were selected as they enabled the investigator to obtain the desired information from the CDOs in an organized, thorough manner (Creswell, 2014). Each CDO was given the opportunity to respond, in depth, to four multifaceted questions. Following the initial questions, there were opportunities for the researcher/interviewer to follow up with requests for clarification or elaboration, specific illustrations, or additional probing questions (Creswell, 2014). Using this format enabled the researcher to acquire information deemed pertinent to the research questions, while personalizing the interview for each respondent to uncover the CDO's perception of his or her individual unique experience.

Interview question 1 sought to understand the institution through the eyes of the CDO. This question was relevant as it provided an introduction for the interview and enabled the researcher to determine what the CDO perceived was important to know. Interview question 2 looked for clarification about the relationships the CDOs had built with other stakeholders within their community and the organizational structure in which they operated. This question aligns with Research Question 1, and it allowed the investigator to focus additional questions on gaps in the response from the CDOs.

Interview question 3 referred to the institutional commitment to inclusive excellence. This question directly aligned with Research Question 2 and allowed the investigator to formulate probing questions based on any information that may have been missing from the initial CDOs' responses. Interview question 4 spoke to the strategies that the CDOs had implemented or planned to implement in an effort to produce

transformational changes at their respective institutions. Responses to this question assisted the researcher in identifying the appropriate transformational change strategies outlined in Table 4.1.

In preparation for the SUNY CDO interviews, the researcher conducted three mock interviews: one interview was with the researchers' executive mentor assigned throughout the program, and two interviews were with CDOs from private institutions. The mock interviews were designed to assist the researcher in developing skills as an interviewer, in coding themes, and in practice, analyzing, and categorizing themes for the narrative analysis. Additionally, the mock interviews were used to remove *Now what?* moments in the official interviews, and they enabled the researcher to refine specific interview and follow-up questions. The researcher selected three mock interviews to provide credibility for the researcher, prompting the researcher about whether it was necessary to adjust the research questions, and enabling the researcher to gauge if there were changes that had to be implemented before conducting the official CDO interviews.

### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

The researcher analyzed data through the use of audio tapes and written transcripts from the CDO interviews. Prior to sending the audio tapes for transcription, the researcher assigned letters and numbers to correspond to the archetypes of vertical structure for each CDO to safeguard the participants' identities and ensure confidentiality. After listening to the recorded audio tapes, they were compared to the written transcripts to ensure accuracy. The researcher also coded the data from the CDO interviews based on the themes identified through the CDOs' perceptions of the five practices of exemplary leadership.



Once the data were gathered through the CDO interviews, the researcher applied a narrative analysis to tell the unique stories of the participants. Narrative analysis is rooted in literary theory, and it relates to cultural and social justice studies; however, social scientists have used it to better understand the social world and describe the data produced from human exchanges (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). Various scholars from different disciplines have used narrative analysis as the norm to organize human interactions (Bruner, 1991; Earthy & Cronin, 2008; Schafer, 1980). Earthy and Cronin (2008) stated that a narrative analysis can be applied for various data collection and analysis including autobiographies, life narratives, the sociology of storytelling, and oral history.

Through the use of these five elements of narrative analysis: attending, telling, transcribing, analyzing, and reading, the researcher produced a thoughtful story based on the perceptions and experiences of the CDOs. Attending refers to the presence of the researcher during the interviews as observing nonverbal cues and mannerisms that may lead the investigator to shift the focus of follow-up questions. Telling encourages participants to tell their stories based on the researcher using open-ended questions that promote narrative responses (Riessman, 1993). Transcribing describes the process of rewriting data gathered during interviews in preparation to begin analyzing and coding the data. Analyzing is characterized by the understanding the researcher gained through searching for deeper meanings, patterns, and themes of the interview transcripts. Reading involves those individuals who read this study as they received material that had been screened by the researcher. With respect to the narrative analysis, the researcher remained sensitive to personal biases and sought to inform the readers of all perceptions shared by

the CDOs as their viewpoints may have provided valuable insight relevant to this research.

Narrative analysis enabled the researcher to investigate the stories of the participants, organize and make sense of their experiences, and tell the appropriate story for each CDO (Riessman, 1993). Furthermore, narrative analysis provided the best approach for extracting the perceptions of the CDOs in their performances of facilitating transformational changes.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined facilitating transformational change as the desired outcome of the transformed institution based on the structures within which the CDOs operated. Informed by Kouzes and Posner's (2012) work regarding the five practices of exemplary leadership, the following terms were defined by the researcher: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, encouraging the heart, and enabling others to act. Table 4.2 illustrates the five practices of exemplary leadership and their definitions.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change and the relationship between the CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment and their performance in facilitating institutional change in the SUNY higher education system. Nationally, the number of CDO appointments has increased since 2007, but there is no evidence linking transformational changes on campus to these administrative roles. The ability to produce inclusive excellence varies among CDOs, but operating in the appropriate archetype of vertical structure may

provide the necessary foundation for CDOs to achieve the desired goals outlined in their institutions' strategic plans. Through the use of a pre-interview survey and semistructured interviews, the researcher was able to generate a hypothesis about the performance of CDOs in facilitating transformational change through this qualitative study.

This study contributes to the increasing body of literature pertaining to CDOs while providing valuable insight for current and aspiring CDOs as well as colleges, universities, hospitals, or corporations considering employing a person in that position. The perceptions and professional experiences of the participating CDOs provided qualitative data pertaining to the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment, and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure (Table 4.1), institutional commitments to inclusive excellence, and the perceptions of the CDOs' performances in facilitating transformational change. By investigating these relationships, the researcher sought to better understand how the participating CDOs used the five practices of exemplary leadership (Table 4.2) to facilitate transformational change on their respective campuses. The researcher also desired to comprehend what impact the organizational structure CDOs operated within had on their efforts to produce inclusive excellence. Furthermore, the investigator desired to show evidence of the commitment of SUNY institutions to inclusive excellence and provide insight from higher education administrators to other professionals working in the diversity arena.

Table 4.1 highlights the characteristics of the three archetypes of vertical structure: collaborative, unit-based, portfolio-divisional that were identified with each CDO.

Table 4.2 illustrates the five practices of exemplary leadership and the definitions used to identify to what extent, if any, each CDO implemented those practices within his or her efforts to facilitate transformational change.

Table 4.1

*Chief Diversity Officers: Archetypes of Vertical Structure*

Model	Description
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Characterized by the CDO, possibly another fulltime staff member, a shared assistant or student workers working collaborative with other offices to implement initiatives</li> <li>▪ They are restricted in their ability to hire additional staff, manage, or assess the work of others who directly report to them.</li> <li>▪ Depends heavily on their ability to impact change and build relationships based on their personality.</li> <li>▪ Based on inadequate support and various demands to participate in various capacities on campus, limiting the responsibility of CDOs and focusing their attention on specific matters may be more beneficial.</li> </ul>
Unit-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thoughtful and developed as it encompasses a staff of other diversity professionals, administrative support, and specialists in various disciplines.</li> <li>▪ CDOs in this model have the opportunity to generate institutional changes in a variety of ways.</li> <li>▪ May not lead the institution’s diversity agenda, but have the luxury of increased staff, bigger budgets, and the flexibility to be better situated if the task is assigned.</li> <li>▪ Building meaningful vertical and horizontal personal relationships on campus to assist with buy-in and support from colleagues is a major component of this model.</li> <li>▪ Planning and implementing diversity programs and initiatives is more likely than the collaborative model, but it is typically done through collaborations with other diversity units throughout the institution.</li> <li>▪ CDOs have no direct reporting structure in place from other offices, which limits their span of authority.</li> </ul>
Portfolio-Divisional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporates aspects of the collaborative and unit-based models, but provides the CDO with the vertical authority that the others lack.</li> <li>▪ Empowers CDOs because of their relationships with direct reports as well as senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other campus stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Requires the CDO to change perceptions of what the norm has always been and be prepared to deal with criticism.</li> <li>▪ The least commonly used mode of the three, and it is typical at institutions that enroll 10,000 or more students.</li> </ul>

Table 4.2

*Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*

Practice	Definition
Modeling the Way	The CDO models the way for others by clarifying values, finding their voice, affirming shared values, and setting the example by aligning actions with shared values.
Inspiring a Shared Vision	The CDO inspires others to envision a future of imagining exciting, ennobling possibilities, and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenging the Process	The CDO challenges processes by searching for opportunities to seize initiatives, looking outward for innovative ways to improve, and experimenting and taking risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experiences.
Encouraging the Heart	The CDO encourages the heart by recognizing contributions and showing appreciation for individual excellence and by celebrating the victories of creating a spirit of community.
Enabling Others to Act	The CDO enable others to act by fostering collaboration to build trust, facilitating relationships, and strengthening others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.

*Note.* Adapted from “The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations,” by J. Kouzes and B. Posner, 2012. Copyright 2012 by Jossey-Bass.

Changing demographics have presented colleges and universities with a serious problem of accommodating and acknowledging the responsibility of higher education institutions to strategically address matters of diversity and inclusion. The research questions for this study were designed to better understand the complexities associated with diversity leadership and transforming institutions in response to the increases in diverse student enrollment. In exploring these relationships, the researcher interviewed nine CDOs who were employed within the SUNY higher education system throughout the fall of 2018. Rather than using names to protect their anonymity, each participant was assigned a letter and a number, which corresponded to his or her archetype of vertical structure and the order in which their structure was identified, respectively.

Table 4.3 displays the CDOs’ pseudonyms, whether or not they were the inaugural CDO at their institution, the amount of time they had already served in their CDO role, and the archetype of vertical structure within which they operated.

Table 4.3

*Chief Diversity Officer Pre-Interview Survey*

Pseudonym	Inaugural Position	Amount of Time in Position	Archetype of Vertical Structure
PD1	Yes	1 Year	Portfolio-Divisional
C1	Yes	1 Year	Collaborative
C2	No	11 Years	Collaborative
PD2	No	10 Months	Portfolio-Divisional
UB1	No	2 Years	Unit-Based
C3	Yes	2 Years	Collaborative
C4	Yes	1.5 Years	Collaborative
C5	No	6 years	Collaborative
PD3	No	11 Months	Portfolio-Divisional

**Data Analysis and Findings**

**Research question 1:** What is the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs’ perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

Based on the *September 2015 Policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (Zimpher, 2015) according to the SUNY Chancellor and approved by its Board of Trustees, there is a requirement that all SUNY schools employ a CDO with specific designated assignments including:

- A direct reporting relationship to the president or provost
- Serve as a member of the president’s cabinet

- Work collaboratively with others to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Serve as a member of the state wide network of CDOs.

However, within the policy, there is no declaration regarding the organizational structure in which the CDO should operate. As each institution decides which organizational structure is best for their CDO in providing leadership to achieve the goals outlined in their strategic plan, this dynamic may have a direct impact on the CDO's ability to facilitate transformational change.

After gathering information about how each CDO viewed his or her institution, specific roles and responsibilities, goals outlined in the strategic plan, and how they navigated their respective campuses, the investigator was able to identify the archetype of vertical structure in which each CDO operated. Regardless of the amount of time any of the CDOs had been in their roles, whether or not they were an inaugural CDO, or if they held a dual position, all the CDOs articulated clear perceptions about the relationship between the archetype of vertical structure they operated within and their performance in facilitating transformational change.

This section is divided by the archetypes of vertical structure and the five practices of exemplary leadership to describe the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Based on the CDOs' experiences and perceptions, the researcher was able to identify the five CDOs who operated within the collaborative model, one who operating within the unit-based model, and three who operated within the portfolio-divisional model.



## **Collaborative Archetype of Vertical Structure**

Research suggests the collaborative model is the most commonly used archetype of all the models (Leon, 2014; Stanley, 2014; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). This research supports that notion because the majority of the CDOs participating in this study operated within this model. Moreover, it was interesting to learn how this archetype of vertical structure influenced what practices of exemplary leadership the CDOs were able to engage in and which ones they were less effective in employing.

**Modeling the way.** Operating within the collaborative limited most of the CDOs in their ability to influence senior administrators, although some were effective with faculty, staff, and students. Assuming that the CDOs had a clear understanding of the institutions' values and worked to affirm those values, it was difficult for most to find their voices and set examples by aligning actions with shared values. Given the restrictions associated with functioning within this archetype, most of the CDOs relied on their ability to develop meaningful horizontal and vertical relationships, finding their voices with specific stakeholders, and discussing the possibilities of aligning actions with shared values. However, C5 was effective using this structure to model the way, explaining,

It's how we make certain that we prepare everyone to contribute to the mission of the organization, because it impacts employee longevity, it impacts the way the institution is perceived from the external audience, as well as internal. My role is to make certain that long after I'm gone, the ways in which I've done things can remain. Again, making certain that the overall organizational structure embraces diversity but also in a way that manifests itself by respect. (C5)

C6 experienced some level of success in modeling the way because this CDO was empowered to find his/her voice and navigate complex challenges that were not always embraced by others. C6 stated:

They were very, very controversial, and as the Chief Diversity Officer, I was in the center of this. It was my job to navigate all the complexities for that educational program. The president of the university embraced this. From the start, he promoted it, he attended the panel. He was on board. He was 100% on board.

Given the opportunity to affirm shared values and set the example by aligning actions with shared values, C6 encompassed the college's traditional values and advocated for others to support a project that exposed the real-life conditions that occurred on college campuses. The CDOs experiencing success in modeling the way credited the unwavering support from senior leadership as the reason they are able to set examples by aligning actions with shared values.

**Inspiring a shared vision.** The nature of the collaborative model lends itself to CDOs inspiring a shared vision, but the evidence did not always reflect that. Due to the limitations of this archetype, the CDOs depended heavily on their individual abilities to build strong working relationships by envisioning a future of possibilities and recruiting others with common visions and shared aspirations. C1 explained:

It's harder for people to criticize something they've been a part of. If folks feel as if you have consulted with them and they have a voice, then they will be more supportive and engaging when it comes to delivering the product. I developed *In the Know* with the CDO, it was a document that morphed into a blog. It's

cataloging our success from inclusion to diversity to equity and who's who. It's a way to shine a light on champions besides the CDO so people can know that diversity really is happening all over the institution.

Some of the CDOs operating in this structure spoke about the efforts and leadership practices they tried to attempt to create an inclusive campus environment for all stakeholders while others focused on communication in general. C5 explained:

Anyone who answers my phone should understand and treat the internal person as decently as they would the external. It impacts the way the institution is perceived from the external audience, as well as the internal. Making certain the overall organizational structure embraces the diversity, but also in a way that manifests itself by respect.

**Challenging the process.** It was rare that functioning within the collaborative model that the CDOs were able to challenge the process. For most of the CDOs, there were opportunities to communicate their opinions, but this structure did not typically provide enough resources or support to look outward for innovative ways to improve, taking risks, and generating small wins or learning experiences without being seen as threatening to the institutions' cultures or other stakeholders. Additionally, there were times when the CDOs' efforts were stifled when attempting to challenge policies and practices that had governed their institutions over long periods of time. However, C1 was effective in challenging the process by focusing on matters of compliance.

I have spoken to the purchasing people, and I asked if I could communicate with some of our contractors to let them know our commitment to diversity and how they could contribute to helping us send that message. People didn't expect me to

say, “Are we working with minority-owned, women-owned, better-owned businesses, and not only are we, [but] do we have a list of those we generally use?”

C1 was strategic in challenging the process by being educated on fiscal matters, communicating with the proper stakeholders, and understanding institutional policies. C1 explained:

Compliance or story. I’m going to tie it down to compliance, but I’m also going to tie it to story. And the story is that we’ve done a really great job since my hire of trying to illuminate the possibility of diversifying not only our student body but our workforce as well. The compliance piece is that we have a Title IX obligation.

This archetype enabled C1 to question the college’s purchasing strategies, processes for reporting internships and externships, and educating the campus community about stakeholders’ individual responsibilities and the potential consequences for failing to comply with policy. Likewise, C5 had been effective in using this archetype to challenge the process in relation to employment processes.

I challenge every search committee, and if I see something, whether it’s through the hiring process, the promotional process, or the ways in which we tell folks to leave, my role is to make certain that we have a defensible argument for what we do.

By keeping the best interest of the institution at the forefront, C5 worked to understand what practices added value to the institution and which ones contributed to the institution not achieving the desired goals.

**Encouraging the heart.** The relationship between the collaborative model and encouraging the heart was essential for the CDOs in their efforts to facilitate transformational change. The CDOs operating within this archetype depended on encouraging the heart as their most effective exemplary leadership practice. “Diversity is not a person. It’s not a destination. It’s not a program. It’s an interdependent ecosystem that requires everyone’s participation. So while you think it’s not related to you, it is related to you” C4 had reminded all stakeholders consistently. Through recognizing the contributions of others and showing appreciation for individual excellence, these CDOs applied encouraging the heart in all efforts to transforming their respective campuses.

**Enabling others to act.** Operating in this archetype facilitated relationships with students, staff, and faculty, and it fostered collaboration to build trust. Furthermore, this archetype provided the CDOs with the authority to strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence. However, this structure proved to be ineffective with senior administrators because some of the CDOs experienced challenges when trying to build trust and collaborative relationships at the highest levels of the institution. Depending on the institutions’ commitment to inclusive excellence and having a CDO, there were times when the CDOs struggled in enabling other to act based on previous efforts that produced minimal results.

### **Unit-Based Archetype of Vertical Structure**

Research suggests that the unit-based archetype is typically paired with the collaborative model to create a hybrid model for leading change (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). This current study supports those findings because one CDO often combined the unit-based archetype with characteristics of the collaborative model. Based

on the characteristics of this archetype, the CDO operating within this structure may have had more ability to facilitate change than those working in the collaborative model. Contrary to some previous research, the researcher found that the CDO functioning in this hybrid model was offered additional resources to provide more direct leadership over diversity initiatives on his/her campus. While having additional resources assisted in achieving some goals, it was not enough to produce the desired outcomes of all goals outlined in the college's strategic plan.

**Modeling the way.** The researcher discovered that operating in the unit-based (hybrid) archetype provided minimal opportunities for CDO UB1 to model the way. However, UB1 was often effective in modeling the way with some senior administrators, and UB1 continued working to establish collaborative relationships with faculty and staff.

UB1 articulated:

When it comes to faculty and staff, I have to take more of a collaborative role and I have to work with other departments who will help me achieve my goals. For example, the diversity strategic plan was very much a collaboration between departments.

It was difficult at times for UB1 to model the way by aligning actions with values. As UB1 understood the components associated with demonstrating this exemplary leadership practice, modeling the way was articulated to the researcher as a work in progress due to other responsibilities being of higher importance.

**Inspiring a shared vision.** The results of this study reveal there is no direct relationship between operating in this archetype and inspiring a shared vision. Moreover, UB1 described inspiring a shared vision as a challenging task. UB1 explained:

It feels like you're the only one who cares about it, even though it's not necessarily true. Different offices have different agendas. They have different priorities. They have different values. They have different everything. Sometimes it can be quite a challenge.

While inspiring a shared vision throughout the campus community had not always been successful, UB1 appreciated the buy-in and support within his/her department, those with a direct reporting relationship, other departments that had been collaborative, the president, and members of the board of trustees. "To implement the goals we have, to implement the vision we have, you really have to change how people think, how they see the world, how things are done. And it's just not easy," UB1 shared.

**Challenging the process.** Although UB1 had a direct reporting relationship to the president, serves as a member of the president's cabinet and the statewide network of CDOs, and worked collaboratively with others to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, this archetype limited UB1's ability to challenge the processes that governed the institution. UB1 implemented innovative methods to improve and received financial support from SUNY administration in taking risks to generate small wins while learning from experience. However, the CDO used a consistent approach of pushing a little to bring about the desired changes. UB1 articulated:

Every time you try to change, there will be push back. It's great because sometimes those are things that weren't considered before. When you learn what the response is, you gather the responses you need, you do the investigation that you need, and then you go in and you push a little bit more. It's tiring.

While UB1 desired to be more proactive in challenging the process and providing leadership that would achieve the goals outlined in this institution's strategic plan, this CDO was aware of the obstacles that prevented this from happening and continued working to find solutions.

**Encouraging the heart.** The relationship between the unit-based archetype of vertical structure and encouraging the heart was significant. Operating in this archetype provided UB1 with numerous opportunities to recognize the contribution of professional stakeholders, show appreciation for individual excellence, and celebrate victories by creating a spirit of community. "My job is to try to understand the whole picture, and then give them additional options that they may not have thought about," UB1 indicated. By actively listening and supporting other campus leaders in their decision-making processes, UB1 had encouraged the hearts of stakeholders which, in turn, had positively impacted the campus community.

**Enabling others to act.** When constructing the college's strategic plan and recruiting diverse students, the unit-based archetype was effective in enabling others to act. By developing collaborative relationships and building trust among the institutional stakeholders, this archetype helped UB1 enable others to act by assisting them in developing competency and increasing autonomy. "The whole idea behind the diversity strategic plan was to include as many units within the institution as possible so that they all felt they had a say in the plan, and that they would help me implement it," UB1 explained. Additionally, UB1 tried not to undermine the authority of other administrators and preferred to understand all aspects of a situation.



I try to sit down and better understand the situation saying, “Explain to me what happened? Where did all this start? What is your take on this?” I try to take multiple perspectives and then come up with a solution. I have to be very sensitive about those things, but I try to work with them in a collaborative way.

### **Portfolio-Divisional Archetype of Vertical Structure**

Research suggests that the portfolio-divisional archetype is the least commonly used model, and it is typically reserved for institutions that enroll at least 10,000 students (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Yet, every institution chooses an organizational structure that will most likely enable their CDO to achieve the goals outlined in their strategic plan—regardless of enrollment numbers. While this model incorporates aspects of the collaborative and unit-based models, the vertical authority it provides assists the CDOs in their quests to alter perceptions of stakeholders from cultures that are clinging to the status quo to ones that are indicative of the desired transformational change. With that in mind, the investigator was able to identify three CDOs operating within this model.

**Modeling the way.** Operating in the portfolio-divisional archetype of vertical structure provided the CDOs with the structure and authority to proactively model the way. This archetype enabled PD1 to question senior leadership, stating, “If this is what you have articulated your priorities are, then how are you demonstrating that every day through the programs, the trainings, the initiatives, the outcomes, and the data that you are looking at?” PD1’s questioning of the senior leadership led to each division developing its own Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committees of different constituents at all levels within the institution to provide feedback of what they are doing well and what they are not doing as well.

“Recognizing that there are times when, regardless of what your intent might be, if you do harm, you did harm, own up to that, and have an open conversation,” PD2 indicated as part of facilitating the preferred transformation. This archetype empowered PD2 to address inconsistencies between thoughts and actions among stakeholders at all levels of the college. PD1 articulated:

That’s where the accountability piece comes in. Strategic plans cannot be put on the bookshelf and looked at in 6 years to see where we progressed. If you want success, you’ve got to look at it every year and say, “What are we doing? How are we measuring it? What’s not working?”

This portfolio-divisional archetype assisted PD1 in clarifying institutional values, affirming shared values, and setting the example for the college by aligning actions with shared values.

Likewise, the portfolio-divisional archetype supported PD3 in identifying systematic deficiencies that created challenges for achieving the goals outlined in the strategic plan and enabled PD3 to develop infrastructures that promoted growth and change. “I’m very focused on how we create structures that help us achieve our goals, but also to ensure that it’s not based on an individual person moving it forward, that it does not collapse when they’re gone,” PD3 explained. Based on the authority of operating in the portfolio-divisional archetype, the CDOs were able to model the way consistently and enable stakeholders at all levels to understand the importance of setting the example by aligning actions with shared values.

**Inspiring a shared vision.** The results of this study indicate that functioning in the portfolio-divisional archetype assisted the CDOs with inspiring a shared vision at all levels of the institution.

One of the things I believe in is collaborative leadership, individual ownership, which means, at the end of the day, it's all of our responsibilities to put forth strides, and accomplish the college's priorities, but each one of us must own our responsibility.

PD1 described that the communication and education that is filtered throughout the campus to inspire others. As to how this structure assists with inspiring a shared vision within the campus community, PD2 explained:

I really engage with students and have them get to know me and who I am, I have a history with all members of the president's cabinet and they know who I am, they know what I stand for, I tend to run around the campus a lot and tend to make myself as visible as possible.

PD3 used the flexibility of this archetype to develop committees, subcommittees, and advisory councils as well as advocating for designated spaces to be created for multiple purposes, changes in syllabi to include more diverse perspectives, and for more opportunities for faculty to apply for grant funding.

**Challenging the process.** Operating within the portfolio-divisional archetype has enabled the CDOs to consistently challenge the processes and policies that governed their institutions at the highest level. All the CDOs had been deliberate in how they examined institutional policies and practices, and they were willing to strategically articulate what changes are necessary to achieve inclusive excellence in forums that can facilitate

change. Working in an environment that has not been traditionally diverse, PD1 regularly asks, “What policies are written into your college’s structure that actually serve as barriers to those exact outcomes that you say you want?” By consistently questioning policies and practices that prevent the institution from achieving their desired outcomes, PD1 educated senior leaders while raising awareness about systemic barriers and the level of consciousness necessary to drive change. As a result of challenging the process, PD1 recognized that the CDO role had not traditionally been a part of the college’s structure, and while some senior leaders may have experienced discomfort at times, the campus community had been receptive and the learning curve that occurred was humbling for PD1.

Functioning at a college that has valued social justice from its inception, PD2 asked “How do we create this inclusive environment that we all know is part of our culture as an institution?” Since inclusive excellence has been engrained in the fabric of the institution, PD2 had not struggled to get others to buy-in because diversity is not a new initiative but provided constant reminders. Furthermore, it is rare for stakeholders to question the importance of diversity and inclusion efforts, although PD2 has kept inclusive excellence at the forefront of the conversation. “I think it’s just one of those things that we know why it’s important because it’s who we are” PD2 explained. While challenging the process requires innovative ways to improve, experimenting and taking risks, PD2 is fortunate to be at an institution where constituents recognize its importance.

After identifying some of the institutional challenges that prevented their colleges from achieving inclusive excellence, the CDOs concentrated on how to improve the processes that would facilitate change. PD1 acknowledged “this structure enables me to

examine the systems and policies that could potentially serve as barriers and prevent the institution from experiencing the transformational changes they desire to achieve.”

Similarly, PD3 indicated, “I’m very focused on how we create structures that help us to achieve our goals but also to ensure that it’s not based on an individual moving it forward.” Based on the evidence and practical approaches to the CDOs’ successes, the institutions, directed by the president, must commit to a diverse environments that supports the leadership of this mission.

**Encouraging the heart.** Functioning in the portfolio-divisional archetype accelerates CDOs’ abilities to encourage the heart, with stakeholders throughout the college, by recognizing contributions and showing appreciation for individual excellence. This structure enabled PD1 to request,

I want each division to have your own Equity, Diversity, Inclusion committee where people within the division, not just directors, and deans, and vice presidents, but people who are cleaning the bathrooms, people who are driving the go-carts, the police, many different constituents of many different, levels have the ability to give feedback and say, “we’re doing this well, we’re not doing these things well.”

PD3 depended on this structure to effectively communicate:

It’s important to learn from one another, because I think it’s not just empowering when you hear how someone else tackled a challenge, but also it gives you a sense that it can be done. It’s inspiring. You’re in a cohort of people who are trying to move things forward, and you don’t feel like you’re the lone person

By acknowledging the contributions of others in order to create a spirit of community, these CDOs appreciated the flexibility the portfolio-divisional archetype of vertical structure offered them.

**Enabling others to act.** Working in the portfolio-divisional archetype helped CDOs enable others to act because it supports their efforts to establish trust, build meaningful relationships, increase self-determination, and develop competence. “The leadership has to understand that we have to empower the people that are a part of the units, so it becomes ours, versus just the one, this is everybody. everybody has a place,” PD1 echoed. Similarly, PD3 explained, “I need to focus on creating structures where people can learn from each other, because I think not feeling empowered in terms of making change can be an obstacle.” Likewise, PD2 articulated,

If I’m the only one talking all the time, then it’s just one voice. I can advocate for department heads and the deans, I can have students advocate for something that they need, and I have a strong group of colleagues I’m able to count on to support the work we want to do, which makes my life easier.

Based on the benefits of having a CDO who operates in the portfolio-divisional archetype, stakeholders at all levels of the colleges are empowered to contribute to the desired environment.

### **Summary of Research Question 1 Results**

All archetypes of vertical structure have their pros and cons, but it was clear that certain archetypes facilitate exemplary leadership practices more than others. The collaborative model was most effective in assisting the CDOs with inspiring a shared

vision and encouraging the heart, but it offered limited support in modeling the way, challenging the process, and enabling others to act.

The unit-based model provided minimal support in modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and challenging the process, but it obtained more support in encouraging the heart and enabling others to act. There was evidence that the portfolio-divisional model was supportive of all five exemplary leadership practices.

Based on the characteristics of the archetypes of vertical structure, this research suggests that CDOs operating in the portfolio-divisional model have more institutional support and are placed best in the institution to be most effective in facilitating transformational change.

The researcher believes the portfolio-divisional archetype is most effective because it provides CDOs with the vertical authority necessary to facilitate change, and this archetype empowers CDOs to develop relationships with stakeholders at all levels of their institutions. As CDOs face the challenges of changing perceptions and dealing with criticism, it is essential to operate within an archetype that provides structural flexibility and a high level of institutional support. While the portfolio-divisional archetype is typically used at colleges and universities that enroll more than 10,000 students, the researcher believes this archetype is the most effective in helping CDOs achieve inclusive excellence at any institution, because it provides a span of authority that empowers the CDO to facilitate change, as well providing the level of institutional commitment necessary to achieve inclusive excellence.

**Research question 2.** What is the relationship between CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

While all SUNY institutions are required to develop strategic plans to increase diversity among students, staff, and faculty, and hire a CDO, there was no decree about what the level of institutional commitment would be in achieving inclusive excellence. This study made the assumption that institutions vary in their level of institutional commitment toward achieving inclusive excellence, however, the archetype of vertical structure the CDOs operate within may be an indication of the institutions' commitment. Through learning about each institution's commitment to inclusive excellence, how that level of commitment impacted the CDOs' effectiveness in facilitating transformational change, and the five practices of exemplary leadership that supported the CDOs in promoting inclusive excellence on their respective campuses, the researcher is prepared to answer Research Question 2.

Regardless of student, faculty, and staff demographics; previous commitments to diversity efforts; or the amount of diversity programs offered, all of the CDOs expressed keen perceptions about the relationship between institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their performance in facilitating transformational change. Based on a review of the literature and from interviewing the participant CDOs, the researcher identified seven efforts that institutions should demonstrate as a commitment to inclusive excellence:

- Increase the enrollment the numbers of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty.



- Increase cultural activities relating to diversity and inclusiveness.
- Increase budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities.
- Have regularly planned meetings of underrepresented faculty and staff to discuss their concerns about diversity issues within the campus community.
- Commit additional resources for the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion activities and space.
- Create an environment in which inclusiveness is evident by committee meetings, underrepresented faculty and staff interacting with each other, and syllabi that include elements of diversity.
- Enable the CDO to work collaboratively with human resources to ensure all open searches produce a diverse pool of candidates from which to select.

For the purpose of this research, these seven efforts can be used to measure the level of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence. This section is divided by the archetypes of vertical structure to detail the relationship between institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

### **Collaborative Archetype of Vertical Structure**

In SUNY institutions where CDOs operated in the collaborative model, evidence suggests the level of institutional commitment fluctuated. Some institutions showed a slight commitment by:

- increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty;
- increasing cultural activities relating to diversity and inclusiveness; and

- increasing budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities

C3 explained:

We are less than 5% faculty of color. Here's our strategic plan, there are measurable outcomes to achieve, there's specifically five faculty of color in the next 3 years stated in our strategic plan that we need to increase by. We have four new professionals of color who just started this fall. It shows that our commitment is more than just talk.

C4 described:

Prior to me coming here, there never really had been a Native American heritage celebration or Asian heritage [celebration] because it was assumed that things were happening. When I came on board I reached out to the planning committee and said, "How can I help? How can my office assist you in this?" And they were really surprised, pleasantly surprised.

C1 shared:

We came up with the Men of Merit program because we understand that men are not persisting to graduation, significantly, and so, what do you do to address that? We create this support system that brings young men together to talk about how they get through this, and we've got resources behind it.

Other institutions demonstrated various behaviors that were inconsistent with the collaborative model by failing to:

- regularly plan meetings of underrepresented faculty and staff to discuss their concerns about diversity issues within the campus community;

- commit additional resources for the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion activities and space;
- create an environment in which inclusiveness is evident by committee meeting, underrepresented faculty and staff interacting with each other, and creating syllabuses that include elements of diversity; and
- enable the CDO to work collaboratively with human resources to ensure all open searches produce a diverse pool of candidates from which to select

As the level of institutional commitment varied by institution, there was evidence that proved some institutions were more invested in demonstrating a commitment to inclusive excellence and facilitating transformational change than others.

### **Unit-Based Archetype of Vertical Structure**

Based on the CDO who operated within the unit-based archetype of vertical structure, the evidence revealed the level of institutional commitment was insufficient to facilitate transformational change. The researcher reached this conclusion because the institution demonstrated only two of the seven indicators of a commitment to inclusive excellence:

- increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty; and
- increasing budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities.

By increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented students and increasing budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities, this CDO's institution displayed a desire to change. However, the lack of engagement in more transformational change

behaviors illustrates their commitment was not at a level that would produce the desired outcome.

### **Portfolio-Divisional Archetype of Vertical Structure**

For the SUNY institutions in which the CDOs functioned in the portfolio-divisional model, evidence suggests there was a direct relationship between the level of institutional commitment and facilitating transformational change. The researcher determined the level of institutional commitment to be high based on the institutions' actions associated with enabling their CDOs to provide leadership in facilitating transformational change. All of these institutions consistently demonstrated their commitment by implementing five of the seven indicators, they:

- increased budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities;
- increased their enrollment numbers of underrepresented faculty, staff, and students;
- committed additional resources for the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion activities and space;
- increased cultural activities relating to diversity and inclusiveness; and
- created environments in which inclusiveness was evident through committee meetings, underrepresented faculty and staff interactions, and syllabi that included elements of diversity.

Additionally, some of the institutions:

- had regularly scheduled meetings with underrepresented faculty and staff to discuss their concerns about diversity issues within the campus community; and

- enabled the CDOs to work collaboratively with human resources to ensure all open searches produced a diverse pool of candidates from which to select.

By demonstrating at least five of the aforementioned indicators, these colleges and universities showed they were committed to inclusive excellence and facilitating transformational change on their campuses. Regardless of the increased numbers of CDO appointments, there has to be a commitment by the institution for transformative institutional change. Few institutions declare this transformational shift without a campus crisis because this type of change requires a realignment of priorities and prioritizing fiscal investments. The historical traditions and norms at colleges and universities have enabled a set of obstacles confronting CDOs that must be overcome.

### **Summary of Research Question 2 Results**

While it was assumed that commitment to inclusive excellence varies by institution, the researcher found evidence that confirms that the level of institutional commitment directly impacts a CDO's performance in facilitating transformational change. Although each archetype of vertical structure revealed evidence of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, some colleges were more invested than others as demonstrated by the implementation of specific indicators. Even though the institutions with CDOs operating in the collaborative and unit based models demonstrated their commitment to inclusive excellence at some level, the colleges with the CDOs functioning within the portfolio-divisional archetype established themselves as leaders and motivators by more consistently incorporating behaviors that indicated their commitment to inclusive excellence.

At the core of this descriptive study is a theoretical framework that is intertwined with the five practices of exemplary leadership, which may enable CDOs to facilitate transformational change, depending on the institution's level of commitment to inclusive excellence. The results of this study indicate that each archetype of vertical structure had specific strengths, but the CDOs operating within the portfolio-divisional model were more likely to facilitate transformational changes. In addition, evidence suggests that functioning within the portfolio-divisional archetype of vertical structure provides more institutional commitment to inclusive excellence than other archetypes of vertical structure. This study was conducted to add to the body of research that already exists pertaining to CDOs in higher education by examining organizational structures and institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and it revealed there are significant relationships that may be outside of the CDOs' control that impact their ability to facilitate transformational change.

Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) suggested three archetypes of vertical structure in which CDOs operate to facilitate change on their respective campuses. However, based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposes that all colleges and universities use the portfolio-divisional archetype to provide their CDOs with the necessary span of authority, resources, and institutional commitment to achieve inclusive excellence. All of the archetypes of vertical structure are not created equally, enabling some CDOs to be more effective than others. Yet, the personalities of these CDOs enabled them to facilitate some change toward inclusive excellence, which included:

- increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty;

- increasing cultural activities related to diversity and inclusiveness;
- increasing budgets to support diversity and inclusion efforts and activities;
- having regularly planned meeting of underrepresented faculty and staff to discuss their concerns about diversity issues within the campus community;
- committing additional resources for the development and implementation of diversity and inclusion activities and space;
- creating an environment in which inclusiveness is evident by committee meetings, underrepresented faculty and staff interacting with each other, and syllabi that includes elements of diversity; and
- enabling the CDO to work collaboratively with human resource to ensure all open searches produce a diverse pool of candidates from which to select.

In comparison to CDOs operating in the portfolio-divisional model, their counterparts showed limited evidence of producing inclusive excellence.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

Within higher education institutions, CDOs have been the latest administrators charged with providing leadership over diversity and inclusion initiatives. Depending on the proper organizational structure and institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, it is assumed that CDOs have the ability to facilitate transformational change. However, succeeding in achieving inclusive excellence is rarely accomplished as some stakeholders will typically question the importance of diversity and inclusion and whether or not it needs to be communicated as an essential part of the institution's fabric (Chun & Evans, 2008). Conducting a descriptive study about CDOs operating in the SUNY higher education system provided an opportunity for the researcher to examine the relationships that could impact CDOs' ability to facilitate transformational change within their institutions. This study is essential in helping college administrators better understand what organizational structure and level of institutional commitment is necessary in order to achieve the desired outcomes on their respective campuses.

Williams and Wade-Golden's (2007), archetypes of vertical structure and Kouzes and Posner's (2012), five practices of exemplary leadership guided this study. Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) identified three archetypes of vertical structure that categorize the span of authority CDOs have within which to facilitate transformational change. Kouzes and Posner (2012) developed the five practices of exemplary leadership to describe the behavioral characteristics of leaders in their efforts to produce inclusive



excellence. These frameworks provided the researcher with the foundation to examine and analyze the relationships between organizational structure and institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. While all of the CDOs operated within a specific archetype of vertical structure, which enabled certain CDOs to facilitate change, the leadership strategies varied based on the level of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence. The remainder of this chapter discusses the implications of the researcher's findings, limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research.

### **Implications of Findings**

The literature suggests that, over the past two decades, numerous colleges and universities have developed strategic plans and hired CDOs to provide leadership over diversity initiatives (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007; Wilson, 2013). However, various attempts to achieve inclusive excellence have been unsuccessful due to the multiplicity of variables within the epicenter of transformational change at every institution. After conducting this research, two themes emerged regarding the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure: institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and the CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change.

First, it is important to engage all stakeholders within the campus community in the effort to achieve inclusive excellence. Second, it is essential to understand what institutional structures encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion and to what extent the CDO can be successful in applying responsibilities to those structures. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how the results of this study compare to previous research that used these theoretical frameworks.

Previous research has suggested that *all stakeholders should be engaged within the campus community in the effort to achieve inclusive excellence*. Similar to the findings of other researchers, the responses of the participants in this study indicated that successfully facilitating transformational change depends on the ability of leaders to inspire a shared vision among campus constituents (Ayad & Rahim, 2016; Basham, 2012; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013; Wilson, 2013). All of the participant CDOs in this study acknowledged that failure to inspire a shared vision among stakeholders can be linked to the archetype of vertical structure within which they operated. Members of the campus community that disengage often isolate themselves from others and look to recruit other allies by discounting the work that is being done by the CDO. Furthermore, the disconnect that stakeholders experience guides their feelings and actions about their value and sense of belonging within the campus community.

Failure to engage all stakeholders within the campus community reveals a lack of modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, and encouraging the heart. It also implies that specific members of the campus community are not valued, and their efforts are not recognized as contributing to achieving inclusive excellence at their institutions. Research suggests that students, staff, and faculty play significant roles in improving policies, providing support services, and acknowledging their own limitations and areas in which they need to grow while making necessary changes to understand the perspectives of others that lead to inclusive excellence (Berman, 2013; VanDerLinden, 2014). Additionally, Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) discussed how the archetypes of vertical structures can influence CDOs' span of authority, ultimately limiting their ability to facilitate transformational change. This descriptive study revealed that the proper

archetype of vertical structure and a high level of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence are essential in order for a CDO to facilitate transformational change and achieve inclusive excellence.

Previous research has also suggested that stakeholders *understand what institutional structures encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion, and they must discover to what extent the CDO can be successful in applying responsibilities to those structures.* Based on the findings of this study, the CDOs understand what institutional structures lead to implementing successful diversity initiatives, and they have learned how to be effective in applying responsibilities to those structures.

Given that achieving inclusive excellence is uncommon, failure to operate within the proper organizational structure, combined with a low level of institutional commitment, is worrisome for most CDOs—because they are responsible for providing leadership over the diversity initiatives. Some participant CDOs expressed concerns about the organizational structure within which they operated as well as the institutions' commitments to inclusive excellence, resulting in initiatives moving forward at a pace that was not conducive to change. Furthermore, organizational structure and the level of institutional commitment, at times, negatively impacted the CDOs' ability to develop meaningful relationships with various stakeholders and to get buy-in regarding specific initiatives. Within the limited scope of this study, the researcher suggests that CDOs should be mindful of their organizational structure and the level of institutional commitment.

In general, the participant CDOs expressed an understanding of the dynamics associated with the structure they operated within, the ability to recognize areas where

change was needed, and the professional experience needed to implement the necessary structures that would facilitate transformational change. Throughout the interview process, the CDOs were able to reflect on some of the successful initiatives they spearheaded as well as the challenges that prevented them from accomplishing specific goals outlined in their colleges' strategic plans.

The results of this study are closely aligned with Wilson (2013), as the archetypes of vertical structure directly impacted the CDOs' ability to facilitate changes at their institutions. This study revealed that some of the participant CDOs had the personal savvy, knowledge of what was necessary to transform their institution, and the professional experiences to be effective in producing inclusive excellence. However, some participant CDOs were concerned about their institutions being fully committed to achieving inclusive excellence and their institutions' willingness to provide the necessary resources to accomplish those goals. The experiences of providing leadership over diversity initiatives caused the CDOs to reexamine their organizational structures, advocate for structural changes that would encourage successful outcomes, and build alliances with stakeholders that have the ability to assist in efforts that would facilitate the desired institutional changes. Overall, the organizational structure of the institutions was the primary component in facilitating change, yet when the participant CDOs were placed within structures that limited their span of authority and responsibilities, the outcomes were likely to be unsuccessful.

It is important to note that of all the participating CDOs, one CDO did not agree to the interview being audio recorded nor did the CDO enable the researcher to use anonymous quotes in this work. This suggests that there may have been administrative

areas that could potentially put the candidate at risk of accomplishing the goals in the CDO's institution's strategic plan.

### **Limitations**

When deciding to focus this research on CDOs working in the SUNY system, the goal was to have a diverse participant pool of CDOs from community colleges, technology colleges, university colleges, and university centers to examine the differences in structure and institutional commitment at various institutions within the same system. However, a conversation with the SUNY system CDO shifted the focus to CDOs working at university centers and doctoral-degree-granting institutions. Limiting this study to participants employed at university centers and doctoral-degree-granting institutions presented concerns about revealing the identity of the participants or their institutions.

Fifty-eight percent of SUNY institutions are not university centers or doctoral-degree-granting institutions, therefore, any attempt to draw inferences about these findings are only from university colleges and doctoral-degree-granting institutions. In the context of this study, this limitation suggests future research should be conducted at non-university centers and non-doctoral-degree-granting institutions within the SUNY system. Considering the small number of participants, the epicenter of transformational change at each institution, and the ability of the individual CDOs to develop meaningful relationships in their efforts to produce inclusive excellence, the findings associated with this study can only be viewed as preliminary, pending additional research evaluating the impacts of the archetypes of vertical structure at colleges and universities of varying sizes and orientations.

Another limitation of this study was that it only included the voices of CDOs. In order to properly gauge the performance of CDOs in facilitating transformational change, it would be helpful to include the perceptions of other stakeholders including the president, deans, faculty members, staff, and students to see if their perceptions align with that of the CDOs' perceptions. As a professional working in the diversity field, the researcher tried to mitigate any personal bias that would skew the results. Given the importance of the CDO role, more needs to be understood about the challenges facing CDOs, and it is important to hear that directly from employed CDOs.

### **Recommendations**

While learning about the roles and responsibilities of CDOs and the numerous institutions that have employed them in recent years to provide leadership over diversity initiatives, the researcher offers the following suggestions for future research. First, including CDOs from all types of institutions within the SUNY system as participants for future study could provide significant data that could produce generalizable results. Identifying the similarities and differences between CDOs' organizational structures, institutional commitments, and span of authority may provide enough data for results to be conclusive. Second, researchers might conduct a similar study within a different state higher education system to compare this study participant CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change based on organizational structure at their respective institutions.

It could be beneficial to conduct similar studies at HBCUs or other institutions in which diverse stakeholders are the majority, to analyze the success of CDOs in facilitating transformational change. Additionally, investigating the leadership

capabilities of CDOs and their previous experiences, which may qualify them to provide sound leadership in this regard, would be essential. Prior to outlining roles and responsibilities, developing a strategic plan, configuring the proper organizational structure, or establishing the CDO's span of authority, it is crucial to identify and hire the right candidate who can enable the institution with the best opportunity to achieve the desired outcome. Conducting a study focusing on leadership capabilities, previous professional experiences, and a CDO's ability to implement transformational change strategies could yield significant data that would contribute to the body of research that currently exists.

Future researchers should consider conducting a longitudinal study that examines the relationships between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment, and CDOs' perceptions of their performance. Studying these relationships over an extended time period would provide a richer analysis as change is not likely to occur in an instance but over a longer period of time. A longitudinal study would be helpful because it would enable researchers to investigate participants at different points throughout their careers versus at a single point in time, and the researchers could capture the essence of change.

Considering the turnover rates in the CDO position, future research could provide insight into the longevity of these administrative roles. Testing how CDOs entered their positions as well as how they left them could add to the body of literature that already exists regarding CDOs. Additionally, investigating turnover rates by the archetype of vertical structure could provide meaningful data about the importance of organizational structure with higher education institutions.

## **Recommendations for Higher Education Administrators**

The lack of documented success of CDOs achieving inclusive excellence raises questions about the nature of the position and whether or not hiring a CDO is the best practice for facilitating transformational change at institutions of higher education. In hindsight, CDOs are expected to change campus cultures and obtain buy-in from the majority of stakeholders, while changing the status quo, implementing new policies, and inspiring a shared vision of what the institution could resemble at its best. Unfortunately, the reality of CDOs producing these types of environments on their respective campuses is unlikely.

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher offers four recommendations to higher education administrators to improve the likelihood of CDOs being successful in facilitating transformational change: (a) survey and understand the campus climate prior to hiring a CDO; (b) acknowledge the appropriate level of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and allocate the appropriate resources; (c) clearly articulate the CDO's roles, responsibilities, and span of authority; and (d) engage the CDO in developing the institution's strategic plan.

The first recommendation is to survey and understand what makes your institution unique. By examining the campus climate and identifying areas that are unsatisfactory in the institution's quest to have an inclusive campus environment, administrators can obtain a better understanding of how to address specific concerns. Based on the CDO would be the best course of action for their individual circumstances.

The second recommendation is to acknowledge the required level of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and allocate the appropriate resources to achieve the



desired goal. If institutional commitment has been identified as a key variable in the performance of CDOs in facilitating transformational change, it becomes the responsibility of senior administrators to provide the appropriate financial, human, and supplemental resources to assist the CDO in achieving the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Failure to provide the necessary level of institutional commitment can ultimately set the tone for a CDO to be unsuccessful.

The third recommendation is to clearly articulate the CDO's role, responsibilities, and span of authority. By communicating this information directly to the CDO, as well as to the larger campus community, all members of the campus community will be made aware of the reason this administrative role is being added to the ranks with other senior administrators. When efforts are made to include all members of the campus community, obtaining support and buy-in is more likely to occur, thus establishing networks of support and alliance for the CDO. Furthermore, stakeholders can be guided by the recommendations provided within this study.

The final recommendation is to engage the CDO in developing the institution's strategic plan. In some cases, strategic plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion have been developed prior to employing a CDO. Nevertheless, CDOs should be afforded the opportunity to assist or lead in the development of the institution's strategic plan. By engaging a CDO in the process of developing the institution's strategic plan, there is a level of ownership and a better understanding of why specific initiatives are incorporated and what strategies will be most effective in accomplishing the desired outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided the analysis of the research findings, limitations to the study, and recommendations for future research. This study found that there is a direct relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. Two significant themes emerged from this study: (a) engage all stakeholders within the campus community in an effort to achieve inclusive excellence, and (b) understand what institutional structures encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion and to what extent the CDO can be successful in applying responsibilities to those structures. Additionally, the researcher provided two limitations of this study as well as recommendations for higher education administrators.

The theoretical conclusions endorse Williams and Wade-Golden's (2007) archetypes of vertical structure and Kouzes and Posner's (2012) five practices of exemplary leadership as effective frameworks to research CDOs' ability to facilitate transformational change. The components of Williams and Wade-Golden's (2007) model are supported by the span of authority CDOs are provided in each model in their quest to produce inclusive excellence. The elements of Kouzes and Posner's (2012) theory are reinforced by CDOs' ability to effectively use the practices of exemplary leadership to achieve the goals outlined in the institutions' strategic plans. The findings of this study suggest that CDOs are more likely to facilitate transformational change leading to inclusive excellence when there is a high level of institutional commitment and an organizational structure that enables them to engage the entire campus community by

modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, encouraging the heart, and enabling others to act.

The backdrop of this study revealed that having a CDO is, in some way, an admission of failure on the part of the institution. Literature suggests there have not been a lot of studies in which CDOs have been interviewed, therefore, it is essential to conduct more studies in the future to get a better understanding of what they are doing. The fact that institutions have chosen to hire a CDO demonstrates there is a problem on their campus regarding diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. Most colleges and universities have mission statements detailing their commitment to diversity and inclusion as a part of the fabric of their institution. If colleges and universities are true to what they say in their mission statements, CDOs play a critical role in the ongoing process of the implementation of the institutions' missions. As college communities typically have high turnover, the perspective of the CDO becomes significant as re-teaching values and upholding the mission are essential to the engagement of the teaching and learning of the community.

One of the goals of this study was to provide a better understanding of the organizational structures and levels of institutional commitment necessary to assist CDOs in their quest to facilitate transformational change at their respective institutions leading to inclusive excellence. Changing demographics and increased enrollment of underrepresented students at colleges and universities has required colleges and universities to address the social inequalities that exist (Hurtado, 2007). To address this growing concern, numerous institutions have hired CDOs to provide leadership over diversity initiatives. Employing a CDO may be the first step in the process toward

producing change, but it is important to note that hiring a CDO requires the proper organizational structure, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, the appropriate span of authority, and an understanding of the reporting relationships to the CDO (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007).

Research suggests that CDOs may be a critical component in transforming the culture within institutions of higher education (Leon, 2014; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, 2013; Wilson, 2013). By assessing the campus culture and getting buy-in from all stakeholders within the campus community, a strategic plan can be developed that addresses the unique challenges that are preventing an institution from achieving inclusive excellence. By understanding the epicenter of transformational change, the future of education, CDOs working in other fields, and Williams & Wade-Golden's archetypes of vertical structure, college and university administrators can properly prepare to achieve the outcomes outlined in their institutions' strategic plans.

The researcher conducted a descriptive study using semistructured interviews with nine CDOs who were working in the SUNY higher education system. This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?
2. What is the relationship between CDOs' perception of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change?

In preparation for interviews, the researcher reviewed CDO job descriptions, organizational charts, and institutional strategic plans. Data gathered through this research were analyzed by reviewing audio tapes and coding transcripts (with the exception of one of the participant CDOs) from every interview prior to using a narrative analysis to tell the unique stories of these relationships.

The results of this study indicate that there is a direct relationship between the archetypes of vertical structure, institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational change. While some of the five practices of exemplary leadership were more prevalent in specific archetypes of vertical structure than others, this study revealed institutional commitment to inclusive excellence was ultimately the deciding factor of whether or not CDOs can facilitate transformational change at their respective institutions. Furthermore, evidence suggests that CDOs operating in the portfolio-divisional archetype of vertical structure had greater autonomy to facilitate transformational change, and they were provided higher levels of institutional commitment. The results of this study support the previous research findings of Leon (2014), Williams & Wade-Golden (2007, 2013) and Wilson (2013), while adding to the body of research that exists pertaining to the success of CDOs providing leadership over diversity initiatives in higher education institutions.

The findings of this study implied that in order for CDOs to facilitate transformational change leading to inclusive excellence, it is necessary to engage all stakeholders within the campus community and understand what institutional structures encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion and to what extent they can be successful in applying responsibilities to those structures. Additionally, the researcher identified two

limitations to the study: (a) the limited pool of participants within the SUNY system, and (b) only including the voice of the CDOs in gauging their performance in facilitating transformational change. This study concluded with the researcher providing numerous recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for higher education administrators who may have to decide if hiring a CDO is the best course of action for their respective institution.

It is worthwhile to mention the potential challenges and impact that changes in the presidential administration could have on the future of higher education. Since 2000, the stance of the existing presidential administration has directly affected colleges and universities. In coming years, a new administration could likely impact higher education in unpredictable ways. Institutional strategic plans to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts should take these circumstances into consideration.

Conducting this study was essential in adding to the body of research that already exists about CDOs in higher education and their efforts to provide leadership over diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Research suggests increased enrollment by diverse students has forced colleges and universities to address racial and social differences and deal with the reality of inequality in America (Hurtado, 2007). Furthermore, previous studies indicate that achieving the desired outcomes of strategic plans and transforming institutions is uncommon (Chun & Evans, 2008). Although numerous higher education institutions have employed CDOs to provide leadership in this respect, transformational change may not occur without the appropriate organizational structure aligned with the goals to achieve optimal outcomes. Also, clearly

defined roles and responsibilities, proper institutional rank, and an understanding of the reporting relationships to the CDO appear to be necessary.

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## Appendix A

### CDO Researcher Participant Letter

Dear Chief Diversity Officer,

This letter is an invitation and a request of you to assist me in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College under the supervision of Dr. James Berman and Dr. James Evans. I am currently an administrator at Nazareth College serving as the Director of Student Access and Achievement Programs. I would like to provide you with more information about this research and what your involvement would entail should you decide to work with me.

You have been identified as somebody who might usefully participate in this study and we wondered if you would be interested in participating. My research is specific to CDOs that work in State Universities in New York (SUNY) system

In recent years, many colleges and universities have hired Chief Diversity Officers (CDO) to provide leadership over campus wide diversity and inclusion initiatives. As you are aware, according to the SUNY September 2015 policy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees, all institutions in the system are required to have strategic plans to increase diversity among faculty, staff and students and employ a Chief Diversity Officer. Hopefully this research will assist you in developing your strategic plan.

The charge for CDOs is to serve as a member of the President's administration reporting directly to the President or Provost; work collaborative with offices across campus to elevate inclusive excellence and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion regarding recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff and senior administrators; and serve as a part of the state-wide network of CDOs to support SUNY's overall diversity goals.

This study will focus on the relationship between Williams and Wade-Golden's archetypes of vertical structure and CDOs' perceptions of their performance in facilitating transformational changes at their respective institution. Furthermore, this research seeks to understand the relationship between CDOs' perceptions of institutional commitment to inclusive excellence and their performance in facilitating transformational change.

The term "archetype" results from Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), creating the Chief Diversity Officer Development Framework (CDODF). The vertical structure describes the CDOs range of responsibilities and the institutional system of support to achieve the desired outcomes. The concept of a vertical structure leads to the idea that this type of organization best responds to the desired transformation of the institution.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will require an hour in person interview at a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions you wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time by advising the researcher.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate the collection of information. Tapes will remain confidential and be destroyed at the completion of the study. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in the dissertation or any reports resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used.

Data collected during this study will be retained for six months and stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

Prior to being interviewed, it would be helpful to the researcher if you completed the consent form and the pre-interview survey.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact the researcher at (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ or by e-mail at \_\_\_\_\_@sjfc.edu. You can also contact my Committee Chair, Dr. Jason Berman, at (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ by e-mail at \_\_\_\_\_@sjfc.edu.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received clearance from the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the chair of the IRB, Dr. Eileen Lynd-Balta, at \_\_\_\_\_@sjfc.edu or (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to you and the institutions directly involved in the study, other institutions and organizations not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Marshall, Sr.  
DEXL Candidate

## Appendix B

### Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Gabriel Marshall of the Doctorate of Executive Leadership program at St. John Fisher College.

I had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I requested.

I am aware that the researcher is requesting my permission to tape record my interview to ensure accuracy of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications that come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project had been reviewed by, and received ethical clearance through, the Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College.

I was informed that if I have any questions or concerns resulting from my participation in his study, I may contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_@sjfc.edu.

With full knowledge of all aforementioned information, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES       NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

YES       NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in this dissertation or publication that comes of this research.

YES       NO



Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**

CDO Pre-Interview Survey

SHOULD YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE,

PLEASE COMPLETE THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Inaugural Position: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Time in Position: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership	Questions to be Answered
Modeling the Way (MTW)	Does the CDO model the way for others by clarifying values, finding their voice, affirming shared values, and setting the example by aligning actions with shared values
Inspiring a Shared Vision (ISV)	Does the CDO inspire others to envision a future of imagining exciting, ennobling possibilities, and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations
Challenging the Process (CTP)	Does the CDO challenge processes by searching for opportunities to seize initiatives, looking outward for innovative ways to improve, experimenting and taking risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experiences
Encouraging the Heart (ETH)	Does the CDO encourage the heart by recognizing contributions and showing appreciation for individual excellence and celebrating the victories by creating a spirit of community
Enabling Others to Act (EOA)	Does the CDO enable others to act by fostering collaboration to build trust, facilitating relationships, strengthening others by increasing self-determination and developing competence

## Appendix E

### CDO Interview Questions

1. I am seeking to understand your institution through the eyes of the CDO as you see it. Can you describe your institution as you view it? What would be important for me to know?

(The researcher begins with this question as it allows the CDO to ease into the interview by talking about how they view their institution within the scope of their daily routine. Based on what the CDO sees as important, it may cause follow-up questions to be shifted)

2. I have an understanding about your role and responsibilities, organizational structure, and goals outlined in your institutions strategic plan based on what I have previously read. Can you talk to me about how you navigate the campus and the organizational structure in which you operate?

(The researcher chose this question as it aligns with research question 1. Depending on the CDOs response to this question, the investigator can focus probing questions on gaps in their response)

3. Looking back over the time you've been here, how would you describe your school's commitment to inclusive excellence? How much has that level of commitment impacted your ability to produce transformational changes?

(The researcher selected this question because it aligns with research question 2. Depending on the CDOs response to this question, follow-up questions will aim at filling any gaps that will be valuable for the investigator)

4. Do you see yourself as an agent of transformational change? When it comes to inclusive excellence, what strategies are you implementing to promote transformational change on your respective campus?

(This question is designed to solicit a response focusing on transformational change strategies. Depending on the response it will enable the researcher to better identify which transformational change strategies each CDO uses to produce changes on their respective campus)