Leading for Diversity

Over the past several years, American Universities along with their corporate allies have developed new organizational structures to address issues of diversity in higher education. Many of these positions are charged not only with issues of equity, inclusion, orientations, but they have also been charged with setting the climate for training and cultural tolerance campus wide. Although many would agree that these are positive steps for institutions of higher education, numerous critics have expressed concerned about the nature of the position; the responsibilities of the position; funding for these positions, etc. given the political climate in the States at the moment, some states/universities are doubting the usefulness of these positions and have expressed difficulty with designing appropriate responsibilities that lead to positive outcomes for the diversity milieu.

Accordingly, the purpose of this session is to explore the responsibilities and status of chief diversity Officers on university campuses. Particular attention will be devoted to responsibilities, resources, and the politics of leading diversity in a racially and culturally charged America. The authors approach this session with over 25 years of leadership experience in higher education in leadership roles that addressed diversity and social justice on college campuses.

Authors: Bernard Oliver, Professor, School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fl., USA

Eileen Oliver, Professor, School of Teaching & Learning, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fl., USA