

Top universities fail to achieve many measures of institutionalized diversity outreach

July 24 2019

Top universities around the world appear still to be in the very early stages of institutionalizing diversity outreach, according to research published in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* on July 24, by Mariana Buenestado-Fernández and colleagues at the University of Cordoba, Spain.

In recent years higher education has expanded around the world, providing access to larger demographics and in low income countries. Primary factors such as race, ethnicity, gender and age show improvements, but the inclusion of [diversity](#) in development plans and policies varies. The authors of the present study set out to investigate to what extent the world's best universities fulfil institutionalization indicators in the area of diversity.

They assessed information published on the institutional websites of 127 universities in the Academic Ranking of World Universities top 500 for their compliance with a series of indicators grouped into four areas: philosophy and institutional policy, institutionalization strategies for the university community, for research and teaching staff and for administrative managers. Where a diversity and equality officer was identified, the authors asked if they could fill out a survey; of 78 approached, 29 responded.

Low achievement of the indicators was seen across the board, suggesting

that instilling diversity outreach within higher education institutions is far from established. Compliance varied greatly by [indicator](#)—for example, 51.2 percent of universities reference diversity in their institutional statements, while just 12.2% have given awards or acknowledgment to individuals championing diversity outreach.

North American universities were most likely to have complied with most indicators, followed by European universities and then universities based elsewhere. The authors suggest that America's history of advocacy for civil rights and equal opportunities may have influenced North American universities to consolidate diversity outreach.

The researchers believe that further research should investigate trends in institutionalizing diversity outreach. Nonetheless, they call for universities to do more to institutionalize processes which eliminate inequalities and promote social justice.

Buenestado-Fernández adds: "Higher education institutions from the Academic Ranking of World Universities are at the beginning of the process to institutionalize diversity outreach. Combining inclusion with excellence in [higher education](#) would help eliminate inequalities and promote social justice."

More information: Evaluating the institutionalisation of diversity outreach in top universities worldwide. *PLoS ONE* 14(7): e0219525. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0219525](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0219525)

Provided by Public Library of Science

Citation: Top universities fail to achieve many measures of institutionalized diversity outreach (2019, July 24) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-07-universities->

institutionalized-diversity-outreach.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.