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FROM THE EDITOR



Barry L. Gordon, PhD

This edition of *The California Psychologist* is our second annual **Special Issue on Diversity in Psychology**. Guest Editor, **Terrie A. Furukawa, PhD**, assembled nine feature articles written by over a dozen eminent psychologists who are leaders and innovators in providing psychological services to diverse populations. She also interviewed two key state legislators who have demonstrated their commitment to psychology and increasing much needed access to mental health care services. California's continually changing demographics make it unlikely that any single ethnic or cultural group will comprise a numerical majority.

The authors reflect a rich diversity in both backgrounds and approaches to working in a multicultural and multiethnic milieu. They carefully examine important clinical, professional and public interest issues that challenge us to continue evolving as mental health care providers. As a profession, we need to recognize, understand, and adapt to evolving issues of diversity. Last year, Publications Chair Dr. Miguel Gallardo wrote in our first *Special Issue on Diversity in Psychology*, "What we know today will most likely begin to change tomorrow. Continuing to incorporate diverse perspectives and expand our world views is fundamental to the growth of professional psychology." Local, state, and world events over the last sixteen months have made his words particularly poignant.

Finally, this issue of the *CP* is especially meaningful to me, as it is my final one as Editor. I have greatly enjoyed serving our members and readers over the last two years, and I am deeply honored to have been appointed and reappointed by two consecutive CPA Presidents, Drs. Star Vega and Jana Martin. I look forward to continue working on new challenges within CPA and to help the *CP* continue to grow and develop with our Association.

As always, we encourage you to write and submit articles with clinical, practice or research content for publication in the *CP*. Book reviews and articles on professional issues are also welcome. **Submission Information** is published in each issue. Please send any manuscripts, suggestions or letters by e-mail to editor@calpsychlink.org. Thank you.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

BERNARDO M. FERDMAN, PHD

Effectively addressing and integrating cultural diversity is a vital imperative for organizations such as CPA that wish to be prepared to successfully accomplish their mission now and in the future. California is at the vanguard of the more complex and multifaceted diversity that now characterizes the United States—Latinos now outnumber African Americans; cross-cutting and multiple group memberships mean that we cannot readily attribute group-level cultural features to individuals; and increasingly, more and more of us defy simple categorizations. The American Psychological Association's (2003) new *Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists* provide a useful framework for addressing racial and ethnic diversity in our work. However, we must also consider how to build and sustain inclusion in our professional organizations, particularly in developing leadership that reflects the breadth and diversity of the people whom the organizations purport to represent.

Becoming responsive to the needs of a more ethnically and culturally diverse constituency means much more than developing multicultural competencies (though these are key for individual practitioners). It requires envisioning an inclusive organization that incorporates these constituencies at its core and takes the systematic steps needed to truly use differences as a source of strength and accomplishment (Holvino, Ferdman, & Merrill-Sands, 2004). In this sense, inclusion is the fundamental ingredient for leveraging diversity (Ferdman & Davidson, 2002).

Becoming inclusive means striving to use all available resources and to value differences as a source of competitive advantage, as well as developing competencies in everyday behaviors, which support these goals and allow all members of the organization to feel that they belong and that they matter.



Building inclusion thus involves changes in both individuals and organizations. Individuals must develop skills in inclusive behavior, dialogue, and cross-cultural interaction. At the same time, the organization must proactively remove systemic barriers and incorporate new ways of working in order to foster a culture of inclusion and change historical patterns of subordination against particular groups and their styles

and perspectives. An overemphasis on individualism can often get in the way of doing this. At the same time, overemphasizing group memberships to the exclusion of individuality can also be a problem. In any case, a “colorblind” approach has served primarily to perpetuate exclusive structures and practices.

In the case of psychological associations, what might need to re-examine certain fundamental assumptions about the role of psychologists, our incentives for joining and taking on leadership roles, and the value of the organization to its members and potential members. This can be challenging for long-time dedicated leaders who have invested a great deal in a particular vision for the organization, but who now may be asked to share some of their power with others who see things differently. This can also be especially difficult for those—both Caucasian and people of color—who believe that they have “paid their dues” and that others should do the same. In psychology—a field of practice heavily based on mentoring and role modeling, credentialing, and standardization—an expression of difference can often be interpreted as a fundamental challenge to the field itself. Building and sustaining inclusion will require holding, working with, and even welcoming the tension involved in difficult explorations that make many feel as if the core is being challenged or changed. Yet the development of the profession requires the continuous infusion of

new ideas and approaches. Much is to be gained by seeking to make this process as inclusive of the diverse breadth of psychologists as possible.

It is only with a clear vision of inclusion and a systematic approach to change spearheaded by courageous leadership that our professional organizations can become more integrated and diverse.

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About the Author



Bernardo M. Ferdman, PhD, received his doctorate in Psychology from Yale University. Dr. Ferdman is Professor at California School of Organizational Studies, Alliant International University. He has over 20 years experience as a teacher, writer, and consultant on issues of diversity and multiculturalism in organizations, ethnic and cultural identity, Latinos/as in the workplace, and organizational behavior and development. Dr. Bernardo is Past-President (2003-2005) of the Interamerican Society of Psychology, a Fellow of APA Division 9 (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) and recipient of the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize, and a Charter Fellow of the International Academy for Intercultural Research. Dr. Ferdman may be contacted at bferdman@alliant.edu.

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