Zachary W. Oberfield’s article “Accounting for Time: Comparing Temporal and Atemporal Analyses of the Business Case for Diversity Management” introduces some new considerations for work in the field of diversity management.

Upon initial reading, the study appeared to have little relevance to our actual work in the diversity field. The article uses diversity management as a business case to examine whether the passage of time changes the understanding of management strategies. The results of the study are not intended to provide guidance to diversity management professionals but rather to assess whether incorporating temporal analysis into the study of public management generally will improve our understanding of the effects of management actions.

The case study findings are limited to the cultural side of diversity management—certainly an important focus of New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli’s Division of Diversity Programs. We create and promote programs and initiatives to encourage inclusiveness as well as to foster communication. However, our mission, “to establish and maintain a work environment that provides equal opportunity and access, embraces diversity, and values the contributions and talents of all . . . employees,” is also heavily focused on recruitment and promotional opportunities and policies, which are not part of this study.

Nonetheless, the article presents practical applications for us. It is encouraging to know that cross-sectional analyses of diversity management strategies can be useful, as longitudinal analyses are difficult to obtain and assess when managers and policies change frequently. For example, a discrimination complaint procedure may be changed when a new manager takes over. The change may be for the better, but the differences make it difficult to compare the effects of previous experiences and findings. The study uses data from a large group of federal agencies. The findings show that employees felt an increase in cooperation, more satisfaction, and better-quality work as a result of a commitment from managers to a diverse workplace. Employee perception may be subjective, but it is also essential, and these findings are heartening.

Oberfield’s article also refers to studies showing that our work in the field of diversity management can produce valuable and useful changes in the workplace. Diversity helps expand the variety of ideas, experiences, and backgrounds that inform the workforce. Diversity adds to the ability of an organization to respond to challenges. More studies in the public sector, such as this one, will help us embrace and expand diversity to better adapt to change and improve performance in the workplace. When the understanding of diversity’s impact becomes more generally known, diversity managers will be sought out for guidance in workplace decisions.
We understand that the use of affirmative action in the public sector is under intensive examination. The recent decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (No. 09-50822 [5th Cir. 2014]) indicates that a narrowly tailored affirmative action program can be used in university admissions to create a diverse educational experience and ensure equal opportunity. However, *Fisher* is likely to be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, where its fate is unknown. Diversity management, on the other hand, is very much alive and thriving. Once again, the more knowledge we acquire to improve our methods and policies, and the more experience we acquire testing these strategies in the field, the better off we will be.

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