

Leadership Forum Notes

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Inclusive Leadership in Increasingly Diverse Organizations

Dr. Lewis is originally from New Orleans, attended undergrad in OH, and then went to NC for Grad School. He iterated that his perspective is this: "I love UK, but there is room for improvement as far as diversity and inclusivity." He also encourages us to think about what we bring to the table as far as representing diversity and the biases we all carry. To drive this home, Dr. Lewis described his experience as a K-12 student in New Orleans. He said he never went to school with anyone during that time who was not African-American. When he went to College, he was shocked to see a white grounds-person on the College campus. He admitted he had his own bias that white people did not do that kind of work (blue-collar jobs). Dr. Lewis also commented that what he discusses today could count for any organization, company, Campus, etc.

- 1.) There is a lot of discussion about Diversity on this Campus.
 - a. These conversations mostly revolve around students (approximately 30,000 students on UK's Campus).
 - b. What about the Diversity conversation in regard to Faculty and Staff?
 - i. Faculty and Staff diversity will improve student experience and retention as they are role models who can identify with students who bring a broader experience and perspective to the classroom or unit.
- 2.) Numbers are important but don't define diversity or inclusivity. We measure much by numbers.
 - a. What does an inclusive environment look like?
 - i. Differences are valued.
 - ii. Those different perspectives are included and given representation in decision-making conversations.
 - iii. Assimilation is NOT expected. Assimilation is dangerous.
 1. Melting pot vs. Salad Bowl.
 - a. Melting pot asks people to conform. Salad bowl allows for individuality. Actions and expectations speak volumes.
- 3.) Allow for honest conversations (this is a general header and *my* interpretation of the next section).
 - a. (As example of honest conversation) Dr. Lewis is very open when guiding doctoral students and openly cautions them to be very mindful of what they write their dissertations on.
 - i. Some topics are safer than others.
 - ii. One may be judged in the job market if his/her topic is too radical.
 - b. People do their best work when they are comfortable.
 - c. We model for students.
 - d. Students will be better prepared for jobs, dealing with people, etc. if they study in a diverse environment.
 - e. These conversations should look globally for content and talented people. Meaning, the best people to teach our classes and work at our campus aren't necessarily here (they may not be male, white, Christian, and under 40).
- 4.) Inclusivity is not tolerance.
 - a. A campus or an organization does not just become inclusive.
 - b. Inclusivity comes from decisive and deliberate action.

- 5.) Leadership with a focus on diversity and inclusivity.
- a. First, this is the definition we will use for *leadership* (did not get source of definition—sorry!): a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.
 - b. A leader doesn't always have a title and someone with a title isn't always a leader.
 - i. Leaders can emerge in different situations, depending on need, functions, goals, etc.
 - c. Leaders influence inclusivity.
 - i. Characteristics of Leaders who positively influence inclusivity:
 1. Courage.
 - a. Expect opposition. People will disagree with you.
 - b. You also have to have courage to face your own biases.
 2. Vision.
 - a. See the future. You can't move forward if you don't know where you want to go.
 - i. Cooperation vs. Collaboration. When you ask people to cooperate, you already have path in mind. When you ask people to collaborate, you are seeking diverse ideas and input.
 - ii. Transparency is important.
 - iii. Continual learning is also important.
 3. Strategy.
 - a. Set *quality* goals (not just easily achievable goals—Places of higher ed. tend to do this).
 - b. Have specific aims and targets.
 - c. Metrics and accountability.
 4. Determination.
 - a. Good intentions and passion can fall away if determination is not there.
 - d. Why not you?
 - i. In regard to the conversation and being an inclusive and diverse environment, we all have to have "skin in the game."
 - ii. We start the movement to make the experiences better for others.