Excellence in Leadership Program

Communicating Difference Matters: Implications for Leaders

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Communicating

• Sharing meaning
  – Explicit
  – Implicit
• Verbal, nonverbal
• Formal, informal
• Mediated
• Power-laden
Difference = Social Identity*

- Group oriented
- Membership (perceived by others and/or self)
- Meaningful to self and/or others
- Identifiable (labeled)
- Learned
- Assigned

Why Difference Matters

- Population projections
- Globalization
- Persistent inequities
- Potential for + change
- Challenges to address
Challenges

• Denial
• False dichotomies
• Simplified categories
• Focus on “other”
• Difference = problem
• Diversity as separate issue
Why Higher Ed Matters

• Source of constructing identities

• Site where we encounter differences

• Context for change*

The University of Colorado is committed to building a community of students, faculty, and staff in which diversity is a fundamental value. People are different, and the differences among them are what we call diversity -- a natural and enriching hallmark of life.
A climate of healthy diversity is one in which people value a rich panoply of diverse ideas, perspectives and backgrounds, individual and group differences, and communicate openly.
Accountability rests at all levels of the university, including administrative units and academic departments, as well as individual faculty, staff, and students.

http://www.cu.edu/regents/policy-10p-diversity
Challenges in Higher Ed

- Relegate responsibility to particular individuals or groups
- units
- disciplines/areas of study
- Polarize diversity and quality
- Perpetuate institutional –isms
- Tend to be reactive
Promising Practices

• Visible, sustained commitment
• Diversity as everyone’s responsibility
• Strategic plan
• Multiple assessments
• Varying rewards and accountability
• Proactive organizational development
• Holistic approaches
• Ongoing professional development
Implicit Association Tests
Unconscious Bias
What is Unconscious Bias?

• Form of rapid cognition

• Well documented, pervasive

• Replicates the social hierarchy
Why focus on UB?

• Influences attitudes and behavior
• Often contradicts conscious values
• Affects decision making
• Informs diversity efforts
• Can be managed and reduced
Unconscious Bias

- Culture
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Seniority
- Income
- Education
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical Ability
- Mental Ability
- Upbringing
- Age
- Gender
- Marital Status
The average height of a US president has been slightly under six feet since 1900.

Ninety percent of CEOs are of above average height.
Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians
Resume Research

Black Sounding Names
DeShawn Jefferson
DeAndre Washington
Ebony Booker
Aaliyah Jackson

White Sounding Names
Cody Baker
Jake Kelly
Claire Kruger
Amy Rasmussen

An examination of racial discrimination in the labor market for recent college graduates: estimates from the field.
John M. Nunley, Adam Pugh, Nicholas Romero, and Richard Alan Seals, Jr.
Working paper series / Auburn University, Department of Economics 2014
He Dropped One Letter In His Name While Applying for Jobs, and the Responses Rolled In

José

Joe

The Huffington Post | By Cate Matthews
Posted: 09/02/2014 2:43 pm ED
Cognitive, Cultural, & Contextual Factors
UB Recommendations

- Strive for consistency.
- Clarify criteria.
- Allow sufficient time on task.
- Be accountable for decisions.
- Gather examples (best practices; worst cases).
- Debrief processes and revise as needed.
UB Recommendations

• Remember that we all have biases.

• Commit to reducing your UB.

• Be mindful of T.U.I.*

• Establish guidelines for interaction.

• Foster inclusive communication contexts.

Search Committee Scenario
DM Recommendations

• (Re)Commit to difference matters
• Engage in self-reflexivity
• Be proactive
• Become more informed
• Work within your sphere of influence
• Identify and apply best practices
• Gather and share resources
• Other ideas?
Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.


New York: Continuum International Publishing.