Diversifying Leadership

Tackling the under-representation of BAME leaders in HE

In order to respond to current challenges and opportunities, the higher education sector needs to take full advantage of its wide pool of talent. Institutions must be committed to creating inclusive workplaces through systemic change.

Diversifying Leadership seeks to balance the development of skills for staff new to leadership in the sector with tackling the structural barriers resulting in the persistent underrepresentation of Black and Global Majority staff in leadership roles.

Participants of Diversifying Leadership have the space to explore their leadership approach and are given tools and techniques to develop and maintain a proactive career personality as leaders in higher education and beyond. Participants will be introduced to evidence-based strategies for survival and success. Alongside this, sponsors undertake a commitment to advocate for their participant and provide tangible opportunities for leadership.

Overview

Position on the pathway: New to Leading

Duration: Five one-day online workshops, including two facilitated online action learning sets and access to online resources as part of the programme

- Orientation webinar: 26 January 2021
- Module 1: Tuesday 16 February 2021
- Module 2: Tuesday 9 March 2021
- Module 3: (Action Learning Set): Tuesday 23 March 2021
- Module 4: Wednesday 28 April 2021
- Module 5: (Action Learning Set): Tuesday 11 May 2021

Advance HE member price: £1650 Non-member price: £2195
Who is Diversifying Leadership for?

Diversifying Leadership is aimed at aspiring Black and Global Majority academic and professional services staff who are either new to leadership in higher education and/or have experienced structural barriers to leadership while working in the sector.

Typically, participants will be working in roles at grade 6-8 and seeking progression opportunities through promotion, stretch projects or increased visibility. This will include (but is not limited to) lecturers, senior lecturers, co-ordinators and heads of service. Staff in roles either above or below these grades who are committed and able to meet the demands of the programme are also encouraged to apply.

How is the programme delivered?

Diversifying Leadership has been developed by experienced facilitators who have worked in the HE sector and identify with the lived experiences of the participants. A range of teaching and learning methods are used including discussion, group work, self-reflection and creative storytelling. Facilitated action learning set sessions are included to provide dedicated time for participants to work through live issues with the support of their peers.

Leadership is explored primarily through the lens of race and with an intersectional perspective, affording participants a rare opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues from across the UK. Taken-for-granted concepts of leadership are explored and critiqued, allowing alternatives to be considered.

A unique feature of the programme is the opportunity to work with a sponsor, minimally for the duration of the programme. Ideally, participants should identify a sponsor who is in a similar area of work and at two or three grades above them. While line managers are not expected to take on the role of a DL sponsor, they remain instrumental in supporting the career development of participants.

Diversifying Leadership sponsors are given guidance and support in the form of a webinar and a Sponsor Toolkit. The toolkit is a digital resource that explains why formal sponsorship schemes are needed for staff from racialised minority groups; it provides guidance on cross cultural advocacy, along with practical activities for sponsors to complete with their participant.
Programme outcomes

Participants will increase their practical and critical understanding of leadership. They will be able to draw upon their cultural and wider identity capital to remain authentic, while seeking leadership opportunities in the sector and beyond. This will include:

+ Continuing to work with their sponsors and other allies to increase visibility.
+ Developing strategic networks to increase visibility in the face of institutional barriers.
+ Increased confidence to apply for stretch roles commensurate with ability and potential.

Benefits of having a sponsor

Sponsors help in the development of leadership skills and characteristics such as:

+ **Action-orientated judgement**: by making decisions that moves the participant forward.
+ **Task competence**: opening up new opportunities.
+ **Understanding employees and their needs**: effective sponsors pay attention to their participants and genuinely care about helping them succeed.
+ **Capacity to motivate people**: through inspiring a participant and motivating them to do their best.
+ **Trustworthiness**: participants need to be able to depend upon and trust the person leading them.
+ **Self-confidence**: Having a sponsor is an endorsement of the participant's capabilities and increases the propensity for risk taking.
+ **Adaptability and flexibility**: by developing an ability to think outside the box and adapt quickly to changing situations for the participant.
+ **Creativity**: perhaps most importantly in terms of leadership skills, a sponsor not only possesses their own creativity, they are also able to foster creativity in the participant and ultimately among their staff members.

“Having completed the programme, I feel refreshed with positive energy; a sudden realisation that in HE, what makes a difference in BAME's career progression isn’t just achievements or what we know but who knows us.”

KELECHI DIBIE, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
Programme structure

Module one: Leadership, BAME Leadership and Lessons from the Labyrinth
Participants explore the meaning of leadership, reflect on their leadership journey to date and consider specific issues that impact on aspiring leaders from Black and Global Majority backgrounds working in higher education and the wider community. Participants identify their cultural capital and its importance in shaping them as leaders. During this session, participants discuss how to develop a protégé mindset in preparation for their relationship with their Diversifying Leadership sponsor.

Module two: Leadership, Power and Influence: changing the game
Module two explores issues relating to power and influence. Participants are asked to evaluate their political skills and consider how networking can be used more strategically to extend their reach. The hidden rules of leadership are discussed and participants are introduced to different influencing techniques.

Module three: Speaking actions into existence (action learning sets)
Participants have the opportunity to work through a live leadership issue in smaller peer groups. Each group has an experienced facilitator to provide support within learning set conventions. To prepare for this session, active listening skills are modelled and questioning techniques are practised.

Module four: Leadership tomorrow: vision, voice and visibility
Participants give an update on the actions agreed in their learning sets. The “double bind” of visibility is discussed and participants are introduced to storytelling techniques to articulate their new leadership story in a compelling way. Participants complete their action plan for their onward leadership journey.

Module Five: Leading change
Building on their knowledge and skills from the previous action learning session, participants will use peer coaching techniques to consolidate the learning developed over the previous modules. The focus will be on what it takes to be change agents in Higher Education. Finally, participants will reflect on the ‘distance travelled’ while on the programme.

Leadership insights
Modules two and four include input (themed talks followed by Q&A) from BAME leaders, mainly in higher education roles including academia, professional services and governance. This gives participants an opportunity to hear from leaders who were once in their position. Diversifying Leadership sponsors and alumni also provide input during Module one.
Who delivers the programme?

Jannett Morgan (Associate Programme Director) and Kemi Oladapo (Associate Facilitator) have delivered the programme since its inception and work with a core team of colleagues who have extensive experience of leadership development.

Diversifying Leadership is an open programme. This enables participants (many of whom feel isolated in their home institutions) to network with and learn from colleagues from different institutional contexts, sharing best practice and solutions in tackling shared challenges.

What can participants do next?

Too often, staff of colour have had to bear the burden of anti-racist work. In order for opportunities to exist for participants to develop further, institutions must remain proactive in removing systemic barriers that led to the need for Diversifying Leadership to be developed. This may include reviewing recruitment and selection processes, embedding a sponsorship culture, addressing bias and having conversations wider about race.

Participants, who will feel energised by the programme, can work with their institutions by, for example, sharing good practice, joining race equity networks and other affinity groups and contributing to strategic initiatives such as applications for the Race Equality Charter. Not all activities will be race-specific; participants will also be better equipped to apply for leadership roles in their institutions or elsewhere in the sector. Previous participants have gained promotion, led on projects high profile projects, become principal investigators, been appointed to committee roles and increased their visibility through speaking engagements.

Want to find out more about Diversifying Leadership?

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