## Developing a Paradigm of Diversity leadership

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The Diversity Leadership Summit, a cosponsored project of Division 13, 14, 35, 44,45, and 51 funded by an APA Interdivisional Grant was held on Jan 16, 2013 at the NMCS in Houston.  Fifteen diverse leaders representing corporate, higher education, government, military, and community non-profit industry sectors were invited to deliberate in a process to identify their view of leadership as informed by their identity dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and their lived experience.  Observers provided feedback to this process to identify relevant themes.  Our intent was to develop a contemporary paradigm of leadership that is inclusive of diversity and relevant to the realities of our social identities.

Our rationale for convening this Summit was: The state of diversity and leadership is changing at a fast pace nationally and internationally making it important for us to deliberate how our leadership models can be inclusive and relevant as we recruit and train our next generation of leaders.  As Chin & Eagly (2010) note, *“…the omission of diversity about leaders and followers in terms of culture, gender, race and ethnicity, or sexual orientation...has weakened the ability of research and theory to address some of the most provocative aspects of contemporary leadership, including (a) their limited access to leadership roles; (b)how leaders’ behavior are shaped by their dual identities as leaders and members of gender, racial, ethnic, or other identity groups; and (c) their potential to provide excellent leadership because of their differences.”(American Psychologist, April 2010, p. 216)*

All participants were inspired by this grounded process to develop leadership theory.  “Transformative, innovative, cutting edge, inspiring, and one of the best conferences in my career”, were some of the descriptions of the experience.  This was not just a conference.  We intend to disseminate and continue to evolve our findings from the Summit through our divisions' publications, through APA, and through our journals to contemporize and transform our paradigms of leadership relevant to a global and diverse society.  We also intend to use these findings to create leadership training that will help build the leadership pipelines and support our existing cadre of diverse leaders.

### Summit Themes

With this purpose in mind, the following is an overall summary of themes from the tapes of the Summit. While we had leaders from different industry sectors, this summary does not reflect or represent the different demands or characteristics of leading across different sectors. All the leaders and the observers emphasized the importance of both personal and professional lives. Personal life was a buffer and a source of self-care for diverse leaders. Unlike traditional leadership models that separate professional and personal lives, diverse leaders assert the unhealthiness of this bifurcation. They believe that everyone will reach higher levels of professional development if their personal lives are supported.

### Social identities

The social identities of the diverse leaders were central to their professional lives. They used the lenses from their personal and lived experiences with oppression and marginalization as a guide to changing their professional contexts in order to decrease this oppression for others through their leadership. Diverse leaders trust these experiences as a source of knowledge and purpose. Social identities are an important part of diverse leaders expressing their identities and speaking their truths. The theme of trusting one’s diversity lens as an important reality to support a leader’s empowerment to accomplish change was a central theme.

* Social identities are salient in the leadership of diverse leaders and were felt to influence the exercise of leaders. These include such dimensions as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, SES, religion.
* Intersectionality of these social identities with leadership was felt to be especially important. At times, these include attempts to reconcile multiple identities, deciding when to emphasize which identities depending on the member composition or organizational culture

### Social and Organizational Contexts

* Context and culture is important when talking about diversity leadership. What voices are represented as well as those that are missing
* Importance of leaders understanding organizational culture and being adaptable to differences across organization contexts in shaping how leadership is enacted and effective
* Direction, formality, and authority can vary across organizations so it is important to mesh your diversity goals with that of the organizational context and the informal rules and values that it supports
* Importance of family upbringing and family life or the life experiences that one draws upon and brings to the exercise of leadership
* Always being a symbol whether you want it or not

### Diverse Leader Characteristics

While many leader characteristics associated with effective leadership overlap and are common across all social identity groups, the following were some leader characteristics felt to be important especially when social identities are marginalized or less privileged; benefits and challenges with being from a non-dominant group. Diverse leadership requires a wide variety of both technical and interpersonal skills. Diverse leaders have to be adept at reading the cultural contexts of their workspaces and of being able to build relationships with a variety of constituents. There are additional characteristics that reflect their lived experiences associated with less privileged social identities or differing cultural values; these could be both strengths and weaknesses.

* Adaptability/Flexibility given the differences in social identities, and cultural values
* Resiliency
* Authenticity and being comfortable with oneself; translating your cultural values without losing yourself is a real challenge. How do you transcend tokenism? Need to build external network to compensate.
* Trailblazing/Creating New Solutions/Being a Visionary
* Communication to bring people together
* Self-Awareness amidst frequent challenges
* Confidence/Courage to be open and honest, to change
* Integrity – having a moral compass to do the right thing for the right reason
* Taking Risks to effect change
* Finding Common Ground
* Passion to promote equity and social justice
* Self-Promotion balanced with Humility – self-promotion can be important and necessary in some contexts to rise to leadership ranks, but may clash with cultural and gender expectations
* Valuing humility and having a genuine respect for differences and others
* Inclusivity
* Being Compassionate
* Ability to take another’s perspective, and always questioning our own assumptions

### Processes of Diversity Leadership

* Importance of Collaboration as a process
* Balancing empowerment and consensus building with the need to exert authority
* Using competition to promote diversity goals may be a useful tool
* Building networks and community
* Emphasis on changing the culture to push for diversity as a goal
* Accountability
* Balancing power and influence as a leader with a servant leadership perspective; using power and influence wisely
* Working with different and diverse groups toward a common direction
* Activating a vision for change
* Making the Business case for Diversity—Diversity needs to be compelling to all leaders; therefore viewing Diversity as a competitive advantage and diversity as driving the bottom line are important concepts to define the goals of an organization
* Understanding what motivates people is important to preparing to lead a group; need to get buy-in to make diversity leadership happen
* Giving Back to and Empowering Others is a responsibility of diversity leadership

### Mentoring/Building Pipelines

* Mentors are crucial. They model risk taking and strategies for staying consistent with one’s own values and identities. Mentorships seem to last across time and geographical space.
* Mentoring others was viewed as a vital part of being a diverse leader if we are to build a pipeline of diverse leaders
* Receiving mentoring was viewed as equally important to receive the support and affirmation needed to face the challenges associated with leadership especially when leader social identities are also marginalized or less privileged
* Sometimes there is the tendency to pair mentors only with mentees who share the same social identity; we need to balance between the importance of talking to multiple people with multiple perspectives vs. finding someone where the affinity because of shared identities is important

### Challenges Associated with Maintaining Authenticity and Integrity as a Diverse Leader

Diverse leaders are pioneers with courage to initiate needed social change. But there is also a tension with not having to pay too high a price in their personal lives while working to be an effective leadership. Many have associated with “Having to work twice as hard to get half as far” or “Always having to prove oneself”. As one leader said, “as a woman and as a minority, you have to be extraordinary to be a leader; white men only need to be ordinary”.

* Diverse leaders challenge existing cultural scripts, but also risk negative consequences in doing so.
* Living in two worlds, diverse leaders face clashes between cultural and organizational values, push and pull between family traditions and requirements of being a leader, e.g., needing to self-promote contrary to cultural values
* Diverse leaders often face challenges of bias, oppression and marginalization even in their role as leaders; double bind situations are common in being expected to perform according to stereotypic social roles and simultaneously criticized for not being an effective leader when they do
* Diverse leaders often means being a trailblazer; your uniqueness takes you to an extraordinary level
* Authenticity connected to coming out or role conflicts between one’s cultural values and organizational values is a challenge and a decision many diverse leaders face
* Diverse leaders often never lose their outsider status
* While social identities are important, you can also diminish leader effectiveness because a focus on it oneself to being categorized and stereotyped

#### Self-protection/Safety

* Safety of oneself – while this is a dimension most leaders rank low as instrumental to effective leadership, diverse leaders find self-protection to be somewhat more important. This is attributed to more frequent challenges to one’s competence and effectiveness as a leader when social identities include being a member of a marginalized or less privileged social group. This may mean not taking things personally.
* Creating Safe Havens - Safety in the group or organization and serving as a protective shield for others was emphasized accordingly to allow for diverse voices especially when organizational cultures and values are more homogeneous or aligned with those of more privileged groups in society. This promotes creativity and innovation
* Omission of women and racial/ethnic minorities from senior ranks of leadership is not uncommon; therefore, it is often important to be careful about self-presentation which may be jarring because they do or do not fit the stereotype of the social identity of the leader.
* Coming out is a tough process because people bring LGBT stigma to the workplace; importance with LGBT leaders to be proud of who you are since you often told that you are not OK.

### Diversity Leadership Paradigm

In summarizing a paradigm for diversity leadership, leaders spoke compellingly about the importance of recognizing where we stand in history and the work of those who came before us. One leader stressed “being grounded in the ancestors and looking forward. Going from reality and looking to history and bringing it in to today…” Another leader described the process of creating a sense of community to help be an effective leader. She asked herself what was it that she needed when she felt alone and she realized that she needed friends and a like-minded community as she grew and thrived as a leader. Another leader encouraged younger leaders to look for opportunity and take advantage of leadership positions at an early age to set the stage for future accomplishments. Finally, a leader attested to the support she received from mentors to not “subordinate dimensions of myself; to not tell less than full truths.” This is central to the importance of the personal and lived experiences that diverse leaders bring to their leadership

The importance of identity development as it relates to the development of leaders was pervasive as another overarching theme. An observer posed the question: “In developing leaders, is there some value in mentoring toward identity development? [It seems that] leaders able to make the greatest contribution are at the farther end of that identity development.” The ensuing discussion touched upon identity being critical to leadership and “correlated with authenticity.” Some leaders spoke about using their heritage as a leader and learning from the good and bad. Others detailed how embracing your complete identity as a leader is liberating. An example was given about how LGBT stigma can be invisible and that given the “invisibility of privilege,” the identity piece of leadership is not experienced by people in the same way. This is central to the importance of social identities in the exercise of leadership among diverse leaders.

Change and the adaptive change skills that leaders need to have in order to be effective was a third overarching principle in the development of a paradigm for diversity leadership. A leader described how cultural fluency is a skill that leaders should work on developing to enable them to lead across different organizational contexts and cultures. Building on that point, an observer gave examples of generational issues and the development of cultural fluency. Another observer added that she felt younger generations were struggling with their comfort level about who they were and noted: “It appears to me that you [leaders] are settled with who you are and are conscious of how other people view you and what impacts your role as a leader. Knowing yourself has been important; to be a leader takes being aware of your surroundings, where you’re at and what people think of you.” Many participants felt that oftentimes people assert that they “cannot see race;” to which a leader spoke about how one reconciles the discomfort with race that exists when such statements are made. He asked; “At what point do you take that leadership and say I am going to go there or not? That is the burden of awareness.” These skills are ones often gained by virtue of being diverse and having to live in two different worlds.

Some observers spoke about the personal-professional identity dynamic and the role of spirituality in leadership. With regard to the personal-professional identity dynamic, discussion centered on understanding gender roles and leadership as well as recognizing that there are costs to breaking the rules in regard to traditional notions of that personal-professional leadership balance. One leader said there is “pain that comes with [challenging these notions] and courage that comes with doing that.” Another stressed the importance of communicating through difficult topics. A number of leaders addressed spirituality by speaking to their belief about the need for a moral compass and purpose, “how to be in this world,” and the importance of being “robust, vibrant and healthy in all dimensions of [one’s] life.” Leaders did caution that spirituality does not equal a moral compass and that there is also a need not to impose one’s beliefs on others. This captures some of the challenges faced by diverse leaders in their enactment of leadership.

Finally, the take-away messages were stimulated by an observer’s question: “What guidance would [these diverse] leaders offer about how to navigate future leadership issues?” Leaders responded with the following:

* Focus on global issues by bringing all generations and [voices] in to the conversation;
* Play a role by pushing social justice issues locally which will have an eventual global impact;
* “Be a mentor; be a protégé; speak your truth;”
* Speak the business case first to get buy in from those in power; mentoring is going to be an obligation for all leaders in an organization;
* “Don’t lose who you are in the process or the things that make you unique;”
* “Know your purpose and find a network that you can give support to and get support from;”
* It is important to be technologically literate in today’s environment of rapid change;
* Relationship and consensus building is so important so technology should not be our main communication vehicles; and
* “Discern your own values; [maintain your authenticity;] no job is worth violating your own values.”

A synthesizing principle was evoked by one observer talking about the need for evolution and transformation and another talking about fluidity, process, relationality and intersectionality in order to capture the lived experiences and social realities of diversity leadership. With these overarching principles, it was recommended that the following are important to incorporate into a paradigm for diversity leadership:

1. Influence of social and organizational contexts on leadership
2. Influence of personal and lived experiences on leadership
3. Incorporating theories on race and racism, and social identities into a paradigm for diversity leadership
4. Adaptability and flexibility on the part of diverse leaders to adjust their leadership style to the organizational contexts in which they lead
5. Diversity as a core competency for leaders and members
6. Add Communication, Trust, and Change to existing leadership models
7. Accountability to ensure that diversity is incorporated and bias is eliminated from formal performance appraisal systems and organizational audits
8. Focus on a mission imperative to align a diversity leadership paradigm with the mission of the organization
9. Mentoring to build the pipeline and expand the applicant pool to leadership; and to provide support to diverse leaders facing the challenges of being diverse
10. Focus on diversity and inclusion as core competencies to include: **R**esilience, **E**xcellence, **S**trength), **P** (), **E**mpathy), **C**ourage, and **T**enacity --RESPECT
11. Be mindful of what’s coming down the horizon and be prepared to change

### Division 45: Successes of and Challenges for the Division Related to the LDS Themes: Edith Arrington, Vanessa Li, & Jean Lau Chin

The Society for the Psychology Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, Division 45 of the American Psychological Association (APA), was one of the co-sponsors for the Leadership Diversity Summit (LDS) held in January 2013 preceding the National Multicultural Conference and Summit in Houston, TX. Diverse leaders across sectors convened for this day-long summit that directly explored how dimensions of diversity—including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender—shape the expression and experience of leadership. The themes which emerged at LDS are particularly relevant to Division 45 and its members who are psychologists of color or psychologists committed to diversity. Division 45 members directly address ethnic minority issues in psychological research and their application within psychology (e.g., clinical, consulting, or industrial/organizational psychology). As the APA division that is “the major representative body for psychologists who conduct research on ethnic minority concerns or who apply psychological knowledge and techniques to ethnic minority issues ([http://division45.org/about/)](http://division45.org/about/%29),” Division 45 was uniquely situated to collaborate with other APA divisions and the leaders who gathered at LDS to explore the diversity and leadership.

There were a number of themese that arose over the course of the Leadership Diversity Summit that were germane to psychologists of color and psychologists committed to diversity. Of particular relevance were discussions of social and organizational context, challenges faced by diverse leaders within these contexts, and the critical role of mentoring and building a diverse pipeline of leaders. Implications for how these themes relate to diverse psychologists are outlined below.

Leaders enact their roles within specific social and organizational contexts. To that end, LDS convened leaders across contexts including government, academia, and the corporate arena. The history and contemporary reality of oppression and marginalization of ethnic minorities in society-at-large is paralleled in these work settings and sets a unique context for diverse leaders to enact their leadership. For leaders of color, “representation matters” which pertains to the level at which their community is represented in their leadership context as well as having their voices represented. Often this representation can be symbolic, so diverse leadership must go beyond tokenism where one voice is expected to represent all groups.

Tokenism is one example of the challenges diverse leaders face in their social and organizational contexts. Another challenge that leaders of color encounter is that they are often pioneers in attaining leadership roles. Consequently, there is constant pressure to prove oneself given the history of exclusion of people of color from leadership roles. This pioneer status can also result in leaders feeling that they must conform to the status quo of what is defined as good leadership. The danger here is that the congruence (or incongruence) between racial and ethnic cultural group norms and organizational norms in contexts where one leads often can erode one’s authority and legitimacy as a leader. Furthermore, continuing patterns of exclusion in and out of the workplace set a stage for leaders of color where they must, as one of the LDS participants asserted, show “courage to initiate needed social change.” This display of courage by leaders of color is often complicated by the unspoken demands they confront within organizational contexts to behave according to racial and ethnic stereotypes, creating a double bind situation where these leaders believe they must “work twice as hard to get half as far.”

For Division 45 members and other diverse leaders, it is often a struggle to challenge these existing cultural scripts in their work settings due to the potential for negative consequences to doing so. For example, assertiveness by diverse leaders may be perceived as aggression due to existing cultural scripts about their particular community. Additionally, diverse leaders often need to manage the push and pull between family and cultural traditions and the requirements of being a leader in mainstream settings (e.g., needing to self-promote which can be contrary to cultural values or balancing the individualist culture that exists in some work arenas with the collectivist nature of their home communities).

In response to the challenges encountered by diverse leaders, LDS participants described how they used their social identities as a resource (rather than a weakness) and how their racial or ethnic identity was a key component of their leadership style. Social identities, including such dimensions as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, SES, religion, cultural heritage, educational background, etc., were salient for all the leaders at LDS. Virtually all of the participating leaders and observers at LDS emphasized the importance of both their personal and professional lives on the exercise of leadership. Their personal lives—which were grounded and shaped by their social identities—were often a buffer and a source of self-care for these diverse leaders. Given the ways that leaders of color at LDS spoke about using their “personal and lived experiences with oppression and marginalization” as a lens through which they express their identity and as a foundation from which to impact their organizations, Division 45 members would do well to extend the scope of the research they conduct on resiliency, multiculturalism, ethnic minority communities, etc., to better understand leadership development.

In our increasingly interconnected and global society, effective leadership practices will incorporate an affirmative paradigm that recognizes the benefits of diverse perspectives on leadership from individuals across social identities. Division 45 members can be at the forefront of a new base of research that explores how intersectionality of various aspects of social identity influences the exercise of leadership. Indeed, in her recent work Chin (2013) investigates the **“**importance of social identities and lived experiences associated with variables of race, ethnicity, gender, and minority status in our conceptualizations of leadership (p.2).”

Division 45 endorses the importance of collaboration as a process and integral part of the dynamic and interactive nature of leadership. Division 45 values collaboration as a means to help support building networks and empowering communities.For ethnic minority leaders, a particular challenge is how to balance empowerment and consensus building while maintaining authority and credibility as a leader since collaboration is often associated with indecision and weakness.Another component of the process of diversity leadership is how to use competition to promote diversity goals within an organization. Efforts to promote diversity as a competitive advantage that supports the mission of an organization must be balanced against the [perceived] threat of change engendered by diversity goals. The LDS provided a good reminder for leaders to keep their values and identity as they engaged in the process of leadership: “Don’t lose who you are in the process or the things that make you unique.”

Along with the importance of collaboration to diversity leadership, Division 45 focuses on mentoring as being vital to diverse leadership if we are to build a pipeline of diverse leaders. LDS participants spoke to the need for mentoring and building pipeline. Mentoring new and diverse leaders was deemed not only important, but a critical obligation for all leaders. “Be a mentor; be a protégé; speak your truth” was a motto articulated by several leaders during LDS. Having mentors of one’s race and ethnicity can model risk taking and offer strategies for remaining true to one’s cultural values and social identities. Division 45 programs such as Links and Shoulders and the new Leadership Development Institute of CNPAAEMI [Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests] are ways to support and build these mentoring relationships. These efforts can span time and geographical space and help junior colleagues access positions of leadership while receiving the support and affirmation needed to face the challenges often associated with marginalized or less privileged social identities. Within the scope of APA and its divisions such as Division 45, the need for leadership institutes as well as opportunities to connect senior scholars with students, mentors with research fellows, and seasoned psychologists with early career practitioners is essential to build pipelines to leadership and to expand the diversity of leaders within those ranks. More specifically, conferences such as Division 45’s Biennial Division 45 Conference, the National Multicultural Conference and Summit, and other leadership programs such as APA’s Minority Fellowship Program (and its Psychology Summer Institute and other programming), provide forums for emerging leaders and graduate students to network with peers and be mentored by senior scholars.

#### Next Steps in the Movement toward Diverse Leadership

The overarching themes identified from the LDS point to the importance of social identity to diverse leadership; the challenges diverse leaders face; the social and organizational contexts in which diverse leadership is enacted; and the necessity for mentoring and building a pipeline of diverse leaders. In closing, since ethnic minority research in areas of leadership is important to promoting diversity leadership and capturing the lived experiences of diverse leaders, the members of Diversity 45, who are psychologists of color and psychologists committed to diversity, are well situated to collaborate with leaders across sectors and APA divisions to develop a paradigm for diversity leadership.