

**Training Student Leaders in Community Building  
Amid Cultural and Religious Difference on a College Campus**

A Capstone Action Project

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## **Abstract**

The reality of globalization and increasing diversity within the United States combines to make interaction with persons of nationalities, cultures, and religions other than one's own an increasingly commonplace experience. One of the settings in which this is evident is the diversity of students living in dormitories on college campuses. The overarching vision of this action research project is building an inclusive community among college students in which cultural and religious diversity is seen as a gift rather than a threat. Building this kind of community requires awareness, knowledge, and skills within designated student leaders.

Working with student development staff, the researcher provided a training experience for student leaders on a college campus. The training focused on the development of the student leader's awareness of their own cultural and religious biases while cultivating curiosity, respect, and engagement across differences. The measured outcomes were the internal changes within student leaders that will prepare them to exercise culturally and religiously competent leadership within the realm of student life on campus. The change was measured through pre- and post-training surveys of attitudes, values, and beliefs. The most significant changes shown because of the training were in awareness of the impact of biases and assumptions and in awareness of the value of building relationships with persons from other cultures and religions.

*Keywords: diversity; inclusion; student leadership development; cultural competency; inter-religious engagement; community building*

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## **CHAPTER 1 - Introduction to Project**

### **Purpose and Scope**

This capstone action project focuses on cultivating self-awareness and interpersonal relationship skills of student leaders in a multicultural and inter-religious college dormitory environment. Through the development of these skills, they will cultivate an inclusive, compassionate community of culturally and religiously diverse students. The student leaders, who are the focus of this project, are dormitory Resident Assistants (RAs). They are identified through an application and vetting process led by the Dean of Students and the student development staff. They arrive on campus for four days of orientation for their leadership role prior to other students arriving on campus. In this orientation, they receive training in a variety of policies, procedures, and skills that are important for them to fulfill their responsibilities. Within this orientation context, I will be leading a two-hour training session on multicultural and interreligious leadership. The change that I will measure is the internal change within these student leaders through that training event that will prepare them to exercise culturally and religiously competent leadership within the realm of student life on campus.

The college that will be the focus of my capstone project is one of five colleges or universities that operate within the denomination, Mennonite Church USA. The Mennonite Church grew out of the radical wing of the protestant reformation of the 1500's. Among their core beliefs were the separation of church and state, non-resistant pacifism, and adult, voluntary membership in the church based on personal commitment and belief. Baptism was the public sign of the adult voluntary commitment, thus they rejected the common practice of infant baptism practiced by the Catholic church and other protestant reformers. They were labeled as

“Anabaptists”—meaning “re-baptizers”—by their opponents. They were severely persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant controlled states because the church-state alliance viewed voluntary church membership as a threat to the social order. The strong belief in the separation of church and state—which was often phrased as “separation from the world”—coupled with the early experience of severe persecution led the Anabaptists and their various descendent groups, including the Mennonites, to function as separatists in whatever land they migrated as they sought to escape persecution.<sup>1</sup>

Following the separatist impulse, the college established by 1909 to provide Mennonite young adults an alternative to secular higher education. This separatism and isolationism has been present in the campus ethos to varying degrees throughout its history.<sup>2</sup> The student body has been predominantly young adults who identify as Mennonite. In recent years there has been a significant demographic shift in the student body. Mennonite students now only make up about 25% of the student body, dramatically increasing the racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. About 13% of the students are from other countries. This shift has been driven, in part, by declining numbers of college age Mennonite youth which has precipitated broader recruiting efforts to assure sufficient numbers of students for the college to remain viable. It is also reflective of changes within the Mennonite Church as it has shifted away from its separatist roots to become more socially, culturally, and politically engaged.

Despite this shift in demographics, student leaders, including RAs, continue to be predominantly Mennonite, although that trend is beginning to shift. The college has embraced a

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<sup>1</sup> C.J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1993)

<sup>2</sup> John Sharp, *A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009*, (Telford: Cascadia Publishing, 2009)

vision to become a broadly inclusive campus. One of the foundational value statements of the college is, “Celebrate differences in backgrounds and cultures and make every effort to learn from each other.”<sup>3</sup> There have been previous attempts to work intentionally at issues of diversity and inclusion on campus including an attempt at establishing a “Diversity and Inclusion Council” that was made up of a mix of faculty, staff, students, and community members. With changes in staff and administration, the council’s activity diminished and then it disbanded even though creating a campus community that is inclusive of cultural and religious diversity remains a stated goal.

Leadership within the dorms is structured under the office of the Vice President of Student Development. The Dean of Students supervises four Resident Directors (RD) who are paid staff who live in apartments in the dorms. The dorms are divided into mods which are groups of 10 to 14 students with an RA assigned to each mod. Being an RA is considered a campus job that is awarded through an application and vetting process. RAs arrive on campus prior to other students for orientation. During orientation, they receive a variety of leadership training including such things as emergency response, first aid, conflict management, and policies and procedures in response to violations of the lifestyle code that all students who live in the dorm are required to sign. RAs have received diversity training as a part of their orientation for the past several years.

It is within the context of the RA orientation that I will provide introductory training in cultivating an inclusive community amid cultural and religious diversity through awareness, curiosity, and communication. The training will seek to develop awareness of the student leader’s own cultural biases and how those biases impact their ability to understand the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hesston.edu/about/mission-vision-and-values/>

experience of persons of other cultures and religions. It will seek to cultivate curiosity about the gifts and the perspectives of the other and the contribution that they can uniquely make within their mod and in the broader campus community. This change will be measured by pre- and post-training testing. Two follow-up sessions are scheduled two weeks into the school year. The first is with the Dean and Students and RDs. The second will be with the RAs. These follow up sessions will include reflection will include further evaluation of the training through inviting reflection on their experiences in multicultural and interreligious engagement in their first two weeks of the school year. While beyond the scope of this action research project, the Dean of Students has invited me to remain connected with the RAs through this school year for continued consultation and monitoring of the broader impact of the internal change within these student leaders.

### Guiding Values and Project Significance

This project is built on the foundational belief that human differences are a gift. At the macro level differences in culture, religion, race, and nationality all contribute to create a greater global whole than could be experienced with the absence of any. At the micro level within those larger social categories of difference, individual differences of gender identity, personality type, perspectives, and personal interests and abilities each make important contributions to the larger system. This truth is illustrated in the environment as ecosystems thrive in the balance of a wide variety of organisms and species interacting with one another. A human hand is most effective when its four similar fingers are combined with the opposable thumb. Theologically, in the Christian tradition, the apostle Paul elegantly described the community of the followers of Jesus

as “the body of Christ” and describes the effective functionality of the whole dependent on the interconnection of unique parts.<sup>4</sup>

Simply because difference has great value, does not mean that it is easy. Difference is also the root of misunderstanding, tension, and conflict. Tension and conflict are not necessarily bad things to be avoided. In fact, avoiding conflict contributes to the escalation the negative elements of conflict that diminish the ability to discover the gifts of difference. Discovering and experiencing the gift of difference amidst the challenges that it presents requires the embrace of values of the dignity of all persons, who must be engaged with respect, curiosity, and a desire to see things through their perspective. Teaching the importance of these values is not only the end goal of this project, it must be the means as well. Living these values is not only about focusing them toward the other, but it is also about mindfully cultivating the awareness of one’s own value, dignity, and agency. Cultivating and putting these values into practice may not resolve the conflicts in the sense that differences disappear. Rather it transforms the conflict through an understanding of how differences can work together for the common good.

While this is a micro level project, its significance begins awareness of significant shifts at the macro level. We live in an increasingly pluralistic age in which encounters with persons of nationalities, cultures, and religions other than one’s own has become an increasingly common experience. This is driven, in part, by exponential, technological advances in global transportation and communication. The increasing capacity to move people and goods quickly around the world via jet aircraft and ever larger cargo ships has expanded access to natural resources, labor, and markets. The digital communication revolution has enabled corporations, non-profit organizations, and individuals to connect with people from around the world, readily

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

and cheaply facilitating increased awareness, relationships, and collaborative efforts that could barely be imagined a few decades ago. Political, economic, and environmental factors have caused a dramatic increase in global migration. People of different cultural and religious backgrounds not only collaborate from a distance or briefly visit one another's countries, but they live together in the same communities, shop at the same stores, work side by side in businesses, care for one another in the practice of medicine, and study in the same schools.

The increase in globalization and pluralism has led to two opposite outcomes. On the one hand, it has led to conflicts that range from misunderstandings and miscommunication to vying for political and economic dominance and control. These conflicts have bred mistrust and animosity. Some conflicts have erupted into violence, both domestically and globally. These incidents stir fear and hatred toward those who do not fit the dominant cultural norms. A reflexive response of isolationist nationalism marked by rigidity and a desire for conformity and uniformity is growing in many countries, including the United States. Conflicts across the world, reported through the instantaneous and unfiltered formats of social media, contribute to local prejudice, fears, and animosity toward the persons of diverse cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, increasing pluralism of globalization brings new opportunities for social engagement and economic advancements. Businesses that cultivate the ability to work together across cultural divides can substantially expand the talent pool of perspective employees, expand their market base, and increase their capacity to provide excellence in customer service. Culturally competent health care organizations increase the quality of patient care and limit their liability risk. As diverse groups of people learn to work together in these contexts, the broader social context is transformed as they also discover the joy of living together in community.

Stemming the spiraling negative consequences and enhancing the potential of the positive outcomes of increasing pluralism requires the development of new understandings and skills. These new cultural competencies need to be applied across social and economic sectors including business, health care, education, manufacturing, and governance. These competencies include self-awareness of the biases and assumptions of one's own culture, sufficient knowledge of other cultures to provide an understanding of the biases and assumptions that shape their perspectives, and the ability to communicate across cultural differences. Communication across cultural and religious differences is a multifaceted challenge. It includes learning to listen to the other seeking to understand their intended meaning through their worldview and speaking in a way that the intended message is understandable through the biases and assumptions of the other. This communication often happens between people who do not share a primary language. Developing competency in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagements is an essential first step in the efforts to transform these conflicts, reduce fear, violence and animosity and begin to experience the vast opportunities for social and economic advancement.

In the developmental phase of this project, I engaged in dialogue with local stakeholders in business, health care, and education. These conversations confirmed that the challenges and opportunities of globalization and pluralism were present in our community. A repeated refrain was that of employers seeking employees who have awareness, knowledge and skills that allow them to work effectively in cross-cultural engagements. Awareness of this desire by employers pointed toward the importance of examining how these qualities are being cultivated in higher education so that graduates enter the job market with those skills. I, therefore, narrowed the focus of my study to the context of higher education and expanded my stakeholder conversation within our local college to include administration, faculty, and student development staff.

The local college has a strong vision for being a campus that values cultural and religious difference as a gift to their community. They had attempted to move toward that vision with the establishment of an Inclusion and Diversity Committee made up of faculty, staff, and students. There was some energy behind it during its first year of existence. When the faculty leader of that initiative retired, the second year lost energy. By the third year it had faded with little long-term impact. The other evidence of a gap between their vision and values and the reality that they experienced was in the student experience in the dormitory. Despite an intentional plan to create diverse dorm encounters by making sure that each small dorm unit had a variety of nationalities, ethnic groups, and religions, the students were described as “self-segregating.” They socialized, ate in the cafeteria, and formed study groups that created circles of sameness. While there were not significant conflicts or outbursts, the vision of enriching cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement was not developing. Through these conversations with stakeholders it began to emerge that a leverage point for change was in training the student leaders to provide effective facilitation for cultivating the vision within these small groups of diverse students living in the dorms.

### Limitations

A significant limitation of this study is its narrow focus on the change within the student leaders in an introductory training event. Follow up with these student leaders to explore how these concepts have shaped their own leadership and response to cultural and religious challenges that they encounter will be important in measuring the long-term impact of this initial change. Additional research regarding how the skills and experiences shape the campus ethos over the span of a semester and an entire school year would provide even further evidence of the

impact of the outcomes of this training. These follow up steps are a part of the plan for my ongoing engagement with the college, but are beyond the scope of this capstone action research project.

It is also a limitation that this study is carried out in the context of one small college in central Kansas. Repeating this study, or studies like this, in a larger number of contexts and in larger colleges and universities that have even greater cultural and religious diversity would provide a broader base of data regarding the effectiveness of the training.

#### Definitions of Terms

- Resident Assistant (RA): Student leadership role fulfilled by college students who carry a full-time course load and live on campus in a dormitory. This leadership role is filled by students who apply for the position and are vetted by the student development staff at the college. They receive training, supervision, and a stipend for their leadership role.
- Resident Director (RD): Student development staff who are hired by the college. They are the direct supervisors of the RAs and are directly supervised by the Dean of Students. They have direct student contact in campus activities that are designed to build relationships among the students and between students and staff. They also engage students directly in areas of discipline at times when student life covenants are broken, or at times of conflict between students.
- Mod: a grouping of five to seven dorm rooms, housing 8 to 14 students. Students may choose their roommates but are assigned to a mod to assure diversity of persons in the mod. Each mod is led by an RA.

- **Interreligious engagement:** In the context of this study interreligious engagement is defined as encounters between individuals who have divergent religious beliefs and practices, including no religious beliefs and practices. For the purposes of this study, this terminology does not refer to institutional engagement between leaders or representatives of different religions or religious institutions.
- **Cross-cultural engagement:** In the context of this study, cross-cultural engagement is defined as encounters between individuals who do not share elements of cultural experience. These elemental differences include things like race, ethnicity, nationality, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, geographical location, educational background of family, and extra-curricular focus.
- **Power and privilege:** Socially constructed cultural and religious norms that are granted preferential status and influence. These are often held without awareness or reflexivity.

## **CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review and Initial Stakeholder Dialogue**

### Introduction to Literature Review

This capstone project began with a broad interest in exploring the potential benefits of intentionally utilizing the inter-religious and cross-cultural engagements that naturally take place in society: workplace, health care, education, retail, and so on. Given the time limited nature of this project it became important to narrow the focus to only one aspect of one area. For reasons outlined in chapter one, I chose to focus on the dormitory experience of students on a college campus. This process of narrowing resulted in a two-stage process of stakeholder engagement and literature review. The first stage explored the impact of increasing cultural and religious pluralism within the context of local organizations. This research focused on understanding the challenges and opportunities that stakeholders experienced in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement and approaches to overcoming the challenges and embracing the opportunities that transformed that diversity from a threat to an asset for the organization and the broader community. The second stage was to narrow the scope of my research to the stakeholders and literature that focused narrowly on the unique context of cultural and religious diversity in the student life aspect of higher education. This two-step process was important in narrowing focus of my project within the broader social and cultural context. Each section of this chapter will outline the learnings in researching the broader context followed by the learnings from the narrower focus. These studies highlight the combination of the self-awareness and the unique relationship skills that are essential components of effective cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement.

The central search tool for my literature research for both stages of this project was the Claremont Lincoln University online library and associated journal databases. I also utilized “Research Gate,”<sup>5</sup> a tool that gave me access to certain articles from the *Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion*. Search terms in the first stage of research included “cultural competency,” “inclusion and diversity,” “inclusion and diversity in the workplace,” “religion in the workplace,” “cross-cultural conflict resolution” and “spiritual capital.” These search terms turned up a diverse assortment of books and peer reviewed articles that provided an intriguing mix of perspectives for this step in the process.

In the second, narrower focus of research, I engaged in a search for academic literature regarding leadership training models for building culturally and religiously inclusive communities, particularly among young adults. My initial search terms of “inclusion and diversity”—which is the common terminology on campuses for positive cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement—turned up few resources. I tried a variety of similar words also with limited results. When I began to search using the word, “multicultural” a flood of articles began to appear. I narrowed my search to “multicultural leadership training.” Further narrowing to focus on campus or university settings provided an even more focused body of literature. I reviewed the abstracts of about 25 documents before narrowing my focus down to thirteen articles for the review. One weakness of my choice of articles may be that the journal *New Directions for Student Services* dedicated their entire winter of 2013 issue to the focus of multicultural training initiatives. Five of my chosen articles are from this one journal. While they are peer reviewed, being part of the same publication at the same time period limits the diversity of my search. The articles did connect very directly to my question.

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<sup>5</sup> Research Gate, <https://www.researchgate.net>

## Past Perspectives on Training for Multicultural Leadership

In both the broader and narrow search for material for the literature review I found very little literature that is prior to 2000. I interpret this as an indication that study of the intersectionality of cultures and religion in the workplace is a relatively new discipline brought on by the increasing reality of globalization and cultural pluralism within specific geographic regions. History suggests that past cross-cultural interactions were predominantly marked by dominance and suppression, such as the practices of colonialism and slavery or the even more extreme actions of overthrow and genocide, exemplified by patterns of engagement such as the “Doctrine of Discovery.” These historic approaches saw cultural and religious diversity as threat to be conquered rather than an asset to be cultivated. They did not see any potential benefit in seeking mutual understanding, let alone collaboration that would build the common good. These attitudes remain visible in our world today and are a part of the resistance to exploring the case for the benefits of engaging in cultural diversity.

Lambert, Myers, and Simons, in the introduction to *50 Activities for Achieving Cultural Competence*, speak to the recent change of globalization and pluralism on cross-cultural interaction in the workplace by saying, “We used to experience culture shock (‘Oh, did they really do/say that?’) when we travelled between countries. Now we experience culture shock just sitting at our desks as we engage with people in the workplace who come from all around the world.”<sup>6</sup> Cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement has rapidly expanded to become a regular experience across multiple cultures, often in the same experience. Due to this recent and rapid

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<sup>6</sup> Jonamay Lambert, Selma Myers, and George Simons, *50 Activities for Achieving Cultural Competence*, (Amherst: HRD Press, 2009.) 9

rise of globalization there is very limited past research on this topic in either the broader context or the narrower focus of this project.

### Current Perspectives on Training for Multicultural Leadership

The initial phase of my capstone project research focused on exploration of literature that addressed the broad social, economic, and religious context of cultural and religious difference. This research revealed differing reasons why it is important to engage in this research at this time. Lambert, Myers, and Simons, framed the importance of new research by saying, “Successful international managers reconcile dilemmas daily and see cross-cultural differences as an opportunity to get the best of both worlds. This means creating new ways of looking at and dealing with our differences. Not fighting each other about how we are, or are not, going to behave, but combining our strengths and avoiding compromise because that often leads to mediocre solutions .”<sup>7</sup> Along with other authors such as Judi Neal,<sup>8</sup> Richard Peregory,<sup>9</sup> Danah Zohar,<sup>10</sup> and Derven, Leri, and Gundling,<sup>11</sup> this makes the argument that effective cross-cultural engagement doesn’t simply resolve conflicts and minimize misunderstandings. It adds value to an organization. The reason to engage in leadership that increases cultural competency is achieving a positive outcome.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>8</sup> Judi Neal, “Edgewalkers: Leadership and the New Global Humans.”

<sup>9</sup> Richard Peregoy, “Toward a further understanding of work as spiritual,” *Journal of Management Spirituality & Religion*.

<sup>10</sup> Danah Zohar and I. N. Marshall, *Spiritual Capital : Wealth We Can Live by*, (Berrett-Koehler Publishers:San Francisco, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Marjorie Derven, Pamela Leri, and Ernie Gundling, *Leveraging Diversity & Inclusion for a Global Economy*, (Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development, 2014).

Kathy Lund Dean, Scott R. Safranski, and E. Scott Lee reflect a significantly different rationale for companies increasing their effectiveness in engaging cultural and religious diversity. In their article, "Religious Accommodation in the Workplace: Understanding Religious Identity Threat and Workplace Behaviors in Legal Disputes,"<sup>12</sup> they research the frequency of and reasons for employee lawsuits against employers for issues specifically related to religion. As religious diversity increases in the workplace new issues of religious accommodation arise. Their research reveals increasing litigation relating to matters of discrimination, the display or wearing of religious artifacts, and a hostile work environment. They conclude that there will continue to be "increasing [spiritual and religious workplace] disputes, more diverse accommodation requests, and more assertive employees willing to escalate disputes if requests remain unsatisfactorily resolved."<sup>13</sup> This reflects a negative reason to increase cultural and religious diversity, namely, avoiding conflict regarding the difference that leads to legal litigation if not resolved.

Emphasizing the positive outcomes rather than avoiding the negative outcomes, authors such as Derven, Leri, and Gundling join Dean, Safranski, and Lee apply the change in cultural and religious diversity within the workplace to the arena of Human Resources (HR). They explore collaborative processes for creating policies that accommodating diverse practices and protect against harassment and discrimination. They also explore creating job descriptions for new positions within companies that focus on training and promoting the growth of employees in cultural competency. Neal, Zohar, and Peregoy also focus on employee development and growth.

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<sup>12</sup> Kathy Lund Dean, Scott Safranski, and E. Lee, "Religious Accommodation in the Workplace: Understanding Religious Identity Threat and Workplace Behaviors in Legal Disputes." *Employee Responsibilities & Rights Journal* 26, no. 2: 2014. 75-94.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 80

Their emphasis is less on external practices and skills and more on the internal values, meaning and purpose that create employee satisfaction not only within the workplace but extending to include positive relationships in families and community. Focusing on cultivating the internal values, meaning, and purpose within persons creates deeper and longer lasting change than simply the formation and enforcement of policies. It is an inside-out approach to change that views inward changes as the most effective starting point to affect external change.

Four main foci of growth emerged from this first phase of my literature review. First is awareness of one's own culture. One's own culture is often like water to fish; you don't realize that you are swimming in it until you are outside of it. The lack of awareness of one's own cultural assumptions and biases make it difficult to understand that of another. Second is developing even a basic knowledge and understanding of the other's culture that grows out of curiosity. This is very contextual depending on which cultures are represented in any given situation. It is also important to remember as one begins to learn about other cultures that there are subtle (or not so subtle) differences within each culture. It is important not to assume that everyone in a given culture all shares the same biases, assumptions, and preferences. Third, is communication. This is of particular importance. Most of us have experienced the reality of miscommunication and misunderstanding that can happen between two people who share a primary language. Communication challenges become even greater when a primary language is not shared. This is magnified further when communication is dependent on a translator. Barrera and Corso's "Cultural Competency as Skilled Dialogue"<sup>14</sup> and Weirsbicka's description of

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<sup>14</sup> Isaura Barrera, and Robert M. Corso, "Cultural Competency as Skilled Dialogue," *Topics In Early Childhood Special Education* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2002).

“Natural Semantic Metalanguage” (NSM)<sup>15</sup> both offer important tools to facilitate communication when primary languages are not shared. Fourth is conflict resolution. Conflict is inevitable. It can become destructive, even violent. It can also become a creative means of learning and discovery. In order to experience conflict as creative rather than a threat, it is important to understand the cultural norms in response to conflict that are a part of the various cultures represented in the conflict. Jeanne Brett’s *Negotiating Globally: How to Negotiate Deals, Resolve Disputes, and Make Decisions Across Cultural Boundaries* is a particularly helpful resource in approaching conflict to avoid the negative cycles and maximize the learning potential along the path toward mutual understanding and collaborative decision making. Rather than focusing on the dynamics of interaction with specific cultures, her approach focuses on developing skills in cross-cultural competency that can be applied in various cultural settings. These skills include cross-cultural negotiation, conflict resolution, and building multicultural teams. A wide variety of tools that can be utilized for training in each of the four areas can be found in Lambert, Myers, and Simons’ *50 Activities for Achieving Cultural Competence*.<sup>16</sup>

As the focus of my capstone project narrowed, the second phase of my literature reviewed narrowed in focus to the challenges and opportunities presented by the increase of cultural and religious diversity on college and university campuses. The first common theme, evident across the literature, is the importance and the timeliness of addressing this question. Most referred in some way to the increasing cultural and religious diversity in the US along with the reality of the development of globalization. These factors increase the diversity of the student body in colleges and universities making it more important for students to be competent in

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<sup>15</sup> Anna Wierzbicka, “The concept of ‘dialogue’ in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective,” *Discourse Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (October 2006) 686

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Lambert, et. al.

managing cultural and religious diversity in the campus setting. They also speak to the importance of students learning effective diversity in skills for future employment and community involvement after they have completed their degrees. Sherry Watt noted that in this environment it is important to view diversity not only as a “social good”—providing support of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, but as a “social value”—a central and integrative approach to a systemic change in the way difference is engaged.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding areas of focus of training the literature consistently pointed to three broad areas of attention. Kim and Lyons speak of “awareness, knowledge, and skills.”<sup>18</sup> Watt uses the language of “head, heart and hands.”<sup>19</sup> Knowledge and skills are often the focus of desired outcomes. However, the literature emphasizes that the important initial focus is on the development of self-awareness and an understanding of one’s own cultural identity.<sup>20</sup> The developmental stage of the traditional age undergraduate student adds to the importance of the development of self-awareness and personal cultural identity. The literature points out that those who are a part of socially privileged cultures are less likely to have developed this awareness. The area of knowledge focuses on gathering information about the culture, history, and geographical context of the other. This includes developing an understanding of customs, time orientation, and patterns of relationship within the family and broader society that shape the

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<sup>17</sup> Sherry Watt, "Designing and Implementing Multicultural Initiatives: Guiding Principles," *New Directions for Student Services* 2013, no. 144 (Winter 2013), 9-10

<sup>18</sup> Bryan S. K. Kim and Heather Z. Lyons, "Experiential Activities and Multicultural Counseling Competence Training," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 81, no. 4 (Fall 2003). 81

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Watt. 11

<sup>20</sup> Taryn Petryk, Monita C. Thompson, and Trelawny Boynton, "Building Multicultural Residential Communities: A Model for Training Student Staff," *New Directions for Student Services* 2013, no. 144 (Winter 2013). 72

expectations and behaviors of both self and other.<sup>21</sup> Knowledge also extends more broadly to an understanding of the social systems of power and privilege, and the intersectionality of various categories of social privilege. Skills that are identified in the literature include cross-cultural community, conflict resolution, and ally development.<sup>22</sup>

Beyond the outcomes of awareness, knowledge and skills, the literature focused on the means of engagement in training programs. There was a repeated emphasis on creating a safe environment for learning. This begins with helping the group to develop a clear awareness of the diversity within the training group itself. This includes establishing guidelines for interaction.<sup>23</sup> Watt, Golden, Schumacher, and Moreno point to the model of developing “Circles of Trust” and emphasize that a safe environment is free from judgment, neither invasive nor evasive and that there can be “no fixing, advising, saving, or correcting.”<sup>24</sup> By saying a “safe” environment, the literature does not mean without conflict or tension. There is a repeated awareness that engaging in diversity training can stir many deep emotions. It is important in the group setting not avoid or shut out these emotions but to be prepared to hold them in a non-defensive way that allows those emotions to become a part of the learning and growth. Dealing with these intense emotions in a healthy way is also modeling leadership techniques that group members can then apply as leaders in future scenarios.

A central theme in the literature regarding the means of training is that cross-cultural and inter-religious competency training is most effective when it is experiential. This includes not

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<sup>21</sup> Ramsey, MaryLou. "Diversity Identity Development Training: Theory Informs Practice." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development* 24, no. 4 (October 1996)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Petryk, et.al. 73

<sup>23</sup> Mona Hicks and Uyen Tran-Parsons, "Spiritual Development as a Social Good," *New Directions For Student Services* 2013, no. 144 (Winter 2013). 89

<sup>24</sup>, Sherry K. Watt, et al., "Courage in Multicultural Initiatives," *New Directions for Student Services* 2013, no. 144 (Winter 2013). 60

only multi-cultural presenters, but activities that engage the participants in active learning experiences. This includes designing and playing games, using interactive drama,<sup>25</sup> and role plays. These activities can break down barriers of resistance, provide moments of discovery, and points for internal reflection. Using multiple modes of training also honors the diversity of learning styles within the groups and again models engaging diversity through the awareness of diversity.

The articles by Elkins, Morris and Schimek and by Petryk, Thompson, and Boynton, include an emphasis on assessment. This includes student self-assessment of their own learning, growth and development in the areas of self-understanding and self-awareness as well as in the skills of building relationships with a broader diversity of people and enabling others to do the same. It is also important to continue assessment of the changes in the broader social system on campus.

#### Future Perspectives on Training for Multicultural Leadership

It is broadly agreed throughout the literature I reviewed that the future trend will continue toward ever-increasing globalization and expanding cultural and religious pluralism within the United States. This reaffirms the importance and the need for further research in best practices and ongoing, focused training in cultural diversity and inclusion in a wide variety of organizations. Lambert, Meyers, and Simons also note that not only is pluralism becoming the norm it is expanding in breadth as well. "In the past, companies sent professionals on two- to three-year assignments to specific countries. While this trend continues, a greater number of

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<sup>25</sup> Donna Tromski, and Glenn Doston, "Interactive Drama: A Method for Experiential Multicultural Training," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development* 31, no. 1 (January 2003).

professionals challenged by cultural diversity issues today require a broad understanding of many different cultures, rather than a thorough understanding of only one. More often than not, we find ourselves members of long-distance, virtual project teams representing five or six cultures.”<sup>26</sup> They conclude that “Successful international managers reconcile dilemmas daily and see cross-cultural differences as an opportunity to get the best of both worlds. This means creating new ways of looking at and dealing with our differences. Not fighting each other about how we are, or are not, going to behave, but combining our strengths and avoiding compromise because that often leads to mediocre solutions .”<sup>27</sup>

Peregoy, whose research focused on the benefits to employees in terms of meaning and purpose, added that additional research regarding organizational productivity and profitability as it relates to effective engagement across cultures and religions would be helpful.<sup>28</sup> This statement speaks directly to one of the concerns raised by several of the stakeholders I interviewed—quite emphatically by one—that there needs to be evidence that the expense of training for the skills of cross-cultural and interreligious engagement have a positive impact on the bottom line of businesses.

Training young adults in the skills of cross-cultural and interreligious engagement as they are preparing for a variety of vocational pursuits is a significant way to impact the future. It enhances the quality of their education in the presence, provides them skills that will be applicable in future contexts, and prepare them as models and examples as how to effectively building positive connections across cultural and religious difference. This will not only stem

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Lambert et. al. 9

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>28</sup> Peregoy, Richard. “Toward a further understanding of work as spiritual.” *Journal of Management Spirituality & Religion*. (May 2016).

misunderstanding and provide the possibility of resolving conflicts, but it opens the door to creative opportunities that would not be present in isolation and segregation.

### Stakeholder Perspectives on Training for Multicultural Leadership

In the first step of understanding the broader context, I engaged with stakeholders in a variety of businesses including health care, manufacturing, finance, construction, retail, higher education. These included persons who were consultants, executive leaders, HR directors and board members. The prominent response in each of these conversations was their awareness of the increasing cultural and religious pluralism that they were experiencing. Not only were they aware of the increasing reality of pluralism, they were aware of challenges and difficulties that were connected to the reality of this increasing pluralism. These included issues such as quality customer service, marketing, and global partnerships. One of the common threads across the various sectors was in human resources. This included issues of employee recruitment, equitable policies for time off on religious holidays, and cultivating an organizational culture that is hospitable to diverse cultures and religions so that all employees can thrive. A few of these stakeholders were interested in exploring the importance of addressing these challenges for the sake of the broader social good that could come out of cultivating competency in engaging cultural and religious diversity. Most were looking for some evidence that engaging this work would either increase their bottom line or reduce their litigation risk. Most conversations were initially focused on problem avoidance, problem solving or conflict resolution. Their assumption seemed to be that the most that the development of cultural and religious competency could contribute was avoiding negative outcomes of pluralism. Their intrigue increased when we began talking about the creative benefits and opportunities that effective engagement in cultural and

religious diversity could offer them. This positive motivation seemed like a new concept to most of initial stakeholders that I engaged in dialogue.

As the focus of my project narrowed, my conversations with stakeholders narrowed to the leaders of the educational institution that I ultimately worked with in providing a training session for student leaders. Initial meetings were with administrative leaders of the college. Our conversations explored the broad potential of positive impact that increased cultural and religious competency could make within their organizational system. Areas of discussion included student recruitment and retention, development of course offerings and general education requirements, teaching and learning styles within the classroom, and student development within the campus life experience—particularly in the dorms. One of the Vice Presidents noted that in their mission, vision, and values statement, one of their stated values was, “Culture: Celebrate differences in backgrounds and cultures and make every effort to learn from each other.” Another one of the Vice Presidents indicated that he thought that the issue of creatively bridging cultural and religious difference was the central issue of the next five years for colleges to thrive. The vision for working at the change that my capstone project was address was clearly present within the institution.

As the conversation continued, they outlined attempts in the past to address issues of cultural and religious difference. A “Diversity and Inclusion Committee” had been established. The first two years there was significant energy and enthusiasm around exploring how the campus could be more hospitable and engaging of the diversity that existed in its midst. A staff change in the leadership of the group, along with a transition in the President’s office, including an interim president, led to decreasing energy and focus on the group. By the end of the third year, the initiative was discontinued.

Conversations with the student development staff also revealed both their commitment to bridging cultural and religious difference as well as their struggle to effectively address it. In assigning students to mods they intentionally seek to create diversity within each mod. They do so to create an environment in which engagement with diverse cultures and religious perspectives will naturally happen. Their description of reality is that in spite of their intentions to facilitate engagement with difference the students tend to “self-segregate”—in who they sit with at lunch, walk to class with, study with, and hang out together. One unanticipated element around which they segregate is extracurricular activities. Teammates tend to only hang out with other teammates. There is a significant intersection of racial diversity, religious difference and athletics. The shift of regarding the communal value of sports from high school to college was also an interesting conversation. Athletes in high school are often idolized, especially those with the skills to be able to play at the college level. Division I college athletics gets national coverage and fame. Playing at a small school in central Kansas carries none of that social privilege and that is experienced as a significant loss for a number of athletes and pushes them toward engaging only with their teammates.

In evaluating the ineffectiveness of previous attempts an awareness emerged that much of the efforts were externally focused activities or policies that would create change without any intrapersonal reflection and engagement. It was an outside-in approach to learning. The Dean of Students became particularly interested in exploring how we might engage student leaders in the change process that we were seeking to create. She suggested that focusing efforts on training them within the context of a required orientation training session could be a catalyst for broader change within the system. This became the narrow focus of the capstone project.

## Conclusion

The initial literature review and stakeholder engagement for this action research project provided an important understanding of the broader context of the increasing encounters with cultural and religious diversity that is the result of the ongoing expansion of globalization and pluralism. They also revealed the necessity of narrowing the focus. The fear, conflict, and anxiety that is encountered in the absence of competence in creative engagement with difference perpetuates the problem. For that broader social change to happen, the first change that must take place is within the hearts and minds of individuals. Training students in the awareness, knowledge and skills of cultural and religious competency as they prepare for a variety of vocational pursuits provide a fertile context for long term, significant change. That is the focus of this project.

That internal change must begin with self-awareness and self-understanding of one's own culture. This is especially important for those of the dominant culture who have not needed to define themselves over against a cultural norm that is different than their own. After developing a deeper understanding of self and one's own assumptions and biases that shape, or misshape, the perception of others, it is important to begin to deepen one's understanding of the context in which the other has developed. It is important to do this with the awareness of the danger of stereotyping individuals by their connection to a larger cultural context. This requires direct engagement with effective communication that is aware of one's own pattern of communication and aware of the patterns of communication of others.

For young adult student leaders who have had limited experience in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement, the important concepts presented in this literature review can be

difficult to grasp in the span of a two-hour training session. The focus of my research is seeking to find effective means to introduce these concepts through simple, creative, and engaging activities. These activities will cultivate understanding of the importance of developing cultural competence and provide the tools for the development of self-awareness, reflection, humility, and curiosity that are the foundation for ongoing change.

### **CHAPTER 3 - Methods Determined with Stakeholders**

The goal of this capstone action research project is to train student leaders on a college campus to provide effective leadership in facilitating positive relationships on campus amidst the cultural and religious diversity represented in the student body. The rising globalization and increasing cultural and religious pluralism within the United States is reflected in the increasing cultural and religious diversity of students on college campuses. For many students, the campus environment is a first experience of living in close proximity and having daily interaction with persons from cultures and religions other than their own. Developing the understanding and skills necessary for positive cross-cultural and inter-religious relations is key to minimize conflicts that can develop due to misunderstanding. More importantly, developing these understandings and skills will maximize the potential for the development of mutually enriching relationships that nurture personal growth and create a vibrant social community.

#### **Project Goal Determined by Researcher and Stakeholders**

My initial conversations with stakeholders at a local college included broad conversations about the reality of increasing globalization and domestic cultural and religious pluralism and the challenges and opportunities that these presented institutions of higher education. These conversations included the incoming college president<sup>29</sup> who had been hired by the college board of directors, in part, due to his extensive international, cross-cultural, and inter-religious

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<sup>29</sup> The announcement of the hiring of the incoming president was announced on December 1, 2016. His actual start date was August 1, 2017.

experience and self-identity. The conversations extended to include the vice-presidents of the college who each reflected on how globalization and cultural and religious pluralism impacted their responsibilities within their academic system. As we explored the intersection of their needs and the potential design of a Capstone Action Research Project, it became evident that focusing a project with student development and relationships among students on campus, especially within the dorms, presented the greatest opportunity for creative engagement. At that point, the stakeholders within the college shifted to focus with the vice-president of student development, the dean of students, the resident directors, the director of international student support and the director of international student recruitment.

Conversations with these persons deepened my understanding of the broader context on campus, drawing in additional social categories of difference that intersect with culture and religion. Some of these additional dynamics include interest groups and extra-curricular activities, such as athletics and music. Race and political differences also segmented groups from one another as debates about current tensions in our nation created ideological divisions. There was an awareness that cultural difference is often understood as little more than language, food and country of origin. These conversations led to agreement that the point of leverage for change would be to focus on training student leaders to become facilitators of positive cross-cultural and inter-religious relationships. The student leaders that would become the focus of the training would be the Resident Assistants (RAs). These are students who live in the dorms and are responsible to provide leadership to a group of 10 to 15 students who share a common living area within the dorm. They receive a stipend for their work. They apply for this leadership position and are vetted by the student development staff. In being trained themselves, they could in turn impact change in the broader student community.

An RA orientation is scheduled at the beginning of each school year. During this orientation RAs receive training in a variety of areas of responsibility including first aid, crisis response, and disciplinary procedures in response to violations of codes of conduct expectations in the dorms. In the past, there has been some training in cultural diversity provided by the international student recruitment and international student support services staff. This training was focused on providing background on the cultures of the international students who would be joining them on campus. While this information is helpful and important in developing an understanding the other, the principles of mindfulness and dialogue suggest that before one can effectively engage with the other, one must begin with the development of self-awareness and self-understanding. In other words, in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement the most important culture and religion to understand is one's own. This provides awareness of the assumptions and biases that color one's perceptions of the other. It introduces an awareness that the other will have different biases and assumptions that will impact their perceptions of us. In short, the change that we are seeking to create is a change within the leaders themselves.

Out of this understanding and in collaboration with the Dean of Students, objectives of my section of training session were developed. These included: 1) Develop awareness of the cultural/religious lens through which we view reality. 2) Develop awareness that different cultural/religious lenses create different perceptions of reality. 3) Cultivate the attitudes of humility, curiosity, and openness that lead to mutual discovery. And, 4) provide a few practical tools for providing leadership in building community in the context of cultural and religious diversity. This provided a framework through which the information about specific cultures from the international student recruitment and support services staff could be applied. It also provided a framework for engagement with cultural and religious differences that are present among the

students who are US citizens. A two-hour time frame was established for the training session. The short time frame created an obstacle to creating sustainable change that requires a long term evolutionary focus more than a short term revolutionary action.

In one collaborative planning session, the Dean of Students and the RDs shared that in a previous training session the topic of diversity and difference triggered a strong emotional reaction by some of the students. They were particularly resistant to explore any understanding of the dynamics of power and privilege connected to social difference. We also discussed our awareness that as cultural and religious diversity and globalization have increased, so is polarization, prejudice, and the demonizing of difference. A strong defensive reaction, by even a few, would be an obstacle in this training experience. It became important to prepare for the possibility that at least some of the RAs in the training session will have adopted, at least to some degree, a negative bias toward cultural and religious diversity. To overcome the potential of reactionary resistance of such persons within the RA group, it was helpful to take an orthogonal, rather than a direct, approach to teaching these concepts. Another obstacle that was identified was that this two-hour training session is during a four-day training process in which many other important issues will also be addressed. This context suggested the importance of creating memorable, hands-on experiences rather than simply verbal presentation. The training session would need to include active engagement that will hold the focus of 19 to 20-year-old participants. Out of this discussion, the strategy to create memorable experiences that both communicate important concepts and make them memorable beyond the moment was developed.

Project Methods Determined by Researcher and Stakeholders

Given the goals, constraints and obstacles named above it was important to develop a strategic and methodic outline of the education exercises that would be engaged. The outline is listed in Appendix C. A detailed description follows.

The first step was an introduction to our time together. I began with a brief statement of the vision for a campus community that experiences cultural and religious difference as a gift that offers creative opportunity for personal and communal enrichment. The vision for the leadership outcomes are more than conflict management and tolerance. The vision is for creative engagement. At the end of sharing this vision, I invited them to recall their observations and experiences of the social differences that created the most segregation of students into circles of similarity during the previous year. I expressed that for them to facilitate this change within the campus community the change needed to begin with them and within them. The goal of the interaction within the training session was to help them explore their own biases and assumptions. I briefly outlined our agenda and the exercises that we would engage in. Finally, the introduction included a statement of the ground rules for our interaction with one another in the training session. These ground rules included: 1) Be present; 2) Be safe; 3) Be willing to speak your truth; 4) Be open to unexpected outcomes.<sup>30</sup>

The training session included four exercises that were framed by what I called “mindfulness moments.” These were recurrent exercises at several points throughout the session. The first of these mindfulness moments took place immediately following the introduction. It began with a brief description of mindfulness as observing our own thoughts and emotions, thinking about how and what we think, and developing awareness of our internal reactions.

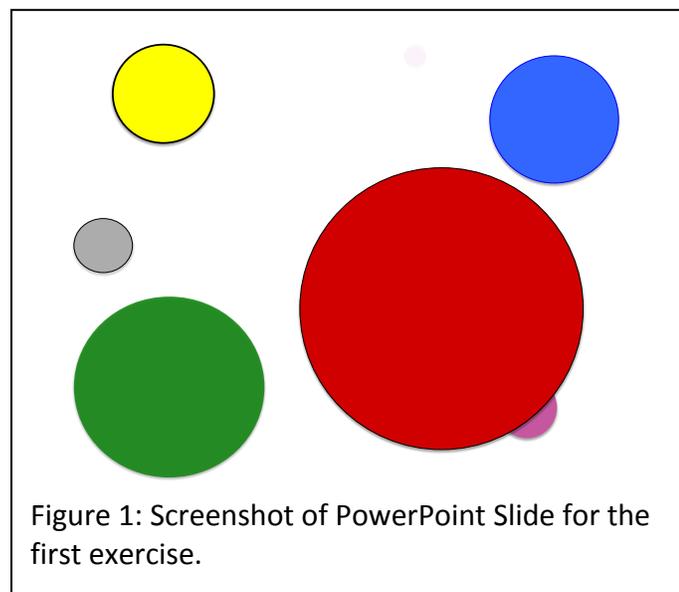
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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix A for additional information about the rationale for and the explanation of the ground rules.

Additional mindfulness moments were provided at the end of each of the third and fourth exercises, and again at the conclusion of our time together. These moments invited focused reflection on the important moments of discovery from the exercises as well as what is most important to practice and teach as leaders within the campus community.

The first three exercises utilized differences in colors on a slide to discover and engage with our mental processes around difference. The focus on different colors provided the orthogonal approach that invites examination of our mental responses to difference while avoiding a focus on the emotionally charged realities of social difference. These were followed by a case study that invited them to identify the barriers to engagement and what changed that opened the door to positive engagement. The first two exercises were shorter and introductory in nature. This allowed for the building of rapport between the RAs and me as a facilitator. The third color exercise and the case study were the centerpieces of the training session.

The first exercise projected a PowerPoint slide with seven circles of various colors, sizes and brightness on a white background. Two of the colored circles had a thin black line around the circle. The smallest was also the most transparent in relationship to the white background. Before displaying the slide, I indicated that it would only be displayed for seven seconds. They were to write down as many colors that they see in seven seconds. I allowed about 10 more seconds after the slide was removed to write any colors that



they remembered. After engaging in this viewing and writing process we collected data regarding what colors were written down, including which were written down first as “first observed.” After the data was collected the slide with the colored circles was displayed again. I asked the group to analyze the data in comparison to actual picture. What colors were most often written down and written first? Why? What colors were written least frequently or missed all together? Why? This led to conversations about first impressions and about dominance of individual identities within a social system.

The second exercise consisted of a slide show with 25 individual pictures of cars of various styles, ages, and colors. I explained that each picture will be projected for two seconds. I told them that at the end of the slide show I would ask them to tell me how many red cars were in the series of pictures. After showing the pictures, I asked for the number of red cars pictured. This is a simple task. As expected all were able to name the correct number of red cars. Then, I asked how many blue, green, white and yellow cars were pictured? As expected, few were able to confidently answer those questions. The point of this exercise is that by indicating before the slide show that I would ask about red cars, I established a social norm. Red cars counted while any other colors of cars didn't count. This opened a discussion about what messages are communicated on campus about what/who counts. Who makes those statements? Do different groups on campus create different social norms of who counts? How might we pay attention differently in order to develop deeper awareness of the social norms that are intentionally and unintentionally communicated. We brainstormed ways to communicate that we not only see those outside the social norm, but that they count as well.

The third exercise had three parts. The first two parts utilized eye glasses with four different sets of color filters in them—red, blue, green, and yellow. The group was divided into

table groups of four people. Each group received one of each color of glasses. They choose among themselves who wore which color. I emphasized that they should each remember the color that they were wearing. During this exercise, they were instructed not remove their colored glasses or try to peek around the edges, but only look through the filters. In the first part of the exercise I showed slides with zero to three different colored circles—red, green or blue. As I showed each slide I asked a person



Figure 2: Picture of students wearing color filtered glasses.

with each color of glasses, “How many circles do you see? What color are they?” Each color filter allowed the viewer to see a different number of circles and different colors. After several slides, I asked if the answers given by a person with a different color of glasses were wrong. The point this exercise teaches is that while we all see things differently, in one sense, no one is wrong because the question that was asked was, “What do you see?” In another sense, everyone is wrong because no one is describing what is displayed on the screen. We debriefed this part of the exercise with a conversation about perspectives.

The second part of the third exercise continued with the glasses on. This time I invited them to work together in teams of four, with four different colored

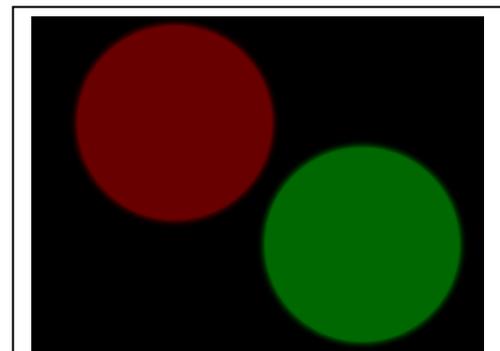


Figure 3: Illustration of a slide that appears different when wearing color filter glasses.

lenses. They were instructed to engage in conversation with one another about what each of them saw, trying to determine the number of circles and the colors that were projected on the screen. If

they were effective in their communication and everyone participated in the conversation, they could correctly identify the number of circles and the colors that were actually on the screen. After several rounds of this process of group engagement, we debriefed the process of dialogue and collaboration that happened in their circles of divergent perspectives. We continued the conversation considering how those principles of dialogue that were practiced in this exercise apply to engaging students with different perspectives on campus thereby building broader community understanding in which each perspective contributes to a richer whole than if any perspective was missing.

As I prepared to start the third part of the exercise, I invited them to remove their glasses. This was the serendipitous moment of the workshop. I was ready to move on to the third part of this exercise, but I was interrupted by a sudden increase in the volume of their instinctive interaction with one another. They started exchanging their glasses with one another making comments like, “I want to see what you saw,” and offering invitations to “see what I could see.” I allowed this impromptu conversation to continue for a while. I then interrupted asked them to observe what was happening. They were displaying, with energetic interest, a desire to see from other perspectives.

To begin the third part of this exercise, I displayed a graphic from Brene Brown<sup>31</sup> which uses the visual metaphor of seeing through lenses. The lens are not

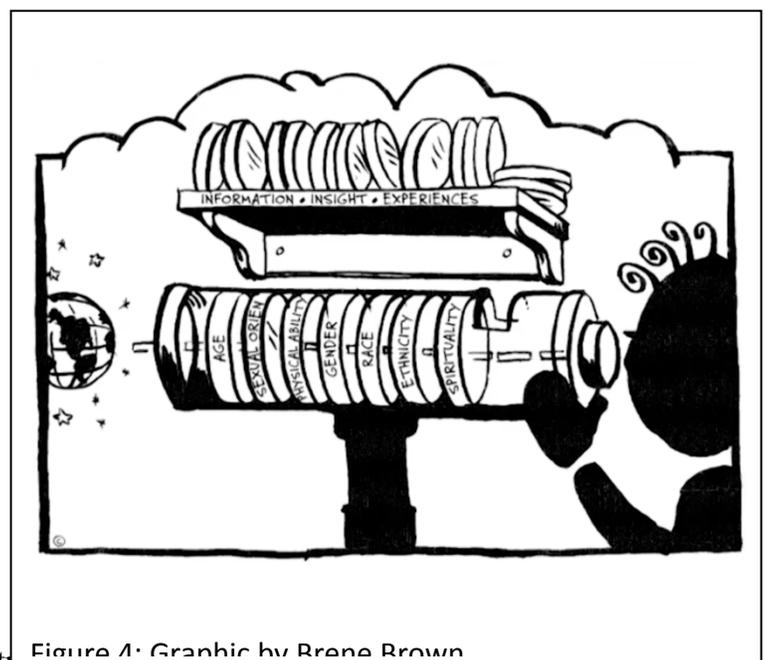


Figure 1: Graphic by Brene Brown

<sup>31</sup> Brene Brown, “Living Brave,” 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.courageworks.com/classes/living-brave-semester>

colors but categories of social difference. I invited them to begin by identifying their own lenses in each of the categories in the graphic. I invited them to reflect on how their own social lenses impact the way they see the world around them. I invited them to reflect on how people with other social lenses will see the world differently than they do. As they reflected on that, I invited them to be mindfully aware of the thoughts and feelings that go through their mind as they consider engaging with specific social differences. Were there any categories of social difference that triggered anxiety for them? Why? How does a leader enable dialogue between people with different lenses that allow them to see something more than what they can see by only looking through their own lens?

The final exercise was a case study. I told a story of my experience of personal change in a cross-cultural and inter-religious context from anxious and resentful segregation to discovery of the transformative gift of cross-cultural engagement. (See Appendix D for the full case study). Before I told the story, I invited them to listen for the barriers to cross-cultural and inter-religious relationships in the first portion of the story. As the story unfolds they were to listen for the specific actions and invitations that led to the dramatic change and who took those steps and made those invitations. After telling the story we debriefed the case study by identifying the barriers and the actions that created the possibility of change.

The final wrap up began with a mindfulness moment of reflection on the moments of discovery in the exercises and discussion that took place during the workshop. Then we reviewed the list of segregating differences they had observed in the past year on the campus that they had identified at the beginning of the training session. We discussed how the principles and actions that were discovered in our exercises might be applied in the campus context, in the dorms, classes, cafeteria, and extra-curricular activities to open the door of possibility of discovery of

the gift of cultural, religious and social difference. Among the applications identified were: 1) taking initiative to introduce yourself to persons and learning their names. 2) Learning simple greetings and a few basic words in the primary languages of persons from other countries. 3) Asking for stories about classes and extracurricular activities that different from one's own. 4) Attending concerts and sporting events simply to show support of fellow students.

#### Project Measurements Determined by Researcher and Stakeholders

Two evaluation processes regarding the effectiveness of change in this training process were developed. The first provided quantitative data through surveys of the RAs. These surveys consisted of a list of statements regarding the attitudes, values and beliefs of the RAs in the area of cultural, social, and religious differences. These statements were ranked on a Likert Scale. One of my stakeholders who has particular expertise in survey design encouraged phrasing statements in both positive and negative form as this provides a more accurate picture for a survey of attitudes, values and beliefs. (See Appendix E for the list of questions and the demographic data that was collected.) The surveys were administered three times: 1) at the beginning of the training session; 2) at the end of training session; and 3) at the September 5, 2017 debriefing session with the RA's. The first survey provided baseline data. The second survey provided quantitative data regarding the immediate impact of the training session. The third survey provided quantitative data regarding retention and impact of the training after they have had three weeks of engagement with students living the dorms.

The second evaluation process provided qualitative data. The Dean of Students, the RDs and one of my outside consultants for my capstone project offered "from the balcony" observations about the training experience. This data was provided to me by my outside

consultant in the form of written reflections immediately following the training event. The data from the Dean of Students and the RDs was provided in a debriefing meeting on August 28, 2017. They reflected on how the students were engaged at various points of the training session. What was their body language? Who engaged, who did not engage, and how did they engage? A debriefing meeting with the RAs took place three weeks after the training sessions, two weeks after they have had direct encounters with the students in their mods. We reflected on the data from the pre- and post-session assessments, what was most memorable and impactful from the training session, and how their practical experiences have intersected with the concepts they encountered in the training experience.

Beyond the scope of this capstone project, I will remain connected with the Dean of Students, RDs and interested RAs as they journey through the experiences of the school year. This will provide an opportunity to collect ongoing qualitative data on changes in engagement and relationships among students from different cultures, nationalities and religions. These continuing evaluation points will focus on the ongoing growth of the student leaders the mindful reflection on changes that they lead and observe. It will also shape my ongoing growth as a change agent who is focused on nurturing and developing other change agents. Working together we will build inclusive communities by embracing diversity.

## **CHAPTER 4 - Results: Evidence of Change through Project Implementation**

### **Actions Taken by Researcher and Stakeholders**

The centerpiece of my capstone action research project was a two-hour training session with 29 Resident Assistants (RAs) who will provide student leadership in the dormitories on a college campus. The title of my training session was “Building Inclusive Community by Embracing Diversity.” The goals of the training were to: 1) Communicate the vision that effective leadership in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement was not merely to minimize conflict or practice tolerance. It is to discover the unique gifts in each social grouping and each individual that enhances the total community. 2) Develop mindful awareness of one’s own cultural and religious biases and how those impact leadership and relationships with others. 3) Develop awareness of the presence of different perspectives and how each perspective can contribute to a greater whole. These goals focused the desired change within the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the RAs. My central collaborators in this process was the Vice President of Student Development, the Dean of Students, the four Resident Directors (RDs), and the international student recruitment and support staff. The incoming college president and business leaders in the community were contributing collaborators around the vision for and importance of developing culturally and religiously competent leaders.

The training session took place on Saturday, August 12, 2017. The training opened with greetings that are commonly used in Arabic/Islamic and Indian/Hindu greetings. “As salaam alaikum,” literally translated from Arabic to English means, “May peace come upon you.” There is not a simple, literal translation of “Namaste” from Hindi to English. It conveys the complex meaning I honor the place in you where the divine resides. When you are at that place in your

and I am at that place in me, we are one. The significant meaning of those greetings makes “hello” seem a little weak. These greetings were used because I do wish peace upon the participants and I recognize the divine within them as well as our oneness. I also used the greetings to illustrate the depth of meaning that can be added to communication when we learn and embrace even the simple practices of other cultures and religious traditions.

The initial engagement of the session invited reflection and discussion on the RAs’ observations and experiences of difference driven conflict or segregation in the past. These were listed on a newsprint and posted in the front as contextual background for the training session. There were four main experiential training exercises. The first three were experiments with color. The first demonstrated external factors that influence our awareness of difference. The second demonstrated the influence of social norms on our awareness of difference. The third demonstrated the influence of our individual biases on our understanding of reality and how working together in awareness of our differences provides a more complete understanding of reality. The fourth exercise was a case study of a personal encounter that involved both cross-cultural and inter-religious dynamics. These exercises were interspersed with four “mindfulness moments” during which I allowed space for silent self-reflection. The final mindfulness moment invited reflection on the discoveries during the training session and how they will apply these learnings to the observations of segregation around difference that were shared at the beginning of the session. A detailed outline of the training session is included in Appendix C.

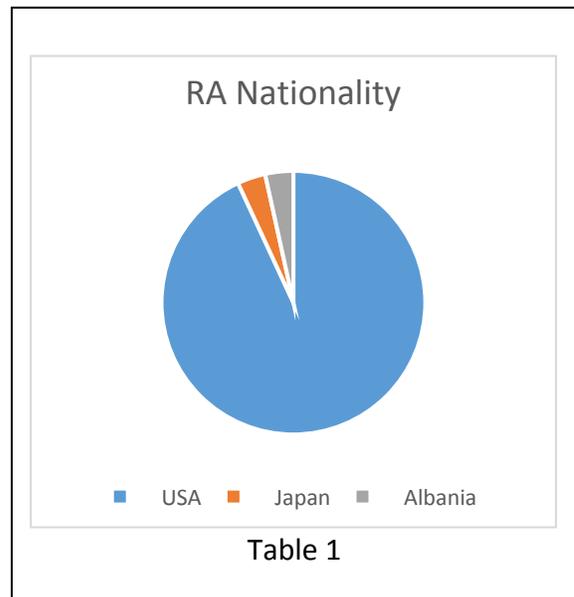
### Measurements of Results

A quantitative measurement tool, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, was a survey examining the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the participants in the training session. This

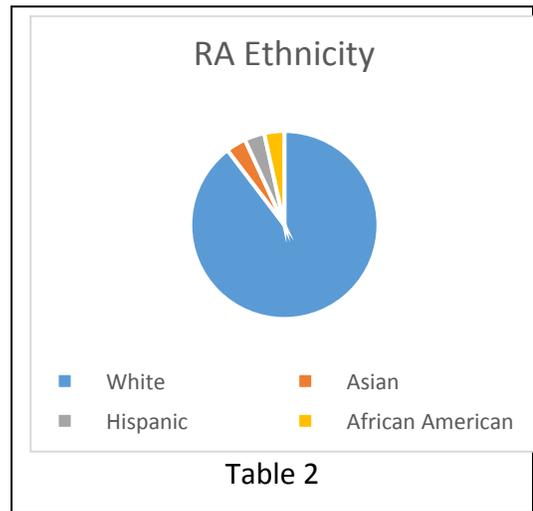
survey was administered three times. The first time was at the beginning of the training session. It was administered a second time at the end of the training session. It was administered a third time at the debriefing session with the RAs after they have experienced leadership in building inclusive community among the diverse student population at the beginning of the school year. The survey began with five demographic categories: gender, age, nationality, race, and religion. These were each “fill in the blank” to provide the students with the freedom to define their own identity rather than to check a predefined category. The survey included twelve statements, some phrased in positive terms, others in negative terms.

Participants were asked to respond to these statements on a four point Likert Scale: The labels on the scale were “Never True,” “Seldom True,” “Usually True,” and “Always True.” The full survey is available in Appendix E. Tables of the raw demographic data and the responses from the surveys are available in Appendix F.

The demographic data indicated that the group included 14 females and 15 males. The entire student body is made up of slightly more females than males, but there is very little statistical difference between the RAs and the overall student body in terms of gender. Three nationalities were represented among the RAs but it was dominated by students from the United States. One was Japanese. One was Albanian. Twenty-seven were from United States. Of these, 16 identified themselves as “Americans,” whereas 11 identified themselves as from the United States. The RAs are 93% United States citizens whereas only 82% of the student body have a US nationality. The self-identified ethnicities included one

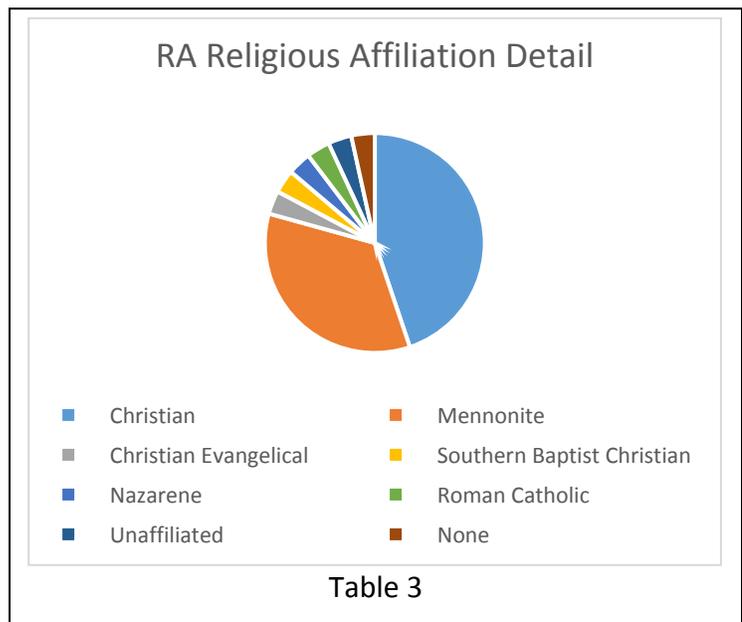


Asian, one African American, one Hispanic, 26 who identified themselves as either White (15), Caucasian (10), or as “White/Caucasian.” Here there is an even greater difference between the RAs and the student body. 93% of RAs identify as White or Caucasian whereas only 65% of the student body is White/Caucasian.



Religiously, 13 self-identified simply as “Christian.” Ten identified as “Mennonite.” Of those ten four included a dual identification as Mennonite and Christian. Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, Nazarene, and Christian Evangelical each had one person self-identify with that label. Combining these various Christian identities represents 93% of the RAs. One self-identified as no religion and one as “unaffiliated.” It was unclear if the respondent meant that they were unaffiliated with any religion or unaffiliated with a particular

Christian denomination. The RAs are 93% Christian which includes 34% who are Mennonite. The student body is only 80% Christian including 28% Mennonites. The demographic differences between the student leaders and the overall student body in the areas of nationality, ethnicity, and religion are important for leaders

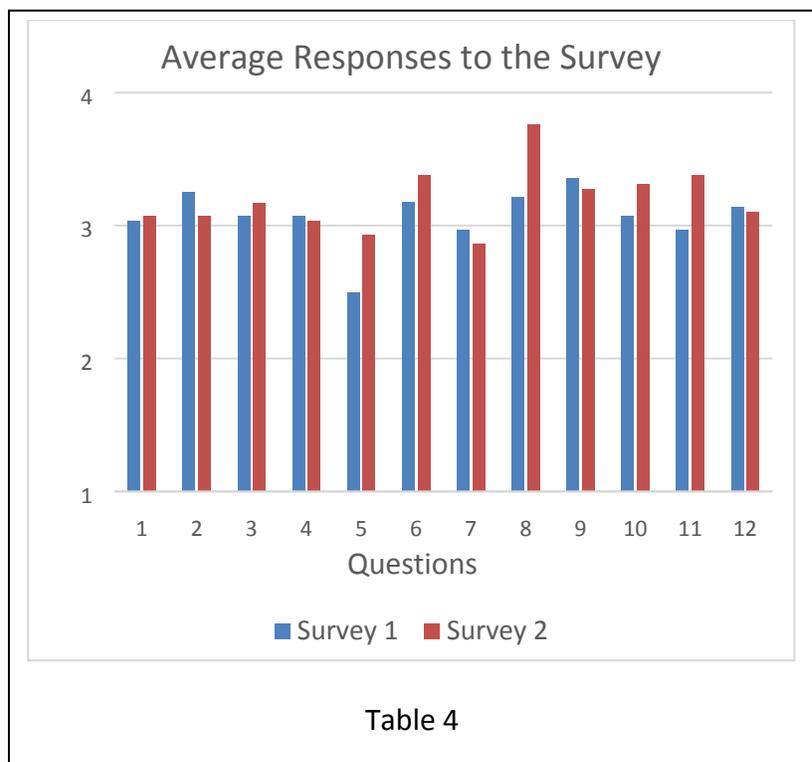


to hold in awareness as they seek to incorporate the broader variety of voices into the campus community.

The raw data of the responses to the Likert Scale on the survey was tabulated by applying a weighting multiplier to the responses from one (Never True) to four (Always True) on the questions that were positively phrased. On the negatively phrased questions the weighting multipliers were the opposite from four (Never True) to one (Always True). After applying the weighting multiplier, the resulting numbers for each question were added together and divided by the number of respondents. This provided the average response for each question between one and four. A higher number indicates an attitude, value, or belief that is important in leading community building in cross-cultural and inter-religious settings.

The graph in Table 4 charts the average response to each statement in the pre-training and post training surveys. Eight of the twelve questions did not indicate a statistically significant

change. Four of the questions indicated a statistically significant growth toward a greater capacity for leadership in building community amidst diversity. The four questions in which participants experienced significant growth were: 1) My biases do not influence my perceptions of others. 2) Engagement with people from



cultures and religions other than my own helps me grow and develop as a person.3) Engagement with people from other cultures provides me an opportunity to teach them my perspectives and beliefs. 4) It is important to me to connect with people from cultures and religions other than my own. The growth in these areas indicates an increase in awareness that their biases do influence their perception of others. It also a greater belief that engagement with people from other cultures is important in facilitating personal growth and change. Reciprocally, it also indicates that in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement, they recognized that they each have something to contribute that will enhance the experience of the whole.

There are three components to the qualitative change analysis in the study. The first of these is provided by a third-party observer who I invited to be present at the training session. She was introduced to the group simply as one who was present to assist in my own learning experience for my degree program. She provided observations of body language of the participants and verbatim of the open discussion time. The second component was a debriefing session with the Dean of Students and the RDs during which they will review the statistical data from the surveys and I gathered their observations and feedback on the training session itself and their observations of RAs since the training session. This took place on Monday, August 28, 2017. The third component was a debriefing session with the RAs. The format of this meeting was similar to the meeting with the Dean of Students and the RDs with the addition of completing the survey a third time. This meeting took place on Tuesday, September 5, 2017.

The meeting notes of my observer, along with brief post-training comments from the Dean of Students and the RDs indicated perception of a very positive training session. The body language of the RAs and the conversant responses they provided in discussion times indicated that the student leaders remained engaged throughout the session. There were two serendipitous

moments in the training event that communicated that understanding and change were developing within the students. The first was in reflection on the first exercise with color. In the debriefing of the experience we discovered that some had identified one of the circles as red while other had identified the same circle as orange. An argument began to develop among some in the group about whether it was red or orange. I intervened by asking, “What does this argument reveal about us? Who is right? Why are we labeling it differently?” The conversation quickly turned to differences in perception. One student stated, “According to us they are wrong, but they obviously see it differently that we do.”

The second moment was even more striking. The third exercise in color included the participants wearing glasses with different color filters through which they looked at different color circles projected on the screen. After the exercises that were engaged while wearing the glasses, I invited them to remove their glasses so we could move on to the next exercise. Instead of moving on, the entire group spontaneously engaged in an animated process of sharing the glasses around the table. They wanted others to see what they saw. They wanted to see what other people saw. They wanted other people to be able to see what they saw. I allowed this engagement to go for several minutes. Then I invited them to pause and think about what had just spontaneously happened. One said, “we want see what other people see. We want to know their perspective.” I added in reinforcement of the observation, “It is a powerful experience to see through someone else’s eyes.”

### Communication of Results to Stakeholders

The first follow-up meeting with stakeholders included the student development staff of the college. This included the Dean of Students and the RDs. The agenda for this meeting

included discussion of their observations at the training event, their personal responses and feedback, and any feedback that they heard from the RAs. They affirmed that the activities, the language, and the design of the training session was developmentally appropriate given the RAs ages of 20 to 21 years. One stated that they appreciated the simplicity of training session. When I pressed for what they meant by that, this person stated, “it engaged what could have been emotionally charged issues in a playful way that removed any defensiveness.” One expressed surprise at how deeply the students appeared to engage in the mindfulness moments. They confessed that when I first introduced that component of the training the thought that went through their mind was, “This will never work with this group.” But with each successive mindfulness moment he observed what he interpreted to be deeper reflection taking place. The conversation that took place after the mindfulness moments confirmed to him that “the participants were indeed reflecting and not simply daydreaming.” Another noted that the mindfulness moments “developed an awareness of what goes on inside of our own minds as we engage in new learning.”

The conversation also focused on the exercises with color. They noted the effectiveness of the “count the red cars” exercise in teaching that we often only see the things that we are looking for. One noted the importance of the lesson of the single slide with multiple colors that was shown for only a short time. The “ah ha” moment in that exercise was that it is not only the smallest or least prominent that are not noticed. The most predominant color, that we often consider the background, is not noticed either. These are quite different realities. One is not noticed because of its obscurity. The other is not noticed because of predominance. They opened the door for a later conversation between one of the RDs and one of the RAs about “white privilege.” The RD reported that the RA stated, “I think I finally understand what white privilege

is all about.” That seems to be a little extreme of a statement from a simple exercise, but it indicates a significant opening to explore the concept of white privilege in a way that they had not been able or willing to before. One of the RDs reported a conversation with an RA after the session in which he said, “I didn’t really understand the concept of white privilege before, but I think I do now.”

The overwhelming choice for most impactful experience was the colored lens. The three components of that were specifically highlighted. One was the collaborative conversations that happened between those wearing different colored glasses as they tried to decipher what was on the screen. That modeled the ability to engage difference in a way that made it a gift and a community strength. It gave them an opportunity to practice those dialogue skills in a non-threatening context. They all mentioned the significance of the unplanned teachable moment that took place when they took off their glasses and began enthusiastically exchanging them. One stated their observation of the importance of the Brene Brown illustration after the lenses experience that took a fun exercise and turned it to a serious reflection on social, cultural, and religious difference. Another RD noted that this exercise provided them with a new metaphor to use when they engage in conflict situations. They will utilize the question, “So what color lenses are you looking through as you experience this situation?”

They also offered some reflections on a few things that limited the effectiveness of the training session. One noted that the short time frame worked against the possibility of moving into deeper reflection and learning. This training happened in the context of a whole series of different training experiences. Some of the concepts might have been lost in the “sea of information” that they were exposed to in a short period of time. Another wondered if more time should have been spent establishing a “baseline of common understandings of important

concepts.” They went on to say, “we often assume that we all share a common language and awareness, when that may not be the case.”

I shared the demographic and quantitative data that was collected in the survey. There were two distinct foci of our conversation about the demographic data. The first was related to my choice to have the demographic information be “fill in the blank” rather than to mark the box. On the one hand, it gave the participants the freedom of self-expression regarding their identity. On the other hand, it required interpretive analysis in collating the data. This freedom is inconsequential in relationship to age. All gender responses were either “male” or “female.” There is no way to know if other gender identities were present but this was not a safe or appropriate place to reveal that. By listing gender as an open-ended question, we could at least engage the question about the possibility of the presence of persons with other gender identities either in the leader group or in the larger student population. The responses to open-ended questions for nationality, ethnicity, and religion created some interpretative challenges regarding quantitative analysis. Should I count “USA” and “American” as the same answer in calculating demographics of nationality? Should I count “White,” “Caucasian,” and “White/Caucasian” as the same answer in calculating the demographics of ethnicity? In response to the question of religion, some simply wrote “Christian” while others chose specific denominations. One wrote “unaffiliated” which could be interpreted as not affiliated with any religion or not affiliated with a particular Christian group. For statistical purposes, it was necessary to combine the different responses that had a shared meaning since the information regarding the general student population to which we were comparing it was a “check the box” type response. Once again, the open-ended question process allowed for conversation about the meanings that we attach to words that we choose for our identities.

The second focus of our conversation around demographics was in examining any differences between the RAs and the general student population. In terms of gender there was a negligible difference. The age of the RAs was slightly older, which is to be expected since they are returning students. In the other categories, there were significant differences between the RAs and the general student population. As compared to the overall student population, the RAs included a higher percentage of U.S. citizens in terms of nationality, Whites in terms of ethnicity, and Mennonites and Christians in terms of religion. Of particular interest, there are 15 nationalities on campus that are not represented in this student leadership group. There are 3 religious groups, Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim, and 13 Christian denominations present on campus that are not represented in the leadership group. We recognized that model that provided representation for all was not organizationally feasible. But the difference was an important awareness for leaders as they seek to be intentional and engaging the broad range of cultural and religious difference that is present on campus.

We then examined a spreadsheet of the raw data and the graphed comparison of average changes on the Likert Scale responses in the pre- and post-training surveys. One of the stakeholders observed that the four statements that demonstrated the most dramatic change before and after the training were the four that most directly connected to the training goals that we had established prior to the session. Her perspective was that the other statements which reflected very little change were concepts that were tangential to the main points of the training exercises. One of the other stakeholders noted two statements which had received two marks in the lowest point on the Likert Scale when they had received no marks in that lowest category before the training session. He was curious about that as it would suggest that for at least two people in two categories the training had shifted people in the opposite direction that was

desired. Then he added an interpretative reflection, “Perhaps they felt that way before the training session but felt like they wouldn’t be accepted if they were honest. But after the training session they felt like this was a place where difference could be expressed and be accepted, so they were free to name their fears and resistance to the presence of difference.” From the information that we have there is no way to judge if this interpretation is correct or not. It does highlight a limitation of this kind of quantitative data, especially from a small sampling group. We can measure their responses but how they interpret the statements or why they change a response will only be conjecture.

I closed the session by asking what additional or follow up actions, training, or conversations would be helpful to continue to develop the community building skills of the RA’s amidst the cultural and religious diversity on campus. There was common agreement that while the training session had appeared to be effective, it would likely have only limited effect over the long term as a stand-alone training experience. The RDs acknowledged that it will be important for them in their one on one sessions with the RAs over the course of the term to continue to check in regarding the application of these principles, inquiring about what is going well and what isn’t.

The second stakeholder meeting included the RAs along with the Student Development Staff. I asked the Student Development staff to function as observers in this meeting so that I could focus on receiving reflections and feedback from the RAs. I had set up the room so that they would be seated in groups of four, with one group of five. I began by showing them the list of differences that they indicated at the beginning of the training session that they had observed or experienced as creating segregation in the previous year. I then invited them to discuss in their groups if there were any areas of segregation that they had observed this year. I also asked them

to discuss if they observed any changes in how the identified differences were experienced this year.

There were several common themes that emerged from the reporting of their conversation. First, MOD groupings, sports teams, and nationality continued to be the most frequently observed segregating differences. The only academic majors that created segmentation were identified as Nursing and Aviation. There was broad agreement that these differences were present again this year, but that they didn't seem as extreme. One wondered if the segregation of differences seemed less extreme because they were accustomed to the campus culture. Another acknowledge that could be case, but stated, "I feel freer to engage with those who are in different groups because I am more curious about who they are." One offered a particularly important evaluation of the segregation of sports teams that she observed, "Coaches require their teams to sit together at meals to build the cohesiveness of the team. Their practices schedules prevent them from engaging with other groups. This is really a systemic problem." That triggered the idea of having a few RAs talk to coaches about ways that they could continue to build team unity without segregating the team from the rest of the campus.

Following this discussion, I invited the participants to engage in a "Mindfulness Moment." I invited them to focus on their memories of experiences, feelings, and discoveries during the training session. After two minutes of silence, I asked them to work with their group and list everything about the training session that they remembered. The small group conversation was animated and energetic. As they recalled more of the session, energy in the room seemed to increase. Reconvening in the large group, table groups shared what they remembered. Every element of the training session was mentioned. The exercise with colored filtered glasses was obviously the highlight of the training session for them. There were two

statements about take-aways from the training session that surprised me. One person said, “I learned to think about what I am thinking.” Another said, “We had to learn how to trust one another when they said that they saw something that we couldn’t see.” One person associated a video that they had seen in another training session with my training session. The video illustrated how our focus on one small thing can keep us from seeing dramatic things around us. I told her I would give her credit for associating that with my training session since it illustrated one of points that my training session had focused on.

When I began sharing their responses to the survey, the energy went out of the room. I had charts and graphs. I described the unique characteristics of the demographics. I highlighted the four statements that showed significant change in the Likert Scale scoring. I asked for their observations about these. I struggled to get any response. I did have some technical difficulties with the video projector I was using during that time. One of the students whose campus job is with the A/V department had to come up and reset the projector three times. That likely contributed to loss of energy and focus. I was disappointed in the response to this portion of our debriefing session. I gained little understanding of their interpretation of the quantitative data. The final step before dismissal was to invite them to do the survey a third time so that I could compare those results to the pre- and post-training results collected earlier.

### Assessment of Goal Achievement

At the beginning of this chapter I articulated the three goals for the training session that were developed in collaboration with the student development staff at the college. 1) Communicate the vision that effective leadership in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement was not merely to minimize conflict or practice tolerance. It is to discover the

unique gifts in each social grouping and each individual that enhances the total community. 2) Develop mindful awareness of one's own cultural and religious biases and how those impact leadership and relationships with others. 3) Develop awareness of the presence of different perspectives and how each perspective can contribute to a greater whole. These goals within this training session are one step in a journey of many steps to building an inclusive community amidst diversity. In a journey of many steps it is easy to overlook the significance of the small steps that took place along the way.

About half of the survey questions showed no significant change. Three of the questions only showed modest improvement. Three of the questions showed significant inner change in the participants of the training session. The fact that there was growth in three is something to celebrate. It is of special significance to note that each of the survey questions that reflected the most change are directly related to the three goals that were identified of the training session. Through changes in their responses to these survey statements, they indicated that they became more aware of how their biases and assumptions impacted the way that they perceived the world and other people. They indicated that through the training they had become more keenly aware that engagement with other cultures is important and that those engagements will help them to grow and develop as persons.

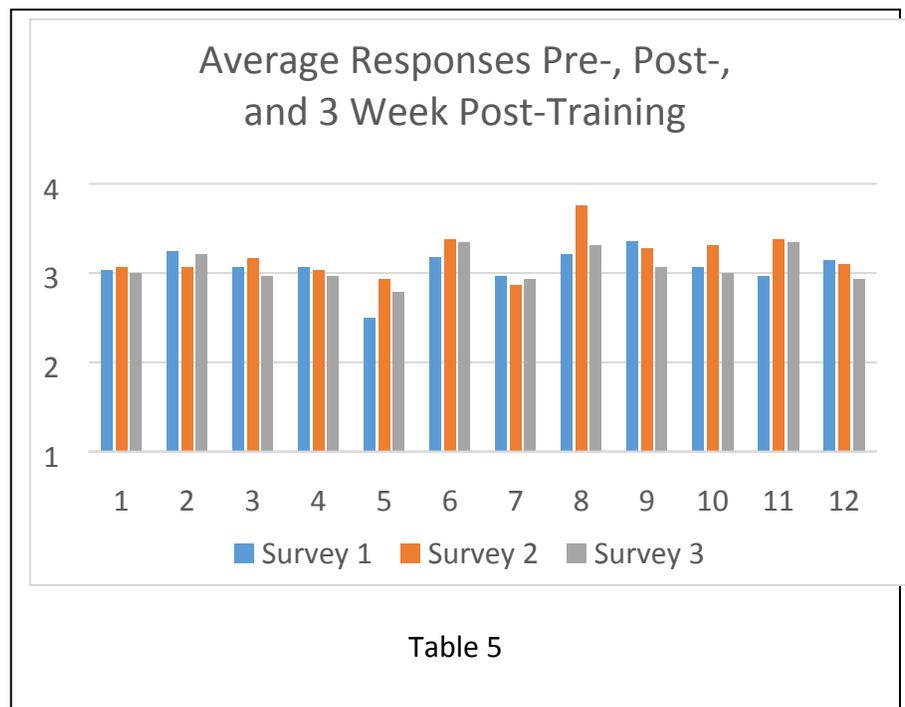
Beyond that quantitative evidence of change the energetic engagement of the student leaders through a two-hour training session during a four-day orientation process was an indicator that the training peaked their interest in the topic. The reflective responses that they offered at the points of large group discussion indicated that they were processing this deeply, both in terms of their own inner journey and in practical application as leaders. The moments of

spontaneous response indicated that they were understanding at a subconscious level that I as a leader could not have planned.

The energy and qualitative evidence of change continued in the first portion of the debriefing session with the RAs. Their ability to recall the experiences and the principles that those experiences sought to illustrate was impressive. It all appeared to indicate that we had made progress in taking a step toward building inclusive communities amid the cultural and religious diversity. Then I began the analysis of the quantitative data from the third survey. It seemed to tell a different story.

The results of this final quantitative analysis are depicted as Survey 3 in Table 5. The eight responses that had not changed, still showed no significant change. Three of the four that had changed returned to their pre-training levels. The one statement that remained a strong response was “It is important to me to connect with people from culture sand religions other than my own.”

Initially, I was surprised by the decline in the responses to the third survey given the energetic way the participants had engaged in the debriefing session and the reports of personal and broader change they had



experienced and observed. I reflected about this outcome with my outside observer and consultant in the project to assist in interpreting this data. We developed several interpretations and observations. Change is hard. During a week of training, anticipating new experiences of a new school year, and encountering new ideas, change can be very exciting. Once into the routines and challenges of school it is easy to lose touch with the vision of newness one had initially embraced. Change doesn't happen quickly. It needs to be reinforced multiple times before it becomes fully integrated into a way of being. This outcome is confirmation of the reflection from the debriefing session with the Student Development staff prior to the RA debriefing. A single training session will likely have little long-term effect without ongoing engagement, reflection, and recurrent training.

## **CHAPTER 5 - Final Reflections and Recommendations**

### **Overall Project Summary**

College dormitories are one of the settings where the reality of globalization and domestic pluralism is experienced in a practical and present reality. Students from a wide variety of backgrounds, races, religions, ethnicities, nationalities, and interests are assigned to live together in shared spaces. Many come from largely monolithic communities and have little experience navigating relationships that include the dynamic of cultural and religious differences. This project provided training for student leaders to equip them with the self-awareness, awareness of others, and the relational and leadership skills to equip them to nurture the development of cross-cultural and inter-religious community on campus. The training was designed in collaboration with the Student Development staff in consultation and coordination with the school's administrative cabinet. It is one step in the larger goal of creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment in which social, cultural, and religious difference is not merely tolerated but is valued as a gift that contributes to the learning and growth of all. The motivation for this goal is the belief that every individual and social grouping has dignity and unique gifts and perspectives that contribute to the greater whole. No single individual or group grasps a picture that is more complete or privileged than any other. Each one has an important piece to contribute to the health and vitality of the whole community.

### **Consistency of Guiding Values**

The project was built on the guiding value that all people have value, dignity, and something to contribute and therefore must be engaged with respect, curiosity, and a desire to see things through their perspective. This value was the desired end. It was also the means by which

the project was engaged. These values were the practiced with the initial stakeholders who helped me to understand the larger needs within our broader community. They continued to shape the way I interacted with the key stakeholders and collaborators in developing and carrying out the training event.

The guiding principle that all people are of value and have something to contribute to the whole also shaped the way in which I planned and carried out my interaction with the student leaders who were the focus of the training event. I wanted them to grow in their awareness of the value of others. I also wanted them to become more aware of how the unique gift that they are contributes to the whole. Each one had something to contribute to the learning process. This guided the design of an experiential learning process in which each participant contributed to their own discoveries as well as to the discoveries that others made.

#### Project Impact on the Researcher

The initial concept of this project was a very big idea regarding significant change across many sectors of society. Engaging initially with a broad variety of stakeholders in business, health care, and education confirmed the importance of the overarching theme. An important discovery was that to be a change agent in the large issues of our social context begins with change within a few individuals within one segment of one institution. Before that smaller scale change can happen, I need to be open to being changed myself. The big picture change, while exciting and energizing was overwhelming and discouraging. The narrow focus provided clarity and confidence that this was an achievable goal.

I learned the power of collaborative design in working with other stakeholders to understand the problem, explore various possibilities, and ponder implications and potential

unexpected outcomes. This includes collaboration with organizational leaders, consultants, and technical experts. Most importantly, it includes collaboration with those whose change I desired to affect. I learned the importance of testing the technological side of the training session in advance to confirm that they would work as expected. I learn the importance of being flexible and prepared to adjust and adapt as necessary. I learned that I have the capacity to develop and implement effective teaching tools that communicate difficult topics through simple, energizing activities. Engaging in these processes allowed participants to discover and apply concepts experientially. This is an impactful teaching tool beyond lecture and memorization.

### Project Impact on the Stakeholders

The impact on the student leaders was evident in the observation of their body language and verbal responses as we moved through the training session. Their words and actions communicated that they were grasping the key concepts and putting them into practice reflexively in ways that I had not anticipated or expected. The data from the post-training survey provided quantitative data that indicated change and growth in the attitudes, values and beliefs that were the central focus of the training exercises. The stories and reflections that they shared in the first part of the debriefing meeting three weeks following the event indicated that they remembered and were applying what they learned in the training. They were growing in their awareness of the positive potential of difference and of the impact of bias and assumptions on the perception of difference. The return to the baseline scores of the pre-training survey in the final survey three weeks after the training event suggests that for long term change to be sustained,

recurrent training and ongoing engagement that deepens the understanding and application of these principles is essential.

The Student Development staff, who collaborated in the planning and were observers of the training, identified their own personal growth through the process. The reflective conversations that identified the needs to be addressed and shaped the focus of the training provided them with deeper insights into the context in which they provided leadership. This initial conversation helped them to identify challenges that they faced in getting from where they were to where they wanted to be. Their observation of the students during training provided insights into the student's perspectives. They also discovered tools with which to engage the challenges that they face. As one of the RDs stated, "Now when I encounter conflict I am simply going to ask, 'what color glasses are you wearing?'"

#### Overall Project Assessment

The strengths of this project include: 1) It took place within an educational institution whose leadership had already articulated a vision to cultivate a campus community in which cultural and religious differences are valued. Work had already been undertaken to understand and to break down the barriers that hindered the development of inclusive community. The previously instilled vision and the challenges that they had encountered in earlier attempts enabled a collaborative partnership in which the student development staff brought interest, energy, and commitment to the project. 2) The training experience was a required expectation in preparation for their leadership role. Planning could, therefore be focused on program development rather than marketing and recruiting participants. Planning had the additional advantage that the number of people who would be present and the demographics that they

would represent were known in advance. 3) The flow of the training session began with the identification of challenges and opportunities. These were posted at the front and center of the room for the remainder of the training session providing an ongoing reminder of the application of the values and principles that we were discovering together. 4) The active engagement in the training sessions created a hands-on experience that kept the participants engaged mentally and physically giving them both ownership and authorship of the journey of discovery.

One of the weaknesses of the project was the limited time to engage the training. The initial training session that was the focus of this project could have been longer. At two hours, key concepts were introduced but not fully developed. Applications of the key concepts were explored but not fully shaped into clear action steps. Additional sessions for ongoing training and, more importantly, ongoing reflections on actual experiences through the semester would be important for deepening and expanding the change within the student leaders and in the campus environment. Additional topics that will be important to explore include cross-cultural conflict transformation and communication between persons who don't share a primary language. A second weakness was that the entire training experience was led by one person who happened to be a white male. Having a team lead the experience with other leaders offering different gender identity and cultural and religious perspectives would have modeled the principles that I sought to teach. A related weakness was that the student leader group had only a few persons who represented cultural and religious difference. One of the things that the student development staff will need to wrestle with and consider for the future is the possibility of some kind of affirmative action plan to assure that there is greater diversity among the student leadership group.

## Recommendations for Future Projects

It would be exciting to carry this project out with student leaders on other college campuses. Working with stakeholders and leaders at other campus would provide an opportunity to test the training exercises in other contexts and expand the data pool to evaluate the effectiveness of the training in facilitating change and growth in the student leaders. It would also be exciting to see future projects expand beyond a single training event and carry through at least an entire semester if not the entire school year. Expanding the research in this way would provide opportunity to engage with one another around additional topics, test specific actions, and reflect together on outcomes. The longer-term engagement would also provide opportunity to design measurements of change in the broader campus culture as well as the internal changes within the student leaders. Future research that would test differences in outcomes between individual and team leadership of such training session would also provide helpful data in understanding how to create inclusive communities. In looking at the broader campus environment, it would also be interesting to research how diversity training with faculty and staff could impact the experience in the classroom which would also impact the broader campus culture.

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## **APPENDIX A: Ethical Guidelines**

In collaboration with the Dean of Students we devised a three-step plan to communicate the nature of my capstone project, my commitment to confidentiality, and their voluntary participation, including the freedom to excuse themselves from the process. The first step was that the Dean of Students, at the beginning of the RA orientation, two days before my training session, explained that my session was a part of my Capstone Action Research project with Claremont Lincoln University. She reviewed the consent form, asked if there were any questions or concerns and distributed two copies to each RA inviting them to sign both, keep one copy for their records and return one copy for my records. Second, at the beginning of my session I explained that this training was a part of my Capstone Action Research Project for Claremont Lincoln University. I reviewed my commitment to confidentiality and confirmed that they had each received and returned a copy of the consent form. I had extra copies with me in case someone was missed.

Third, as we began the workshop I offered four ground rules for our engagement with one another in the workshop. Be present. Be safe. Be willing to speak your truth. Be open to unexpected outcomes. I then expanded the definition of each. Be present doesn't simply mean being physically in the space and paying attention to what is being said. It means being present with yourself and your thoughts, feelings, and needs. It means being attentive and aware of others. Be safe carries the expectation that we engage others with respect and honor, avoiding words and actions that create harm, and taking ownership for those things if we do cross boundaries. It is also means be aware of your own sense of safety and pass on questions that you would rather not answer and feel free to excuse yourself and leave the room if you require space

to reestablish a sense of safety for self. Be willing to speak your truth means that it is ok to disagree, share different opinions and perspectives. It also indicates a willingness to allow others to speak their truth and respectfully engage that even if it may be different from you. Be open to unexpected outcomes means that this is not intended to be coercive process that leads everyone to a point of agreement on a predetermined outcome. It is a journey of discovery.

A copy of the consent form is included on the following page.

August 9, 2017

To Resident Assistants and Resident Directors of Hesston College,

I am doing an action research project about developing leadership for cross-cultural and inter-religious community building. I am inviting you to be a participant in my research by participating in the training session “Building Inclusive Community by Embracing Diversity.” This training session will be a part of RA Orientation and take place on Saturday, August 12, 2017.

I will give priority to your interests at all times. To protect your interests in my final report, I promise the following:

- Your identity will be protected at all times in my final report unless you give me specific permission to use your name.
- You are free at any time to withdraw from the research project, whereupon I will destroy all data relating to you. I will report that a participant decided to leave the project, and reflect on ways the project might have been more conducive for all participants.
- I will make a copy of my research report available to you.

Two copies of this ethics statement are enclosed. Please sign both. Keep one for your records and return the other to me.

Researcher: John C. Murray

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have received an ethics statement from John C. Murray.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: If at any time you have any questions or concerns about the project, you may contact the Dean of Capstone Studies at Claremont Lincoln University, Dr. Stan Ward. Please contact him by email: [sward@claremontlincoln.edu](mailto:sward@claremontlincoln.edu), or call the university: 909-667-4400.

## Appendix B: Stakeholder Collaboration Log

Date	Purpose	Persons involved	Notes:
1/20/2017	Consult regarding the goals of the capstone and potential businesses to engage	Principal in Consulting Firm that works with Family Businesses	<p>Telephone conversation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Conversation about a workshop proposal for the International Association of Management, Spirituality and Religion Conference to be held May 18-20 in Fayetteville, AR. Could this be a place to begin to present, explore and refine some of the ideas and activities that would be part of core workshop of my capstone project.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Working title: Cross-cultural and Inter-religious engagement from the inside out.</li> <li>b. Initial ideas include sharing my own journey</li> <li>c. Exploring our own spirituality</li> <li>d. Engaging with the spirituality of others</li> <li>e. Building the spiritual capital of the organization</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Conversation about business persons to have initial conversation with               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Two manufacturing business in our local community. Both would have application for employees and worldwide sales</li> <li>b. Industrial Roofing Contractor... employees</li> <li>c. Client of the consulting firm in Salina, KS</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Potential evaluation tools for the Capstone Workshops               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. AVBQ (Attitudes, Values, Beliefs Questionnaire) explores changes in those areas in response to education and experiences.</li> <li>b. PCFI (Perception, Competence, and Functioning Inventory) Explores growth and development in self-efficacy.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Question for further thought: What is it within the human mind that allows for or creates the opportunity for creative and energizing cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement?</li> </ol>
1/25/2017	Contact regarding engaging with local college as a	Incoming College President	<p>Skype conversation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Incoming president will assume office on July 1, 2017. He is currently teaching and director of an institute at a university in Thailand.</li> </ol>

	participant in my capstone project.		<p>2) Expressed his vision and commitment to enhancing the cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement on campus. He encouraged my engagement with the current vice-presidents and deans at the college prior to his arrival to begin laying a foundation for utilization of college as one of the institutions to work with as a part of the capstone project. He sees the benefit of my engagement with the college in my capstone project.</p> <p>3) Beyond the capstone project, he sees the application of the principles and learnings of the capstone project applicable not only to the reality of pluralization in the US, but also for globalization. He is interested in exploring how this could be a foundation for his vision of connecting the college with other universities in other parts of the world, including where he is currently teaching in Thailand.</p>
1/26/2017	Contact regarding engaging with local hospital as a participant in my capstone project.	Chairperson of the hospital's board of directors.	<p>Explored the possibility of engaging the local regional hospital, which also owns satellite outpatient clinics within a 50 mile radius, in my capstone project. I described my vision for my capstone project in providing a workshop or seminar type program to increase competency in cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement. We had scheduled to talk for an hour, but the meeting last an hour and half. We talked about various applications within the structure of the medical center in which such training could be an asset to the hospital. Those included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board member training. They operate with a board of 19 persons. Providing training to the board would increase the awareness of the board of the importance of cultivating a culture of effective engagement with pluralism at all levels of the hospital.</li> <li>• Administration training. Particular focus and interest here is in regard to the recruitment and retentions of doctors, especially specialists to a small market hospital. US law allows for hospitals with the designation of under-served communities to recruit doctors from other countries.</li> <li>• HR—strengthen cross-cultural and inter-religious communication and engagement with employees and to examine policies and procedures that may reflect bias and assumptions that hinder a positive work environment and fail to capitalize on the diversity of employees.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training nursing staff to be effective in patient care. Patient satisfaction surveys are linked to reimbursement amounts for many government programs. Increasing effective cross-cultural and inter-religious patient care would be of great benefit to the hospital.</li> </ul> <p>Follow up: The board chair will have a conversation with the CEO of the hospital about my interest in connecting my capstone project with the medical center, including what singular area of focus might fit best for them. The chair will let me know about the outcome of their conversation.</p>
1/26/2017	Explore the potential of shaping the capstone project to be the foundation of a business enterprise.	CPA at local firm	<p>My conversation with this CPA was in regard to the interest of businesses in in the vision of the capstone project. he is the first person that I have visited with who was clearly hesitant about my project. He expressed his clear identity as a Christian and kept returning to the question as to how this cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement would help people become Christians. I replied that this wasn't about trying to convert people to Christianity but to build a deeper sense of community not only to reduce conflict but so that we can work together for the common good. No matter how I tried to communicate the broader vision he couldn't fully understand or at least embrace that.</p> <p>What was helpful from our conversation is his continue encouragement to bring a narrower focus to my project. He encouraged me to think about focusing on only one cultural and/or one religion and to focus only on one area... either business, or health care, or education rather than develop something that could be adapted for various settings.</p>
1/30/2017	Learn the challenges that cross-cultural and inter-religious encounters brought within the framework of a	Chief Philanthropy Office for Senior Living and Health Care Corporation. Former Vice President of	<p>The area of conflict that identified from the HR experience was the issue of flexible holidays for alternate religious holidays. As we explored the possible applications of training for cross-cultural and inter-religious competency, she emphasized that those who make decisions about such training would want to know how this training would either 1) positively impact on the bottom line (financial) or 2) minimize legal risk.</p>

	corporate medical institution.	Human Resources for a national hospital chain.	Yvonne will follow up with conversations with former co-workers at the national hospital chain who are their chief legal council and the chief mission officer. While I am doubtful that this will lead to engagement in the capstone project itself engagement with the issues and needs at this level of organizational management will be very helpful.
2/1/2017	Explore possible engagement with my capstone project	Vice-president of Admissions local college.	<p>Challenges include concerns/fears expressed mostly by parents of prospective students, but also by some prospective students, who are concerned that in the college environment their child will be exposed to the religious other, and to beliefs other than the ones that they hold. Challenge is how to articulate the value of cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement to those who are pre-disposed to avoid it.</p> <p>Questions that they receive relate frequently to access to local resources for their particular faith tradition.</p> <p>Provide anti-racism training for some of the admissions staff. Tend to view engagement from a “representative” perspective.</p> <p>Evident that the language of “spiritual capital” needs further and clearer definition or simply find new language in order to effectively communicate the value of the capstone project.</p> <p>Very interested in the potential engagement with the capstone project.</p>
2/1/2017	Explore possible engagement with my capstone project	Vice Preside of Academics, Dean of Students, Vice President of Student Development, Dean of Student Success	<p>Together this groups forms a team that is responsible for attention to the overall campus culture and student experience.</p> <p>Challenges include: 1) the reality of “in groups” and self-segregation and segmentation of cultures and religions among students. 2) Being owned by a Christian denomination with organizational stipulations for the number of faculty who embrace the denomination’s identity while seeking to recruit the best teachers. 3) Twenty-seven percent of the student population identifies with the denomination that owns the college but the assumption of all students is that they are the majority. 4) Difficulty in recruiting on campus</p>

			<p>student leaders who are not affiliated with the denomination that owns the college.</p> <p>Have engaged in some cross-cultural training for faculty but it has been haphazard. Some training for Resident Assistants, but minimal.</p> <p>Very interested in engagement in the capstone project. They will continue conversation in future meetings and consider which focus on campus might be best for engagement with the capstone project.</p> <p>Encouraging response within the meeting: “This may be the most important institutional issue we will face in the next five years.”</p>
2/17/2017	Explore possible engagement with my capstone project	Director of Brand and People Experience for a Corporation that owns and manages restaurants.	<p>This corporation owns and operates 42 restaurants in 6 states and employ 2500 people. They are very socially conscious. They are working with the a national refugee resettlement organization in hiring and job training for refugees entering the United States.</p> <p>Interested in developing training and resourcing for managers who would be training and working with refugees. The current refugee population that they are working with are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and have been in refugee camps for 5 to 7 years in Kenya or Tanzania.</p> <p>Interest is in helping managers and other employees develop empathy and understanding of the Congolese refugee experience in order to effectively bring them onto their employee teams, minimizing misunderstanding and conflict, while building creative engagement that helps the refugees settle into their new location, experiencing meaningful work.</p> <p>Expressed interest in the Capstone Project in general and with a specific application to assisting in Refugee Resettlement. Asked for more specifics in terms of development.</p>

2/27/2017	Explore possible engagement with my capstone project	CEO of Manufacturing company.	<p>This is a \$25 million per year farm implement and professional turf equipment manufacturing company located in a town of about 1500 people in South Central Kansas. While it is predominantly Caucasian, there is an increase in the number of Hispanic residents. About 25% of the slightly more than 100 employees in the manufacturing plant are Hispanic.</p> <p>About 10% of their sales are to international markets and this is the fastest growing sector of their sales.</p> <p>They are also in partnership with a German implement company, building planters for their US Market.</p> <p>They are a values driven company emphasizing employee care, spiritual development, family, and a joyful work environment. They have an average employee retention rate exceeding 10 years.</p> <p>Their values, along with their increasing experience in both globalization through their increasing international sales and their partnership with along with the increasing cultural diversity of their workforce leaves them very interested in participating in the Capstone project. They are particularly interested in thinking carefully about what are the metrics of effective cross-cultural engagement.</p>
3/6/2017	Follow Up	Incoming College President	<p>This is a follow up conversation to the initial conversation on 1/25/17. I updated him on the conversations that I had with the other administrators at the college. He updated me on his vision for cross-cultural and inter-faith engagement. He continues to be supportive of my engagement with various segments of the college.</p>
3/10/2017	Follow Up	Director of Student Life	<p>A face to face conversation with director of student life at her initiative. She has begun planning the training retreat for Resident assistance for next school year. We began to make additional plans for how the training that I would offer could be included within their training event. We began to look at dates for collaborating on additional details, including specific goals, objectives and outcomes.</p>

4/12/2017	Initial Conversation	HR Consultant and Executive Coach	Keep focus on “Cross-Cultural” fit religion within that context. Businesses are reticent to talk about religion and spirituality. May be out of the context of the separation of church and state, and the title VII requirements for non-discrimination on the basis of religion. Focus on “Diversity and Inclusion” and the positive impact of that within companies. Large companies are moving toward the hiring of “Diversity Champions.” These are people who help to create an company culture of the welcome and embrace of cultural diversity within a company.
4/12/2017	Initial Conversation	Organizational development trainer	Spent time together doing an overall review of the Capstone project seeking to narrow the focus of the project. Notes from this conversational process are recorded separately from this record and will be reflected in the writings that shape the project into the future.
4/27/2017 (scheduled )	Follow Up	Principal in family business consulting firm	Develop questions for the survey.
5/2/2017	Follow Up	VP of Academics	Engaged in conversation about upcoming courses that will be offered in world religions. Discussed the potential of once again offering the course “Cross-cultural Nursing: India” that would include orientation to the culture and medical practices of India and include a two week trip to visit various medical clinic and hospitals in South India.
5/11/2017	Planning session	Dean of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalized agreement for me lead cultural and religious diversity leadership training within RA Orientation in August 2017</li> <li>• Reviewed the list of incoming RAs and the demographics represented within the group who will participate in training</li> <li>• Reviewed past diversity training for RA’s and the outcomes. Noted especially that some issues surrounding diversity, especially issues of power and privilege triggered strong emotional reactions for some.</li> <li>• Asked for stories of the past year or two that illustrate experiences in which cultural and religious diversity created a challenge or triggered a critical incident and when that diversity was experienced as a asset in achieving a particular goal or outcome.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed other training components that will be included in the RA orientation and how this training could intersect with those training components to maximize the impact through the interconnectivity.</li> <li>• Discussed the possibility of including an experience over lunch to expand the time of the engagement as well as provide a point of application.</li> <li>• Discussed details of room space, available technology</li> </ul>
5/22/2017	Follow up	Incoming President	Brief check in with the incoming president to keep him in the loop on developing plans with my capstone project and my interest in broader engagement in cultural and religious competency on campus.
6/1/2017	Conversation to understand context	International Student Recruiter	Met with the director of international student recruitment at the college. Gathered demographic information about students who will be arriving on campus next year from various countries. Asked for and gathered stories of the strengths and challenges that international students had in engaging in the college campus. Of particular interest was the story of a muslim student who had made a personal decision before arriving that he would not disclose his Muslim identity while he was in the US due to his perceived American bias against Muslims.
6/8/2017	Conversation to understand context	Resident Director	Engaged in a conversation with the longest serving resident director. Sought stories and experiences of how cultural and religious diversity has impacted the campus community both positively and negatively. What had been the challenges, conflicts, and/or critical incidents? How had students who are not a part of the dominant culture and religion engaged or not engaged in campus life? How has this changed during his years of working in this role?
6/12/2017	Ramadan Iftar	VP of Student Development, VP of Admissions, and VP of Academics	Three of the five vice presidents of the college were able to join me for a Ramadan Iftar at the Islamic Society of Wichita (ISW). I had been invited by friends at ISW to bring a group of people who would be interested in learning more about Islam to be their guests at a Ramadan Iftar. Due to the focus of my capstone project I invited the VPs of the college. Three were able to join me at the ISW. After the event we debriefed the experience, reflecting on the experience of Muslim students on campus and the opportunity to connect other students and classes with people at the mosque as a way expanding experiences that could increase cultural and religious competency.
6/25/2017	Check in	Dean of Students	Confirming plans moving forward. Set date for meeting for final planning.

7/11/2017	Planning Session	Dean of Students	Reviewed overview of the entire RA Orientation schedule and how my training session would fit into the overall flow. Explored possible locations of the training session on campus. Discussed which location would be most conducive to the activities, what technology resources were available in the room, and what additional resources would need to be arranged in the room.
7/25/2017	Coordination meeting	Associate Director of International Admissions and Director of International Student Support	These two campus leaders are responsible for the training session immediately following mine. The focus of their input will be information on specific countries and cultures of students that will be on campus. Their session will also include the practicality of name pronunciation and communication of the orientation schedule for International students so that the RAs can assist them in getting where they are supposed to be when. The purpose of our collaboration was coordinate our efforts so that they could build on the principles that I offered as a part of my training. One outcome of this meeting was that the Associate Director of International Admissions expressed interest in participating in my training session as an observer.
8/1/2017	Conversation to understand context	Resident Director	While late in the process for this conversation, this RD had been out of town through the summer and was just now responding to my earlier invitation to meet and reflect on the context. There was not new information out of this meeting, but it was helpful in confirming perspectives gained from earlier meetings and hearing a description in a different voice.
8/3/2017	Resource generation	Consultant, Observer	One of my ongoing consultants in this process assisted in the final draft of the pre- and post- training survey and uploading them to SurveyMonkey. We also worked together on assembling the colored filtered glasses that would be used in one of the training exercises.
8/8/2017	Technical Consultation	Media Director at the college	We set up the computer, projector and screen that would be used in the space that the event would take place. I displayed the PowerPoint presentation that I would use and experimented with the color filter glasses to see if we achieved the desired effect. This turned out to be a very important test, as it revealed that the lighting in the space interfered with the exercise and it would not have worked as designed. As a result, changes were implemented with both the glasses and the slides that would be viewed through the glasses to assure that the desired effect would be achieved. Without this step, the exercise would have failed.



## Appendix C: Outline of Training Session

Building Inclusive Community by Embracing Diversity  
Workshop with Resident Assistants in a College Dormitory

John C. Murray

August 12, 2017

1. Welcome and Personal Introductions
  - a. Self-introduction
  - b. Introduction of third-party observer
  - c. Brief introduction to my Action Research Project
  - d. Brief review of outline for the session
  - e. Ground Rules:
    - i. Be Present
    - ii. Be Safe
    - iii. Be willing to speak your truth
    - iv. Be open to unexpected outcomes
  - f. Pre-training Survey
2. Training Introduction
  - a. Common Greetings—and their meaning
    - i. Asalamalahkum (Islam)
    - ii. Namaste (Hindu)
    - iii. Hello
  - b. The challenge
    - i. Globalization
    - ii. Domestic Pluralism
    - iii. Segregation
    - iv. ACTIVITY #1: Name the social/cultural/religious differences that you have observed on campus and the times that segregation has been experienced.
  - c. Goals for the training session
    - i. Developing leadership skills for bridging cultural and religious differences
      1. More than conflict resolution
      2. More than tolerance
      3. Cultivating positive encounters in which difference is a gift.
    - ii. Developing understanding of self and your own cultural lenses.
    - iii. Developing self-awareness not only of words and actions, but of the attitudes, values and beliefs out of which those words and actions flow.
3. ACTIVITY #2: Mindfulness exercise #1
  - a. Introduction to mindfulness practice...
    - i. observing our thoughts
    - ii. Attention to breathing
  - b. 3 minutes silence
  - c. 2 minutes writing what you thought during silence

4. ACTIVITY #3: Color Exercise #1
  - a. Introduction and instructions
  - b. Show single slide with white background and circles of various colors for 7 seconds
  - c. Allow 10 seconds to write down colors.
  - d. Collect Data of colors written down
  - e. Redisplay the slide and analyze the data in comparison with the slide.
    - i. What colors were most frequently written down? Why?
    - ii. What colors were least frequently written down? Why?
    - iii. Any colors missed completely? Why?
    - iv. Leader note: most frequent colors are typically largest circles and brightest colors. Least frequently named colors are the background color which is also the most predominant color, outline colors, and minimal contrast colors.
  - f. Group reflection on the experience.
5. ACTIVITY #4: Color Exercise #2
  - a. Introduction: You will be shown a series of slides with pictures of cars in rapid succession. After the pictures are displayed I will ask you how many red cars you saw.
  - b. Show the pictures
  - c. Ask: How many red cars did you see? (Most all will get the answer correct.) Then ask, How many green-yellow-blue-white cars did you see? (few will be able to answer these questions).
  - d. Reflect on the power of cultural norms (stated or unstated) shaping what we “see.”
6. ACTIVITY #5: Mindfulness Moment #2
  - a. 3 minutes silence—breathing and observing your thoughts
  - b. 2 minutes writing your observations about what you are thinking.
7. ACTIVITY #6: Color Exercise #3
  - a. Distribute and Introduce Colored Glasses
  - b. View different slides asking those wearing different colored glasses to share what they observed.
    - i. Reflect on the question as to whether there are right or wrong answers to these questions.
  - c. Gather in groups of four in which each in group has a different colored lens
    - i. Display slide and invite discussion in group with the goal of determining what is actually displayed on the screen
  - d. Reflect on what had to happen in the conversation in order for the group to determine what was actually on the screen.
  - e. Display Slide of Social Lenses
  - f. Reflect what your social lenses are and how they influence your view of others and your view of “reality.”
8. ACTIVITY #7: Mindfulness Moment #3
  - a. 3 minutes silence—breathing and observing your thoughts
  - b. 2 minutes writing your observations about what you are thinking.

9. ACTIVITY #8: Case Study
  - a. Introduction—what to listen for in the story
    - i. What are the barriers to community which maintain segregation?
    - ii. What happened that opened the door to connection and community?
  - b. Share the Case Study
  - c. Debrief the Case Study
10. ACTIVITY #9: Mindfulness Moment #4
  - a. Focused Reflection
    - i. What stands out to you from your experience this morning?
    - ii. What “ah ha” moments did you have?
    - iii. Recalling the list of differences and experiences of segregation that we identified at the beginning, what will you do as a leader on campus because of what you experienced this morning?
  - b. Sharing reflections from this reflection time.
11. Conclusion
  - a. Thanks for engagement
  - b. Complete post-training survey.

## Appendix D: Case Study

My first trip to India was in 1997. My initial reaction was culture shock on steroids. It was a mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically disorienting experience. Overwhelming population density, pollution, chaotic traffic that was on the wrong side of the road (from my cultural experience), toilets, if they existed at all, were nothing like I had ever seen, and unreliable electric power all contributed to my disorientation. But the biggest challenge for me was poverty like I had never seen. That included beggars. Gaunt mothers holding malnourished babies, people of all ages with severe physical deformities would tug on my sleeves, get in my way all begging for a few rupees. I tried giving a few rupees to one young mother and was instantly surrounded by crowd of beggars all clamoring for the next few coins. I resented them because I assumed that they thought I was a rich American who could give away all kinds of money. I resented them for what I assumed that they thought of me.

I went to India as part of a group that had a dream to establish a medical clinic in a rural village in South India. When we arrived in the village we met with the village elders of this predominantly Hindu and Muslim village. They welcomed us as Christians and embraced our vision for building a clinic in their village. After our meeting, they led us on a walking tour through the entire village. As we journey through the area of the lowest caste residents, I saw up ahead, a man who was obviously a paralytic leaning against a wall on the side of the road. My mind immediately labeled him a beggar and I walked to the other side of the road and focused my attention on houses and scenery away from where he was. The elders of this predominantly Hindu and Muslim village stopped the procession. They came to me and said, aren't you a Christian pastor? We would like you pray for this man? Internally, I was as resistant pray for him as I was to give a few rupees. What did they want me to do, heal this guy? What if he is not

healed what will they think of me as a Christian pastor? What if he is, I wasn't ready for that response either. I was about to ask for a translator to translate my prayer into Telegu, the local language, then I remembered that prayer is talking to God and God probably didn't need a translator.

I knew I couldn't refuse their request. They told me his name was Jorgipa. I knelt down beside him. I took his limp hand in mine and placed my other hand on his shoulder. For the first time since I had been in the country of India, I looked directly into the eyes of someone who was asking something from me. I was amazed at what I saw. I didn't see a poor pitiful creature who lived in poverty and thought I was a rich American who could give away all kinds of money. I saw a beloved child of God. I saw the very image of God. As he looked back at me I sense that he could see the image of God in me, which was something I had no longer been able to see in myself. I don't recall the words of my prayer, I suspect they were poorly chosen, uttered in something like a stammer. In that moment I was changed. I saw Jorjipa, beggars, my new Hindu and Muslim friends with new eyes. Most importantly I saw myself differently.

## Appendix E: Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs Survey

### Demographic Data:

Gender:

Age:

Nationality:

Race:

Religion:

Each statement below invited a response of either “Never True,” “Seldom True,” “Usually True,” or “Always True.” They were presented through Survey Monkey and accessed through student cell phones. Survey Monkey randomized the order of the questions.

1. I am confident in engaging with people from cultures and religions other than my own.
2. I avoid interacting with people from a culture or religion other than my own.
3. I am aware of how my cultural and religious biases shape my perception of others.
4. I do not have any cultural or religious biases.
5. My biases do not influence my perceptions of others.
6. The presence of differences creates stronger community.
7. The presence of differences hinders the development of community.
8. Engagement with people from cultures and religions other than my own helps me grow and develop as a person.
9. Engagement with people from cultures and religions other than my own is a threat to my beliefs and values.
10. Engagement with people from other cultures provides me an opportunity to teach them my perspectives and beliefs.
11. It is important to me to connect with people from cultures and religions other than my own.
12. It is not essential to me to connect with people from cultures and religions other than my own.

## Appendix F: Raw Survey Data

### Demographics

RA Self Reported Categories	Resident Assistants	Percentage RAs	Percentage RAs Combined Categories		All Students	Percentage All Students	Percentage All Students Combined Categories
Gender:							
Female	14	48.28%			155	50.82%	
Male	15	51.72%			150	49.18%	
Age:							
Under 18					8	2.67%	
18 years old					128	41.97%	
19 years old	24	82.76%			100	32.79%	
20 years old	4	13.79%			46	15.08%	
21 years old	1	3.45%			16	5.25%	
Over 21					7	2.30%	
Nationality:							
USA	11	37.93%	93.10%		252	82.62%	
“American”	16	55.17%					
Japan	1	3.45%	3.45%	6.90%	21	39.62%	17.38%
Albania	1	3.45%	3.45%		5	15.63%	
Australia					1	3.70%	
Bahamas					2	0.88%	
China					3	1.34%	
Ethiopia					3	1.36%	
France					1	0.40%	
Honduras					2	0.68%	
Indonesia					3	0.96%	
Israel					1	0.32%	
Italy					1	0.32%	
South Korea					3	0.95%	
Nigeria					1	0.28%	
Panama					2	0.46%	
Peru					2	0.46%	
Thailand					1	0.23%	
Venezuela					1	0.23%	

RA Self Reported Categories	Resident Assistants	Percentage RAs	Percentage RAs Combined Categories		All Students	Percentage All Students	Percentage All Students Combined Categories
Ethnicity:							
White	15	51.72%	89.66%		200	65.57%	
Caucasian	10	34.48%					
White/Caucasian	1	3.45%					
Asian	1	3.45%	3.45%		31	10.16%	
Hispanic	1	3.45%	3.45%		47	15.41%	
African American	1	3.45%	3.45%		21	6.89%	
Two or More Races					6	1.97%	
Religion:							
Christian	13	44.83%	44.83%	All Christian 93.10%	40	13.29%	All Christian 80%
Mennonite	6	20.69%	34.48%		86	28.57%	
Mennonite/Christian	4	13.79%					
Christian Evangelical	1	3.45%	3.45%		5	1.66%	
Southern Baptist Christian	1	3.45%	3.45%				
Nazarene	1	3.45%	3.45%		5	1.66%	
Roman Catholic	1	3.45%	3.45%		29	9.63%	
Baptist				21	6.98%		
Assembly of God				1	0.33%		
Church of Christ				1	0.33%		
Church of God				1	0.33%		
Community				1	0.33%		
Episcopal				1	0.33%		
Lutheran				9	2.99%		
Methodist				11	3.65%		
Non-denominational				24	7.97%		
Orthodox				1	0.33%		
Pentacostal				1	0.33%		
Presbyterian				2	0.66%		
Protestant				3	1.00%		
Buddhist				1	0.33%		
Islam				1	0.33%		
Jewish				1	0.33%		
Unaffiliated	1	3.45%	3.45%	3.45%			
None	1	3.45%	3.45%	3.45%	56	18.60%	

Likert Scale Responses to Survey Statements				
Question	Never True	Seldom True	Usually True	Always True
Q1. I am confident in engaging with people from cultures and religions other than my own.				
Collector 1	0	9	9	10
Collector 2	0	6	15	8
Collector 3	0	2	21	5
Q2. I avoid interacting with people from a culture or religion other than my own.				
Collector 1	11	13	4	0
Collector 2	6	18	3	2
Collector 3	12	10	6	0
Q3. I am aware of how my cultural and religious biases shape my perception of others.				
Collector 1	0	4	18	6
Collector 2	0	4	16	9
Collector 3	0	4	18	6
Q4. I do not have any cultural or religious biases.				
Collector 1	8	9	9	2
Collector 2	10	7	9	3
Collector 3	7	16	5	0

Q5. My biases do not influence my perceptions of others.

Collector 1	1	14	11	2
Collector 2	8	14	4	3
Collector 3	6	14	7	1

Q6. The presence of differences creates stronger community.

Collector 1	0	5	13	10
Collector 2	0	3	12	14
Collector 3	1	1	10	16

Q7. The presence of difference hinders the development of community.

Collector 1	5	17	6	0
Collector 2	8	13	4	4
Collector 3	5	19	4	0

Q8. Engagement with people from cultures and religions other than my own helps me grow and develop as a person.

Collector 1	1	2	15	10
Collector 2	0	0	7	22
Collector 3	0	2	12	14

Q9. Engagement with people from cultures and religions other than my own is a threat to my beliefs and values.

Collector 1	13	12	3	0
Collector 2	12	15	0	2
Collector 3	11	11	3	3

Q10. Engagement with people from other cultures provides me an opportunity to teach them my perspectives and beliefs.

Collector 1	0	4	18	6
Collector 2	0	3	14	12
Collector 3	0	6	13	9

Q11. It is important to me to connect with people from cultures and religions other than my own.

Collector 1	0	9	11	8
Collector 2	0	4	10	15
Collector 3	0	3	9	16

Q12. It is not essential to me to connect with people from cultures and religions other than my own.

Collector 1	11	11	5	1
Collector 2	11	11	6	1
Collector 3	11	9	6	2

