

HOW TO CREATE A
WINNING COMPANY CULTURE

HEROES FOR HIRE:
VETERANS IN THE WORKPLACE

GET READY—
GEN Z IS COMING!

INCLUSION

*Creating Globally
Inclusive & Culturally
Competent Workplaces*

WINTER 2020 + ISSUE 5

Leading the
Charge on
Implementing
Inclusive
Practices

NEW YORK
UNIVERSITY'S

LISA
COLEMAN





Lisa Coleman Senior VP, Global Inclusion and Strategic Innovation, New York University

Reporting to the president, Dr. Lisa Coleman is the inaugural SVP for global inclusion and strategic innovation at New York University (NYU). She also serves as chief diversity officer. Dr. Coleman and her teams collaborate with deans and other senior leaders, varied and divergent sectors, as well as internal and external stakeholders locally and globally to advance, build capacity for, and implement inclusive, innovative, diversified, equitable strategic organizational research and best practices.

Prior to joining NYU, Dr. Coleman served as the first chief diversity officer and special

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assistant to the president at Harvard University, from 2009 to 2017. During her tenure, she and her team developed some of the first pilot programs focused on the intersections of emerging technologies and disability.

Dr. Coleman advises and consults with C-suite leaders globally. She sits on various national and international boards, and her current work focuses on the intersections of leadership, innovation, and inclusion. Dr. Coleman is the recipient of numerous awards, recognitions, and honors for excellence in leadership and teaching, and for her work on diversity, inclusion, belonging, equity, and innovation globally.

Dr. Coleman earned a doctorate in social and cultural analysis, American studies, from NYU and three master's degrees from Ohio State University in African and African American studies; women's, gender, and sexuality studies; and communication studies. Her undergraduate foci were computer science and sociology.

Inclusion: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2020 for diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?

Lisa Coleman: Immense opportunities can be found in how we engage changing demography and technological advances, and sustain and grow future global talent. These opportunities are intermingled with rapidly shifting, diverse, inclusive entrepreneurial and innovative markets. As new constituencies evolve—including people with disabilities; multiethnic and multiracial communities; gender, sexual, and multifaceted intersectional identities; and generations—so do ideas about equity, belonging, work, and community. Those on the neurodiversity spectrum, generation Z, the alpha generation—or my nickname for this newest generation, the double AAs, because they are double packed—are asking all types of questions about education, technology, work, home, and family; these are opportunities, versus challenges, for us to create better work, educational, and community spaces now and for our collective futures.

IN: What are some of the most salient D&I issues and challenges specific to academia?

LC: As global and for-profit higher educational



Dr. Coleman models and inspires joyful, inclusive leadership.

markets expand, there are increasing pressures to define the benefits of higher education in the US. Moreover, access and the affordability of higher education are at the forefront of many deliberations in the media as some contemplate the proposed value of higher education.

There is much research demonstrating the benefits of higher education. At NYU, we are building on this research and creating initiatives directed toward affordability, and related programs, such as food security, first-generation students, etcetera. Faculty, board, and senior leadership diversification also continues to be a concern for many universities, and as many are aware, these mirror corporate and nonprofit challenges and opportunities. We employ emerging research and best practices, including mentorship, augmented retention and promotional processes, cohort/critical mass hires, and new pathway programs—and there remains much more to do.

IN: What brought you to do this work? Is there a personal motivation, that inspired you in this direction?

LC: I was, and am, inspired by the work that dedicated and often unrecognized people do in the face of adversity. Very early in life, I was honored and humbled to work with volunteers who served the homeless and people with disabilities. The fortitude and empathy these teachers, volunteers—successful and ordinary people—demonstrated shaped my world. They provided roadmaps of compassion with practical tools that allowed me to see how even the smallest of gestures, a blanket, can change a life. I was also greatly influenced by the 1980s/'90s HIV pandemic. As a young volunteer, I saw some retreat with fear and horror, but I saw others—caretakers, nurses, and doctors—take up the hard work at hard times; they stood in the face of uncertainty with grace and gentleness. I thought if they can do it, and if I could model my life after this kind of work, then maybe I, too, could make a small contribution to make the world better for others. I continue to try to do my best; there is so much more to do, so I keep working, and volunteering.

IN: A concept that is increasingly being addressed now is cultural transformation of the workplace. What does this mean to you and how is NYU working to transform its culture?

LC: Cultural transformation is key to understanding organizations, and I engage research globally, including transformation work in South Africa. Historically, and far too often in the US, diversity and inclusion work is focused on changing people. We learn from global research that organizational cultures must be examined and unpacked, and different institutions engrain different cultures. We all know the adage “culture eats strategy”; my addition is culture eats people. It is imperative to assess culture(s) to be effective.

Many cultures of academia are steeped in and driven by research, teaching, and new knowledge production; also, cultures in academia vary because there are numerous types of educational institutions. To be effective in organizational reimagining, development, and transformation, it is important to query the organizational type. This is also true for corporations, and for governmental and nongovernmental agencies. In other words, how diversity and inclusion strategies are developed for banking may not be the best for art organizations because cultures are distinct. In higher education, there is a tendency to focus on students, but culture in higher education is also created by faculty, boards, alumni, administrators, other stakeholders, and heterogeneous disciplines/schools. NYU, like others, has many schools, including global health, arts and humanities, science, engineering, business, public policy, and many more. These constituencies' and schools' cultures and interests are not always analogous.

Accordingly, transformation efforts must be specific and grounded in data analytics that relate to the particular type of organization or institution, its histories, and relevant micro and macro cultures. I engage a design-thinking model to spark new ideas and pathways for creating more effective transformation tools.

IN: Tell us about your greatest success story.

LC: Building capacity for more research, increasing resources, and raising funds for those who have been systemically and systematically excluded, and historically disenfranchised. I have also been privileged to work with a team and raise funds to build one of the first pilot



and testing labs for people with disabilities across the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and gender and sexual identities.

IN: What are some of the recent thought leader topics in the world of inclusion that organizations are learning about and implementing?

LC: Much emerging research is focused on advantage-based models building on the scholarship of Dolly Chugh, Scott Page, and other scholars that underscore the science of inclusion, growth and sustainability models, data- and evidence-based organizational analyses, and interconnected implementation strategies. We all know the future will be different than the present. In global inclusion, we take the opportunity to learn from the present and our communities. Therefore, the second area is neurodiversity; exploring this burgeoning research is one way that we, at NYU, are innovating and expanding ways of teaching and learning. Lastly, researching shifting demography and expanding entrepreneurial markets provides insight into future definitions of community, identity, work, family, and much more.

IN: Over the last few years, there has been a great deal of excitement about artificial intelligence and machine learning in creating more inclusive workplaces. What do you see as the opportunities? How is NYU using these technologies? What are some of the cautionary tales we need to be aware of?

LC: Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics, as well as other technological

advances, are crucial to diversity, inclusion, belonging, and equity advancements. I see these as opportunities yet to be fully imagined. We designed our inaugural office to highlight how the intersections of global inclusion, innovations, and sustainability are at the nexus of our collective futures. New technologies must be sustainable and take into account the complexities and histories of bias and discrimination, exclusion, and inclusion. The opportunities are to figure out how technologies will benefit human-centered learning and engagement; mitigate present-day prejudices, biases, and stereotypes; and safeguard new and future technologies and global power structures from systems that sustain and perpetuate the disenfranchisement of particular communities. At NYU, we employ novel, innovative research and technologies to build capacity for debate and belonging, and to engender more equitable strategies, processes, and practices.

IN: What do you see as the challenges and opportunities posed by gen Z?

LC: Generation Z and the alphas present limitless opportunities. The best practices in higher education reveal and underscore the vast and immeasurable cross-generational possibilities, not just today but for the future. Newer generations might help everyone appreciate and share emerging technologies and innovations. Older generations might provide information about, and assist with, navigating an increasingly complex world built in histories that we must untangle collectively. Together we can build extraordinary nimble multigenerational communities in work, education, and so much more.

IN: How does a university best cultivate a diverse talent pipeline?

LC: Universities sit at the center of creating globally multifaceted collaborative learning, research, and work opportunities across all sectors. Fittingly, it is imperative to teach and partner with all sectors and entities as we create and expand globally inclusive, transformational, diverse, and thriving pathways. At NYU, we collaborate with corporations, nonprofits, community organizations, K-12, NGOs, hospitals, and many others. And across our global network—which includes three degree-granting campuses in New York, Shanghai, and Abu Dhabi, and other sites in Sydney, Buenos Aires, Paris, London, Accra, Prague, Madrid, Athens, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC—we have increasingly globally diverse student, administrative, and faculty bodies. This network allows us to collaborate, learn, innovate, and partner across sectors around the world as we reimagine what higher education is, and will be.

IN: How do you use data and metrics to measure D&I success?

LC: Higher education is built in, and on, research. In 2018, we completed a survey and collected qualitative and quantitative data from close to 22,000 respondents about inclusion, equity, diversity, and belonging on our campuses. This exemplifies how we employ data analytics, research, evidence-based modeling, and best practices to guide the work of the NYU's inaugural Office of Global Inclusion and Strategic Innovation. **IN**