

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**  
**HALL OF FAME**

**THE SECRET POWERS OF**  
**NEURODIVERGENT TEAMS**

**PUSHING FOR GENDER**  
**PAY EQUITY**

# INCLUSION

*Creating Globally  
Inclusive &  
Culturally  
Competent  
Workplaces*

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**NUTRIEN'S**

# Leslie Coleman

**Leading the Charge  
on Implementing Inclusive  
and Equitable Practices**



# Leslie Coleman

**Vice President, Equity,  
Diversity, and Inclusion,  
Nutrien**

A mom, industry leader, and staunch football fan, Leslie Coleman, Nutrien's first ever vice president, equity, diversity, and inclusion, has been charged with creating the \$45 billion organization's ED&I Center of Excellence.

Leslie joined Nutrien in March 2021 with a mammoth charge of creating and leading world-class DEI strategies at the agriculture products company, which helps growers increase food production in a sustainable way.

She brings to Nutrien extensive experience in driving a diverse and inclusive workforce for global organizations in a variety of sectors. Most recently, Leslie was the global director of diversity and inclusion at International Paper in Memphis, Tennessee. Prior to joining IP, she served as the global HR leader at Cargill.

Leslie is a national board member for the National Black MBA Association and former president of the Memphis chapter. She is also a board member for the Memphis Orpheum, Stillman College, TAG, and YWCA, amongst other prestigious organizations.



She earned a bachelor's degree in human resources with a minor in psychology at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Leslie also graduated with honors from the University of Memphis, from which she earned a masters in psychology and research, publishing an article titled "Self Theories." She also holds executive certifications from both Harvard and Emory.

Leslie has two sons. Luke plays football for the US Naval Academy, and Lane resides with Leslie in Memphis, Tennessee. Her motto, "Forward to the possibilities," has served her well and continues to be the ground swell for her success.

**Inclusion:** Equity is now taking center stage, over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization like Nutrien best ensure equity?

**Leslie Coleman:** Equity is about ensuring people have what they need to be successful. We've spent a lot of time having conversations about how each person is unique and how we need to work together to be our best. The next logical step is identifying what each person needs to be their best and be on the same field as everyone else.

At Nutrien, we are working on understanding not only what different groups may need, but also understanding the environment they are in, as psychological safety is a number one priority. The needs of people in Fort Saskatchewan are going to be different than those in Trinidad, Australia, or even the US. We rely on our employee resource groups (ERGs) to communicate with us on what the unique needs are and help us deliver tools to those areas. We also encourage allies to be a part of the network to understand the concerns brought forward by the group. Together we can identify the barriers and work on a solution.

In addition to working with our ERGs, we have a number of ways that people can connect with us to provide input. From employee engagement surveys, to townhalls where people can ask anonymous questions, to an integrity hotline, employees are encouraged to let us know where we can improve. We take each suggestion seriously and work with leaders and HR to make the appropriate changes.

**IN:** What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?



**LC:** Without question, every organization will have to adjust to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has created a different environment across our personal and professional lives. There are also the societal concerns of 2020 that have created the need for a deeper emphasis and prioritization around equity, diversity, and inclusion. The good news is corporations made unprecedented commitments to this space which created opportunities for chief diversity officers and other diversity professionals, where people of color took prominent seating.

Other important topics to keep in mind are changing demographics. Are we reflective of our communities, our employee needs, our suppliers, and our customers? The shift to a focus on environment is driving a great deal of effort for organizations. As stakeholders continue to ask questions related to EDI, we must make the connection to ESG (environmental, social, and governance). The "S" in ESG examines how companies manage relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where we operate. Here at Nutrien, we've created pillars around

social governance and will continue to measure our actions to ensure priority alignment within EDI.

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

**LC:** I love the perspective that gen Z brings to our workplace. They are no longer interested in working the kind of schedules their parents did—or are doing—to pay down a mortgage or maintain a certain lifestyle. What I hear from gen Z is that they watched their parents miss games, miss out on fun with friends, etcetera, and that is not something they are interested in pursuing. They want a job that fits into their lifestyle, not a life that fits around their job. I admire that. It allows them the flexibility to find a company that values work-life balance. In the long run that promotes stronger mental health for employees. The challenge is for businesses that rely on a strict in-office or at-a-site workforce to make changes. Organizations need to figure out what can be done remotely and allow employees the flexibility to work from wherever they need to. We also need to look at modifying the 5-day, 40-hour work week. Can we adapt to a work environment where we focus on the tasks and not on the hours spent doing the tasks?

Gen Z are digital natives. They have no idea of what the world was like without smartphones. If we want to keep up with, employ, and retain gen Z, we need to learn to be more digitally adept ourselves. Now is a time to ensure we are using multiple platforms to reach out and connect with members of this generation. Additionally, it is a great opportunity to upgrade the digital technology in our operations.

**IN: How do you use data and metrics to measure DEI success?**

**LC:** Like others, we track gender across job categories such as senior management and board of directors. We also set targets in what we want to achieve by 2030. By tracking our progress, we are holding ourselves accountable and ensuring we are doing everything we can to remove barriers to access. We take it a

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step further and publish this metric in our proxy documents. This allows shareholders and other stakeholders to see what we are doing and call us on it if we are not meeting our goals.

Internally we also measure data related to turnover and new hires. Are we finding higher turnover with one segment? If so, we can then also look at exit interview data, historical trends, and engagement survey results to find if there is a DEI-related trend we can address, or if there is something else we should be investigating.

**IN: Is Nutrien making a shift from a focus on diversity and inclusion, to diversity, equity, and inclusion? If so, how are you shifting thinking, resources, desired outcomes?**

**LC:** In fact, we are shifting the focus to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We have purposefully arranged the wording this way to ensure that everything we do starts with equity. It may seem like a small shift, but when you start the conversation with diversity, we focus on our differences. By starting the conversation with equity, we focus on what is needed to ensure everyone has the access they need to be successful.

The most difficult step in the journey has been to help people understand that equity is not about someone getting something better than them. It's about providing a different route. I often use the example of a ramp. You may be able to use the stairs, but access to the building is limited to only those who can use them. By building a ramp, you are now providing access to individuals who are unable to use the stairs. You can use the ramp now if you choose, or if at some point in the future you need it, it's there. It's not better or worse, just a different way to access the building with the same end goal of getting everyone inside.

I believe the shift to focus on equity also inspires a shift to focus on innovation and collaboration. We are no longer thinking about how I personally can get ahead, but on how we can all win as one. By thinking of equity now, it also supports our business in the future. We are ready to make changes and adapt, rather than being averse to change and rehearsing "this is how we've always done it." We are one Nutrien. We all win as one, Nutrien. **IN**