MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Leadership Advising Results
3 | About UBUNTU
4 | Assessment Overview
5 - 10 | Self-Assessment Results
11 - 23 | Leadership Advising Slides & Notes
24 | Accountability Planning
25 | Additional Materials
UBUNTU Research and Evaluation is a strategic-learning organization powered by unapologetic Black women, femmes, & nonbinary folks. We work as transdisciplinary strategists committed to resisting anti-Blackness and building the intellectual & political defenses of all Black people, in solidarity with the global majority, through education, facilitation, and evaluation.
About the Social Justice Leadership Self-Assessment

Participants of the Leadership Advising Sessions completed a Social Justice Leadership Self-Assessment. Advisors used the results to gauge staff’s knowledge base and practice as it relates to aspects of social justice. Topics included mindfulness, whiteness, intersectionality, dignity, interdependence, and accountability.

Out of 30 potential participants, there were a total of 22 responses.

- 7 Management
- 7 Frontline Staff
- 8 Board/Governance

The following slides contain the responses to six (6) questions, each asking participants to make a selection based on the Likert scale (1 being “not at all” and 5 being “Very much”).
Mindfulness: To what extent do you bring together your body and your brain to understand, interpret, and evaluate your experiences?

22 responses

- 13 (59.1%)
- 4 (18.2%)
- 5 (22.7%)
- 0 (0%)
- 0 (0%)
Whiteness: To what extent do you assume that there are no race neutral situations?

22 responses

- 1 (4.5%)
- 4 (18.2%)
- 5 (22.7%)
- 4 (18.2%)
- 8 (36.4%)
Intersectionality: To what extent do you identify the complexity of multiple social identities in any given situation?

22 responses
Dignity: To what extent do you protect the inherent value of each person's knowledge and experience?

22 responses

- 0 (0%)
- 1 (4.5%)
- 2 (9.1%)
- 11 (50%)
- 8 (36.4%)
Interdependence: To what extent do you acknowledge the individual as both part of the collective and RESPONSIBLE FOR the collective in your professional roles?

22 responses

- 1: 0 (0%)
- 2: 0 (0%)
- 3: 4 (18.2%)
- 4: 9 (40.9%)
- 5: 9 (40.9%)
Accountability: To what extent do you believe yourself accountable for providing culturally relevant curriculum and/or practices for the communities that you serve?

22 responses

- 0 (0%)
- 0 (0%)
- 2 (9.1%)
- 12 (54.5%)
- 8 (36.4%)
Leadership Advising

Strategy Building & Further Discussion

UBUNTU Research and Evaluation facilitated 6 1-hour advising sessions for members of each organizational tier. These sessions support these populations through strategic advising targeted to their specific vantage point within their organizations.

Organizational Tiers:
- Frontline Staff
- Management
- Board/Governance
QUESTION:
As frontline staff, you have perhaps the most face time (or screen time!) with clients, patrons, and/or communities you serve. With this in mind, how can you use your power, privilege, and influence to further this work along for your organization? In times where you have experienced humiliation in your role, how did dignity and mindfulness play a role in the aftermath?
How can you use your power, privilege, influence, and understanding of dignity to further this work for your organization? Double-click a post-it to edit.

Collect examples! Put faces and events to the barriers you see people face when trying to interact.

Bringing a sense of humility and humanity to the way I relate to other departments and how the organization meets the community at large.

I can accept myself for who/what I am and have to offer, in order to accept others for what they have to offer.

Pass along research to both those above and below so that we are all using the same language.

Assume/hope for good intent and exercise empathy to think about how I may need to approach things differently.

^ Creating and sharing tools/"cheat sheets"even. So much turnover in frontline staff.

^ + ACT on issues that arise, don't sweep stuff under the rug.

Keeping in mind that everyone is coming in with different knowledge, not necessarily more/less, better/worse.

Assume/hope for good intent and exercise empathy to think about how I may need to approach things differently.

Extend dignity to others in all directions.

Use my privilege as someone in a communications centric role to amplify the voices and work of our community partners/programs to the audiences that will gain value from them, not simply donors who we want to support that work.

Use privilege of being a young person to influence change by those who may be stuck in old ways, "auto-pilot" and mindlessness.

Leading with my own vulnerability, sharing my own access needs so others feel comfortable sharing theirs.

Being honest about my needs to lead by example so others feel that freedom.

COLLECT EXAMPLES! Put faces and events to the barriers you see people face when trying to interact.

I can use my power, privilege, and influence to refuse to adopt the learned helplessness that is often in the air, the coaxing of the drive to numb realities because it is "too complicated", but pushing others in power to wrestle with complex problems with creativity and accountability for change.

^ this!

Storytelling

Using privilege as someone in a communications centric role to amplify the voices and work of our community partners/programs to the audiences that will gain value from them, not simply donors who we want to support that work.

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Second Session

**Question One:** What does accountability currently look like within your organizations? Within the council? How can these measures shift and become more transformative?

**Question Two:** What does this work look like moving forward?
What does this work look like moving forward? Double-click a post-it to edit.

Interdependence-Action: Share the concepts from these sessions with my manager/team leader and recommend facilitating a team-wide discussion of these topics.

Plan: Ensure problem solving doesn’t end with someone just being heard, but ends with a real solution, even if it means altering a system in place.

Interdependence: my team members, colleagues on other teams, members of our Accessibility Task Force/Racial Equity Working Groups.

Assets: relationships with consultants and partners who can advise; departmental budget.

Assets: Making sure resources are not made available to some and not all.

Recognize and amplify the work that has been done.

Recognize current assets while reaching out further.

Challenge - confusion over role within group.

Plan: Ensure problem solving doesn’t end with someone just being heard, but ends with a real solution, even if it means altering a system in place.

Strategies: Get to work now and present.

Recognize and amplify the work that has been done.

Assets: In flux + passion.

Challenges: Be explicit about when a challenge that arises to systemic change at the organizational level is a symptom of whiteness or lack of dignity being reciprocated.

Action: Challenge authority to align personal/institutional directions.

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Challenge - confusion over role within group.

Assets: In flux + passion.

Challenges: Be explicit about when a challenge that arises to systemic change at the organizational level is a symptom of whiteness or lack of dignity being reciprocated.

Template by Training for Change
**QUESTION:**
How does dignity (restorative + social) tie in with the *concept of mindfulness*?

As management/supervisors, you have the responsibility of not only projects and tasks, but being in community with team members. With this in mind, **how can you use your power, privilege, and influence to further this work along for your team? For your organization?**
**How can you use your power, privilege, influence, and understanding of dignity to further this work for your organization? Double-click a post-it to edit.**

- **Model meeting your outcomes that align with your mission through building trust**
- **Give time to change, adapt, learn—change the pace of “we’ve always done it this way”**
- **Building a foundation of trust and a scaffold to creative a positive and healthy dynamic to solving problems**
- **Thinking about shared outcomes but different paths to achieve those results. Mentoring so that practices are embodied and stay with you no matter where you work.**
- **Slowing down to build best practices moving forward rather than defaulting to the “way we’ve always done things”**
- **Taking everyone’s individual, personal experiences into account.**
- **Asking the group to expand mindfulness to include the experiences of others (often those not present in the conversation).**
- **Changing hiring practices—job descriptions, where listed, etc.**
- **Advocate for the needs of your team, especially if they are in the front lines**
- **More plays by BIPOC writers**
- **Empathy and understanding being regular workplace behaviors.**
- **No one wants to make the wrong decision, so the don’t make one**
- **Really Listening.**
- **Thinking of what people need to have an equal playing field to work from**
- **Including as many people as possible in mission of organization.**
- **Think, what is missing from your team. Ideas come from all backgrounds. What ideas do you miss out on from having only 1 perspective?**
- **“Yes, and” approach to management**
- **Ask! Ask your teammates and employees, what they need for better support.**
Second Session

**Question One:** What does accountability currently look like within your organizations? Within the council? How can these measures shift and become more transformative?  

**Question Two:** What does this work look like moving forward?
What does this work look like moving forward? Double-click a post-it to edit.

- Being more inclusive in marketing, rather than targeting
- Having the Board of Trustees as a partner in the efforts
- Centering diverse experiences and voices even when they aren’t in the room
- Greater diversity among all different sectors of organization
- Shift in language for job descriptions
- Seeking out inviting ppl in
- Including/anticipating needs in budgetary planning
- Inviting people into the organization instead of waiting for them to come to you
- Better outreach. Partnering with more diverse organizations than your own.
- Addressing indecisiveness to make meaningful change as the same silence/refusal

Making programming accessible and interesting to a wider population.

Have diverse voices present from the beginning (planning phase)
**QUESTION:**
As board members/governance, you have the responsibility of making some really big decisions on behalf of the orgs/communities you serve.

With this in mind, **how can you use your power, privilege, and influence to further this work along for your organization?**
How can you use your power, privilege, influence, and understanding of dignity to further this work for your organization? Double-click a post-it to edit.

- **Learn from mistakes.**
- **Facilitating dialogue**
- **Group conversations and commitment building**
- **Saying “thank you” instead of sorry**
- **Cultivate risk-taking**
- **Find transportation solutions.**
- **Go directly to the community instead of asking them to come to you.**

Asking folks from underrepresented communities to be apart of dialogues and conversations.
Second Session

**Question One:** What does accountability currently look like within your organizations? Within the council? How can these measures shift and become more transformative?

**Question Two:** What does this work look like moving forward?
In response to the question:

• Moving from focus on wrongdoing to transformative accountability (with volunteers & other staff)
• For board, taking the handbook & reinforcing positive behavior
• Training in cross-cultural techniques
• Instead of jumping to action, focusing on achievements
• Check-ins and reinforcement
• Allowing space for folks to be heard
• Moving from retributive to transformative ——> how to bridge gap among all levels in the organization
• Transformative Accountability: Almost two year commitment to the idea work
• Moving from volunteers to staff to board
• Hosting Committees
• Holding ourselves accountable, expecting where we demonstrate that commitment
• Commitment being tangible
• Hiring HR Consultant
• Idea work at the center / a lens to HR practices
• Vendor Audit / BIPOC actors
• Mindful of access (dignity) / hairdressers in theatre space
• Actively sharing & challenging the board with info gained
• Creating space for more dialogue
• New resources / better identifying opportunities for engagement
• Continue recruiting experts and stakeholders for board
• More training across the teams
• Consumer of nonwhite work
**ACCOUNTABILITY PLANNING**

Answer the following questions based on your desired accountability for any of the following:

**DIGNITY, WHITENESS, MINDFULNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY & INTERDEPENDENCE**

**Action:**
What action should you take next?

**Plan:**
What step must you take in order to fully implement each action?

**Interdependence:**
Who will be your accountability partners?

**Alignment:**
How do these actions align with one or more of your organization priorities or goals?

**Assets:**
What resources does your organization have?

**Challenges:**
What might get in the way?

**Strategies:**
How do you overcome challenges?
ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Dr. Maya Angelou [Video]
- Readings for White People
- Additional UBUNTU Webinars
- Join our mailing list! (We’ll be launching our online learning communities soon!)