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Leadership Perspectives

NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND EEO IN A CHANGED WORLD



Hello, I'm Paul Danczyk, Director of Executive Education for the USC Price School of Public Policy in Sacramento. For the last eight years, I have designed, delivered and evaluated leadership programs targeted at the public and nonprofit sectors. What I consistently find is that when programs are designed and delivered correctly, they make lasting impacts on their participants. These opportunities make an organization stronger by reshaping its culture to one that fosters and supports growth within staff members, thereby transforming how business is done. As a returned Peace Corps volunteer, past president of local professional associations, teacher, and practitioner, I continue my journey of applying best practices in leadership and public administration in practical

settings while searching for reasonableness under a rule of law.

I became involved in this APSEA Symposium when Margaret Kim invited me to my first steering committee meeting last fall. I was instantly hooked. I was impressed with the passion of the other leaders in attendance and the Symposium's goals of addressing change and opportunity. While not everyone was an APSEA member, they rallied around the concept of improving public service through leadership and EEO perspectives. The sustained commitment continues in creating a high-quality, high-impact one-day program with exemplars at all levels within government.

The more that I study the fields of public administration and leadership, the more that I appreciate multiple paradoxes in which we operate; for example, the relationship between democracy and bureaucracy or localization and globalization. In a short period of time, as a society, we have changed how we access information, and thereby demand more and in real-time. In many ways, this is shaping the sense of urgency and our responses. While there are times when we must be reactive, proactivity ensures success. Sometimes, this visually presents itself as building—and strengthening—networks. At other times, it is seeking clarity to perceived assumptions or approaching different environments through strategic techniques like evidence-based decision-making. In many ways, we cannot be afraid to ask, as one leadership mentor, Laree Kiely, puts it, "What are you solving and for whom?" This leads to another paradox—complexity and simplicity. While organizations and their missions become more complex, the conversations and systems need to be constructed in such a way as to create foundational understandings, promote ease of use/access, and foster flexibility.

This symposium reflects the best of public service. Instead of talking about leadership, this symposium is *leadership in action*. Even the collaborative approach in which the APSEA leadership extended partnerships is a testament to how strategic leadership approaches can turn a vision into reality. For those attending, this program challenges our understanding and appreciation for public service in a modern context given contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Attending this symposium is a valuable opportunity to learn something new while reflecting on our own contributions to our larger society. During a recent USC leadership program, our featured presenter, Dave Logan, reflected that "leaders actively create other leaders." In many ways, this program is a forum for this discussion. Leaders develop their strength

through gaining knowledge, shaping behaviors, and changing attitudes. The 2012 APSEA Symposium accomplishes this vision.

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