# LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

*"Fully capitalizing on the value equation for [DEI] in the 21st century will require leaders who can lead globally complex, culturally diverse, and interrelated organizations. This will require a new cadre of leaders, with vision, experience, and global competencies."[1]*
*– Dr. Vanessa Weaver*

## Purpose

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of climate within ASCE institutes, sections, branches, committees, and student chapters foster equitable opportunities for engagement and achievement for all.

## Identification of best practices

After more than 20 years of leadership research, Kouzes and Posner[2] provide the foundational framework for leadership best practices. However, juxtaposed with this traditional understanding of leadership is the concept of inclusive leadership based on the research of Bourke and Titus[3], who attribute inclusive leadership as setting the tone for a more just, diverse, and equitable culture. Drawing upon these sources, the following guiding principles and best practices represent various aspects of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) and are intended to inform all leaders at all levels, including the Board of Direction, sections/branches, institutes, and students:
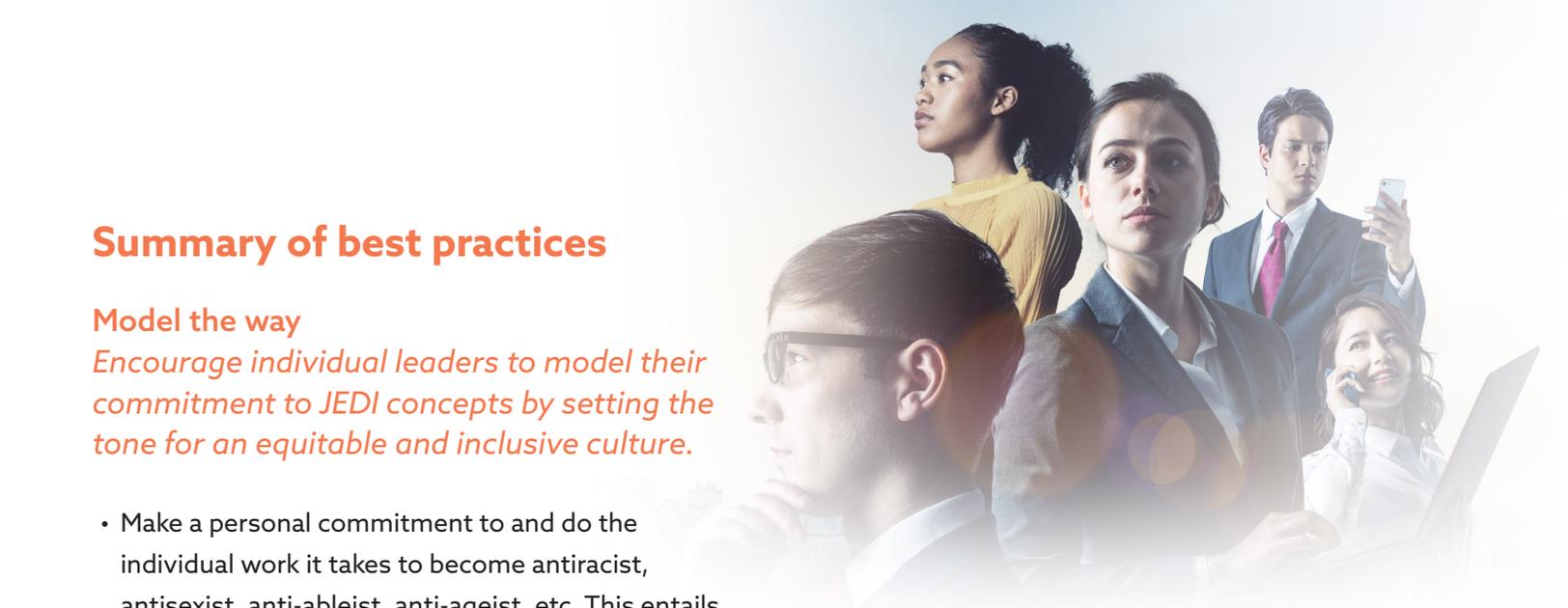
- **Model the way** – encourage individual leaders to model their commitment to JEDI concepts by setting the tone for an equitable and inclusive culture.
- **Inspire a shared vision** – envision ASCE's future as fully incorporating JEDI principles throughout the organization and enlist others in that common vision.
- **Challenge the process** – challenge the status quo by seeking innovative ways to grow an equitable and inclusive culture.
- **Empower others to act** – empower others to act by facilitating a sense of belonging and respect for unique characteristics among members.
- **Encourage the heart** – recognize individual excellence and celebrate JEDI values.

[1]Weaver, V. (2009). "Diversity & Inclusion Leadership." *Diversity Best Practices*, 75-93.
https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/sites/diversitybestpractices.com/files/import/embedded/anchors/files/diversity_primer_chapter_05.pdf.
[2]Kouzes & Posner (2003). http://www.pnbhs.school.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/The-Five-Practices-of-Exemplary-Leadership.pdf
[3]Bourke, J., & Titus, A. (2020). "The Key to Inclusive Leadership." *Harvard Business Review.* https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-key-to-inclusive-leadership
(accessed 1 Aug. 2020).

# Summary of best practices

## Model the way
*Encourage individual leaders to model their commitment to JEDI concepts by setting the tone for an equitable and inclusive culture.*

- Make a personal commitment to and do the individual work it takes to become antiracist, antisexist, anti-ableist, anti-ageist, etc. This entails acknowledging deeply seeded "-isms" and the impacts on the organization[4].
- Establish a visible commitment by investing time, energy, and resources to develop nurturing, inclusive environments that reflect leadership passion and goals for advancing JEDI. For example, have leaders facilitate a brief discussion at each meeting about how the organization is doing in the area of JEDI and how things can be improved.[5]
- Exercise humility by acknowledging vulnerability to bias and opening oneself to receive feedback on areas of unknown shortcomings. Researchers assert that the most important "trait generating a sense of inclusiveness is a leader's visible awareness of bias."[6] It should be clear that the leader is committed to "treating all team members with fairness and respect and understands the uniqueness of each team member."[7] This can be achieved by educating oneself on topics such as leading diverse teams, emotional intelligence, bias (implicit and explicit), etc.
- Listen in order to understand the diverse perspectives of others.
- Facilitate JEDI training across all levels of ASCE (members and staff), to ensure all persons are treated with respect, dignity, and fairness. JEDI training should be led by an expert with focus on topics such as (a) developing awareness of bias and prejudice; (b) creating equitable and inclusive environments; (c) behavioral and attitudinal elements (power skills) that play a major role in advancing (or inhibiting) JEDI; and (d) how JEDI impacts civil engineering education, research, and practice.

## Inspire a shared JEDI vision
*Envision ASCE's future as fully incorporating JEDI principles throughout the organization and enlist others in that common vision.*

- Establish, empower, and resource JEDI committees at all organizational levels (sections, branches, institutes, student chapters, etc.) to provide strategic vision, leadership, and support for JEDI efforts across the organization.

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[4]Black in Engineering. (2020). "On Becoming an Anti-Racist University: Principles and Recommendations for Universities from Black Engineering Faculty." https://blackinengineering.org/action-item-list/ (accessed 2 Sept. 2021).
[5]National Council of Nonprofits. (2015). "Tip Sheet for Candid Conversations about Board Governance: 'How Are We Doing?'" https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/tip-sheet-candid-conversations-board-governance.pdf
[6]Bourke, J., & Titus, A. (2020). "The Key to Inclusive Leadership." *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-key-to-inclusive-leadership> (accessed 1 Aug. 2020).
[7]Bourke, J. (April 2016). "The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership: Thriving in a Diverse New World." *Deloitte Insights*. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html/#endnote-sup-43

- Ensure that the group of JEDI champions who lead and compose the committees include JEDI experts and represent a diverse range of personal and professional perspectives and experiences.
- Provide incentives and resources to sections, branches, institutes, and student chapters that establish JEDI committees and/or champions.
- Enact an integrated and valued reporting structure that extends to the governing boards.
- **Do not** delegate sole responsibility for JEDI to JEDI champions, committees, or people from traditionally marginalized identities, or relegate it to the margins of the profession.[8] Communicate that JEDI is the responsibility of all stakeholders at all levels. Structure policies, resources, practices, and accountability systems that reinforce this so that it becomes part of "business as usual" and so that JEDI becomes ubiquitous within engineering practice and ASCE's organizational management.[9]

## Challenge the process
*Challenge the status quo by seeking innovative ways to grow an equitable and inclusive culture.*

- Demonstrate courage in speaking up and challenging the status quo.[10] Challenge policies and processes that perpetuate systemic inequities.
- Go beyond mere avoidance of bias and discrimination[11] and actively engage in growing emotional intelligence to increase understanding of the impact of bias on the organizational culture and eradicate longstanding policies and practices built on bias and discrimination.
- Establish and document policies and processes ensuring that committees comprise individuals from diverse personal and professional identities, with a strong focus on those who represent identities that have been historically marginalized in civil engineering and society at large. In doing this, it is critical that these are not performative efforts that "check boxes" for diverse identities.[12] Rather, the efforts should demonstrate value and respect for the competencies individuals possess, and recognition of diversity as a measure of excellence.
- Incorporate structures of accountability and employ measures to increase understanding of the impact of JEDI efforts on the organizational culture. For example, conduct a self-assessment[13] of the Board/governing body to identify how or whether a culture of equity and inclusion is being fostered. Is the Board/governing body welcoming to those from diverse cultures or backgrounds? Does the Board/governing body reflect diversity of identities, perspectives, and experiences? Do Board/governing body members feel comfortable speaking up and know that their opinions are valued and respected? How equitable and inclusive is the Board/governing body in policy and practice?
- Measure JEDI efforts through a membership survey. Use qualitative feedback to get insights into respondents' experiences. Be transparent in sharing the results with members and staff.
- Integrate JEDI into strategic plans. Work with experts internal and external to ASCE to establish goals and metrics.

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[8]Walpole, B. (Host). (2020, July 13). "Engineering a Culture of Inclusion Part 1: Time for Change, Dr. Yvette E. Pearson Guest." (Episode 67) [Audio podcast episode].
[9]Pearson, Y.E. (November/December 2019). "Inclusion, Diversity Now Factor into Accreditation Standards." *PE Magazine*. https://www.nspe.org/resources/pe-magazine/november-2019/inclusion-diversity-now-factor-accreditation-standards.
[10]Bourke, J. (April 2016). " The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership: Thriving in a Diverse New World." *Deloitte Insights*. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html/#endnote-sup-43
[11]Bourke, J. (April 2016). " The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership: Thriving in a Diverse New World." *Deloitte Insights*. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html/#endnote-sup-43
[12]Gentles Crawford, M. "How to Diversify Your Professional Network (Because Your Connections Shouldn't All Be Just Like You)." *The Muse*. https://www.themuse.com/advice/tips-expand-network-more-diverse
[13]National Council of Nonprofits (2021). "Self-Assessments for Nonprofit Boards." https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/self-assessments-nonprofit-boards

## Empower others to act
*Empower others to act by facilitating a sense of belonging and respect for unique characteristics among members.*

- Include individuals with various personal and professional identities in the strategic planning process to ensure the voices of all stakeholders within the organization are included in goal-setting and decision-making. Members of a diverse team feel respected, valued, and empowered to act when they have a voice.[14]
- Collaborate with leaders of partner engineering organizations focused on advancing JEDI efforts. Collaboration has the potential to empower individuals and leverage diverse thinking within and across teams.
- Create a transitional leadership program that promotes equitable participation for all future leaders who represent diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences.
- Create a job-shadowing program with leaders who represent diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences.
- Communicate through social media (blogs, podcasts, etc.) how various groups across the organization are promoting JEDI and demonstrating best practices.

## Encourage the heart
*Recognize individual excellence and celebrate JEDI values.*

- Celebrate individual and group accomplishments that reflect JEDI values. Explicit acknowledgments may also contribute to encouraging collective responsibility for advancing JEDI across ASCE.
- Individually approach and recruit members who represent diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences for leadership opportunities at all levels. It is important to remember that many members and leaders are engaged because someone asked them to lead, believed in them, and mentored them. This individual approach is routinely used to identify leaders.
- **Do not** limit nominations of people from traditionally marginalized identities (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities) to diversity-related roles, awards, and honors. Respect the technical competence and contributions of all members, regardless of identity. Nominate members with diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences for roles, awards, and honors in all areas and at all levels of the organization.
- Provide grants for students, younger members, and/or other ASCE members to support JEDI initiatives.
- Develop a social media strategic plan to optimize digital outreach mechanisms (blogs, podcasts, etc.) to communicate how various ASCE entities are promoting DEI or have established best practices. Examples include such communication vehicles as *ASCE Plot Points,* ASCE Source*, and Civil Engineering* magazine.

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[14]Bourke, J., & Titus, A. (2020). "The Key to Inclusive Leadership." *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-key-to-inclusive-leadership> (accessed 1 Aug. 2020).

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