

Core conference themes:

1. **How do we move from diffuse democratic experiments to more just, comprehensive, democratic systems?**
2. **How do we educate and prepare citizens to be more effective participants in a just and deliberative democracy?**

Learning Exchange: A deliberative framing of (and for) leadership and change in universities

Reporter : B. Mallory

- What **innovations, ideas, opportunities, and/or action steps** received the most support among your group?

We focused a lot on the skills, disposition, and knowledge needed by democratic academic leaders. We agreed that democratic leaders need to:

--be entrepreneurial, need to understand the processes of institutional change, when to be collaborative/consultative and when to be more independent and get ahead of the curve

--be able to guide institutional change, using deliberative processes

--need to understand the culture of diverse disciplines in order to “fit” democratic principles into diverse disciplines (e.g., the collaborative nature of the sciences or the highly individualized scholarship of the humanities)

--be able to acknowledge mistakes when they are made

--be capable of laying out their agendas/values/vision so that others can engage with it and determine how best to achieve that agenda or vision (that is, leaders articulate the goals, then others help, through deliberative processes, to design the process of getting to the goals)

--use inquiry methods to “get out of their own heads” and understand where others are coming from, what their aspirations are, and what they need to achieve those aspirations

--Frame the issue from the perspective of those who will need to implement the solutions, not from the leader’s perspective

--attend above all to relationships—their importance, how they work, how to make them better

--understand the processes of DD in order to engage stake holders and foster democratic problem-solving

--have a strong and clear understanding of themselves and what they bring to the role of democratic leader

We agreed that we need a repository of stories about successful democratic leaders, in order to create positive images and inspire others to move in this direction.

We also agreed that there is a need for focused workshops/seminars on democratic leadership in HE, perhaps held at the regional level, as a follow up to this conference. Goddard College sort of volunteered to do this in our region.

- In the probes (suggestions, not mandatory questions), we ask about **language, assessment, and technology**. Please share with us anything regarding these topics that resonated with your group.

We did not end up struggling with these topics. We did not stumble into language issues, or identify them as a barrier to effective democratic leadership. Nor did we focus on assessment or the role of technology. We concentrated on the personal and interpersonal characteristics of democratic leaders necessary for more democratic institutions. The most important “technology” is the creation of participatory structures within colleges and universities where the principles of democratic governance can be practiced.

- In the probes, we ask about **justice, equity, and freedom**. Please share with us anything regarding these values that resonated with your group.

These were not addressed explicitly in our exchange.

- Were there **people** in your group who were interested in working on these ideas? (If so, please be specific about who and the plans being hatched.)

See the comment above about regional follow-up workshops on democratic leadership. Lucinda Garthwaite at Goddard College has some energy around this.

- Based on the discussion, what do you think should be the **top priorities** for educators and practitioners?

We agreed that there is a critical need for effective professional development programs to prepare and support democratic leaders.