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AUCD-Meet the Coaches: Implementing the Equity, Di (USAUCD3006A)

SPEAKER:

Hi, everyone. We are just going to wait a second for everyone to join. Hello, everyone and welcome! People will continue to roll in but I will continue to get started with some announcements. Welcome to our meet to the coaches, thank you for hitting record. I always forget. We will have a recording available of this webinar at the end. We are really happy to have you join this series of supporting implementation of the equity, diversity and inclusion action plan. My name is Katie Johnson, I am a program specialist with the resource Centre and I will be overseeing today's webinar.

Before we get started, I will share some brief logistics with you all. This webinar is going to be presented in webinar mode, so all of our participants cameras are automatically off and there microphones are muted but you are able to chat with us using the chat box. If you wanted to go for everyone, you click panelists and attendees. We are saving time for questions at the end. You can submit your questions into the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen. If there is time, we will read those allowed so that everyone can know what our Q&A is.

We have caught caption available. It is at the bottom of your zoom screen, click on the CC button to view the subtitles. You can also make the captions larger or smaller by clicking again on that button and selecting settings. There is a new Zoom feature that lets you move your subtitles to wherever works for you by just clicking and dragging, so feel free to adjust as needed.

Again, this meeting is being recorded and will be sent out along with a transcript from our Captioner. Before we get started with the webinar, I wanted to give a brief introduction to our coaching initiative. This webinar is where we are going to meet the six coaches that the URC has set up for you all to support you in making progress on implementing the equity, diversity and inclusion action plan. Then we will dive into a conversation about some of the essential parts of the action plan.

These coaches are part of the coaching initiative. They are available for coaching from now until the end of September. For you CED leaders. We encourage you to check out our coaching page to learn more about the initiative. These can provide a different variety of coaching for you all to meet whatever needs you have. That can be a coach coming and supporting a team meeting and planning discussions related to how to make use of the plan and make process. It could be inviting one of the coaches in to speak or do training with your staff. They could review some of the materials you are working on if you are spending the summer doing some assessment I want someone to take a look at it, that is something they can do. They can also meet one on one, if you are a champion at your centre and you are really trying to get the action plan to be a part of your work, and you want to chat one-on-one with the coach and learn about resources, they are really great for that.

I will put the coaching page in the chat box so that everyone knows where they can find more information about the coaching initiative. It includes the bios and areas of expertise for each of our coaches as well as their contact information, so you can go ahead and contact them directly to schedule.

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Again, our hope today is that you will learn a little bit about each of them, to know who will be the best fit for your centre, whether it be geographically, whether it be the size of the centre or that area of expertise. If you are looking at implanting a particular part of the action plan, and might be one coach that better fits your needs.

Today, in our panelist session we might be covering a lot of ground, it might feel like a lightning discussion, but that is intentional. We are hoping that you can get a sampling of what some of our coaches might be able to speak on or coach you in. Again, we will have space and time for questions at the end. If you have any questions about this coaching initiative or the logistics, feel free to put that in the Q&A box. And questions for our panelists about the ED&I action plan will be great as well.

Without further ado, we will get started with introductions from our coaches. I will have each coach introduce themselves and talk a little bit about the experience they bring to this role as a coach. Specifically for implementing the ED&I action plan. We will get started with Jenean.

JENEAN CASTILLO:

Good afternoon everyone, thank you for joining us. I am Jenean a Castillo. My area of expertise as advanced psychologist and I'm also a diversity and inclusion coordinator which is in Worcester County, New York. I am also the parent of a child who really at this point is a young adult, with a disability. My experience goes back almost 10 years when I started out as an intern and actually I was a trainee representative in what was then the AUCD diversity support group. A lot of activities have involve various training initiatives and learning around our internal efforts here at WHD as well as building our external partnerships around EDI. Most of the work I have done around CLC has been my involvement in the program. (indiscernible) these include creating activities for undergraduate students from minority serving institutions which continue to support undergraduates participating in programs. Developing diversity recruitment strategy for greater diversity representation in our training program as well as developing (indiscernible) to better address disparities for our long-term and short-term trainees. I have also been involved in the Department of the diversity inclusion toolkit as well as participating in the New York State community practice particularly around language access. I am currently leading diversity efforts around our organizational and linguistic competence to better address diversity of our populations as well as promote an equitable workplace. With that, I'm just happy to be in the company with everyone on this panel, as we continue to do this work that is very well needed. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Jenean. I will have Dan go next.

DANIEL CRIMMINS:

Good afternoon, on the East Coast. My name is Daniel Crimmings and I'm happy to be with you today. I was trying to figure out how flippant I should be to say I am currently unemployed. I am recently retired from the Centre for leadership and disability at Georgia State University where I had been the director for 13 years. Now it is actually among the youngest of the UCDs by virtue of twists and turns. I was at WA -- WY HD when Jenean started there, so I have long history of working with this network from 2007. Moving to Georgia made it very clear that we had to address issues of equity and access and services in a way that... While it was clear to me in

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New York, it was glaringly obvious in Atlanta and the rest of Georgia. I was able to be part of the first partnership with a minority serving institution funded through the ACL, so that was our partnership with (Name) School of medicine. That ended up continuing through our funding as an LEND program. So we are really happy about that. A couple of the issues that I also had partners with Barbara Wheeler and several initiatives that related to the study of equity, diversity and inclusion relative to the network and developing the written plan that we are talking about today.

I will say something briefly now, and then I will get the chance to return to it at the end. The real idea of the plan was what could... One was a recognition that we all have to be doing work in this area, too, we are UCEDDs we are never going to do the same work in every area. That work can be themed but it is absolutely necessary. The last one of that is that a key part of that is our identity as university centres. Our commitment should be the science on the study and the scholarship as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion along with all of our other missions that relate to our identities as UCD -- UCEDDs. I'm particular interested in how this is then reflected in this -- people's five-year plans. That is our funder, that is what we have to do, that is where we get buy-in from our community advisory councils. I think that is the strategy that I am most interested in sort of pursuing with folks. Thank you for being here, and I look forward to working with some of you and certainly my fellow panelists, because there is some really good people on this call.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Dan. I will let Timotheus go ahead and introduce himself.

TIMOTHEUS 'TJ' GORDON JR:

Good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon from Chicago. My name is Timotheus Gordon and I'm a research assistant at the Institute on disability and human development at the University of Illinois at Chicago or UIC. I have been there in that position for two years, I have been involved in the disability human development department since 2016 as a research assistant, TA and Masters student. My area of expertise is primarily inclusion and disability pride in communities of colour.

This one is very important to me because I am a myself, is an autistic African and artistic father to a two-year-old. And also a Godfather of a two-year-old girl as well. I feel that why there are -- while there are opportunities for disabilities with employment, housing, education and other things, we should use the available resource to empower people with disabilities in marginalized communities as well. So I am blessed to be a help in ensuring that more self advocates, more people of colour with disabilities, could be a great asset to your centre but also a great asset to their communities as well.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Timotheus. I will let Sally go ahead and introduce herself.

SALLY GOULD-TAYLOR:

Hi! My name is Sally Gould-Taylor, thank you so much for having me here today. I am the executive director at the Institute on disabilities at Temple University. I, myself, am an anthropologist and I do most of my research looking at the intersection of race and disability. I

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focus on inclusive research, design and participatory and youth participatory action research. Which means I spend a lot of my time making sure that all of the research, training and service work that we do at the Institute includes people with disabilities within all of the phases of the work. As co-researchers, as analysts, as staff members, and in our dissemination.

I spend a lot of time working both on a strategic plan for our Institute based out of liberation or emancipatory ideologies around antiracism and pushing racial equity into all of the work that we do, not just specific awards that identify race and racism as part of our work. I have spent the last few years working on our statewide information advisory sharing committee, subcommittee on racial equity. Looking at our service system to making sure that we address any inequity within and throughout the service system and for people who work with people with disabilities as well. I'm really happy to be here and I look forward to hearing from all of our panelists today. Thanks!

SPEAKER:

Thanks, Sally. Next, we will have can really introduce herself.

DR. KIMBERLEY MILLS:

Great, can you hear me? Super. Thanks for being here and thanks for this opportunity to share. My name is Kim Billy Mills and I am Executive Director of the (Name) and I have been in this capacity for the last five years. I am born in Brooklyn New York, and grew up in the New York area. But I have lived all over. I worked for quite a while in different island locations including Hawaii and Bermuda. Thankfully, I have been residing and enjoying my life and work in the US Virgin Islands. My background is practitioner, sometimes I call myself a glorified special educator, which is perfectly fine. Because that is the root and the love of the work.

What I guess I can bring to this diversity and equity coaching initiative is a really strong foundation of the importance of the practical implementation of research, the importance of the user-friendly nature of having things that we are doing translate into things that are meaningful and life-changing and applicable for our participants. Systems change is sort of one of my strengths, and I have had quite a bit of success through the years in taking research and ideas and philosophies to bring things forward and helping to channel those things into meaningful systematic change on a number of different levels, mostly within juvenile justice, but also within services for people with autism and such. And just sort of creating systems and structures for the practical implementation and ways that actually make a difference in people's lives.

I guess also, one thing that I could potentially add to this mix is really figuring out how to take existing structures, whether they are a structure of a UCEDDs or a structure of university or legislative process, and provide opportunities and awareness of flexibility and ways to be creative within these sometimes very restrictive cultures. Add environments.

And I guess a little bit workarounds. I remember chatting with a colleague of mine briefly in Vermont, and he was indicating some different things that are going on with that university. I think that one way that I could potentially be helpful to you as a coat is just really in figuring out strategic strategies to get your ultimate goal in terms of where it is you want to go, I think I can provide a little insight in helping to navigate a great path forward that will be within the parameters and the restrictions but will also give you sort of freedom and empowerment to

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exercise your ideals and your dreams for where you would like to take the program etc. I guess I will leave it at that.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much, Kim Lee. Last but not least for our introductions before we jump into the panel questions is Eduardo Ortiz.

EDUARDO ORTIZ:

Hi everybody. Happy to be here. I would like to share with you part of my background. I started from Ecuador around 20 years ago, I have a degree from there and I came here to study, I got my PhD in sociology and I'm still here. So what can I offer to this group of a lot of wisdom that I can see, I can hear. I can contribute with more than 15 years of experience working here at the centre for persons with disabilities, that is the Utah UCEDD. Working on different projects especially with multicultural operations at different levels including local levels, state levels and international level. In addition, I have been working for the past 12 years at the Utah (Name) project covering five different states including Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota. I have been the coordinator of linguistic competency in this program, additionally, I have been a professor at Casa Grande University in Ecuador for the past seven or eight years. That is a great experience because keep in mind this international scope where everybody is related. During the past 15 years I have learned important knowledge across the many projects and programs I have been participating in. I had the opportunity to work with many different communities of minority cultures including Latinos, Native American population, persons with disabilities of course, refugees, veterans, migrants, rural population and others. What I have learned as part of these – make this journey, I learned about the importance of building trust in relationships with the stakeholders and with individuals, and using participatory action research, for example. That is critical. I have learned the complexity of ethnicity and culture, it is very complex. I'm coming from Ming -- from a country the size of -- size of Colorado with 14 different languages. How complex is that? Sometimes we put together all that culture, it is very complex. I have learned about the familiar strength approach in the individual's strength approach. Everybody is unique and has their own strengths, we need to keep that in mind because that is going to help us to keep growing together. I also have been successful of reaching and recruiting minorities from diverse communities. In summary, because it is a very short time that we have, I have a lot of live and work experience, ready and willing to share. Thank you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Eduardo. Thank you all, I hope our network and see what a breadth of knowledge and experience our coaches bring to the table. We are just so grateful to have you all on board to kind of share that and help our UCEDDs network together using and leveraging the strengths that we have. With that, we will move forward to our panel discussion. We have designed the panel to kind of move through each of the four areas of the action plan so the crosscutting and - cost cutting and considerations, diversity, cultural and liquid stick competency and local state impact.

Thank you for your questions, I will put the link to our coaches page so you can see how to contact the coaches. We will get started. Add water, we will start with you. Focusing on cost-cutting considerations. We know the action plans call for the participation of individuals with IDD and their families from underserved groups at all levels and all parts of implementation of the

plan. What would meaningful participation look like to you and what are some strategies you can see to achieve this?

EDUARDO ORTIZ:

Thank you Katie. Thank you for the question. I have been reflecting on that. I want to summarize some of my ideas. First of all, I think that efforts need to be intentional. And in many cases, those efforts to reach positive outcomes takes time and a plan. We need to think in the long run. As a sociologist, for me, the concept of community is very important. And the concept of community has three important elements. The first one, a place. It is the geography. The physical area where we are at. The second part of this concept is the people. Everybody who is living in this geography. But there is a critical element that I would like to approach that it is the interactions, interactions between people. I think it is important and critical to maximize opportunities for interactions. Those interactions need to be as equals, the power need to be equal, balance power. A power balance is necessary to go beyond theoretical approaches, because if we create opportunities for listening as well as better understanding, so we can have a real and visible idea of complex lives and faces that is going to keep being in our minds. For example, as part of our LEND program in collaboration with other community partners, for the past 20 years we have had a group of horticultural (?) patterns of youth. Most of them are Latino who attend presentations by LEND trainees. But what is happening here? The topics of the presentations are selected, are chosen by the parents. The parents also are part of developing the ground rules for those meetings. Because of this lawn -- long history of more than 12 years, many of those parents are empowered and they are committed to share their experience and expertise from their own cases. And they share what has worked and what is not working. This setting creates different (indiscernible) and context of the interactions. It is contextual, with real examples. Sometimes it is emotional, of course. People get emotional. But that is part of leading. Gopi on -- go beyond the abstract, this is the contact that makes us more human and helps us to learn. That, I think, on the organizational level, at the committee level, all the levels, we need to be wise to create those interactions that have the power of participation. That is critical because it is not only staying there, it is important to participate, fully participation. Because the learning is going both ways. It is not a top-down approach. It happens both ways. It is also a bottom down approach. We can learn from individuals that we are working with and we are working for. Therefore, summarizing the answer to that question, maximize the opportunities for interactions and plenty of participation where we can find power balance, and even control for the parties involved in this interaction is critical. As an example, some individuals might need more time to respond during those interactions. We need to be prepared and we need to be trained for that interaction to be fully effective. At all the levels. And it needs to be intentional. It is not for some specific short term, we need to be prepared for the long run, for a long-lasting. I see that as an important outcome because we need to be self-sustaining in the long run.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much, Eduardo. I think you are absolutely right about the amount of time this will take. It is not a short-term outcome but a long process. I will ask the next question of Timotheus. What does meaningful participation look like to you and what are some strategies to achieve that?

TIMOTHEUS 'TJ' GORDON JR:

That's a very good question, Katie. That's a very good question. From the perspective of a

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person with living experience with disability, meaningful participation is not only having access to participate in research or in initiatives, but also having the ability to set the tone or set what the initiative and research would look like. Listen to the voices of community is very important, numbers do not loudly -- lie. Quantitative research is key, but I also want to believe that in order to get into the heart of what is going on in the disability community's in your area or around your centre, you will need stories and experiences of people who live with disabilities. One strategy, for instance, is to figure out a way to communicate where they can understand, and they feel respected and valued. Even if that means plain language or a language like Spanish or in other language that they can understand or use a communication device, whatever it takes to connect with them. I think that is one particular strategy I can think of as far as making sure that people with disabilities can have a voice in how they want to participate in the research or initiatives through your centre.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Timotheus. I am hearing bits of being included in all parts. The planning of the initiative and the actual doing, the local state impact is where a lot of the research in the plan fits, but being involved in what are we researching, what disparities are interested in? What matters? During the research, analysing it, and the second piece I'm hearing is that there needs to be accessed. People need access to time and resources to make sure everyone can understand what is happening so that they can easily participate. That was powerful, thank you. We will move freely correctly -- quickly, looking at workforce diversity. Can you tell us about success that you had at your centre and that you have -- that you had in increasing workforce diversity.

TIMOTHEUS 'TJ' GORDON JR:

Absolutely. I'm very proud of the ADHDID --IDDH-- IDHD including more people with disabilities in the workforce, whether as staff members, professors, or contractors as well. I am proud of our disability studies program where people with disabilities could gain access in learning about the field itself, but also incorporate their talents and passions into it as well. And we definitely value not only voices of people with disabilities in that field, but also giving them the Avenue to drive in the research aspect of the cultural aspect of our centre or even the management part as well. We ensure to not only value the disability community, but also the diversity within it as well, whether it is ethnicity or gender or sexual orientation. We make sure that people have opportunity to showcase what they can do while also respecting their accommodations and identity as well. Intersectionality is possible.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, Timotheus. I really appreciate your reflections on the work for the centre. I will ask the same of Kimberly. How has the Virgin Islands be -- been working on this action plan and how have you found success and what might have led to it? Can bee -- Kindley Mac

DR. KIMBERLEY MILLS:

I was going to joke that we had hired a nonperson of colour, but that is actually a joke but also true. (Laughs) first of all, Timotheus, thank you for that fantastic thing. I will give a little bit of my time to respond a bit to what he said because he said so many things. I love the peace about the importance of the stories as well as the quantitative analysis. I will share that when I was doing my doctoral program, every person on my committee wanted me to do a qualitative

model. Being the first master student let alone doctorate student in my family, I said, "I think I'd better turn -- learn to speak quantitative analysis because very few of us get to this point." We will tell the story later. But I really appreciate that so much. I like what he also said about the intersectionality. For us, we are in HBC youH -HBCU. I remember being on a call speaking about racial equality and we were having some conversations with different members of who were African-American, and I was reminded what a gift it is to be able to work at an HBCU. It is something I have never experienced in my whole professional career and it is nice to be in an environment where certain things are given and a standard and you do not have to spend that time warding off sometimes well-meaning but very harmful interactions and things like this. So we are in a unique position in the US Virgin Islands as far as racial diversity in that the majority of the people here are black and brown. Some semblance is and some shade, we are also in a great position in some ways because a majority of the people that do choose to come here who are not from this racial community are here for a reason so they are at least comfortable being around black and brown people. That is a wonderful thing. Speaking specifically to the question how have we done it? Certainly, racial diversity wasn't something that was a huge hurdle to jump over, to challenge, but we had to really work on the disability diversity. I will also say that we are a small UCEDD and our funding is increasing but we do not have vast amount of quantities and grant monies coming in. I guess one of the things that we did was create an environment that those with hidden disabilities felt free to come out and disclose their disabilities. That is one great thing I will give a shout out to Andy (Name), one thing I admire about him was that he was always upfront about bipolar disorder. It was a very powerful thing and a very powerful way to be. Part of the work we had to do within our UCEDD to increase diversity was create an environment where those who had hidden disabilities felt comfortable speaking about them, because you think in a disability organization it is natural, but of course not. That is also our particular cross to bear in relation to diversity. There is a great deal of stigma against mental health conditions in these islands and many black and brown communities. So part of it, a big part of our work, and Timotheus also mentioned this. Giving people an opportunity to be out about the multiple and various identities. As far as the workforce development, when we do have funding, besides having a 10 of people who would identify at least in a staff meeting as people with disabilities on staff, we also use opportunities with small little chunks of grant money we get, even if it's not enough to find a position for the full year, if there is a stipend, a little consultation gig, we can then certainly make an affirmative effort to choose people who are identified as people with disability, whether those disabilities are hidden or are visible. That is something that we have made an effort towards.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much for sharing those strategies. I can see them being helpful outside the unique context of the Virgin Islands and can be broadly applied to areas that are less virtually or ethnically diverse applying those strategies to different identities. Thank you for sharing, Kimberly. Continue on the journey through the action plan, we will make another stop at cultural and linguistic competency. I will send this verse to Jenean. One of the objectives in the action plan is increased cultural linguistic competency including embedding CLC into and across all of the UCEDD functions. What lessons have you learned in integrating cultural and with that competency in your work?

JENEAN CASTILLO:

Thank you for that question. Thinking about the core functions of the UCEDD will -- whether we

are talking about (indiscernible) I think it is also important to think about those core functions within the various centres and the context in which (indiscernible) so for example, a nonprofit organization and there are some UCEDDs who are a medical centre or both. And taking into account the different partners or the different levels within the centre (indiscernible). As we began this work it is important for us to be able to have a 360 view of who we are and what we are doing and how we are doing it. So we started the process (indiscernible) assessment. We utilize the cultural and linguistic competencies organizations which is a tool that was developed by (Name) University National Centre. For anyone who is familiar with that survey, you know it is a very full and exhaustive process. It requires a lot of time and commitment, but I will say that the effort is worth it in terms of what you learn and what you gain from match. So we were really able to get a 360 view in terms of what we were doing across the board. We also got a 360 perspective in the sense that we included everyone in the assessment process, from frontline staff to executive staff. Our advisory (indiscernible) as well as other partners and stakeholders. We also saw input from those who receive services from the organization as well as their family members, caregivers or support staff. Even included in terms of volunteers and we were able to... Once we were able to get all this information we started to identify where where the gaps across these different areas. What were we doing well, how are we doing it and thinking about how we can replicate the successes within other areas of the work that we needed to accomplish. In thinking about identifying those two objectives, those two targets that you want to address, it is starting this work, it always seems lofty but really I think it is a reminder to start with those achievable targets, and then you build on those, right? And so sort of recognizing that, and along with that, the importance of progress. Often times, when you run this work, we don't stop to reflect and think about what those successes after -- have been. That is another important part of the process as well. I would also add to the importance of engaging with others in this process. So while, yes, I might have a similar title as diversity inclusion coordinator, but someone who is a champion at the centre, it doesn't mean we do it in isolation. We are all responsible for the outcome, and just as this panel is here, we are here, our work in providing consultation and support. We also benefit from having similar consultation and support, so certainly, I think, in doing this work and addressing some of our organizational needs, I sought out others within our network who are already doing this work as well. Certainly looking, as I mentioned before, to (indiscernible) at Georgetown. And reaching out to other centres, for example, at Vermont who had already started in this work. So again, including others in the process is very important. Covering the leadership (indiscernible) is also another thing as well. For many of us doing this work, we are not necessarily the executive director of the (indiscernible), but having their support and direct collaborative support. And providing and allowing the resources to be able to do this work, whether we are talking about time or compensation, I think that is also key. The final important point just the psychologist in me, is a reminder of self-care when doing this work. Because it can be challenging and we are not always able to change things right away. Certainly, this past year has been highlighting the importance for us to be able to take care of ourselves to be able to take care of each other. Continue to refuel and continue to keep going. So just some key takeaways.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, so much Jenean for those thoughts. That was wonderful. I really appreciate it. I want to make sure we have enough time to get to (indiscernible), but I will see if

EDUARDO ORTIZ:

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Has anything he wants to add before we move for to the next pot. Add water?

EDUARDO ORTIZ:

Sure. I will be fast. There are two things I want to mention. The first, it is very important for cultural linguistic competency leadership. Having leadership support is critical for those efforts in this area. Because having a group of friends, a team that works in this area who have the champions to move all together, it is critical to move forward. Without support, help and assistance it is going to be very difficult to move forward. The second thing, based on the time, we are going to talk about embedding cultural, linguistic competencies because it is an important term. It is critical in the action plan. But very briefly, I think that many of our efforts need to go beyond that. Because I think that cultural and linguistic competency has its own space. Has its own area, in its own niche. It has objectives, measurable's, I think it is going to help to move forward. Because if it is embedded, we are going to be under the umbrella of something additional. And it is not the core that we are pursuing. The core that we are seeking and would like to achieve. I think that cultural linguistic competency in addition to embedding also needs to have its own space. To develop and grow at each organization considering its own context, because each organization is unique and they need to look at their strengths, at their specific situation. Having specific goals and resources, and measurable outcomes to monitoring keep track of process does make progress, I think it will be important. I would like to add, but I know time is limited. Thank you, Kate.

SPEAKER:

Thank you,

EDUARDO ORTIZ:

I think both are true and I appreciate you pointing that out. We can go over a few minutes if some of the panelists want to stay, but I want to make sure that we get a chance to go into our last area of cultural impact. The question being share about your work in documenting and addressing disparities in one of the areas of emphasis and about your work to promote adoption of policies that address disparities. I will pass it to Sally.

SALLY GOULD-TAYLOR:

I wanted to I like that for us, part of the workaround addressing disparities, local or state, is reaching out to community partners who may not be part of the disability fields per se. For us, as an example, we knew that there was in its two -- issue in Pennsylvania around exclusion of people graduating from school. People getting separated from the school environment. This wasn't a disability issue, but an issue of people experiencing incarceration, dealing with immigration issues, dealing with access to learning and the language that they knew. For us, it was using our role as a UCEDDs to reach out to community-based partners in these areas and bring all of that data and information together and use that to support or engage with or educate and provide information to lawmakers or people working to create new policies. In this example, we got information from the Chinatown cultural Centre. We got data and information from the juvenile Law Centre. We reached out to local immigration agencies in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and then we put together... We look at our own information around race and disability and inequities within schools. Because of that, we were able to put it all together and reach out and provide data information for what became a state bell. State bill 324 in Pennsylvania, it hasn't been put forth yet but we were able to use our power as a UCEDD and

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use the funds that we have to engage and get some kind of time and money and monetary support to the small community centres and bring all of that information and really put our data forward on an arm to provide the information for people who are putting up these bills. The bill is focused on fostering graduation success both for students with disabilities who are kind of pushed out of the school, traditional school setting, but also people experiencing homelessness, dealing with the juvenile justice system, dealing with immigration issues, those types of things. So it really is about engaging those relationship making with partners who may not seem like they have so much in common with us at first, but really, we do.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much, Sally. That's incredible work and I hope people will engage with you to learn more about it. I will pass it off to Dan to speak to local state impact. Dan, do you want to tie this all together as well, how this relates, feel free to share that.

DANIEL CRIMMINS:

Let me share a couple of things complement read what Sally said. Sometimes it is not obvious partners and sometimes it is obvious partners. Again, as university people we have a commitment to scholarship that the rest of the field does not have. It is a responsibility to our university and identity. I wanted to just strike that. We have woven inquiry into routine projects with mental health screening but there is an element of who is being screened and who isn't, and who is being served once screened. Autism screening and identification are the instruments equally valid across identities. When COVID came up, it became very clear that who was being affected, who wasn't being affected among both people with disabilities and people who care for them. All of those had elements that I think are absolutely critical and where the and require scholarship. And that is our job, I guess. The reflection, and I sort of reflected on how it would reflect a couple of different ways. One of the things I wanted to share is that there is a piece of me that says the plan as it is written, if we were writing it today would be very different. When we were writing it, it still felt optional to some people that you could take on these issues. It just isn't optional anymore. We do not have a choice. The events of the last 18 months have made that so clear that we have to engage in all of the work to build a more equitable, diverse and inclusive society. Which then says, as we are planning and implementing plans, when we wrote the plan, it was sort of like you can opt in to one of these issues in some of the areas of the plan. It is sort of like... I think we are at a point where you would have to opt out of the issue on a specific area of the plan if you could even do that. I'm not sure how you would. But it has to be woven in. It is imperative to us. And I would have said that even if I was not retired. It is the experience of the last 18 months, I think, that has made that very very clear. That is where we have to go. That is my perspective, and I think that is probably a good point to yield to either my fellow panelists or questions that might be coming in.

SPEAKER:

Thank you so much, Dan. Thank you to all of our panelists. I know that we just zoomed through the plan, and that is what we were hoping to do today, to give you a taste of the richness with our coaching initiative. I will pop in our evaluation. It is helpful for our series to get feedback. Again, if you have any questions, I do not see any in the Q&A now but I will stay on the line and I will answer any questions. Or again, all of the contact information is on that page. But I just wanted to say thank you so much for sharing all of this information in this channel right now, your lessons learned and getting through it, and also thank you for the coaching that you have

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and will provide for the network. It really does mean a lot for moving us forward. Because it is not optional. It is where we need to head, it is so critical to what we do. Thank you so much to everyone who has attended, if you could complete our evaluation that would be great. I hope you have a great rest of your day. Thank you for coming with us on this lightning round. All the best to everyone, thank you so much. Goodbye, everyone.

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