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Women in Leadership and Social Justice: The Importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Video

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00:24
i'm joan ferrini mundy the president of
00:25
the university of maine and our regional
00:27
campus university of maine at lache
00:30
and i'm delighted to welcome everybody
00:32
to our virtual roundtable and observance
00:34
of women's history month
00:35
our focus today is on women in
00:37
leadership and social justice
00:39
the importance of diversity equity and
00:41
inclusion
00:43
just a little bit of history about
00:44
women's history month
00:47
the observance of this month began in
00:48
1978 as a local celebration in santa
00:51
rosa california
00:53
the education task force of the sonoma
00:55
county commission on the status of women
00:57
planned and executed a women's history
00:59
week
01:00
then the first official recognition
01:03
nationwide began in 1980 with president
01:05
jimmy carter
01:06
who proclaimed the week of march 8 1980

01:09
as national women's history
01:11
week these events were sort of
01:14
contemporaneous with my own
01:16
dissertation work as it happens at the
01:18
university of new hampshire such a long
01:19
time ago
01:20
where i studied the the the reasons why
01:24
women
01:24
had difficulty in progressing in
01:26
mathematics
01:28
you know when i look back on that work
01:30
which was such a while ago
01:32
there were social justice issues right
01:34
in the middle of it women were
01:36
not getting the opportunities to study
01:38
mathematics for a lot of reasons
01:40
that i could give multiple speeches on
01:42
but i won't today
01:44
and therefore not having the access to
01:45
careers that they might have had
01:47
so it's great to be coming back together
01:50
with a group of
01:51
incredible women here in maine for this

01:53

conversation today the theme for women's

01:55

history month in 2021

01:58

is choose to challenge which

02:00

acknowledges that while we've made

02:02

tremendous progress to advance women's

02:04

rights there's still so much more work

02:06

to be done and so many systemic barriers

02:08

that must be

02:09

challenged and that's a fitting theme

02:11

for this group

02:12

group of three outstanding women

02:14

panelists who've chosen to challenge

02:16

through their advocacy work through

02:17

their professional work through their

02:19

personal lives

02:20

and to exemplify leadership and social

02:22

justice for all of us

02:24

uh with a connection to the state of

02:26

maine so our panelists this afternoon

02:28

are

02:29

dr chante dellalu who is vice president

02:32

for institutional diversity and

02:34

inclusion at brown university and the

02:36
inaugural senior vice president and
02:38
senior diversity
02:39
officer at dartmouth college coming
02:42
coming up in a few months
02:43
and shantae is an alum of the university
02:46
of maine and i'll let her tell you more
02:47
about that
02:48
so uh so she's definitely uh
02:51
had quite a lot of experience in the
02:53
state of maine and she's coming much
02:54
closer now that she'll be in new
02:55
hampshire so we're thrilled with that
02:57
uh second councilwoman angela okofer
03:01
from the bangor city council who is an
03:03
attorney and business owner there
03:05
and dean lee sockley the university of
03:08
maine law school
03:09
and also former chief justice of the
03:11
maine supreme court each of these women
03:13
has extraordinary
03:14
visas that could be described in great
03:16
detail i'm going to let them tell you a
03:18
little bit

03:19
about themselves and i'm so happy you
03:22
can be with us this afternoon
03:23
it's also possible for you to send in
03:25
questions to the chat
03:27
i'd like to introduce and thank dr
03:29
kimberly whitehead vice president and
03:31
chief of staff here at the university of
03:33
maine
03:33
who has organized us for this afternoon
03:35
and is is here
03:37
helping us along through the through the
03:39
conversation so i'm going to ask
03:40
questions
03:41
but i've told the panelists that they
03:42
should simply use those questions as a
03:44
springboard
03:45
for whatever they'd like to share with
03:46
this group today and uh we'll jump right
03:49
in
03:50
i'm going to start with a uh with a
03:52
question that will go to
03:54
um dr uh bellalu
03:59
and so i'd like the audience to hear a

04:01
little bit about
04:02
how you have um made your background how
04:06
your journey has taken you to this point
04:08
what your background has been i will ask
04:10
each of you the same question but uh
04:12
shantae if you begin
04:13
so sort of like how did you land here
04:15
yes thank you
04:16
president for many mundy for the
04:18
opportunity to serve
04:20
on this panel um it's an important month
04:22
and something we should celebrate
04:24
um every month women's history uh and
04:27
our contributions to
04:28
the country in the world um so i grew up
04:31
in new jersey i always
04:32
i kind of over the years have separated
04:35
my life into states
04:37
and i'm a first-generation college
04:39
graduate
04:41
grew up in a in a home where we you know
04:45
we didn't have a lot of resources
04:46
and but education was critically

04:48

important

04:49

and one of my um really i would

04:52

say reasons that i have been successful

04:55

with my family

04:56

i grew up with a very large um

05:00

extended family mostly women my mother

05:02

has six sisters

05:03

and so no my grandparents didn't have

05:06

any

05:06

um male children and so there were a lot

05:09

of women around and of the 14 grandkids

05:11

i'm the

05:12

youngest uh female grandchild and so

05:15

that really was my

05:16

um first entree into my own leadership

05:19

and what i could be and what i could do

05:22

i went on to

05:23

university of maine and um after living

05:26

40 minutes from new york city growing up

05:27

40 minutes from new york city it was

05:28

very different

05:30

and but but it's not something i would

05:32

would trade um

05:33
after having uh traveled extensively now
05:36
in my life
05:37
i can really see all the benefits of
05:39
studying at the university of maine
05:40
and how it helped propel my own career
05:42
so i
05:43
studied undergrad communications my
05:45
graduate degree in edu
05:47
education was a focus on counseling and
05:51
worked at the university
05:52
so i graduated on may 20th and may 23rd
05:55
i
05:55
started my first job and i've worked
05:57
since i was 14 years old and so
05:59
my work ethic has again was cemented
06:03
as a teenager and has carried me through
06:05
my career
06:06
i went on to go become a director
06:09
in alaska university of alaska southeast
06:12
um and that was life changing uh it you
06:16
know
06:16
i was able to engage with alaska native
06:20
elders and really learn about

06:22
sustainability of the land and
06:23
the sustainability of culture and that
06:26
was applicable
06:27
into all aspects of my work i moved back
06:30
to the east coast and
06:31
worked at a high school for a short
06:33
stint
06:34
where i was a counselor and really
06:36
helped undocumented families
06:39
underrepresented families marginalized
06:41
communities
06:42
think about life after high school and
06:45
really social emotional health
06:47
right anyone you can help a lot of
06:49
people fill out an application or
06:51
fill out a fafsa form which is important
06:53
for access to higher education
06:55
but really helping them think about what
06:58
how will you
06:59
be successful even if you don't have all
07:02
of the resources at home
07:04
that other people may have at their
07:05
disposal so that was a real rewarding

07:07
experience
07:08
um i went back to higher ed and worked
07:11
at uh
07:11
institution with 80 business students
07:14
and so that was a unique experience many
07:17
of the students focused on becoming ceos
07:20
and becoming millionaires
07:22
and me having to infuse social justice
07:24
and
07:25
and um ensuring that they understood
07:27
their responsibilities as the next
07:29
leaders
07:30
in a lot of these corporate spaces
07:33
and and most recently i've been at brown
07:35
for the last seven and a half years
07:38
and serving in a capacity reporting to
07:40
the president
07:41
and so my life has really been rewarding
07:44
um and i i lead with cultural humility
07:48
so i think about the ways in which we
07:50
engage in multicultural encounters on a
07:52
daily basis
07:53
but we all have limits to our own

07:55

knowledge and so i really

07:56

carry that with me as i do my own work

07:59

and i continue

08:00

my own process of lifelong learning

08:04

and i forgot to say my phd was at

08:07

university of rhode island and rhode

08:08

island college

08:10

in education and so i i have a love for

08:13

land grant sea grant institutions

08:16

that's great terrific thanks so much

08:19

ante how about

08:20

angela same question tell us a bit about

08:23

yourself your background and your

08:25

journey

08:26

thank you um so i was

08:29

born in nigeria which is in west africa

08:33

i am i have fought four siblings we have

08:36

five of us i'm the second and the first

08:38

girl

08:39

and you know being the first girl

08:42

you are expected to do a lot to carry a

08:45

lot of responsibilities take care of

08:48

your younger ones so i think

08:50

i would think maybe my leadership

08:53

skills or you know life i would think

08:56

kind of started from there you know

08:58

trying to be um kind of bd my ass

09:01

my mom's assistant kind of you know

09:04

taking care of my younger ones

09:06

i remember growing up sometimes me and

09:08

my mom will be doing laundry my

09:10

even my elder brother will be playing

09:12

outside and you know i'm so angry like

09:14

what does

09:15

he have to be me you know and um

09:18

so that was it and then i i i studied

09:21

law in nigeria

09:23

and um graduated got called to the uh

09:25

admitted to divine nigeria before moving

09:28

here um

09:29

because my husband got a job so we moved

09:32

here since 2007 and i've been here i

09:35

took the new york bar exam the finisher

09:37

plan was to move to new york but of

09:39

course life happened we grew to like

09:41

here and of course explore opportunities

09:42
here i'm still struggling
09:44
uh here because maine still wouldn't let
09:46
me do the bad but
09:47
being life-sized in new york it's it's a
09:50
long story
09:50
i studied abroad that is a problem so
09:53
even though i've been in active practice
09:55
because i
09:56
i realized i could practice federal law
09:58
anywhere
10:00
so i started i launched my own
10:01
immigration law practice here but even
10:04
at that having been in
10:05
active practice for three years still
10:08
applied
10:08
to be uh approved by the main board
10:11
still they denied me so that's a totally
10:14
different
10:15
story of its own but uh basically i'm
10:18
i'm doing i started a law practice an
10:20
immigration law practice because
10:21
immigration is federal
10:23
and um well i wanted to also put in

10:27
bankruptcy which is also fedra but
10:28
interesting thing was
10:30
to to practice um bankruptcy you have to
10:33
be admitted in a federal cuts
10:35
you know and we have a federal court
10:37
here in bengal but i went to get a you
10:39
know know what to do to get admitted but
10:41
i was torn down because i'm not licensed
10:43
in men
10:44
so this this i had to bring up this
10:46
because this is part of the diversity
10:48
and inclusion that we are talking about
10:50
you know
10:51
and um so at some point i decided of
10:55
course i couldn't get any
10:57
reasonable job as even a licensed
10:59
attorney i walked in a dish room
11:01
you know washing dishes just to get my
11:03
foot in the door of course until i got
11:05
frustrated and i couldn't continue
11:07
so i decided to start up an
11:09
international market
11:10
that also had some personal uh

11:13
connections to me because you know
11:15
coming here when i first came
11:17
there where i could hardly see a person
11:19
of color like it was when
11:20
if you saw someone who looked like brown
11:22
like remotely brown you're like oh my
11:24
goodness is that a pro
11:25
you know that was how this place was
11:28
then so
11:29
seeing people that would come especially
11:31
to hustle
11:32
to study pharmacy black people and then
11:35
by the end of their studies they moved
11:37
back
11:37
so it was it was personal to me that i
11:40
wanted to see people stay
11:42
so i thought one of the major things was
11:44
african
11:45
food so which led me to starting up the
11:48
international market i made it
11:49
internationally because i felt you know
11:51
there's a lot of
11:52
division anyway so why make it just

11:53
african where there are
11:55
a lot of other small small communities
11:57
so i made it international
11:58
to you know and then at some point
12:01
i um when i first came of course
12:05
our hair is very important to a black
12:07
woman i couldn't braid my hair
12:08
but i couldn't even find anywhere to
12:10
break you know to have my hair braided
12:13
so then when i first came we came on a
12:15
h-1b which is a professional
12:17
visa type so only my husband could walk
12:20
myself was a h4 uh visa holder spouse to
12:25
him i couldn't walk i could live here
12:26
but i could only go
12:28
seek employment so i
12:32
can stop first thank you
12:34
[Laughter]
12:36
life of a working mom in a pandemic so
12:38
um
12:39
so i couldn't legally seek employment
12:41
within the like five years so
12:43
being stuck at home i learned

12:46
to braid hair on my own head so that
12:50
became a problem with people you know
12:52
um being able to find a haircare
12:54
services
12:55
and i launched the haircare business
12:58
here
12:58
and i worked with the university of
13:00
maine and the black students association
13:02
to start the health care fair that
13:04
happens every except this year
13:06
so that is how i got where i am and then
13:08
in 2019 january i became an american
13:12
citizen with my husband
13:15
and by november i
13:18
i i ran for the city council and um
13:22
thankfully and i was honored to be the
13:24
first person of color and
13:27
first immigrant to be on the bengal city
13:28
council and i'm a mother of three
13:31
one behind me right now
13:34
thank you and and who's this behind you
13:37
can we be introduced
13:38
you want to say hi do you want to say hi

13:42
okay okay great
13:45
thank you so much angela lee
13:49
thank you so much for inviting me
13:50
president for any monday this is
13:52
just uh wonderful and i
13:55
i'm really honored to be here with these
13:58
amazing women
13:59
and i just want to start by saying i
14:02
have led
14:02
a really privileged existence and i've
14:06
more and more in these recent years have
14:08
come to understand just how privileged
14:10
it was
14:11
i grew up in southern maine i am the
14:14
oldest girl i have two younger brothers
14:17
uh although both of them are in their
14:19
60s now so that's a
14:20
that's been a delight for me uh both of
14:23
my parents went to college my dad's an
14:26
engineer
14:26
my mom was a nurse turned business
14:28
person it was
14:30
always assumed that i would go to

14:31
college uh
14:33
i went to the university of maine which
14:35
was umo when i was there i'm that old
14:38
and i got an absolutely amazing
14:41
education there
14:42
and then uh went off to
14:45
uh work for a little while and decided
14:47
that i wanted to go to law school
14:50
one of the amazing things i've learned
14:52
as
14:53
uh as my career has progressed
14:56
is that when i left high school in 1972
15:01
there had never been a woman or
15:04
a person of color in a judgeship in the
15:07
state of maine
15:08
ever all all of the judges
15:12
in maine when i was graduating from high
15:14
school which doesn't seem that long ago
15:16
now
15:16
uh were white men and uh
15:20
it was uh pretty amazing to look back on
15:22
that
15:23
when i graduated from law school in 1980

15:27
my law school class was the first class
15:30
in which women were almost exactly equal
15:34
in number
15:35
to the number of men and that happened
15:37
very rapidly so
15:39
i went out into a profession
15:42
where uh women were new and
15:45
uh uh and i learned very quickly that i
15:48
was very often going to be the only
15:50
woman
15:50
in the room uh in the uh
15:53
my my uh job for about 10 years before i
15:57
was appointed
15:58
to the bench was with the attorney
16:00
general's office which was
16:01
just an extraordinary legal opportunity
16:05
but once again i was often the only
16:07
woman in the room and
16:09
i was among the very first women to be a
16:12
deputy attorney general
16:13
uh working with eight or nine men and
16:17
often having really interesting
16:19
conversations because the point of view

16:21
can be
16:22
quite different um the the
16:26
what really strikes me when i look back
16:28
on my
16:29
own career and my own privilege
16:33
was that my parents taught me if you
16:35
work really hard you can do anything you
16:37
want to do
16:38
and i've always believed that so i work
16:40
really hard
16:41
and and then i realized that in fact
16:45
uh being a white woman in a
16:48
primarily white area gave me
16:51
opportunities
16:52
that i later learned others did not have
16:56
and the first time i came upon
16:59
some extraordinarily
17:03
awful prejudice was when i went as a
17:06
young attorney into the northern
17:08
counties in maine
17:09
and realized that for decades the policy
17:13
of the united states
17:14
and the state of maine had been to take

17:18
native american children from their
17:20
parents homes
17:21
and find white homes for those children
17:25
and there were generations of
17:28
wabanaki children who were
17:32
torn away from their culture their
17:34
parents everything that they knew
17:36
when i was arriving in that area
17:39
of geography and law
17:42
the world was beginning to understand
17:45
what a
17:46
horrible and unconscionable thing that
17:48
had been
17:49
and uh and so one of the things that has
17:52
happened
17:53
very recently i think in 2015
17:56
the maine wabanaki state truth and
17:58
reconciliation report
18:00
was issued going back through all of the
18:03
terrible things that had been done
18:06
for decades where no one questioned it
18:08
at all
18:09
and uh and it was not until that time

18:13
that i
18:13
really began to understand how
18:15
pernicious
18:17
a culture can be when no one says stop
18:20
that's not okay i was appointed to the
18:23
bench in 1990
18:25
and served on the trial courts and the
18:26
appellate courts
18:28
and an awful lot of what uh i focused on
18:32
with the with the bully pulpit that a
18:34
chief justice gets
18:36
uh is were the children and families of
18:39
the state of maine
18:40
and in that work i came to understand
18:44
how differently some of our youth were
18:46
treated
18:47
and uh learned that at every stage
18:50
school
18:51
and then into um the juvenile justice
18:54
system and then into the adult
18:56
criminal system the decisions that were
18:59
made
19:00
changed depending on the the ethnicity

19:04
the color of the skin and uh and
19:07
all of that happened with laws that on
19:10
their face are completely neutral
19:13
so we did a lot of work with juveniles
19:15
in maine and i'm very proud of that work
19:17
but we haven't done enough
19:19
so i i just want to fast forward to
19:23
uh i became dean at this amazing
19:26
institution
19:27
in april last year a month later we
19:30
watched
19:31
george floyd die it was
19:36
horrifying to watch that and one of the
19:39
things that really still stands out to
19:41
me and i'm sorry i get for glimps
19:44
is that all of us went we haven't done
19:47
enough
19:48
we are not doing enough we are assuming
19:51
we've done
19:51
enough we have to do more so at the
19:55
university of maine school of law we set
19:57
up a
19:57
dei task force we are working on

20:00
listening we brought in uh youth
20:04
so that we could hear the voices of
20:07
our um uh black and native american
20:11
youth
20:12
who said to us stop asking us
20:15
to relive our trauma and
20:18
start changing the system stop having
20:21
meetings
20:23
stop uh stop asking us to share
20:26
and start changing the system so uh
20:29
we are working now to try to make a
20:32
difference
20:32
in everything that we do and we are
20:35
determined that this will not be
20:37
one more round of lots of meetings
20:42
and uh that changes will actually be
20:44
made so i'm grateful to be here today
20:46
thank you president for ready monday
20:50
thank you lee thank you all uh there
20:52
would be so much to follow up on in
20:54
every um
20:55
in every remark each of you has made so
20:57
instead i'll go to another

20:59

question or somewhat general question

21:01

and i'd like to begin with angela on

21:03

this one

21:04

uh so from your own perspective and

21:06

point of view and experience

21:09

can you talk about the place of

21:12

diversity equity and inclusion in the

21:14

context of social

21:16

justice

21:19

thank you crazy um for the question

21:22

so um like i said i was the first

21:27

girl in my family and the second

21:31

child and um you know

21:34

growing up in my family it was i had to

21:37

help my mom to cook i had to help my mom

21:39

do laundry everybody's laundry

21:40

i had to watch my younger child sibling

21:43

i had to this i had to die i had to die

21:45

like i said i remember growing up a lot

21:48

of times my

21:48

my elder brother would even be playing

21:50

but you know i had to

21:52

do this and do that and i feel just like

21:55
right now and also a
21:56
very that example is you know look at me
21:58
struggling with
21:59
children which is the same thing with a
22:01
lot of other women in this pandemic you
22:03
know
22:03
uh having to either lose our jobs to
22:06
take care of children
22:08
or you know cut our times or just
22:10
whatever we have to do to
22:12
be able to walk around children so um
22:16
i feel that diversity inclusion
22:19
and you know we need to be very
22:21
purposeful in the way we do
22:23
things you know to equal the playing
22:27
ground for everybody because women we
22:29
are at the receiving end of everything
22:32
and especially even black and brown
22:34
women are at the bottom
22:36
list of every you know receiving end of
22:39
every um
22:40
every uh marginalization or every
22:42
struggle

22:44

i would um one other thing i i think

22:47

that most times we tend to not

22:49

or to overlook or not think truly about

22:51

is

22:52

i feel that also in this whole struggle

22:55

we need to be more purposeful in raising

22:57

our boys

22:59

because with all this you know talk

23:01

about women making all the efforts i

23:03

will give an example

23:04

let's say i'm raising i have two boys

23:06

and a girl

23:08

and then let's say i'm raising my boys

23:09

and i'm telling them you know

23:11

uh this is what a boy should do you're a

23:12

boy you should do this or you shouldn't

23:14

do that you're a girl you should this

23:15

you should that

23:16

so as a boy they would obviously grow up

23:19

looking at the girl as the weaker

23:21

you know that oh she's a girl so she can

23:23

do this or she's a girl so she has to do

23:25

that and i have to do that

23:26
so i think from home we tend to
23:29
condition these boys to grow up and come
23:31
into the public
23:33
and to look at women as that lesser
23:35
being
23:36
does that make sense like you know let's
23:38
have been so they can't do this or they
23:39
can't do that or they shouldn't go to
23:41
this or
23:41
they shouldn't do this because you're a
23:43
woman you have to be you know be a
23:44
princess you have to
23:46
talk slower you have to you know not
23:48
assert yourself you will not have to not
23:50
this or not that
23:51
so i think in the process of trying to
23:53
fight for this
23:54
social justice we need to apart from
23:56
looking at the systems
23:57
we need to also be looking at the homes
23:59
because in as much as we talk about
24:01
black brown you know
24:02
diversity in relation to race when it

24:05
comes to women too we need to
24:07
because if we train no matter how much
24:10
we train women
24:11
girls to grow up to be strong women if
24:13
they still have to battle and fight with
24:16
men who don't see them as human beings
24:18
as equals
24:20
all our efforts will be close to
24:22
futility so i think
24:23
we need to start to try to balance that
24:26
because i don't think social justice
24:28
will really be
24:29
uh will be at close to his best if we
24:32
only face the system but we have
24:35
individual duties to to play towards
24:37
that
24:38
thank you thank you it's very
24:40
interesting you talk about being
24:41
purposeful
24:42
uh you talk about um lee talked about as
24:46
we as we heard her account
24:48
talked about um the the request from the
24:52
voices you heard

24:53

to be um to stop asking to to do

24:56

something to to do more than have

24:58

reports there's a theme here so i'm

25:00

going to turn to shantae next

25:02

and and ask the same general question

25:04

and any interpretation you want to give

25:06

to

25:07

um to the place of uh of a focus on

25:11

diversity equity and inclusion

25:13

and at the same time working to achieve

25:15

social justice in our institutions

25:18

as an educator in particular any

25:20

thoughts you might have on that

25:22

yes thanks for opportunity and and what

25:25

angela and lee said definitely resonate

25:28

with me

25:29

so the way that i think of it is that

25:31

it's uh

25:32

and both as opposed to either or

25:35

and sometimes i think in society as

25:38

individuals we get stuck like oh we

25:39

either need to be focused on this or

25:41

focus on that and so my thoughts are

25:43
diversity is composition so having
25:46
access
25:47
right and so lee's story is a great one
25:49
my story of coming to maine and angela's
25:51
story have come to me
25:52
and being sometimes the only one or one
25:54
of a few right that was
25:55
an access point there was a time when we
25:57
were not at the table
25:59
we were not even allowed to be at the
26:00
table right uh and we have a whole
26:03
history of women and people of color
26:05
being
26:06
left out of policy making and voting and
26:09
you name it
26:10
and so diversity is the you know the
26:12
access point
26:13
um composition who's there who's not
26:15
there inclusion is once you have
26:17
individuals there
26:18
do they feel a sense of belonging
26:20
because you can bring as many people as
26:21
you want but if they don't feel included

26:23
well
26:24
then your work may be for not uh this
26:27
that
26:27
social justice piece is really critical
26:29
and sometimes i think we leave that part
26:31
off right so a very general
26:33
definition if you just did a simple
26:35
google search of social justices
26:37
distribution of wealth opportunities and
26:39
privileges well
26:40
how do you get to that distribution it's
26:43
through your policies and your practices
26:45
so you know when when lee talked about
26:48
the
26:48
individual the youth who said hey look
26:50
we raised our voices already we said
26:52
what we had to say now do something
26:54
the do something is changing our
26:56
policies reviewing our policies
26:58
are they equitable who do they leave out
27:01
um
27:01
oftentimes we'll have the things that
27:03
are um

27:05

we we just it's it's just the way that

27:06

it is um i think when you enter the

27:08

state of maine it says the way life

27:10

should be

27:10

so have we interrogated that not in a

27:13

bad way

27:14

that's good but who is left out when we

27:17

don't consider

27:18

all the various backgrounds and

27:20

histories and

27:21

um experiences and so to me the social

27:24

justice part

27:25

is critical to actually changing

27:29

the kind of this is the way it's always

27:31

going to be and this is the way it's

27:32

been

27:33

it allows us to be creative and to

27:36

make sure the diverse voices that we've

27:39

given access to

27:40

uh and included are now a part of the

27:43

policy making and changing

27:47

especially when it comes to education um

27:50

because

27:52
when we bring in those different voices
27:54
we know that
27:55
innovation and creativity will thrive
27:57
right when you're bringing people who
27:58
have different backgrounds we all come
28:00
from very different backgrounds and
28:02
together if we were to put our head
28:03
together
28:04
on a project we're going to come up with
28:06
something really
28:07
unique and different because we're
28:08
coming from it with from a different
28:09
lens
28:10
and so the social justice part says that
28:13
everybody's voice
28:14
is important um at the table not just
28:17
the voices that have always been there
28:19
yeah no i'm gonna keep with this theme
28:23
and and have a question for lee
28:25
that that relates to it which is um you
28:27
know we're hearing a lot about
28:29
voices at the table we're hearing a lot
28:31
about the valuing of voices

28:34
and about the importance of really
28:36
interrogating
28:37
our practices and our policies in ways
28:40
that
28:40
[Music]
28:42
that adjust them uh to make sure that
28:44
it's possible
28:45
for that kind of uh voice to be present
28:47
and the access to be
28:48
to be there so um as you are hearing
28:52
from um
28:52
from people in your community about this
28:55
what what are some ways to actually
28:58
take all of this forward and again since
29:00
you and i both are part of the
29:01
university system
29:03
i'm very interested in your ideas about
29:05
what we can be doing right here within
29:07
the university of maine system
29:11
you know i've uh that is such a great
29:14
question i think it is
29:15
the question that you and i and others
29:17
have to be asking ourselves because

29:19
and i love the way chante put it um
29:23
diversity is who is at the table but
29:25
inclusion
29:27
tells us who is actually engaged at that
29:31
table
29:32
uh i fear in many ways that
29:35
maine is at the very earliest stages
29:38
because we
29:39
do not have a lot of diversity
29:42
at the table and so the first thing i
29:46
think
29:46
we have to be doing is getting really
29:50
um aggressive about
29:53
reaching out to our communities
29:57
to bring students you'll this is all
30:00
going to be from the perspective of
30:02
education because
30:03
i think it unlocks the doors to seats of
30:06
power
30:06
and until we get diversity in the seats
30:09
of power
30:10
we will not have a really
30:14
good shot at making sure we have

30:17
equity everywhere so to get people into
30:19
the seats of power
30:20
they need the system of education and
30:24
we in education need to be reaching out
30:27
we
30:27
cannot sit back and say we're here if
30:31
you find us
30:32
and uh and that becomes important at
30:36
every single stage from early childhood
30:39
to higher education and i'm gonna focus
30:42
for a minute on higher education because
30:44
one of the things that
30:45
we heard from angela is something i am
30:47
struggling with right now and i'm
30:50
i'm trying uh soon to bring a group of
30:52
people together to help me think this
30:54
through
30:55
there are a number of uh wonderful
30:59
brilliant legal professionals
31:02
primarily from african countries who are
31:05
here
31:05
in maine who are trained
31:09
in a legal process but

31:12
aren't yet or or are right now
31:17
not licensed to practice law or to do
31:20
those other aspects of providing access
31:24
to justice
31:25
in maine so there are judges and lawyers
31:29
who are here among us who cannot
31:31
practice
31:32
those wonderful skills that they have we
31:35
need to find a way
31:37
of bringing those professionals together
31:40
and connecting them to our institutions
31:43
in a way that the institutions are ready
31:46
to help them
31:48
get licensed find jobs become part of
31:51
our communities
31:52
and find their way into the seats of
31:54
power
31:55
and uh so we we start i'm looking at
31:59
adults who already have had a profession
32:02
and have now come to maine
32:04
but i think in the university we also
32:06
have to start looking
32:08
much younger we need to be talking to

32:11
our
32:11
youth of color about expecting that they
32:15
will go to college that they will find a
32:18
place in college that they will get
32:20
great educations and that
32:22
they will eventually come to some place
32:23
fabulous like maine law
32:25
but if we sit back and wait
32:28
it's not going to happen it hasn't
32:31
happened in the last decades
32:32
it's not going to happen if we just sit
32:35
we've got to get out into the
32:37
communities
32:38
and uh and help bring people
32:41
so that we have the diversity we start
32:44
with and then we build the inclusion
32:46
when the
32:47
diversity begins so i'm going to
32:50
challenge that a little bit and ask for
32:52
anyone to comment i
32:53
i think it feels to me like we have to
32:55
do them at the same time right
32:57
because if there is no space no sense of

33:01
how to belong then i imagine it's pretty
33:04
hard to
33:04
um open up the exact access right right
33:07
and
33:08
so they kind of go together which takes
33:10
me to another
33:11
question that that i would very much
33:13
appreciate the insights of
33:15
of any of you on and it has to do with
33:18
um i mean it's just happening here
33:21
automatically through this discussion
33:23
but it doesn't happen automatically
33:25
in lots of conversation and that is how
33:27
to best
33:28
talk with people about diversity equity
33:31
and inclusion
33:32
and make the case uh for it
33:35
i think tying it to social justice is
33:37
very important but
33:39
i have found in my encounters with
33:41
people here and
33:42
really wherever i've been but here that
33:45
we are

33:46
in lots of different places and i'm just
33:47
going to give my first example
33:50
my best way of of learning has been
33:52
perhaps a bit like lee's
33:54
by bringing together groups of uh of
33:56
students of color particularly
33:58
um groups of students that include young
34:01
women
34:02
particularly young women in some of our
34:04
stem fields where
34:06
even today there can be issues of
34:08
feeling included
34:10
and having listening to them but
34:14
but hearing the same thing that lee is
34:16
hearing like
34:17
you know quit asking get going and do
34:19
something so so we here at umaine have
34:22
launched a
34:23
president's uh council on diversity
34:25
equity and inclusion that um that
34:27
kimberly whitehead co-chairs
34:29
and my charge to them was to look at
34:31
structural

34:32
barriers and areas that we need to take
34:35
up and
34:36
and they've already given us 45 45
34:38
recommendations
34:39
for how to do that um pretty pretty
34:42
quickly
34:42
so that suggests to me that um there's a
34:45
lot there
34:46
and so i feel like we've got a way to
34:47
start that conversation but that's not
34:49
the case
34:50
in every place or in every kind of
34:52
context so ideas about
34:54
a way to do that that will work well
35:00
you know i i i experienced that
35:03
when i was in maine and in other states
35:05
as well of
35:07
meeting people where they are uh and i
35:09
learned pretty quickly that
35:11
uh i don't know if maine is still the
35:13
widest state in the country but it was
35:14
for a long time in terms
35:16
of demographic um uh representation

35:19
um that you can't wait until
35:22
um you have more diversity right like
35:25
there's an urgency to this that
35:27
regardless of your background we need
35:28
everybody to
35:30
find their place in this work so what i
35:32
think really is the start
35:34
um because president ferrini mundy i
35:36
agree with you that is simultaneous work
35:38
is that is critical self-reflection we
35:42
have to get people to see themselves
35:44
as a part of this larger conversation
35:47
one of the things i
35:48
i engage i experienced a lot in maine
35:50
was
35:51
um there's a way in which we talked
35:52
about diversity as other
35:54
right so diversity was like everything
35:56
that wasn't white and it's like wait a
35:58
minute
35:58
there's diversity with amongst white
36:00
people and people were saying not like
36:02
one they weren't comfortable saying the

36:03
word white
36:04
two they just didn't see themselves as a
36:06
part of this and so i think that it
36:08
starts with this critical work
36:10
of like what is my family's background
36:13
who am i
36:14
how is that different than some of my
36:16
white neighbors or white
36:17
people in if i'm from southern maine
36:19
white people from northern maine right
36:21
there's different cultures within the
36:22
state of maine and so
36:24
i found that to be an entry point that
36:27
allowed people to kind of say okay i see
36:29
myself in this
36:30
i can start to now engage because if you
36:32
just jump straight to social justice
36:34
it is foreign it's like well that's this
36:36
thing that happens outside in this other
36:38
place um
36:40
as opposed to no it's a part of like my
36:42
everyday life as well
36:44
and then that way you don't have to wait

36:46
so i love the story
36:48
um that lee gave because when she talked
36:50
about early in her career and going up
36:53
and hearing about the experience of
36:54
native children um
36:56
you know you don't have to identify as
36:58
native american and say wait a minute
37:00
something really doesn't feel right with
37:02
me you just you know what i'm saying so
37:04
you can almost use your own experience
37:06
to then apply it to what would that
37:08
feel like if somebody came and ripped my
37:10
child away from me and placed them in
37:11
the home
37:12
and they lost their culture right so
37:14
there's a way in which empathy
37:16
can be tied into this cultural
37:18
reflection um to allow people to engage
37:20
in the work
37:23
thank you thank you other thoughts
37:34
reactions
37:37
now i at least have a frame of reference
37:39
for how to think about this in a

37:40
university
37:41
a little but but angela
37:44
as a as a member of a of a of a city
37:47
council
37:49
what is it like there oh thank you
37:53
very very mundy um
37:56
so uh on the city council it's i don't
37:58
think it's anything that different
38:00
i think it's the same group pretty much
38:02
applies everywhere just
38:04
maybe a little tweak here and there
38:06
depending on the area
38:08
um i quite agree with shantae
38:13
but another thing a little more thing i
38:15
think to add here is
38:17
when we talk about diversity of course
38:19
who is involved
38:21
and then uh inclusion you know who
38:24
actually who's
38:25
whose impute is actually uh being
38:28
uh utilized but i think also another
38:31
part of it when we talk about the
38:33
systems and you know actually doing

38:35
something and still not asking
38:37
people to share and relieve their
38:39
experiences another thing i think that
38:41
will be very that is very very important
38:43
to note is
38:44
adding economic values to those voices
38:48
i work with some a lot of students
38:54
and a lot of other young people and one
38:56
of the things i
38:57
tread i hear a lot is you know they just
39:01
want us to come and talk and talk and
39:02
talk and what happens they take the our
39:04
opinions and then they go and take
39:06
get credit and i don't even get paid or
39:08
acknowledged
39:10
you know this is very important because
39:12
when you talk about inclusion you cannot
39:14
tell me
39:15
oh you know you can say your opinion and
39:17
will actually put it in in
39:18
in you use it to make policies but then
39:22
you get
39:22
paid but i get the idea and put it

39:25
forward i don't get paid or i don't get
39:27
some accolades attached to it so i think
39:30
this is also
39:31
something else that you know when people
39:34
say
39:34
don't make us relieve our our exp our
39:37
trauma or don't ask us to share that is
39:39
one of the things they are
39:41
telling you without knowing how to say
39:43
it bluntly
39:44
you know and our economic value is a
39:47
very important thing when we talk about
39:50
inclusion that is why i like to use
39:51
being purposeful
39:53
not just telling me oh when you speak we
39:54
are going to listen to what you say you
39:56
know what you say is important
39:58
but then you know nobody everybody has
40:00
their bills to pay
40:01
so we talk about economic equality
40:05
that is part of it being purposeful in
40:07
everything
40:08
i want to hear your thoughts that is an

40:10
a an um
40:11
exercise you're doing that is job that
40:13
you're doing you're thinking you're
40:15
you're giving those values you're giving
40:17
those um
40:19
thoughts and opinions and um ideas on
40:22
how things can be better but what are
40:24
you getting in return
40:26
you know people have to pay their bills
40:27
and this is part of it
40:29
so i feel when we talk about you know be
40:31
talking about diversity inclusion we
40:33
have to also be talking about
40:35
you know this and then making the system
40:37
you know in a way that
40:40
like i said being purposeful in every
40:43
single way of you know being that
40:45
inclusive not just
40:46
having one person and saying here we
40:48
have it you know just be dangling that
40:50
one person
40:50
but also make it in a way that you know
40:53
that one person has some

40:55

some someone to turn to you know because

40:58

it can be very draining

41:00

to to you know have one person be the

41:03

only voice always talking about

41:04

diversity and inclusion so

41:06

to start to talk about things like this

41:08

we have to find ways to use the system

41:10

to make it

41:11

possible so that that one person doesn't

41:13

get

41:14

bounced down thank you

41:18

thank you there's an interest there's a

41:20

question that i think

41:21

has come in that has come in that is a

41:23

little bit tied to this theme

41:25

so the person has written in most cases

41:26

we know what work is necessary to

41:29

promote social justice

41:30

and to increase diversity in seats of

41:33

power

41:34

there needs to be an investment in doing

41:36

that work actively

41:37

now it's not exactly a question it's a

41:40

comment

41:42

but i think it's tied angela to what

41:43

you've said about being purposeful

41:45

again you know this is this is um

41:49

this is okay we know what we need to do

41:52

we need to

41:52

invest what does that look like

41:57

lee as you're thinking about what you're

42:00

going to do with maine law

42:02

so uh i i think that uh i

42:05

that is at the heart of some of the

42:08

actions

42:09

we need to take the investment

42:12

particularly if you're talking about

42:14

higher education has to be in

42:17

providing those scholarships and

42:20

the support for paid experiential

42:24

education that make it possible

42:28

for students of color for native

42:31

american students

42:32

to come to these universities get that

42:35

education

42:36

and to get the interim jobs that take

42:39
them through
42:40
their college careers they in many
42:43
instances we are finding that
42:46
the economic difficulties and i think
42:48
coming out of the pandemic we're going
42:50
to have
42:51
even more challenges around this so that
42:54
it is only those who are privileged
42:56
enough
42:57
whose parents can take care of all of
43:00
those
43:01
the fairly extraordinary costs of coming
43:04
to college
43:04
going to law school getting the
43:07
opportunity to do
43:09
uh the various externships and
43:11
internships
43:12
we have to actually invest and it's
43:15
interesting that the
43:16
main legislature has required
43:20
certain scholarships throughout the
43:22
university and there are several of them
43:23
at the law school but they aren't

43:25
actually funded
43:26
so we run into these great ideas
43:30
that in which there has not been
43:33
sufficient investment in a variety of
43:36
different ways
43:37
and i think that just getting to the
43:39
point where we can offer
43:41
scholarships and housing support
43:45
and that experiential education support
43:48
along the way
43:49
will make a huge difference but it
43:52
requires money
43:53
and that is what we all have to accept
43:56
and push hard to do
43:58
you know there was a piece of what you
43:59
said that i wanted to pick up on where
44:00
you talked about
44:02
helping people to get you i think you
44:03
said the interim jobs the
44:05
the jobs along the way and indeed there
44:08
needs to be
44:10
financial support for that but there
44:12
needs to be um

44:14
access assistance to that too right this
44:18
is
44:18
this is a pretty small state and i
44:22
think making one's way into certain
44:25
kinds of groups certain sorts of
44:27
networks certain kinds of
44:30
potential areas of long-term
44:32
professional
44:33
reward is something that we can be
44:36
intentional about
44:38
uh i think that's a different way it's
44:41
it's a very good point because if you if
44:43
you talk to people in the
44:45
in the legal community or around
44:48
issues of justice which is where my
44:50
career has been spent
44:52
everyone will tell you that success
44:55
is in great part a measure of the
44:58
connections that you make
45:00
and the intentionality of
45:04
helping people make the right
45:05
connections is going to be critical
45:07
in the middle of uh everything that

45:10
we're doing
45:11
to go from step to step and that is back
45:14
to
45:15
intentionality i think you're right on
45:17
there
45:18
here's another question as students how
45:20
can we do this
45:21
how can an ally help
45:25
that was the exact word that ally that
45:27
came to my mind
45:29
and this is coupled with the previous
45:30
statement um
45:32
i have in my time in my career and my
45:35
experience
45:36
people who have power don't easily give
45:38
it up
45:39
so what we're talking about is a shift
45:41
of power and an allocation of resources
45:44
so it has to be both
45:46
uh and so the way in which you get there
45:48
and we have to have a longer discussion
45:50
but those two things are critically
45:52
important i'll say this um and i like

45:54
this saying i don't know who to
45:55
attribute it to but
45:57
your resource allocation is um
46:01
a statement of your values so so where
46:03
you put your resources it tells everyone
46:06
what you care about and so we tend to do
46:08
this thing where
46:09
these these concerns are add-on so
46:12
people are either too tired to do them
46:14
or don't have any money
46:16
those two things no time and no money
46:18
well let's stop talking
46:19
about them as add-ons and let's talk
46:21
about them as center to what you do
46:23
if it's central and it's core to what
46:25
you do it's a statement of your values
46:28
then you're going to find you're going
46:30
to do resource reallocation
46:32
right and and make sure that we're
46:34
putting our
46:35
our resources towards the things that
46:37
will ensure
46:39
these diversity equity inclusion justice

46:41
all of it
46:42
um is moving forward in a positive way
46:45
and so
46:45
what can students do i think what i have
46:48
found and what i did as a student
46:50
was find who my allies were
46:54
this is daunting work and we're talking
46:56
about
46:57
undoing hundreds of years of a system
46:59
that was designed to benefit a
47:01
particular group of people
47:03
so no one person should take on the work
47:05
alone and no one person can do the work
47:07
alone
47:07
so to me it's always going to be a small
47:10
few there's always a small few in
47:11
history that change the world right
47:14
find your small few and work on the
47:16
issue that you're most passionate about
47:18
and keep chipping away at it for me i'll
47:20
be doing this for the rest of my life
47:22
um even in retirement right because it's
47:24
that important to me it's so it's a way

47:26
of life it's a way is the way that i see
47:28
the world in a way i see the world can
47:30
be
47:30
and so i think for students um it's it's
47:34
finding other people they may not have
47:36
the same background
47:38
as you and that's okay but are they
47:40
committed to this work are they
47:41
committed to ensuring
47:43
that there's equity not equality right
47:45
so not that we have a pie and we
47:47
slice it and each of us all who are
47:49
speaking today get two pieces
47:51
no if if lee started out and with an
47:54
honest assessment right you know what i
47:57
i grew up privileged
47:58
that i mean that's somebody i want to
48:00
become an ally with
48:02
their she already started the
48:04
conversation by acknowledging her
48:05
privilege right
48:06
so these are the ways in which i think
48:08
you find people who

48:09
are are committed to the work and see
48:12
themselves in the work and can be honest
48:14
about their own experiences
48:19
you know you use the language of it's a
48:21
way of life it's the way you see the
48:22
world
48:23
and i think people are in different
48:26
places with
48:26
with how they can be with that so
48:30
um one of the questions that was kind of
48:32
cued up as a possibility is what
48:34
what has been the most challenging and
48:35
most rewarding aspect of your
48:37
involvement
48:38
in this work and when you said it's the
48:40
way you see the world
48:42
it's your way of life i thought well
48:44
there at least
48:45
it's it's just like fully and fully
48:47
infused it's who you are
48:49
um other thoughts shantae from you or
48:52
from others on
48:53
what's most challenging what's most

48:55

rewarding

48:58

ah thank you for the question

49:01

me i i would think that the one of the

49:05

most

49:05

i would say one of because i think there

49:07

are quite a number of them

49:10

but i would think one of the most

49:11

challenging for me

49:13

was you know coming out in the public

49:16

space

49:17

and being judged just because

49:20

you know of who i am or the uh how thick

49:23

my

49:23

accent is or that i have an accent

49:27

um i remember when i was running for

49:29

bengal city council i ran um

49:32

you know side by side with 11 other

49:34

people candidates

49:36

and um there was an article written

49:39

about

49:39

me and about all of us and you know a

49:43

lot of

49:44

uh there were of course supporting

49:45
comments but there were a couple of
49:47
comments that really hit me
49:49
so hard like you know are they she being
49:52
supported uh
49:53
because she's a person of color you know
49:55
the focus was
49:56
is it because she's a person of color
49:58
she qualified
50:00
you know and finally one of my
50:03
one of my supporters responded i mean i
50:07
had to hold myself not to respond so one
50:09
of my
50:10
supporters responded and said and asked
50:13
i'm surprised i've not seen
50:14
you question all the other candidates
50:16
why does it have to be only her
50:18
in case you don't know you know someone
50:21
attached
50:22
a couple of other articles she's a
50:23
lawyer she's doing she's that you know
50:25
i'm sure your question came from the
50:27
fact that she's an immigrant and she's
50:29
black woman you know it was you know

50:32

it's

50:32

challenging to kind of try to see myself

50:36

through other people's

50:37

um thoughts you know how they view me

50:40

how they criticize me how they talk

50:42

about me

50:43

some without even knowing me or you know

50:46

knowing half of my story or just because

50:49

people are supporting me to just say oh

50:51

is it because she's black

50:53

is it just so it will be you know

50:54

instead of trying to understand without

50:56

even asking

50:57

other people if they are qualified you

51:00

know that is

51:00

one of the biggest things i mean we go

51:03

through people questioning us but

51:05

you know privately but to have to face

51:07

it publicly

51:08

you know it was it's it's it was

51:11

challenging but i would say

51:13

i've had quite a number of very

51:15

fulfilling things

51:16
um experiences too first coming on
51:19
bengal city council you know i wasn't
51:21
sure how or where i was
51:23
gonna start but
51:26
when we when i came first came in i
51:29
you know i've seen a lot of changes
51:32
you know my children go to schools here
51:34
in bengal
51:36
and before i got on bengal city council
51:38
it used to be you know that like
51:40
things like racism didn't happen in
51:43
bengal
51:43
you know but now every corner of bengal
51:46
pretty much you turn around
51:47
there is a conversation on diversity and
51:50
inclusion
51:51
and being purposeful so that is one
51:53
thing when i look at it i'm like okay
51:55
you know at least my children will you
51:57
know they would
51:58
keep growing and you know things i mean
52:00
i know it won't automatically be very
52:02
easy for them but at least

52:04
even if just like uh shantae said you
52:06
know chipping it away one
52:08
one whatever at a time you know knowing
52:11
that
52:12
hopefully this conversation will
52:13
continue to go on
52:15
and no matter what things will be a
52:17
little easier for my children no matter
52:19
how small
52:20
but at least that is one thing that you
52:22
know that one of the very fulfilling um
52:25
experiences i would say have um
52:28
for me thank you so you you see
52:32
you see some hope for the future
52:35
but it's hard work um
52:38
it is you know i believe that no matter
52:41
how
52:42
small you know so longer steps are being
52:44
taken yeah
52:46
you know i you know i think it's always
52:48
very important
52:49
keep moving no matter at what space
52:53
so we've had a question come in that i

52:55

think is in this general

52:57

thematic area it goes like this how do

52:59

you suggest we as women

53:01

make sure our voices are heard within

53:03

the classroom the workplace and our

53:05

government

53:06

how do you suggest we work with men who

53:08

are sexist

53:14

okay so uh this kind of um

53:18

made me smile because you know my story

53:20

about

53:21

you know growing up and like i said

53:24

i mean it's not easy in any way as a

53:27

woman

53:28

you are basically born and looked at as

53:30

you know like

53:31

for example growing up in nigeria you're

53:33

being told as a woman who to marry when

53:35

you're expected to be married what to

53:37

study

53:37

whether to go to school or not even go

53:39

to school just get married and

53:41

you know it should be your highest

53:43
highest achievement as a woman you know
53:46
and all that but i think um
53:50
one thing i've i've felt that has been
53:53
very helpful for me is i mean there is
53:56
no way to look at it that is easy
53:58
but you know you have to find a way um
54:01
reading the environment first helps
54:04
just like shantae said you know there is
54:06
always one or two people
54:08
that you know and um i believe that when
54:12
you are being yourself
54:14
those allies sometimes they will find
54:16
you
54:17
they will see the truth they will see
54:18
your strength they will see your power
54:20
of course there are going to be a lot of
54:22
them that want to shut you down
54:24
but you know find what it is that makes
54:26
you feel comfortable
54:28
find what it is that makes you you know
54:30
kind of um
54:31
covers up for where you feel you have
54:33
some luck for example i love

54:35
fashion i love to look good so when i'm
54:37
going to places i feel like you know
54:39
i'm going to see a lot of or maybe i'm
54:41
going to struggle a little bit
54:43
dress well look good make your hair well
54:45
you know those are the kind of things
54:47
it's true
54:47
you may see it may sound like a very
54:49
little thing but these are things that
54:51
can be a little reassuring
54:53
to you that you know something happens
54:55
but you're like oh my well i look good i
54:57
you know it kind of
54:58
boosts it it can boost confidence find
55:01
those things that
55:02
make you um kind of boost your
55:04
confidence or your courage
55:06
if it's if it's there are topics being
55:08
talked about
55:09
you don't have to know all the topics i
55:11
mean nobody is an embodiment of
55:13
knowledge
55:13
but find that tiny part of it that you

55:15
truly truly understand
55:17
you know enjoy yourself on it
55:20
you know try to show off on it that
55:22
there has to be a way but you have to
55:24
understand
55:25
the circle of where you are to help you
55:27
know how to thrive in it
55:29
because if you don't understand you're
55:30
going to dive in
55:32
and you know they're going to make a
55:33
whole mess of you i mean it's not easy
55:36
and again it still boils down to trying
55:38
to also educate men while we try to
55:40
educate and empower women
55:42
i think we need to start to focus too on
55:44
educating men and you know
55:46
making them understand that um
55:49
you have to understand that a woman when
55:51
a woman is passionate she's passionate
55:53
she's just not
55:54
yelling or being angry she's not just
55:56
you know when a woman has
55:58
is he's um he's a good leader she's a

56:00
good leader she's not she's not
56:02
just being bossy you know and we women
56:04
to need to
56:05
uh be more supportive of each other and
56:08
not just tearing down on you know
56:10
or who is she who does she think she is
56:12
she's a strong
56:14
powerful hard-working woman and we as
56:16
women need to be acknowledging that
56:18
because sometimes
56:20
it may take just a bystander
56:23
to put back a man who is overstepping in
56:26
their place
56:27
thank you you know years ago i worked in
56:30
a place that
56:31
where the leaders were mostly men but
56:34
one of the higher
56:35
leaders was a woman and she i was being
56:37
appointed to a position
56:39
with a group of of the key leaders and
56:42
her advice to me was you're the
56:43
education
56:44
person but find a way to talk about

56:46
things in addition to education
56:48
even not unlike what you just said
56:50
angela
56:51
have an opinion come to the table with
56:53
something um
56:55
and it will change and it did change the
56:56
dynamic we're running out of time this
56:58
could go on i think we need to do more
57:00
of these
57:01
there are two questions that i'll get
57:02
out on the table and use those as
57:04
opportunities for each of you to make a
57:06
kind of last comment
57:07
one is what can we do as student leaders
57:10
is coming from i believe humane
57:12
students to help first-year students
57:14
learn to think for themselves and start
57:16
conversations about dei
57:18
and what are the best ways to educate
57:20
people sometimes people get defensive
57:22
even when you're trying to educate them
57:24
on social justice issues
57:25
so this is now coming from students who

57:27

want to be a part of this

57:29

um why don't we close with sort of your

57:32

advice from each of you

57:33

uh to those to those um students i'll

57:36

start with uh chante then to lee then to

57:38

angela to close

57:40

great um thanks once again for this

57:43

opportunity and what i would say with

57:45

those questions

57:46

is that um those questions make sense to

57:49

me

57:50

right if people didn't ask those

57:51

questions or weren't

57:53

apprehensive or pushed back then i would

57:55

think that there was actually something

57:56

wrong

57:57

because again we're talking about

57:59

hundreds of years it's the system that

58:00

the country was built on

58:02

so the way i engage in those um

58:04

situations is to ask questions

58:06

right so if i'm engaging with someone

58:08

and i send some apprehension

58:10
i'm gonna ask the question so what about
58:13
this is scary to you
58:14
what what about this seems threatening
58:16
to you what about this
58:18
causes fear for you and see how they
58:21
respond
58:21
because that to me is where people are
58:23
operating from when they don't
58:24
understand something
58:25
or they are not wanting to engage it's
58:28
because they
58:29
have some level of fear or something is
58:32
going to be taken away from
58:33
them uh and we know that that's not what
58:35
this is about this is about
58:37
um being equitable and fair
58:40
and giving people opportunity and access
58:42
they didn't have before or they've been
58:43
historically barred from access
58:45
and so i as a social scientist i always
58:48
think in forms of questions
58:50
because i don't want the wall to come up
58:51
i want to actually know and if they say

58:53
something that's offensive well that now
58:55
that lets me know their position
58:57
so you have to be prepared that they may
58:58
say something that you don't like but at
59:00
least you know what you're dealing with
59:02
and i think that's the advice that um
59:04
president karini mundi when the person
59:06
told you about engaging
59:07
that's where those little pieces come in
59:10
um you're going to get all kinds of
59:11
pushback and students you may experience
59:13
i don't like the word syndrome but
59:15
imposter that you're an impostor in the
59:18
room
59:19
sit with that and then find ways as
59:21
angela said
59:22
to rebound from it it doesn't mean you
59:24
have to stay stuck there
59:26
and so what are you good at what are
59:28
your strengths
59:29
and then go there for me i had to repeat
59:31
certain
59:32
poems to myself when i was at umaine um

59:35
phenomenal woman by maya angelou was one
59:37
of them because i had to remind myself
59:40
that you don't look like everybody else
59:42
and people may have a certain thought
59:44
and that's okay but you are phenomenal
59:46
and nothing
59:47
will ever change that um and so you come
59:50
from
59:51
people who survived one of the most
59:54
traumatic
59:54
experiences in in recent history in
59:57
terms of the atlantic slave trade so you
59:59
were supposed to be here you were made
60:01
to be here you were born to be
60:03
in the place where you are and so i
60:05
didn't always
60:06
have that thought sometimes i felt like
60:08
oh i don't know i shouldn't be here
60:09
but i use that i use ways in which to
60:13
refuel myself to remind myself yes you
60:16
do belong
60:17
uh and your voice and and your presence
60:20
is critically important

60:23
that's boy that's hard to follow that's
60:27
that's really great and i so i'm just
60:30
actually going to um
60:31
repeat a lot of what you heard from
60:33
shantae for
60:34
students who want to be allies reach out
60:38
ask questions remember that
60:41
everyone comes from a slightly different
60:43
place don't assume
60:45
that you know what you're going to hear
60:48
from the
60:49
students you are trying to include let
60:52
them
60:52
tell you where they are and what they
60:55
need
60:56
and just keep acting keep reaching out
61:01
thank you lee and angela
61:04
thank you so um for me uh of course
61:08
recording what everybody uh shantae and
61:10
niece
61:11
said uh but one thing i would add too
61:14
is um
61:18
all right i lost my i knocked out now

61:21
give me 50 seconds please
61:23
um oh man
61:28
so um the question was uh how to advise
61:32
okay
61:33
so i would say one thing i've noticed in
61:35
my public uh
61:36
life is that sometimes when i try
61:40
to talk to people
61:43
i get viewed as this perfectionist
61:47
this know it all but i've learned
61:50
that and most times not like the the i
61:53
don't achieve positive results sometimes
61:56
but i've
61:57
realized that i achieved most
62:00
when i first forshow my own
62:02
vulnerability
62:04
some people may disagree with me but you
62:06
know uh in reality
62:08
yes the system has been the system was
62:10
built on
62:11
a lot of uh racism and you know
62:14
uh the slavery and a lot of um
62:18
of uh you know uh bad bad horrible

62:21
things on
62:23
native americans and i am black people
62:26
but at the same time this was centuries
62:28
ago
62:29
you know if i come to you the system for
62:32
example
62:33
uh lee you know she first started by
62:35
acknowledging her own privilege
62:38
she realized that she didn't make this
62:40
her ancestors did
62:41
but she at where she is realized that
62:44
this is not okay
62:46
you know and i have this a place i have
62:49
the power of
62:50
i'm in a position to try to make this
62:52
better
62:53
but if i come to her and i'm like oh
62:55
you're a white person you know you
62:57
should this issue that i'm you know
62:59
i mean what would we achieve but
63:01
realizing okay
63:02
you are struggling i also have the
63:04
struggles and you know this is my own

63:06
vulnerability
63:07
i think it makes it more welcoming for
63:10
her to see okay
63:11
i'm struggling but i see that she's
63:13
struggling too so at least we can
63:14
struggle together
63:16
so i think this is one thing that we
63:17
need to start to because i feel like
63:20
sometimes a lot of people tend to now be
63:22
walking on eggshells and
63:23
these days we all everybody easily gets
63:26
angry
63:26
you know but if we keep getting angry at
63:28
everything nothing will have to work
63:30
i mean i'm not saying the system is
63:32
right it's not in any way
63:34
but at least we we have to find ways to
63:36
know okay
63:37
you know it has to be one step at a time
63:40
and always
63:40
try to stay as positive as because if we
63:44
are not that positive there's it's going
63:45
to be more difficult to work with people

63:48
so i've realized that most times showing
63:50
that even though i'm a black person
63:51
there are things i still don't
63:52
understand
63:53
you know kind of i think it kind of puts
63:55
me halfway with the other person and i
63:57
think most times i've realized people
63:59
kind of take off their shells
64:01
and then we start to talk which is most
64:03
times this day
64:04
is the target for me thank you
64:09
well that this has just been amazing
64:12
um so much more to say so much more to
64:14
talk about
64:15
i would like to thank angela lee and
64:18
shantae
64:19
like to thank kimberly also for getting
64:21
us organized and for for thinking to do
64:23
this
64:24
um and to uh to say that i do hope our
64:27
listeners have found this
64:28
an interesting and helpful and um and
64:31
provocative session

64:32

uh it's certainly making me think i'm

64:34

back to the

64:35

um critical self-reflection and uh

64:38

reading the environment as as

64:40

really important for me personally

64:43

in taking away from this kind of where

64:45

to go next so

64:46

thank you to all of um our panelists to

64:49

all of our

64:51

organizers and also of course to our

64:52

audience for your thoughtful questions

64:54

for your interesting ideas

64:56

and wishing everyone the best for

64:58

women's history month

65:00

thank you all

65:24

you