CULTIVATING A CAMPUS CULTURE OF CIVILITY

Paula Lustbader, Professor Emerita
Seattle University School of Law
Seattle, Washington

Abstract

Incivility permeates our culture including in colleges and universities. Higher education influences each generation, engenders critical thinking, and establishes cultural norms for professionals. When we teach and model ways to facilitate robust, yet civil, discourse about controversial topics, we empower students to be constructive, civil, and engaged citizens in an increasingly polarized world. After offering a definition and framework for thinking about civility, the paper summarizes the pervasiveness and cost of incivility in our society generally and the presence and impact of incivility on schools specifically. The paper then provides suggestions on ways that higher education can cultivate a campus culture of civility.

Cultivating a Campus Culture of Civility

Thirty years ago, Professor David Boerner and I created the Academic Resource Center Program (ARC) at Seattle University School of Law, an access admission and academic support program for law students. Our purpose was to increase the diversity of the legal profession. We believed that justice would be better served if our system included greater diversity among the members of the legal profession who could bring a broader array of perspectives. Annually, a cohort of thirty students, all who came from underrepresented communities, attended a summer course five days a week, for six weeks. It included a substantive criminal-law class and wrap-around curricula to provide students with a solid basis to excel in law school and the profession. In addition to receiving supplemental instruction on learning theory and pedagogy in this class, students were given the mission and skills to become leaders in their communities, to be the voice for those who are not privileged to have a college education, to empower themselves to respond constructively to micro-aggressions, to proactively and effectively engage in potentially controversial discourse, and to create a safe and effective learning environment within their cohort. At the time we started, we didn't explicitly frame our efforts as cultivating civility, but in retrospect, we realize that inherent in our purpose and intuitive in our approach was cultivating a culture of civility.

Craig Sims' story is but one example of what is possible when the culture in a classroom is civil. In 1994, Craig, a twenty-year-old African American, showed up for his first law-school class within days of completing his undergraduate degree. During the fall semester, he was overwhelmed with the course load and did not feel any connection to what he was learning or to the learning environment. He was only one of three African-American males in his class of ninety. He faced stigmatization from his classmates who never asked him to join a study-group but always asked him to be on their team for a pick up game of basketball. He came to me and talked about possibly leaving law school. I reminded him that he had a purpose for coming to law school, that his future clients were waiting for him, and that he had the necessary intelligence and skills to excel. I also advised him to get involved rather than retreat from the school. He took my advice and became the Student Bar Association section representative. Near the end of his first year, he faced financial challenges, as many students do. He had remained close with his cohort members throughout law school. One day he confided to one of them that he might need to drop out because he didn't have enough money to pay his rent. The following day, when he came home he found an envelope had been slipped under the door. On it was written, "We are all here for you, from the crew." Inside was a stack of twenties, enough to pay his rent and provide for groceries. To this day, he doesn't know who all contributed to that envelope, but because of the generosity of those students, he was able to stay in law school. In his third year he was elected to be the Student Bar Association President. He then went on to become a criminal prosecutor, was the youngest prosecutor assigned to the City of Seattle homicide division, and became Chief of the Criminal Division of a city attorney's office. Currently, he is a highly respected trial lawyer, and consults on issues of diversity and civility. In addition, he was the President of the Loren Miller Bar Association, the Washington State African American Bar, and in 2011, he received the State Bar Award for Professionalism. Imagine all that would have been lost if Craig had left law school.

The power of this story lies in the little acts of kindness and civility that helped support Craig when he needed it, his ability to not react to the incivility of classmates who excluded him from study groups, and his willingness to be vulnerable with his professor and his classmates. Our students internalized the lessons learned in that first summer, to be leaders, to be present, to be mindful, to be creative, and to embrace their community. Craig is just one of over 1000 students who came through this program and who now are contributing broadly to their communities and their profession.

Programs like the ARC exist around the country and demonstrate what is possible when a culture of civility thrives in an educational setting. Nevertheless, outside these consciously constructed cohorts, our educational institutions are fraught with incivility. Some believe that is a duty for those leading in higher education to engender an ethic of civic responsibility and to teach the fundamental skills necessary to be civil. Although not representative of the full range and proportionality of the diversity in our society, every campus is a micro-cosmism of the larger society. The university campus is a large learning-community with each class forming a smaller micro-learning-community within the larger whole. "Respect for the opinions of others, even when we strongly disagree with them, has been, and must remain, a cornerstone of every campus community."[i] [Bringle, Struder, Wilson, Clayton, and Steinberg, 2011] Although not representative of the full range and proportionality of the diversity in our society, every campus is a micro-cosmism of the larger society. The university campus is a large learning-community with each class forming a smaller micro-learning-community within the larger whole. "Respect for the opinions of others, even when we strongly disagree with them, has been, and must remain, a cornerstone of every campus community."[ii] [Dester, 2016] But even those who don't think civility-oriented education is a duty can agree with us that colleges and universities have a powerful opportunity to teach in ways that enable robust discourse about an array of sometimes-controversial subjects in a manner that keeps the focus on the subject and does not descend into ad-hominem attacks. By so doing, we in the academy can help empower students to engage in the world with skills to be constructive and civil. This in turn will create a ripple beyond the classroom so that acts of civility, like the support Craig received when he needed it, become daily occurrences that can turn the tide on the pervasive and increasing incivility that we are experiencing in America. In order to achieve this goal, we must first understand what a civil state of being is, and the pervasiveness and cost of incivility in our society generally and in our schools specifically. With that foundational knowledge intact, we can then begin to explore ways that institutions of higher education can cultivate a campus culture of civility.

Civility as a state of being

P.M. Forni, co-founder of the Johns Hopkins Civility Project, reminds us that "civility means being constantly aware of others and weaving restraint, respect, and consideration into the very fabric of this awareness. Civility is a form of goodness; it is gracious goodness . . . . [I]t also entails an active interest in the well-being of our communities and even a concern for the health of the planet."[iii] [Forni, 2002] Civility does not require us to ignore our disagreements; rather, it requires us to find constructive ways to express ourselves and communicate with respect, as well as to remain open and curious about others' experiences and ideas. In its essence, civility is not a specific set of rules, manners, or skills; instead, civility is a state of being conscious, creative, and community-oriented.

Consciousness embodies the principles of emotional intelligence. Psychologist Daniel Goleman explains that emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as to understand and respond to others' emotions.[iv] [Goleman, 1995] Studies show that people with higher emotional intelligence are less uncivil and more resilient when faced with incivility.[v] [Morrow, McElroy, and Scheibe, 2011] Specifically, consciousness fosters civility by increasing our awareness in three key areas. First, consciousness calls upon us to be aware of our own psychological triggers, emotional responses, and overall well-being.[vi] [Lower, 2012] People who are psychologically healthy generally have a more positive outlook on life and tend to be more proactive and less reactive.[vii] [Alexandra and Benjamin, 2011] Consciousness also calls upon us to be aware of how our words and actions impact others. Finally, consciousness calls upon us to be aware that many of our beliefs and attitudes are unconscious and may be based on invalid biases. Increasing our awareness of these beliefs enables us to examine our assumptions and reduce the impact and influence of unconscious priming, which is how prior exposure to stimuli influences our interpretation of later stimulus. Thus, consciousness fosters civility by helping us live and respond to the present stimuli, with awareness and compassion and without attachment or bias.

Creativity also plays an important role in promoting civility. Because creativity facilitates consciousness and expands our perspectives, it supports more effective problem-solving. By suspending the cognitive regions of the brain and activating the unconscious, less methodical forms of information-processing, we can widen our inquiry to more holistically analyze the problem and find more solutions. Our natural tendency is to solve complex problems

by looking for the preconceived categories that will provide a ready-fit answer. But human problems don't necessarily come in neat shapes that correspond with our previous experience. When we limit analytic possibilities to preconceived categories, we limit our ability to find solutions that satisfy the greatest number of needs and desires. It enables us to see a situation from the perspectives of all involved, to relate to the human, personal, and emotional experience of others, and to anticipate others' needs, issues, and challenges. Creative processes, such as dancing, painting, gardening, writing, playing music, enable us to suspend the inhibitors in our brains and to open pathways for us to see things from varying perspectives. Creativity involves looking beyond our first impression of stimuli to discover other ways of seeing and interpreting. For example, a kaleidoscope contains various shapes, colors, and forms, yet each turn of the cylinder reveals a different pattern. Just recognizing that there is more than one pattern available is significant in the process of expanding perspectives. Over time, we can develop not only this awareness, but we can also develop a habit of discerning yet another pattern. This process allows us to address our own biases and assumptions, become more curious about others' perspectives, and see more possibilities. Through creative process we can suspend our cognitive faculties and open our minds to a broader range of potentialities. In so doing, we are more likely to act civilly.

Community also is a critical part of the civility equation. Community encompasses the basis of Civic Humanism, which posits that humans are free, autonomous beings, able to make choices for themselves. With this freedom comes a concomitant duty to engage and participate in society to serve the common good Os Guinness, a social critic, calls for Americans to recommit to the founding principles of our nation by "abiding by a covenant . . . that requires duties as well as recognizing rights, that gives weight to truth, justice, and restraint as well as to power, and that sees civility as a necessary and vital companion to freedom and justice for all."[viii] [GUINNESS, 2008] Community also helps us recognize that as humans we live a shared inter-dependent existence. When he discusses his work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was set up after the end of apartheid in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu often speaks of Ubuntu, a South African humanist philosophy of interdependence. He explains that we exist *only* in relation to other. He elaborates that our humanity is inextricably tied to each other, that we need to see ourselves in others, and that each of us needs the other to be the best he or she can be because that is the only way each of us can be the best we can be.[ix] [Tutu, 2008] When we operate with this awareness, we strive to understand others in order to build and strengthen our community. Further, when we engage in and build community, we avoid the trap of believing there is only one single narrative.[x] [Adichie, 2009] As a result, we can see individuals, not a stereotype of a person from a different group. Thus being in community, especially a diverse community, reduces implicit racial bias.[xi] [Devine, Forscher, Austin and Cox, 2012] Imagine what would be the experience if you could approach the majority of your encounters from this civility state of being. Despite evidence that being civil is a positive attribute that helps people in their personal and professional lives,[xii] [Shandwick and Tate 2016] unfortunately, the most recent data on incivility suggests that incivility is reaching epidemic levels.

The pervasiveness and cost of incivility in our society

Incivility continues to escalate in America. In the 2016 Civility in America Survey, 95% of respondents said there is a civility problem, and 70% think that incivility has "risen to 'crisis' levels".[xiii] [Shandwick and Tate, 2012] In the 2014 Civility in America Survey, 90% of Millennials, those people who were born between 1981 and 1996, reported that they had personally experienced incivility.[xiv] [Shandwick and Tate, 2014] Millennials expected to experience incivility an average of 9.3 times per week, and strikingly, almost half of them expected to experience incivility within the next twenty-four hours. Millennials expected to experience incivility an average of 9.3 times per week, and strikingly, almost half of them expected to experience incivility within the next twenty-four hours.[xv] [Porath, 2015]. In addition to costing billions of dollars annually, such high levels of incivility contribute to psychological distress and negatively impacts individual health and well-being.[xvi] [Porath and Erez, 2009]. Incivility can lower performance and increase psychological distress. Dr. Robert M. Sapolsky, Professor at Stanford School of Medicine, contends that "when people experience intermittent stressors like incivility for too long or too often, their immune systems pay the price. We also may experience major health problems, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and ulcers.[xvii] [Porath and Erez, 2007] Moreover, incivility reduces cognitive effectiveness, creativity, helpfulness, and memory; it also increases dysfunctional ideation.[xviii] [Porath and Erez, 2011] For example, in 2005, Drs. Porath and Amir Erez investigated the impact of being the target of rudeness on subsequent performance of tasks unrelated to the incident of rudeness. In their experiments they exposed one group to rudeness and a control group to normal civil behavior. Both groups were instructed to complete a personality questionnaire, complete ten anagrams, and take five minutes to create a list of uses for a brick.[xix] [Porath and Erez, 2009]. The participants who were exposed to rudeness performed significantly worse on the tasks. They performed 61% worse than the control group on the anagram tasks and produced less than half as many uses for the brick. In both

experiments, not only did those in the group exposed to rudeness come up with fewer uses for the brick, but the uses were also less diverse and creative. In addition, they came up with more dysfunctional uses for the brick such as "smash the experimenter's face," "break someone's nose," "murder someone," or "beat someone up".[xx] [Porath and Erez, 2009]. Incivility not only impacts the targets detrimentally but also harms witnesses to the incivility, producing a spillover effect. In 2009, Porath and Erez employed a similar control and experimental group methodology to measure the impact of witnessing rudeness on cognitive and creative functioning and helpfulness.[xxi] [Porath and Erez, 2009]. The participants who witnessed the rudeness performed lower than the control group on an anagram test and on the brick test, producing fewer and less creative uses. As was expected, the participants who witnessed the rude response had higher levels of dysfunction ideation. In addition, they demonstrated roughly 50% less citizenship behavior, defined as willingness to volunteer.[xxii] [Shandwick and Tate, 2012] Porath and Erez concluded that witnessing rudeness can prime "anti-social thought in the observers,"[xxiii] [Shandwick and Tate, 2014] producing antisocial behavior, reducing helpfulness, and reducing prosocial tendencies.

Acts of incivility occur throughout our society and permeate our media, our political system, our workplaces, and our schools. The majority of the 2012 Civility in America Survey respondents said that the media was one of the top five of the "most uncivil aspects of American life," and 82% believe that the media "is more interested in controversy than facts."[xxiv] [Shandwick and Tate, 2014] Regardless of political party affiliation, each year respondents to this survey indicate that "the government behaves uncivilly and politicians are seen as the number one cause of civility erosion in America."[xxv] [Wallace, 2016] In 2012, a majority of Americans reported that they were disengaging from the political process and media because of the pervasiveness of incivility.[xxvi] [Zhou, 2014]. In 2016, 79% of the respondents "say that incivility in government is preventing action on important issues; 77 percent say the U.S. is losing stature as a civil nation; 76 percent say incivility makes it difficult to even discuss controversial issues; 64 percent say they have stopped paying attention to political conversations and debates; and 61% say incivility is deterring people from entering public service."[xxvii] [Shandwick, Tate, P., 2016] Only 55.4% of voters voted in the 2016 National Election, which was the lowest voter turnout in twenty years.[xxviii] [Wallace, 2016] Incivility in the workplace has detrimental financial consequences, including lower productivity and efficiency, higher absenteeism, higher turnover rates among employees, disruptions in concentration and increased counterproductive work behavior,[xxix] [Morrow, McElroy and Scheibe, 2011] and negative impacts on consumer attitudes and behavior. Research demonstrates that incivility in the workplace reduces worker motivation and productivity. Pearson and Porath surveyed 800 managers and employees in 17 different industries. Among the targets of incivility surveyed, the vast majority said their commitment to the organization declined, and they lost time worrying about the incident and avoiding the offender. Significant numbers said that they intentionally decreased their work effort, time at work, and work quality.[xxx] [Pearson and Porath, 2009] In fact, it has been estimated that because of workplace incivility, organizations annually lose about $6 billion.[xxxi] [Porath, Gerbasi, and Schorch, 2015] Additionally, incivility results in higher turnover rates. In one survey, 26% of respondents have quit a job because of incivility.[xxxii] [Shandwick, Tate, P 2012] This is also costly for the companies. For example, O'Melveny & Myers, a law firm, estimated that over the course of a few years, the firm lost six attorneys and two paralegals because of one partner's incivility. The firm estimated that replacing these workers cost over $2.8 million.[xxxiii] [Pearson, and Porath, 2009] Not only are there financial costs to businesses, but even worse, incivility increases errors on the job and can even cost lives. In a recent survey of more than 4,500 doctors, nurses, and other hospital personnel, a majority of respondents tied abusive and insulting conduct to medical errors, and just over one-quarter linked these behaviors to patient deaths.[xxxiv] **[Porath, 2015]**

The presence and impact of incivility in our schools

Furthermore, incivility is prevalent in schools. In 2013, a majority of parents reported that their children experienced incivility at school, and some actually transferred their children to different schools because of it.[xxxv] [Shandwick, Tate, 2013] Acts of incivility can occur in a variety of relationships on campuses. Perpetrators of uncivil behavior can be senior administrators targeting other administrators, staff, faculty, and/or students. They can also be staff targeting administrators, other staff, faculty, and/or students. They can be faculty targeting administrators, staff, other faculty, and/or students. Similarly, they can be students targeting administrators, staff, faculty, and/or other students. Incivility not only creates an unhealthy work environment that decreases employee productivity, loyalty, and satisfaction, but more importantly, it also compromises the lofty goals of higher education. It siphons emotional and physical energy from the staff, administrators, faculty, and students. It also distracts their focus from their work and studies. Furthermore, the prevalence of it signals that such behavior will be tolerated, not addressed, thereby engendering further incivility.

According to the 2016 National Survey of Student Engagement in colleges and universities, although the majority of students feel physically safe at their institutions, 14% of black students, 10% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, and 9% of multiracial students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel physically safe at my institution."[xxxvi] [New, 2016] Equally disconcerting, large percentages of minority students do not feel "like a part of the campus community." 40% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 31% of multiracial students, and about 25% of black, Asian, Hispanic, and white students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "I feel like a part of the campus community." And "[t]ransgender students and students with gender identity other than man or woman were twice as likely to disagree with positive statements about safety and belonging than their cisgender peers."[xxxvii] [New, 2016] In April 2016, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that results of their Teaching Tolerance Survey indicated that the 2016 US Presidential campaign was causing "alarming level of fear and anxiety among children of color and inflaming racial and ethnic tensions in the classroom."[xxxviii] [Costello, 2016] Both of these studies were conducted before the more recent racial incidents that are occurring on campuses after Donald Trump became the President-elect.[xxxix] [Associated Press. 2016] Feeling alienated and unsafe compromises learning. For example, in a study of university students, researchers found that frequent exposure to incivility increased negative emotions, which increased disengagement with the institution and lowered academic performance. Furthermore, it increased feelings of ostracism, which can "culminate in depression, helplessness, low self-efficacy, and anxiety."[xl] [Barker Caza and Cortina, 2007]. Arguably the academy has a role to play in helping to stem the tide of incivility that exists in society and in our educational institutions. "Today's university students will be called upon to solve some of society's most critical issues . . . . [Recovering civility] starts with educating the next generation that indignation and insults have no place in public discourse and that we must respect and appreciate the opinions and the humanity of others."[xli] [Taylor, 2016] The academy is supposed to be an environment that educates and influences each generation, engenders critical thinking, and establishes cultural norms for professionals. As a result, the purpose of higher education extends beyond teaching domain-specific knowledge and includes creating learned citizens who have the capacity to critically think and analyze complex issues; who can effectively communicate through speaking, writing, and listening; who remain curious about the multi-dimensionality of all people and cultures; and who engage with a desire to retain our inter-connectedness as human beings on this planet. A pedagogy that cultivates a culture of civility will not only help students develop strategies to be more civil citizens in the workplace and society, but will also enhance learning by promoting a healthier learning environment.

Cultivating a culture of civility in the academy

Cultivating a culture of civility in the academy will not only help prepare students to be engaged citizens who participate with civility in their professional and personal lives, but also it will enhance the working and educational environment for everyone. As result there will be fewer disaffected employees and students, as well as increased productivity.

In general, there is no one-size-fits-all model to create a culture of civility. Instead, each institution must develop its own approach that takes into account its mission and values, as well as the backgrounds, strengths, and needs of faculty, staff, and students. Nonetheless, there are general principles for developing and sustaining a civility plan. They include institutional commitment and support from the President and Provost, as well as a standing committee comprised of representation from all sectors on campus, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni, to design a comprehensive plan, oversee its implementation, and assess its effectiveness. Institutional support for civility initiatives should be reflected in the pedagogy and include resources, training, in-person and on-line workshops for faculty and for students, syllabi, readings, and other materials related to civility skills. The plans could also employ speaker events and panels, and they could model open dialogues concerning potentially controversial issues.[xlii] [Markowsky and Polifroni, 2013] Furthermore, the curricula and extra-curricular programing must be coordinated so that civility becomes a core thread that is continually revisited. Themes of civility, civic engagement, inclusion, respect, and effective communication skills should be explicitly taught, not once only, but in many different ways and many different contexts. A successful plan would incorporate a sense of calling or personal mission, consciousness, creativity, and community as a framework beginning with orientation. Those principles should be evident in the pedagogy, extra-curricular events, and formal as well as informal interactions. They should also extend to programs that support and include alumni.

Orientation programs that foster civility

Orientation programs are the invitation to new students to join the campus community. Academic satisfaction and retention increase when students feel that they are part of the academic and social community, share attitudes and values, and conform to institutional norms.[xliii] [Wolf-Wendel and Ruel, 1999] Faculty, staff, student mentors, presenters, facilitators, and whoever else is involved in orientation will model civility and institutional expectations through their dress; their interactions with others how they prepare, organize, and present material, and how they comport themselves. Often students remember such modeling long after they forget the substance of what was presented or taught. As much as we teachers like to think we teach our respective substantive disciplines, we also actually "teach who we are."[xliv] [Palmer, 1998] Orientation is a critical juncture where students can create community. Important for all students, creating a sense of inclusion and belonging has an even greater impact on groups historically excluded from higher education, including racial minorities and those from socioeconomic disadvantaged backgrounds, who have faced stigmatization and discrimination and may feel more vulnerable and alienated in a completely unfamiliar environment. To cope with a feeling of exclusion, these students may disengage generally and, as a result, suffer academically and otherwise. Another potential form of disengagement is when members of these groups dis-identify from their own group. The negative impact here is it "can potentially strip [the] positive benefits [of community] and leave students more vulnerable to negative outcome," thus further undermining their ability to perform academically and have confidence in themselves.[xlv] [London, Downey and Mace, 2007]Orientation, therefore, can help engender a sense of community through forming intentional learning communities, or assembling cohorts, or simply by using collaborative learning exercises liberally throughout the orientation program.

A successful orientation program, with enduring impact, would ideally culminate with an experience that combines consciousness, creativity, and community. This could be a service project, a group presentation, a social media outreach to pipeline schools, or any other activity that has students working as a team to create something they could not have created on their own.

Effective pedagogy that enhances learning and fosters civility

In general, effective pedagogy begins with the personal commitment and the passion of the teacher.[xlvi] **[**Chickering, Gamson, 1987]Additionally, effective pedagogy is inclusive and respectful, collaborative, active, and provides context.[xlvii] [Lustbader, 2006] An effective pedagogy for civility includes

- uses a variety of methods for disseminating a substantive knowledge base of theory;
- teaches and models the attitudes, behaviors, and skills foster civility;
- immerses students in mindfulness practices;
- promotes self-reflection and approaching life challenges with an open mind;
- expands the students' world view;
- develops active listening and effective communication skills;
- encourages collaborating with others; and
- applies and practices all of this in the context of the students' own personal lives[xlviii][Lustbader, P., 1998] as well as hypothetical settings.

Often professors avoid teaching potentially controversial topics in their fields out of fear that they cannot effectively manage the potential emotional outburst of students who may be triggered by the subject, or they fear that they will lose control of the classroom. When professors don't include these topics, they are failing in their role as educators. When issues that affect student lives are excluded from the course or class discussion, students whose lives are become invisible and who themselves become nameless—especially if they have a name that is difficult to pronounce, and can become invisible. They become more vulnerable to illness, isolation, and stigmatization,[xlix] [London, Downey and Mace, S. 2007] as well as academic disengagement. By not including the particulars of their lives,[l] [Steele, C.M, 1992] the institution invalidates their experience or marginalizes it. They become or remain voiceless. The exclusion of these issues and voices negatively impacts all students because they are deprived of the benefit of learning about diverse experiences, values, and perspectives.[li] [Orfield and Kurlaender, 2001] If all students are not sensitized to these issues, they may see situations only through the narrow lens of their own individual cultural experience. And they may also be less prepared to address diverse issues in their personal and professional lives.

The classroom is the place for students to learn civil and constructive ways to manage their differences of opinion, address conflict, and engage with those topics that are potentially highly divisive. Students can learn and can engage civilly and constructively when institutionalized frameworks for having civil discourse are in place from day one, when students are taught the value of civility and its three pillars, and when they practice consciousness, creativity, and community.

Applying these principles

We employed these practices in the law school Academic Resource Program mentioned earlier. [lii] [Lustbader, 2008] These students, self-named ARCies, started in a cohort where in addition to the substantive course, they had wrap-around curricula that taught and reinforced these principles. The summer program served as an orientation program as well as a model classroom experience. The first day students introduced themselves to the rest of the class, participated in a "raise your hand" survey of questions to help them see who else shared their life situation, interests, and goals. They also were given instruction on learning styles so they could better understand how they learned and also appreciate the learning styles of others; learned techniques to increase their own learning as well as enhance collaborative learning exercises; and were provided with a road map of the substantive course and different ways to learn. During that first week, they also began to develop, refine, and articulate their life's purpose, and they were encouraged to see their life's work as part of a bigger mission to be leaders that fought for justice. When one acts with an awareness of one's life's purpose, that purpose provides a lens through which one gives meaning to events and circumstances and becomes the compass and barometer by which to make decisions. And this is the starting point for fostering civility, by first helping students increase their consciousness of who are they, what are their core values, and what is their calling. The practice of on-going reflection and discernment helped students evaluate and recalibrate their goals as they learned more about themselves and about what is possible. It also gave us, the professors, a greater understanding of their motivations and dreams. In this way, we were able to hold the vision they had for themselves throughout the law schools experience and became a touch stone when they faced challenges. Remember Craig's story? At the point he felt like quitting, because I knew not only his background and strengths, but also I knew his dream, I was able to remind him of his greater purpose, and this is what helped me coach him to do that which would keep him in engaged and enabled him to complete law school.

In the summer program and afterwards in the follow up sessions we had, the ARCies increased their consciousness and emotional intelligence by engaging in a variety of reflection and discernment practices, including meditation and journaling. These exercises helped them learn more about their own triggers and places where they felt particularly vulnerable and provided tools for them to deal with their own emotional landscape. They also developed greater compassion and empathy for others as they listened to and sincerely heard the experience of other members of their cohort.

We explicitly taught creativity as a necessary skill for lawyers to help them problem-solve and see client's issues from a variety of perspectives. Every week students worked in small groups to synthesize that week's lessons through drawing, poems, songs, and skits.[liii] [Adamson, Brodoff, Berger, Enquist, Lustbader, and Mitchell, 2012]

Students embraced their community; each year, in each cohort, students felt a sense of belonging and family.[liv] They supported each other in the larger classes; they attended each other's weddings, divorces, baby showers, and even sadly funerals. And now, even if they were in classes ten years apart, once they identify themselves as an ARCie, they are instant family. Their sense of duty to community extended beyond the group and into the community at large where many assumed leadership positions within student government in law school, in their local and state Bar Associations, and in their communities.[lv] [Lustbader, 2006]

After seeing the success of students who were in our law school program, we applied similar principles to a new program, the Alfie Scholar Program at Seattle University. The purpose of this program is to create a cohort model for students from underrepresented communities who are transferring into the four-year university from a two-year college. This program provides a financial scholarship, academic-enrichment programming, specialized curriculum, and training to become leaders who foster civility in their chosen professions. August 2016 was the inaugural class of 12 students. These students attended a core-required course during the summer, with wrap-around curriculum and programing. The core course was Philosophy of the Person. We co-opted the course and renamed it Philosophy of the Civil Person, and we created a collaborative teaching model with four philosophy professors. We met and co-created the syllabus for the substantive portion of the class, and they each taught a section. Instead of the required four-day-per-week, four-week class, we extended it to five days per week, for five-weeks. This provided us more time for the wrap-around programming.

The first week was our orientation week, where students introduced themselves and did much of the same orientation type activities we had done in the ARC program. We also introduced students to leadership and civility principles, to mindfulness meditation, and to the value of consciousness, creativity, and community by making a mural. Italian artist and art teacher Sergio Tamassia developed one such mural project. Sergio cut white and then black paper into interesting almost Matisse-like shapes. Students selected from the shapes and doodled on them with paint. This stage encouraged a creative-consciousness process as students often found themselves in almost a meditative trance as they contemplated the shape and what to paint on it. The process began to go faster and became more playful as they lost themselves in the fun act of painting. They placed their completed forms on the floor to dry. After the painted shapes dried, students created a collage with the shapes (their own or others') by placing them on a 12- x 4-foot sheet of poster paper. At this point, they lost their attachment to their own work and began to generate a collective and collaborative piece of work. Through this stage of the process, they could see how they could change the impact of a form by altering its direction or by placing other forms next to it. Thus, they experienced how a creative process enables them to expand possibilities and keep soft eyes and open minds – a skill that is useful in problem-solving generally. In addition, as the collage took shape and a composition emerged, the students saw how their individual contributions were both necessary to the completion of the whole and, equally importantly, how the whole was enhanced by everyone's contributions. Thus they saw the value in community collaboration.

Each successive week we met one day to provide more programing on leadership to foster civility, and part of each of those sessions was a small breathing or mediation exercise. At the end of the five weeks, the students each gave a presentation on an aspect of philosophy of the civil person. These presentations were exceptional. By the last day of class, students had formed a tight social bond and said they had never had such a rich class discussion or felt such safety in the class. The professors all said it was the best teaching experience of their careers. And the students all excelled academically.

Now they have finished their first full quarter, the students, who call themselves the "Alfies", have made a successful transition into the university environment. Many have assumed student leadership positions on campus. More significantly is that even though they all have different majors and different classes, they have remained a solid support for each other. They spoke of how comforting it was to see one of the other Alfies on campus during the first few weeks. And they feel a solidarity around their common mission to be leaders of civility. This could not be more evident than how they responded to the election of Donald Trump. The day after the election they drafted the following letter, posted it in the school newspaper, and each of them stood up in each of their classes and read it out loud.

November 9, 2016

To the Seattle University Community, on behalf of the Alfie Scholars of Seattle University,

We, the inaugural cohort of the Alfie Scholars program at Seattle University, offer this response to the results of our nation's recent Presidential election.

Seattle University's mission for a just and humane world compels us, as civility leaders, to reach out to the greater Seattle University community to offer words of reflection as well as to communicate our promise to continue to engage in the fight for what we believe in and what defines us. For those who do not know what an Alfie Scholar is, we are a highly diverse group of high-achieving transfer students who've fought through serious adversity for the honor of obtaining a justice-oriented education. Our governing principle of civility aligns with principles of service, responsibility, and justice. Our instinctive understanding of the full-bodied precedent of unity, as exemplified by so many of the civility leaders who've come before us, leads us to foster betterment in ourselves, and in the hearts and minds of others when the chips are down.

In the past eighteen months, we have watched as our common decency has fallen in the face of fear. It is a natural response to be tempted to allow ourselves to trip into a trap of lasting despair, but we argue that it is more important than ever to situate ourselves within the spectrum of love. Now is not the time to engage in the pathology of divisiveness. It is a moment that will test our resolve as individuals who organically understand that what lives in our hearts has the power to thrust us toward a better tomorrow. In this spirit, we wish to offer our compassion to our Mother Earth, our brothers and sisters of color, our Muslim friends, our Native American tribes, our LGBTQ families, the poor and impoverished, and all those questioning their safety as we digest what the future may bring.

We feel strongly that our Seattle University community has the potential to set an example for strength in leadership, specifically leadership that stands boldly to represent what is right and good within each of us. Margaret Mead's famous quote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has", embodies our ideology of staying grounded, as we engage those with whom we have fierce disagreement with. Civility thrives on connectivity, so we reach out today in an effort to both introduce ourselves and to extend our arms to the SU community. We are here to work alongside you, as we begin the arduous work of establishing our common voice as the dominant voice for a more inclusive discourse. In a broader sense, the confrontation of extremes reminds us of our responsibility as arbiters, the importance of communication, understanding and interaction in a much polarized national conversation. We believe that this resonates even more clearly in context when Americans face the potential of global isolation.

In Civil Solidarity,

Nizama Djudrija, Criminal Justice, Class of 2018
Aminata Drammeh, Business, Class of 2018
Pa Ousman Jobe, Business, Class of 2018
Julia Mariga, Nursing, Class of 2018
Dian "D.D." Meakin, Sociology, Class of 2018
David Morales-Rosales, Criminal Justice, Class of 2018
Gabriel Narvaez, Sociology, Class of 2018
Giang Nguyen, Business, Class of 2018, Class of 2018
Hiba Salama, Diagnostic Ultrasound, Class of 2018
Mahakdeep Singh, Engineering, Class of 2018

This action and letter demonstrates the power of explicitly giving students a greater mission, cultivating civility skills, and having willing and open students who are ready to make their mark on the world. For educators, it doesn't get any better than this.

Conclusion

Our institutions of higher education must create administrative protocols to foster civility and address incivility; develop both curricular and extra-curricular programing to introduce, teach, and model the three pillars of civility; and employ classroom pedagogies that permit inclusion of controversial issues, support open and respectful communication skills, and provide a safe learning environment. In so doing, these institutions will encourage engagement in our democracy, provide learning environments that are rich with content from diverse perspectives, and prepare students to be constructive citizens.

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