

Story Telling



As a kid growing up, I loved solving picture puzzles (i.e. Where's Waldo). The objective was to find all the hidden items listed in the scene.

Sometimes I had to look extremely hard. I would change the angle of the picture by turning it upside down, diagonal, and sideways. Other times, I would close my eyes and try again later. I discovered when I viewed the puzzle from another angle I had a different, and more diverse, perspective.

The importance of diversity is unparalleled. Diversity can be a medium for social change and allow one to develop culturally and socially. When we are able to encompass a broader perspective, we are well on our way to becoming global citizens, who happen to hail from the west.

Working in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion affords our office the opportunity to culturally engage students, faculty, staff through the Center's multicultural events and academic programs. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion's team genuinely shares a passion for playing a role in seeing our students increase not only their knowledge, but also their involvement on campus and in the greater community.....succeeding west. This may be through academic coaching, mentoring, or enlisting volunteers for events. Being west, I have grown to appreciate inter-generational contact through academia, community involvement, and social interaction.

Diversity affords each of us the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of others. Think about when you watch a movie from another era. You are able to witness a different period, actors of different ages, ethnicities, and genders, various attires and costumes, changing scenery and environments, and interesting storylines. In a few hours, unless you are a marathon viewer, you learned about someone or something from a different culture. Sometimes we shy away from learning, broadening, and diversifying our perspectives, due to fear, unfamiliarity, unconcern, insensitivity, or difficult conversations, but there is no victor in this.

I'm reminded of the anthropologist, folklorist, and author Zora Neale Hurston, who when felt discriminated against stated, "It does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me, how someone can deny themselves the pleasure of my company. It's beyond me." With that in mind, do not deny others the pleasure of knowing you or deny yourself the pleasure of knowing others. Why, you may ask? Because everyone has a story to tell, complete with intrigue, uncertainty, challenges, fun times, or memories just waiting to share. Remember, we are all diverse. So while we are on our journey west, remember to share not only west, but also beyond west.

Deirdre Rouse is the director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

Perspective