

Finance and Administration Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion

At the December 3 Finance and Administration stem department heads' meeting, an interactive group exercise in cultural awareness was conducted: "The Cultural Breakfast Party."

Attendees were divided into three corporations, each from a different culture. The corporations included a commercial bank, a construction firm, and a hotel management company. The corporations were to plan a joint venture to develop and build a new hotel and retail store complex in Perth, Australia. A vice president was designated for each corporation, with a management team comprising the rest of the group. The scenario was a three-day meeting during which the three corporations would negotiate the details of the partnership. The opening to the meeting was a "Cultural Breakfast Party."

Because each corporation represented a different culture with specific cultural values, traits, customs, behaviors, and practices, attendees were given 10-15 minutes to become familiar with their cultures; they practiced with each other before interacting with the other groups. All were asked to role-play within their specific culture. The interaction period was 20 minutes, followed by discussion and a debriefing.

The follow-up discussion revealed a desire within the F&A stem to be more involved in the diversity and inclusion initiative at Lehigh University. An ad hoc committee has been established to brainstorm ideas and develop strategies and action plans that embrace and enhance the policies and initiatives identified by President Gast and Provost Farrell. The compilation of ideas will be presented to incoming Vice President of Finance and Administration Patricia Johnson and to the new Associate Vice President of Human Resources when that position is filled.