
USC CULTURE JOURNEY

**ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND
VALUES-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP**

MARCH 2024



USC University of
Southern California



PURPOSE OF **THIS PRESENTATION**



1.

Provide context on the Culture Team and the history and shared vision for the USC Culture Journey

2.

Reflect on organizational culture and the centrality of values for impactful leadership

3.

Engage in interactive discussion on supporting behaviors and processes to reinforce the Unifying Values in your leadership practices

USC CULTURE JOURNEY **MEET THE TEAM**



STACY GIWA

VP, Culture, Ethics and Compliance



MICHAEL BURROUGHS

Executive Director, Organizational Change,
Ethics, and Culture



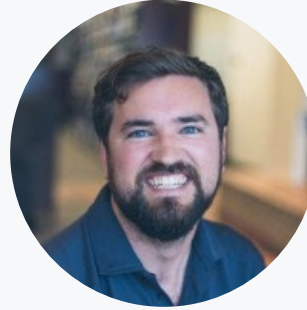
LLANET MARTÍN

Culture Program Director



NORAH LALLY

Assistant Director,
Communications



CHRIS SHEA

Special Projects Manager



ELEN MELKONIAN

Culture Program Lead

OCEC PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



USC CULTURE JOURNEY TO DATE

Our Culture Journey, our unifying values that guide behaviors, and our primary Focus Areas were created through input from the USC community.

Since starting the process of defining our culture in 2019, the USC Culture Journey has been:

Shaped by
Community

Inclusive
to All

Modeled by
Leadership

2019-To Date:

Poll to define Unifying Values



>24,000 Trojans participated in initial values poll and subsequent town halls and discussion sessions

Focus Areas defined; ongoing actions taken to change behaviors, systems, processes



Culture Journey Milestones



- Culture Survey: 2024
- Student Commitment: 2023
- Culture Report: 2022
- Integrity & Accountability Code
- Campus Wide Stakeholders

SCHOOL/UNIT **PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

We engage with leaders and school/unit stakeholders to support culture-focused programs and projects, provide actionable data to shape systems and processes aligned with our Unifying Values, and assist with setting strategic priorities that strengthen communities and drive positive culture change at USC.



CONSULTATIONS

The Culture Team serves as a thought partner, advising leaders and stakeholders on actionable steps for culture and values initiatives, as well as relevant resources from other university partners.



SELF-SERVICE CULTURE TOOLKITS

Easy to use guides designed to bring awareness and provoke discussion around values and culture in a variety of settings. Available for download by anyone at USC.



WORKSHOPS

Interactive sessions that provide an opportunity for community members to explore how our Unifying Values contribute to their work, identify specific behaviors that support those values, and create a shared understanding of what it means to live out the values in their communities.



VALUES-CENTERED STRATEGIC PLANNING

We engage USC leaders and implement culture, education, and outreach initiatives for schools, units, and project team that support systems and processes aligned with our Unifying Values and behaviors.



LISTENING SESSIONS

A series of facilitated discussions that create actionable data to inform strategy priorities by providing space for communities to share their thoughts, concerns, and current areas of strength to living out the unifying values.

EXAMPLE: LMS CULTURE ENGAGEMENT

This plan focuses on embedding the USC Unifying Values within the LMS Implementation Project Plan for the purposes of supporting collaboration, teamwork, and a healthy work culture. These are three suggested areas of engagement:



SYNERGIZE TEAM ENGAGEMENT

Embed values-oriented activities
into established team
conversations and meetings



INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Assist LMS communication staff
with creating communications
practices that reinforce and
spotlight values in action



SPONSOR ACTIVITIES

Support project sponsors with
activities and touchpoints to
recognize and encourage values
related behaviors

EXAMPLE: LISTENING SESSIONS



Provide an opportunity for members of the community to...

- ✓ **Share** opportunities, insights and concerns on how we are living our values
- ✓ **Identify** specific barriers that limit our ability to live our values, and the supports needed to overcome them
- ✓ **Co-Create** a shared understanding of how we can move forward as a community

EXAMPLE



Integrity

We do the right thing

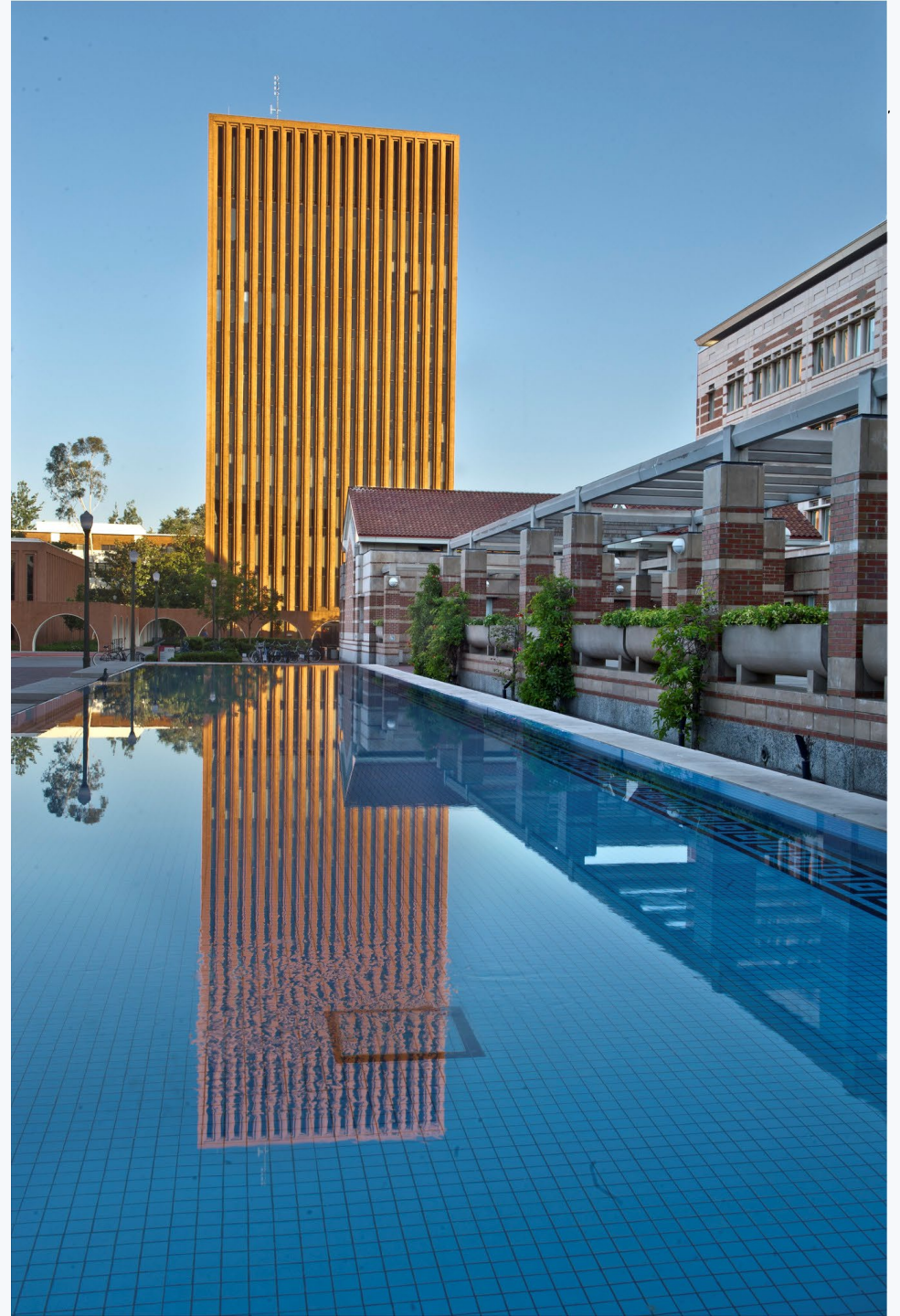
Our words, decisions, and actions align with and are guided by our values, honesty, and ethical principles.

What are specific, observable behaviors that demonstrate this value in action, when at its BEST?		What are specific, observable behaviors that we would like to see LESS of?	
Behaviors	Start/Continue	Stop	
- My supervisor prioritizes our 1 on 1 meetings even when things get busy		- My supervisor says to not work while on vacation, but then still expects me to respond to their emails	
What systems, structures, processes and/or skills are required to SUPPORT this value/behavior?		What systems, structures, processes and/or skills gaps Create BARRIERS our ability to support this value/behavior?	
Systems/Processes	Support	Limit	
- We have 1 on 1's that are calendared in Outlook and set for re-occurring		- Our workload feels out of control, and we don't prioritize projects well	

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is Culture?

Why does it matter to leaders?



CULTURE BRAINSTORM

1

"Culture is a thousand things, a thousand times. It's living the core values when you hire; when you write an email; when you are working on a project; when you are walking in the hall." - **Brian Chesky**

2

"A culture is strong when people work with each other, for each other. A culture is weak when people work against each other, for themselves." - **Simon Sinek**

3

"Culture is the widening of the mind and the spirit." - **Jawaharlal Nehru**

4

"...in a belonging culture, diverse perspectives are cultivated, valued and prioritized. We hire for them, we reward them, we frame sharing difference in opinions and life experiences as courageous and as value-added to the company." - **Brene Brown**

5

"Culture does not make people. People make culture." - **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE



Culture includes the shared attitudes, values, goals and practices that drive how people behave and interpret opportunities and challenges in their environment

It includes the “how” of an institution:

How systems and processes get things done, how value is created, how people are motivated, how people talk and make decisions, how people work together and, also, who works together



An institution’s culture is *not* driven by a single pillar, but is formed through an "interconnected web" of decisions, values, actions, communications, and key focus areas

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

"An analysis of organizational culture of a college or university occurs as if the institution were an interconnected web that cannot be understood unless one looks not only at the **structure and natural laws** of that web, but also at the **actors' interpretations** of the web itself. Organizational culture, then, is the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting."

-**William G. Tierney**, University Professor Emeritus and Founding Director of Pulias Center for Higher Education at USC

"Organizational Culture in Higher Education" (1988)

TABLE 1

A Framework of Organizational Culture

Environment:	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission:	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?
Socialization:	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information:	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?
Strategy:	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership:	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

SMALL GROUPS **DISCUSSION**



Introduce **yourself**, what **area you work in**, and **how long** you've been with USC...

What is an example of a positive culture building practice that you've experienced, or led?

CULTURE CHANGE DRIVERS

- ❖ **Articulating a Vision and Strategy:** what do we aim to achieve and how do we get there?
- ❖ **Change Management:** understanding the process of change and *incremental progress*
- ❖ **The Individual and the Collective:** recognizing my own contributions to a values-centered culture as well as the need for support in community
- ❖ **Making Culture Change Visible:** regularly communicating the importance of our shared values and recognizing the short-term wins





Integrity

We do the right thing

Our words, decisions and actions align with and are guided by our values, honesty and ethical principles.



Excellence

We bring our best selves

We strive to better ourselves as a learning community, our institution and society through assessment, reflection, learning, innovation, research and collaboration.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We all belong

We challenge our community to engage differences as strengths, embrace the richness of our lived experiences, and leverage diversity, equity and inclusion to drive excellence in support of a welcoming community where all can thrive, and discrimination is not tolerated.



Well-being

We honor the whole person

We create a caring culture that fosters our ability to thrive in mind, body, and spirit as essential to the sustainable pursuit of USC's mission.



Open Communication

We share openly and honestly

We actively listen and communicate in a clear, honest, timely and accessible manner and provide opportunities for safe, respectful dialogue and interaction.



Accountability

We take responsibility

At all levels of the university, we set clear expectations and take responsibility for our actions, decisions, outcomes and consequences.

Why **Values**?

Importance of values to creating a shared community:

- ✓ **Create common understanding and language for teamwork**
- ✓ **Clear ideals to turn to when addressing challenges and opportunities**
- ✓ **Serve as point of connection between personal values and community priorities**

VALUES AND LEADERSHIP

“A leader is one who knows the geography of her or his own interior, who relies...on the values that compose his or her very core.”

-**Albert C. Yates**, past president of Colorado State University (1990 – 2003)

"Virtue and Leadership" (2006)



NOTECARD DISCUSSION

Reflect on a value that you feel is **essential to creating positive culture as a leader**

Take a moment to write down
your response on your
notecard



NOTECARD DISCUSSION



What is one leader behavior and/or process **that you can implement with your department** to better live out the value you selected?

OWN YOUR **CULTURE**

“If we are to preserve culture, we must continue to create it.”

-Johan Huizinga



THANK YOU

FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR CULTURE
JOURNEY



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Southern California

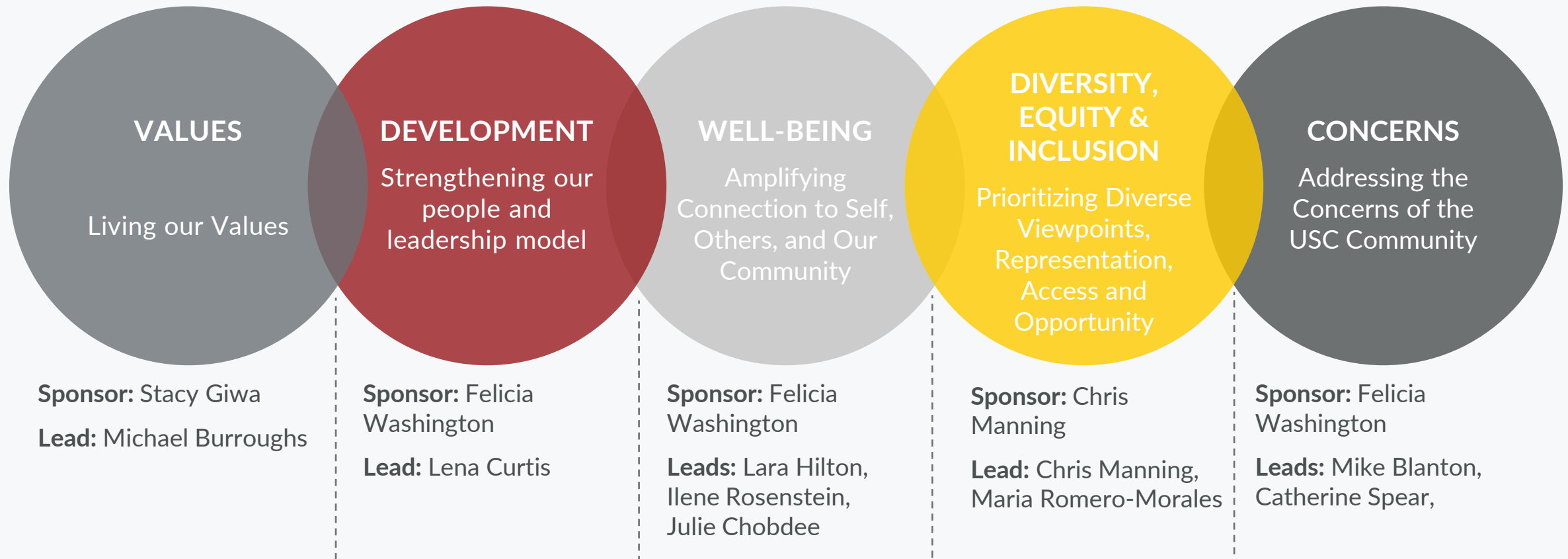


APPENDIX



FOCUS ON CULTURE

USC's focus on culture is designed to support the execution of the mission by aligning on *what we do* and *how we do it*. At present, the Culture Journey prioritizes aligning values, behaviors, systems and processes across these Focus Areas.



WORKING GROUP ON UNIVERSITY CULTURE

Co-Chairs

- Co-Chair, Administration: **Stacy Giwa**, Vice President of Culture, Ethics and Compliance
- Co-Chair, Staff Representative: **Erika Chesley**, Past President of the Staff Assembly; Senior Associate Director of Auxiliary Services, Initiatives and HR Events, USC Auxiliary Services
- Co-Chair, Faculty Representative: **Paul Adler**, Professor of management and organization, USC Marshall School of Business

Faculty Leadership

- Yaniv Bar-Cohen**, Past President of the Academic Senate, professor of clinical pediatrics and medicine, Keck School of Medicine of USC
- Steve Bucher**, Associate Professor of technical communication practice, USC Viterbi School of Engineering
- Paula Cannon**, Distinguished Professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, Keck School of Medicine of USC
- Chantelle Rice Collins**, Associate Professor of clinical occupational therapy, USC Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry

Administrative Leadership

- Renee Almassizadeh**, Assistant Director for Operations and Programming, Center on Public Diplomacy, USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
- Dillon Balthaser**, Manager of Workforce Analytics, USC Human Resources
- Robert Carpino**, Director of Compliance, University Clinical Services
- Tammy Capretta**, Assistant Vice President, Health Care Compliance, Keck Medicine
- Kevin Corbett**, Sr. Executive Director of Learning and Performance, University Advancement
- Matt Curran**, Executive Director of Trademarks and Contract Compliance, USC Auxiliary Services
- Jeff DeCaen**, Associate Dean for Operations, Thornton School of Music
- Quade French**, Associate Dean and Chief Diversity Officer, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
- Ben Holstein**, Associate Vice President, Business Operations
- Elizabeth O'Toole**, Special Project Manager, Office of the Dean, Keck School of Medicine
- Naddia Palacios**, Assistant Vice Provost, USC Student Life
- Ilene Rosenstein**, Associate Vice Provost for Campus Wellness and Education, USC Campus Wellness and Crisis Intervention
- Kim Thomas-Barrios**, Associate Senior Vice President for K-12 Educational Partnerships, USC University Relations
- Ian Wood**, Associate Dean of Finance and Strategic Planning, USC Gould School of Law
- Quinn Anex-Reis** Graduate Student Body Representative

CULTURE JOURNEY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

EVENTS



- Community Panel Discussions
- Speaker Spotlight Events
- Culture Conversations
- Trainings and Workshops
- New Trojan Orientations

COMMUNICATIONS



- Culture Journey Newsletter (~1,000 subscribers)
- Culture Report (published Dec 2022)
- Culture Journey website with stories and useful resources

FACULTY & STAFF NETWORK



- Champions for culture within USC's schools and administrative units
- Currently 560 members and growing
- Share stories, best practices, and ideas that advance Culture Journey and promote Unifying Values



Student Commitment

As Trojans, we always conduct ourselves in alignment with USC's Unifying Values – which were created cooperatively by students, faculty, staff, and administration to reflect the unique spirit of our community and to guide us in our actions, interactions, and ethical decision-making every day, on campus and off.

In making this commitment, together we build and strengthen the culture of USC.

- We act with **integrity** in all situations.
- We work to foster a safe, civil, and equitable campus environment where **well-being** matters.
- We treat each other with respect, even when we have differences.
- We are **accountable** for our actions and decisions.
- We believe that **diversity** - of experiences, cultures, identities, and perspectives - is a cornerstone of our community.
- We value honest, **open communication** and robust debate.
- We strive for **excellence** in rigorous learning and in all scholarly, scientific, professional, artistic, and athletic endeavors.
- We champion ideological diversity and embrace freedom of expression.
- We refuse to engage in discrimination, harassment and hate in any form and on any platform.
- We avoid taking part in behavior that may be harmful to ourselves or others and offer/seek support if we witness dangerous behavior from our peers.
- We promote a culture in which people do not rush to judge others. Our actions are guided by empathy and grounded in facts and truth.