

# Transcript: The Past, Present, and Future of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

## **Rosemary Ferreira (Co-Host)**

Happy new year everyone and welcome back to The Table podcast, where we unpack questions regarding race, ethnicity, culture, norms, and current events. My name is Rosemary Ferreira.

## **Courtney Jones Carney (Co-Host)**

And I'm Courtney Jones Carney.

## **Rosemary Ferreira**

In this episode, we'll be getting a glimpse into the life and journey of the University of Maryland, Baltimore's new vice president and chief equity, diversity, and inclusion officer, Dr. Diane Forbes Berthoud. Dr. Forbes Berthoud joins UMB from the University of California, San Diego where she most recently served as the associate vice chancellor of equity, diversity, and inclusion. According to UMB's CATALYST Magazine, Dr. Forbes Berthoud will be responsible for "steward[ing] UMB's commitment to DEI; catalyz[ing] the institutional change necessary for deepening and strengthening that commitment; and design[ing] and put[ting] into place a transparent accountability framework to measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the University's EDI initiatives at every level of the institution."

UMB launched its search for a chief equity, diversity, and inclusion officer in July 2020, a particularly turbulent time in American history. Against the traumatic backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was particularly ravaging Communities of Color, the murders of Ahmaud Arbery on February 23, 2020, Breonna Taylor on March 13, 2020, George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and numerous other Black women, men, and trans+ people throughout the years had resulted in millions of people protesting in cities and small towns across the U.S. and the world as well as numerous organizing spaces online through social media platforms. Protestors were demanding that Black Lives Matter in all ways of life, which meant an end to the policing of Black people and neighborhoods and an intentional commitment to provide Black communities with access to quality healthcare, education, employment, and housing.

Many higher education institutions, private businesses, non-profit organizations and other sectors responded to the racial justice protests by declaring their beliefs that Black Lives Matter through public statements and committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts or DEI by either creating new DEI departments and hiring staff or providing additional funding and support to their current DEI programs. Almost two years after the murders of Ahmaud, Breonna, and George, has DEI been fulfilling its job in institutionalizing social change? In this episode, we wanted to dedicate time to unpack this question and reflect on the significance of DEI.

But first, what do we mean by diversity, equity, and inclusion? These terms can have many different meanings according to the institution, business, or organization. Within the Intercultural Center at UMB, we define diversity as the presence of individuals from various backgrounds and/or with those of various social identities. Equity is about giving everyone what they need to be successful. This is determined by

the individual or group and not by those with power. It involves the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce or fail to eliminate differential outcomes by social identity or background. Finally, inclusion is when the perspectives and contributions of all people are authentically brought to the table. It requires an equitable distribution of power and incorporates needs, assets, and perspectives into the design and implementation of processes, policies, activities, and decision making.

We asked Dr. Forbes Berthoud about her own thoughts on the role of equity, diversity, and inclusion in creating institutional change, particularly after the racial justice protests of 2020. But first, we wanted to center who she is and her story. Here she is first introducing herself...

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

I come to this work as a woman. I identify as a Black cisgender woman. And you know, I have to say over the years, the salience of my identities have changed, so these days that that's central to me. Being a mother and a daughter, I moved to the East Coast, moved back to the East Coast in part because of family, so my parent, daughter, sister identities are really very important to me and where I am in my ancestral lineages. I'm recalling more of both of whom I knew my great grandparents who died almost 50 years ago and one set that died when I was about 10 or so. So, I am recalling them even more in their wisdom, so I'm thinking about ancestry. So, I am the descendant of ancestors of African, of Indian, of international and also Hindu and Christian religions and descent and descendants of immigrants to the United States. So, these things are all critical parts of my identity. I'm sure I'm leaving things out, but these are some central areas with which I identify, and I come to the work. With those sets of perspectives, including being a scholar practitioner, teacher, who is about my educational and scholarly and occupational status/privilege, if you will to be in a role like this and to have the roles that I've had over the last many decades.

### **Rosemary Ferreira**

I love that. I feel like what you shared was very much like a spiritual connection that you have with your ancestors and that like entering this work doing this work is in alignment with who they were and their impacts on you as well.

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

Very much so. Very much so. Thanks for bringing that up. Yes, so spiritual yes, I'm also a person of faith and uhm have a close relationship with nature as well as a person of faith to honor as much as possible. I don't think we do the best job ever and it will be perfect, but I do as much as possible to honor the lands and land that we are on, the beauty around us, the things that I think have been given to us that we've been offered to steward, and so that's important to me too. So, person of faith, as in believing in God, believing in humanity, believing in what we're here to do, which is to steward the things that we've been given. None of this is ours. So, some of my belief systems coming out here too that the opportunities I have been given, or I've had a privilege to be a part of, came from the ancestors that I mentioned before named an unknown and unknown. And I am a steward, a conduit, a vessel to try to bring that good and that humanity and to restore what we've lost. However, I can in community with others.

### **Rosemary Ferreira**

Beautifully said, thank you and so can you walk us through your journey in your current role now as Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer.

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

The journey to this point is long and complicated and has some important elements related to family and faith and education and mentorship and sponsorships. I'll share some highlights so that you and your audience members, Hi UMB family and community, can get a sense of who I am and what I what I've been given and what I've come to learn and know and the opportunities I've been given. So, I can start from of course my family, my parents, my siblings, larger community who believed in me and with a mom as an educator and a father, as an entrepreneur and parents who grew up poor in a rural in rural community. As the group in separate places met later on instilled in me and my siblings the values of hard work diligence. You know doing, doing the best you can, being the best, you can, serving others, treating others fairly and respectfully and living a life of service and there was no perfection in how that was modeled but certainly those were the lessons I received, both implicitly and explicitly. It didn't start there with me, but those values were instilled and so because my parents grew up poor because my mom was an educator, and my father was in strong support of that and they were also over time formally educated that is. They were like "study your book, go to school" you know those types of messages which were taken very seriously, grades were very important preparation was very important, being excellent was really important and then because of that the schools that my sisters and I attended were very important to my parents and especially my mother as a teacher and so they sacrificed and they provided for us opportunities to attend amazing schools where we learned a lot were challenged, met amazing colleagues who feel like my friends and who feel like siblings some of whom took some similar and different paths from I did, so I'll just raise that whole Community piece. Interestingly, I was thinking of Graduate School, as in studying something related to communication, psychology, people beliefs, you know systems like I was very interested in cultures and societies well, this is so exciting and as someone of faith, as I mentioned at that time in my life in my career, I thought I could go to seminary and so this was an option for me to study more about world religions about faith growing in that area and thinking about service with not just faith based community, community based organizations, communities either having to do with girls or disadvantaged groups or groups without the kinds of privileges that I had and actually this is interesting because this is what I saw my parents do. They were educated and my father ran a business, my mother was a school teacher and both of them served in very under resourced areas in terms of education and business and they did that for more than three decades of their lives and they had many other options, they could have done other things, and so without saying so what I learned is when you have give when you do do more and then when you are in particular positions use that position for change and they never said those things in those words, that's my understanding and my narrative expression of it if you will. I after some research ended up choosing Howard University in part because I had an aunt, my father's sister, who lived in Maryland in Silver Spring, Takoma Park area and again another option, as my parents were thinking about, they were like, "well, your aunt lives here", right? So, I went to Howard University and that was 1995. I came to Washington DC on December 14th, 1995, and that started an amazing journey of learning of love, of fellowship, of challenge of, there's a lot going on socially, do you know it was happening during that time? The OJ trial that was the biggest thing ever like ever and so it became part, so I was in the human communication studies department, and I was also doing, it wasn't called that then, but an interdisciplinary program. I was also in psychology. So yeah, the OJ trial, huge and we would be in

classes, talking communication classes, talking about media representation and talking about the intersections of race, messaging, power, privilege, and the law like huge questions that I was so privileged to be a part of. Also, during Graduate School, Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky, like some of these big issues again, power privilege, sex, sexuality, presidential, you know, whatever privilege and power etc. I wanted to say there were some major things happening in the Middle East as well and in China, so you know, we weren't just studying about the US or about things in the African diaspora, which are very important issues to we received, and we participated and developed a global knowledge and understanding of issues of our time and so I mentioned all of that because I like to say I grew up intellectually at Howard. I grew up as a philosopher. I grew up as an activist, I grew up as a scholar and a practitioner while it is not a perfect institution as no institution is the opportunities again for learning and living and challenging were honed there for me and then I have to make this note too it's not unique to Howard and it's not unique to Washington DC, but I both made myself available to and was provided the opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship from wonderful amazing professors and scholars, just having those experiences affirmed who were as peoples of the diaspora affirmed who I was as a Black person, as a young person, as a woman, you know, coming from a family of immigrants, it affirmed my sense of belonging, and it affirmed my own brilliance and insights in a way that I am not sure can't say but I am not sure would be affirmed and developed in some of those same ways so I will stop there. Oh my gosh, I haven't even gotten to this moment, OK? From there went to George Mason University as a visiting professor for a few years and from there recommended for a role at Trinity University given what I was studying around Black executive women caring about women, leadership development, particularly women of color and continuing to research that and write about that. So I've been, I was really pleased to both be an assistant and then a tenured associate professor there, and department chair and being mentored by some amazing faculty of all backgrounds, but mostly a faculty of color who took an interest in my work and supported and affirmed my scholarship and many of us are friends today and I've been involved with them over 20 years or so that happened and then through the recession our family, moved for an opportunity in California and shortly after moving there, I interestingly, was a stay at home Mom for a while and took care of my 4 year old son and got my 7 year old off to school and I think within about a year of being there then the position at University of California came up to be an academic director to oversee academic program planning assessment and develop scholarship related to project based field based, community based and social justice curriculum and so I did that for six years there's great time to be in a role and I was beginning to think about what else I could do at the university level because I've begun to interact more at that level thought you know, when I say university level at University of California, you know it's a one high profile, high visibility and huge 17 schools and divisions and actually, when we did the breakouts upon my departure was closer to 20 plus because of the programs that were growing in the undergraduate colleges that were added and so yeah, there about 47,000 students there, and I don't think that's counting the medical cohort at all and I thought there's so much more that could be done related to equity and I saw the role to be the number two in the EDI unit and it was fairly new at the time, maybe a yearish, it's almost seven years now and there was a new vice Chancellor there, and I thought I could make a difference. So, I got that position and I was in that role for four plus years and I was called to consider applying to this role here, and I thought OK, are you conversation is how the email came Forward and I was like sure and one conversation into another one and I will We would like to invite you to apply and I'm like oh, this is getting to be a big thing and yeah, few weeks later, another SEV interviews and some of you were there for part of that story with the women are on everything When I was left talking that

absolutely going yoo-hoo anybody there? So yeah, I did that and met a lot of you in that process thankfully and then moved our whole family across the country again for the second time in my career and now this time with a college student and high schooler Not anymore four and seven, that was way back when and so now they are grown all taller than I am looking down on the top of my head “Hey mom” and so yeah, so that happened, and I feel like it was a twinkling of an eye. I was at Howard and then then here 27 years later, but I am grateful and that is the long story of how I have arrived at University of Maryland, Baltimore to be with you all.

### **Rosemary Ferreira**

Thank you so much for that. What a wonderful story and I think what resonated for me the most from your story reminded me of a quote by Toni Morrison that I actually have in my office where “the function of freedom is to free someone else”, and it's like that's just so foundational to your parents' stories right? How your mom and your father were so intentional about giving back and then in your story as well, giving back of utilizing the privileges that you had to then give back. So, something else that also really resonates with me about your presence here at UMB is your focus on leading with equity and so we also wanted to ask like: What is your relationship to equity, diversity and inclusion? Can you unpack that more for us?

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

Yeah, so equity diversity inclusion work is complicated, misunderstood, enriching, wonderful all those great things. Different people bring different things to it, right? Some people come to this work as historians, as political science majors, if you will activists, strategist and you cannot be all those things at the same time or in different ways and with different foci. My background is and perspectives are informed in part by my background in organizational studies, organizational communication, and social psychology. So, groups, people, processes change and assessment they all there are all these things in there and then the key part of my work has also been around the psychodynamics of change and the psychodynamics specifically of race, gendered and sexualized identities. So that means, in addition to writing and researching about it, as a practitioner, have been informed by those ideas about how people think, how people think about change, how people respond to change, and the kinds of things that are needed. For change to happen, moving any big system fuel is difficult. And I remember especially in the last year and a half, with all the turmoil and tensions of 2020 to 21 having colleagues talk about what it means to move a ship or steer a ship and you know it's not like a car, you just go to the right and it just moves or you just make a turn to the let's put on indicating just turn, turning left on James Rd or you know, let's whatever it doesn't happen that way sometimes you turn and you know you watch those movies the wheel is going round and round and round and round and round and then the ship goes like this and it's like 1 inch so I know people are listening, but it moves, then you “go that's it”, you know? And I've heard people use the metaphors of moving the needle, you know, we're going to move the needle and so on, so I think about equity in all those terms of what it means to change systems, which involves people, relationships, networks and everything else as continuous, complicated, consistent and sustainable work that needs to be done by multiple people, actors, agents, you know individuals to impact a larger system. The work of equity diversity inclusion from my perspective, and in my experience, happens with the commitment of the collective and one could say it was you know the Center for Creative Leadership will talk about DAC, direction, alignment, and commitment so you first establish that direction and you kind of go with the alignment and then commitment. I do believe

there's something important about intention, about will, and are you willing to bring us, am I willing to like get in there and do some tough work and then do I have the skill to then do what needs to be done with all the warts, the errors, the kinks and things that don't quite work well. The equity piece is really important because I think we got high on ourselves talking about diversity for many years and it is important. Representation matters, so I'm on record to say representation matters. It matters if there are no women in that or it matters if there are no cancer survivors in that case, talking about cancer patients, it matters if there are no Black people, people of color and I could go on. It matters if there's not a veteran in the room making a particular decision at the VA that matters, and so yes, diversity is important of all the identities that we can mention LGBTQIA+ and so forth. Parents work people from working families be from different socioeconomic backgrounds, immigrants, it matters and we're at a point where we are diverse in some areas, in some areas, not just in higher education, but at UMB and in our various disciplines and schools there is representation. I can tell you better than in some areas when you think about gender and racial and ethnic representation than my life in California or in some parts of Florida and so forth, other places where I've worked. The equity challenge is a bit more or daunting because what it means now is we look at where the representation is how those groups are progressing through the organization as they wish, have our systems as they exist socially, structurally, organizationally provided for each individual what they need to succeed and survive, not just survive but thrive and not only have they been given what they need to thrive. I keep saying survive because what I think some people are actually doing right now, so I'm not going to take that word out of my vocabulary 'cause unconsciously it keeps coming back to me. So, my training in psychodynamic says that "slip of the tongue" is there for a reason and so unfortunate, I think why it's with me is unfortunately some people are just surviving and barely that, as in they're coming to work, and you'll hear people say "to get our paychecks". They may not believe that they or feel that they belong. They may not believe that someone cares about their development and growth and they may not believe that they will ever move occupationally or professionally or socioeconomically from where they are although they have that wish, some people are very happy in their roles and I want to respect and understand that to so the equity challenge is identifying where those barriers are, and disparities that X person moved ahead and this one did not or this one gets paid less or more when they have the same qualifications and experiences, or a certain person received access to opportunities, or networks or resources or got included in something and then that led to something else which left another person behind so to speak. So, it is looking at where is it not fair for these various individuals and groups. And we know that from qualitative data, anecdotal data, and we know that from aggregate quantitative data and now where all the data are, we have to find that out, and we have to examine it carefully and then the other part is doing what is some will say is equitable, some will say is just to redress correct address. All of the things that I just mentioned and in as many ways as we can from as many angles as we can and what I've just talked about friends, is a very large social experiment and effort that is thousands of years long and so what we're attempting to do, and that has been done to some degree at the University and many institutions of higher education so far is but the beginning of a larger challenge that we have to be willing to take on together throughout the institution, from the middle, all the way out at all levels and in all factions and parts and those of us who have formal roles in leadership our tasks to do better and to focus on the things that still remain amiss and still remain unfair and where people don't have access to the resources, you know we talk about. We talk about an education mostly I've heard it mostly K through 12 and college actually undergrad college about the hidden curriculum. I think that exists in work too, not quite sure it would call it, you know, hidden norms, hidden culture. I don't know what all

the terms are seeing different kinds of things. I know it's around organizational culture and climate, well, that exists too, you know these codes about and it's funny we were joking about let me get ready you know in the hair, and I get had my lip gloss and lipstick and all of this and it was funny to some degree. However, there are codes about what people believe, including hair and makeup, and all the things we were talking about what people believe is professional and what the cultural norms are not cultural as in country, cultural, those cultural, as in systems and society and organizations what we think is professional and that is gendered, that is racialized that is nationalized. I have a formal title and so do you all and well, who gets to say those things and all is in part about the hidden curriculum of work, and that is a very tough nut to crack, and it's hard for me to even bring that up and talk about it in super explicit terms because quite frankly I am the product a lot of educational privilege and occupational professional privilege product and outcome as in, I worked for it as well as I was given opportunities and so there's some things I know there are some things I still don't know, and even as I'm doing leadership development and learning myself about new things from students, fellows, my own children, my family I'm challenged to rethink what I think I know and I'm challenged to think about knowledge production and perpetuation of particular behaviors. So really, I could go on about equity, I love this work. But it is well, who has access to even that information that we just talked about you know knowing that some markers of professionalism are based on hegemonic systems of knowledge are based on dominant beliefs and ideas sometimes couched in white supremacy and in patriarchal norms and other norms. What do we do with that, but that questioning and that conversation about that helps us to get to this equity piece, because then some people have that knowledge and privilege and accidents and understand these things differently and are rewarded for that and others are not and that then leads to exclusion, people not feeling like they belong, breaking the psychological contract of trust at work, and more bias and depression and isms and things like that.

### **Courtney Jones Carney**

I often refer to that written curriculum for employees as the book of rules, uh, so like who gets to determine the rules and who gets an advanced copy so that they can study the text and who gets the Cliff notes and who just has to learn and figure it out as they go, right? Like who gets to determine all of that and then you also talked about the difference between simply surviving and thriving and that really stood out to me. So, thank you for mentioning doing that, and so, I often feel like I thrived while attending a historically Black university, Morgan State University, for my undergraduate and Graduate School and so you talked a little bit already about how you grew and experienced opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship while at Howard. But when you're reflecting on your equity, diversity and inclusion approach did your experience attending Howard, an HBCU, shape your professional practice at all?

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

The short answer, yes. The deeper answer, absolutely yes, you know I like to say as I said, you know, not only did I grow up at Howard intellectually, there's so many ways in which Howard made me. Of course, I could start with my parents even before that, but as a professional Howard made me, I came with a lot of goods already, a lot of resources and they were refined, challenged, reshaped not perfected because you know that was 27 years ago when I graduated 22 years ago from the PhD program. Can't believe that. All that said, that we had this opportunity to go to conventions in our discipline, at least once a year, if we chose to and then being coached and prepped on what's required, you know. So, coaching us

on the preparation of the papers and the research, and then OK, we're going to go and we used to think "Oh my God. We're going on this big stage" and we would get there and find out that there was no one in that room smarter than we were and we weren't any less competent. I remember once a professor came to us well known and whose book we had read and work we had read in a particular area and he heard we were all from Howard. "This is great. I heard that I think he was Diddy at the time I heard that did he was a student at Howard" or something that we were like we just presented a serious like a serious paper citing some of your work, Sir, and that is your comeback, not that engaged you the concepts of cushions 1997, theory of blah blah blah but it was Diddy was a student at Howard, so we responded and then engagement, "is there anything you wanted" and he said "no great job". A good job and he just kind of moved on and we just kind of go like for real, like all this prep from that you know from this God of a of a scholar, and we had similar experiences like that. I'm sorry. Did you say you were from Harvard because it was that good, right? And so were that no, Howard University and big figure out convention badge and all those I thought Ah, this is what our professors were talking about and this is why we had to totally bring our AA plus plus game because of this and that wasn't the whole story, I mean there were many who collaborated, those wanted to Co Author with us and all of this but we had those experiences that made us go in dialect in English, I'll say it in English, but the term that I would hear my parents say in fact one of my colleagues cited it in a text the other day that the donkey says the world is not level and there's a whole way to say that when I was growing up. But what that is, is things aren't fair and because the donkey ever didn't say the horse, 'cause, that's like the, you know, the grand what's this? Whatever of the four-legged creatures or something. The donkey is the scruffy ruggedly one that goes up the hill and goes in the rough pads and doesn't get trained or ridden for equestrian and all of this animal world privilege, but I've thought about that term in different ways, the donkey says the world is level because they're kind of going on these pads and feeling actually what it's like they're not in the cushy grass, and all of this, and I was like, yeah, world is not leveled and that's OK that I came through that experience. I mean, it's not OK that world, and in between doing what will make the world better and giving more students like ourselves and others patients and others that my colleagues work with the opportunity to be their best selves and to make the world more level and so yeah, Howard made me, woke me up to a lot of realities, affirmed a lot of what I was already bringing (couldn't pick up that word) a path to think about service differently.

### **Rosemary Ferreira**

So, I think we have time for one more question on essentially, I think you talked about it a little bit, uhm the year 2020, the year 2021 has been difficult and challenging and hard, and especially with the murder of George Floyd in 2020. It sparked a lot of racial justice movements here in the US and globally as well. And I wanted to hear your thoughts on how has DEI, EDI changed since then. Has it changed? And this is something that we've talked about in a previous conversation, you know when Black Lives Matter is no longer trending what does that mean for the work of EDI? For your work?

### **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

Thank you for the question. I am glad that I engaged in this work before it was cool and I am glad that my number one strength on the Gallup Strengths finder is strategic so that before all of this got into crisis mode and we were talking about triple pandemics. And of course, COVID has complicated and exacerbated and exposed a lot of what we already knew that's new to some of our colleagues and friends, and that's completely fine. What will happen is those of us who have been committed those of



us who were skilled, those of us who have given our lives to this kind of work will continue on and people the way I see it is, people will come on and off the bus if you will, during seasons, this is the kind of the way life is. Trayvon Martin and the various circumstances along the way the various trials up and down and the kinds of things that happened, when I was in college HIV was like the thing. I remember going off to college and getting a lecture from my parents about HIV like “don't go and kiss anybody blah blah Blah”, who you know because at that Time this is what we thought, and this was a crisis. It was a crisis. People dying from AIDS, you know? This now is a crisis and in a way some of what we're seeing and hearing. It's a part of a fad. It's cool to use certain terms and to say certain things, and some of this work has become performative.

## **Rosemary Ferreira**

Today, diversity, equity, and inclusion has become a multi-billion-dollar industry, but [its roots](#) began with the Civil Rights movement, particularly in higher education. With the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there was an increase of Students of Color attending historically white institutions. Students of Color, particularly Black students, involved in the civil rights movement and Black power movement, demanded to live and learn on campuses that valued and honored their racialized identities and lived experiences. This resulted in the development of Black student centers and multicultural centers that served as meeting spaces for social and cultural activities as well as Black studies and ethnic studies departments that sought to legitimize the knowledge of Communities of Color as academic disciplines. The protests for racial justice alongside women's rights, disability rights, and LGBTQ+ rights from the 1960s to the 1990s developed into the broader umbrella of equity, diversity, and inclusion that we know today. These initiatives soon made their way from campuses to corporate America. Student demands to redress historical injustices and exclusion were transformed into bureaucratic solutions that prioritized liability rather than addressing harmful work cultures and inequitable social structures. In other words, DEI has become reactive and focused on avoiding civil rights lawsuits rather than being proactive about dismantling oppression. In 2017, Dr. DL Stewart, a Critical Race Theory and higher education scholar [argued](#) that diversity and inclusion as a framework has been co-opted as a tool for pacification rather than being a model of systemic critique and structural transformation. To pursue real change, he argues that equity and justice must be the new standard for racial and social progress.

Prior to the racial justice protests of 2020, DEI programs saw their operating budgets shrink. This signaled that diversity was an elective rather than a necessary component of these organizations. For instance, Janice Gassam Asare noted in [Forbes](#) that “Whether company actions are authentic, or performative is left to be determined, but one of the clearest indications of a lack of commitment to DEI is the absence of funding designated for DEI efforts.” This waning commitment to DEI could particularly be seen when [diversity job openings](#) drastically plunged 60% between early March and early June of 2020. However, after the extrajudicial murder of George Floyd and resurgence of Black Lives Matter protests, EDI postings rose more than 50%. Moreover, in a new report by [Traliant and World Business Research](#), 79% of organizations, cutting across several industries, are now reporting that they will raise their DEI budgets in 2022 to deal with social disparities.

While we acknowledge that there are organizations where DEI efforts have become performative, at UMB, we are working become a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive institution. People like Dr. Forbes Berthoud are leading this work with equity as the new standard. In this next part of the interview, she talks about viewing equity work as systemic and strategic.”

## **Diane Forbes Berthoud**

I want to make sure that I identify the partners and the networks and the people who are in this work for the long haul. Some values and approaches that are important to me are that we are strategic, that the work we're doing is systemic, so we think beyond one school or department or one corner of our higher education world, and that the work we do is sustainable. It's systemic, strategic and sustainable. And the work that is sustainable is the work that's grounded in data. The work that's consistent, the work that continues to grow and expand in terms of people, and will, and capacity and funding, building us a stronger DEI infrastructure where throughout the schools and administrative units we learn and grow more that then leads to change and that we look at our data seriously and then year after year, over year every two years or we should see marked change in representation, in success rates, and climate numbers and all the things that we talk about in EDI can be measured and when we have to report on that at the system level when we have to report on that in higher education, broadly or at conferences, we should be able to say two or three years from now the experience of name a group that's saying that they are disadvantaged or marginalized that experience has changed markedly, right? And that is these are goals that we need to have that who is represented, where changes, the experience that they have when they're represented in those groups change, their movement and access through the system also changes and that we move from cool terms and phrases 'cause it's going to change right? Latino Latinx. It's going to change. These terms and phrases are very important to shaping, and I think that was one of your questions maybe. Just mention that they're very important to shaping our reality, correcting wrongs, and speaking to issues that matter and people that matter humanizing people and we just need to watch for, it's the cool term right now, anti-racism, and you know I'm for all of those things and land acknowledgments and so but I read a piece the other day, I'll find it in if I can forward it to you all, read most of it and it was that some Indigenous leaders and native peoples see some of those as performative because until we give the land back it or and or until they're represented in in government or their thoughts and their ideas are represented. We talk about health care and rural access to medicine and education and all of those things. They're like "you can keep your acknowledgement until I see tangible change in my recognized community or tribe or community, you know, region so thanks for that" and even some of the language they find hurtful because language or unseeded or stolen land are just like not even acknowledging our sovereignty and I read that it was sobering because we have 17 federally recognized tribes in California and we had land acknowledgments at my previous institutions that quite a few of us in our office helped to craft and it doesn't even get to the harm that has been done in which a number of us, if not all of us collectively and historically have participated. So, I raised that not to say don't do land acknowledgments. I'm just here to say yes and we do, and we examine, we redress, and we recognize and respect, because when those Indigenous leaders tell me that I'm not direct, but "let me tell you what we worked on this" They don't care and that is not addressing the issue. So, I have to listen with humility and see what is the best thing from their perspective to address that and I could name another group and say something similar. You know this is a this is an EEO affirmative action employer, and we did a whatever that line that 2 lines are and we encourage them and then you get there and you're treated poorly and you are called names and you're excluded and you're talked over. So, thanks for the statement and our challenge now is how am I living that out for real and it's never going to be done perfectly, but how am I living that out? So then that two-line federal statement, we need to put in these announcements once the people get here now to the campus, or to the hospital or to the counselor or the office, how were they treated? What is their experience? So, it is very difficult work and I think I can't say what the next quote "trend" is going to be.

I think race will continue to be somewhat central conversations around health care, family care and caregiving will get a little bit more air time and mental health, particularly for populations that are historically marginalized. I think that will get some more focus in the EDI conversation and the conversation around work and health, mental health as well and I hope these are not fads, you know, but something else will happen in the next year or two something else will happen that will shift our consciousness and our emotions. If you're are affects will kind of move to something else. I'm sure it's just the nature of humanity and it as one of my colleagues says, "it is what it is". It is what it is. I try not to judge it per say, I just want to understand it so that as a leader, I and colleagues and others can not only respond, but lead in those in those contexts effectively.

### **Rosemary Ferreira**

So, what is the future of EDI? The history of racial progress in the United States has frequently been met with backlash and regressive policies. In response to the rising public commitment to EDI, there has been increased pushback against theories and programs that center the fundamental role that prejudice, discrimination, and structural racism play both within this country and globally. The newest watchword that has been targeted is "Critical Race Theory" (CRT), which first began in legal studies to examine the impact of race and racism in the law. Numerous states and local governments have recently proposed and passed bills into law banning the teaching of [CRT](#), broadly understood, while others have banned any [programs](#) that explicitly mention privilege, race and racism, implicit and explicit bias, discrimination, and oppression. These assaults on free speech, academic freedom, and equal protection rights threaten the future of EDI, but at the same time EDI itself was born from the struggle against oppression. Being honest about our approach with equity, diversity, and inclusion means constantly examining what our intentions and goals are. Programs can turn from proactive to reactive, messages can be co-opted, but the work continues. EDI's existence has always been necessary for social change.

We want to thank Dr. Diane Forbes Berthoud for sharing her story with us. We are excited to have her join the University of Maryland, Baltimore and look forward to the ways we can collectively work together to lead with equity and justice. Thank you for listening.