Diversity and Inclusion: How Policies Can Positively Shape the Culture of Our Organizations
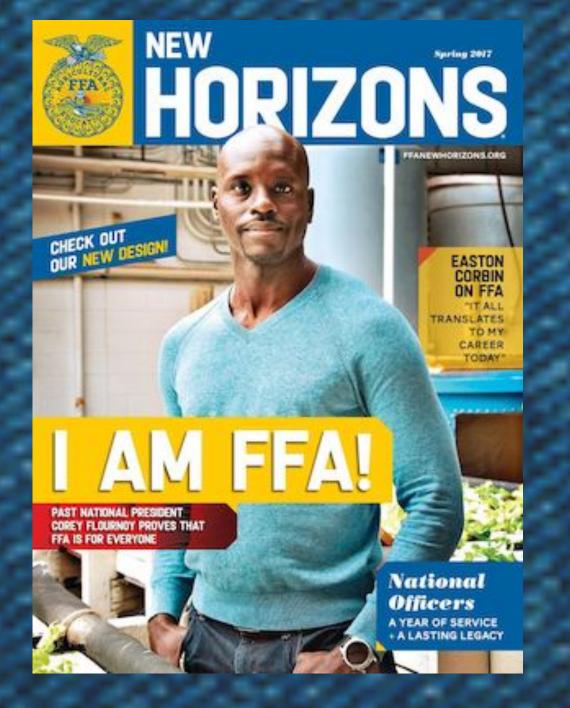## Coleman Simpson, Agricultural Science & Political Science

Background

- Studies have shown that discriminatory policies promoting a specific behavior often leads to that behavior being acted out (Hegarty & Sims, 1978)
- Inconsistent and invisible messaging causes stalls in both change and operations in an organization (Kotter,1996)
- Stable values remain constant and influence our behavior outside our awareness (Schwartz, 2012)
- Education is vital for social and systemic transformation to occur (Shields, 2010)

Questions and Objectives

- Q: What current policies exist with National FFA and the State associations?
- Q: How many states have a formal non-discrimination policy?
- Q: How accessible/visible are these policies?
- Q: Are the policies proactive or reactive?
- Are these policies contained within a governing document or do they exist in an external source?
- Are these policies specific to the organization?
- Q: What accountability do these policies provide?
- Q: How can these policies be enhanced to promote stronger diversity and inclusion?

Methodology

- Compile a list of all national and state association contacts
- Reach out asking about policies and their availability
- Compile a list of available policies and their locations
- If not contacted back, use an internet search to attempt to find the policy
- Determine the uniformity of policies
- Determine the visibility and impact of the policy
- Determine whether a policy was FFA specific or not

Associations with Policies	Associations with FFA Specific Policies	Associations with Policies Housed in A Governing Document
National FFA	National FFA	Colorado
Alabama	Alaska	Iowa
Alaska	Iowa	Kentucky
Colorado	Kentucky	Michigan
Connecticut	Michigan	North Carolina
Florida	North Carolina	
Iowa	Washington	
Kentucky	Wisconsin	
Michigan		
North Carolina		
North Dakota		
Washington		
Wisconsin		

Out of 52 associations contacted, **39 (75%)** did not have a policy or one that could be found.

Breanna Holbert is the first African American female elected to the National Officer Team. What else can we do to increase inclusion?

Example of a Current Policy

"Washington FFA Association provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability."

Proposed Policy

This organization seeks to include and support all students of unique and diverse backgrounds. We will make all appropriate and reasonable accommodations to be accessible to our students, and we strive to not only include students of diverse populations and backgrounds, but to actively welcome them into our organization. Association staff and educators are required to go through Ally training to be prepared to work with students of all experiences and backgrounds.

Recommendations

- Association should adopt policies that ensures a diverse and inclusive student population
- These policies should be adopted into their constitution/bylaws/policy manual and be clearly present and accessible
- Policies should be consistently enacted to ensure accountability
- Supplemental training and educational opportunities can equip association leaders/staff work well with diverse students

Training Program

Equip participants with tools and skills to be more inclusive and inviting to diverse students
- Defining vocabulary for different identities
- Putting issues and obstacles different identities will face in the perspective of the educator
- Concerns these students can/will face both in and outside of the classroom
- Understanding how to make your classroom or office accessible for all students
- Learning about the resources and supports internal and external to the school and how to connect students to these programs when needed