2025 AAC&U Forum on Transformation Leadership
April 3 | San Juan, Puerto Rico

Leadership Wisdom and Advice Shared by Attendees

- Listen and acknowledge peoples' feelings in a way that makes them feel safe to share
- Read the book *Crucial Conversations*. This book has helped me in my role of navigating difficult conversations.
- You are not in this work alone. Reach out to those who are for you and your heart.
- I encourage you to remember your "why" for doing this work. You matter, your work is valued, and you are making an impact on the lives of faculty, staff, and students.
- Pursue some new (small or large) desire, even just baby steps. It will give you the inner freedom to balance chaos better.
- Be courageous.
- Don't be afraid to contact your union and collective organization bodies. You are not alone!
- You have already survived every challenge you have faced in life, and you will make it through today's challenges, too
- Joy! Just to be clear: none of this will steal my joy.
- Give yourself space to reflect on your values so that you can lead in a way that stays true to them.
- Be centered and hold on to that through the storm
- Find a coach or a mentor to talk through the obstacles and opportunities
- Many nightlights can build a large beacon. You don't need to be a beacon alone.
- Give yourself grace and lean into micro-communities.
- Don't give up your humanity. Trust your team.
- Relationships are essential. Keep connecting with those around you.
- Act with kindness and integrity toward others and yourself.
- You might not know what to do in the moment, but you do know what matters and who you want to be
- Keep your values at the forefront of decision-making. How the decision is made is as important as the decision itself. Always ask: Who is present? Who is missing? Who needs to be here? Where are my blind spots?
- Communicate with your people as much as possible
- Be curious and kind. Embrace the messiness that is now as a human that is in a position of leadership.

- Believe in the work and its impact. Believe that truth, honesty and love will sustain you and the people you serve.
- “Remember that consciousness is power. Consciousness is education and knowledge. Consciousness is becoming aware. It is the perfect vehicle for students. Consciousness-raising is pertinent for power, and be sure that power will not be abusively used, but used for building trust and goodwill domestically and internationally.” -*Yuri Kochiyama.*
- Listen and pay close attention to the needs of others. Remember that you were once in the position they are.
- You are well qualified to spread love in your role as a leader
- Go knocking on the door of the door of those above you and connect to their humanity! They need us as much as we need them!
- Be present and informed but protect your emotional wellness; model this for those you lead.
- Hang in there. There is more support for what’s right than you may see
- Meditate every morning before you check email. Find your voice and shout it loudly when and where you can. Focus on what you can do rather than on what you cannot.
- Lean into your networks for support conversation and kindness. Remember the values that allow you to find joy in your work & find others who can help you with them day to day
- “Love is the only creative and constant revolution.” - *Jiddu Krishnamurti.* Let’s enact instances of love throughout our days with one word, one practice, one interaction ... nothing is impossible.
- Be mindful of the topics and agendas you promote (or those you don’t) for the outcomes you seek in the environment you create
- Stay true to your values and commitments ... this too shall pass. “Your neighbors may disappear, but the dinosaurs <u>will</u> disappear.” - *Charly Garcia.*
- You don’t negotiate with a tiger when your head is in its mouth!
- Find your community and continue to build networks
- Trust your instincts and/or your own moral compass. You need to do what feels right to your or you won’t be able to live with yourself or adequately serve others.
- In these challenging times, self-care and professional networking are paramount
- Be like bamboo: flexible but also strong. Do what you know to be appropriate.
- Always think of what’s in the best interest of our students.
- Be courageous and ensure you always lead with a humanistic approach.
- Read the book *On Tyranny* by Timothy Snyder
- Avoid leading with fear by consistently being intentionally strategic, mission-guided, and student focused
- Be yourself and lead the way you want to be leaded
- Nobody leads alone!

- I would recommend to a leader to be honest, transparent while being compassionate with team members when navigating change and/or fear of the unknown
- Lead with love, be a good listener. Be open to the change around you
- Be strong and courageous! You are where you are supposed to be, so do not allow the noise to situation in cacophony, bring the harmony
- Be your authentic self, even if it makes other people uncomfortable
- Advice: Take up yoga, go to the gym, lean into self-care.
- Build your community; you are not alone so don't try to do it on your own.
- You're doing the best you can. Sometimes that's enough.
- Focus on your personal mission! Stay the course! Do not let these temporary concerns/needs/demands distract you.
- Take one day at a time. Reflect before you share and speak. Be kind ... it costs you nothing. Lead with love!
- Take care of yourself and your peoples' humanity
- It's okay to be a human being versus a human doing
- Make space for yourself as a leader
- Show love!
- No one knows what the future holds. Keep going, keep smiling. You've got this!
- Lead with integrity. Ultimately you can only control how you bring yourself into this hard work.
- Believe in the power of love of humanity, and the desire to do good, as a way to build trust and strength in your group.
- Lead with courage, lead with compassion and love, treat everyone with respect regardless of our differences
- Don't forget to fill your own tank. Be vulnerable. It's okay not to have answers when you create space for conversations to happen.
- Work within and outside of systems to effect change.
- Listen with intention. Speak with intention. Collaborate with an institutional coalition within and beyond your own institution.
- It is okay to listen with an open mind and also request time to process and reflect on that new perspective before acting.