

9-1-2022

Next: Reflection on Furman going forward

Kyle C. Longest
Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

Recommended Citation

Longest, Kyle C. (2022) "Next: Reflection on Furman going forward," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 65: Iss. 2, Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol65/iss2/14>

This Regular Feature is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.

“Intercultural interactions and dialogue among students give voice to underrepresented students, more specifically African students on campus, to share with pride their cultural heritage.”

**JANET D. KWAMI,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

African nations place cultural meaning in distinctive fabrics unique to each nation. He compared the tradition to the absence of such a practice in his home country of England.

“(We) should all make a conscious effort to broaden our horizons and learn more about each individual country and stop treating that massive, beautiful continent as one big country!” Raine wrote in a reflection piece. Lola Reyes ’22 learned not only about African nations but became aware of false and dangerous narratives.

“I began thinking a lot about how the world abroad, and Africa specifically, is presented in America,” reflected Reyes. “It is always presented as very poor, dirty, and homogenous, when that is simply not the case.”

PERCEPTIONS OF ‘OTHERS’

Kwami said such events give students a historical,

social, political and cultural lens to understand Africa’s diversity and help to cultivate world citizenship by developing a better understanding of those who are different from them.

“It provides the opportunity for students to reflect upon practices that contour their perceptions of ‘others’ by centering African students’ culture and self-representation in an effort toward engaging students in the appreciation of the diversity and rich culture African students bring to Furman’s campus,” said Kwami.

“I believe such intercultural interactions and dialogue among students give voice to underrepresented students, more specifically African students on campus, to share with pride their cultural heritage as a central part of their identity.” ♦

NEXT



KYLE C. LONGEST

Since transitioning into my current role as associate academic dean, I have become

aware of a whole side of the university to which I was previously unaware. I had worked with students experiencing challenging personal situations as an instructor. Yet, the depth and complexity of these trials were always a bit opaque, and how these students always seemed to bounce back and maintain their progress in my course was even more of a mystery.

I now have had the great fortune to have that curtain pulled back. And, of course, it really isn’t magic. Rather, it is the product of the tremendous and relentless efforts of an entire team of personnel dedicated to helping our students through even the most trying situations and the daily struggles that only seem to be mounting for young people today.

While it may seem somewhat superficial, the best I’ve come up with to explain this system is to compare it to the Justice League. Whenever a student is in trouble, a warning signal is sent out and an entire team of specialized professionals activates to create a care plan and respond accordingly. Where

this analogy breaks down, in addition to no one on our team wearing a cape or full-body leotard, is that our superheroes don’t just swoop in and solve the problem in a tidy 10-minute montage. Rather, they often stand alongside the students for months or years at time, slowly but surely bringing them through, so that they can walk across that stage, and guiding them to becoming stronger and better people in the process.

So I guess this is my way of saying thank you and making sure that this other side of the university no longer goes unnoticed. Of making sure that the next time we hear about the achievements of one of our students or their stories of overcoming adversity, we may all take a second to give just a brief thanks to our own team of superheroes who have had at least some small part of that student’s success and definitely a significant part in the continued thriving of the university. ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kyle C. Longest is Furman’s associate academic dean and an associate professor of sociology.