

[00:00:00] Bonni: Today on episode number 338, Dr. Douglas Haynes joins me to talk about inclusive excellence.

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[00:00:20] Bonni: Hello, and welcome to this episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. I'm Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity approaches, so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Today's guest, Dr. Douglas Haynes, is vice chancellor for equity, diversity, and inclusion at the University of California Irvine. He is also the chief diversity officer at UCI and its Medical Center. Dr. Haynes leads UCI's quest to be a national model of inclusive excellence for its nearly 30,000 undergraduates, 7,000 graduate students, and 16,500 faculty and staff. He oversaw the creation of the Office of Inclusive Excellence in 2016, and was founding member of UCI's Department of African American Studies in 1996, where he still teaches to this day.

Recently, he led the launch around the campus's Black Thriving Initiative, an ambitious and groundbreaking approach that recognizes and responds to anti-blackness as an existential threat to the university's mission. Dr. Haynes is a recognized thought leader on the topics of equity, diversity and inclusion, anti-

blackness and racism, free speech, and fronting extremism, modern medicine, and race and organizational change. A values-driven researcher, educator, and leader for institutionalized inclusive excellence. He's committed to fostering an environment that maximizes every student and faculty member's capacity to be their best and most authentic selves. Doug, welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

[00:02:27] Douglas: Thank you Bonni for having me. I really appreciate this opportunity.

[00:02:31] Bonni: I didn't tell you this before we started interviewing, but I actually used to work at your institution at the University of California Irvine and I still hold it so near and dear to my heart. You're doing such incredible things in every discipline I could possibly think of it. I'm just so honored that you could join me for today's interview.

[00:02:49] Douglas: Thank you for having me. It's always gratifying to know that there's a strong UCI connection.

[00:02:56] Bonni: Still have some friends over there and in fact, some friends that I've met through the podcast, I think it's come full circle, don't they? It's wild. When I was looking through your background, I could not help but notice that one aspect of your research has been around representations of disease and illness in the mass media. The first question I want to ask you is what on earth as a researcher, is that like for you during the times of COVID?

[00:03:24] Douglas: Thank you for that question, because I'm finding that it is very relevant. Just to give an example, that WHO, the World Health Organization changed its disease naming protocol several years ago, but they initially refer to the coronavirus as the Wuhan coronavirus. Actually, that is not a best practice because it tends to stigmatize the region, the people. In one study I looked at, the use of the term Ebola, which was not a pandemic, but an epidemic in West Africa several years ago. What's interesting about that is that Ebola refers to a tributary of the Congo River.

In naming a disease, however convenient, however trying to give it an identity, some specification, the problem is, is that you stigmatize places and people, which is why when the president refers to coronavirus as the China virus, it's deeply insulting, and actually is counterproductive. As the historian, I studied this in relationship to Ebola, but there's many other examples such as the Spanish flu. What people should know is that the Spanish Flu was designated that name, not because the flu or originated in Spain, but because that's what investigators decided to designate it.

The flu itself emerged in the Midwest, not in Spain and so those are just two examples of the relevance of naming and disease and how it can stigmatize and ultimately cause people to fear.

[00:05:24] Bonni: I am positive that another aspect that you think a lot about is the ways in which those most vulnerable in our society are disproportionately negatively impacted. We both live in the state of California and they recently changed our tiers and how they designate them. The tiers which for people that don't live here would maybe not be familiar but certain industries and certain businesses can open at, depending on which of these four tiers. So many of us wish that the colors were like a stop light, so at least we could remember them.

As of this recording, we're in the third lowest of four tiers and so a lot of people are looking forward to, in the county where we live, having more opportunities to open. I know you share these values with me that we don't want to reopen and have it be way, way worse for certain members of our population because those are the people that are most likely to have these negative effects. That's another aspect of it too, for us to be thinking about.

I found for many of my students, they're thinking a lot more with a collectivist mindset than many times they were raised with more of an individualistic. That's been some interesting conversations we've been having.

[00:06:45] Douglas: That's interesting observation and I agree with it, in part because how we respond to this public health crisis is a direct reflection of how we work

together. The expression, we're all in this together, is not only an aspiration but actually a public health strategy. I think to the extent that there's a silver lining, more people understand how interdependent we are, and how individual choices can have unintended consequences.

[00:07:23] Bonni: We're going to be exploring today, two broad themes. They are I think, in contrast, I don't know, if they're opposites, you'll be able to educate me about this as we go. The idea of reactive diversity versus inclusive excellence. We're going to get to hear a little bit from your life and ways that you have been touched by each of these themes and then we're going to look at the institutions and what our institutions of higher learning are doing around these things.

Then finally, we'll look at individual faculty members and how we may inadvertently have some ways we're not living up to our own ideals, and then ways that we can. Let's start with you, and your life. I'd love to hear a time in your life when you've experienced what you would now call reactive diversity.

[00:08:16] Douglas: I'll use an example and then we can discuss it. I remember when I was in college, many moons ago, and I was being considered for spending my senior year at Oxford University, the University College. My college had a competitive process for this. I prepared, I submitted my application, and during the interview, a well-meaning faculty member asked me if I was aware that they were a few Black people in England. He asked the question in part because he wanted to be sure that I was equipped and prepared to navigate this new environment.

Of course, I said, "Yes, I'm not only qualified and prepared but I'm interested for any opportunities that might come before me." I illustrate that as a type of reactive diversity for the following reasons. Reactive diversity refers to the uncertainty about diversity within an organization. In this example, this faculty member was clearly aware that I was Black, it was pretty obvious, but he was not aware about how I fit within this college or within Oxford University or within the world.

Instead of learning more, he asked a set of relatively, I would say superficial questions that were baked with a lot of assumptions. It's possible under reactive

diversity to be personally committed to diversity, to be well-intentioned, but essentially it reflects just a discomfort with what diversity means to me, how do I relate to people who are diverse.

I was overly selected and that experience at Oxford made a massive difference in my life. It's one of the major factors that led me to graduate school and where I am now as a professor of modern European history at UCI. For folks who come from underrepresented or marginal populations, this type of experience is not uncommon. It's often described as a type of implicit bias, unconscious, unintended, but I think that more and more universities in colleges across the country are really have been articulating in value statements, in offices and programs, in issues and events, it's a real commitment to diversity.

That's a good start. It's where we need to grow as our relationship to diverse communities and populations so that we can be not only intentional but also help to recalibrate the social organizations we call colleges and universities.

[00:11:28] Bonni: When you say that, I'm curious about if this has to be a progression. I'm not asking the question very well, but there's a starting point. What I think I heard you talking about is, there's a lack of diversity, so the first person coming in is by its very nature, going to wind up being the token or at least perceived as that. Is it that we have to work our way through reactive to somewhere else, or would it even be possible to not start with that?

[00:11:57] Douglas: I think that's an excellent question. I think in some sense, we've been on a path in higher education in the United States, I would say since 1964 and the Civil Rights Act that mandates colleges and universities receiving federal funding can't discriminate. On top of that, there's a more concerted effort to integrate colleges. There are levels of awareness that you rightly point out on this spectrum. I think most institutions are at a stage-- I would say on a four-point spectrum, I would say most institutions are either point one or two. One, statement on diversity, be really working to recruit students, may even have an office of student affairs or a minority affairs trying to diversify the workforce at both faculty employees and staff employees. I think that's pretty much the landscape.

The real challenge though is that it's inconsistent. You may have, for example, diverse students, but they might not necessarily feel that they belong. You may have a diversity statement, but beyond that, there might not be any relevant attention in the curriculum. Furthermore, you may have all of that, but in the leadership, on the trustees. What I'm trying to get at is that organizations, colleges, and universities, they have to not only be research institutions, educational institutions, but learning organizations to ask four questions, who is our community? Are they thriving? How do we know? How can we improve?

I think those four questions to the extent that they are a part of the culture of an organization, will allow us to see people as bringing their whole selves. There is I think a type of a spectrum of organizational change in consciousness and some are at the mid-point and a few are at point three, but no one is at four yet.

[00:14:20] Bonni: Would you share about a time in your life or your education when you experienced what you would call inclusive excellence?

[00:14:30] Douglas: In many ways, I experience it every day. Partly, I think it's because of my role on campus as a vice chancellor for equity, diversity, inclusion, but one powerful memory that I have when I was teaching a course in modern European history. This was in, I would say the late '90s, I paused for a second, right before the start of the course, and looked out on the sea of students. What struck me was how richly diverse they were. I thought about when I was an undergraduate between 1981 and 1985, and then I was the only person of color in a class on modern Europe.

In some sense, that experience when I was teaching showed me that, "Wow, our campus student population is becoming so diverse that they're curious about the world, including learning about Europe. That we're equipping students to be truly global citizens." I think that's always a very powerful and gratifying experience. That stands out. What also stands out is our development of an Inclusive Excellence Action Plan for UCI that we launched in January of this year, not knowing there was a pandemic, but that whole process of listening and learning, meeting people where they are, trying to figure out how we can better equip ourselves to advance

this idea of a campus community, where people expect equity, support diversity, practice inclusion, and honor free speech. Those are two things that stick out in my mind most immediately.

[00:16:27] Bonni: That's a perfect segue for us then to now look at some of the things that are happening within institutions. Let's begin with reactive diversity, which we spoke about a little bit before, but could you think of some other examples of ways in which institutions have these values or at least they've articulated them but they're missing the mark because their diversity efforts are more reactive?

[00:16:51] Douglas: Yes. I think that what we're really learning now, particularly in the wake of the national reckoning about anti-blackness is that you have to have a whole university or a whole organization response. One thing that we have developed and rolled out as part of our UCI Black Thriving Initiative is to provide tools where people can begin to take greater accountability for confronting anti-blackness by understanding what it is.

Most people, I take as just a bedrock assumption, are personally committed to diversity. Many people want to do something besides click, like, post. They want to be in a community. They don't want to feel that they're isolated. One thing we've done is develop a set of modules about anti-blackness in the United States, that's open to staff employees, faculty employees, undergraduates, and graduate students.

The first looks at the Black protest tradition to answer the question, "Why are people protesting in the streets?" The second is the structures and mechanisms that devalue Black people. Why is it necessary to protest the Black Lives Matter in the 21st century? What's important about this is that it's open to members of the campus community to learn together. It's enriched by reading and viewing materials. It's a moderated conversation that I lead, and so people are able to feel comfortable asking basic questions. We embrace making mistakes because that's what learning is about.

[00:18:47] Bonni: What ways do you foster community for those who may not always appreciate being parts of conversations like that? Because we're always taking care of the people that haven't quite got it down yet, versus those that just need an opportunity to express their anger, their depression, just the ways in which they're just grieving.

[00:19:12] Douglas: Bonni, that's powerful and I really appreciate the language that you use. I think that it's a combination of actions and aspirations. In the wake of the protests in the summer, we developed the UCI Black Thriving Initiative to do two things. One is to say, we're going to confront anti-blackness as an institutional imperative. We see anti-blackness as an existential threat to our mission as a university.

In doing that, we acknowledge that anti-blackness damages people's sense of belonging to a community, that we can't maximize our research and teaching, we can't really call ourselves a public institution. That commitment I think is particularly powerful because I think it named something that many people in the Black community experience. Instead of saying, "Oh, it's bad apples. Oh, it's rare. It's exceptional," because it's not just a matter of life at UCI or for that matter any college or university, it's in society at large.

It's not just the spectacular recorded evidence of a police killing someone, but it's also the casual implicit subtle things that really create this sense of exclusion. I'm not saying that this solves everything, but at least we've named what we believe the challenge is, and have created a pretty ambitious set of interventions to address it to the extent that we can. Bonni, I have to tell you that this is a dialectical process that in some sense we're going to learn and change.

For some folks who've experienced this, this is our commitment as an institution. For those who want to do something or just are curious or who may be skeptical, we want to create opportunities to learn so that they can channel their desire to do something

[00:21:39] Bonni: I'm going to be linking to so many of the resources you've already mentioned your website, it's a phenomenal resource for people, and what you just shared about reminded me of your act for inclusion, #ActForInclusion, and right there on the website that anybody could go and view. It just starts out with, I don't have it right in front of me, but just saying, hello. Starting with these small stakes things, and then really building up the commitment and the awareness, and you talked about naming things, and kind of that recognition if I'm not used to doing this kind of work.

Then realizing that the small stuff you're talking about microaggressions and bias and that can show up in really small ways that is like water and rock carving out what it's like to live with systemic racism for one's entire life, but then to start to feel-- Because if you just start sometimes I guess with issues where it's just enormous and that requires them to completely give up every sense of identity. It's like, "No, that's not quite the way learning typically works because if we're so fearful, we're not going to be able to learn anything new."

[00:22:46] Douglas: Totally, and I really appreciate that Bonni, because part of this initiative derives from being a teacher, being an educator. That it's unreasonable to expect a student to show up knowing material about week 10 in week 1. I think it's important too, that even though people have different roles in the university or college, they could all learn. That's what I so appreciate about the format of our modules is that people's role does not prevent them from listening, and learning, and sharing, and growing, and making connections, and to know that they're part of a community, that they're not isolated. When you mentioned the example of saying, "Hello, the stakes aren't as high," you're right, but to the extent that you have a community, you feel a little better at doing a little more.

[00:23:54] Bonni: It reminds me of learning what it's like to be a good citizen, but once you-- you were talking about protests. What I have learned from others is that protests can look a lot of different ways, and if you tell me there's only one way, I can't see my place in it quite yet, but when I look at the other ways that we can be part of protest, it's really powerful. Then once you take those small steps and then

realize, "Oh, I have a little bit more courage. That actually felt like this is a good thing that I did," and then we can build up to even more courageous things.

[00:24:26] Douglas: At the base of it, it's learning, because I think learning is a process of growth as much as career advancement. I think that we change to the extent that we're a part of the learning process and are recognized and validated. It takes time, but if you put in the time, your community is more resilient.

[00:24:56] Bonni: Let's take ourselves into the classroom. It may not literally be a place that we sit inside of a building these days. It may be a classroom that takes place online, but the community of learning. Would you share some examples of where reactive diversity shows up in a classroom?

[00:25:15] Douglas: Reactive diversity may show up, for example, when a student records in an evaluation that the faculty member put me on the spot and I felt uncomfortable. The faculty member might think, "I just was trying to engage the student, and wasn't trying to make this student feel uncomfortable," but the student comment in some sense reflects this concept of stereotype threat that Claude Steele developed with his co-authors several years ago, where if you're from a stigmatized marginalized population, that when you're in performance-based settings, you feel that if you make a mistake, you're conforming a stereotype, not just getting the answer wrong.

The reaction to the faculty member, "Oh, I didn't mean anything by that. I'm sorry." That's a type of classroom situation that leads two people to misrecognize each other. The more that we learn, the less likely it is that we will repeat this.

[00:26:35] Bonni: Then would you share about in those same spaces, what it looks like when inclusive excellence shows up?

[00:26:42] Douglas: Here's another example, UCI, and I would say the vast majority of colleges or universities, they have high expectations in part because students bring high expectations of achievement. Unfortunately, what can happen is that students may make decisions about who contributes to success more than others. There's a lot of research that shows that student discussion groups or workgroups

that are self-selected, can actually contribute to excluding some groups and not others.

One example of inclusive excellence is really creating a set of guidelines about how to create these informal groups and teams. Because what you're doing is that in laying out those guidelines, you're modeling what inclusive excellence is. That you're trying to equip people to see the whole person, assume strengths rather than deficits. Ask yourself, is this small number of people sufficient, and we broadened the group? Do we have to hoard information? Can we share it?

[00:28:07] Bonni: The last question I wanted to ask you before we get to the recommendation segment, I feel a little bit hesitant because I can recall Ta-Nehisi Coates being asked this on so many times about hope, and he's like, "I don't have hope," and I was like a little hesitant, but you seem like a hopeful guy. I'm going to throw caution to the wind and ask you a question about hope.

You know that there's a question people ask that says, "What keeps you up at night?" I want to ask the opposite of you right now. What is helping you sleep better at night? Which I realize I'm asking this during a really rotten time for a whole bunch of reasons, but is there anything that's helping you sleep?

[00:28:43] Douglas: What's helping me sleep is knowing that each day there are thousands of people who are going to be getting up in the morning, whose principle task is to welcome and support our students. It gives me hope because over half of our students in UCI are first-generation. 40% are Pell-eligible. One in four are Latino. We're a Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

That gives me hope because when UC was founded in 1868, it wasn't founded with this type of diversity in mind, but look at us now. That gives me hope. I guess I'll put it another way, that I see myself as helping to prepare the campus for other people, and I can't do it by myself. I can only make a small contribution to that larger effort, but that's what gives me hope. Even during this very challenging period.

[00:29:54] Bonni: This is the time in the show where we each get to share our recommendations, and this one made me cry the other day. [chuckles] I know this book has been out for a while. It's by Barack Obama and it's called *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters*. It is a children's book. Again, it's been out, in fact, our kids, their school library had sent it home, they do these book bags, and so my husband had already read it. I don't know if he read it to our son or to a daughter, but I got to read it to the kids the other day.

What makes it so distinct is that it focuses on, I think it's 12 or 16 different people in history. They're getting to learn about a lot of people from a lot of different parts of the world and ways that they contributed, but there's always this refrain on the left-hand side of the page. It was so fun how just naturally each one of our kids would get excited that they could be the one to read. I'll just read some of them. It says, Have I told you that you are creative?

Barack tells the story of Georgia O'Keeffe, and how she helped us see beauty in what is small, the hardness of stone, and the softness of feather. Then that refrain comes again, Have I told you that you are smart? Then he tells the story of Albert Einstein, and how he turned pictures in his mind into giant advances in science. Have I told you that you are brave? Then he tells the story of Jackie Robinson, who showed us all how to turn fear to respect and respect to love. He swung his bat with the grace and strength of a lion and gave rave dreams to other dreamers.

On this page, [chuckles] there's a picture of him, it's beautifully illustrated. My kids said, "Boy, the people in the background are really mad, mommy. I said, "Yes. Do you know why those people were mad?" [chuckles] We got to talk about that for a little while. Have I told you that you're a healer? He tells the story of Sitting Bull, a ... Sun Medicine Man.

Have I told you that you have your own song? Then Barack tells the story of Billie Holiday, her voice full of sadness and joy made people feel deeply and add their melodies to the chorus. Have I told you that you are strong? Then he tells the story of Helen Keller. Have I told you how important it is to honor others' sacrifices? Then he tells the story of Maya Lin, who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Have I told you that you are kind? He tells the story of Jane Addams, who I'm embarrassed to say did not know who that was. That's one that I need to do some reading so I can learn more about her life. Have I told you that you don't give up? Then he tells the story of Martin Luther King Jr. who taught us unyielding compassion. He gave us a dream that all races and creeds would walk hand-in-hand. He marched and he prayed and one at a time opened hearts and saw the birth of his dream in us.

It's a really good one. It's a good one. I'd recommend people pick up even if you don't have kids, or your kids are grown, you got grandkids, you got anybody, you just get it for yourself. It's a really, really wonderful, poetic, beautiful work. I'm going to pass it over to you now Doug, for your recommendations.

[00:33:27] Douglas: If anything that you mentioned, Barack Obama, because one book that I've been reading and rereading is *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. The reason why I read it and reread it is because I love how she frames human development as this process, and how she describes how her view of the world changed. I don't know, I guess now that my two kids are now adults, that I'm fairly advanced in my career, it makes me really appreciate that, those lessons.

That's definitely a book that I return to a lot. It's absorbing how someone who didn't see themselves as the First Lady of the United States became on her own terms, learning, making mistakes, but also being proud for our country. That's something that inspires me, that I dip into periodically.

There's other book that I look at, and this is more the historian in me. My wife gave me for my birthday, this set, box set of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. I'm a historian, it's an occupational hazard. Sorry.

[00:35:01] Bonni: [chuckles]

[00:35:03] Douglas: That book, it's a vast book but over the course of my adult life as an undergraduate, graduate student, throughout my career as a historian, I've encountered parts of this vast corpus of writing. I have to tell you, Bonni, I just so enjoyed being able to sit down and read it. Part it's the-- I appreciate it as a writer. I

appreciate it as an intellectual, and also appreciated in terms of how this idea of decline and fall can happen very insidiously. I have a ways to go. It's like six books, but it's a great way to fall asleep.

[laughter]

[00:35:55] Bonni: It has been such a delight to be connected with you and to get to have these conversations and hear the stories about your life and your work. Thank you so much for joining me on today's episode.

[00:36:06] Douglas: Bonni, thank you for having me. I just want to thank you for doing the work that you do, keeping educators connected, and advancing inclusive excellence pedagogy.

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[00:36:20] Bonni: I'm so thankful to Doug Haynes for joining me for today's conversation on Teaching in Higher Ed. You've given us so much not just to think about, but to act on. You can visit the show notes at teachinginhighered.com/338. I'd also love to connect with you on social media. If you're on Twitter, I'm at Bonni with no E, B-O-N-N-I, 208, would love to connect there.

There's also an account for Teaching in Higher Ed, that's T-I Higher Ed. You could connect in either or both of those places, and I also encourage you to subscribe to the updates from Teaching in Higher Ed. You can subscribe at teachinginhighered.com/subscribe. Thank you so much for listening and I look forward to seeing you next time on Teaching in Higher Ed.

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[00:37:19] [END OF AUDIO]

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