The Diversity Career Champions Program

Contributed by Chief Superintendent Alison Jevons - Ontario Provincial Police
The Diversity Career Champions Program (DCCP) is a program developed by the Ontario Public Service (OPS) with the dual goals of building a diverse talent pool and strengthening coaching skills. This program offers a unique opportunity for employees to obtain guidance on career development and planning, while sharing experiences relating to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. It is currently utilized throughout the ranks across the Ontario Provincial Police and is open to employees in the following groups recognized as being under-represented in senior leadership positions: Indigenous, racialized, Francophone, LGBTQ+, women and people with disabilities.

The DCCP develops a relationship between an “Executive Champion” (senior ranking police officer) who has experience, expert knowledge or skills and an “Employee Partner” (Sergeant and above) who wants to gain knowledge or skills and develop professional expertise. The Executive Champion invests in the Employee Partner’s growth and professional development by sharing knowledge, experience and perspectives. Executive Champions enhance their own leadership skills by learning from the lived experiences of their Employee Partner.

Both the Champions and their Partners are encouraged to engage in honest, open and meaningful dialogue about diversity, inclusion and career development throughout the program assisting the Executive Champions in developing a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, and barriers faced by employees from underrepresented groups. These discussions become even more important in the context of policing organizations in North America whose cultures are predominantly built on white, traditionally masculine and conservative norms and where hierarchical, para-military structures prevail. Employee Partners are provided with the opportunity to increase their understanding of organizational culture and successful career management through regular interactions with an executive with whom they may not have otherwise connected. Executive Champions and Employee Partners spend a minimum of six hours together over the course of six meetings of the program cycle in addition to program evaluation.

Chief Superintendent Alison Jevons participated for the first time as an Executive Champion in the DCCP program in 2020. She and her partner got off to a somewhat rocky start (their mutual mentoring kick-off coincided with the week that the COVID shutdowns came to Ontario), but they managed to work through the challenges of building that open trusting relationship “virtually” and turned the experience into a successful one, sharing their myriad of respective COVID challenges along the way.

The program provides real value for members of the Ontario Provincial Police in terms of providing growth and professional development and I look forward to participating in the next round in 2021.