

## Inspiring Change

Change can be overrated. Change for the sake of change can be dangerous. Witness the world.

Change with a purpose, change with a vision, can be transformational. Transformation that leads to peace and sustainability is worth inspiring, but this kind of change is hard. It isn't swept in by popular demand. It doesn't fit neatly into an empty slogan. It isn't possible if hearts and minds aren't engaged.

Recently, I got to watch the beginning of change that holds out the possibility of transformation. We are in the midst of reclamation and renewal at UWC-USA. Reclamation of our ideal to be a diverse community that is intentional in its living of the UWC mission and values. Renewal of the best that UWC culture has to offer by examining what is worth passing down and what is not. This is the most difficult kind of change there is. It isn't so much a "reaction against" as "an aspiration toward." "Reaction against" is easier, and can degenerate into change for the sake of change. Aspiration isn't change for the sake of change. It is hard work in service of an ideal, and it requires those who are willing to lead.

As part of our community-building efforts, our first-year Student Council (STUCO) members stepped up last year, recognizing that assembly held out the potential to be a major culture builder. So how to change assembly from a drudgery to a draw? How to create a space for community to grow, for culture to bloom?

Our STUCO students decided to create a forum for discussion that would bring the whole community together. They considered content that would inspire discussion about local and global issues. They considered the appropriate length for forum and the time of day that would best assure its success. They considered how to frame and format it. They considered how to make it truly student-driven.

Even with all of this thoughtful preparation, there were bumps early on. Unilateral decisions that didn't take into account different stake holders and their various expectations. Attempts to fulfill certain aspects of the vision but losing sight of others. Missing opportunities for advance communication only to have to do damage control later.

But what wonderful bumps they were! How inspiring to see our students learn by taking risks and failing, regrouping, and coming back stronger! Inspiring change isn't easy. Leading change is harder still.

Change can be overrated. But sometimes it's not. Change for the sake of change can be dangerous. But change for the sake of reclamation and renewal is worth striving for. Witness the world.