

# Embracing diversity good for Upstate

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By Judith S. Prince

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Greenville has made a strong commitment to inspiring, educating and engaging its leaders with diversity through the Riley Institute Diversity Leadership Initiative (DLI). Since 2003, over 480 Upstate leaders have been challenged to create a community that capitalizes on the uniqueness and differences among people with respect to age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, and religion.

Class XII of the Diversity Leadership Initiative recently opened with 45 participants that geographically, professionally and ethnically reflect the diversity of the Upstate. Young professionals and small business

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leaders from Anderson, Greenville, Spartanburg and Greenwood, as well as expatriates from France, are in Class XII! Health services, nonprofit organizations and major Upstate industries, including BMW and Michelin, are represented in this class. African-American and Hispanic-American leaders are

Greenville was No. 6 on Relocate America's annual list of "America's Top 100 Places to Live." Forbes ranked Greenville 13th on its list of "Top 15 Best Cities for Young Adults." FDI Intelligence, a division of the Financial Times, ranked Greenville No. 1 among the top 10 micro cities of the future.

These and other awards recognize Greenville's economic stability, community leadership and overall quality of life.

To what can we attribute our growing economy and award-winning community? One of the keys to Greenville's success is embracing diversity. Leaders in Greenville understand that diversity is central to increasing competitiveness and innovation and that creative and talented people thrive in a diverse environment.

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participating.

These leaders bring a multitude of perspectives to the DLI experience, making it possible for the class to explore diversity issues from a wide variety of lenses. Additionally, class members bring distinct reasons for participating in DLI.

Tiffany Santagati, retail loan processor supervisor for BB&T, looks forward to learning how to think critically about diversity and how to integrate her appreciation for diversity with her management style. She believes that “better decisions are made when a diversity of individuals make them.”

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