

DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Inclusion means seeing the individual

Post-Bulletin staff

More than 100 people attended a diversity summit Monday night sponsored by the Augsburg College MBA Program and the Post-Bulletin.

Panel members at “Diversity Leadership: Progress Toward Inclusion” stressed that talking about diversity and inclusion isn’t enough — people must live it and model it, looking at the individual and not the group.

The panel was led by Dr. Sharonne Hayes, cardiologist and director of diversity and inclusion at Mayo Clinic. It also included Armin Budimlic, Ponleou Chim



Hayes

and Ahmed Osman of the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association in Rochester; LeTasha Montgomery, administrator at Mayo Clinic; and James Robertson, education director for the Diversity Council in Rochester.

Hayes asked: What does an inclusive community look like?

“You would see people going beyond the hello to a real acceptance and allowing people into your home and into your lives,” Robertson said.

Osman echoed that thought. “You would see and feel a real

sense of oneness and people would be living a value for others and a respect for their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs.”

Chim said, “It would be where people are not afraid to make the big step and not be afraid to approach people, be communicative, and really get to know each other for who they are.”

People must go beyond their comfort zones to face up to the big challenges before us, Budimlic said.

“The thing that people must get over is their fear of talking and working with others, and the true desire to learn about people must be at the forefront of all intentions and encounters,” Montgomery said.

Diversity is not just the right thing to do, but it makes economic sense too, Hayes said. People have a basic need to be part of something larger than themselves, and to contribute and fit in.

When an audience member asked how to ensure that children live a life of inclusion, panel members agreed that families need to be more involved, to model inclusion, and to walk the talk.

Budimlic added that there should be more diverse teachers, so students can see the power of diverse people working hard, fitting in, and being good role models.

He contended that his children seem to learn best from diverse instructors.