Supporting a College-level Environment that Values Civility and Respect through Annual Bystander Awareness and Action Workshops

Project Collaborators:

Maureen Scully, Professor of Management and PhD Program Director, College of Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Dr. Scully’s areas of expertise include Organizational Change, Efforts, Grassroots Employee Initiatives, Beliefs about Inequality and Interchange: Dimensions of Diversity at Work, Labor and Management Joint Efforts.

True Story Theater’s mission is to build empathy, respect, and understanding among all that attend through the honoring of true life stories. In performances, volunteers from the audience are helped to share what’s important in their lives. On the spot, actors then portray the heart of what they heard using music, movement, and dialogue. True Story Theater offers audiences fresh perspectives, deeper connections, and a renewed appreciation for our common arts.

LaVerne McQuiller Williams currently serves as Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. She previously served as Senior Associate Dean from 2016 to 2020 and was Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice from 2010 to 2016. She holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence, from RIT, a M.S. in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College, a J.D. from Albany Law School, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. McQuiller Williams’s primary research interests include intimate partner violence.

EACH WORKSHOP SETS UP THE NEXT WORKSHOP:

Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops

Each workshop explored power, privilege and unconscious bias. The workshops focused on tackling microaggressions as a bystander through the use of “micro-interventions.” The intent of the micro-intervention is to first make the microaggression visible, then disarm the microaggression, educate the perpetrator, and finally seek external reinforcement. In addition to facilitators Scully and DeCosta, the sessions included a panel discussion with Nancy McDonald-Stolor from HR, Stacy Droz from Title IX and Compliance, and Joe Johnston from the RIT Ombuds Office.

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Four years of annual bystander awareness workshops, often including various forms of theater, have been facilitated by Tina DeCosta from the RIT Diversity Theater and Professor Maureen Scully from the University of Massachusetts Boston, have been offered to the faculty, staff, and academic leaders within RIT. At both the college-level and the university-level, Professor Margaret Bailey, Director of RIT AdvanceRIT led the workshop creation and evaluation efforts.

In 2016 and 2017, the RIT College of Liberal Arts (CLA) consistently hosted workshops for the faculty staff and academic leaders within their college. Dean and Professor, LaVerne McQuiller Williams is our collaborative partner within CLA and we created each year’s offering based on her input which was informed by the CLA faculty/staff community and our past workshop evaluation.

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The trends for leaders shifted between the initial and follow-up surveys. On the initial surveys they were less interested, less likely to take action, etc. but on the follow-up they were more likely to strongly agree to a number of the items. This may be a selection bias related to the action among the lower numbers of respondents.

In both the initial and follow-up surveys, people asked for more emphasis placed on the training and outcomes of targeted faculty members.

Results from both surveys suggest increased awareness as well as intention to act. However, many still lack the confidence to strongly agree to some of the action-oriented statements. More could be done to improve self-efficacy to act through practice sessions.

LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION FROM 2016 – 2019

UW CERSE conducted in-depth survey analysis from nine different unconscious bias events from 2016 to 2018. These include Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops with RIT Diversity Theater (2016, 2017, 2018), UW CERSE conducted in-depth survey analysis from nine different unconscious bias events from 2016 to 2018. These include Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops with RIT Diversity Theater (2016, 2017, 2018). The trends for leaders shifted between the initial and follow-up surveys. On the initial surveys they were less interested, less likely to take action, etc. but on the follow-up they were more likely to strongly agree to a number of the items. This may be a selection bias related to the action among the lower numbers of respondents. On the initial surveys they were less interested, less likely to take action, etc. but on the follow-up they were more likely to strongly agree to a number of the items. This may be a selection bias related to the action among the lower numbers of respondents.

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CONVERSATION BETWEEN INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS:

• To gather suggestions and comments to improve future workshops
• To investigate the respondents’ awareness of the utility of being an active bystander and understanding of power dynamics
• To identify actions taken by participants to be or support active bystanders
• To understand if respondents felt safe to be an active bystander

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

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