

# Partnerships in Pluralism

## Bringing Diversity Together to Share, Learn and Inspire

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# Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Goals
- Partnerships in Pluralism Learning Objectives
- History & Evolution
- How it works: methodology
  - breakdown and scenario
- Results
- Next step: recommendations

# Introductions

- **Michael D'Arcangelo, Ph. D.:** Director Diversity Education; Division for Diversity & Inclusion
- **Jonathan Ntheketha:** Interim Senior Assistant Director First Year Initiatives and Summer Bridge; Multicultural Center for Academic Success
- **Anne Walton:** Senior Academic Advisor; Department of Civil Engineering Technology, Environmental Management and Safety
- **Sandra Woodruff Whitmore, SPHR:** Senior Director of Operations & Deputy Title IX Coordinator; Division for Diversity & Inclusion



# Purpose and Goals of Partnerships in Pluralism

- Unique collaborative institute-wide program which builds campus relationships and develops an understanding of diversity
- Help facilitate a more interconnected and welcoming environment at RIT by utilizing dialogue to encourage interpersonal relationships between faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds
- Provide an opportunity to build trust and credibility among our community members through genuine dialogue

# Goal for Today

- Share the nuances of this uniquely successful program with the hope of inspiring others to create diversity enrichment programs at their respective universities

# Partnerships in Pluralism

## Learning Objectives

- Learning about the cultural and ethnic background of your partner, both broadly and specifically
- Learning about the socialization and risk-taking factors as people get to know each other
- Identifying key diversity issues that enhance the relationships between partners
- Identifying key diversity issues that enhance prospective future relationships across the campus



# History & Evolution

- The dialogue model is rooted in the “*One America*” initiative created by U.S. President Bill Clinton (1998)
- The “*One America*” program was based upon the assumption that dialogue invites discovery
- This model has been instrumental in heightening the awareness and understanding of diversity at RIT among Faculty and Staff

# Methodology

- Create diverse pairs of colleagues within the campus community, who might not otherwise be able to easily connect, and experience designed opportunities to become familiar with each other's cultural backgrounds



# Methodology

- Dialogue develops common values and allows participants to express their own interests around a variety of unspoken and charged diversity and multicultural issues, including: race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and special abilities

# How it works: Pairs

- Over 9 months, participants will be engaged in a designed experience that pairs them with another RIT community member of a different multicultural demographic feature
  - (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, religion, etc.)
- These partners will meet at their convenience approximately every two weeks
- Structured questions are given as guidelines for discussion

# Pairs' Responsibilities

- Pursue their partnerships in an enthusiastic and responsible manner in order to ensure the program's success
- Attend and participate in regular partnering sessions
  - Come prepared to utilize the structured questions
- Attend and participate in cluster meetings

# How it works: Cluster Groups

- Pairs will belong to “Cluster” groups, which will meet four (4) times during the nine (9) months
- In these cluster meetings, facilitators will meet to guide diversity learnings with groupings of other partner pairs

# How it works: Celebrations

- 1) Kickoff / Launch
- 2) Alumni Luncheon
- 3) Concluding Celebration / Graduation



# How it works: Evaluations

- 1) Cluster Meeting Evaluations
- 2) Partner Evaluations
- 3) Program Evaluations

# Results

- The creation of an increasingly interwoven network of diverse partners across campus, whose interactions help to make our campus “smaller” by:
  - enhancing community spiRIT
  - unifying our campus across differences
  - increasing our efficiency and effectiveness when serving students

# Success/Factors

- Support from University President/ stakeholders
- Dedicated time for administration of the program
- Collect and evaluate participants' feedback and implement changes/modifications (yearly?)



# Potential Challenges

- Confidentiality
- Managerial support for participants
  - Time constraints

# *Questions / Discussion*

# Contacts

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