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# To Be or Not to Be Another: Multiracial or Mixed Race

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## **To Be or Not to Be Another: Multiracial or Mixed Race**

### **Abstract**

*This session will explore recent conversations about developing an expanded view of identity in the U.S. The focus would be on the status of "multiracial" or "mixed race." This would also include discussion on how these categories would affect affirmative action and diversity initiatives in the context of higher education.*

### **Cecile Ann Lawrence, J.D., M.A.**

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The concept of race attempts to concretize and simplify. Some in the fields of biology and genetics, as well as anthropology argue that the concept of race is an illusion, while others in those same fields maintain that there is proof of biological difference based on race. Who is "right"? With pressure from those who choose not to check one box, this discussion is gaining more publicity. What would be the results of people identifying outside of the U.S. federal racial/ ethnic categories? Would this be an advance from false simplicity to true complexity or would be it an advance towards the position of those who advocate a position of "color-blindness"? Is it really necessary for anyone or more individuals to have a racial identity?

The objectives of this session would include:

- to raise awareness of the issue through discussing the most recent U.S. census, as well as organizations, conferences and movements on "mixed race" or "multiracial identity,"
- to review examples of issues and conflicts that can arise and have arisen on this topic, issues around power and control,
- to discuss how to continue to be an advocate for diversity, and
- to explore strategies for constructively addressing the issues.

### **Presenter**

**Cecile Ann Lawrence** has a master's degree and a law degree. She has over eleven years experience in a combination of higher education administration and teaching in two and four year colleges and universities and presents frequently at conferences, especially on the topic of diversity. She is currently at Tompkins Cortland Community College.