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Q12 / I IOTM- Answers to The Controversial Gallup Question: Do You Have A Best Friend at Work?

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Q¹² / I^{10TM} - Answers to The Controversial Gallup Question: Do You Have A Best Friend at Work?

Abstract

This interactive session will combine with audience participation and investigate various sentiments toward the controversial Gallup University.. Q¹² / I^{10TM} IMPACT 1 survey question. "Q^{10R} :Do you have a best friend at work?" and highlight the implications associated with "best friendlessness" for minority faculty and staff on predominantly white campuses.

Renita Tyrance

Director, Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services, Assistant Director, Nebraska Unions, Lincoln, NE

New to campus, the year the Q¹² / I^{10TM} 1 Survey was conducted initially, I didn't have a frame of reference for the passionate and very intense discussions I was exposed to surrounding the Gallup survey in general and the question "Do you have a best friend at work?" in particular. When I first heard the QIO question, it seemed quite odd to me. However; four years into my tenure at the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL), having established my own frame of reference and witnessing the changing dynamics of UNL's work place culture-- answering and understanding the implications of this question is imperative as we attempt to address the crucial need for interconnectivity among faculty and staff of color and lend some insight into the difficulty associated with recruiting and retaining faculty and staff at a predominantly white institution.

This interactive session will combine with audience participation and investigate various sentiments toward the much discussed Gallup University Q¹² / I^{10TM} 1 IMPACT 1 survey question, QI~: "Do you have a best friend at work?" and highlight the implications associated with "best friendlessness" for minority faculty and staff on predominantly white campuses.

Session participants will be asked if they have a best friend at work on an informal survey regarding their support networks on and off campus. We will do a quick analysis of the data, present the findings and a discussion will be facilitated on whether or not these networks (or absence of networks) correlate with the difficult task of keeping people of color on predominantly white campuses. This discussion is intended to shed some insight into the task associated with enhancing the experience developing professionals have on campuses where they are a shrinking minority.

Grafting the principles associated with W.E. B. Dubois' "Double Consciousness" and Peggy McIntosh's work on "White Privilege," into the conversation, this session promises to provoke considerations about the "Good Old Boy" and other systemic networks that create systems of hyper-vigilance (that lead to leaving institutions) in the absence of a trusted friend to "run things by", "bounce things off of" and/or ask "Was this crazy or am I imagining things?"

"Are we there yet?" If people of color on predominantly white campuses find it difficult to find some person or some group in their work place that they can connect with. The answer to the question may be no, but as we continue to engage one another in difficult but honest conversations and celebrate the victories that have been won/the progress that has been made--the

arduous task of righting centuries of wrong has the potential to forge the type of character in our humanity that is able to weather brutal storms and still look toward the future with hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Presenter

Renita Tyrance is the director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's (UNL) Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services (OASIS)-A Division of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Director of the Nebraska Unions.

Renita received her Bachelor of Science in Education: English and Social Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December of 1988. Her Master of Education degree was completed at UNL in Curriculum and Instruction in 1990. Currently she is a PhD student in Sociology at UNL.

In 2000, Renita returned to UNL (after ten years in public and private school education), started her graduate career as a Research Assistant in the department of Sociology and spent her second year as a graduate teaching assistant and Program Evaluator of the Ronald E. McNair Baccalaureate Project. She has been employed with the Nebraska Unions since September of 2000.

Her recent scholarly work involves co-authorship on "What Is It About The Walls? A Report on the Domestic Violence Services African American Women Receive in the Lincoln, Nebraska Area" a study commissioned by the Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center (RSAC), Friendship Home and the Family Violence Council to assess the response of domestic violence services to battered women in the African American community and to identify ways to improve this response.