

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

RIT



## 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 Meritocracy, Dimensions of Diversity at Work, Labor and Management Joint Efforts.

True Story Theater's mission is to build empathy, respect, and understanding across differences that divide us, 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 humanity.

<https://truestorytheater.com/about-us/about-true-story/>



**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, restorative justice, therapeutic justice, and sex trafficking. She served as the faculty advisor for the RIT Prelaw Association and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International from 1996-2016. She is also a past recipient of the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching.



## NSF AdvanceRIT Project (#1209115)

GOAL: Increase representation and advancement of women faculty. Funded in 2012, \$3.8 million received to date

AdvanceRIT Project Includes:

- Connectivity Series
- Connect Grants & Partnership Grants
- Implicit Bias Education Workshops
- Allies and Advocates Program
- NSF Faculty Data Indicators
- Dual Career Assistance Program
- Salary Equity Study & Dissemination
- Social science research – women of color and deaf and hard of hearing women faculty, lived experiences



"Reimagining our Careers and Campus Culture"

Reshape institutional culture and practice to promote a more inclusive and equitable working and learning environment at RIT while supporting the resilience, conviction, and courage of women faculty.

AdvanceRIT is now embedded within the Office of the Provost!

Program achievements can be found at: <https://www.rit.edu/nsfadvance/advance-rit-project-outcomes>

## AdvanceRIT Workshops

AdvanceRIT workshops focus on retention and advancement of faculty as well as organizational learning and development. From 2012 - 2019, we offered 50 unconscious bias-related events with a total of 500 unique women attendees and 350 unique men attendees. Examples of offerings include:

- Six large-scale annual workshops by the Michigan Players from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), focused on departmental climate, faculty search, promotion & tenure deliberations, campus inclusion for students, **sexual harassment**, and student mental health concerns – each workshop explores power, privilege and unconscious bias.
  - See POSTER: "Changing the Dialogue and Thinking on Campus Regarding Sexual Harassment through a University-level Workshop Series for Academic Leaders, Staff, and Faculty - Moving the Needle Parts I and II".
- Software Engineering Workshops were offered for various audiences (first year students, design team coaches, faculty) within RIT's Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences. Workshops focus on "Creating a Vibrant Learning Environment within Software Engineering". Read about participation feedback and evaluation results [here](#).



**Tina Chapman DaCosta** is the Director of RIT Diversity Theater which is a university wide program that advances diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives for faculty, staff, students, and community partners using theater-based methods. Professional facilitators and performance artists engage participants in meaningful experiences within the context of diversity and inclusion education. Live theatre, forum theatre, reader's theatre, film and other forms of visual and performance arts are used.

Initiatives grounded in the work of AdvanceRIT and Diversity Theater are creating momentum towards change in dialogue and thinking on our campus regarding how to achieve an inclusive campus environment and supportive campus culture. Workshops described in this poster were held from 2016 – 2019 at RIT within the College of Liberal Arts. The UW Center for Evaluation & Research for STEM Equity (CERSE) provided workshop evaluation.

## Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops (2016 – 2019)

Four years of annual bystander awareness workshops, often including various forms of theater, have been facilitated by **Tina Chapman DaCosta** 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.

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 on past workshop evaluation.



### Bystanders Matter

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends"

Martin Luther King, Jr.

### EACH WORKSHOP SETS UP THE NEXT WORKSHOP:

APRIL 2016 – Research talk on bystanders for RIT

MAY 2016; MAY 2017; NOV 2016 – Playback Theater for RIT

**OCT, NOV 2017; NOV 2018; OCT 2019 – Workshops for CLA**

### WHO IS A "BYSTANDER?"

Why do bystanders speak up or not?  
What are some strategies that I could use?

### CAN WE DO SOME MORE PRACTICE AND BUILD OUR SKILLS

And can we use "scenarios" based on real things that happen in meetings?

### WHAT IF THE BYSTANDER NEEDS TO SPEAK UP TO A PERSON WITH WHO HAS POWER?

Can several bystanders be ALLIES together?  
Can people with power be more mindful?

### GOING "UPSTREAM" –

"How do I know if it is making a difference?  
Where can I go for broader systemic support?"  
Before the bystander intervention.....

### STUDIES, STORIES, SYSTEMS IN RIT'S COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS - OCT 2019

90-minute, interactive workshop sessions were designed for faculty and staff combined and for academic leaders. The goals of these sessions were to bring awareness to the importance of being an active bystander in situations of microaggression. 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 DaCosta, the sessions included a panel discussion with Nancy McDonald-Stoler from HR, Stacy Derooy from Title IX and Compliance, and Joe Johnston from the RIT Ombud's Office.

## Evaluation Outcomes – based on OCT 2019 Workshops

### INITIAL SURVEY SUMMARY:

Increased self-awareness of personal role or perspective of others in bystander situations (7/24)

Concrete resources and methods to use in the future to speak up (7/24)

Increased understanding of the institutional process and how it may have changed (6/24)

Acknowledgement that more work is needed in being active bystanders, being aware, and to not be afraid to intervene (5/24)

44 Attendees

23 faculty

16 staff

5 leaders

### What will respondents do differently?

Use the guiding principles and resources taught (8/21)

Speak up and be more active when they see problematic behavior (6/21)

Listen and be aware (3/21)

Reflect on their own micro-aggressive behavior and the way they receive feedback (2/21)

### PURPOSE OF THE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY:

- 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 feel safe to be an active bystander
- To gather suggestions and comments to improve future workshops
- The follow-up survey was conducted 3 weeks after the event. 25 participants responded to the follow-up survey (57% response rate) with n = 9, 7, 5 from faculty, staff, leaders, respectively.

### CONVERSATION BETWEEN INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS:

- 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 maybe a selection bias issue rather than the result of an actual difference, given the low numbers of respondents.
- In both the initial and follow-up surveys, people asked for more emphasis placed on the training and offenses of tenured 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, May 2018, Nov. 2018, April 2019), Creating Vibrant Learning Environments (2017 and 2019), and 2018 and 2019 Michigan Players. Many of these evaluations included initial and follow-up surveys about 3 - 4 weeks after the event. The response rates have been great for these surveys, ranging from 71%-95% on the initial surveys to 38% to 71% on the follow-up surveys. These response rates suggest that these findings are likely representative of the population and should be taken seriously.

Selected Findings from Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops:

	2016 (2 weeks post)	2017 (4 weeks post)	2018, May (4 weeks post)	2018, Nov. (4 weeks post)	2019 (4 weeks post)
I am more aware of incidents on campus where bystanders would be useful	82%	79%	79%	88%	70%
I shared with others the idea of being an active bystander	73%	79%	80%	66%	50%
I have been an active bystander on campus (since attending workshop)	61%	50%	54%	22%	60%

Attendees reported greater self-efficacy and feel they can make campus a more inclusive place by being an active bystander. On many of these surveys, there were continued calls for more events like these.

Margaret Bailey, [mbbeme@rit.edu](mailto:mbbeme@rit.edu) LaVerne McQuiller Williams, [llmgcj@rit.edu](mailto:llmgcj@rit.edu)  
Tina Chapman DaCosta, [txcvks@rit.edu](mailto:txcvks@rit.edu) Carol Marchetti, [cemsma@rit.edu](mailto:cemsma@rit.edu)

Maureen Scully, [Maureen.Scully@umb.edu](mailto:Maureen.Scully@umb.edu)

RIT  
University of MA Boston

Support for this research was provided by the NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation program under Award No. 1209115. 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.