

## **Diversity Horizons: Creative Programming to Nurture Diversity Awareness for Library Staff**

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### **Abstract**

The Diversity Initiative Team at ASU's Fletcher Library will share our success creating Diversity Horizons, a monthly brown bag lunch series open to all library staff. Diversity Horizons invites speakers from the community to lead discussions and activities related to diversity. This program reinforces principles of respect and inclusion, and encourages staff to embrace the diversity found in every organization. Join us for strategies to develop this easy-to-implement speaker's program at your library.

# Diversity Horizons

## **Creative Programming to Nurture Diversity Awareness for Library Staff**

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# Fletcher Library Diversity Initiatives Team

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- Created in 2002 by Director Marilyn Myers
- Six team members appointed by the Library Director
- Team-related work is done outside of job description and counts only as Professional Contribution to the organization
- Low-to-no operating budget

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# Diversity Initiative Team

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## Mission

The Diversity Initiative Team promotes an inviting, supportive, rich, and diverse Library culture. We provide leadership to the organization by engaging with our constituencies to inspire, encourage, and enlighten about the practical value and vibrant promise of diversity.

## Vision

The Diversity Initiative Team envisions Fletcher Library as a place that reflects diversity in its employees. We aspire to build a culture of excellence founded on inclusion and respect of differences.

# Diversity Initiatives at Fletcher

- Specific activities and events aimed at promoting a cultural change related to diversity
- Planned and implemented by volunteers
- Emphasis on increasing cultural sensitivity, awareness and knowledge

# Diversity Training

## Reviewing the Literature

- Three fundamental goals
  - Creating awareness of discrimination and bias in an organization and using this awareness to improve the work environment
  - Having employees acknowledge their biases and prejudices and then learn skills such as conflict management to address biases in an effort to improve work relationships
  - Recognizing and capitalizing on diversity as an asset that can improve individual and organizational performance (Curtis, Dreachslin & Sinioris, 2007)

# Diversity Horizons

- Brown bag series of one-hour discussions
- Attendance is voluntary
- Held monthly at the team's discretion
- Local experts from the campus or community come to speak about an issue related to multiculturalism or diversity
- Time for questions and answers
- Release time is guaranteed for those not scheduled on service desks
- Snacks provided by a DIT member

# Building Relationships

- The best ingredient for increasing trust and comfort with diversity is friendship
- Personal interactions can effectively challenge preconceived notions that will hinder relationship-building
- Negative generalizations about an entire group will not be accepted if an individual has a friend who is a member of that group



# Building Relationships

- Diversity Horizons brings the experience of a personal interaction to staff members at Fletcher Library
- This exposure encourages staff to build relationships with people different from themselves

# Diversity Horizons

## Challenges

- What if we can't find a speaker?
- What if no one shows up?
- What if the topic is too sensitive?
- What if someone is offended?

## Rewards

- New connections across our campus and community
- Employees with a new perspective on a topic
- Employees who feel like they are accepted and celebrated

# Assessment

- Each program is followed up with a friendly email containing a link to a SurveyMonkey survey
- Surveys are collected and reviewed by the Team

Diversity Horizons Survey: October 2008 [Exit this survey >>](#)

**"Border Justice Series" by Dr. William Simmons: October, 2008**

Thank you for attending the Diversity Horizons brown bag lecture sponsored by the Diversity Initiative Team. We would greatly appreciate your input on our recent program so that we might get a better understanding of what issues and subjects would best serve the interest of the library staff and student workers. Please complete our evaluation form.

**1. Did you attend this event?**

Yes
No

**2. Please rate your enjoyment of this session.**  
Not at all 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 Very much 6  
Rating

**3. Please rate your value of this session.**  
Not at all 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 Very much 6  
Rating

**4. Were important issues related to diversity raised?**  
Not at all 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 Very much 6  
Rating

**5. Did you come away from the event with new or increased awareness?**  
Not at all 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 Very much 6  
Rating

**6. Was the information presented in an interesting way?**  
Not at all 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 Very much 6  
Rating

**7. Additional comments and/or recommendations.**

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[Next >>](#)

# Resources

Brief, Arthur (Ed.). (2008) *Diversity at Work*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Curtis, E.F., Dreachslin, J., & Senioris, M. (2007) Diversity and Cultural Competence Training in Health Care Organizations: Hallmarks of Success. *The Health Care Manager*, 26(3) 255-262.

Holladay, C., & Quinones, M. (2005, Winter) Reactions to Diversity Training: An International Comparison. *Human Resources Development Quarterly*, 16(4) 529-545.