



Contribution ID: 214

Type: Oral

Why Cultural Diversity Matters: Becoming Culturally competent

Friday, August 25, 2017 9:00 AM (30 minutes)

Research has shown that diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives leading to better decision making and problem solving, and leads to unfettered discoveries and breakthrough innovations. Even simply being exposed to diversity can change the way you think.

Professional development opportunities are needed to train faculty and staff to improve their ability to navigate issues of inclusion, equity, and cultural awareness, all of which improve research outcomes. Faculty and staff need training to address diversity factors directly whenever they mentor and teach non-traditional students. The training will help them avoid miscommunication, avoid privileging dominant cultural norms, and misappropriating expectations due to differing value orientations and work styles. Faculty must move away from the idea that science is neutral to cultural diversity factors and embrace the idea that cultural diversity matters.

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Session Classification: Plenary