Diversity training opens the eyes and promotes understanding

If someone said that Tri-C has a diverse workforce, you probably would think first of different races, cultures and perhaps religions. But the College’s new R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Diversity workshop will help you realize that the scope and influence of diversity extends far beyond our usual expectations!

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Diversity was introduced in June by the Department of Human Resources, Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity, as part of the College’s AQIP initiative. Its name stands for Responding, Enhancing, Serving and Producing Excellence in Cross-cultural Transactions.

As one of the goals of the AQIP initiative, the R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Diversity training has been designed as an introductory course to, in part, aid in creating an understanding of the importance of having a diverse faculty and staff, according to Sandra McKnight, vice president, Human Resources. “A diverse faculty pool will provide our students with exposure to a variety of instructors and teaching methods, and will contribute directly to the quality of education we offer.”

Despite its long name, the program’s objectives are relatively simple, said Gia Adeen, EEO/ADA analyst and a program trainer.

“It’s all about moving our understanding of diversity beyond race and gender, and promoting open and

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Families, food and fun make Employee Day a hit!

Almost 600 Tri-C employees and their families enjoyed the annual Employee Day outing in June at

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Families, food and fun
make Employee Day a hit!

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respectful communication and interaction,” she explained.

Fourteen College employees currently serve as program trainers for the workshop, which may be taken in one full-day or two half-day sessions. Workshops have been offered monthly since June, and more are planned in the fall.

A tulip in a rose garden

It’s a very interactive program, and participants learn to identify the many ways in which we can all be considered “different,” Gia noted. In addition to commonly cited differences such as race and gender, more subtle factors can play a major role in how we interact with each other.

Several exercises encourage participants to recognize how they feel in situations where they might be in the minority. You could be the lone Democrat in a discussion with Republicans, the only rock music fan spending an evening with classical music lovers, or even a District Office employee at a luncheon with a group of Western Campus staff.

“The interaction (of participants in the workshop) was reinforcement of the presentation. It really made me think.”

The workshop is designed to open the eyes of participants to the ways in which our differences often affect our attitudes, values and behaviors, Gia continued. “It’s a helpful reminder that we should be sensitive to differences, and remember what it feels like to be discriminated against for any reason.”

Preventing a “cultural train wreck”

In one segment of the training, the concept of a “cultural train wreck” is introduced. It’s based on the idea that our experiences cause us to develop certain expectations for our interactions with others, but we usually don’t state what those are. We tend to assume that others see things the way we do and value the same things we do.

“Unfortunately, other people may not realize that your expectations exist and may unintentionally do something that offends you, or that you misunderstand,” Gia explained. “This creates a ‘cultural train wreck’ and negatively affects the relationship.”

She cited a faculty member’s example of different thoughts about what classroom participation means. In Asian cultures, student participation equals attending class, being prepared and taking notes. The instructor, however, expects students (including Asian students) to participate by answering questions and contributing to discussions. Without further communication, the parties are on a collision course.

The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Diversity workshops are open to all full-time employees at the College. Those completing the workshop will earn one wellness credit. Registration can be completed via REGISTRAR. For more information, contact André Burton, director, Affirmative Action and Diversity, at extension 4772, or Gia Adeen at extension 4789.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Diversity trainers

EASTERN CAMPUS
Judith Barker, associate professor, Psychology
Cedra Westbrook, director, Human Resources

DISTRICT OFFICE
Gia Adeen, EEO/ADA analyst
André Burton, director, Affirmative Action & Diversity

Sandra McKnight, vice president, Human Resources
Claudia Motiu, Staffing recruiter
Myrna Villanueva, special assistant to the president of the College

METRO CAMPUS
Gary Carrington, counselor
Phyllis Dukes, counselor

WEDD/CORPORATE COLLEGE
Allie Dunham, district director III, Human Resources

WESTERN CAMPUS
Deborah Abbott, counselor/associate professor
Diana DelRosario, dean of Student Affairs (interim)
Haydeana Gaviria, Outreach and Retention coordinator
Christopher Hass, director, Human Resources
Retirement review

Congratulations, best wishes and thank you to the following employees who retired recently from the College:

**EASTERN CAMPUS**
- Constance Burnley, administrative assistant II, 28 years of service.
- Dr. Jacquelyn Jefferson, professor, Counseling, 37 years of service.
- Donald Jelfo, professor, History, 34 years of service.
- John Rose, assistant professor, Counseling, 32 years of service.

**METROPOLITAN CAMPUS**
- Dr. Evelyn Love, professor, Counseling, 29 years of service.
- Dr. Robert McDonough, professor, English, 30 years of service.
- Janice Melnick, program manager II, PN Credit Program, 16 years of service.

**WESTERN CAMPUS**
- Ronald Humphrey, instructor, Visual Communication and Design, 26 years of service.
- Janet Sebesy, assistant professor, Information and Technology, 15 years of service.

Families, food and fun make Employee Day a hit!

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As always, the prize drawing was a highlight of the day. In addition to the many gifts arranged by the Employee Day Committee, the following gifts were donated: a $100 gift certificate for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum Gift Shop from Dr. Jerry Sue Thornton; a $100 gift certificate for Mario’s Spa from Dr. Patricia Rowell; an entertainment gift pack including a CD player, pocket radio, *Chronicles of Narnia* DVD and various CDs from Dr. Michael Shoop; a $100 gift certificate for Blue Pointe Grill from Dr. Eric Radtke; and a $100 gift certificate for the House of Blues from Janet Mann.

Additional donations included a $75 gift certificate for Dick’s Sporting Goods from Dr. Jacquelyn Joseph-Silverstein; a $50 gift certificate for Applebee’s and a Malley’s chocolate candy box from David Reines; a gift basket with two tickets to a Lake County Captain’s game from Cleveland.com; two tickets to “Our Town” and “Jesus Christ Superstar” at the Porthouse Theater from Sun Newspapers; an “American Idol” gift bag from Fox 8; two certificates for family of four passes on the Miller Ferry to Put-in-Bay from WOIO 19; a promotional gift pack with a gift certificate for Famous Dave’s from Cleveland’s WB; and a gift bag including a Tim McGraw CD, Opry DVD and $20 gift certificate for Corleone’s from WQAR.

The dedicated Employee Day Committee, headed by Judy Karpowicz, included Deirdra Alexander, Jerry Bell, Mike Bistak, Andre Burton, Tina Darrisaw, Nicole Gifford, Ellen Janik, Marvin Pflaum, Mary Sender and Cedra Westbrook.
New features make using FSA more convenient

Automatic deductions at Walgreen’s

Your SmartFlex Debit Card offers a whole new level of convenience when you use the card at Walgreen’s. It can eliminate the need to send in receipts for reimbursement from your flexible spending account (FSA) and the wait for a reimbursement check.

Here’s how it works:

• When your purchases are rung up at the Walgreen’s counter, you present your SmartFlex card for payment. The register automatically will separate those items that are FSA-eligible and those that are not.

• The total cost of the FSA-approved items will be deducted from your SmartFlex Debit Card, assuming your account has sufficient funds to cover the cost. If not, you will be asked for another form of payment.

• The clerk will ask you for another form of payment for any part of your purchase that is not FSA eligible.

This new service currently is only available at Walgreen’s, as it is an initiative of VISA, the issuer of the SmartFlex card. There are plans to include all providers in the future.

Ordering FSA items online

Using a link on the Vantage Financial Web site allows you to purchase FSA-eligible items online and have the cost automatically deducted from your flexible spending account.

To access the link, go to www.vfgps.com. Use “ccc” as both the user name and password to log in. Click on “Flexible Benefit Plan,” then look for the link to Drugstore.com on the right half of the page. You’ll also find a link to Vantage Financial in the Benefits section of the Human Resources Web site.

Once at the Drugstore.com site, you may purchase both brand name and generic items and have the cost of FSA-eligible purchases automatically deducted from your SmartFlex Debit card. Shipping is free for orders totaling $25 or more.

You also may purchase non-FSA-eligible items, but you must use a separate form of payment to do so. Drugstore.com conducts regular sales, so check the site often but always use the link through Vantage Financial.

Reminder: Don’t delay if FSA receipts requested

If you’re not using one of the purchase methods that automatically determine if an item is FSA eligible (see related article), be sure to save your receipts. Then respond promptly if you get a letter requesting verification.

Here’s why: If you use your SmartFlex Debit Card and the purchase amount does not match one of the standard plan copayments, it cannot automatically be verified as eligible. As a result, you’ll probably be asked to supply a receipt that shows the date of the purchase, the specific name of the product purchased and the dollar amount.

“It’s critical to respond within two weeks or your debit card will be suspended and you will be unable to use it,” explained Lillian Welch, director, Benefits. “You may have to repay the amount in question, and it can be very time-consuming to reactivate the debit card.”

Medical Mutual offers discount fitness program

Medical Mutual subscribers can take advantage of GlobalFit, the nation’s largest fitness network offering memberships to fitness clubs at substantial discounts. You can save up to 60% on month-to-month memberships at clubs such as Power Shack, LifeStart, Club One and select Curves and Ladies Workout Express locations. Discounts also are offered for family members, as well as on home exercise equipment, workout videos and online diet tools.

For information, visit the “Members” section at www.MedMutual.com (select “Health and Wellness,” then “Fitness”), or call GlobalFit at 800-294-1500.
Update: 2005 medical benefits costs

Annual medical costs per employee

The annual medical costs per employee for all plans offered by the College rose 7.6% in 2005 to $7,915. This includes all expenses such as medical care, prescription drugs and administrative fees.

“This was in line with what we expected,” said Lillian Welch, director, Benefits.

She added that medical costs will continue to grow, based on such factors as an aging population, advances in technology and inflation, and she reminded employees of the following ways to help minimize costs:

- Use primary care physicians rather than specialists when possible.
- Make use of nurse call lines.
- Use in-network providers.
- Use generic drugs.
- Participate in wellness programs.
- Use the HealthCare Decision Tools available through the HR Web page to access information about hospital performance, experience and cost. (See article in the May-June 2006 issue of The HR Connection.)

Prescription drugs

Prescription drugs for Medical Mutual and QualChoice participants accounted for 20.5% of the total medical costs. This decrease from the previous year can be attributed to two factors, Lillian said. First, the College introduced a third tier in the drug formulary and adjusted copayments for brand name formulary drugs ordered by mail. Second, the overall nationwide trend of drug cost increases subsided last year.

Watch for additional updates on prescription drug costs and utilization in the next issue of For Your Benefit.