

Nominator: Ameji, Anjum
Nominee: Burruss, Andrea
Group (if applicable)
Dept: Counseling/Advising/Transfer
Class: Faculty
Value: Diversity
Submitted

Question 1:

How does the nominee demonstrate respect for all differences (e.g., race, gender, ethnic background, disabilities, sexual orientation, age, career levels, style, and opinions)?

At the Lakeshore campus many of our students face special challenges personally and academically. Andrea understands this and serves not only as an employee for the college, but as a reliable figure and mentor for our students. She takes her time with every student that walks into her office, and goes out of her way to make sure their needs are met. Whether they are in tears or just need help picking out their classes, Andrea makes time for them to be heard and helped. I admire the way she is comfortable with her pacing, and encourages other Staff to find and be celebratory of the pacing they need to work at, in order to be successful at their job.

Question 2:

Give an example(s) of how the nominee actively solicits opinions from many diverse perspectives and considers different ideas when making decisions.

Both Staff and students know Andrea is extremely competent personally and professionally. But what stands out about her is the humble and serving way in which she demonstrates it. I would like to share a story to illustrate this unique quality in Andrea. At CLC, We have many students and Staff of different physical abilities, sizes, shapes, and needs. Students with special needs, or body types, often suffer silently by going into offices where they are expected to be confident and well-poised, but do not have chairs or arrangements that fit their bodies comfortably and therefore make them feel embarrassed of self-conscious. Most people do not think about how this physical challenge can act as a barrier for success. But Andrea did. When she noticed some of her larger students were uncomfortable, trying to squeeze into her office chair, Andrea took the initiative to order a special sized chair through her department. It is not only a special sized chair. It is a very special chair that sends a very special message: That CLC, values accommodating respecting all abilities and sizes. I would like to point out, that this chair, does not look or feel like an oversized chair. In fact, it is luxurious and welcoming, upholstered with beautiful fabric, well built, soft, and extremely practical. It does not have handles, so it accommodates many different physical shapes. Someone who is six feet tall could fit in this chair, as well. She had made this chair available to each and every student, by placing by her desk-side. What I love about this story is the way little things can make a big difference. By making this little change, it has made a big difference in the comfort level of our students. Having access to an accommodating chair has become the standard in her office. And, to tell you the truth, it has made me want to raise the standard and comfort level in my office.

Question 3:

Give an example(s) of how the nominee enthusiastically works with all students, employees at all levels, and community members to capitalize on their strengths.

I want to share one more story with you that should tip over your nomination for Andrea! At CLC, and in Lake County, we have a sizeable Muslim population, But, if you have noticed there is actually very little physical representation of Muslim Staff and Students in the literature, brochures, and posters we present to the campus. This effects how welcome this minority group feels, and it affects their success personally and professionally. When Andrea had an opportunity to discuss this challenge with a Muslim CLC community member, she empathized. She verbally provided support and care, but that is not the most impressive way she demonstrated her empathy: she physically put up a poster on the counseling board in the hallway. We now have a Four Year University Transfer Poster with a student wearing a beautiful headscarf... I have had the chance to hear many students response to the poster and I see the way an image on a hallway can spark a change in people's awareness. That encourages me to transform my space, and make sure I am using every inch of my office to raise student awareness, and cultural sensitivity.

Additional Comments: