

**Motivating Bystander Intervention to Reduce Bias in Faculty Interactions**

Suzanna M. Rose, Kirsten Wood, and Sanaz Farhangi

Florida International University

Rose, S.M., Wood, K., & Farhangi, S. (2022, January). Motivating Bystander Intervention to Reduce Bias in Faculty Interactions, *ADVANCE Journal*, Oregon State University.  
DOI: 10.5399/osu/ADVJRNL.3.1.12

**Author Note**

Corresponding author: Suzanna Rose, Ph.D., Florida International University,  
[srose@fiu.edu](mailto:srose@fiu.edu), 305-609-4300.

### **Abstract**

Bystander intervention training programs increasingly are used to motivate individuals to intervene in interpersonal situations that are causing harm to others or are violating social norms of fairness. Here, we describe the creation of and immediate response to a Bystander Leadership™ intervention training program to reduce gender and race bias among faculty members. The program addresses the gender, racial, and cultural intersectionality of both U.S. and international faculty and uses a behavioral change approach to influence both individual and peer culture. Participants indicated that the workshop provided them with knowledge and practice to enact the five steps of bystander intervention in observed situations of bias and exclusion: *notice* and *interpret* the experience of others as different from one's own; lead by taking responsibility to intervene; decide what to do; and act to intervene. They reported being equipped with concrete tools and a sense of efficacy to intervene in future incidents.

*Keywords:* racialized gender bias, race bias, gender bias, implicit bias, racialized gender, embodied learning, inclusion, climate, bystander intervention, intersectionality

### **Motivating Bystander Intervention to Reduce Bias in Faculty Interactions**

Recognition of bias against women and racial minorities in the United States (U.S.) has increased recently due to activist movements such as those opposing the sexual assault of women (#MeToo) and racial assaults on Black people (#BlackLivesMatter). This surge has amplified interest in identifying programs to reduce prejudice and increase inclusion in the workplace, including at colleges and universities. Bystander intervention training programs are a proven effective strategy to influence observers' behavior in interactions involving harm to another person (Mujal et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2011). Bystander intervention is a broad term that describes the actions (or inaction) in a potentially urgent situation when the bystander is present but not initially involved (Mazar, 2019). Interventions include getting physically or verbally involved, involving someone else (such as an authority figure), or supporting the person being harmed. Intervention training prepares the bystander to notice and act to interrupt the event.

At the individual level, bystander training has resulted in a reduction of sexual assaults on college campuses by educating students to intervene safely with peers to prevent assault (Coker et al., 2016). Bystander training also has succeeded in reducing racial bias (Nelson et al., 2011), and school-based bullying (Polanin et al., 2012), as well as increasing workplace safety (Otto et al., 2014). Training that includes an experiential, embodied behavioral change approach is particularly impactful: repeated practice sessions throughout the day help participants integrate new concepts and move from cognition to action by experimenting with different ways of taking action (Scully & Rowe, 2009). Bystander intervention training also supports organizational change by engaging numerous individuals in a similar behavior change process at the same time, if done within an institutional context of readiness for change (Wirth, 2004).

In this article, we describe the creation of and the immediate responses of faculty participants to the Bystander Leadership™ Program. The program was designed to decrease bias and increase inclusion at the individual and organizational levels within a university setting. The immediate goal was to improve the recruitment, retention, and climate for faculty women in STEM, used here specifically to denote Black and Latinx women. The long-term goal was to increase the commitment to inclusive excellence among faculty in all disciplines. Inclusive excellence is defined as the “active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity” in ways that increase our personal and social “awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication and empathetic understanding” of one another (AACU, 2012). Our behavioral approach first aims to change behavior at the individual level by taking into account the unique intersectional identities of the bystanders —specifically the gender, race, and cultural heritage of international and U.S. faculty. At the experiential level, the training enables the participants to embody the skills they have learned by practicing them in live interventions. Institutional change is propelled by engaging a critical mass of faculty in bystander training, thereby, extending the importance of inclusive behavior to peer groups and departments.

### **Creating the Bystander Leadership™ Program**

#### ***Institutional Context***

Florida International University, hereafter FIU, began in 2011 to prioritize faculty diversity in STEM with funding provided by a National Science Foundation ADVANCE Partnerships for Adaptation, Implementation, and Dissemination (PAID) grant. The University of Michigan ADVANCE program was the partner on the grant. At the time, a majority of FIU’s 42,000 students were Latinx (59%) and 57% were women. FIU ranked first in the nation among four-year colleges for awarding bachelor’s and master’s degrees to Latinx students (Cooper,

2015). FIU also ranked first in the U.S. for the number of degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities in the STEM fields (Excelencia in Education, 2015). However, women constituted only 11% of tenure-track faculty in STEM and only 1.5% were women of color.

FIU's PAID grant focused on three activities: (a) implementing the Strategies and Tactics to Increase Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) workshops concerning best practices for hiring faculty developed by the University of Michigan ADVANCE program; (b) interactive theater performances; and (c) leadership skills education for women faculty. The PAID project had a positive impact. By 2015, women represented 18% of tenure-track STEM positions, an increase of seven percent over five years, suggesting that the STRIDE workshops had been influential. Improvements also were evidenced by the results of the Harvard COACHE faculty satisfaction survey, conducted every three years, with women faculty reporting greater satisfaction by 2015 on measures of faculty mentoring, research support, and hiring.

By 2016, we felt confident that we had laid the groundwork for inclusive excellence during the NSF PAID years by motivating faculty to change typical processes such as faculty searches. The STRIDE workshops for members of faculty search committees emphasized why change was important by explaining the concept of unconscious bias, presenting empirical evidence that it affected hiring and evaluations, and suggesting objective practices to reduce bias. Initially, the deans of three colleges that included the STEM and Social and Behavioral Science (SBS) disciplines embraced the STRIDE workshops as a requirement for participation on search committees. Furthermore, STRIDE attendance was required once every three years, sending a powerful message about priority and importance. Over the five years of the PAID project, sixty percent of the tenure-track faculty in the selected colleges had attended one or more STRIDE

workshops. STRIDE's reception was strong. During 2012 to 2016, three hundred ten faculty completed a STRIDE evaluation survey. Their average score for the usefulness of the workshop in their practice was 4.24 (where 5= very useful). Qualitative responses from that period indicated that faculty felt more invested in addressing problems of unconscious bias when the workshops incorporated more "active learning" components. Numerous faculty also expressed needing additional practical training in how to effect change in their departments.

The other two PAID activities, including the four Interactive Theater performances provided by the CRLT Players from the University of Michigan and the Leadership Skills training for women faculty, also were highly attended and enjoyable. This contributed to a positive climate of engagement and the development of a community of support for inclusive goals. The strength of the programs was attributed to their interactive, experiential format.

All three of the FIU PAID activities were institutionalized in 2016 with the establishment of the Office to Advance Women, Equity and Diversity (AWED) as part of the Office of the Provost, including STRIDE, interactive theater (now FIU's AWED Theater), and the Women Faculty Leadership Institute. Several department chairs reported that the activities resulted in the widespread engagement of faculty in departmental discussions of how to reduce implicit biases within their departments and colleges.

### ***Motivation and Readiness for Bystander Leadership™***

I know what the best practices are, but I don't know what to do when my colleagues refuse to follow them.

—Anonymous Faculty Member

When STRIDE participants returned to ask, "**how** do I make these practices happen in my department?", we recognized that the next step towards increasing inclusive excellence would be

to provide faculty with the *means* to influence interactions and processes within their departments and on inter-departmental committees. We viewed our decision to focus on behavioral change in our NSF Institutional Transformation (IT) proposal as the next necessary stage of development for ADVANCE programs.

The first fifteen years of ADVANCE programs produced a wealth of excellent evidence-based practices, policy changes, and institutional structures (Stewart & Valian, 2018).

ADVANCE Programs targeted diversity and inclusion problems in academia that can be considered apart from other institutions because of the professional bureaucracy and shared governance models that regulate it. As Kezar (2018) noted, these two characteristics lead to dual power and authority as well as valuing collegiality. It also results in a loosely coupled system which means uncoordinated, more differentiated highly specialized workers who are driven by a complex set of complex values. All these characteristics add to the complexity of making sustained cultural changes in higher education institutions.

Moreover, the internal dynamics of academic departments appeared to be difficult to influence consistently with these institutionally prescribed top-down strategies such as required STRIDE workshops. Hiring is a critical—and often protracted—process in faculty and departmental life but encouraging best practices in that domain alone does not guarantee equitable and inclusive treatment of faculty over time (Stewart & Valian, 2018).

We predicted that a behavioral intervention approach might be effective at changing peer group norms by interrupting exclusionary or inequitable norms, policies, and practices. Internal climate surveys conducted in 2010 and 2013 identified department climate as a particularly intractable issue. One concern was the uneven adoption of STRIDE best practices by faculty search committees. Also, women in both years reported feeling less respected by the faculty in

their departments, being taken less seriously in meetings, and encountering unwritten rules or norms concerning how to interact with colleagues. Department climate contributed to low morale among women, especially Latinx and Black women, and appeared to increase the time for promotion from associate to full professor. For Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) women, a major concern was the lack of leadership opportunity. Although women represented 40% of the faculty in SBS, few were chair, a position that often is a prerequisite for higher administrative roles.

Based on the theory of “diffusion of innovations” (Rogers, 2003), we expected that the faculty who were already committed to equity goals would be the early adopters and quick to pick up the tools offered in the workshops. Diffusion is defined as “the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (Rogers, 2003, p. 5). The threshold model of diffusion posits that an individual engages in a behavior based on the proportion of people in the social system that are already engaged in that behavior (Granovetter, 1978). The rate of adoption of innovation varies, depending upon the innovation type, opinion leaders and types of adopters. Those with low thresholds, or early adopters, engage in collective behavior before many others do. Others are slower to adopt but do so because they are concerned with professionalism or are awaiting how concerns are resolved by others before adopting. Those with high thresholds only engage after most of the group has adopted the behavior. The diffusion of innovation is dependent on an individual’s networks, i.e., the set of direct ties he or she has within a social system (Welhnan, 1988). Theoretically, 40% is the proportion of a demographic that is required for full acceptance of a change to begin (e.g., Tolbert, Simmons, & Rhee, 1995). At 40% participation, an accelerated rate of adoption of innovation occurs (e.g., Izraeli, 1983). Thus, we expected that once 40% of faculty in each



department adopted the new behavioral intervention skills, there would be enough bystander leaders to make the new behaviors the departments' accepted norm.

We envisioned Bystander Leadership™ as incorporating both interactive theater and embodied learning based on the benefits provided earlier. Interactive theater is an effective educational tool where a performance is intersected by activities designed to enhance learning (Bird & Donelan, 2020). The performance acts as a method of cultural awareness and change by causing the audience to reflect on themselves and others (Alexander, 2005). Action also has an extraordinary impact on learning. Embodied cognition is a term that cognitive scientists have coined to describe the effect that behavior has on the brain and emotions (Davis & Markham, 2012). Physically engaging in an action is critical to the processing of cognition and produces different effects than simply observing or discussing another's actions. Research on embodied effects on cognition suggest that engaging in an unfamiliar behavior may subsequently affect perceptions or attitudes (Kontra et al., 2012). Thus, we expected that actively engaging in practice interventions would influence participants' future attitudes and behaviors.

A second innovative aspect of our approach concerned the importance of including intersectionality into the Bystander behavior change framework. Intersectionality refers to the interconnections of race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group and to the overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage they may create (Cole, 2009; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). The interest in intersectional identities led us to deeply explore the demographic makeup of FIU's STEM departments since an increasing number of STEM faculty at U.S. universities are international. For instance, nearly 39 percent of doctoral degrees in STEM in 2018 were conferred on international scholars, mostly men. About 30 percent of these graduates took jobs in academia. Similarly, a substantial majority (85%) of

FIU's engineering faculty were international scholars, largely from Asia, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe (Rose & Farhangi, 2016).

Cultural diversity is critical for innovation, creativity, discovery and flourishing of STEM fields (Jones et al., 2020), but simultaneously complicates the task of explaining biases in inclusive education programs. For instance, cultural values can moderate gender stereotypes. In the U.S., men are stereotyped as "self-oriented" and women as "other-oriented," but Koreans stereotype Korean men as "other-oriented" and Korean women as "self-oriented" (Cuddy et al., 2010).

Additionally, perceptions of departmental climate may not be homogenous within a department. Ackelsberg and her colleagues (2009) defined microclimate as the conditions or microenvironments that women of color might experience that differ from the department's general environment as experienced by most of their colleagues. Distinct departmental microclimates also exist for different cultural groups (Ackelsberg et al., 2009). For instance, at FIU, some international faculty and their colleagues all speak their native (non-English) language, thereby creating a microclimate that fosters a sense of belonging among themselves, but that may also exclude other nationalities and language speakers. Given the highly implicit nature of modern discrimination (Ellemers & Barreto, 2015), we concluded that it was important to explore if and how the cultural values and practices of international faculty affected the microclimates of STEM departments and their receptiveness to STEM women.

Consequently, FIU focused its ADVANCE institutional transformation proposal on developing a Bystander Leadership™ Program that combined the tools of interactive theater and embodied learning with the lens of intersectionality to enable participants to intervene in situations of gender, race, or racialized gender bias in faculty interactions. The goal was to

provide faculty with tools to respond against interpersonal and systemic bias, promoting change that strengthens inclusivity.

In 2016, NSF funded FIU's ADVANCE IT proposal, enabling FIU to develop the Bystander Leadership™ Program as a distinctive feature of its inclusive excellence programming, and to test its effectiveness at reducing bias and increasing inclusion.

### *The Discovery and Preparation Process*

The Bystander Leadership™ Program took 1.5 years to develop before its launch. Preparation included conducting the intersectionality and microclimate research, preparing the facilitation team, and developing and then pilot testing the program components.

**Intersectionality and Microclimate Research.** We intended this project to provide case materials for the Bystander workshop by exploring the views of international faculty concerning women in STEM, particularly Black and Latinx. The theory of intersectionality was used as the general framework for the study. Shields (2008) defined intersectionality as “the mutually constitutive relations among social identities” (p. 301). Crenshaw (1989) originally proposed the term to describe interlocking oppressions of racialized gender stereotypes experienced by Black women that separate laws against either racism or sexism did not address. The concept also is a tool for understanding the interlocking privileges of White people or other dominant groups (Levine-Rasky, 2011). Thus, we used an intersectionality approach to learn about the identities and beliefs of international STEM faculty as well as U. S. women of color.

The intersectionality-microclimate research was a qualitative study conducted using focus groups and semi-structured interviews with forty STEM and SBS tenure-line faculty from eighteen departments. Interviews included eighteen faculty (five women, thirteen men). We also conducted four focus groups with twenty-two faculty, including two groups with nine women

and two with thirteen men. All participants were tenure-track STEM or SBS faculty. The questions explored participants' gender and racial stereotypes, perceptions of their workgroup, the power dynamics of their departments, and how family friendly they were. Participants reflected on the politics of promotion, their experience of working with senior colleagues, and interactions that helped or hindered their careers. The authors reviewed the transcribed recordings to identify rich descriptions of events that happened at FIU. Then, the events were modified for use as case studies in the workshop. The authenticity of the case studies contributed to the effectiveness of the Bystander program.

**Developing the Bystander Facilitation Team.** The STRIDE faculty facilitation team formed most of the core of the Bystander team. The team included ten to twelve tenured faculty members representing different genders, races, ethnicities, and nationalities from a cross-section of departments and colleges.

Developing and running the Bystander Leadership™ Program required a very high level of commitment. The team met bi-weekly during the academic year for three hours, with 1.5 hours dedicated to Bystander and 1.5 hours to STRIDE. Meetings included discussions on social science studies and practicing a gender or race bias experiential exercise. These activities both deepened team members' knowledge of the relevant scholarly research concepts and created opportunities to have difficult discussions about the effectiveness and impact of the exercises. For each year of participation, faculty had the option of a summer stipend or a course release to compensate them for their time.

Many of the team members were in STEM disciplines where interactive teaching was not the norm or where the material did not lend itself to discussing sensitive topics such as racism,

sexism, and intersectionality. Professional development opportunities helped them deepen their personal understanding of bias and learn how to facilitate discussions on these topics.

Two consultants visited FIU to provide the initial training, including in-depth presentations on *Breaking the Bias Habit*® (WISELI, 2015), offered by Patricia Devine, and *Bystander Intervention and Bias in Academe*, offered by Stephanie Goodwin, Inclusion Works, Inc. These activities provided components of our workshop, while enlisting team members as participants in peer-learning activities.

Two additional on-site activities were offered to team members that provided a common foundation of experience. The first was a one-day train-the-trainer workshop that included the Bystander™ (BitB) training, a prevention program that aims to improve participants' bystander self-efficacy and reduce rape myth acceptance (Banyard et al., 2004). We viewed this program as a model that is similar to what we wanted to create as an intervention program focused on racialized gender norms and biases. The second on-site activity was a one-day workshop on Building an Inclusive Workplace, offered by two external consultants from The Praxis Group of St. Louis, Missouri. Through a series of pair-sharing activities, team members also practiced active listening and perspective-taking, crucial skills for facilitating the bystander training program.

Serving on the team had benefits for members, including administrative assignments, the chance to evaluate whether and how they may want to advance in leadership and the kind of experiences that could help them do so. Through their high visibility in the workshops, Bystander team members expanded their faculty networks beyond their units. In addition, team members enhanced their skills in perspective-taking and equitable facilitation, activities that transferred to their research collaborations and teaching. Finally, team members were supported

during the meetings. Members explored issues arising from their own work with Bystander or other DEI programs, proposed new initiatives, or addressed topics of personal concern.

**Creating and Testing the Bystander Components.** The workshop was planned as a full-day event (7.5 hours) following a structure based on the five stages of bystander intervention proposed by Latane and Darley (1970): notice a situation, interpret it as requiring action, lead by assuming responsibility to help, know how to help, and then act. The team then sought or developed content to address each step, including theater skits, experiential exercises, case studies, and readers' theater scripts.

Jeffrey Steiger served as a consultant and creative director to develop the interactive theater component. Mr. Steiger previously was the playwright and founding creative director of the CRLT Players at the University of Michigan. He developed and directed two skits that incorporated the intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity for use in the workshop. Using professional actors, these skits present common dilemmas in academic life—such as an off-color joke in the workplace or a difficult mentor-mentee relationship—and invite participants to draw on their own experiences as a resource to help them interpret the interactions and the barriers to intervention from multiple perspectives.

The team practiced the materials for the experiential exercises and the case studies drawn from the microclimate study repeatedly within the team before pilot testing them on different audiences, including groups of colleagues and classes of students. In the pilots, the team gained facilitation experience by asking questions to elicit participation, tested the logistics by pacing the activities and learned how to respond to hostile or disengaged participants. Facilitators gathered information about whether the audiences successfully noticed and interpreted the problems written into the skits, information that was used in fine-tuning each script. Overall,

more than thirty test trials occurred before finalizing the content, giving team members confidence in the scenarios and experience facilitating the components.

The original plan was to rotate pairs of team members to act as facilitators for each component. However, once we piloted the full-day workshop, the need for a lead facilitator to provide continuity throughout the day became apparent. Dr. Kirsten Wood, AWED Associate Director, accepted this role. These pilots confirmed the importance of reliance on faculty members to perform in the skits; the use of faculty peers reinforced the message that both the problems represented in the scenarios and the possible solutions reflected the real experiences of faculty. As a result, the scenarios could not easily be rejected as the view of outsiders who do not understand faculty life. The involvement of faculty, none of whom are professional actors, also reduced participants' anxiety about attempting their own practice interventions.

Additional modifications to the materials reflected two linked challenges: the toll of enacting bias incidents and the difficulty of communicating intersectionality to our audience. One strategy that we thought would highlight racialized gender involved running a sketch about a faculty woman's committee service twice: once with a White woman in the key role, and a second time with a Black woman in the role. With one pilot audience (our External Advisory Board, a highly informed and invested group), the participants were sensitive to the operation of racialized gender norms in how they perceived and responded to the situation. Notably, other test audiences perceived the Black woman as more capable of speaking for herself than her White counterpart and proposed fewer interventions on her behalf. The Black faculty member felt uncomfortable with the implication of less urgency to intervene when she filled the role compared to when a White woman was involved. This episode captured both the hazard of

inviting Black or other minoritized faculty to embody performances of bias and the difficulty of getting faculty to focus on the intersection of race and gender.

It was clear our workshop needed to scaffold participants' learning throughout the day, building gradually towards greater individual participation and performance. Concurrently, we were committed to having as little didactic material as possible to maintain a high involvement. Thus, the morning session included a short presentation introducing key concepts, experiential exercises, the interactive theater presentation with professional actors, and a skit performed by the faculty facilitators. The morning also included participant reflections on their own identities and experiences.

Only after completing this sequence did participants practice interventions with each other, using case studies and scripts in which participants filled all the roles. This gradual movement towards embodied behavior reduced the anxiety that participants might feel when asked to do a public intervention, while also reducing the risks that participants would feel harmed by their peers' interventions (or lack of). In addition, our experiences in the pilot stage showed the importance to inform participants that they might become uncomfortable, that they were welcome to decline to participate in an exercise if they preferred, and that staff members were available to escort a distressed participant to the appropriate university support offices, if needed.

Challenges in the pilot stage also made it clear that the intersectional aspects of interventions might not be as obvious in a single day of training as hoped. While intervention is part of daily life for some faculty, it is unfamiliar to many more. We expected that there would be a need for subsequent "booster sessions" in which faculty who have attended the workshop can practice their intervention skills and deepen their understanding of topics already discussed.



**Bystander Leadership™ Workshop**

The workshop began by noting the importance of an inclusive workplace and attracting and retaining underrepresented faculty. Next, the lead facilitator introduced the five steps of Bystander intervention. Each step was presented sequentially throughout the day (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Bystander Leadership™ Workshop Agenda and Components*

Agenda		Component	Intervention Step	Content	Format
8:30am-9:30am	1. Introductions & intersectionality exercise		1. Notice	Intersectionality exercise	Experiential
9:30-10am	Unconscious bias-IAT	Insight	1. Notice	Implicit bias	Didactic
10-11:15am	Interactive theater		1. Notice & 2. Interpret	Interactive theater with professional actors	Observational, experiential
11:15-12:45pm	Interventions table		1. Notice & 2. Interpret	Self- and peer group exploration	Experiential
11:45-12:30pm	Third year review skit		1. Notice & 2. Interpret	Self- and peer group exploration	Observational, Experiential
12:20-1pm		Lunch			
1-1:45pm	Doctoral student selection skit and readers'theater	Action	3. Lead (take responsibility)	Intervention table (four response categories)	Didactic
			3. Lead	Third year review skit	Embodied behavior
2:45-3:45pm	Two skits with role play		4. Decide on action	Participant-enacted readers' theater with interventions	Embodied behavior
1:45-2:45pm	Case studies with role play		4. Decide & 5. Act	Case studies enacted with interventions	Embodied behavior
2:45-3:45pm	Two skits with role play		4. Decide & 5. Act	Two skits and practice interventions	Embodied behavior
3:45-4:30pm	Discussion and evaluation				Conversational

As shown in Table 1, the first two steps, *notice* and *interpret*, were identified as the *insight components*. The remaining steps, *lead*, *decide* and *act*, were the *action components*. The *insight component* focused on exploring the naturally occurring individual differences within the workshop peer group to encourage participants to engage in Steps 1 and 2, *notice* and *interpret* the experience of others as different from oneself. Three additional concepts were incorporated into the insight component, including intersectionality, implicit bias, and the distinction between

intent and impact.

- Intersectionality was explained as being how one's assigned identities, such as gender, race, social class origin, and country of origin, might affect one's ability to notice that people with other identities might perceive a situation quite differently from oneself.
- Implicit bias was described as the subconscious attitudes one has about other people, which develop through one's immersion in a culture. Often based on stereotypes about characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity, implicit bias often impedes one's ability to notice and interpret interpersonal interactions with people whose identities incorporate different combinations of characteristics.
- Intent versus impact referred to an important distinction to make concerning one's statements or actions. The noticing and interpreting steps require that one acknowledge the possibility of disjuncture between intentions and impact and seek to take appropriate responsibility for the impact of one's statements and actions.

The group exercises for the insight component were aimed at changing social norms in two ways: (a) by illustrating that one's social position shapes what one knows and (b) by revealing that underlying and/or perceived differences can contribute to divergent interpretations of events among peers, regardless of the shared status as faculty members in a department and institution. In this exercise, peers learn from each other that misperceptions and assumptions--whether of similarities or differences--impede mutual understanding and can impair faculty's sense of belonging in an academic unit. The *action component* engaged participants in the lead, decide, and act steps. Taking the first step, to lead, involves a cost-benefit analysis by the bystander that often depends on the person's intervention skill set. Having a range of intervention responses in one's behavioral repertoire helps to reduce the real and imagined risks

associated with intervening. For this reason, a typology of bystander intervention behaviors proposed by Bowes-Sperry and O’Leary-Kelly (2005) was modified to apply to events pertaining to bias in faculty interactions and used to educate participants about the range of response options available to them (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008). The typology categorizes interventions along two dimensions: (a) immediacy of the intervention (immediate or delayed) and (b) level of involvement (high or low). Participants practiced Steps 3, 4, and 5, using any combination of response options that they deemed appropriate to the simulated situation, their intersecting identities, and their position within the university.

## **Methodology**

### ***Procedure, Participants, and Evaluation Measure***

Seventeen Bystander Leadership™ workshops occurred over four semesters from 2018-2020, each with an average of 24 participants per group (range was from twelve to twenty-seven). A stable team of eight to ten faculty facilitators led each workshop.

Faculty participants were recruited by email and incentivized by a minimum of \$100 for attending the workshop.<sup>1</sup> A week before the workshop, they were urged to confirm their full-day attendance and to take an Implicit Association Test focusing on gender and/or race before attending. Attendance for the workshop was 316 participants, including 305 FIU faculty members and eleven staff or guests from other universities. As shown in Table 2, about 45.3% were women and 54.7% were men. The majority were White (50%), followed by Asian (24.7%),

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<sup>1</sup> A subset of participants that included tenure-track STEM and SBS faculty received a maximum incentive of \$325 for participating in a pre-test and two post-tests as well as the workshop. This subset was for the participants in one of the two research studies required by NSF for Institutional Transformation grant proposals; the funds were provided as participant incentives. This was an IRB approved study. Non-STEM and non-SBS faculty received \$100 for their participation, paid by FIU funds. These results are in preparation.

Latinx (17.4%) and Black (7.9%). The average age was 49.7 ( $SD = 10.9$ ). Most were tenured or tenure-track faculty members (73.3%). About 53.5% were international faculty. The sciences, engineering, and social and behavioral sciences were represented about equally (25.5%, 25.3%, and 21.5%, respectively); the remaining 24.5% were from other disciplines.

**Table 2**

*Demographic characteristics of workshop and evaluation participants*

Demographic Characteristics		Workshop Participants $N = 316$	Evaluation Participants $N = 299$
Gender	Male	173 (54.7%)	135 (42.2%)
	Female	143 (45.3%)	151 (50.5%)
	Not reported	0	13 (4.3%)
Race	Asian	78 (24.7%)	64 (21.4%)
	Black	25 (7.9%)	25 (8.4%)
	Latinx	55 (17.4%)	50 (16.7%)
	White	158 (50.0%)	139 (46.5%)
	Not reported	0	21 (7.0%)

Also as shown in Table 2, the final sample included responses from the 299 faculty (94.6% of attendees) who completed an evaluation at the end of the workshop. In order to ensure anonymity, participants only identified their gender and race/ethnicity, and type of position (i.e., faculty or other) on the evaluation. The gender and racial/ethnic characteristics of the evaluation participants were comparable to those reported for the group as a whole. About 42.2% identified as men and 50.5% as women; 4.3% did not respond. The race/ethnicity breakdown was 46.5% White, 21.4% Asian, 16.7% Latinx, 8.4% Black; 7% did not respond.

Fifteen quality control items were included in the evaluation, asking participants to rate

(using a 5-point Likert scale) the clarity or effectiveness of the concepts including: the 5-step intervention process; the major concepts (purpose, implicit bias, intersectionality, intent vs impact); the intervention options; and the format of the activities (i.e., interactive theater, the faculty-led interactive scenarios, four skits, and the case studies).

Five outcome measures also were included. Two items assessed the extent to which the workshop provided them with concrete behavioral interventions they could use and prepared them to take action in the future. The remaining outcome measures took the form of open-ended questions: what the most significant aspect of the workshop was; what they would apply to interactions with colleagues; and what they might do differently in the future.

Overall, participants' ratings of the effectiveness of the fifteen quality control items were overwhelmingly positive. As shown in Table 3, the average score for all items ranged between 4.04 to 4.76 on a 5-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree or very effective). However, mean ratings show that we were somewhat less successful in the concepts of intersectionality or intent versus impact.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the scenarios we devised were somewhat more effective in representing gender and race issues than representing intersectionality.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A non-parametric Friedman test of differences of the distribution of Likert ratings for each item revealed a significant effect,  $\chi^2= 241.19$  ( $p<0.001$ ). Subsequent Dunn-Bonferroni post hoc tests verified that intersectionality and intent vs. impact concepts were different from all other items. ( $p<0.001$ ).

<sup>3</sup> The same analysis for representation items showed that our scenarios did not represent intersectionality as well as race or gender issues. ( $\chi^2(2)=164.46$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Table 3**

*Quality Control Comparisons of Effectiveness of the Workshop Components*

Workshop Component	Mean Evaluation (SD)	Percent of Participants Endorsing Ratings	
		Lowest Ratings (1 and 2)	Highest Ratings (4 and 5)
<b>CONCEPTS<sup>1</sup></b>			
Purpose of the Bystander workshop	4.72 (0.54)	0.70%	97.60%
Implicit bias	4.61 (0.59)	0.00%	94.30%
Intersectionality	4.22 (0.83)	2.70%	97.60%
Intent vs. impact	4.30 (0.79)	2.40%	85.90%
Five-step process of bystander intervention	4.72 (0.52)	0.30%	97.30%
Four types of intervention	4.67 (0.60)	1.00%	95.10%
<b>FORMAT<sup>2</sup></b>			
Interactive theater	4.58 (0.78)	2.30%	92.60%
Faculty team performed skits	4.73 (0.68)	2.00%	96.70%
<b>SCENARIOS<sup>2</sup></b>			
Third year review	4.60 (0.72)	2.70%	94.90%
Doctoral student selection	4.55 (0.67)	1.70%	95.30%
Case studies	4.54 (0.68)	1.00%	92.20%
Exclusion from committee	4.67 (0.63)	1.40%	96.20%
Intersectionality	4.12 (0.86)	5.40%	83.40%
Gender Issues	4.70 (0.62)	1.70%	96.00%
Race issues	4.51 (0.69)	2.00%	92.90%

<sup>1</sup>Likert scale, 5-points, 5=extremely well explained; <sup>2</sup>Likert scale, 5-points, 5=strongly agree were effective.

**Results**

***Participant Responses to the Bystander Leadership™ Workshop***

The two outcome measures indicated that the workshop prepared participants to take action in the future. The mean ratings for both items were high (5-point scale, 5= strongly agree): Item 1, “The workshop provided me with concrete behavioral interventions that I could use.” (M

= 4.23,  $SD = 0.75$ ) and Item 2, “The actual practice of intervening prepared me to take action in the future.” ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ).

Significant gender and race/ethnicity effects<sup>4</sup> also were found for Item 1: “The workshop provided me with concrete behavioral interventions that I could use.” Specifically, women had a higher mean score on this item ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) than men ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). For the same item, Latinx faculty had a higher mean score ( $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) than Whites ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ); the other two groups did not differ significantly. There also was a significant gender difference found for the second outcome measure, “The actual practice of intervening prepared me to take action in the future.” Women had a higher mean score on this item ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ) than men ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 1$ ), but there was no significant race/ethnicity effect.

A final item asked how well the scenarios and discussions reflected what sometimes happens between colleagues. Although this item was highly ranked ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), it also showed both gender and race/ethnicity effects.<sup>5</sup> Women rated this item higher than men ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 0.75$  and  $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ , respectively). Also, with the same pattern, Latinx faculty had a higher mean score ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) than Whites ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The mean for Black faculty ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ) compared to White faculty approached significance ( $p = .06$ ).<sup>6</sup> We interpret this pattern of difference as an indication that women faculty, as well as Hispanic and Black faculty, are more aware of bias in faculty interactions and therefore may be

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<sup>4</sup> Kruskal-Wallis test for gender,  $H=5.04$ ,  $p=0.025$ ; for race/ethnicity,  $H=18.2$ ,  $p<0.01$ ; post hoc (DSCF) pairwise comparisons.  $p<0.001$ .

<sup>5</sup> Kruskal-Wallis test for gender,  $H=3.27$ ,  $p=0.021$ ; for race/ethnicity,  $H=12.9$ ,  $p=0.005$ ; post hoc (DSCF) pairwise comparisons.  $P=0.024$ .

<sup>6</sup> Due to the data being highly skewed, we were not able to test for an interaction effect of gender and race/ethnicity, which would be more appropriate for an intersectional approach.

more primed to notice and interpret situations as possibly involving interpersonal or systemic bias. This interpretation is consistent with participants' informal self-disclosure that women faculty, especially Black and Latinx, were most likely to have previous experience in intervening on others' or their own behalf.

A thematic content analysis (Gibbs, 2018) of the responses to the open-ended questions confirmed that the workshop was beneficial. Participants appreciated the immersiveness of the workshop, practical tools, and realistic scenarios. Yet, they also revealed that bias incidents often are invisible or unnoticed. Some expressed amazement at the problematic issues depicted in the skits. For example, one participant wrote about a particular scenario: "A lot of problems at FIU, I had no idea [that] could happen....I feel very happy to be in my current department." Other colleagues from the same department recognized that the scenario was based on an incident in that department. Through discussion, participants recognized problematic behavioral dynamics in their own units. Table 4 depicts examples of the responses that we found in our thematic coding (Gibbs, 2018).

#### **Table 4**

##### *Selected Participant responses to open-ended questions*

Q1: What is the most significant thing you learned from the workshop?

###### Notice and interpret

- Be aware of race and gender issues in our daily life.
- My own biases and how to identify biases towards me.
- Learning how I've not been aware of implicit biases running in my own department.
- How to identify patterns of exclusion.
- Gender, racial bias & intersectionality.

###### Intervention strategies

- That there are multiple ways to intervene. Not only one.
- Strategies for intervention that are appropriate for junior faculty.
- Sometimes it is important to intervene directly at the moment. Not saying anything can hurt another person.
- It's okay if your intervention is delayed.



### Practicing the interventions

- The more you practice and get put into these situations, the more confident you feel when having to confront situations like this one.
- The practice performing an intervention. It was illuminating and thought-provoking. Important component to help ensure proactive action.
- Practicing and seeing others try out different methods made it easier for me to imagine myself intervening. So, I learned the strategies.
- Skills for coming forward and intervening with humor.

### To take action

- That I have the ability to intervene. That I can't let my fear of being perceived a certain way inhibit my role/responsibility to my colleagues and department.
- Intervene, whether you do it right away or it is delayed, or whether it is low or high involvement.
- How to calmly intervene in situations with potential professional and personal repercussions.
- I feel more empowered to take action.

### Peer group

- Group efforts in intervention will be more effective.
- Getting to see how other faculty respond has been helpful.
- Talking with other colleagues who have been through this program or who are diversity advocates to build more a sense of collective responsibility.
- I have found other allies in today's session.
- Loved getting to know new colleagues.

### Q2: Suggestions for improving the workshop or for future workshops?

- Practice more responses/interventions.
- How do you diffuse a combative colleague?
- There should be a refresher at some point. Would love to see how people integrated all that was learned.

## Discussion

We identified two challenges in developing a bystander intervention program. The first challenge concerned participants' uneven awareness of and sensitivity to bias. As we strove to present bias incidents in the scenarios that are subtle enough to mimic life but also obvious enough to be recognized by most participants, we found out that subtle bias situations were

difficult for the international faculty to notice and interpret. For example, in the applied theater component, the professional actor starts an inappropriate joke that deploys ethnic, racial, religious, and gender stereotypes. Within the skit, the joke is never completed; instead, its narration is interrupted by the second actor's thoughts about the scenario. The fragments of the joke were sufficient for many participants to understand the nature of the joke and interpret it as objectionable, but some international faculty were confused and wanted to hear the whole joke to decide if it was biased. Even after an explanation about how the beginning of the narrated joke replicated the well-known structure of American jokes rooted in deleterious stereotypes, some international faculty believed the joke could not cause harm.

The second challenge arose from the struggles of understanding and teaching intersectionality. The gender and race/ethnicity differences in the responses to the workshop's effectiveness highlight the difficulty of dealing with intersectionality in practice and the need for more research on how faculty can understand and use it in daily interactions. The dearth of research on intersectionality's practical use has been previously acknowledged (Atewologun, 2018). There are many challenges in defining and operationalizing the concept. We prepared our facilitation team to avoid misidentifying the concept of intersectionality and appropriating it for less intersectional ends (Ward & Luft, 2009); and we wrestled with delivering intersectional stories without reifying social constructs like gender, race, and cultural differences. The struggle became especially apparent in Leila's story, a scenario based on a graduate student's experience. The story concerned a woman graduate student in a research lab, where she, the advisor and her fellow men students all shared a culture that values the strict separation of women and men. While the male students enjoyed attending conferences and felt comfortable sharing a hotel room, Leila was excluded and informed that the advisor did not have enough money to reserve a

separate room for her. Many participants believed that the story was only about gender and believed that Leila should forcefully insist on going with her team. Our participants failed to see that the intersection of her nationality (cultural values) and her gender positioned her differently than other women. It was hard to clarify the situation and identify the discrimination and call for action from bystanders without stigmatizing Leila or her culture. We did not want our practice to “compromise facets of identity, reproduce oppressive patterns, or sabotage long-term movement goals” (Ward & Luft, 2009, p.27). Yet, somewhat similar to Krumer-Nevo & Komem’s (2013) and Naples’ (2016) experience, we also found out that practicing intersectionality while teaching about it complicated our work even further.

### **Conclusion**

Research has shown that bystander intervention is enabled when individuals perceive there is a problem to be addressed and believe they have the skills to act. The evaluation responses immediately after our bystander intervention workshop show that we have been successful in providing the faculty participants with the tools and the practice necessary for taking responsibility and intervening in biased interactions. Preliminary results from survey data taken three months after participating in the Bystander Leadership™ workshop indicate the program is effective at increasing positive attitudes and behaviors concerning diversity and inclusion (Rose & Farhangi, 2021 In Prep). Our primary motivation in creating the Bystander Leadership™ Program was to provide faculty with the skills to improve departmental climate by creating a peer group that would act to increase inclusion by challenging biases or changing processes, e.g., noticing if a woman faculty member is excluded in invitations to lunch or to participate in research projects, and acting to include her. Because of the inter-departmental participant recruitment, moreover, this peer group is not limited to peers in the same department. Sharing a

vocabulary of Bystander Leadership™ with faculty across departments helps participants continue to question their own department's traditional behaviors and processes.

One important measure that we used to assess our progress towards the goal of improving departmental climate was the Harvard COACHE faculty satisfaction survey, in which FIU participates every three years. Recent COACHE results suggested that Bystander, along with our other inclusive excellence programming, had a positive effect. FIU's faculty satisfaction ratings showed great improvement since 2017 when FIU ADVANCE started. FIU faculty cited many more areas of satisfaction in 2020 than in 2017. Specifically, FIU's areas of strength (indicating any benchmark in which FIU score higher than 30% of 110 cohort institutions) increased from five of 25 measures in 2017 to 19 out of 25 measures in 2020. Latinx and Black faculty satisfaction scores also were in the top 30% of the cohort of 110 institutions on 23 of 25 measures. Women faculty's satisfaction scores were in the top 30% of 20 of 25 measures. We believe that the Bystander Leadership™ Program, along with FIU's other inclusive excellence programming, has made modest progress toward institutional change as measured by our current demographics. By 2020, tenure-track women represented 20% of the STEM faculty and 40% of the SBS faculty at FIU, up from 17% and 38% in 2016, respectively. STEM women of color also increased from 1.5% to 2.5% since 2016. FIU met its goal to increase the representation of women and URM faculty overall; over the past five years, Latinx faculty increased from 16% to 21% and women faculty from 38% to 43%. FIU's Black faculty representation has remained at 8% for the past several years.

Preliminary results from FIU's bystander intervention training program suggest that our model could be fruitfully adopted in other institutions of higher education. The prosocial effects that emerge from the program at FIU should enhance efforts to promote diversity,

inclusion, and equity at other colleges and universities, although modifications would be required to reflect institutionally specific issues. Content concerning doctoral students would not be relevant in all settings, for example, while issues around teaching would be more important in teaching-centered institutions. To succeed elsewhere, new scenarios would need to be discovered to reflect local faculty issues that result in biased behaviors and actions. Successful adaptation of this program would also require significant commitments, including financial, to support a day-long workshop and the facilitation team. Beyond academia, this model would need further revision to reflect organizational structure (divisions versus departments), hierarchy (managers versus chairs; absence of collective governance), promotion processes (presence or absence of “up-or-out” promotions), and the range of ways in which implicit and explicit bias are expressed in non-academic institutions.

*Suzanna Rose is founding Associate Provost for the Office to Advance Women, Equity and Diversity and Professor of Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies at Florida International University. Rose also is the lead investigator for FIU's NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant that is aimed at improving the recruitment, promotion and retention of women in STEM at FIU. A specific focus of the grant concerns exploring intersectional issues arising from the cultural gender and race biases of international faculty. Rose has published extensively on issues related to gender, race, and sexual orientation, including professional networks, career development, friendship, and personal relationships.*

*Kirsten E. Wood is Associate Director of the Office to Advance Women, Equity and Diversity and Associate Professor of History at Florida International University. She received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1998. Her area of research interest encompasses the early nineteenth-century United States, with particular attention to gender, women, slavery, family, and political history. She has contributed to diversity and equity initiatives at FIU and in her professional scholarly associations as a committee member and panelist.*

*Sanaz Farhangi is a Research Assistant Professor in the office to Advance Women, Equity, and Diversity in Florida International University. She is trained as an engineer and has worked as a science teacher and these experiences have led her to wonder about how people engage with science and engineering and why the opportunity of this engagement is not as accessible for all learners. Her research interests are social justice through science education and exploring the promotion of women and underserved minorities in STEM.*

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