

BC3 seminar on diverse work environments may strengthen companies, administrator says

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(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College in May will offer a seven-hour seminar designed for participants to develop a greater understanding of global diversity, generations in the workplace and workplace inclusiveness, topics that will enable companies to utilize diversity management to capitalize on employees' differences, a BC3 Workforce Development administrator said.

“The Changing Workplace: Embracing Diversity to Grow Your People and Your Business” will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 10 on BC3's main campus in Butler Township, and will emphasize the advantages of contrasts in workers' backgrounds, knowledge and experience, said Kathleen Strobel, BC3's coordinator of business training.



From left, Dr. Mildred Emefa Biaku, Susan Hileman and Jarod Mills will deliver presentations titled Global Diversity, Generations in the Workplace and Workplace Inclusiveness in Butler County Community College's “The Changing Workplace: Embracing Diversity to Grow Your People and Your Business.” The seven-hour seminar will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 10 on BC3's main campus in Butler Township.

Those who receive a certificate of completion following the seminar “will have a better understanding of the value of a diverse work environment and will know how to work together to leverage the background, skills and knowledge that each employee provides,” Strobel said.

Dr. Mildred Emefa Biaku, a U.S. resident born in Ghana who holds a doctorate degree in teaching and learning with an emphasis on diversity and higher education, will discuss with participants the importance of understanding global diversity.

Among the goals of her session titled Global Diversity will be for participants to be able to recognize, and seek to overcome, assumptions, personal biases, prejudice and stereotypes toward others; learn how to avoid costly cultural mistakes; and comprehend all factors related to cultural diversity at the workplace, including race, language, differing physical ability and ethnicity.

“Any workforce community is as strong as its weakest link,” Biaku said. “Gaining awareness and competencies in this type of diversity will help to not only prevent costly mistakes and miscommunication, but also having the right people with a high level of cultural awareness and intercultural competence is now key when working across borders and cultures.”

Generations in the Workplace session participants will be able to appreciate the strengths and challenges of each age group, improve strategies to attract and retain qualified employees, and recognize how other businesses and industries have approached common issues with generational differences. The session will also explain how Generation Z – those born after 1996 – is different from previous age groups and what employers need to do to prepare.

“Millennials are now all in and we’re preparing for Gen Z to enter the workforce,” said Susan Hileman, owner of RED Day Communications and a strategic business adviser for the Northwest Industrial Resource Center, a liaison that provides resources for manufacturers to improve the performance and profitability of their business.

“Add this to the current shortage of qualified workers and companies are very interested in figuring out the best way to attract and retain good talent,” said Hileman, who will lead BC3’s session on Generations in the Workplace. “Many companies have made great strides in looking at the strengths and challenges of each generation, then adjusting the strategies, communications and policies in their workplace. Each generation brings its own values and way of operating, as well as gifts and talents. It’s a shift in the way we do things, though, so like all change, it will take time. The first step is awareness and understanding.”

Jarod Mills will help to create awareness and understanding in his Workplace Inclusiveness session, whose participants will be able to identify strategies to weaken discrimination, critically analyze ethical dilemmas with at-risk populations and recognize acts of discrimination and their impacts.

“In today’s diverse world, where people are becoming more aware of how their actions and words influence others,” said Mills, who holds a master’s degree in family and marriage counseling, “it is vital to educate the workplace on how to make a better work environment and see how they can help accommodate for the needs of others.”

“The Changing Workplace” also reflects an objective in BC3’s 2017-2022 strategic plan in that it enhances the college’s role in economic development in the communities it serves, Strobel said.

“Organizations that embrace diversity are comprised of employees from multiple generations with different backgrounds, personalities, experience levels and abilities,” Strobel said. “This diversity lends itself to having a team of employees with different strengths, talents and experiences. All of this leads to a stronger workforce, a culture of creativity and an environment where employees learn from each other.

“When employees learn to capitalize on the diversity within their workforce, companies will attract and retain not only their current workforce but also prepare for the future. Attracting and maintaining a strong, diverse workforce will allow the company to remain competitive in the global environment.”

The \$160 cost of “The Changing Workplace: Embracing Diversity to Grow Your People and Your Business” includes lunch. Those seeking to register for the seminar can visit

bc3.edu/business-training. For more information, contact Strobel at 724-287-8711, Ext. 8267 or email kathleen.strobel@bc3.edu.