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21st annual Respecting Differences event: Understanding Unconscious and Implicit Bias

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21st annual Respecting Differences event: Understanding Unconscious and Implicit Bias

As stakeholders of Western Michigan University, we carry a collective responsibility for creating an environment in which every person is respected, appreciated and has an opportunity to succeed.

To support that commitment, we are co-sponsoring the communitywide, 21st annual Respecting Differences diversity program Wednesday, April 10, in Miller Auditorium. Other sponsors of this year's program are the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, Kalamazoo County, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

I strongly urge you to attend and ask that you encourage your colleagues and staff to attend as their schedules allow.

This year's speaker is Darnell Blackburn, a former police officer and the CEO of Protecting Resources through Awareness Training LLC, a training and consulting service in Clinton Township, Michigan. His talk is intended to help attendees recognize their personal biases; create a culturally competent mindset; foster better cross-cultural relationships; more effectively communicate with family members, co-workers and clients; and adopt a positive mindset based on a better understanding of biases.

He will offer two presentations, one at 9:30 a.m. and a second at 1:30 p.m.

The schedule has been set so that attendees would be engaged for about two hours, thus posing minimal disruption to WMU services. This timing includes the 60-minute presentation, a question-and-answer period and travel time.

Though admission is free, tickets are required. Last week, every WMU faculty and staff member should have received a ticket through campus mail.

Additional tickets and posters can be downloaded at wmich.edu/hr/respectingdifferences. Free parking will be available in the Miller Auditorium ramp, including at meters, and in the adjacent lots numbered 33, 34 and 35. If driving, carpooling is recommended.

Thank you for your assistance in supporting this very important diversity event. If you have any questions, call Gretta Clay, Human Resources, at (269) 387-3647, or Mike Ramirez, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, at (269) 387-3329, or visit wmich.edu/hr/respectingdifferences.

Best regards,
Edward Montgomery
President