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Celebrating Diversity Workshop

September 19, 2007

Workshop Reflection

As soon as I walked into that classroom in the admissions building, I knew that I was in for an insightful day. I knew this because Dr. Zimmerman greeted me with a big smile and then handed me a schedule of the day after I signed in. I quickly read the paper and discovered that the day was going to be filled with meeting other people and learning about their backgrounds. We were also going to be learning about how to defeat stereotypes within our identity groups and also in other identity groups. Just by scanning the paper, I knew it was going to be a day of learning.

The first activity that I found interesting was the identity group activity. The leaders of the workshop wrote different groups of people on the chalkboard. For example, groups like “athletes,” “farmers,” and “computer geniuses” were written. Then each person in the class picked a group and then sat with the other people that also picked that group. Myself and two other girls picked the group title of “women.” We then had to write down on a paper what we never wanted people to think about women again. Some of the things we wrote down included being called “gold diggers,” being thought of as weaker, and that we should stay home while cooking and cleaning. We also had to record the positives of being a woman. In this category we included independence and we are thought of as pleasant, sweet, and caring. Afterwards, we shared our thoughts with the rest of the class and also heard from the other groups. It was great to hear what

other groups don't want us to think of them. This was probably my favorite activity of the day.

We also did an activity where people in the room had the opportunity to share comments or stories where they have encountered discrimination. Then we discussed non-violent ways to counter act the discrimination of the person who was doing so. At this time, Dr. Zimmerman and Professor Burge, the professors leading the workshop, acted out a scene. Dr. Zimmerman was pretending to have just bought a new car and while he was describing it to Professor Burge, he used the term "Jew down" in reference to the price of the car. This is offensive to Jewish people because it is calling them cheap. Professor Burge kindly asked Dr. Zimmerman open ended questions about where he heard this term and then told him that some people might find it offensive. She was very classy about handling the situation and didn't sound like she was accusing Dr. Zimmerman. This activity was so helpful in seeing how to tactfully handle any similar situation without accusing the person of wrong doing.

The activities that we did in the workshop were fun and enlightening. Before the workshop, I never realized how easily I stereotype people. I sometimes do it without even thinking. By listening to other identity groups and the things that they don't want people to think about them, I have become more aware of this problem. Also, by seeing Dr. Zimmerman and Professor Berge acting out a possible real life situation, it helped me to see how these potentially awkward moments can be handled with tact. Overall, I am glad I participated in the workshop and look forward to using my new skills in the future.