CILMAR 2018 On-Campus Vision Award

Over her tenure at Purdue as faculty, the work of Dr. Pamala Morris has embodied the CILMAR mission in areas of intercultural learning, mentorship, assessment and research.

She has been recognized for her sustained teaching and engagement programs in diversity awareness and social justice. Her primary areas of focus and scholarship are:

a. Developing intercultural competence grounded in intersectional theory, which provides a critical lens for bringing awareness and enhancing capacity of institutions to engage in social justice discourse and practice.
b. Investigating resistance to learning in the face of cultural discomfort/disequilibrium.
c. Employing service-learning pedagogy viewed through the lens of cultural diversity/social justice issues.

Dr. Morris has a national and international reputation for using the social justice framework as the basis of her educational programs in diversity and inclusion. She has successfully bridged theories of social cognition and learning with those of social identity development and change process to facilitate an understanding of the critical social issues that challenge people living in a global society.

Dr. Morris was instrumental in the development of the College’s Multicultural Understanding Requirement that the faculty approved in 2006. She recognized the impact that could be made on teaching and learning when the CoA instituted this requirement, so she developed a new course, Communicating Across Cultures, to assist students in fulfilling the requirement. She has taught this course every semester since 2007, averaging 300 students each academic year. These efforts have increased intercultural sensitivity toward cultural differences as reported by more than 70 percent of CoA students who took this course over the past decade. She expanded this effort through innovative teaching using distance methodologies while maintaining the content’s integrity through critical reflection and discussion. The course was approved as a University Core Curriculum course in 2013 and is now offered across campus under two foundational outcomes—Behavioral/Social Sciences and Information Literacy. The course is offered at several IVY Tech campuses and at the University of Kentucky.

As a certified IDI administrator in partnership with the Center for Instructional Excellence and the Purdue University International Programs Office, she co-facilitated the first-of-its-kind Intercultural Learning and Teaching Workshop Series. These workshops provided Purdue faculty and staff with opportunities to actively explore a four-step intercultural learning and teaching process. This process was designed to help faculty and staff mentor students in transformative education through a variety of study abroad opportunities that will advance their intercultural competence.

Dr. Morris developed a study abroad course for spring break as an international service-learning experience to enhance student scholarship in social justice and further develop their intercultural competence. The course, while pursuing the common goals of increasing students’ international and cultural exposure and their awareness of living in a global society, also allows students to broaden their learning experiences by engaging in intercultural communication and service-learning activities with a Colombian university, Unicolombo.

Over the last year, she has worked closely with CILMAR to support and mentor a Post Doc who conducted research on the students in her class using the IDI as pre/post to determine if there was any significant movement along the IDC. A paper was submitted to a journal and is in revision. In addition, her mentorship has been broad and outreaching as she has worked across many Land-grant institutions to provide IDI group/individual debriefings to faculty, experiment station directors.

Finally, she is working with CILMAR to administer the BEVI as a pre/post for this academic year to provide additional insight into the learning process as the instructor and students continue to struggle with the contentious issues presented in the course.