

CELEBRATE PURDUE WOMEN

PAMALA V. MORRIS



WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

I feel like leadership is empowering others. I've always thought of myself as a servant leader.

WHAT ROLE HAS COMMUNITY PLAYED IN YOUR SUCCESS?

My family played a huge part in my success, but I had to create a new community when I was appointed to the position of Associate Dean/Director of the Office of Multicultural Programs. That was an obstacle that I had to overcome, just trying to find a community where I felt like I belong.

WHAT ROLE HAS COLLABORATION PLAYED IN YOUR JOURNEY?

Collaboration has played a big role. My collaborations with CILMAR, the Center for Intercultural Learning, Mentorship, Assessment, and Research, and the Center for Instructional Excellence have been great collaborations for me in my academic journey.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS?

"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome."

- Booker T. Washington

WHAT DOES MENTORSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

I am the first African American female in the college of Agriculture to become a tenured track faculty member. They had no idea how to mentor me. Mentoring is extremely important to help new people coming into an environment that they're not familiar with.

WHAT HAS ENCOURAGED YOU IN THE OBSTACLES YOU'VE FACED?

My father told me, "The word can't is not in the dictionary. If it's not in the dictionary, then you need to take it out of your vocabulary." That has kept me going. At moments when I thought I couldn't, I think back to what my father said about "can't." He said, "you can do anything you want to do, but you've got to get rid of the word 'can't.'"

HOW HAS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS EVOLVED OVER TIME?

My definition of success has changed. I'm not focused on me anymore. When I started with working with students, underrepresented minorities, first generation college students, underserved populations, then my whole definition of success changed. Because what I saw is that it's how I impact the lives of others that was going to demonstrate my success.

Dr. Pamala V. Morris is an Associate Dean/Director of the Office of Multicultural Programs and Professor of Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication, in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University. As faculty, her primary areas of focus and scholarship include: developing intercultural competence grounded in intersectional theory, investigating resistance to learning in the face of cultural discomfort/disequilibrium, and employing service-learning pedagogy viewed through the lens of cultural diversity/social justice issues. Dr. Morris provides leadership in the area of diversity and social justice, and works collaboratively across 11 academic departments to achieve key diversity/inclusion initiatives. This includes, but not limited to, recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students; development of a more welcoming and inclusive college environment; and development of curricular and co-curricular activities; development and implementation of grants to support diversity initiatives.

YouTube



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