

HELP BRIDGE (HB) THE EMPOWERMENT PROJECT



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

THE EMPOWERMENT PROJECT OFFERS UNIQUE TRAINING WORKSHOPS THAT IMMERSE STUDENTS IN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

The Empowerment Project has **four** goals:

Goal **one** is to teach students how to accept new customs and values in diverse and changing environments. Goal **two** is to encourage students to self-explore by discussing their unique interactions, conversations, and observations. Goal **three** is to develop students' ability to communicate clearly, build trust, and strengthen relationships. Goal **four** is to help students make educated decisions about social issues.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Empowerment Project Workshop 1. Multiculturalism and Cultural Integration.

The "Multiculturalism and Cultural Integration Workshop" is designed to help students accept new customs and values in diverse and changing environments. The academic system is increasingly culturally diverse sharing several languages, rituals, religions, and cultural identities. Cultural integration will occur when students learn to celebrate diversity. The goal of the workshop is to enhance skills that promote **trustworthiness** and **respect**. The multicultural activities provided will develop students' potential to understand and **solve problems**.

Empowerment Project Workshop 2. Self-Exploration and Reflection.

The "Self-exploration and Reflection Workshop" is designed to encourage self-exploration through dialogue about unique interactions, conversations, and observations students. Understanding multicultural identities is a journey that includes personal involvement. Students will explore **awareness** of their unique assumptions and perceptions. Activities will help students think critically about lived experiences that influence their understandings of diverse cultures. They will learn how social factors like income, age, gender, race or ethnicity can influence your observations. The group will consider ways that communication can engender and reinforce generalizations and stereotypes. By learning more about themselves, students can become **responsible** communicators. Using reflection-based activities and by questioning, students will work toward rejecting some negative stereotypes. Students will also learn to be accountable for their actions.

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Empowerment Project Workshop 3. Communication and Culture.

The “Communication and Culture Workshop” is designed to develop clearer communication skills. Communication is at the heart of cultural identity and expression. It is through communication that cultures emerge, sustain themselves, and change. This workshop will introduce skills that enable students to communicate their ideas and substantiate their beliefs about the environment in which we live. The session will explore cognitive, behavioral, and emotional constraints. Students will develop **nonverbal communication skills** and **active listening skills** to enhance positive communication and nurture relationships. Students will learn strategies that enable them to be ethically responsible communicators.

Empowerment Project Workshop 4. Leadership and Social Justice.

The “Leadership and Social Justice Workshop” is designed to help students use social **decision-making** to empower and lead others. Effective communication across different cultures is especially challenging since it involves **teamwork**. Students will learn about the history of grassroots movements and service learning. Social justice education and training will enhance students’ **leadership** abilities as they engage in creative activity such as role-plays to help them to become more invested in bringing action to their home communities. Students will perform as future change makers, activists, and community organizers. They will learn about key social justice concepts as they relate to community issues and related movements.

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR

Dr. Chiquita Howard-Bostic will lead the Empowerment Project. She received a Ph.D. in Sociology, teaching certificate in Women’s Studies, and a Race and Social Policy research certification at Virginia Tech. She earned a Masters in Urban Planning with a specialization in Urban Management and a Bachelors of Arts degree in Legal Studies and English from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. Howard-Bostic is also a Certified Life Coach through Integrative Wellness Academy. Howard-Bostic is currently chair of the Department of Sociology and Geography and an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies at Shepherd University. Howard-Bostic is also a former college director of institutional assessment and planning.