"When there's any possible injustice, my antennae go up," says Motier Haskins.

As a clinical assistant professor at the University of Iowa's School of Social Work and coordinator of the Critical Cultural Competent Certificate program, Haskins has devoted his life's work to "de-mystifying and leading people away from stereotypes of populations."

Haskins began his career as a "social worker in the trenches" in his native New York, working with individuals with drug and alcohol dependencies, HIV/AIDS and at-risk youth. He never felt a pull toward academia until he was asked to teach a diversity course at the State University of New York-Albany.

"I was scared to death for that first class," he says. "But it didn't take long to realize that it was fate. It was a perfect combination of social work and education. Magic happened."

Two years later, Haskins was hired as a full-time faculty member at SUNY-Albany, and he began his career in higher education, of which the University of Iowa is his sixth academic position.

Haskins' research interests include cultural competent practice, Islamophobia, and domestic violence in the Muslim community. He publishes research and maintains a national presence in his field.

Haskins' awareness of injustice stems from his personal understanding of cultural competence, a topic he teaches as part of the 18-credit Critical Cultural Competent Certificate program, which provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to increase their effectiveness in relating across cultural differences and in increasingly diverse domestic and international environments.

"Cultural competency is having the awareness, knowledge and skills to be effective in cross-cultural interactions," he says, noting that these interactions are not just defined by race and ethnicity. Instead, he urges students to consider other areas, such as age, gender, sexual orientation, politics, class, disability and weight.

Haskins identifies the Critical Cultural Competent Certificate program as a "tremendous success," noting that it just celebrated its first graduates. Currently there are 38 students enrolled in the program, which also offers an immersion trip to India, led by Haskins. The experiences and skills students gain prepare them for the "real world" of work or continued education.

"Research indicates that employers are looking for employees that are culturally competent," says Haskins. "We prepare them to be ready for that world. They can use this program as a launching for"
**Name:** Motier Haskins  
**City of Residence:** Fairfield  
**Hometown:** Harlem, New York  
**Title:** Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa’s School of Social Work and Coordinator of the Critical Cultural Competent Certificate program at the U of I and the Hubbard Group  
**Family:** Wife, Vanessa, five children and eight grandchildren  

**More Information:**  
* Motier Haskins: www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/people/facultypages/motierhaskins.shtml  
* The Hubbard Group: www.uiowa.edu/~hubgrp/index.html  
* Critical Cultural Competent Certificate program: www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/certificatenccc/
Educational content

"Cultural competency is having the awareness, knowledge and skills to be effective in cross-cultural interactions."
- Motier Haskins

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matter. We talk a lot about the treatment of people and stereotypes." Encouraging students to evaluate stereotypes are key, Sullivan says, to preventing them in the future. She teaches students that "stereotypes happen because people don’t understand one another."

"Kids realize a lot of times that they have a stereotype because they have never experienced a culture or a religion or something else," says Sullivan.
She helps students drill down to the reasoning behind the flawed viewpoint and believes that this type of exercise is "very eye opening" for many adolescents.
Sullivan acknowledges that "bullying happens at every high school," but believes that building trust and respect with students will result in positive relationships that can minimize bullying.
"You notice kids who are quiet in class or who sit with their head down, and you can tell something's not right," she says. "I start with a one-on-one relationship rather than singling them out in a large class. I try to meet them where they are."
It's this course of action that often allows Sullivan to touch a student who may be having difficulty relating to others.
By building connections with students and encouraging them to develop and hone relationship skills, Sullivan builds on her personal mission, noting that "we're all in this together."
"At the end of the day, I want to put my head on my pillow and know that I’ve made positive contributions to someone's life that day," says Sullivan.
And she hopes you'll do the same.