



NOV 11

Hands-Up Gets Race Conversation Going

Sara Donlin

As a response to the recent nationwide deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of police, the College of Liberal Arts hosted an open discussion Tuesday night to examine relationships between police and the community.

The discussion, titled “Hands-up: Police/Community Relations,” took place in Bohannon 90 with a panel consisting of Mayor Emily Larson, Duluth Police Chief Mike Tusken, Jeremy Nevilles-Sorrell from Mending the Sacred Hoop, and activist Kym Young.

“Perception is reality. We need leadership to recognize that there is racism and that we can be part of the solution,” Larson said. “There’s an interest in talking about it but we need to be honest about where the problems are.”

Larson went on to say that acknowledgement is the first step.

“This is a city that can work for everybody and we have a lot of work ahead to accomplish that,” Larson said.

Young, a member of the African Heritage Community, pointed out how the representation of people of color can lead to certain prejudices.

“When a person of color is caught and apprehended, it’s represented as that person’s entire community,” Young said. “We see that happening today because of the way we’re portrayed in the media.”

Police Chief Mike Tusken said that recently Duluth has been recruiting officers of color to combat this issue.

“It is very important for me to have a police force that reflects the community we serve,” Tusken said.

UMD Sociology Professor and discussion facilitator Emily Gaarder said the objective of having a forum like this is to allow for healthy conversation.

“An open discussion allows for people to ask questions, be heard, and come away with new information,” Gaarder said. “Our goal is to get community dialogue going with relationships regarding authority.”



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