

Multicultural Center Student Council

Action Items May 2011

University of Minnesota Duluth- Current draft of the campus goals (as of 4/12/11):

Goal 1: Promote curricular, co-curricular, and living-learning undergraduate experiences that achieve UMD's learning goals and prepare students for lifelong learning, globally engaged citizenship, and success in their academic, personal, and professional lives.

Goal 2: Create a positive and inclusive campus climate for all by advancing equity, diversity, and social justice.

Goal 3: Establish UMD as a center of excellence for graduate studies in the Upper Midwest.

Goal 4: Advance UMD's stature as a major campus for research and creative activities, leveraging our region's unique natural, human, and cultural resources.

Goal 5: Strengthen ties with Duluth and surrounding communities in an intentional, visible, and mutually beneficial partnership.

Goal 6: Utilize UMD's infrastructure; technologies; and information, human and financial resources to support the campus in a sustainable manner.

Proposal 1: Executive Director for Women's Resource and Action Center (WRAC)

We believe that the Women's Resource and Action Center should have a part to full time director to support the work done in the office on a more administrative level in addition to supporting the work of student interns. This position would help fulfill Campus Goals 2, 4, 5 and 6 specifically by helping students on our campus and strengthening ties with the greater Duluth community. Currently, our office and the interns who run it have been very successful in organizing events, creating a safe space in the office for other students, and maintaining the PAVSA (Program to Aid Victims of Sexual Assault) advocacy program as well as partnerships with other women's organizations in the community. These internships allow the office to remain open for forty hours a week, for students to become empowered to make change on their campus, and create a welcoming space in our office for other students to seek support and resources. However, a permanent director position would make it possible for our office to better maintain community ties by creating more consistency, to allow our office to focus on school policies and procedures that affect women on campus, and to take on the role of interviewing, hiring and supporting student interns. Interns would continue to be essential for event planning and promotion while a director could take a more active role in sustaining the day to day needs of running and maintaining an office.

Goals:

According to the UMD website there were 5,658 female identified students enrolled for the fall 2010 semester. This makes up 48% of the total student body. The Women's Resource & Action Center's mission is to provide all women on the UMD campus with support and encouragement and to empower women both individually and collectively through the provision of a wide variety of services and resources. It is extremely important that all women on campus feel supported by the University. By supporting WRAC, the University is supporting the success of 48% of the student body. Currently, WRAC is in many ways successful in our mission, but a director position would allow us to accomplish even more.

The director of the WRAC office would be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and supporting student interns throughout their time in the office. This would relieve the Director of the Office of Cultural Diversity from this responsibility and time commitment. Other responsibilities would include becoming familiar with UMD policies and protocols that specifically affect female students, especially those associated with sexual harassment, sexual assault and stalking. Students identify WRAC as a space they can come to discuss these issues and experiences. Current interns are well trained about these policies but having a director who focuses on this topic would be extremely helpful, especially with evolving policies and protocols. A director with specific knowledge in this area would help our office better serve these women. A director would also be responsible for maintaining relationships with women's organizations in the community and with other key staffs at the University. An example would be continuing a relationship with facilities management to ensure that WRAC can continue to hang sexual assault awareness posters in campus restrooms. Having a consistent director who could maintain continuity and organization while students come and go would be beneficial to interns, other organizations who partner with WRAC and students who use our services. We do not intend to replace student interns as they are an essential part of the success of the work done in WRAC.

Action:

This action would require the hire of a new employee with bachelor's degree, preferably in Women's Studies, and experience having worked in our center or a comparable facility. It is our expectation that this position would be in addition to student interns and not a replacement for the internship program.

Intended Outcomes:

The intended outcome of director position for the WRAC office would be to expand the amount of work and the quality of services provided by the office. It would allow the campus community to know that they have a space and specific group of people (both the students interns and the director in the WRAC office) in which they could come for resources and support should issues arise.

Proposal 2: Office of Equal Opportunity Position

We propose that the Office of Equal Opportunity have a well-trained, full-time staff person who can offer resources to students, investigate reports, and make recommendations to the University administration that are followed. It would be essential that this person be able to conduct

impartial investigations to find out the reality of an incident and then to compare the finding with University policies that relate to the incident. It would coincide with Goals 1 and 2 in making this campus a safe, diverse community.

Goals:

Our office works closely with the Office of Equal Opportunity and, as it stands, that office is where we direct students to go when they encounter issues such as sexual harassment, racial or ethnic harassment, hate crimes, rape, sexual assault, or stalking that occurs on campus. It is imperative that there is a full-time position for someone to work with students and organizations on campus. We need someone who is well-versed in University protocols and understand the needs and issues of students. This person would need to be openly available, open-minded, and passionate about creating a safe and welcoming community for all people on campus, and be a visible ally to all students. Having a full-time position would also mean that organizations would feel comfortable working with the Office of Equal Opportunity. Creating this position would serve as a bold statement that this University has its students' interests at heart and cares about following up with incidents that take place on this campus.

We also believe that the person in this position needs to be able to make recommendations based on University policy and that these recommendations are followed by University officials. We believe that this position should have the power and authority to conduct investigations and make recommendations to administration. Follow up is essential to this process, and makes it easier for students to report if they have a safe, confidential ally who they know will be working with and for them.

Action Items:

To achieve this goal it would be necessary for the University to allocate funds to go to a full-time director for the Office of Equal Opportunity, and either support the recommendations that come out of this office, or offer some sort of appeals process so students feel like they have options in reporting and likewise know the outcomes of the investigations.

Intended Outcomes:

Students would feel confident that this campus is a secure place to make reports, and receive assistance on sensitive topics. This means that students will feel that reporting an incident or experience will be effective and that the University will follow through with reports. There would be higher reporting rates, and students would feel secure and welcome on this campus. We do not believe that solely having an online reporting system or other similar process would be adequate. Students who need these services need personal assistance from someone who would ensure that their reports or personal issues are important to the University.

Having face to face interaction in times of trauma is essential in the reporting process and by having a full time, well trained staff in the Office of Equal Opportunity; we feel that these goals can be met.

Proposal 3: Campus Tour Guides

We seek culturally knowledgeable campus tour guides who will adequately promote and provide information about the Multicultural Center resources, services, individual groups, and events. This would absolutely apply to Campus Goals 1 and 2 in sponsoring a diverse and equitable campus climate.

Goals:

It has come to our attention that the campus tour guides when coming through the Multicultural Center, have little or no knowledge about our cubicles and offices, or perhaps have the faintest idea of what to say to prospective students and families. Many times, it even borders on ignorant comments, because they weren't trained or given an in-depth background in what the Multicultural Center is and does. We would like campus tour guides to have a mandatory training in which they learn about the resources that are offered in the Multicultural Center, and can engage incoming students in what our center does.

Action Items:

All campus tour guides could go through a tour of the Multicultural Center to familiarize themselves with this area and what each individual group and cubicles do. We could schedule to have a member, board member, or intern present; therefore, tour guides could visit each cubicle and meet the students who frequently use the space. They would then understand what each office or cubicle does, who it serves, what is its purpose, and what resources it offers to students. This would allow tour guides to have a clear background of the Multicultural Center and would hopefully feel more comfortable talking about the Multicultural Center and what each cubicle and offices do. Visitors, prospective students, and family members would also receive a better and more positive image of the Multicultural Center and feel welcome to get involved with this center and campus at large.

Intended Outcomes:

Tour Guides would feel more comfortable talking about the Multicultural Center because they know people and have correct information about the space, and would aid in the promotion of an inclusive campus climate. Potential students who are interested in attending this University would feel like the Multicultural Center is a comfortable place for everyone to connect and make use of, and would sustain this relationship while attending the University.

Multicultural Center: UMD QASU

GOALS: *Where do we want to go?*

To achieve comfortable, safe and accommodating housing for non-heterosexual-identified students.

To achieve comfortable, safe and accommodating housing for transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students.

This will fall into accordance with goals 1, 2, and 4 of the campus goals identified during strategic planning;

(1) to promote student-centered undergraduate learning experiences that prepare students for lifelong learning, globally engaged citizenship, and success in their academic, personal, and professional lives;

(2) to create a positive and inclusive campus climate for all by advancing equity, diversity, and social justice; and

(4) to advance UMD's stature as a major campus for research and creative activities, leveraging our region's unique natural, human, and cultural resources.

This will also fall into accordance with several of the core values identified during strategic planning;

Inclusiveness: respecting and embracing the diversity of individuals, perspectives, and ideas and strive for social justice;

Sustainability: balancing current environment, economic, and social needs with those of future generations;

Integrity: adhering to the highest ethical standards and taking responsibility for our ideas and actions;

Excellence: achieving excellence through creativity, continuous improvement and innovation.

ACTION ITEMS: *What will help us achieve our goal?*

Include on the on-campus housing form a section to indicate that you would not object to rooming with non-heterosexual-identified students and/or transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students.

Include on-campus housing that accommodates transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students, allowing them to live in an area where they can live with people who have similar gender presentations and/or identities.

Include on-campus housing that accommodates transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students, allowing them to live in an area where they can live close to an accessible gender-neutral bathroom, which will allow them to access single-person rooms featuring showers and toilets, complete with a locking door, providing safety and privacy.

INTENDED OUTCOMES: *How will we know when we have achieved the goal?*

When non-heterosexual-identified students and transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students feel comfortable, safe and accommodated when choosing to live on-campus including housing and accessible bathrooms.

When UMD becomes a campus that is open and willing to ensure the safety of non-

heterosexual-identified students, transgender-identified and gender-variant-identified students within residence life.

When students can recommend UMD as an open and affirming place that offers non-heterosexual-identified students and transgender-identified or gender-variant-identified students safe on-campus housing and residence.

When UMD can be advertised and promoted as an institution that values, promotes and affirms all types of personal expression, any gender identity or presentation and students of all types.

Proposal: This initiative requests that signage on all existing single-stall lockable gendered restrooms located on the University Campus be changed to gender neutral terms.

Primary Goal:

This initiative specifically requests that signage be changed from gendered restrooms to unisex restrooms; thereby beginning a move toward the creation of a more accessible and accepting environment for everyone including families, persons with disabilities, breastfeeding mothers, and gender queer or intersexed persons.

As cited from the University of Minnesota Mission Statement, the University system strives to provide an “environment that embodies the values of academic freedom, responsibility, integrity, and cooperation; that provides an atmosphere of mutual respect, free from racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and intolerance; that assists individuals, institutions, and communities in responding to a continuously changing world; that is conscious of and responsive to the needs of the many communities it is committed to serving”. (<http://www.d.umn.edu/about/mission.html>)

The current setup of gendered restrooms prevents these persons from having access to University facilities by restricting access based upon gender. Through this restriction there is less access to persons with disabilities as it may be necessary to move to a different floor to access a facility that represents their gender. This can also be a problem for those who do not identify as either male or female, as there is not a facility available for them that are readily accessible.

Additionally, breastfeeding mothers and families may desire a private and safe area that is accessible, and a single-stall lockable unisex restroom is ideal.

Chancellor Black (as stated within his statement to Members of the UMD Campus Community), “One of my top priorities is to create a learning and working environment that embeds the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into all aspects of our programs”. (<http://www.d.umn.edu/chancellor/climate/>)

Our proposed initiative would help support Chancellor Black’s previously stated priority for the UMD Campus, through benefiting persons with disabilities, families gender queer or intersexed persons, as well as breastfeeding mothers we they will be allowed equal access to university

facilities. By creating a more accessible and accepting environment throughout the campus we set an expectation for the wider community to be inclusionary as well.

What will help us achieve our goal?

1. As the administration has previously recognized the need to be inclusive of all persons and provide equal access to all UMD facilities, we believe that through the cooperation with our proposed initiative, many would benefit.
2. The values stated here are also in accordance this proposal, taken from Facilities Management's Mission Statement:
 - “*Safety and Health* of our campus community”
 - “*Responsible Use* of our human, natural, and financial resources”

As stated in the vision, Facilities Management strives to:

- “Consider long-term environmental, financial, and human impacts in decision making”
- “Remain flexible to benefit from new opportunities”
- “Promote innovation to achieve our mission”

(<http://www.d.umn.edu/fm/about/mission.htm>)

Through cooperation with Facilities Management in changing all signage on existing single-stall lockable gendered restrooms located on the University Campus to gender neutral terms, the stated values of safety and health, the responsible use of resources, commitment to innovation and flexibility with new opportunities, and considering long-term impacts encompassed within their Mission Statement will be realized with a small amount of effort and cost.

Intended Outcomes:

- Access to UMD facilities for all persons, without their needing to seek out a safe or appropriate restroom to:
 - Change a baby
 - Hide sexual or gender identity
 - Breastfeed
 - Use a facility privately, due to disability or other concerns
- Additional safety and health for all students, faculty and staff within the campus community.
- Development of a respectful, positive relationship between the University's students, faculty and staff.
- Creating an inclusive campus environment for all persons.