

STUDENT LIFE CHANGE TEAM

Annual Report - July 2018

Members: Carolyn Anderson (Dining Services), Ashley Singleton (Housing & Residence Life), Lesa Radtke (Kirby Student Center), Stef Regenold (Student Conduct), Jeffrey Romano (UMD Stores), Alissa Stainbrook (Disability Resources), Robin Mensinger (Health Services), Kristi Dalbec (Transportation & Parking Services), Wendi Christenson (UMD Stores), Mick McComber (Recreational Sport & Outdoor Programs), Molle Nelson (Alumni Relations), Amanda Perrin (Housing & Residence Life), Sarah Fisher (Student), Jennifer Xiong (Student), Marwa Hamed (Student).

Co-chairs: Ashley Singleton, Mollie Nelson

Student Life Change Team Mission:

To provide leadership within the Division of Student Life to further social justice, equity and respect for diversity in all its forms.

2017-2018 Team Overview:

This year the Student Life Change Team had two new co-chairs and a significant number of new members. With this, the committee spent some time building relationships, sharing resources, and gaining understanding of the role of SLCT. In addition, the committee took on two new projects and continued one project from the previous year. These projects are outlined in greater detail below, including the work that each sub-committee completed and the recommendations for future work. The full SLCT met every two weeks throughout the academic year, with the exception of campus holidays, totaling approximately 12 meetings for 2017-2018. Sub-committees met additionally as needed.

SUB-COMMITTEES

1. Diverse Student Employment

Members: Jeff Romano, Carolyn Anderson, Kristi Dalbec, Sara Fisher, Jennifer Xiong

Purpose: To identify ways to increase the diversity in our student employees in Student Life Departments. To achieve this goal we gathered data from different sources, and sought input from student hiring authorities and others to help us develop a plan. We are also currently exploring different ways to create an inclusive environment that helps retain all student workers, especially students from diverse backgrounds.

Description of Work, Accomplishments: This past year the Diversity in Student Employment sub-committee developed a [Powerpoint presentation](#) that was shared with the Student Life Change Team, along with the hiring authorities in all of the Student Life departments. This presentation made recommendations on defining diversity, showing history data, recruiting strategies, a statement supporting diversity in the job postings, and some potential interview questions.

Next Steps:

- Gather input from hiring authorities on our recommendations
- Gather updated information specifically from Fall semester 2016 and 2017 to include in the historical data analysis

- After our recommendations are communicated and implemented, measure the number of diverse students in the Fall 2019. Use 2016/17 data as a baseline for our assessment of success

2. Observing Holidays on Campus

Members: Carolyn Anderson, Wendi Christenson, Lesa Radtke, Stef Regenold, Marwa Hamed, Amanda Perrin

Purpose: The purpose of this subcommittee is to increase sense of belonging within Student Life among students and staff by finding a way for all to celebrate who they are and the cultures they hail from through the mode of holidays. Past collected information shows that our current campus members believe that holidays are stifled, and thus, people feel silenced. Our hope is to minimize or eliminate this perception and celebrate the humans that make up what UMD is as a community. Realizing that holidays and cultural celebrations are part of who people are, this is a priority for our Student Life Change Team to tackle.

Description of Work, Accomplishments: This year, we have spent extensive time researching best practices at other institutions, continue education through webinars, consulting with leadership, and narrowing possibilities to accomplish the task of celebrating culture with intention, rather than silencing.

First, we assembled three different approaches to celebrations as unit; through policy, awareness, and education. Through further investigation and evaluation, as a subcommittee we decided eliminate the policy option, as this path seemed to limit and continue to silence and/or be a near impossible option regulate. Thus, we would be making a policy for policies sake.

We then brainstormed a series of ideas to aid in raising awareness about specific cultural holidays. These ideas and thoughts will be brought forward to a future Student Life Directors Team meeting in the future to continue the conversation about what action can be taken.

Our third step is education. This step includes finding the root of frustration around holidays and building trust between different communities of people who make up UMD. The hope is by doing this, we can find a mutual understanding of one another. The education component still needs further investigation, input, and research sought out.

Next Steps: The next steps we have decided to take is to assemble a proposal of ideas to present to the Student Life Directors Team by September 2018.

3. Deeper Dive: Space for Dialog Series

Members: Ashley Singleton, Mollie Nelson, Robin Mensinger

Purpose: The language of diversity requires awareness, understanding and skill similar to developing intercultural competencies in other areas of our personal self. The purpose of this sub-committee is to provide resources to Student Life staff on fostering inclusive and intentional dialog around challenging and difficult conversations. The goal is to equip staff with the tools to effectively speak up and bridge ideas and relationships.

Description of Work, Accomplishments: Initially this program was conceived through conversations around a campus wide campaign for a desire to provide deeper supporting education efforts to support inclusive communication campaigns. Many events and trainings already take place on campus that support Goal 2 work and learning, however, many of these current offerings primarily offer only a one-way avenue of communication. While this is a necessary aspect of Goal 2, SLCT identified that a supporting effort by providing opportunities for dialogue between members of the UMD community is needed. Increased knowledge and language skills is important, and when students and staff can have conversations together about real issues in which they listen and hear one another, where they can develop understandings about differences and similarities, about how complex our community is, the campus will lend itself to opportunities for exploration and celebration of our many differences.

Next Steps: Engaging in dialogue about the difficult topics of diversity, inclusion, and social justice involves language, trust, and space. The next steps for this initiative address these elements. First, we plan to provide resources to student life staff that can give them background information and terminology that can help with discussing current events within our community. The hope is that these resources will cover a variety of topics and be available electronically in a variety of formats, thus helping staff who work in variety of roles on campus to access this information.

Second, we plan to offer space for conversation twice a semester, in which staff can come together for intentional training on effective dialogue. When we get caught up in the daily shuffle of our work, it can be challenging to figure out how Goal 2 work fits, even if we value it. By offering a space for people to come together, it can help bring Goal 2 work back to the front of our consciousness, and it allows space for staff to build relationships together which furthers all of our campus work.

BUDGET

While the Student Life Change Team does not have a budget, the Chair(s) requests funds as needed and according to the support required as determined by special projects and team development. In 2017-2018, no funds were required other than payment for catering a welcome lunch for the SLCT in October, and payment for catering desserts for the SLCT in May for recognition of their contributions and achievements.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

This past year has been a development year for the Student Life Change Team. At the beginning of the 2017-18 year, we did not outline goals due to the significant change in leadership and membership. During the academic year the committee focused on developing relationships, continued some of the previous work of SLCT, and established new projects that examined systemic change in Student Life.

Looking ahead to the 2018-2019 academic year, the co-chairs have begun establishing goals, which include increased onboarding for new SLCT members and utilizing the SLCT website to share updates and resources with Student Life staff. Next year's work will also include continuing some of the current sub-committee projects. As is customary on the Student Life Change Team, co-chairs will meet with Vice Chancellor Erwin at the end of summer or beginning of fall semester to discuss and confirm priorities for SLCT's work in the 2018-2019 academic year. The Chair(s) will also write and submit the strategic plan upon collaboration with the SLCT members for that year.