COMMUNITY REPORT
September 2014

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WITHIN STUDENT GROUPS
Diversity and Inclusion within Student Groups

**Charge:** The focus of this committee is on undergraduate student organizations (Student Union recognized student groups, sororities, and fraternities, as well as the five governing bodies: Student Union, Congress of the South Forty, Northside Association, Interfraternity Council, and Women's Panhellenic Association) and how we think about creating and sustaining more diverse and inclusive communities within the various organizations as well as across organizations.

**Tasks:** 1. To define the terms "diversity" and "inclusion" as each relates to student groups at WU; 2. To assess student organizations’ desires related to additional diversity and inclusion education and planning; 3. To establish an advisory/education board to work with student organizations regarding diversity and inclusion; 4. To share progress from the various Mosaic Project committees with leaders of student organizations.

**Outcomes:** The Diversity and Inclusion within Student Organizations working group was formed with the intention of creating more inclusive environments in undergraduate student-run organizations. Initially, the specific mission of the working group was of great debate during its start. The chairs felt it was important to have a clearly defined mission that could inspire future discussions after their tenure. Thus, the mission is shaped from the goals and outcomes that were discussed throughout the course of the 2014 spring semester. The flexibility of the mission statement is intended to allow any organization that may later connect with the outcomes of the committee the ability to change it for the needs of the Washington University community.

"We aim to enable change within and across student organizations that will foster greater diversity and inclusion for all of Washington University. We will accomplish this by setting expectations, creating resources and tools that will help groups self-evaluate, and implementing an initiative that will allow our community to celebrate and elevate the great work being done."

In defining “diversity” and “inclusion” as it relates to the over 300 student organizations on campus, the working group created the following structure to highlight best practices used and maintained by the ideal diverse and inclusive student group. These pillars will serve as a foundation to the initiative created by the working group.

**Support**

The initiative that will be created must promote the support of students within organizations on campus. This message must be communicated to the advisors and mentors of the student organizations on campus, but also to the leaders of these groups. Organizations must be encouraged to provide initiatives of support such as mentoring programs (e.g., bigs/littles), annual retreats, family structures, workshops, or social gatherings. These structures are meant to foster relationships within student organizations and to provide support for those of other identities that may choose to join. The initiative must provide members with the opportunity to find a safe and welcoming environment in whichever student organization they choose to join.
**Education**

Education both within and between student organizations is essential to the success of this initiative. The initiative must encourage reflection on student identities, current issues, relationships, commitments, etc. In addition, the initiative must also encourage educational opportunities to occur between student organizations. Through advocacy, forums, or panels, the initiative should reward student organizations for opening their programming up to the entire WU community and for providing opportunities to learn about different identities. Such tools of implementation include co-programming, councils that connect similar groups, debates, etc. The initiative should empower members of student groups to learn more about their own identities, while promoting the intersectionality of identities across groups.

**Collaboration and Outreach**

Promotion of programming or events that encourage collaboration and outreach must also be a focus of the initiative. For this to happen, student organizations must become more open and inclusive to the diverse student population on campus. By promoting the multitude of activities and experiences each student organization has to offer, the initiative will support groups that pursue the mission to engage students of all identity groups. Cross-campus partnerships and inclusive and open recruitment processes must be incentivized for this same reason.

**Elements of the Initiative:**

**Evaluation**

The working group will create a questionnaire/form that is intended to be a point of access into this initiative. It will allow leaders of student organizations to self-evaluate their own practices and presence on campus through a series of reflective questions. The tool will be available online, on Portfolio, and in print. The structure of the form will include reflection on the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of, and threats to, the organization as perceived by the executive or leading board. The form may be coupled with a consultation, if desired, with the Student Union Diversity Affairs Council or Center staff members that would provide the student groups with a formalized action plan to improve the state of diversity and inclusion in their organization. There would also be a section that serves as a proposal for a diverse and inclusive event for which a group, or groups, may request additional funding.

**Creating Awareness**

The working group is also creating a system through which student organizations can register events in an effort to raise awareness and seek additional funding for events that conform to the best practices listed above. In creating this system, the group is paying particular attention to its promotion and name.

**Promotion**

In order to promote this system, the Working Group proposes a variety of mechanisms that include marketing through President’s training and Treasurer’s training, conveying it as a tool for improving the student organization, and as a responsibility to the members of each group. To incentivize the process, there must be a monetary prize for groups that choose to submit the form. Those proposals that fit the above-mentioned criteria would be selected by the Diversity Affairs Council and would receive the funding and additional marketing. To begin, the Working Group suggests that a pilot program with a few student organizations should be used to set an example for the form and process.

**Naming**

The branding of this campaign/process has been the focal point of recent discussions. The name should align with the criteria for the certification process. The initial proposal of “Everybody’s Welcome” was perceived as not fully portraying the initiative. Thoughts included using verbiage such as “stretch” to imply the notion of stretching the attendees’ minds and exposing them to new experiences.
Next Steps:
1. This working group will reconvene in Fall 2014, under the direction of the student co-chairs.
2. The group will continue to develop and release the self-assessment tool for student groups during the 2014-2015 academic year.
3. The group will work closely with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the Diversity Affairs Council, and other key stakeholders to further explore and implement other recommendations.

Members:
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