

**Advancing Inclusive Excellence**  
Multicultural Center Working Group  
Final Report  
2018 May 7

Diversity is a core value and guiding principle for the University of Delaware's educational mission and is essential in preparing students to be global citizens who will create knowledge that has societal impact. Our collective mission of valuing and respecting diverse people and cultures means we must be intentional in our work to make our campus more equitable, diverse, and inclusive at every level of the institution. These efforts enrich the learning of *all* students as UD cultivates a thriving campus culture that promotes student success.

Diversity and inclusion is one of the University of Delaware's most pressing goals. The Multicultural Center Working Group (MCWG) was tasked in spring 2017 with bringing students, faculty, and staff together to assess multicultural spaces and programming needs on campus, to guide the establishment of increased diversity and inclusion efforts on campus, and to provide the present senior leadership a report of recommendations concerning the proposed multicultural center or centers. To this end, the MCWG:

- A. catalogued existing programs and services available to campus constituents
- B. invited and hosted external higher education diversity and inclusion consultants
- C. engaged the campus community in response to MCWG consultant's report.

The following outlines summary findings and recommendations from the MCWG.

**Present Diversity and Inclusion Infrastructure**

Diversity and inclusion is present throughout the University's curricular and co-curricular offerings, yet it is the central focus of a limited number of units on campus. During summer 2017, MCWG generated an inventory of campus units that held student support and/or student engagement as it relates to diversity and inclusion as their primary function. The MCWG acknowledges that there is a broader scope of offices or positions at the University that focus on diversity and inclusion (e.g., Vice Provost for Diversity, Center for the Study of Diversity, Chief Diversity Advocates). The list below focuses on units that are primarily undergraduate and graduate student serving entities – either offering support for underrepresented students or providing co-curricular programming to celebrate and education about various cultures – in most cases, these units do both.

*UD Units with Diversity & Inclusion as Primary Functions*

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Unit	FTE Staff	Primary Audience	Primary Function
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Center for Black Culture (CBC), Division of Student Life	4	African American and Black, Asian American, and Latinx Students	Recruit, retain, and graduate historically underrepresented students by creating an inclusive learning environment and providing a "home away from home" for many Black students. The CBC supports the personal and professional development of these students through various services and a plethora of cultural and educational programs promoting academic success, community engagement, social integration, and student leadership.
LGBT Program, Division of Student Life	1	LGBTQ+ Undergraduate Students	Provide advocacy, support, and resources for LGBTQ+ students and educate the wider campus community
Office of Equity & Inclusion	4	Faculty and Staff	Compliance and to ensure that all members of its community, irrespective of their differences, are understood, respected and valued. OEI primarily serves University employees around diversity and inclusion training but serves and the compliance unit for the University's Title IX and Non-Discrimination policies.
Office of International Students & Scholars	18	International students, scholars and dependents F, J and H on U.S. non-immigrant visas	Provide support services for international students, scholars and their families at the University of Delaware. The primary role of the office is to advise foreign nationals and University departments on compliance with U.S. immigration laws and regulations related to F, J and H visa categories.
Office of Disability Support Services	9	Students, faculty, and staff with disabilities	Provide support services to students, staff, and faculty with disabilities. Ensure ADA compliance on campus. Provide programming and education for the entire community about the many facets of identifying as a person with a disability.

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## Consultants' Report

Following initial meetings and information gathering, the MCWG group brought a consultant team to campus Oct. 15-17, 2017. Led by Dr. Lori Patton Davis of Indiana University-Purdue, the team held multiple forums with administrators, stakeholders, students and other groups to determine the key needs, opportunities, challenges and concerns related to a UD multicultural space. After the consultants provided a report on their findings, that report was released to the campus community and all were encouraged to provide feedback.

The consultancy was framed by the following questions:

1. What are some of the key needs underlying the establishment of a Multicultural Center?
2. What are some of the major concerns among campus constituents regarding the establishment of a Multicultural Center?
3. What opportunities exist to ensure that the establishment of a Multicultural Center will be successful and sustainable?
4. What challenges and cautions should be considered in the establishment of a Multicultural Center?
5. What general observations regarding the overall campus climate and institutional context should be considered in the establishment of a Multicultural Center?

### Consultants' Recommendations

Overall, the consultants collectively “agreed that a multicultural center should be established” and further noted “that UD is in a unique position to create a center that looks different from other centers and possibly serves as a model for other institutions.” In support of the establishment of a multicultural center, the consultants offered six broad recommendations for moving forward:

1. Identify community needs, principles, and outcomes for the multicultural center that will aid in the development of a purpose statement for the center.
2. Engage the entire UD community in the development of the center so that it reflects the needs of the students, faculty, and staff.
3. Identify specific outcomes that should be gained as a result of interaction with the center.
4. Consider the range of models (presented within the report) for implementing a multicultural center, as well as, the staffing models that will support the work of the center.
5. Ensure that the center is well situated within a refined and refocused University-wide diversity infrastructure that will enable its success and its relevance to the broader UD mission.
6. Identify the necessary components for the center’s infrastructure and consider how such components align with the business and funding models of the University.

### Campus Community Survey Response to Consultants' Report

In the context of announcing the release of the MCWG's consultant report, the MCWG also sought direct campus community feedback. A survey was developed to identify the priorities and campus constituents' central areas of interests in the establishment of "multicultural" services on campus. The survey garnered over 200 respondents (including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, alumni, and parents).

Survey respondents were asked to rank functions of the Multicultural Center at UD, including to: foster campus community engagement; provide opportunities for cross-cultural

interactions and engagement; provide resources for students from historically underrepresented and underserved groups; offer diversity education; support identity affirmation; provide opportunities for students to connect with faculty and staff; and advise student organizations (from most to least important). The functions to foster campus community engagement, provide opportunities for cross-cultural interactions and engagement, and provide resources for students from historically underrepresented and underserved groups were each ranked equally, as most important.

In regards to prospective outcomes for the Multicultural Center and the UD Campus and Surrounding Community, respondents selected: sustained climate of respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences; increased co-curricular opportunities for demonstrating the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a skill set and institutional value; and improved retention of historically underserved and underrepresented groups, as the top three important outcomes.

In addition, survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments. The themes of these comments are summarized as follows:

- Cross-collaboration among diversity related hubs on campus
- Active engagement of “white majority”
- Not just constructing a building but not backing it up with proper institutional infrastructure at the University
- Opportunities to meet students from other backgrounds
- Specific cohesion with the CBC and making sure not to leave it out of infrastructure
- Avoiding a “Band-Aid” approach to diversity by building a new building but instead reexamining the overall culture at the University
- Increasing retention of historically underrepresented students
- Better support for diversity related registered student organizations such as more culturally relevant advisors
- Taking weight off of the CBC so that they can focus more of their energy solely on Black and African-American students

## **Contentions and Concerns**

The MCWG acknowledges that a limited number of contentions and concerns were repeatedly raised throughout this process and ought to be documented as part of this report.

- Multicultural programming and support spaces are a strategy that will help to advance inclusive excellence at UD. However, until the University decides upon a cogent overarching infrastructure for the administration of diversity and inclusion, systemic issues that were raised throughout the MCWG’s research cannot be addressed accurately. The multicultural center(s) and spaces proposed in this report need to be developed within a better-defined broader University diversity & inclusion infrastructure that defines the roles of various offices around campus.

- The Center for Black Culture (CBC) maintains a pivotal and historical role in the legacy of responding to issues of diversity and inclusion on this campus. The CBC should not be taken away by the effort to expand multicultural spaces on campus but instead consideration should be given to how it ought to be aligned with the work happening across campus with student diversity and inclusion efforts more broadly.
- Though there are many ways the University can define multicultural spaces, the MCWG believes it is important to stay committed to the original charge of this committee of addressing the needs of historically underrepresented and underserved groups on campus who struggle with campus climate (see HERI DLE Campus Results) and thereby whose retention and graduation rates are impacted.

### Considerations, Moving Forward

Taking into account present diversity and inclusion units, the MCWG's consultant report, and the campus community's response to the consultants' report, it was evident that a number of considerations must be noted moving forward.

- Development of a multicultural center(s) needs to be developed within the context of UD's *Inclusive Excellence Plan* and in strong collaboration with University-level leadership of diversity and inclusion (i.e., Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion) with emphasis on the following aims of the *Inclusive Excellence Plan*:
  - *Enhancing Student Success*
    - Continue to create and retain a diverse student body.
    - Continue to promote student success for all students.
  - *Advancing Campus Climate & Culture*
    - Engage the campus with activities and programs to foster an inclusive environment.
    - Operationalizing professional development and educational opportunities that leverage diversity as a core competency that has educational, professional and societal value.
- Balance and negotiate persistent tensions in service, engagement, and space
  - Physical space(s) for specific populations (e.g. Center for Black Culture)
  - Space open to engage for *all* students across difference
- Ensure the Center for Black Culture and Student Life's LGBTQ Program operate and function in collaboration with recommendations
- Create specific opportunities for faculty and staff to interact with students through "multicultural" programming. Though principally focused on the student experience, the presence of faculty and staff should be a key element any centers' framework design
- Support for both undergraduate and graduate students
- Ongoing inclusion of voices and perspectives from campus and community stakeholders

- Connect to advancing curricular requirements as it relates to multiculturalism, civic engagement, and social justice needs to remain a priority at the University
- Development and implementation of multicultural services can and should be seen as an opportunity to innovate new services that are contemporary and meet the needs of our current knowledge about diversity and inclusion

## Recommendations

The MCWG suggests the following culminating recommendations to be implemented with the above considerations in-mind.

- Move from the name and creation of "multicultural centers" to a "framework for diversity and inclusion" with a specified name for the framework to be determined at a later date
- Approach the development and implementation of new diversity and inclusion initiatives through a phased model, for example:
  - Phase I: focus on increasing diversity and inclusion staff positions
  - Phase II: develop programs, services, engagement opportunities, and resources
  - Phase III: build and/or renovate physical spaces
- Situate the responsibility for the "framework for diversity and inclusion" and the evolution of multicultural spaces within the Division of Student Life
  - Build organically upon current Student Life initiatives:
    - Student Life's proposal to increase Student Diversity & Inclusion staffing positions
    - External Program Review for the Center for Black Culture to inform the growing model of student diversity and inclusion
    - Development of Student Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Board
    - Forming a Non-Discrimination Response Team
    - Advising of new student identity and affinity-based leadership councils (i.e. Latinx, Asian American Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ+ subpopulations)
    - Initiating new undergraduate (and eventually graduate) student diversity and inclusion internship positions

## Appendices

- Centers/resource spaces on campus for students:
  1. Center for Black Culture
  2. University Student Centers (Perkins, Trabant)
  3. Office of International Students and Scholars
  4. English Language Institute
  5. LGBTQ Resource Coordinator/office
  6. Veterans Coordinator/office
  7. The Kristol Center for Jewish Life
  8. Disability Support Services

9. Office of Graduate and Professional Education (No Resource Center)
- Link to final external consultant work: <http://sites.udel.edu/studentlife/mcwg/>
  - Survey results (PDF included here)

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