"Embracing Our Past, Enhancing Our Present to Inspire Our Future"

Weber State University

MULTICULTURAL CENTER

Academics - Advocacy - Cultural Heritage - Retention

MULTICULTURAL STUDENT CENTER

PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

FINAL REPORT

SPRING 2011

Introduction

Multicultural Student Centers (MSC) are a university service that promote understanding and appreciation of diversity on campus as well as assisting with the retention and graduation of multicultural students. While MSCs compliment and support other university services, they offer a variety of programs that engage the campus and community in conversations about diversity. In addition to serving all students, the MSC is also charged with providing essential outreach to historically underrepresented students at the university. The ultimate goal of MSCs are to assist students to prepare for the global community they will encounter during their university experience and beyond.

According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education, the mission of Multicultural Student Programs and Services should "promote academic and personal growth of traditionally underserved students, work with the entire campus to create an institutional and community climate of justice, promote access and equity in higher education, and offer programs that educate the campus about diversity" (p. 258). They must also "assist the institution in developing shared goals and creating a sense of common community that serves all constituents fairly and equitably" (p. 258) and helps to encourage the university "to hold units responsible for meeting the needs of underserved students in their area of responsibility" (p. 258)

This report has been compiled with information for the MSC Self-Study and Campus Site Visit conducted on January 31 and February 1, 2011 by the following external reviewers:

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- Jamie S. Patton, Director of the Multicultural Student Center—Northern Arizona University (Chair)
- Dr. Richard Sline, Professor of Communication—Weber State University

Other resources that were used to provide the content in this report were: the Weber State University (WSU) Division of Student Affairs, *Program Review Standards*, the WSU Multicultural Student Center website, the 6th edition of the *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Multicultural Student Programs and Services* and Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs.

UNIT MISSION AND GOALS

Excerpts from CAS Standards for MSPS: "Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and with the standards of this document. MSPS must operate as an integral part of the institution's overall mission. MSPA must encourage the institution to hold units responsible for meeting the needs of traditionally underserved students in their area of responsibility; this includes under-represented students or oppressed students, such as students of color, lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender students, and students with disabilities" (p. 258).

The mission of the WSU Multicultural Student Center reads as follows: *The Multicultural Student Center is committed to planning, developing, and implementing services, programs, and interventions that foster the learning and personal development of the various students served. The Multicultural Student Center (MSC) promotes a strong campus sense of common community and aids students in building essential skills for independent critical thinking and self-determination through in and out of classroom experiences. Furthermore, through collaborative efforts with University and community partners, the Multicultural Student Center provides educational efforts to promote multicultural sensitivity, awareness, competency, and understanding.*

The MSC Mission statement is in alignment with those of the University and Student Affairs division, with the university statement being the broader umbrella and the MSC statement being more specific. The mission statement of the MSC speaks to the purpose of the MSC and provides a description of the available services. After review, it appears too broad and needs to directly state what services the MSC provides. The mission should describe how the MSC . "…promotes a strong campus sense of common community and aids students in building essential skills…" One aid in revising a mission statement is having a clear vision statement that defines where the organization will be in the next five years.   Finally, creating a set of values that could include "…planning, developing, and implementing services… and collaborative efforts and community partners…" would provide a clear understanding of the MSCs purpose.

The seven goals of the MSC are great as six out of seven of them speak directly to how the MSC serves students. However, it remains unclear how some of these goals are carried out.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider updating and revising their current mission statement that speaks to the core of the program and defines what the MSC's purpose is.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider creating a list of values that articulate how they carry out the mission. This should speak to departmental programming and standards.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider revising its goals and creating a plan of action for each that describes how the goal is significant.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider additional ways of promoting its mission, values, goals and services throughout the campus and community.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Excerpts from CAS Standards for MSPS: "MSPS must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes. Relevant and desirable outcomes include: intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness and achievement of personal and educational goals" (p. 258).

The WSU MSC has a variety of programs that it offers to students that are common among the majority of MSC's nationally. Categories included in the self-study report are: academic advising, personal advising, mentoring, and career advising. Many of the programs offered by the MSC have students meeting with staff, both para-professional and professional, on a one-on-one basis, which is very important as students feel that their specific needs are being addressed personally. Questions for the MSC staff to consider are:

1. How do you prioritize the needs of students based on what you learn from meetings with students?

2. How are those meetings manifested in the overall programmatic efforts of the MSC?

RECOMMENDATION: As MSC staff have relationships with students through their individual meetings, there needs to be on-going training with other university departments (e.g.. Career Services, Financial Aid, Advising, etc.) for all MSC staff to ensure they know and understand current university policy.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider creating an annual programming calendar that outlines when their programs occur. This will assist in forecasting staff time allocation, understanding what resources are needed and when, as well as streamline existing programs and services.

RECOMMENDATION: All MSC staff need clear expectations in regards to reporting student meetings, including intake and reoccurring student meetings.

RECOMMENDATION: *As stated in a part of the MSC mission,* through the Area Councils and Peer Mentor Program, continue to create programs that connect students to other students. This will help connect more students to the MSC and provide additional leadership opportunities for student leaders.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to develop the Peer Mentoring program to include a clear reporting line, programmatic outcomes and clear expectations for the mentors. When asked directly in several of our meetings, the Program Review Team was provided with three different responses to who supervises the Peer Mentors.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to develop Peer Mentor training that encompasses both skill development and resource knowledge sharing.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING

Excerpts from CAS Standards for MSPS: MSPS leaders must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant

professional credentials, as well as potential for promoting learning and development in students, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness" (p. 261). In regards to management, "MSPS must be structured purposely and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. MSPS must be located in an organizational structure that can best provide for effective programs and services for achievement of its mission (p. 262).

One of the true strength's of the MSC is having Michiko Nakashima-Lizarazo serve as Director. This belief was evidenced throughout the two-day site visit with several constituents making sure this was understood. Since she has become Director, the MSC has had visible growth in usage and there seems to be a greater sense of pride about the MSC from the university community. Michiko has a passion to help students and appears to lead by example for her staff in regards to accountability, work ethic, and desire to go above and beyond to meet the needs of the students.

Throughout the self-study and through conversations during the campus site visit, staffing seems to be an issue due to the traditional titles and ethnic specific work of the MSC. We encourage the MSC to hire candidates who care about students to fill their vacancies, regardless of the candidates' ethnicity. Also, within the student evaluations for the last couple of years, and in the student portion of the campus site-visit, it was apparent that the ethnicity of the staff member was not a major concern.

While the self-report illustrates reporting lines and articulates how decisions are made, the conversations during the campus site-visit indicated something different. From discussions, it appears that there is a lot of collaboration among the MSC staff. A challenge of this organizational culture is that sometimes the lead person assigned to the task does not follow through on completing the task and creates additional work for other members of the staff. For future projects there needs to be clear expectations of what the program or task entails with support and guidance from the Director when needed.

RECOMMENDATION: Evaluate the need for additional professional staff versus additional graduate and undergraduate student staff. There may be an opportunity to have a part-time (30 hour/week) professional position to help meet the additional needs.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider having a para-professional serve in a receptionist/greeter position. Several individuals mentioned to us during our visit that they, either in-person or on the phone did not feel welcome or comfortable using the MSC because of the way they were initially greeted. As the MSC works with many students who are historically underrepresented at the university, this could be very problematic and impact retention of those students.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: "MSPS must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. Professional staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience. Professional staff must have knowledge about identity development and the intersection of the various aspects of diversity. Professional staff must be skilled in identifying cultural issues and assessing their impact. Professional staff must be able to develop empathetic and trusting relationships with students. MSPS staff members must create and maintain position descriptions for all staff members and provide regular performance planning and appraisals. MSPS staff members must have a system for regular staff evaluation and must provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences and workshops" (p. 262-263).

Excerpts from Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs: "Pope and Reynolds created a synthesized list of seven core student affairs competencies: administrative and management, theory and translation, helping and interpersonal, ethical and legal, teaching and training, assessment and evaluation and multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills" (p. 8). "Multicultural competence is a distinctive category of awareness, knowledge, and skills essential for efficacious student affairs work; this category may assist student affairs practitioners in creating diverse and inclusive campuses. Although not all student affairs practitioners will become experts in multicultural issues…every student affairs professional must have a level of multicultural

awareness, knowledge, and skills that allows them to competently work with diverse groups of students and colleagues" (p. 9).

The strength of the WSU MSC staff, both para-professional and professional, is the fact of their diversity in many ways, (age, ethnicity, gender, etc). With such a diverse staff, students are able to find additional connections with the MSC. This connection has manifested in a greater number of students engaged with the MSC. That said, while attempting to create a diverse staff, it is important to hire qualified and/or experienced staff to continue programs regardless of how they identify. With the addition of the Peer Mentors, the MSC has a more "close knit social community" and has created an "intangible support system" for those students who serve in this role. While the Program Review Team was provided with descriptions of staff positions and responsibilities, it was difficult to determine truly what each professional staff member does throughout the day other than meeting with students. Without guidelines, we are not able to determine if the staff is using their time appropriately and proportionality on programs under the current leadership.

During time with staff, there appeared to be a clear division between those who are working within the current vision of the MSC and those who are not. The Program Review Team also found it interesting that a para-professional, a graduate assistant and the newest team member were the only staff members who responded to questions without additional prompting, while the other members of the staff appeared to be disinterested and not engaged in the conversation.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider working with the HR department to rename the "counselor" title, staff are rarely licensed mental health professionals but rather coaches. While this title may define the one-on-one service staff provide to students, this could be problematic as there is an advising office as well as counseling services at WSU. In reviewing potential titles, one available title that may be appropriate found on the WSU HR website is "specialist" another title used at other universities for this type of position is "consultant".

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider auditing the time of its employees to determine how all staff members use their time. Staff members should account for the percentage of time

spent meeting one-on-one with students, on community relations, in meetings, planning programs, advising student groups, doing correspondence, etc. This will assist if the MSC considers re-writing job descriptions and justify new staff budget lines.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider reformatting their organizational chart that includes clear reporting lines and clear programmatic responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should require the supervisor of the Peer Mentors to have a graduate degree, to be in alignment with the CAS.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider expanding the role of the Department Secretary to assist staff members with administrative tasks and departmental data reporting.

RECOMMENDATION: Each professional staff member should consider creating a professional development plan to ensure they are aware of current trends and developments of multicultural students and the Student Affairs profession.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider quarterly workshops for professional staff with a focus on organization development, interpersonal communication, program planning and departmental updates.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider additional training of Peer Mentor and other relevant student staff with a focus on team building, university protocol, Peer Mentor boundaries, skill development, and resource sharing.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND BUDGET

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: "Funding priorities must be determined within the context of the stated mission, goals, objectives, and comprehensive analysis of the needs and capabilities of students and the availability of internal and external resources" (p. 262).

Based on the self-report document, the MSC director oversees five budget lines approximately totaling $700,000. According to the self-report document the MSC is aligned with the division and university as well as meeting the CAS standard for resource management. Depending on divisional and departmental needs, in the future the MSC may need to consider securing grants to supplement university funding to support the needs of staffing and programmatic efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: If possible, the MSC should consider purchasing software to collect data. This can aid in justifying the need for additional resources for staff and services.

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: "Multicultural Student Programs and Services must have adequate, suitably located facilities, adequate technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals efficiently and effectively. Adequate space should be provided for a resource library, private individual consultations, group workshops, and work areas for support staff. Many of the activities offered by MSPS require the same level of privacy as individual and group counseling. Wherever it is located, MSPS should provide a safe haven for students" (p. 263).

With the growing number of students served, facilities will become a greater challenge. In a quick tour of the facility, it appeared to have the basic elements that a MSPS office would have, staff offices, center area for students to congregate, a reception area and computing services. Noted in both the self-study document and in each of the MSC staff meetings with the Program Review team, the MSC staff has to be creative with scheduling the space that they have. The MSC needs additional office space to meet with students. Currently, two professional staff members and the Peer Mentors are not able to have comfortable and confidential meetings with students. Depending on the expectations for Student Association Senators the common could be too small, only accommodating 10-20 people at one time; this may need to be expanded. Lastly, the space for the departmental secretary is very cramped and depending on the tasks that need to be completed by this position, it is not a confidential space.

According to the self-study report it appears that the MSC is able to update equipment as needed and recommended by the Student Affairs Technology staff. It is more than sufficient to have computers updated or replaced every four years. There is a concern that the MSC is unable to purchase additional office equipment because there is not sufficient office space.

The MSC has hired staff to specifically work towards keeping the website current. The website and other forms of social media are great ways to keep the community aware of events, meetings and programs. It will be important for the MSC to continue to use these forms of media and other traditional forms of media to generate student usage and Center visibility.

RECOMMENDATION: If possible, the MSC should consider purchasing software to collect data. This can aid in justifying the need for additional resources for facilities, staffing and services.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC needs at least three more offices for its staff ([1] Departmental Secretary, [1] Professional Staff member, [1] Peer Mentors). This will allow staff to work with students in a comfortable space and staff to not be concerned with having to vacate their current space for one another.

ETHICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: Ethical Responsibilities "MSPS staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the law and appropriate statements of ethical practice. Staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved, or when otherwise required by institutional policy or relevant law. Staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications (p. 264).

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: Legal Responsibilities "MSPS staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities. MSPS staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents" (p 263-264).

In the self-study report, the MSC acknowledges that staff understands the value of accurate information that is readily available to parties that require it and understands that files must be protected and kept confidential. It is our understanding that locking file cabinets and ensuring that computers are password protected accomplish file security. Also, through one-on-one supervisor meetings, concerning or emergency information is shared addressing ethical and legal responsibilities.

Two areas of concern are, Peer Mentor roles and reporting in regards to student meetings and professional staff member student meeting documentation. In the Program Review teams' meeting with Peer Mentors, they acknowledged that they had training and understand when to refer a student on to a professional staff member, we are unsure if this is practice among all Peer Mentors. While the current group of Peer Mentors are sharp and have the ability to connect with students, through our conversation, we have a concern that the Peer Mentors are over stepping a boundary when their attitude is there is nothing that I don't know how to do to help a student. There needs to be clear lines when a Peer Mentor needs to refer a student to consult with a professional MSC staff member.

In regards to staff member student meeting documentation, without a database we have a concern with access of files and information for other MSC staff members and physical documentation of what was discussed in meetings. MSC staff needs access to student meeting information in order to assist a student in case of a staff member being absent when a student is in need. Having prior meeting data allows other staff members to help a student without them having to share personal information multiple times.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider purchasing software to collect data. This can aid in providing information for their colleagues and creates a "one stop shop" of MSC student information.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider continuing all departmental training with other campus offices including, counseling services, tutoring services, financial aid, bursar, and other services that their students frequently use. This will help staff understand changing policies and remain current with new regulations, including annual review of FERPA and other campus information policies.

RECOMMENDATION: As mentioned under Human Resources, the MSC should consider additional training of Peer Mentor on para-professional boundaries.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Excerpts from CAS for MSPS: MSPS must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. General evaluation of the multicultural student programs and services must be conducted on a regularly schedules basis. Assessments must be conducted in a manner to assure an effective response. Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and in recognizing staff performance " (p. 265).

The MSC provided Satisfaction Surveys for 2010 and 2009 with student responses of 26 and 68 respectively. While both provided data, the number of respondents seems low, thus these surveys do not have the collective voice of a representative sample of all the students that utilize the MSC service. There was also no data provided about satisfaction of MSC staff and peer mentor presentations, something that is a part of their mission.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC will need to begin tracking student retention as another measure of effectiveness and to be accountable to the division. This will require accurate recording of student data and the students' usage of services.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider alternate ways of conducting its satisfaction survey; this may include increasing the frequency that the survey is administered. The targeted response rate depends on the number of students served within a period of time.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider identifying their target audience and begin to track and collect outreach efforts and contact meetings.

UNIVERSITY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Throughout the Program Review visit the team had an opportunity to meet with several groups of individuals who provided additional insight about the MSC. Please find our thoughts and recommendations below.

Alumni: This group shared many heartwarming stories about their experiences with staff and what they had done to aid in their education and in their personal lives. Some of them also talked about how it was great to have the advisors, because they held them accountable and "keep you on track." An overall theme that emerged was that the MSC was a "family", where relationships were important.

Some of the challenges discussed in this group were the confusion about the difference between the Diversity Center and the perception of staff workload. One specific concern that was raised was about all staff providing good customer service and treating each student with respect, all in the effort of creating a student-centered atmosphere.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider continuing and expanding events for alumni to connect with current students in the form of an alumni panel or other social ways that allow alumni to visit the MSC.

Advisory Council: This group was concerned about the progress of the MSC. We believe that the concern is based off them not understanding what the current MSC leadership has been tasked to complete, thus they are operating on past MSC programming. They seemed to be pro-active, diligent, focused and concerned about minority students at WSU. The Advisory Council expressed that Michiko is fantastic and for the most part, the staff is very committed. Overall, they recognized the importance of relationship building of the MSC and felt that the MSC is far more visible than in the past.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider working with the Advisory Council to create a mission and set expectations for the members.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider creating more opportunities for students to connect with members of the council.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider working with connecting the council to the Educational Access and Outreach program, to assist with pre-college and recruitment programs.

Student Affairs and University Partners: This provided insight about the MSC and also showed their commitment to helping the MSC provide a great experience for students. They recognized that the MSC successfully outreached to student-athletes and that overall the MSC is serving more students. SA and University Partners also discussed how the MSC and other minority staff members were extended and spread thin due to the extensive university committee work.

RECOMMENDATION: Student Affairs Leadership should consider merging the MSC and the Diversity and Inclusion Center. If this merger of these two departments is not feasible, the MSC should consider meeting regularly (minimally each month) with the Diversity and Inclusion Center staff to outline upcoming programs and collaboration opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION: The MSC should consider hosting an open house each semester to provide networking opportunities for its staff, provide updates in regards to their programming and create

dialogue amongst colleagues about how they can better collaborate on how to best serve their students. This open house should also be open to faculty members to engage with the Center.

CONCLUSION

The WSU Multicultural Student Center serves in a critical role on the Weber State campus and the community. It provides both one-on-one services and group programs to promote inclusion and serves as a comfort zone for students who choose to use the services and engage with the campus. Traditionally, MSC's provide additional opportunities for students to participate in dialogue and programming around diversity in a safe space on the university campus and the more students you get involved the greater the impact will be.

Currently, the MSC is not able to fully take credit for the students it serves, due to a myriad of challenges. We hope that the recommendations within this report help the MSC team reach its potential as professionals and as an organization to better serve students. Ultimately, we believe that with teamwork, the MSC can successfully continue to serve students and become a leader of multicultural competence on the WSU campus.

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