Integrating Inclusiveness in a University Counseling Center:

Use of a Multicultural Team

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MC Team Historical Context

Diversity Task Force/Early Multicultural Team:
- Both were more experiential and process-oriented for the purpose of diversity exposure/awareness/consciousness-raising
- Activities consisted of small group meetings and watching movies/some other stimulus to facilitate process reactions, etc.

Past 4 years - from Multicultural Team to Multicultural Committee:
- More active team/committee with the development of specific activities to enhance and sustain our multicultural competence
- Membership is voluntary and members can join by semester or the entire academic year
- Team meets monthly with alternating between small group team meetings and full staff meetings
- Goals are set for the year with two over-arching goals to accommodate multiple sub goals/priorities
- Priorities are set by soliciting ideas from staff members related to events/issues in the local/national news, on campus and presented by our client population
- Activities/initiatives encompass components of team-building, are educational, experiential with an eye toward valuing different learning styles and ways to engage
- Sub-committees are formed within the Team when necessary to focus on a specific task
Multicultural Team End of Year Goals/Outcome Report

2014-2015

1) Increase and sustain the UCC staff’s multicultural awareness and commitment to diversity issues

This goal will be met by:

A. Hosting a multicultural potluck with all UCC staff invited: Goal met on Thursday September 11, 2014

B. Displaying our winter holiday ensemble that includes multiple cultural perspectives-Goal completed during the weeks of November 24 and December 1, 2014 with a bulletin board presentation and decorative displays describing the four holidays represented (Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Chinese New Year, and Christmas):
   i. Also, all departments in St. Liam hall were invited to bring in ornaments of cultural significance to put on the tree in the 3rd floor conference room-Goal completed

C. Having a multicultural panel presentation re: student-athletes at the beginning of the spring semester: Not able to schedule this semester

D. Having a spring semester multicultural activity entitled “Exploring the Culture in Your Own Backyard”: Goal met on May 5, 2015

2) As a collective, commit to actively incorporating multicultural variables into our daily work lives

This goal will be met by:

A. Staff members sharing relevant multicultural information with entire staff via email, newsletter, staff meetings, and informal staff discussions- approximately 27 emails and 1 newsletter item were sent to the staff Fall 2014 by; approximately 22 emails were sent to the staff Spring 2015

B. Staff infusing multicultural variables into clinic team, disposition team, supervision, intern seminars, and staff meetings-Completed this year and on going

C. Staff sharing experiences related to multiculturalism at full staff meeting(s)-Goal completed on October 28, 2014 and May 5, 2015

D. Staff volunteering to assist with the planning and execution of multicultural activities, as needed

E. *Staff attending multicultural events on-campus such as STAR-ND presentations-On going
Multicultural Team Activities
University Counseling Center, University of Notre Dame
(2011-2015)

Community Service Projects
To promote a broader multicultural community perspective, the MC Team organized a volunteer opportunity at the Salvation Army over the course of two days. The staff helped stock the food pantry, prepare the ground for a community garden, and register new visitors.

In a similar vein the following year the MC Team organized a volunteer opportunity at two different assisted living facilities. Staff helped organize games, participated in exercise classes, and shared stories with individual residents. The staff spent 1-2 hours processing these experiences at a later date.

Experiential/Team Building
“Exploring the Culture in Your Own Backyard”
The MC Team created a categorical list of multiculturally-related “people, places, and things” (e.g., places of worship) in the South Bend and surrounding area, organized staff members into teams, and invited them to identify four activities from the list to engage in on their own time, individually or as a group, during the semester. The staff spent one hour processing the experience at the end of the semester.

Media/Cultural Diversity Game
The MC Team created activities using media/technology as a stimulus for imparting multicultural information. These activities included 1) staff members watching Super Bowl ads and discussing levels of cultural sensitivity/insensitivity in the media and 2) staff members engaging in a diversity game (“Jeopardy” style with multiple choice format) in teams. Prizes were offered to the winning team.

Multicultural Potlucks
Staff members were invited to bring in a food/drink item that represented a part of their culture/heritage. Staff were then invited to each share the story of their food/drink with everyone at the potluck.

Multicultural Moments
Staff members were asked to sign up to share a 5 minute “multicultural moment” at the beginning of a staff meeting. Information was usually of a personal nature and included details about the staff member’s individual heritage and/or unique cultural identity.
Campus Productions

ND students (with the help of faculty/staff) write, produce and perform an annual campus-wide stage production on important diversity topics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation called “Show Some Skin”. Stories are solicited anonymously from students, faculty, and staff and performed by student actors.

For several years, after the production, UCC staffs have watched a recording of the production together and invited students from the show to join us in processing our reactions, discussing the impact on campus, and engaging in dialogue about needed changes on campus re. diversity.

Panel Presentations

Intersection of Race/ Ethnicity and Gender/Sexual Orientation Panel - See attached.

Asian International Student Panel - To enhance the UCC’s understanding and competence regarding our growing Asian International student population, the MC Team invited select staff, faculty, and students to join us in sharing their stories. Three students who identified as Asian International students and three faculty/staff (two of whom identified as Asian-American) comprised the panel. Each shared their experiences as a member of a minority group on campus, including challenges, cultural differences, and what has been helpful in the adjustment/transition to Notre Dame. Staff/faculty also shared how they specifically work with Asian students (from academic advising, campus ministry, and International Student Services perspectives).

Holidays

To broaden our appreciation of holiday celebrations beyond the Catholic tradition, UCC staff, under the leadership of the MC Team, created a winter holiday display representing four holiday traditions (i.e., Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Chinese New Year). The display included ornamental decorations in a central location as well as factual information describing each tradition on large bulletin board.

Clinical Services

To better meet the needs of our growing Hispanic student population the MC Team procured mental health-related resources in Spanish.

To better meet the needs of our ESL students the MC Team investigated the use of interpreter services and passed on information to administration.
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Multicultural Activity

The UCC Multicultural Team organizes an end-of-the semester event every year. This year, we would like to have a panel presentation with professionals who can educate our staff on the intersection between race/ethnicity and the GLBT community. Thus, we would like to invite you to be a panel member and provide your perspective on this intersection. The program is scheduled for Thursday December 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We are asking panel members to arrive at 9:30 a.m. so the Multicultural Team members can meet and help you get settled before the program. Our goals for the panel discussion are to:

1) Provide space for discussion of the experience of LGBT students of color at ND and in SB community
2) Identify resources and sources of support for LGBT students of color at ND and in SB community
3) Identify gaps/needs in resources and support for LGBT students of color at ND and in SB community
4) Discuss particular ways to better serve LGBT students of color at ND and in SB community

We are asking 4-5 professionals from Notre Dame and the South Bend community to consider participating in this event. A proposed general outline is provided below:

Panel Agenda (90 minutes)

1) Panelists introduce themselves (5 minutes)
2) Each panelist take 5 -10 minutes to discuss specific perspective (45 minutes)
3) The Multicultural Team members will offer a set of questions to panelists to discuss if needed (0-25 minutes)
4) Staff questions (20-25 minutes)
5) Wrap up (5 minutes)

If you are able to join us, please respond to this email. Once confirmed, I will contact you so we can dialogue about what kind of information you would like to provide as a panel member. If you are not able to join us, please recommend a professional who you think would be educative on this topic.

Thank you for considering this invitation. We are excited to meet you and welcome you to our center.

Sincerely,
Josephine Dickinson, Ph.D.
UCC Staff Psychologist
Intersectionality of Race/Ethnicity and Sexual/Gender Identity

Panel Presentation

The Multicultural Team organized a panel presentation to provide further conversation related to multiple identities, specifically the intersection of race/ethnicity and GLBT identities.

Panel Members

The panel consisted of ND students, ND faculty/staff, and community members from the South Bend region. Members were selected to provide a broad perspective, bring diverse groups together, and share information/experiences from multiple vantage points. The panel included:

- Director of University of Notre Dame’s Multicultural Student Programs and Services
- Interim Executive Director of South Bend’s GLBT Resource Center
- Therapist in private practice specializing in working with GLBT-identified individuals
- Three students (all identified as men, two identified as gay, and one identified as transgender, two identified as Latino and one identified as Latino and White)

Process

Each panel member introduced himself/herself and shared 5-10 minutes about his/her role at ND/in the community, their experiences being a person of intersecting identities (particularly the students being on a campus where the majority population identifies as White, heterosexual, and cisgender), and their experience working with students/clients with multiple identities.

After all panel members spoke, the audience asked questions and shared reactions. As a thank you, breakfast was provided and gift cards were given to each panel member.

Themes

- Students’ experiences of “outsider” status; coping with microaggressions and university climate where formal resources for GLBT students were not yet available; students needing to be resilient, creative, and proactive in creating their own support network and resources
- Students’ saw their development, strengths, challenges re: sexual/gender identity as more prominent than their corresponding racial/ethnic identity
- Students expressed their gratitude about being invited by the UCC to participate in the presentation; perceived the UCC as a caring, welcoming place and staff members caring about the “whole person”
- Staff and community panel members appreciated the opportunity to share information re. the resources they offer and how their services can provide additional support to students
- Feedback from the UCC staff was that hearing from the students was most impactful.
Creating and Utilizing a Multicultural Team:

Potential “Take Aways”

1. **Be Patient, Creative, Thoughtful, and Persistent** – It takes time, sensitivity and intentionality to determine how best to meet the needs of a diverse group of professionals at different levels of multicultural competence and with different learning styles and needs.

2. **Get Administrative “Buy-In”** – Having the support of leadership can go very far in communicating the essential nature of multicultural competence for staff.

3. **Strike While the Iron is Hot!** – If an issue is causing tension or concern on your campus or in your Center, it may be the perfect time to create an opportunity for your staff to explore the issue together and build common understandings and solidarity.

4. **Plant Seeds and Pay Attention to Openings** – Some issues are too hot in the moment. This may be a good time to circulate readings, recommend videos, and suggest/plan for more direct training experiences down the road.

5. **Meet Staff Members Where They Are** - Change is often incremental. Include small, achievable challenges for staff growth and development.

6. **Be Willing to Take Risks and Handle Any Fall-out** – There may be times when you decide to push ahead on an issue that is difficult or not “popular” and run into resistance. Be prepared.

7. **Invite Others to Participate in your Activities, i.e. students, faculty, staff, community members, etc.** Including diverse perspectives and building ally relationships within the community is priceless. Most importantly, make room for student voices. This has been the most impactful aspect of our experiences over the years.

8. **Demonstrate that Multicultural Learning Can be Fun!** Many of these issues are difficult and painful to explore and address, but working to increase our understanding and grow together can be empowering and FUN.