



2008

Multicultural Student Services and the Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
1883-2008
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

MULTICULTURAL STUDENT
SERVICES AND THE ERA BELL
THOMPSON MULTICULTURAL
CENTER

Submitted By

Dr. Matsimela Changa Diop

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Services and Director Multicultural Student Services

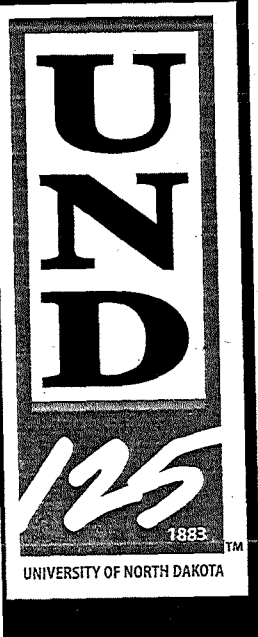


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I. The Beginning of the Department/Program

Why was it Created?

The Black Student Program was created to provide a meeting place for African American students enrolled at UND and greater unity among the African American community on campus and at the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

When was it Created?

The history of Black Student Programs and its services to Black students on campus can be traced to 1967, When 12 students organized the Afro-American Union.

When did it first appear in the University Catalogue?

1980-same year as the Division of Student Affairs

What was the aim and scope of the department?

To promote greater unity among African American students at UND by seeking to develop their cultural heritage while maintaining their identity while in a culture alien to their own. The aim was also to develop a foundation for communication and association between different cultures.

II. The First Staff Members

The composition of the department:

From October 1970 to 1974, Services to Black students at UND was provided by the Student Affairs Division staff. In 1974, L. Bruce Austin was hired as a half-time counselor to provide direct assistance to Black students At UND. In 1975 this position became full-time as Coordinator of Black Student Programs. The original full time coordinator of the Black Cultural Center position was funded when the Dean of Students office closed one position in their office and moved the salary/funding to the Black Cultural Center to hire a full-time administrator, who became the coordinator. That first full-time coordinator was Robert Crawford (5/78-5/79), who later resigned because family illness. Others who have held this position were Ralph Crenshaw (10/79-6/81), Artis Stanfield (8/81-6/85), Nathan Williams (1/2 time 85-86 academic year), Jacqueline Skinner (8/86-6/88), and Herb Jones (8/88-9/90).

From what locations did they come?

Past coordinators come from cities and universities-Historically Black colleges and Universities (HBCU) south, east, and north of the Midwest such as Grambling State in Grambling, LA and North Carolina A&T in Greensboro, NC.

What were their personal backgrounds and training?

Unknown

What were their living accomplishments at the university after leaving UND?

As of August 1975, the Black student enrollment at UND had doubled in the first five years of providing services to the Black students on campus. The rate of graduation for the Black students at UND was high with 25 graduating during the 1973-74 and 1974-1975 academic years. In the years to follow, the recruitment of Black students to UND continued fairly extensively in both North Dakota and Minnesota.

III. The First Students

The composition of the student body:

In 1970, there were 17 Black students who self identified and became members of the Black Student Union. The numbers increased to 40 in 1973 with 25 Black students graduating with degrees during the 1973-1975 academic years.

From where did they come?

Approximately 15 percent of the Black students enrolled at UND had connections to the Grand Forks Air Force Base. A significant number were considered international students, While others attended UND through exchange programs between UND, Grambling State University, and North Carolina A&T University.

What was their high school training?

Each had earned High school Diplomas or GEDs

What were their living accommodations at the university?

Most of the early Black students lived in the university housing residential Units.

IV The Early Programs/Services

Were there specific services that seem dated and sound peculiar today?

There were several programs that the Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center offered. The founding program was to provide the Black Students an environment in which they can share their experiences. In the early years, the center operated as an information booth. It collected different kinds of information about African-American Culture. Although open to all students, the Center served as a resource center where a collection of black history literature and black people's viewpoints was housed.

Besides, the Center sponsored different activities both at the Center and across UND campus. The activities included the Black History Week, which by 1983 became the Black Cultural Week. As of 1983, the Center sponsored cultural events throughout the academic year rather than concentrating on one specific week, a tradition continued to date.

Many programs were developed to:

- ❖ *provide a comfortable environment for black students*
- ❖ *project and develop black cultural heritage*
- ❖ *provide ongoing educational and social programs so the University and the community have the opportunity to learn about and from the black culture*
- ❖ *maintain a sense of self identity in striving for academic success and growth*

- ❖ *provide a basis of communication, association, and understanding of cultures other than our own.*
- ❖ *expand the population of and programs for black students, and to*
- ❖ *provide a place for students to relax and exchange ideas in a "home away from home" environment.*

The Center operated as a resource center for black students until 1985 when it began providing academic services such as tutoring and academic advising. As of 1989, the Center provided different on-going student educational and social programs including:

- *academic advising and support*
- *recruitment of graduate and undergraduate students*
- *new student orientation*
- *cultural awareness and programming*
- *personal counseling services*
- *group advisement*
- *career development referrals, and*
- *financial aid and scholarship information*
- *social activities such as dinners and parties*

By the end of 1991, the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center became a base of operation not only for students of African descent, but also became a center for Asian and Hispanic Student programs. Thus it housed offices of the Director of African, Asian and Hispanic Student Programs(Toni Scott) and the Black Student Association. The center operated under the auspices of the Division of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students.

Currently, the Center House Multicultural Student Services, which provides the following services:

- *Tutoring Services*
- *Academic advising and Peer Mentoring*
- *Programming for different student organizing such as Organization for Latin Americans, Black Student Association, Asian Student Association, and the ALANA organization.*
- *Celebrations of Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month; Asian Awareness Month; Martin Luther King Jr. Week; Women of Color week; and Black History Month.*
- *Skills building seminars and workshops*
- *Advocating for multicultural student programs and activities*
- *Distribution of a Newsletter which includes information on scholarships, campus and community events, career opportunities and other information pertinent to the Cultural Awareness and Understanding.*
- *Discussions, Guest Lectures, Receptions, Film Nights, Book Reviews, Workshops,*
- *Informal gatherings such as the Annual ALANA Family BBQ & Job Expo and the Annual Harvest Luncheon events.*

V The Department's Early Resources

The building, facilities, equipment:

The original Multicultural Center opened in October 1970. It was first housed off-campus at 1910 Dyke Avenue. The house was a former home to a Grand Forks family. The facility served 17 students who were members of the Black Student Union. But in August 1973, the Black Student Union acquired a new cultural center at 2315 Second Avenue North in Grand Forks. Two important reasons necessitated the acquisition of the new building. First, it was closer to campus. Second, the original building was too small for the growing population of black students on campus. Black students from the Grand Forks Air Force Base, the doubled number of minority enrollment compared to that of 1970, the student exchange program with Grambling (La.) State University, and an increased international student enrollment contributed to the significant increase to the

number of black students at UND. For this reason, the second facility at 2315 Second Avenue North became too small.

In 1976 the present building was opened at 2800 University Avenue. It was first called Black Cultural Center. But in February 1979, it was renamed Era Bell Thompson Black Cultural Center (EBTBCC) in honor of former UND Student of 1925 and 1926. The center housed a library, conference room, lounge and multipurpose room. The EBTBCC was remodeled and later (in 2004) became known as The Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center in an effort to reflect its mission to serve a mixture of ethnic cultures. In the Spring of 1995, the Center was closed only to be reopened in the Fall 1995. Sandy Hoagland, Director of the EBTCC had resigned due to problems and concerns with students and the Student Affairs office on how he runs the culture center.

The appointment of Dr. Matsimela Changa Diop in 1997 brought different structures and programs to the center. He has developed a computer lab, which houses ten computers with internet connections, a modern laser printer, and telephone access for use by all students who visit the center. On the ground floor, he has provided a satellite hookup, which offers more cultural television programs such as black entertainment channel and Latino news and shows.

VI Over the Course of Time

In April of 1996, a group of consultants (Mrs. Alicia Chavez, Administrative Associate to the Dean of Students and doctoral candidate from the University of Arizona and Dr. Anthony Ross, Associate to the President at Wichita State University) was requested by President Baker and Dr. Gordon Henry to make an assessment on the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center and the position of Coordinator for African American, Asian American, and Hispanic students.

The consultation objectives were to address the following issues through a review of written reports and consultation with students, faculty and administrative staff members who serve as the coordinator for African American, Asian American and Hispanic American students:

- 1. Conduct an examination of the interactions of the students who use the Center and the activities which occur within the cultural center to identify the range of support activities which the students are utilizing and/or are in need of in a dual academic/social setting such as the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center.*
- 2. Determine what needs to occur to bring a cultural enriched environment to the students who use the Center and to other students while creating individual opportunities that encourage cross-cultural learning experiences. How can the position of Coordinator best be developed to support these goals?*
- 3. Review the essential services currently available to African American, Asian American, and Hispanic student populations at UND. What is necessary to occur for students of these populations to know that they matter and what additional services or support are needed?*
- 4. What should be the role of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center in facilitating the above student connections? Where should administrative responsibility for Era Bell Reside? What should the role of students be in its operation? Should "services" to students and the Center facility is one and the same? What populations should be served through the programs and/or the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center? Why?*
- 5. What should be the role of the Center within the University? The community of Grand forks?*
- 6. What does the University need to do to ensure the success and stability of the Center?*
- 7. Should the position of Coordinator be maintained? If not, why—and how could the resources better be used? If yes, should the job description remain the same? To whom should the position report organizationally? Where should the office be located, at the Center or elsewhere?*

8. Determine what needs to occur to bring a culturally enriched environment to the students who use the Center and to other students while creating individual opportunities that encourage cross-cultural learning experiences. How can the position of Coordinator best be developed to support these goals?

What effect has this change had, if any, on the composition of the students?

The composition of the students in the past was mostly African Americans. The mission of the center during the time of their visit (1996) was to also serve Asian American and Hispanic students; however, "there was no real evidence that Asian American students utilized the center." They meet generally in other locations on campus or at the International Student Center. There was a change on how the Hispanic students interact with the African American students. The Hispanic students at that year of 1996 were reluctant to utilize the center for programming purposes. The consultants reported that "this change in usage can be attributed to attitudes of past professional staff on the direction and vision of the center."

According to Dr. Gordon Henry in his letter to the University Relations during the closure of the EBTCC in 1995, "the use of the center by African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and other students had fallen off." In an article entitled, "The best remedy?" by Steve Schmidt of the Grand Forks Herald on April 8, 1995, students stated their sentiments regarding the shutting down of the center. Some students agreed that it was a good remedy and some students disagree, and he quote, "the UND administrators should have tried harder to resolve problems before shutting down the center." The president of the Black Student Association, Broderick "Bo" Powell felt that "it was not fair."

How has the mission of the department/program changed over time?

The mission of the department/program changed over time according to the needs of the students. Along with the revisions of the missions, the center was also renamed, from a Black Student Union, to Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center and to the present name of Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center.

The Black Cultural center opened at its present location at the 2800 University Avenue in 1976. The Black Cultural Center also housed the Black Student Union (BSU), which sponsored the activities both at the center and around the campus. Among the group's activities was the annual Black History Week, later becoming the Black Cultural Week. It serves as a cultural educational and social activity center for the entire university and community. The center became a focal point for learning, activities and information about black heritage. The center changed its focus on sponsoring cultural events like the Black Cultural Week throughout the academic year rather than rather than concentrating on one specific week.

Herbert Jones, the Black Student Programs Coordinator, expressed the reason for changing the name to Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center and its mission in an article called "Cultural Center Brings Black's Heritage Closer" written by Ian Swanson of the Dakota Student. He feels that having a cultural center is very important for black students to have a place to go and "in a sense let their hair down" especially in a predominantly white institution like UND. It was a place to share their common heritage. Jones added that the "cultural center is there to defeat racism." A black student named Any Lewis, lamented that the cultural center needed to a different focus. He suggests to the center that "if you want a white student to come to the cultural center you have to change perceptions." This idea was the key to a new image of the center, which was not a center for black people but instead a cultural center where all races is welcome. Any Lewis emphasized that the concept of exclusivity was wrong. The center has started to

evolve as a wider part of the community and not just exclusively pertaining to a certain group, like the black students.

When the "Black Cultural Center" was renamed as "Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center" in February 1979 in honor of the former UND student who went on to become a well-known black writer and magazine editor of Ebony, its mission was

"to coordinate campus and Grand Forks community efforts toward eradication of discrimination through social and education programs, thus helping others to appreciate the diverse population represented at the Center."

In an article called, "Black Cultural Center Expands Its Focus" by Luke Schockman of the Dakota Student on October 10, 1991, the EBTCC was changing the center's mission to meet the needs of more students. The students got together and approached the dean of students about including other cultures in the center. In the past, the center has represented African-American culture on campus. The center will now include African-American, Asian American, and Hispanic American culture. The director during this time was, Toni Scott, who said that 'the goals of the center will still be much the same.' It was reported that there were 207 students who belong with these three cultures. It was this time when the perspective about diversity has changed. With Toni Scott's leadership she believes that integration is more important than assimilation. She said that "colleges are becoming more culturally diverse. It was time for students to learn about other cultures."

The mission during the year of their visit in 1996 was generally the same in the past when it serves as a "home base" or "touch stone" for many of the students of African descent who attend UND. The administration believes that "the center is a focal point and gathering place for many of the students" of Asian, African and Hispanic descent. The center provides a "home away from home" atmosphere, a place where people of color can come together their cultural heritage. Therefore, the center acts as an advocate for African American, Asian American and Hispanic students. The objective was to "provide academic and social programs that seek to ensure the success of all students (of all races)."

Were policy/program changes internally driven or were they the result of community needs, national/regional trends, funding issues, etc.?

According to the consultants, "it appears that the support activities of the Center complement the academic and social nature of the programming efforts designed to enhance the living environment of the university." This is evident in having the following items which were found during their visit: the brown bag series, the speaker's forums, the cultural library, the availability of additional study space, the availability of computers and printers.

Reaching out into the campus and the community to portray a mixing of cultures is one of the main functions of the center.

In the assessment report given by the consultant team, "as for the community of Grand Forks, the Center could function in much the same way as outlined, although there would need to be a limit as to the extent of usage granted to the community. Whenever there are programs at the Center, the general public should be invited in an effort to welcome them to the university and one of its "show piece" facilities.

Has the department needed to move from one building to another, and, if so, what effect did this have on the department?

There was no change in the location of the building at the time of consultant's visit in 1996. However, the existing problem was how to bring back the books that were in the Center's library, which was moved to the University library during the closure of the Center in 1995, "as a protection against their disappearance." The consultants thought that it was already time to return the books back to the Center's library now that it already reopened. In the same year after the consultants conducted the study, the "University has moved the books back to the EBTCC library, in addition to renewing the subscriptions to the magazines and journals that had been allowed to lapse."

When the building was re-opened, it was recommended that the keys for the center will be stored at the Info Center at the Memorial Union and building managers will pick up and return keys there. The Black Student Association, the only student group with a desk and file cabinet in the Center was provided a space in the Union. The second floor of the Center was not used with exception of the former library, which can be used for meetings and study sessions. The conference room in the cultural center was named in honor of Jack Mayfield, a long time, well-known Grand Forks resident.

The EBTCC "student" computer were moved back to the Center and placed on the first floor for easy access by students and so that it can be observed by the building manager. This computer was moved to the International Center when the EBTCC was closed.

How has the staff composition changed?

The history of the Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center (EBTMC) is marked by staff shortages. In September 1991, the center named Toni Scott as a new Director of the Era Bell Thompson Black Cultural Center at UND. She was alcohol and drug peer counseling coordinator and advisor for the Black Student Alliance at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. But in early 1995 problems between students and the administrator of the Center led to its closure. Sandy Hoagland, Director of the EBTCC, effectively resigned on May 31, 1995 after working barely for one year citing a difference in philosophy with the Student Affairs office. However, the trend of resignations was not new to UND Division of Student Affairs. Hoagland's resignation was the fourth in seven years, and second in two years. The trend however led the University to engage consultants who reexamined the position of the director, the role of the center, and university policies on multiculturalism. The position remained vacant for two years until Dr. Matsimela Changa Diop was appointed Director of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center in Fall 1997. As of 2007, his appointment has continued without a resignation for ten years.

In 1981, the BSU changes its name to the Black Student Association. Serving as coordinator of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center since fall 1981 was Artis Stanfield.

In 1991, Toni Scott was hired as the new coordinator of the Era Bell Thompson Center. Her goal was a "productive use of the center by all." She also promoted continuing education of various departments on campus. According to her, it was important that "the three cultures are discussed and taught in departments like English and Political Science.

In a student meeting by the Black Student Association and the Hispanic American Council on January 31, 1994, they requested for the following actions to be taken by the University Administration:

1. *The position for a Tri-Cultural Coordinator should be advertised immediately.*
2. *The responsibilities of the Coordinator should be reassessed.*
3. *Grants and like funding be actively sought for the recruitment of graduate students within each cultural group to assist the Coordinator in meeting the needs of the students.*
4. *Steps must be taken to make the Center welcoming to the cultures supposedly housed there. Currently (and until now), the only culture represented through wall hanging, literature and limited space is that of the African American. Restructuring of the Center was definitely needed to take place so that sufficient space was available to the students, organizations who would use the Center.*

Dr. Matsimela Changa "M.C." Diop was chosen as the new director of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center in 1997, filling the post that had been vacant nearly two years. When he was appointed as the director composition of the students at UND have changed dramatically. Based on the report given by the Dakota Student article, "Far our of Africa" written by Steve Schmidt, "the UND's minority numbers have been on the increase through the 1990s, and at last count, included about 330 American Indians, 128 Asian or Pacific Islander Americans, 100 Hispanic Americans and 93 black or non-Hispanic Americans. Increasing those numbers even more, remains a priority of President Kendall Baker. Dr. Diop's title includes assistant to the vice president for student affairs and worked in both Twamley Hall, the campus administrative center and at the EBTMC. When he was chosen for the position, the student's demand was "to make the cultural center more accessible to students and community members of any color or race." Dr. Diop suggested "to extend the hours on weekends and during the school week; and also to have staff on hand so the center can be open until midnight. He hoped that he could have land a cable or satellite network that could offer more cultural programs, such as a BET, the black entertainment channel and Latino news shows. In 1998 and again this year (2007), the satellite service was provided to all students by Dr. Diop and the Multicultural Center.

In a letter written by Dr. Gordon Henry, Vice President for Student Affairs to the University Relations dated July 6, 1995, announcing the closure of the EBTMC (previous name EBTCC-Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center), he explained that the building has to be closed because of the resignation of Dr. Sandy Hoagland on May 31, 1995, Director of the Center as a result of the tensions that have built up over the past year. Sandy Hoagland told the Dakota Student that his philosophy on running the center was different from the philosophy held by the UND's Student Affairs office that led to his sudden resignation. He was the fourth director to leave in the past seven years. Without any replacement, Lillian Elsinga, Dean of Students, and Gerald Bulisco, Assistant Dean of Students performed the duties of the Director during an interim period.

When the EBTMC was reopened on August 28, 1995, the University hired five student-building managers to run the cultural center under the close supervision of Jill Novotny, DOS Office manger and Vice President Gordon Henry. Much of the training was "on-the-job-training." The EBTMC secretary had resigned and no one could be hired until Task Force report and findings were developed and accepted. It was also stated that not only the staff composition would change but also the hours of operation were modified. When it was re-opened the center hours was Monday until Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00 p.m. and closed during weekends. The operation of the building in 1995 was done by student building managers (4 to 5) who received training from the Memorial Union and Dean of Students staff. The Dean of Students maintained supervision of the Center with Jerry Bulisco overseeing the facility and the student building managers.

In the article by Chris Bjorke of the Dakota Student on January 23, 1996, entitled "Cultural Center Still Lacks Coordinator," it was stated that the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center was still without a full-time coordinator after Sandy Hoagland resigned. There was a dire need to review the responsibilities of the coordinator by the Student Affairs Office. Mary Anne Lustgraff, Chair of the Cultural Center Committee suggested that "center should act as a support system instead of providing a set of services separate from Student Affairs.

With the assessment report, they suggested the position of Coordinator of the EBTCC should be eliminated. It should be replaced by a position along the lines of Director of Student Services/Coordinator of Multicultural Student Resources. The job description should reflect a commitment to serving all students with specific responsibility for enhancing and serving the Multicultural and multi-ethnic populations on campus without competing with the International house staff and programs. It was suggested that the newly revised position should report to the VP for Student Affairs and should be located in the Memorial Union, McCannel Hall or Twamley Hall. While the student employees could staff the Center, the team believed that the Center and the University would benefit from having two (2) graduate assistants assigned to the Center to supervise the student staff and assist the director in programming, scheduling and writing/monitoring maintenance reports.

Notable Issues and Concerns:

In a letter sent to VP Gordon Henry by Sally J. Page, the Affirmative Action Officer Re: Concerns Relating to Era Bell Thompson Center and Restructuring Proposal, which was dated December 23, 1994, she made a remarkable observations and comments about the center that brought attention to the university. Due to the fact the structure of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center was no longer viable model for the students. "It has not been a viable model for many years." Her request was to have a cultural coordinator work out of centralized and consolidated offices in the Union or McCannel rather than isolate them in houses. She explained that "these staff members need to be in the mainstream of student and staff activities, easily accessible for students, and integrated into working relationships with the rest of the University community." The model that she recommended was to consider a "cultural studies in African, Hispanic, and Asian American cultures and diversity. Indian studies and Women studies, which already exist as academic units, would be incorporated under a broad umbrella of a cultural diversity studies unit. It means that the commitment is academically oriented rather than social or residential life." She proclaimed that the responsibility for cultural and diversity education should be moved into Academic Affairs and out of Student Affairs.

Financing the operations of the center was difficult. The University shifted money from other programs to the fund the center. At the inception of the center in 1970, \$1600 of student fees for example was allocated by the UND Student Activities Committee to Black Student Union now Black Student Association (BSA). This was done to establish a cultural center, which has now come to be known as the Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center. Over the years the UND Student Activities Committee (SAC) continued to sponsor cultural programs in the center. In 1989, the Estate of Era Bell Thompson gave UND the rights to the copyright and royalties from Era Bell Thompson's book American Daughter. The University requested the UND Alumni Foundation in November 1993 to dedicate the yearly proceeds generated from the \$25,000 Era Bell Thompson endowment to the administration of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center. The aim was to support programs, which promoted African – American Culture. \$1,000 was allocated as a result to the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center in December 1993 with a possibility for annual request for fund allocation. The future allocations depended on decisions and priority of the UND President.

The Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center made a University Fee Funding Request of \$13,546 for the academic year 1994 – 1995. The University approved \$11,046 from the budget EBTCC presented to the Dean of Students for staff salaries and operating expenses. Generally the Appropriated Funds, Baker Funds, Student Affairs Funds, Trust Account, Artwork Fund, and Work-study Funds finance the EBTCC Budget.

Currently, the university uses annual appropriations to fund operations of the center. Besides, annually the UND President and the Multicultural Advisory Committee disburses money to fund activities of different student organizations under the Era Bell Thompson Multicultural Center.

VII Appendices

Acknowledgements of help and support:

President Thomas J. Clifford
Vice President Russ Brown
President Kendall Baker
Vice President Gordon Henry
Dean of Students Lillian Elsinga
Robert Crawford
Ralph Crenshaw
Artis Stanfield
Nathan Williams
Jacqueline Skinner
Herb Jones
Jerome Williams
Nancy Nienhuis
Toni Scott
Kent Burbank
Peg O'Leary
Eileen Cajucom
Sandy Hoagland
Gerald 'Jerry' Bulisco
Jill Novotny

Departmental and staff awards, Publications, grants, etc.

Martin Luther King Jr. Awards – 1998 to present
HOPE Awards (ALANA Student Awards) – 2004 to present
Phenomenal Woman Awards – 2005 to present
Era Bell Thompson Awards – 1998 to present
Rosa Parks Awards – 2006 to present
Coretta Scott King Awards – 2007 to present
Paul V. Boswell Award – 2006 to present

Multicultural Student Services Peer Mentoring and Retention Program was recognized by NASPA as the National Model for the retention of under represented student populations – 2007

Departmental conferences held, notable lectures, presentation delivered by department members.

Dr. Martin Luther King day Celebration 1990, 1998-2003
Dr. Martin Luther King week Celebration 2004- present
Solidarity Days - November 1997
The Hypest and Deffest Comedy Jam – February 1998
Black woman's day – February 1999
Black man's day – February 1999
Unification Day - April 1999
ALANA Student Leadership Conference – April 2000
Washington Sisters – 1992
Dr. Richard Williams – 1997 & 2003
Rosa Celmente – 1998 & 2002
Col. (Ret.) Frizroy Newsome 1998

Dr. Benard Boozer – 1999
Dr. Frances Jackson – 1999
Dr. Raymond Hicks – 2000
Dr. Rosenna Bakari – 2001 & 2006
Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis – 2001
Dr. Sushill Sharma – 2002
Venise Berry – 2003 & 2005
Tony Queen - 2003
Dr. Oba T'Shaka - 2004
Dennis Biddle – 2005
Bakari Kitwana – 2005
Dr. Cheryl Saunders – 2005
Dr. Alveda King – 2006
Dr. Kevin Washington - 2006

File

A REPORT ON DIVERSITY AND THE IMPACT
OF THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL
STUDENT SERVICES

AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

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NOVEMBER 15, 2000

INTRODUCTION

This report is provided in accordance with a request by the University of North Dakota (UND) and the Office of Multicultural Student Services. It is based on information collected during this consultant's visit to the campus to participate in the Annual Dialogue on Race and Gender. It is an informal non-commissioned assessment of diversity and the impact of the Office of Multicultural Student Services.

METHODOLOGY

This assessment, although informal, used a multi-method approach, and is based on analyses of data from the following sources.

- A review of the Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Formal meetings with academic and administrative units.
- Surveys administered to students, faculty and staff

ORGANIZATION

This report presents the conclusions and recommendations of the assessment. It begins with overall conclusions about the foundation of diversity at UND, the efforts of the Office of Multicultural Student Services, and then offers a set of specific recommendations to engage the campus in discussions for enhancing the institutionalization of diversity and cultural pluralism. It begins with overall conclusions and then offers a set of specific recommendations in terms of interpersonal, instructional, and institutional diversity.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information derived from my assessment of the status of diversity on the campus during my brief visit and informal review, it is my conclusion that:

1. The Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan provides a strong focus and structure for enhancing diversity. It includes most of the kinds of strategies that are believed to promote successful outcomes, and is tailored to specific problems that have been identified at the institution.
2. UND through the work of the Office of Multicultural Student Services and the campus cultural centers has made meaningful progress in enhancing an open and supportive environment for the understanding and acceptance of the diverse cultures on campus.
3. The central administration at UND must play a key role in the success of the institution's diversity efforts.

4. In order for UND to be effective in building support for identified objectives, it will need to go beyond partial programmatic budgets and develop a campus-wide budget that is grounded at the division department level and incorporates the initiatives that the institution must take to reach its goals.

5. M.C. Diop, Assistant to the Vice-President for Student and Outreach and Director of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center has served as a key element in the success of many diversity initiatives. As a key liaison person, he has provided consultation and technical assistance; has met regularly with key staff from all areas of the campus; and has participated in the development of most major initiatives related to enhancing diversity. His role and involvement in the diversity efforts at UND is prominent. His office provides an opportunity for the campus community to learn and grow from a professional with a vast wealth of knowledge and patience.

6. The creation of the successful Writing Across the Curriculum Program at the institution could be used as a model for developing an effective response to the curriculum and instructional needs included in the Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan.

7. The numerous and diverse cultural centers play a vital role in enhancing sensitivity and cultural competence on the campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The University President, with the approval of the State Board of Education, should issue a mandate to all constituencies to implement the Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan in their areas of direct responsibilities.
2. The campus should clarify the importance of diversity among important priorities and reactivate the Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan of 1994 and implement a strategy for monitoring its progress and achievements.
3. Reactivate the President's Advisory Council on Diversity and charge them with the responsibility of implementing the Diversity and Cultural Pluralism Plan.
4. Develop and implement a Diversity Across the Curriculum Program to enhance faculty/staff understanding of diversity and increase the integration of diversity in course content and program activities.
5. Increase institutionalization of recruitment efforts to increase a more diverse administration, faculty, staff, and students.
6. Increase opportunities for students to be engaged in facilitated discussions about

breaking down stereotypes targeted at Native Americans, Blacks, and other underrepresented groups.

7. Adopt and communicate a zero tolerance policy for acts of bigotry, discrimination, and harassment in the campus community.
8. Implement diversity education activities inside and outside of the classroom as well as across academic and administrative units.
9. Consider using the Annual Dialogue on Race and Gender as the campus-wide celebration of diversity and appreciation of the multiple cultures that constitute UND, North Dakota, United States of America and the world.
10. Establish the Office of the Assistant to the University President for Diversity and Cultural Pluralism with the responsibility for coordinating the institutionalization of campus-wide diversity efforts.
11. Mr. M. C. Diop offers the institution a fit that according to campus stakeholders has not been realized in the area of diversity during the tenure of the past four administrators of the Era Bell Thompson Cultural Center. UND would be at a great disadvantage without his contributions. It is my recommendation that every effort should be made to retain his services for the long term at a senior level administrative position at the institution. His absence would create a major void and negatively impact the institution's ability to enhance diversity.