

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program Review

**Cultural Centers:
Intercultural Center
Gender and Sexuality Center**

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT:

April 10-11, 2019

The review team was provided with a self study report and other documents including: assessment tools and rubrics, recent assessment data, position descriptions, training outlines for various programs,. The review team also reviewed the completed CAS Standards or those developed by the appropriate professional association in the field and reviewed benchmarking data and/or a comparison of best practices. During their visit, the reviewers were able to meet with and interview a variety of students, faculty, and staff, in addition to community partners whose programs **Cultural Center** serves. They were also able to tour the **Cultural Centers** space and other spaces on campus. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, and Student Life's Commitment Statement along with other university materials.

[Provide a summary response to each of the following questions.]

1. **How did the external review committee rate the overall quality of the department - excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the department compare with well established/recognized programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**

While there was no rating provided by the reviewers, they did state that the Centers' reputation with certain stakeholders and the nature of their work for students and community members reflect a commitment and need from the campus community for the broad work being accomplished. The Centers seem to focus on certain self-developed goals in a very diffused campus culture which makes synergy and collaboration extremely difficult. The staff, graduate students, and undergraduate interns are committed to a common goal of the success of students of color and, in some ways, LGBTQ students at USF and yet the diffused nature make success at any one thing almost impossible. However, it is clear there

is the talent and passion in the space, and that with focus and support, could become an excellent example of this work both regionally and nationally.

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

● **Learning Outcomes**

- The Centers have identified a handful of assessment measures including satisfaction and sense of belonging. The specific measures identified as “learning” are more a report of needs and satisfaction. It is not clear that the team in the Center has received the professional development and/or time to conduct learning outcomes assessment or that learning is part of their core purpose as they are structured now.
- There seems to be a lack of alignment between 1) the mission statement and programmatic learning goals, 2) the programming and services offered, and 3) staffing structure.
- Consider utilizing or adopting the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubric for Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.

● **Lack of capacity in people power**

- There is not an adequate distribution of personnel time or budget to effectively deliver all of the programs and services with the highest possible impact to the most possible participants. A lack of capacity in time and people power to manage the workload was expressed at every level internally and noted by external partners. A lack of capacity in terms of expertise is a potential risk factor given the level of work currently assigned to undergraduate and graduate students. For example, undergraduate interns seem to be uncomfortable handling certain interactions with students that could call for counseling or clinical expertise. The professional staff seem quite distanced from the on-the-ground work with student program participants.

● **Budget and Financial Support**

- The allocated budget is limited. One-third of the budget is spent on the End of Year Ceremonies and it is unclear if the remaining budget allows for other opportunities. Additionally, opportunities to generate funding are also limited by what activities are approved by Development or external vendor policies.

● **Lack of visibility.**

- Lack of visibility not just of the physical location of the Centers, but also limited opportunities to try new marketing strategies. The primary form of effective communication seems to be word-of-mouth which limits

potential student program participants to friends and acquaintances of student interns.

- **Physical space.**
 - New recently added signage may make the physical space more noticeable, but there does not appear to be a high-traffic, walk-in culture at the Centers. This is compounded by students not knowing what the Centers are and how to engage with the space, being intimidated by the space, and limited resources (or perception there-of).
- **Alignment with DECO and other diversity efforts on campus.**
 - While there is some collaborative committee work and a general camaraderie between Diversity Engagement and Community Outreach (DECO) and the Centers, diversity efforts will be diffused and not as impactful as possible unless these two entities are more strategically and intentionally aligned. Together, DECO and the CCs have the potential to streamline diversity work on campus.
- **Racelessness and a culture of social justice.**
 - None of the data provided in the internal self-study is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, or sexual or gender identity. There seems to be a lack of social justice rooted in racial or LGBTQ+ identity. Instead, the “culture” of the Cultural Centers seem to be more about social justice generically and not race- or LGBTQ+-specifically. Social justice is a pervasive theme throughout the Jesuit education experience and may not need to be the emphasis of the Cultural Centers.
- **Challenges with staffing structure and internal communication.**
 - A lack of capacity in terms of expertise is a potential risk factor given the level of work currently assigned to undergraduate and graduate students. For example, undergraduate interns seem to be uncomfortable handling certain interactions with students that could call for counseling or clinical expertise. The professional staff seem quite distanced from the on-the-ground work with student program participants.
 - Internal communication does not seem to be flowing upward or downward very effectively. This is perhaps due to a highly hierarchical staffing structure. Examples of serious concerns that were not heard or adequately addressed were expressed at each level of staffing.
 - A structure of undergraduates reporting to the graduates and then professional staff seems to replicate a hierarchical system that limits communication, supports top down decision-making, and separates the professional staff from relationships with the students they support.

3. **What specific recommendations for improving the department's quality has the external review committee made to the supervisor?**
- I. **Strategize & Align;** Conduct a strategic planning effort with the Center including a visioning, core purpose, and development of focused goals and outcomes within a larger process of clarifying diversity and inclusion division-wide (with Student Life and Student Leadership and Engagement) and campus wide (with DECO).
 - A. Produce and share a "site map" of all equity programs and funding on campus to help guide and clearly communicate institutional support.
 - B. Craft a "stop doing" list for the CCs to make way to new and innovated opportunities. Let go of tradition and re-imagine what the Cultural Centers could be and do through a student- and identity-centered process.
 - C. Develop a clear artifact/document that can be used to communicate to the campus community what the CCs do, for who, and what success looks like.
 - II. **Clarify Positionality;** Consider the positioning and relationship (perceived, actual, and ideal) of the CCs and the Student Life and Engagement area. Address tensions between staff in both areas about cultural competence and the ability to address bias related concerns.
 - III. **Improve Internal Communication;** Examine the structure of the Center and consider models that are less hierarchy based. Develop feedback structures that "close the loop" to reporting staff.
 - IV. **Shift to Skills-based Programming**
 - A. Pursue End of Year Ceremonies (EYCs) to be sponsored by Development or the Alumni Association and allocate that budget for new and collaborative Cultural Center programming. Develop a structure of support by the institution that coordinates all of the EYC logistics and funding support while empowering the communities to create programming that more explicitly and specifically develop skills.
 - B. Develop ongoing peer dialogue and/or mentorship program as an opportunity for students to develop intergroup dialogue skills.
 - V. **Increase Visibility**
 - A. Host more large scale events outside of the Centers' space on the 4th floor in more centralized, visible locations. For example, hosting the Lyricist Lounge at the library or events in collaboration with Thatcher Gallery.
 - B. Commission an artist to lead a community-based, permanent art installation for a highly visible space on campus.
 - C. Host Open Houses on the 4th floor on a monthly basis for new students to access the space and learn about the CCs program offerings.
 - D. Focus on the co-creation of events with other departments and academic areas to increase the connections and capacity. This should be done from the idea and planning stages and not just from merely co-sponsorship.

4. In the opinion of the external review committee, is the department advancing the University's strategic initiatives and divisional goals and commitments in the programs and services it offers?

Yes, the reviewers believed the department advance the University's strategic initiatives related specifically to diversity and inclusion.

5. Is the department in compliance with professionally accepted standards? What best practices have been adopted and implemented?

The department is presently reviewing current practices and procedures to ensure they are in alignment with CAS standards for gender and sexuality, cultural diversity, and inclusion.

6. Does the department have adequate space, personnel and budget to carry out its programs and services?

As structured the department has adequate space. Cultural centers will focus on attracting more students into the space this next academic year. The recent addition of a program manager position has provided the Cultural centers with the appropriate staff level for this department. The department is hopeful they will be able to maintain this staffing level for years to come depending on budget support. Budget for additional programming and new initiatives will be vital to future success and effectiveness of this department.

7. Has the department identified appropriate learning outcomes and implemented assessment strategies to measure progress in this area?

Yes, Cultural Center learning outcomes are in alignment with outcomes development by the Division of Student Life

8. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee's recommendations for program improvement? What can the Vice President's Office do to appropriately respond to the review?

Yes, the internal self-study has identified appropriate learning outcomes. As the report was completed in April 2019, it is feasible that many of the recommendations will be discussed and planned for implementation in Spring 2020. Cultural Centers had made the decision to complete almost all requested action plan items by the end of Summer 2020.

9. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewer's report?

The addition of a program manager position to the Cultural Center staff whose main focus is on supporting international students has made a tremendous difference in the

scope and reach of the Center. The Center remains committed to the peer-to-peer educator model and is excited to see this model expand to offer additional peer-to-peer facilitation opportunities in the coming year.