

**Living/Learning Center Programs**  
The University of Vermont  
<http://www.uvm.edu/lcenter/>

## **The ALANA House**

### **Overview**

The ALANA House (African-American Latino/a Asian-American Native American Ally) helps participants develop a sense of their own cultural identity and the other cultures of the world alongside their suitemates throughout the year. Participants are also equipped with the knowledge and skills to be able to disseminate cultural competency and sensitivity to their UVM peers. Participants will elevate their awareness of different cultures at an accelerated pace through bi-weekly dialogues, working with ALANA affiliated clubs and organizations on campus and off, and through collaborating with other suites to see how race and ethnicity intersect with other parts of their identities. ALANA House members will always be able to feel comfortable confiding in other suite members, for our suite also will serve the purpose of being a safe space for ALANA identified students. The programmed part of the ALANA House aims at increasing members' intellectual "big picture" of how race and ethnicity matter at UVM and in the U.S., while the informal lessons of living together will give students an idea of what multiculturalism looks like in everyday life. The program's activities and dynamics are all set up to stamp out ignorance by having participants better understand the profound impact of discrimination and take what they learn as tools with them for battling prejudice with confidence and wisdom.

### **Learning Objectives**

**Each member will explore their race/ethnic background through research but will also reflect on their own personal experiences in order to give a context to how their ethnicity affects their lifestyle and life experiences. (First Semester)**

#### **Action Steps**

- Every member will read books, articles, watch movies, search websites, and/or talk to others who come from similar backgrounds in order to gain a heightened sense of awareness about their race/ethnic background. Members will keep a running list of sources they used to learn more about their background, report new sources at bi-weekly meetings, and keep the list available to other members who are interested.
- Every member will creatively reflect upon and record their personal experiences related to their race/ethnicity via journals, artwork, or any other way in which they feel comfortable, and then share their revelations at program meetings when appropriate.

- Everyone will choose one experience or topic they reflected on and make a creative piece of work about it that can be displayed in the common room in the form of written word, painting, drawing, sculpture, collage or any other appropriate art form.
- Each member will also be asked to sign up at the beginning of the year to give a presentation at one of bi-weekly meetings on their own ethnic background, however they define it.

**Each member will learn about another culture they know nothing about, and also about a culture they want to know more about. (Second Semester)**

#### Action Steps

- Each member will pick a culture not represented in the program and research it as they researched their own culture. They will keep an ongoing list of resources from which they learn about the other culture, and keep this available for all.
- Every member will be expected to present on the unrepresented culture at a suite meeting as they did for their own culture during the first semester.
- Members will look to the Burlington community to have a better look at its diverse make-up, specifically of the Bosnian, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Somalia and Sudanese ethnic groups. Members will be able to volunteer at the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, The Association of Africans Living in Vermont, Inc., or attend cultural events like the Tibetan Festival to learn more about Burlington varying minority cultures.

**Each member will enrich themselves and others with knowledge of other cultural experiences and backgrounds by getting involved in on and off campus organizations and events.**

#### Action Steps

- Each member will be involved in helping organize and recruit for the annual ALANA Talent Show.
- Members will help organize and execute UVM's first ever ALANA Parade, a campus wide event that will involve other L/L programs, the ALANA Student Center, ALANA affiliated clubs, and any ALANA identified students on campus and members of the surrounding community.
- Members will help organize and execute UVM's first ever Mr. UVM Pageant. This will also be a campus wide event that will serve the purposes of benefiting a local agency that helps people in abusive relationships and raising awareness on campus of gender violence.
- Members will be able to join any ALANA affiliated group on campus. They will also be able to attend ALANA discussion groups held weekly at the ALANA Student Center by staff from the Counseling Center, and can attend the weekly ALANA Breakfasts.

## **Community Service**

The ALANA House members will spend time throughout the year serving UVM and the greater Burlington community in many ways. On campus, members will be able to volunteer for ALANA affiliated events like the Soul Food Social, La Noche de Cultura and Friday Breakfast. Off campus, the program will serve via UVM events like the Serve-a-thon (fall) and Community Works (spring). Also, the program will do some of its own community service at an organization of its choice once a semester.

## **Collaboration With Other Programs**

The ALANA House will keep in contact with other cultural/diversity focused programs like *L.I.V.E.* and *No Boundaries: Redefining Culture* in order to give members different views of diversity and widen the pool of knowledge from which they can learn. Also, spending time with these other programs will let ALANA House members know that diversity is a continuous circle of all sorts of identities. The ALANA House will also reach out to programs in the Global Village that focus on specific communities and try to work with them when we're learning about other cultures and backgrounds. As program directors, we'd like to hold game nights outside (i.e. hide and seek, capture the flag) with other programs, and also Dinner & Discussion nights where we make dinner with another program while telling each other about what our respective programs represent. We'll also hold the Acronym Movie Marathon in the Fireplace Lounge, open to all of L/L.