



Tiffani Hemcher

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College of Arts & Sciences

Erica Fraser

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Medical Lab Sciences

College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Overview:

No Boundaries: Redefining Culture is a program in which members are challenged to test society's view on culture in order to build self-awareness as well as tolerance and understanding for those extending beyond our community. We will focus on how we choose as individuals to acknowledge the existence of any culture and how that affects building a community with those who identify with those cultures. Members of the program will be exposed to many different backgrounds and cultures and will be encouraged to share their own experiences and cultural identities with the group. Along with the mainstream idea of culture between races and locations, we are always surrounded by culture even when we do not realize it. For example, farming can be a culture, skateboarding can be a culture. We have many cultures within our culture, and deciding what that can be all depends on what culture means to you. Underground culture is often an even bigger part of life than racial or geographical culture. We would like our suites to be a safe zone to share our ideas and definitions of culture. We need to become informed and learn to respect subcultures within our own. By joining this program, we hope that people can gain courage and encouragement from others to share their cultural understanding with not only each other but out in the world as well. Living in a suite environment will allow program members to experience a real life community consisting of multiple cultures. Residing in a space that forces people to interrelate with one another will allow members to develop a level of understanding and respect that comes from open communication and daily interaction with each other. This atmosphere will also be a great place for members to reflect and feel safe with their fellow suitemates and eventually build a sense of family as they are exposed to different cultures at UVM. This environment will also allow members to easily organize meetings each week and will be a base for event planning. Our main goal for this program is to expand our refined knowledge into the UVM community. In order to reach this goal, we will organize and participate in events pertaining to cultural togetherness. Our community will be fostered through self-guided and group learning. Our members will also be required to participate in volunteering in order to put themselves in a cultural environment they are not accustomed to. By the end of this cultural adventure, each member will have the skills to identify and respect the complexities of the societies that exist close and far beyond our boarder.

Learning Objective 1:

Members will expand their understanding and knowledge of other cultures and identity as well as their own.

Action Steps:

A. Members will attend weekly scheduled meetings, in which they will participate in discussion.

For the first few meetings, we will focus on what culture means to each individual in the group; Group members will describe their perspective of culture and the cultures that they identify with. The presentation will be educational for the rest of the group and a discussion will be facilitated in order for the group to reflect on the topic.

Following the first few meetings, we will decide a culture of focus together as a group. The weekly meetings will be centered on discussions of that culture; outside research is encouraged.

B. During the semester, we will socialize with other suites, to not only build a community within our suite but in our column as well. Both groups can learn from each other in this manner.

1. The first part of the meeting will consist of short discussion about the cultural environment of the program we are working with, and we will discuss with them about our suite environment as well.

2. The second part of the meeting will involve a game in order to connect the suites and build community and family further than what talking can evoke.

C. As a program, we will attend events centered on cultures that program members are interested in.

Learning Objective 2:

Members of our suite will raise awareness in the UVM community about culture.

Action steps:

A. Members will collaborate with other suites and participate in their activities.

Members are required to attend or assist in at least three cultural activities put on by UVM affiliates per academic year.

B. Two to four movies a semester that will help educate students, faculty, and members of the community about issues concerning culture. These will be put on by program members. The members will choose these movies and program participants will be encouraged to sign up for one of the dates per semester to set up the movie, refreshments and facilitate discussion after the film.

Learning Objective 3:

Program Members will help teach what they've learned to Living/Learning and Burlington area community members.

Action Steps:

A. We plan on hosting a self-defense course for people of all genders in the L/L community. During the month of April, which is national sexual violence awareness month. This event would raise awareness about sexual violence and also teach the basics of self-defense to those who are interested in learning. We would like to have a discussion after holding the self-defense class so that people can express thoughts about what they learned. The goals of this event are to educate people about the

problem and how to protect themselves in all situations. Also see *Plans for Interactions With L/L Communities* as well as *Community Service and Publicity*.

Learning Objective 4:

Program Members will learn to redefine culture and understand underground culture.

Action Steps:

A. First we will have a specific meeting when we have each person list what groups and clubs or parts of them that they are involved in. Then we will describe that each of these can be part of a culture. We will then discuss what other activities can be a culture. Then we will have each person in the group host a presentation of what culture means to them and what cultures they belong to.

Community Service:

Each member is required to do 5 hours of community service for each academic semester. As the definition is broad, activities can include volunteering at local organizations, cultural events put on by UVM and the community, membership in a campus group of relevance etc. Community service is encouraged as a means of putting members outside their usual peer groups to experience the cultures of other people. To give back to the Burlington Community, we will volunteer at the food shelter and visit nursing homes as well. Another way to interact with the Burlington community is to have a food drive in L/L. We would like to have everyone bring in as many cans of food as they can and we can donate it to the local shelter. Along with a food drive, we could also do a clothing drive.

Publicity:

In order to communicate with others about our programmed events, we will make posters, use word of mouth and utilize internet social networks. We will also make No Boundaries t-shirts in order to spread the knowledge of the program. We have ideas for events that will also publicize No Bo. We would like to have a third world dinner in which the ratios of the world will be displayed by handing out tickets of what people will have for dinner that night. For the people who draw third world tickets (which will be the majority of people in accordance with the actual ratio) they will eat rice with water for a drink. For the second world tickets, the people will eat peanut butter and jelly with milk. For third world, the people will eat pizza and soda. This shows awareness of the unfair distribution of the world and how the difference in economies affects the different cultural locations. We then will describe to the participants some facts that correspond with the monetary difference thus showing them where the culture fits. With this, we would like to have a food drive collecting cans and donating it to a local charity in Burlington or the surrounding area. We also would like to have world music night (see collaborations with L/L programs). We also will have a face painting cultural event in the fireplace lounge where we look up interesting face painting patterns from different South American tribes along with information about it and then give to anyone who wishes. (see the photo below) We also would like to host a privilege walk where different questions are asked and people step forward or back according to their privilege and they can see the difference between themselves and others. Also, we would like to have jeopardy for our column or even in the fireplace lounge involving questions about culture and people's understanding about it.

**Special Facilities:**

We will need a common living room to host game nights and for our weekly check-ins.

Programmed Suites:

In the past it has always been two suites, so we would like to continue that. Suites will each have 6-7 people in it. Both suites will be co-ed as well—we will accept people who identify as male and female. We would also like to stay in L/L A-High where we have been—it proves to be an extremely nice environment for learning as well as building relationships.

Recruitment Techniques to be used:

We are going to make posters encouraging people to join, as well as create a Facebook group and just networking in general! Many people living here already are interested in coming back again.

as well. Both of us are very enthusiastic and friendly people and will love to talk to people to get We will also wear our t-shirts around to encourage more members! We will also hand out fliers, and put posters up around areas where especially culturally diverse students are found such as the ALANA center, the LGBTQA center, etc. Also around the Davis Center we could put pictures or posters up along with hand out those fliers.

Plans for Interactions with Other L/L Programs:

We would like to interact with the Spectrum suite, the ALANA suite, other culturally diverse suites, and the suites in our column in order to create a close-knit column overflowing with love and community. We would like to have a few nights where we teach different dances from different cultures to L/L in the fireplace lounge. In accordance with that we would like to collaborate with the suites and Rhythm and Brews in order to learn a few different dances from around the world (incorporating the Chinese House, Russian House, a creativity program) to perform for the L/L community. We also would like to have a world music night where we experience the different music of the world where we could collaborate with the Africa House, Caribbean House, Spanish House and any other program that would like to participate. We would also like to collaborate with some of the cooking suites along with the cultural suites to have a night where we all can share dishes of different cultures that we find interesting. This could be collaborated with Global Village. We also will collaborate with Spectrum for Queer Prom, as well as another drag show. Along with this, our face painting event can be collaborated with one of the art/ creativity suites.