Lane McLelland to Carolyn Dahl, August 07, 2014

Here is some text I just sent to our division to be included in the UA Diversity Report. Much more than you need, I'm sure, but in it I re-crafted some of the language on the website that may be clearer and added a few specifics that you might find helpful. For the sample activity, I am attaching the learning outcomes and a related activity - Root Cause Analysis - we did for last fall's pilot version of the course with 18 students. (I'm still compiling the exact data for that because 2 of the exercises evolved into a different assignment that I need to adjust for, but I can probably get you something late tomorrow afternoon if that's not too late - let me know if that would be helpful.) Thirteen of those 18 students were sorority members who met as 2 separate dialogue groups discussing issues directly related to Greek life. This next semester I believe our enrollment of 60+ includes a number of students who are members of sororities, but I don’t have totals on that yet.

Have a look at all this and let me know what you still need!

**Crossroads Community Center**, created in 2005 to facilitate meaningful intercultural engagement among students, employees, and the local community, is a vital presence on campus demonstrating The University of Alabama’s commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive campus. Crossroads is a facilitator of crucial community dialogue through its **Sustained Dialogue (SD)** program and its **Better Together Interfaith Initiative (BT)**. Crossroads Community Center also enhances awareness and appreciation of cultural and individual diversity by sponsoring interdepartmental collaboration for diverse learning experiences through its **Community Conversations** and **The Capstone Network (CN)**. Both independently and through **CN**, Crossroads coordinates individual programs and cultural heritage month celebrations that promote the rich cultural traditions of the Capstone and the world. Crossroads hosts the conversations that build community, helping UA to create and sustain a positive campus environment.

**Sustained Dialogue:**

UA’s Sustained Dialogue (SD) program helps students *engage their differences as strengths* using the SD five stage dialogue-to-action model for addressing important campus and broader community issues. UA is a member of the SD Campus Network ([sdcampusnetwork.org](http://sdcampusnetwork.org)), a growing international consortium of SD programs at over 28 colleges and universities. Initiated in 1999 at Princeton University, SD is rooted in the work of Dr. Harold Saunders, a senior U.S. diplomat in the Arab-Israeli peace process after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. SD student moderators are assigned in pairs to dialogue groups of 8–12 diverse members, meeting one hour a week to work on issues related to social identity, campus life and politics. By offering its students experience with this transformative Sustained Dialogue model, UA improves our campus community and enhances the professional and personal lives of its students during and after college. Sustained Dialogue helps students understand perspectives of individuals they would not otherwise meet; interact comfortably with all kinds of people; build relationships across lines of difference in communities; and gain the communication skills necessary for increasingly diverse academic, social and work environments.
Through a credit-earning course at UA, Crossroads makes the SD experience available to over 60 students each semester, providing training in professional conflict resolution, diversity facilitation, and mediation skills in our students. The transformative, student-led dialogue sessions are designed to encourage students to understand their peers and develop a global skill set that will prepare them for a life in the global society in which they will live and work. Sustained Dialogue addresses issues with a deliberative engagement model and contributes to retention by giving students a place where they can share their cultural values and have them respected. To support SD efforts on campus during the past year, four students and their campus advisor traveled to the national SD conference held at Dickinson College in March of 2014.

**Annual Assessment of Sustained Dialogue Program with national SD Campus Network:** Through Sustained Dialogue experiences, participants develop a diverse set of leadership skills, including strong personal identity awareness, knowledge of social and cultural concepts, empathy, facilitation and conflict resolution skills. Participating in UA's Sustained Dialogue program results in the following learning outcomes: Participants:

- demonstrate a clear and comprehensive understanding of the ways in which systems and structures have impacted, and continue to impact, their own identities and the identities of those around them.
- engage in critical and comprehensive self-reflection about their own position in systems in inequality, power, and privilege, and learn how to communicate and build relationships across lines of difference.
- undertake action to create a more inclusive and supportive campus climate, local, national, and global community by recognizing issues that stem from political, social, and economic inequalities and diversities, frame options for ameliorating those issues, and decide upon action.
- understand the art, practice, tools, and concepts of dialogue as a method for developing and conducting productive relationships that create practical, peaceful, and respectful solutions.
- emerge as competent and influential leaders and equity change agents on and off campus.

In coordination with the SD Campus Network, Crossroads conducts pre- and post- dialogue SD surveys based on measures from the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE). Results demonstrate significant, marked increases in empathy, efficacy, interest in improving the experiences of others, ability to explain campus climate to others, communication skills, and feeling the importance of one’s own “voice” ([sdcampusnetwork.org](http://sdcampusnetwork.org)).

**Better Together Interfaith Initiative.** Instead of seeing personal beliefs as differences that divide, the Crossroads Better Together Interfaith Initiative draws on the work of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC.org) to advance the view that religious and philosophical traditions can be bridges for cooperation and understanding. In spring 2014, Crossroads Community Center facilitated the attendance of UA students at IFYC’s Interfaith Leadership Institute in Atlanta where they developed strategies to improve interfaith understanding on campus. As a result of this experience, Crossroads Community Center collaborated with UA's Community Service Center to host **Serve Better Together.** Over 50 students with different religious and non-religious beliefs participated in this day of service, repairing and painting three homes in the Tuscaloosa
Community. After completing the service activities, the students concluded the day together with an interfaith dinner and dialogue at the Hillel Jewish Student Center. Through events such as Serve Better Together, Crossroads’ campus interfaith initiative promotes respect for people’s diverse religious and non-religious identities, joining them in common action for the common good.

Community Conversations. Through Community Conversations, Crossroads invites open, honest and balanced talk about intercultural relationships and faith traditions at our university and in the Tuscaloosa community. Students find their voices in the discussion of sensitive topics about inclusion and belonging, engage new acquaintances in candid conversation, and learn directly from their neighbors about the many cultures and experiences we each bring to the university. (1) During Week of Welcome in August 2013, Crossroads Community Center sponsored an event entitled India and the Culture of Yoga. Cosponsored with Capstone International Programs and other campus partners, this program offered the opportunity for students to participate in culturally enlightening yoga classes and an interactive lecture given by an internationally known teacher in the history and practice of yoga in Indian culture. (2) In February 2014, Crossroads led a Community Conversation about Body Image as part Body Awareness Week sponsored by the Women’s Resource Center and the Counseling Center. (3) Crossroads co-sponsored with New College and other campus partners a photography exhibit and lecture series at UA’s Paul R. Jones Gallery of Art examining, through the photographs of Decatur photographer Fred Hiroshige, the second trial of Haywood Patterson, one of the nine men falsely accused in Scottsboro, Alabama in 1931. This interdisciplinary event invited students to learn more about the legacy of the Scottsboro Boys on the Southern experience of racism during the 20th century and today. These Community Conversations are indicative of the year-round presentations Crossroads supports and facilitates about the meaning of culture, faith and identity in our daily lives.

The Capstone Network (CN). Crossroads strengthens collaboration among faculty and higher education professionals to address multicultural affairs on our campus. Through a yearlong series of open, monthly meetings, The Capstone Network helps faculty, staff, and students in grow in their understanding of the resources available on campus and ways in which these resources can be used to broaden a program’s impact. The relationships created through the planning work surrounding the year’s events form the infrastructure of a positive environment on campus, and the individual scholar is supported in a network of those with similar goals for increasing appreciation of diversity on campus. Crossroads, thus, coordinates cultural activities on campus by organizing these interdisciplinary planning meetings among departments and organizations, coordinating schedules of multicultural events, and publicizing the heritage month events on posters. Most prominent among these programs are: African American Heritage Month, Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month, International Education Week, and Native American Heritage Month. In this way, Crossroads aids individuals in sharing the paths they have traveled to come here, enhancing the richness of the student experience.

Many valuable intercultural conversations and professional relationships are created through the Capstone Network. It serves as a welcome group, an orientation network, and a supportive anchor for new faculty, staff, and students with an interest in intercultural affairs, thus
contributing to campus retention efforts. This group of culturally diverse members of the UA campus community seeks to strengthen relationships with associations and programs across the campus and foster awareness and appreciation of the diversity within our university. In support of Goal 2, the CN’s mission statement is: To engage faculty, staff, and students in a collaborative culture committed to diverse learning experiences that prepare students for active global citizenship.

Leadership Training. Crossroads fosters more informed and open perspectives on The University of Alabama campus by supporting student leadership training across campus and at national student conferences. In 2013-14 Crossroads provided intercultural leadership training on campus at the SD Inclusive Leadership Workshop, UA Leadership, Education, Action and Diversity Summit (UA LEADS), Honors College Student Peer Mentors Training, Camp 1831 A-Team of Peer Leaders Training, and the Student Leaders Council monthly meetings. Student leaders of Sustained Dialogue, the Better Together Interfaith Initiative, and Community Conversations are also offered intercultural training as part of their Crossroads experience. Throughout the year, Crossroads Interns and the student leaders of Crossroads’ programs receive training and practice in areas such as: Intercultural Communication, Facilitation of Intercultural Dialogue, Cross-Cultural Interviewing, Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict, and Dealing with Our Cultural Biases. Student leadership training is provided by national specialists from the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, campus specialists in multicultural affairs, and the Crossroads professional staff. Student development is further supported by study travel opportunities. For example, during the 2013-2014 academic year, Crossroads student leaders traveled to the International Youth Core Interfaith Leadership Institute in Atlanta to enhance their skills in interfaith cooperation. Sustained Dialogue moderators received inclusive leadership development at the national annual meeting and at the August 2013 SD Leadership Summit. At all of these events, UA students collaborated with their counterparts from around the country to design effective programs for their individual campuses.

Through its diverse programs, Crossroads Community Center prepares students and staff for demographic shifts in a global society and contributes to a campus culture of inclusiveness. These joint efforts foster intercultural awareness, promote community, and prepare our students to live and work in an ever-expanding global environment.

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