



UMSL CULTURAL CENTER COMMITTEE DRAFT REPORT

April 2019

UMSL Cultural Center

As one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse campuses in Missouri, UMSL is committed to maintaining a climate where all students, faculty, staff, and visitors can explore their interests, refine their talents and flourish. The Inclusive Excellence Compact within our 2018-2023 Strategic Plan discusses actions to recruit and retain diverse students and employees, and promote activities that encourage civil and constructive discourse, reasoned thought and sustained dialogue in an environment of inclusion, respect, and appreciation.

In order to execute those actions, we want to continue to engage our diverse student population, and we will do this by achieving the goal of establishing a multicultural student center that becomes the framework for programming and support; by exploring in 2018-19 and implementing in 2019-20.



Proposed Name

The University of Missouri-St. Louis Cultural Center

At this time the committee recommends naming it the University of Missouri-St. Louis Cultural Center. The naming of the Center opens up the possibility for a distinguished alumnus or donor to have the Center named after them in the future.

Committee

An exploratory committee was established with the goal of bringing the Cultural Center to fruition. The committee was formed in September of 2018 and held monthly meetings throughout the 2018-19 academic year. The committee drafted a name, vision, and mission for the Center. The committee members are as follows:

Co-Chairs

Felia K. Davenport, Associate Professor, Chair Theatre and Cinema Arts
Harry Hawkins, LGBTQ+ Coordinator, Office of LGBTQ+ Initiatives

Committee Members

Jamiliah Boyd, Assistant Teaching Professor, College of Business Administration
Dr. Priscilla Dowden-White, Associate Professor, History Department
Maya Harris, Coordinator of Vocational Experiences, SUCCEED Program
Diquan Jones, Undergraduate Student, Biochemistry
Anita Manion, Associate Teaching Professor, Political Science Department
Luimil Negrón, Graduate Assistant for Latino Recruitment and Retention
Dr. Ashlee Roberts, Associate Director Office of Student Involvement
Alieu Sanneh, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Political Science Department
Dr. Kim Song, Associate Professor, College of Education
Dr. Lynn Staley, Teaching Professor, English Department
Melanie Tucci, Sponsored International Student Recruiter and Advisor, International Student and Scholar Services
Timothy Wombles, Strategic Communication Associate, University Marcom

In January 2019, the committee developed subcommittees to explore opportunities for Assessments, Facilities and Staffing, and Programs and Events. Each subcommittee was tasked to explore and examine what the University has offered in the past and in the present and to use this data to develop each of these specific areas. The subcommittees were:

Assessments

Jamiliah Boyd
Anita Manion
Dr. Ashlee Roberts

Programs and Events

Felia K. Davenport
Dr. Priscilla Dowden-White
Maya Harris
Diquan Jones
Dr. Kim Song
Melanie Tucci

Facilities and Staffing

Harry Hawkins
Luimil Negrón
Alieu Sanneh
Dr. Lynn Staley
Timothy Wombles



Mission

To centralize UMSL initiatives emphasizing social justice, academic freedom, and community connection; provide intentional support of and advocacy for underrepresented groups by celebrating identity through race and ethnicity, culture and language, gender, sexual orientation, and ability status.



Vision

The UMSL Cultural Center facilitates conversations and programs around race, ethnicity, intersectional identities, systems of oppression, cultural empowerment, gender, and social justice. The Center dedicates itself to providing a supportive and welcoming communal space in order to advance diversity, socially conscious teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and creative approaches to problem-solving.



Our Core Partners and CommUNITY

The Center will incorporate core partners from various campus units and student organizations. The Center will collaborate with and bolster the programs already existing in these units and student organizations. Community members represent constituencies on campus that the center will work to serve and celebrate.

Community members will work with the center to help it fulfill its mission of providing a supportive and welcoming communal space in order to advance diversity, socially conscious teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and creative approaches to problem-solving. The Center has outlined Core Partners and CommUNITY members in the list below.

Our Core Partners

Able-Disable Partnership
Associated Black Collegians
Black Business Student Association
Chinese Students and Scholars Association
Gender Studies
Hispanic Latino Association
Japan-America Student Association
Jewish Student Association
KHAOS-UMSL K-Pop Dance Group
Lingua
Minority Student Nurses Association
Muslim Students Association
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Office of LGBTQ+ initiatives
Office of Student Involvement
Pan-African Student Association
PRIZM Queer-Trans-Straight Alliance
Student Veteran's Association
Vietnamese Student Association
Women Empowering Women

Our CommUNITY

African American
Asian
International
Latinx
LGBTQIA+
Muslim
Native American
Pan-African
Abilities-Disabilities
Women



Programs and Events

The Center will offer a variety of unique programs and services that support the overall mission and vision. The Center will also collaborate with appropriate Core Partners and CommUNITY members to ensure the successful implementation of the programs.

Speak Up Speak Out

The core goals of Speak Up Speak Out are to challenge, change, and inspire.

We have been taught to stand silent in the face of adversity and to focus on our differences. Speak Up Speak Out challenges this idea of separateness and instead offers a platform for discussion, change, and community. We must celebrate our differences and our similarities to unite and enact change. In collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences and our commUNITIES, we will explore diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout this country, communities, and our own truths through the guise of various performances and workshops.

Speak On It Series

Potential podcast and discussion series. Listeners and participants will suggest topics or questions anonymously that can be used to speak on issues that challenge and inspire our communities to engage in dialogue. A monthly podcast and discussion will open the doors for educational and healing opportunities. This series will also offer rapid response to current events in St. Louis and throughout the nation.

UMSL'S Red Table Talks: A Monthly Healing Series

Red Table Talks will allow the UMSL community to discuss current topics and issues among all of our CommUNITIES. Every person and perspective is invited to a healthy discussion. This is a forum where all are welcomed, however there are rules of engagement: participants will not dismiss others, and will not spread hate, ONLY love. All participants will be invited to get involved in the conversation and are expected to be respectful of everyone's perspectives, be open and share. Food and drinks will be provided.

Annual Award

Graduating students will be nominated by students, staff, or faculty for their work in advancing cultural initiatives and appreciation for diversity on campus. To be presented at graduation to the awarded student.

CommUNITY Poetry and Art Slams

Events will include live poetry and art competitions. Each semester a different theme or concept will be chosen for these live events. Artists and poets will have an hour to create their works related to the concept/theme. Once the hour has ended, the audience will vote for the winner.

First Year and Transfer Student Experience:

The Center will work to develop and incorporate a pre-orientation or orientation program for first year and transfer students. This will allow students of underrepresented communities to have access to tools for academic and personal success, and most importantly make meaningful connections as they bond with each other as incoming students.

The Boutique:

Every need is unique at The Boutique.

In collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, The Boutique provides free clothing for trans, gender transitioning students, and students in need allowing them access to gently used or new clothing, shoes, and accessories. If you find something that is too big or not 100% your style, you can have the clothing altered and you can work with a designer to help you re-imagine the clothing.

The Harriet and Dred Scott Memorial and Art Space

The names of Harriet and Dred Scott are inextricably intertwined with the history of the St. Louis region. In their quest for freedom for themselves and their children, the Scott's embodied the resilience, determination, and vision that informed the emancipation movement. The lessons that the nation learned from their remarkable battle to be acknowledged as free citizens were forged here, and those lessons have shaped the many conflicts and opportunities for dialogue that the UMSL campus seeks to examine through its teaching and community outreach. The UMSL Cultural Center honors the legacy of righteousness inherent in the sacrifices the Scott's made. They paved the way for a better understanding of cross-cultural support, and the need to partner with others to fight injustice. We hope our center will serve as a vibrant reminder of what the human spirit can achieve. The Center will also sponsor and provide exhibition space for community art projects, and students, faculty, staff, and members of the larger St. Louis community will be invited to contribute to a rotating schedule of multiculturally themed exhibits.



Heritage and Community Celebration Months

The Center will provide support for and/or partner with the Office of Student Involvement on programming for specific heritage months (listed below) that OSI currently supports. The Center will also offer specific programs and events.

September: Hispanic Heritage Month

October: LGBTQ+ History Month

November: Native American Heritage Month

February: Black History Month

March: Women's HerStory Month

April: Abilities-Disabilities Month

May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Celebration of Nations

An ongoing celebration throughout the school year offering various events:

International/cultural film nights

- Followed by panel discussions of themes in films

Food Truck Fridays

- Offering culturally specific foods

Cultural Presentations

- Presenting dance and spoken word events

Trivia Nights

- Benefiting local non-profit organizations
- Including culturally priented themes and prizes

Hispanic Heritage Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on Latinx CommUNITY
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Understanding Roots (could be history of through dance, etc.)
- Conferences including but not limited to poetry and art slam, healing series, guest speakers

LGBTQ+ History Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on LGBTQ+ topics
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Drag show
- Conferences including but not limited to poetry and art slam, healing series, guest speakers

Native American Heritage Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on the Native American CommUNITY
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Understanding Roots (could be history of through dance, fashion, etc.)
- Conferences including but not limited to poetry and art slam, healing series, guest speakers

Black History Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on African American CommUNITY
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Understanding Roots (could be history of through fashion, dance, etc.)
- Black Collegiate Conference

Women's HerStory Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on women's topics
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Women's Conference
- Clothing drive for women's shelters

Abilities Month

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series focusing on Abilities related issues
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- The Ability of Art: An art series that focuses on the Abilities CommUNITY

Asian Pacific American Heritage

- Trivia Night (proceeds to be donated to charity of choice)
- Speak On It series discussion focusing on Asian Pacific American CommUNITY
- Performances with panel discussions
- Film nights followed by panel discussions
- Understanding Roots (could be history of through dance, etc.)
- Conferences including but not limited to poetry and art slam, healing series, guest speakers



Facilities

The Committee recommends a space on North Campus that is accessible and in a highly trafficked area. Students, faculty, and staff will be utilizing the space on a daily basis, so creating a significant presence on campus is critical to the Center's success and in keeping with our goals to increase the visibility of our under-represented constituent groups. The Committee recommends (in order of preference) a space in The JCPenney Building, Lucas Hall, or Millenium Student Center. The spaces in these buildings will allow the Center to be in a central location that is visibly and physically accessible to the campus community, and provide event space for the larger events and programs outlined above.

To serve our staff, students, and guests, we recommend the following design plan for the Center (as we are anticipating input from the campus design team).

1. Two staff offices
2. Conference room (to accommodate 8 - 10 people)
3. Student lounge and flexible event space
4. Work station/s
5. Staff break and supply room
6. Exhibition space for student and community art installations
7. Workspaces for the diverse student organizations listed under Core Partners
8. Anticipated equipment needs:
 - a. Smart room technology
 - b. Television/video capabilities
 - c. Multiple computer ports
 - d. Multiple phone lines
 - e. Copier/printer
 - f. Microwave, refrigerator, etc.
 - g. Whiteboards
 - h. Screens/bulletin boards for event and program promotion

Staffing

The Committee recommends a sustainable staffing structure that will fulfill the vision of the Center. At this time, it makes logistical sense for the Center to be housed under the Division of Student Affairs. We propose a staff structure that includes a director, an assistant director, one or two graduate assistant(s), and undergraduate interns. The staffing structure will be achieved in two phases, phase one with the hiring of a Director, Graduate Assistant, and undergraduate intern(s); phase two will consist of the hiring of an Assistant Director.

Positions

Director - Full time - Phase 1

Duties:

1. Promotes the mission and vision of the Center.
2. Establishes and implements policies and procedures.
3. Oversees and guides daily operations and implementation of programs and procedures.
4. Serves as a representative of the unit.
5. Coordinates operational business practices and coordinates with other areas to improve efficiency.
6. Gathers input on long-term plans and strategies to achieve programming goals.
7. Ensures daily operations are in compliance with University, local, state, and federal policy regulations.
8. Coordinates resources, sets priorities, and prepares budget and resource statements.
9. Ensures the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Center's team.
10. Provides performance feedback to staff and handles sensitive issues.
11. Conducts outreach to the larger campus and regional communities.
12. Recruits and hires graduate assistants and interns.
13. Assessment of program outcomes and needs.

Assistant Director - Full time - Phase 2

Duties:

1. Assists with promoting the mission and vision of the Center.
2. Oversees programmatic development.
3. Troubleshoots and resolves day to day technical and/or operational problems.
4. May serve as a representative of the functional unit in the absence of the Director.
5. Assists in recruitment and hiring of graduate assistants and interns.
6. Assigns or delegates projects to graduate assistants and interns.
7. Determines the strategic direction of social media and online presence of the Center.
8. Contributes toward coordination of Center events and programs.
9. Serves as a liaison with student organizations, Core Partners, and CommUNITY

Graduate Assistants and Undergraduate Interns - Phase 1

20 hours/week with tuition remission/course credit as appropriate

Duties:

1. Under the direction of the Center's leadership team, assist with program development, event planning, and social media and online platforms.
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Conclusion



Our next steps: the Assessments sub-committee will prepare assessments via Qualtrics and in-person surveys to be sent out to faculty, staff, students, and alumni to further assess their opinions on what they want to see in the Center. A website will be created for the draft of the UMSL's Cultural Center, which will also serve to provide the UMSL community with an opportunity to provide feedback on the different components of the proposed draft. The committee will be available to summarize this report for the Student Government Association, the Staff Association, and the University Assembly and Faculty Senate, along with other departments or units who would like to discuss the committee's recommendations.
