

Cross Cultural Centers
California State University, Los Angeles
Internal Review 2011

Report from Internal Reviewers

Dr. Ambika G. Raj
Associate Professor
Charter College of Education

Dr. Carlos Gutierrez
Professor of Chemistry
College of Natural and Social Sciences

Executive Summary

This internal review report of the Cross Cultural Centers (CCC) is based upon three inputs – A self study of the CCC conducted by the Director Frederick Smith, the report by external reviewers and an internal review process from January to June 2011.

A review of these reports indicates that the Cross Cultural Centers is doing an excellent job serving the needs of the California State University, Los Angeles campus. The areas that were specifically reviewed were:

1. Selection and Evaluation of Programs geared to the CSULA community
2. Administrative Structure
3. Assessment
4. Student Learning Outcomes
5. Budget

Through a process of scheduled interviews with the Director of the CCC and through documents supplied by the CCC, the committee has come to the conclusion that overall the CCC is doing more than just serving the needs of the campus. Indeed, the committee has been very impressed by the extent of CCC's reach and effectiveness in their programming. However, the committee feels that there are some areas that the CCC can improve upon. Key commendations and recommendations follow.

Introduction

The Cross Cultural Centers (CCC) at California State University, Los Angeles is a valuable part of the campus community. Through the provision of co-curricular programming and services that enrich the educational experience of many student populations, the CCC enhances the operation of academic and administrative units of the University. In the eight years since its last review it has continued its positive trajectory of service to the University and its students. It has made good progress in addressing issues that arose in that review, and has developed into an invaluable part of the campus community under the capable direction of its head Mr. Frederick Smith.

Internal and external review of the work of the CCC has been very positive and recognizes the benefit that the centers perform on behalf of Cal State LA students. The following report is intended to be taken in the spirit of helping an already very good program become even better.

It has been very satisfying for the internal review team to be part of this process and to become familiar with the work of the CCC and the positive impact it has on the University and its students. The congruence of perceptions from the material prepared by the CCC self study, conversations with and the report of the external review team, which included a member from the 2003 prior review, and the work of the internal review team, show that the CCC is performing commendable work for the campus and surrounding communities.

Affirmations and Commendations

Through the following affirmations, we recognize the good work the CCC is performing that should be continued. Commendations follow this section:

Affirmation: The CCC is fortunate to have the strong and able leadership of director Frederick Smith. He continues the tradition of creative leadership that has well served the development of CCC into a valuable resource for co-curricular programming and services that both enrich and support many Cal State LA student populations, and enhance the work of several Cal State LA academic departments.

Affirmation: The CCC has provided strong leadership that has helped develop and sustain the four cultural resource centers that serve broad segments of the student population

Affirmation: The CCC has developed a philosophy and practice that reflect the University's mission and diversity statements.

Affirmation: The CCC has provided leadership and supported development of culturally based student organizations.

Affirmation: The CCC has created a physical space where students from across the campus, regardless of background, feel comfortable and welcome.

Affirmation: The CCC has continued its tradition of intentional, interesting, and thoughtful co-curricular, culturally focused programming that has served various campus communities well. The programming and services reflect the variety and diversity of the campus and surrounding communities.

Affirmation: The CCC continues to enjoy the loyal support of the many faculty members and students that use its programming and services.

Affirmation: The CCC has consciously made its programming so that its student learning outcomes are aligned with and congruent to meeting University student learning outcomes. In doing so, it is a positive contributor to interconnecting the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions of the University.

Affirmation: The CCC has implemented regular assessment and evaluation of its programs and services.

Furthermore, we commend the following benefits that the CCC has secured.

Commendation: The CCC leadership is commended for securing a level of funding that is reasonable for its high quality operation. In these fiscally difficult times, this is both a tribute to the hard work of CCC leadership and staff, and the high esteem in which the campus community holds the CCC.

Commendation: The CCC has secured an outstanding space in the new student union that will be a strong resource for meeting its programming and service goals.

Summary of Key Recommendations

Internal and external review of the work of the CCC has been very positive and recognizes the benefit that the centers perform on behalf of Cal State LA students. The following recommendations are intended to help an already very good program become even better.

The following recommendations are to address items that have arisen in the course of this review and are consistent with the CCC self study, the conversations with and the report by the external reviewers, discussions with the CCC Director, and University Administrators. These should result in the improvement of the already strong CCC, and thus enhance student learning.

| These recommendations are summarized below.

Recommendations to the Cross Cultural Centers:

- Establish an advisory committee that is useful in helping the CCC meet its goals
- Establish a formal deliberate process for setting programming goals each year to meet the many student needs and issues across campus populations and demographics
- Assess the impact of the CCCs programming more effectively and by means beyond customer satisfaction surveys
- Explicitly link the CCCs Student learning outcomes (SLOs) to the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- Assess the benefit to the Centers of the current staffing experiment of eliminating the assistant director position and expanding the number of student coordinator positions.

Recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs:

We recommend that resources be made available for the CCC to secure the services of an expert external to the Centers for the development of a more effective evaluation plan and its implementation.

The following sections give a brief history of the CCC as explained through the self-study conducted by the Director of the CCC. Each section is followed by recommendations that the Internal Reviewers would like to make for the CCC

1.0 History, Mission, Goals, and Objectives

1.1 History

The Cross Cultural Centers at California State University, Los Angeles include the Asian Pacific Islander Student Resource Center, Chicana/o Latina/o Student Resource Center, Pan African Student Resource Center, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center (originally founded as the Women's Resource Center in 1976). Each of the resource centers is now under the umbrella of the Cross Cultural Centers, part of the University-Student Union (U-SU). Originally, the centers were established as separate entities, with differing governing structures, under the Division of Student Affairs. The CCC has been blessed with strong leadership which has greatly benefitted its operation.

Affirmation: The CCC is fortunate to have the strong and able leadership of director Frederick Smith. He continues the tradition of creative leadership that has well served the development of CCC into a valuable resource for co-curricular programming and services that both enrich and support many Cal State LA student populations, and enhance the work of several Cal State LA academic departments.

Affirmation: The CCC has provided strong leadership that has helped develop and sustain the four cultural resource centers that serve broad segments of the student population

1.2 Mission

The mission of the Cross Cultural Centers at California State University, Los Angeles is to encourage student learning as well as foster an inclusive campus environment that challenges racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression. With a commitment to increasing cross-cultural awareness, the Centers offer a wide variety of programs and services that explore both the shared and unique experiences, histories, and heritages of our diverse communities.

Affirmation: The CCC has developed a philosophy and practice that reflect the University's mission and diversity statements.

1.3 Goals and Objectives

- a) Provide leadership training and development opportunities for students
- b) Operate an effective communication plan for each of the resource centers
- c) Present cross-cultural programs for the University.
- d) Develop and maintain resource libraries for each resource center.
- e) Create partnerships or collaborations with other University departments.
- f) Help enable student retention and recruitment.
- g) Provide safe space and a welcoming environment for diverse communities.

Affirmation: The CCC has provided leadership and supported development of culturally based student organizations.

Affirmation: The CCC has created a physical space where students from across the campus, regardless of background, feel comfortable and welcome.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend that the CCC establish an advisory committee that is useful in helping the Centers meet its goals.

With a current enrollment of 20,142 that reflects the diversity of the Los Angeles county, Cal State LA is an interesting mix of cultural diversity: 57% Hispanic, 7% African American, .3% American Indian, 22% Asian-Pacific Islander, and 16% non-Hispanic white; 60% female and 40% male. A large portion of the student population are the first in their families to attend college. Most campus cultural centers are at institutions where persons of color are a distinct minority; at Cal State LA minorities make up in excess of 80% of the student population, and they are distributed in majors throughout the University. The challenges of our CCC are thus different than its counterparts at other institutions.

An advisory committee that is composed of individuals external to the Centers can provide valuable perspectives on the work of the Centers and areas into which it may want to expand.

2.0 Program Content and Campus Programming

The CCC organize and present numerous programs and special events throughout the year. The purpose of the programs is to enhance student learning, increase cross-cultural awareness, challenge oppression, and recognize and celebrate the histories, heritages, struggles, and experiences of our diverse community. Several of our programs have received awards from national organizations, including the National Association for Campus Activities.

From 2003 – 2008, the Cross Cultural Centers presented 405 events, and co-sponsored/collaborated in planning more than 112 events presented by academic departments, student organizations, or other departments. Total attendance at these events was 64,000.

Affirmation: The CCC has continued its tradition of intentional, interesting, and thoughtful co-curricular culturally focused programming that has served various campus communities well. The programming and services reflect the variety and diversity of the campus and surrounding communities.

Affirmation: The CCC continues to enjoy the loyal support of the many faculty members and students that use its programming and services.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the CCC establish a formal deliberate process for setting programming goals each year to meet the many student needs and issues across campus populations and demographics.

The CCC has developed a strong following through intentional and intelligent programming and services that can be expanded to other student groups (such as night students; students in science, engineering, health and human services, business; older students, students with children). Much of current programming appears focused on the social sciences, arts and letters. This is appropriate, but consideration to programming that would impact the equally large student populations in other segments of the University should be considered.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the CCC more effectively assess the impact of its programming and services, and by means beyond customer satisfaction surveys.

The CCC is evaluating the effectiveness of its programming. Conversation with the Director indicates that CCC is trying to go beyond customer satisfaction surveys. We appreciate that they are starting to work with Dr. Holly Menzies from Special Ed. However, the assessment tools used to date do not appear adequate to provide evaluative information to the Centers beyond customer satisfaction. The main purpose of evaluation is for the Centers to gain information and insights for improvement of the Centers' programming and operation. More needs to be done in terms of focused assessment. We recommend that CCC staff work with evaluators outside the Centers and together develop an evaluation plan and work on its implementation.

Recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs:

We recommend that resources be made available for the CCC for securing the services of an expert external to the Centers for the development of an effective evaluation plan and for its implementation.

3.0 Assessment of Student and Institutional Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes

Through involvement in the Cross Cultural Centers' programs and services, students will be able to:

- Understand the multiple perspectives (heritages, experiences, values) of others, while valuing their own heritages, experiences and values.
- Work as individuals and as a team for both personal and collective good.
- Understand the interactive relationship of race, class and gender in society.
- Articulate their views and experiences around race, class and gender by integrating their personal experiences and academic perspectives.
- Appreciate the role that the arts and cultural events can play in developing an enlightened and culturally-empowered perspective.
- Examine and challenge personal acts of oppression.
- Examine personal behaviors and choices and their effects on campus, local and global issues.

- Identify and articulate the values and processes that lead to an inclusive and democratic community.
- Influence social change on campus and in society with creativity, integrity, and compassion.

Affirmation: The CCC has consciously made its programming so that its student learning outcomes are aligned with and congruent to meeting University student learning outcomes. In doing so, it is a positive contributor to interconnecting the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs divisions of the University.

Affirmation: The CCC has implemented regular assessment and evaluation of its programs and services.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that the CCC explicitly link its Student learning outcomes (SLOs) to the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

We note that the CCC SLOs that are mentioned along each of the ILOs. Yet it would be useful to more directly assess *how* the SLOs meet the ILOs. For example, a University ILO is listed as 'Knowledge: Mastery of content and processes of inquiry'; the corresponding CCC SLO is mentioned as –

- Understand the interactive relationship of race, class, and gender in society.
- Articulate views and experiences around race, class, and gender by integrating personal experiences and academic perspectives

In practice, what would this look like? What processes of inquiry would help to understand the interactive relationship of race, class and gender in society? How is this mastery of content? What would a program such as this look like? How can this be assessed?

The deliberate action by CCC to link its programming to meet the ILOs is a positive move, yet CCC needs to articulate in practice through examples of programs, or through evaluative methods, or through actual processes of inquiry how the CCC's SLOs meet the University's ILOs.

Additional input from well-constituted advisory board(s) can be useful in enhancing the effectiveness of the CCC.

4.0 Centers Staffing

The CCC has been staffed by four full-time staff: the director, the associate director, the office manager, the coordinator of Gender & Sexuality Resource Center; and 14 part-time students who serve as program coordinators (4) and customer service assistants (10).

The aggregate number of staff appears adequate for the present level of programming and services provided by the Centers. The CCC has decided to experiment with eliminating the position of Assistant Director and expanding the number of student coordinators.

Recommendation 5: After a year, the CCC should assess the benefit to the Centers of the current staffing experiment of eliminating the assistant director position and expanding the number of student coordinator positions.

5.0 Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention

A considerable amount of center programming and other efforts support the University's recruitment and retention efforts. Extensive outreach efforts to local schools and community colleges attract students to Cal State LA. For on-campus students, the CCC administration and staff provide a range of activities and programming that contribute to a healthy campus life and retention of students to graduation. The safe and welcoming environment of the Centers is also a valuable contributor to student retention.

Recommendation 6: However, the CCC has not developed measures for assessing the impact of the Centers on student recruitment or retention. They are strongly encouraged to do so as part of an assessment plan to encompass all center activities.

6.0 The Centers' 5 year Plan

Serving the Present, Looking to the Future

The CCC has been very beneficial to the University community. Its programming and services provide co-curricular education to many student groups, while providing a safe and welcoming space and support for individuals from all backgrounds.

Cal State LA is at the leading edge of demographic changes in American higher education. Our student body reflects the broad racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the Los Angeles communities it serves. The Cal State LA CCC does its work in a context where diversity is the rule and expectation. It faces challenges different from those of institutions where there are minorities.

We are pleased that the Cross Cultural Centers will soon engage in a strategic planning process that will allow it to look to its future, of where it wants to be in five years, why it wants to be there and how it plans to get there. We look forward to seeing the results of this planning and growth.

We also look forward to the CCC's next five-year report as part of the next program review. If history is a guide, we expect it will be exciting, innovative, and useful to the students at California State University, Los Angeles.