

The Office of Residence Life (Housing Services) at Ferris State University consistently celebrates and promotes education, understanding and inclusion for all students. Our intention is to build a safe, inclusive community for all students that live on campus. Residence Life promotes an inclusive community through programming initiatives, the training of the Residence Life employees, and committee initiatives such as the Harmony Project.

### **Success in Residence Life**

Residence Life has been successful in recruiting and maintaining a level of diversity in their staff members.

#### Staff Demographics:

- 1 out of 14 Residence Life Staff are Hispanic/Latina (7%)
- 1 out of 14 Residence Life Staff are African American (7%)
- 7 out of 14 Residence Life Staff are women (50%)
- 5 out of 14 Residence Life Staff are LGBTQ (35.7%)
- 17 out of 144 student staff members identify as African American (11.8%)
- 6 out of 144 student staff members identify as Hispanic/Latino (4.2%)
- 2 out of 144 student staff members identifies as Asian/Pacific Islander (1.4%)
- 1 out of 144 student staff members identifies as Middle Eastern (.69%)
- 1 out of 144 student staff members identifies as Native American (.69%)
- 4 out of 144 student staff members are GLB (2.8%)

Residence Life has been successful in promoting diversity in the training initiatives for staff. Initiatives are identified below:

- Crossing the Line – self identity activity to allow other to view hidden diversity.
- Ally Training – basic training for those who identify as LGBTQ allies
- Safe Place Training – the training of students and staff to create safe zones for any under represented groups on campus.
- Hate Images and Presidential Campaign by Dr. Pilgrim
- Building Inclusive Communities – how to build an inclusive community
- Sensitivity Training – human resources to recognize discrimination in the work place
- Understanding Transgender identity – basic information on transgender identity
- How can I become and LGBTA Ally? – how to become an ally
- Diversity 101 – to teach new staff members general concepts of diversity
- Behind Different Doors – experiential learning activity to teach basic skills for interacting in different diversity situations.
- White Privilege In-service – based on Peggy McIntosh’s work on white privilege
- Diversity and Inclusion in-service
- What does it mean to you? - Socioeconomic/Social Class In-service

- Minority Student Network – roundtable discussions lead by Hurdylyn and Lisa for any student staff member who identifies as part of an under-represented group

Residence Life has been successful in implementing the Harmony Project as a major committee of student and professional staff in the Office of Housing/Residence Life. The Harmony Project is responsible for campus wide programs such as the Underground Railroad Experience, Power to the People (election program), and other campus wide diversity programs. The Harmony Project also produces a monthly newsletter that addresses relevant diversity issues on campus such as National Coming Out Day, The Day of Silence/Night of Noise, Native American History Month, National Adoption Day, and other various diversity issues. Members of the Harmony Project present ongoing training opportunities through staff in-services with topics such as White Privilege, Transgender Education, and other relevant diversity issues. The committee chair of the Harmony Project also tracks and implements the Champions for Diversity program which recognizes Resident Advisors on campus that create and implement diversity programs on campus.

Residence Life has been successful in encouraging both passive (bulletin boards, poster campaigns) and active diversity programs on campus that include:

- Black History Month – It Happened Today Bulletin Board
- Breast Cancer Awareness Bulletin Board
- Make It Diverse! Bulletin Board
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Bulletin Board
- Peace/Languages of Love Bulletin Board
- Prevention of Violence Against Women Bulletin Board
- What Ninja Turtle Are You Bulletin Board
- Women’s History Month Spotlight Bulletin Board
- ALSAME Conference Planning
- Are You Privileged?
- Asian/Pacific Islander Luau
- Bingo in the Lobby
- Black History
- Chinese New Year Party
- Chinese New Year Program
- Circle of Life
- Controversial Casuals - Immigration
- Crash Movie and Discussion
- Darius Goes West
- Different Life
- Diversity Beads
- Diversity Bingo
- Diversity Bowling
- Diversity Karaoke
- Find Yourself

- Folding Under Pressure
- His House
- Hispanic Festival
- Image Awards
- International Board Games
- International Student Organization Festival
- Islamophobia
- It's Junk in the Box
- Japanese Origami Fans
- LGBT Panel Discussion
- Live Action Underground Railroad
- Mardi Gras Party
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Trivia
- MLK Bingo
- MLK Info session
- Mock beauty Pageant
- My Room is Hate Free
- NICE Conference
- Night of Drag
- Olympic Rings
- Piñata Program
- Post-A-Secret
- Pre-Vagina Monologue Get Together for Cast
- Pride Panel
- Ramadan Dinner
- Real Talk
- Room Raiders
- Sexual Assault Program
- Sharin' the Shamrock
- Significant Chain of Events
- St. Patty's Day Remix
- Super Fat Tuesday
- Tearing Down the Walls
- The Den – Showcasing Your Soul
- Transgendered Snowpeople
- Tunnel of Oppression
- Urban House
- Vagina Monologues
- Wango Tango
- We're All Goin' To Hell
- What Kind of Animal are You?
- Who Am I?
- WILL Conference
- Would You Rather

- Writings on the Wall 2
- YBBW Fashion Show

Residence Life has been successful in encouraging professional development for our professional staff and this is expressed through presentations and involvement.

#### Off Campus Professional Diversity Committees

- The Great Lakes Association of College and University Housing Officers (GLACUHO) Race and Ethnicity Committee (Lisa, Jes, Hurd, Kari T. )
- GLACUHO Sexual Orientation Awareness and Resources (Christy)
- Oshkosh Placement Exchange Minority and Friends Network long standing sponsor (Ferris State) and mentors (Jon Shaffer, Leroy Wright, Hurdylyn Woods)
- ACPA Standing Committee for LGBTQA (2 board members and 3 general members)
- Professional Presentations for 2008
  - Mentoring of Housing Professionals of Color (Lisa Ortiz)
  - Roundtable discussion of mid level professional of color in Residence Life (Lisa Ortiz)
  - Queer is the New Frontier (Wendy Hardy, Jes Berndt, Brian Kurisky)
  - Underground Railroad (Kari Talik)
  - How to do a safe job search as a LGBTQA professional (Lisa Ortiz)

#### On Campus Diversity Committees

- Diversity Action Team (DAT) Chair Jan 08-May 09
- Advisor to Diverse Sexuality and Gender Alliance (D-SAGA)
  - Office for D-SAGA is hosted within the Housing Office
  - President and leadership for D-SAGA are student staff members
  - National Coming out Day
  - Day of Silence/Night of Noise
  - Pride Panels as classroom and residence hall programs/presentations
- Advisor to S.T.A.N.D.
- Members of the DPC (Hurdylyn Woods and Jes Berndt)
- Member of the Sexual Assault and Aggression Taskforce (Lisa Ortiz)
- Dr. MLK, Jr. week Planning Committee (Hurdylyn Woods)
- Hurdylyn Woods and Brian Kurisky have participated in the "diversity response committee" chaired by Scott Herron in response to the preachers on campus in Fall 2008.
- Advisor to S.L.A.C.K., Sigma Pi
- International Students Committee

#### **Areas of Challenge for Residence Life**

Residence Life will continue to be challenged by the student perceptions of the individual events on campus. Due to the fact that Residence Life has the challenge of upholding university policy and published procedures for safety/Security/ employment, etc., there is often a misperception that decisions are made based on race, sexual identity, or other

diversity factors. The department strives to and will continue to educate the community that all students are treated equally in the conduct process, the employee process, and in the conflict resolution process. All of our processes have methods of appeal published as part of our processes.

Residence Life has been challenged to offer a broader level of diversity education to our student staff members. The in-services and student staff training for this year covered a spectrum of diversity issues and offered an emphasis on GLBT education, awareness and self awareness. Next year's training will again be broad to all and offer an emphasis on another issue of diversity including training for the trainers. Student Staff training will have an emphasis on the "how to" educate the general student population on issues of diversity and the importance of diversity in our global society.

Residence Life has been challenged by the general student population's reluctance to have honest and courageous dialogue about issues of diversity. The students seem to lack comfort to have dialogue when there is conflict in a community. This often leads to passive aggressive behavior (i.e. notes on a white board) that is not inclusive, if not outright racist, homophobic, etc. to other community members. Residence Life will continue to be challenged to proactively address covert behavior. The solutions for this situation will include developing programs about conflict resolution that allows students to utilize their voice on campus in a positive and productive way. Also, Residence Life will continue to react to acts of intolerance in a prompt and community based way.

Residence Life has been challenged with hiring professional staff of color. We are able to recruit a viable diverse pool, but generally lose our candidates to more urban campus environments. Active efforts are made to recruit professionals of color, but struggle with convincing candidates that Big Rapids, Michigan is an inclusive community. Residence Life is active in the Minority Friends Network at the annual Residence Life job fair at the Oshkosh Placement Exchange as a long time sponsor and in providing mentors (Jon Shaffer, Hurdylyn Woods and Leroy Wright), which helps candidates recognize Ferris as a welcoming campus. Residence Life will continue to intentionally recruit professionals of color and will continue to create a program that is enticing and enriching for all candidates.

### **Continued Commitment to Diversity**

Residence Life will continue their commitment to diversity through professional and student staff training, Harmony Project, recruitment of a diverse staff, professional and student staff professional development, and diversity initiative programming expectations.

Residence Life will continue to take the lead on the Live Underground Railroad experience in the 2008-2009 academic year. This program will be a primary focus of the Harmony Project in order to create a large impact on campus with the educational component of the experience. Through experiential learning, the Live Underground Railroad offers the students a chance to walk in the shoes of history.