This report contains a summary of the Beneficence Dialogue concerns, suggested solutions and recommendations.
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Introduction

In response to growing student concerns regarding diversity and inclusion at Ball State University, a group of stakeholders created a forum for students to dialogue about the issues and possible solutions. Student Government Association, Office of Student Life, Office of Institutional Diversity the Multicultural Center and Division of Student Affairs planned the Beneficence Dialogue. The dialogue created a safe space for students to share their concerns directly to the administration through structured conversations.

The Beneficence Dialogue was held on Tuesday, March 30 at 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. There were 123 students, 20 small group facilitators (faculty and staff) and 35 administrators from various areas on campus to serve as a resource to students. President Paul Ferguson and Dr. Kay Bales, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, conducted a listening tour among the small group discussions throughout the evening.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the issues presented and solutions identified from the Beneficence Dialogue, and to make recommendations to respond to the concerns expressed by students.

This report was organized and written by Ro-Anne Royer Engle, Director of the Multicultural Center.
Background and Purpose

There were five primary objectives for the Beneficence Dialogue. These included:

- To provide a safe space for students to dialogue and share ideas to address inclusivity which will be shared with administration as an action plan.
- To discuss institutional and student led response to issues of diversity.
- To demonstrate that Ball State University is a place where all students feel valued, safe, heard, and welcome.
- To understand what role student organizations play in identifying and advancing concerns to administrators.
- To share campus resources and services available to students.
Program Overview

Beneficence Dialogue Planning Team Members

Barry Hawkins, Assistant Director of Student Life (Multicultural Organizations)

Jamie Goebel, Secretary of Diversity for Student Government Association

Ro-Anne Royer Engle, Director, Multicultural Center

Dr. Charlene Alexander, Associate Provost for Diversity and Director of Office of Institutional Diversity

Dr. Thomas Gibson, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Dialogue Structure

The dialogue was facilitated in small groups of 6-10 students. The small groups ensured everyone in the group had the opportunity to have their voice heard. Discussion group members heard different perspectives on the topics discussed and this intergroup dialogue helped students to understand the multi-faceted nature of the issue.

Individual Worksheets

The students were given a worksheet and pen at the beginning of the workshop. The worksheet prompted students to write down their concerns in case they do not get the opportunity to or choose not to share them during the discussion. The worksheet also asks students to identify solutions to each concern identified. A copy of the worksheet is provided in Appendix A.

Facilitator Discussion Guide

Each group was assigned a facilitator who recorded the comments and concerns the group discussed. The facilitators were given a discussion guide with the key questions for consideration to ensure the discussions generated the needed information. Each facilitator submitted to the planning group their written notes from the discussion group and the students’ individual worksheets. See Appendix B for the facilitator guide.
Summary

The raw data from facilitator notes and individual student worksheets were analyzed and arranged by themes which emerged from the information gathered. It reflects a wide range of issues students believe are related to diversity and inclusivity of a diverse student body. Some solutions were suggested multiple times, but have been noted once to be concise.

The following concerns and suggested solutions were organized by the following themes:

1. Recruitment and Retention of a diverse student body
2. Diversity awareness/education initiatives for students
3. Education/Training for and support from faculty
4. University Response/ Student Body and Administration Interactions
5. Campus Climate
Recommendations

Themes based on the concerns and solutions emerged from the notes and worksheets and are presented below. The information which follows reflects a summary of the concerns shared by students and the suggested solutions recommended by students.

A. Recruitment and Retention of a diverse student body
Concerns:
- BSU is comfortable with its homogeny.
- Administration does not represent or welcome students.
- We market as a diversified university – we are not so stop disappointing students.

Recommended solutions:
- Overhaul and improve marketing strategies to attract diverse student populations. (in progress)
- Ensure marketing images used by the university reflect the true diversity of the student population, including gender non-conforming students whenever possible.
- Explore why underrepresented minority students are not being admitted or retained in certain academic programs.
- Build relationships with high schools with predominately underrepresented minority student populations to create a pathway to Ball State. (Currently being done by Undergraduate Admissions)
- Highlight and address diversity resources during the admissions process, Orientation, Welcome Week, and throughout college experience. (Currently being done in Admissions, partially done during Orientation, will be added for Welcome Week 2015)
- Increase scholarship opportunities and resources for underrepresented minority students.
- Increase gender identity options on university application and in Banner system beyond the current gender binary system.
B. Diversity awareness/education initiatives for students

Concerns:

- Students of privilege may not be concerned with or aware of diversity issues.
- Need to address and bridge the minority-majority gap.
- Students think the Multicultural Center is only for people of color.

Recommended solutions:

- Create a central calendar for all university diversity and cultural events clearly visible on university webpage and promoted through social media. (Current calendar on BSU webpage does not include a “diversity” category for events)
- Incentivize diversity event attendance to encourage all students to attend. (In progress by Multicultural Center)
- Create and launch a required diversity course or seminar as part of core curriculum like the Writing Proficiency requirement.
- Create and launch a pre-college online module to address diversity on campus. Similar to “Think About It” module.
- Explore current required History 150 course offerings to include more diverse history of western civilization.
- Encourage a culture for intergroup and intragroup dialogues on a regular basis organized by various stakeholders (students, multicultural related offices). (In progress by Multicultural Center)
- Increase diversity focus in academic curricula. (In progress by Office of Institutional Diversity)
- Expand the diversity peer advocate program aimed at presenting diversity related workshops to students and student organizations. The current MOSAIC Peer Advocate Leaders (PALS) serves this purpose, but is limited due to funding. (In progress by Office of Student Life and Multicultural Center)
- Intentional outreach and resources to students financially at-risk based on non-payment, and high bursar balances. Staff
can meet with students and offer resources or talk about a plan to address financial shortfall.

- Explore creation of a cell phone app, similar to Sexual Assault App. App should include multicultural resources, how to report bias incidents, diversity programs (from Benny Link) and “What to do if” tips for advocates and allies.

C. Education/Training for and support from faculty

Concerns:

- Some faculty members do not know how to talk about taboo or potentially offensive topics.
- Faculty doesn’t show care for students. For example, being the “only” and being asked to “speak” for your assumed identity population. Insensitive comments by students not addressed appropriately by faculty in classrooms.
- Faculty need to be more aware of what is happening on campus.

Recommended Solutions:

- Increase recruitment of a more diverse faculty. (In progress by Office of Institutional Diversity)
- Ensure the assessment of candidate cultural competence is a part of the selection process for all faculty and staff hired at Ball State University.
- Provide mandatory one-time and on-going cultural and diversity training for faculty and staff to improve climate for underrepresented minority students in the classroom, organization, and on campus.
- Explore creating a Faculty/Staff mentoring program for underrepresented minority student populations. A good example is the mentoring program through the Office of Disability Services.
- Offer faculty incentives to include social justice and diversity work in their courses. This will help majority students see the intersectionality of cultural competence and academic knowledge within their fields.
• Highlight, celebrate and reward faculty who serve as advocates and allies on campus and in the Muncie community.

D. University Response/ Student Body and Administration Interactions Concerns:
• Only hear from the administration when something happens.
• The perception that administration is always more concerned with protecting itself than speaking out for students.

Recommended solutions:
• Increase opportunities for consistent and honest proactive dialogue between students and administrators about their experiences on campus.
• State of the University Diversity address by the University President to share updates on plans and progress with diversity initiatives and how the university lives up to its Diversity Statement.
• Create a “Lunch with an Administrator” program, modeled after Lunch with UPD. Administrators must be viewed as accessible and approachable.
• Create an Advisory Council of students from various multicultural organizations to be included in decisions and utilized as a sounding board for administrators. (In progress)
• Consistent and timely communication in response to campus based diversity related incidents. Silence is not a response.
• Explore the appropriate use of multiple communication methods, including social media, to promptly and thoughtfully respond to concerns.

E. Campus Climate Concerns:
• Students feel isolated because they are thrown into the majority.
• More minority students need to be involved.
• There is a feeling of discomfort and exclusion.
Recommended solutions:

- Continue to explore relocation options for the Multicultural Center to improve accessibility, visibility and impact on students from recruitment to graduation. (In progress)

- Consistent assessment of the campus’s diversity climate for students. Utilize data to inform services, programs and initiatives. (In progress. Campus Climate survey conducted in fall 2015. Scheduled to be conducted again in fall 2019)

- Establish a mentorship program for underrepresented minority students. Mentors can be other students and or faculty/staff. (Being explored by Multicultural Center)

- Increase awareness of services to address student welfare (bias incident reporting, Multicultural Center, Multicultural Organizations). Improved marketing and a dedicated website similar to Sexual Assault and Title IX. (In progress)

- Provide additional resources to expand “We Are Equal” campaign, similar to Step In. Speak Up. efforts to address sexual assault and bystander intervention.

- Provide counseling groups for specific underrepresented minority student populations. For example, the current Kaleidoscope group for students from racial and ethnic minority populations led by Dr. Khanh Nghiem.

- Develop an ally and advocate training program similar to Safe Zone (LGBTQ) to address racial and ethnic populations. Ohio State University has a similar program to address bias incidents and issues called Open Doors. (In progress. Scheduled to be launched in spring 2016)

- Increase gender neutral spaces on campus; restrooms and housing.

- Allow students to use “preferred names” on student IDs. This option is already available in the Banner system.

- Ensure all units of the university establish and implement a diversity plan with measurable metrics to proactively address issues of diversity. Unit plans should be accessible to university community members and reflect updates as needed. (In progress in academic units)
APPENDIX A

Individual Worksheets

What concern(s) do you have?

What would you like to see implemented to address your concerns? Try to find two for each
APPENDIX B

Structured Workshop Sessions

Facilitator Discussion Guide for Small Groups

What are your concerns? Why?

(What are some reoccurring themes of the concerns?)

What are the actions you would like to see taken by the University and fellow students to resolve these concerns?

- What goals and expectations do the students have for the university?
- What can students do to improve the campus environment for diversity?
- How can students address issues and share concerns in an effective way?
- What is the preferred communication mechanism for communicating diversity issues to the administration?
- What is the preferred response mechanism for communication from the administration?
- What steps can Ball State take to be more welcoming and inclusive?

(Expand on some of the possible solutions.)

(Additional Comments)