

MRC NEWS

Special points of interest:

- 6 OMA Directors in 10 years
- Charge to Admissions Office
- Upcoming Campus Events

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6 in 10: Maintaining stability in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA)

The recent departure of Multicultural Affairs director Dr. Jame'l Hodges has inspired students to speak up regarding the instability of this student affairs entity. OMA (Office of Multicultural Affairs), located on the second floor of Lehigh's University Center, houses the popular M-Room and facilitates the Cultural Programming Board, social justice peer educator group "Kaleidoscope," and the Men of Color Alliance (MOCA). One of the most recent initiatives born out of OMA is the Real World-LU PreLUision Program that occurs during first year orientation and consists of a three day self-exploration allowing students to reflect on their past, prepare for present college life at Lehigh, and think of ways to navigate their new home in Bethlehem, PA. In addition to honoring cultural history months (e.g., Black history, Hispanic history), the OMA staff provides professional consultation to campus organizations as well as personal support to students from underrepresented backgrounds who utilize the office. Despite being an essential component of student affairs, the office's constant state of transition has impacted the students, faculty, and staff who work closely with OMA.

Having 6 different directors in 10 years is a key point of

scrutiny, and members of the campus community want an explanation for the high turnover rate in the office. For whatever reason, personal or professional, Lehigh consistently has difficulty recruiting and maintaining quality candidates for this position, and many people wonder if this is a coincidence. At an institution that struggles to enhance cultural diversity and a campus climate that is frankly unwelcoming to difference, OMA has struggled to maintain a strong presence at Lehigh. Though the office exists and is thriving in many aspects, some students from culturally diverse backgrounds fail to use the space or support the programs hosted by the office. Across campus, members of the community are unclear about the role of the OMA director and whether the position is limited to student affairs. So as the search begins for a new OMA director, the question of what will be different remains. More specifically, how will Lehigh recruit a quality candidate and retain that employee?

As these questions remain unanswered, students are at the forefront of the debate. As the main stakeholders of Student Affairs, OMA directly impacts students most, and students from



underrepresented groups will not be ignored. The student-led silent protest at a faculty and staff town hall meeting made Brown and White headlines on Monday, March 22 and spoke to students' frustration with the number of OMA directors that Lehigh has had in recent years. In a discussion about hiring a new OMA director, Sharon Basso, Associate Vice Provost & Dean of Students, and Allison Gulati, Associate Dean of Students, allowed students to voice their questions and concerns about why the office has difficulty retaining good directors and how they will be involved with the search process in the future. Though minimal answers were provided, students remained steadfast and were left with the message that their voices will be considered in future decisions regarding OMA. However, students are concerned that they've heard this before and are now left to wonder about its truth.

Watch What Happens: Tim Wise Dinner & Discussion

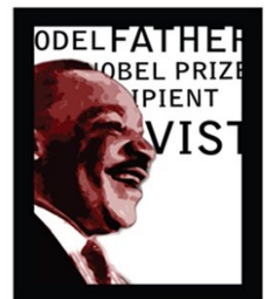
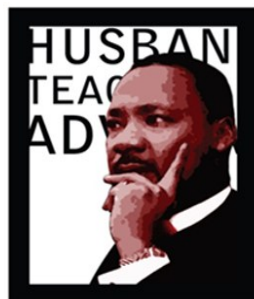
“Attendees suggested that the [admissions] office not only focus on visible diversity but recruiting majority students who are committed to social justice and advocacy work.”

Though the MLK Week keynote address by anti-racist writer and speaker Tim Wise occurred more than two months ago, some members of the campus community vividly remember the address as if it was yesterday. A combination of Wise’s powerful message of personal responsibility in regards to racial privilege and a heated debate that erupted between Wise and members of the outside community toward the end left attendees with plenty to talk about during dinner in the M-room on Thursday, March 17. The discussion began with attendees viewing a clip from the event that highlighted the heated debate between Wise and outside community members. This was followed by open dialogue regarding feelings experienced during that moment. The remainder of the discussion focused on how to use Wise’s message to enhance the cultural competence of our campus community.

Representatives from the College of Education, the Cultural Programming Board, and the Admissions Office brainstormed ways to shift the culture of Lehigh so that it truly exhibits a value for cultural diversity and social justice. The admissions office was identified as a major player in this shift given its diligent work to recruit students from diverse backgrounds. Attendees suggested that the office not only focus on visible diversity but recruiting majority students who are committed to social justice and advocacy work. One attendee specifically suggested adding a question to the admissions application that allows students to speak to how they can enhance the cultural diversity of Lehigh. In addition to changing the culture of students here, it is anticipated that the new Vice Provost for Academic Diversity (VPAD) will institute a similar practice on the faculty and staff level. It seems that regardless of what type of student attends Lehigh, it is essential that culturally competent faculty, staff, and administrators work to create an inclusive academic environment that not only educates but inspires students to make a difference in their personal and professional lives.

2011 MLK WEEK CELEBRATION

MARTIN
ONE MAN MANY FACES
LUTHER
THE IDENTITIES OF MLK
KING JR



Upcoming Campus Events

Book Giveaway by Turkish Students Club: Every week, the Turkish Students Club is giving away books by acclaimed Turkish writers. All you need to do is to visit the website (www.lehigh.edu/~inturkey) and take a very short trivia quiz.

LU/United Nations Partnership Internship and Delegate Positions (all majors), DUE April 1 & 6

This Friday (April 1) is the deadline for applying to be a UN Delegate for the 2011-2012 academic year. Don't pass up this amazing opportunity, plus you get to put the UN on your resume! The link for information is http://www.lehigh.edu/~inunited/student_committee.html Also, applications for the LU/UN Partnership and Global Union internships are due Wednesday, April 6th. Internships available with the LU/UN Partnership – Application Deadline Wednesday, April 6. Contact Hallie at hkh209@lehigh.edu for more information and applications.

10th Anniversary 2011 Spring Fling April 2, 2011, 11am - 3pm, University Center Lawn

Spring Fling is the Community Service Office's annual carnival that provides cost-free food, crafts and entertainment for families and children for a day. The overall goal of Spring Fling is to bring different campus organizations together to provide a day of fun, education and nutritious food for local families, and we look forward to being able to host another exciting Spring Fling this year!

SouthSide Film Institute "\$1,000 Night" Fundraiser, April 2, 2011, 6pm-9:30pm, Bethlehem Comfort Suites

The Evening's activities include: Prize Drawings throughout the evening with final drawing of \$1,000; Treasure Chest - Prize: Samsung 32" HD TV; Silent Auction for many high-quality items including art, jewelry, and film festival memorabilia - cash or check only (ATM available); Culinary Specialties provided by Lehigh Valley Caterers, Restaurants & Bakeries; Music by "Eclectic Electrick"; Cash Bar. Tickets: \$75 per Couple; \$40 per Individual available at Deja Brew, 101 W. 4th Street; Cleo's, 23 E 3rd Street; or on-line at www.ssff.org.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Blood Drive April 4-5, 2011, 9am-5pm, Ulrich Student Center

The last blood drive of the semester, sponsored by the Class of 2013 and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, will take place on April 4th and 5th from 9:00AM-5:00pm in the Ulrich Student Center. Donation is quick and easy, and takes about 45 minutes. Visit the website below to sign up online. Donate blood and help save a life! Sign up online! http://www.lehigh.edu/service/blood_drive.shtml

International Competency Series: The Business End, April 6, 2011, 4pm in Rauch 141

Globalization; 21st Century skills; a flat world: these are phrases we hear often in the media, but what do they mean for you? Finance & Law Professors Paul Brockman & David Myers will lead a discussion through which students will get a chance to consider the role of international skills and awareness in their careers in the "globalized marketplace" and engage in a conversation with the professors about implications for the future. This discussion is the final of three organized by the Global Union. For a full schedule, see: <http://www.lehigh.edu/~inglobal/events10/IntlComp.jpg>.

OMARS Student Award Reception, April 21, 5:30pm (reception), 6:30pm (ceremony)

The Office of Multicultural Affairs is in the process of gathering nominations for the 2011 OMARS student award ceremony scheduled for April 21st at 6:30pm (reception at 5:30pm) in the Asa Packer Dining Room. Please take the time to recognize the wonderful student leaders on this campus that are excelling academically, as well as giving back to the larger Lehigh community in their efforts to make this a more diverse and inclusive environment.

2011 Cross-University Collaborative Mentoring Conference (CUCMC), June 13-14 @ Lehigh University

The 2011 Cross-University Collaborative Mentoring Conference (CUCMC), to be held at Lehigh University June 13-14th, is now accepting proposal submissions! The theme of the conference is "Current research, practice, and policy in child development." Information for CUCMC is currently available on the website (<http://www.lehigh.edu/education/cucmc/index.htm>).

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We're on the web!
www.lehigh.edu/mrc

The MRC seeks to foster knowledge, skills, understanding, and awareness in the area of multiculturalism and diversity. Its core goals are to: (1) Create a space with resources to foster discussion and development, (2) Foster a culture among faculty, staff, and students that is supportive of and open to diverse perspectives and experiences, (3) Help develop the school community to better reflect the diverse communities served by the College's fields of professional practice and (4) Strengthen the curriculum across programs to better reflect issues of multiculturalism and diversity.

Check out www.lehigh.edu/mrc for updates, events, and the monthly newsletter MRC NEWS or email mrc@lehigh.edu to join the mailing list!



HAPPY SPRING
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