

THIRD WORLD CENTER (TWC) PROGRAM REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RESPONSE

Mary Grace Almandrez, Ed.D.
Director, Third World Center and Assistant Dean of the College

June 10, 2013

Introduction

The TWC's program review was part of a larger planning exercise to identify the most pressing needs of students while visioning for the future. The objectives were threefold:

- Highlight best practices and assess areas of improvement in relation to the Center's mission, signature programs, and resources
- Determine connections between TWC programs and student satisfaction, learning, and retention
- Offer recommendations regarding the Center's name and strategic direction for immediate, short-term, and long-term implementation

The review began in summer 2011 and consists of four parts: institutional buy-in, self-study, external review, and strategic plan. The first, institutional buy-in, involved 28 formal presentations and dialogues with student, administrative, and alumni groups. The second part, or self-study, was an internal review consisting of student assessment, staff assessment, alumni assessment, and benchmarking. The third part, external review, took place March 7-8, 2013. The last part of the program review is the long-term strategic planning process, which begins this summer.

This Executive Summary begins with a discussion of the Self-Study. This is followed by findings and recommendations from the External Review. Next are Additional Considerations. The final section is the University Response.

Self-Study

The self-study provided both qualitative and quantitative data to identify best practices, areas of improvement, and possible next steps for the Center. It also allowed for different communities to evaluate the Center through their respective lenses. Five themes emerged during the self-study:

1. *Students are at the heart of the TWC.* Their perspectives are valued and taken into serious consideration in shaping the Center's programs, operations, and objectives.
2. *The Center facilitates learning through critical consciousness, community-building, and leadership development programs.* These experiences provide an avenue for students of color to build meaningful relationships with others while practicing social justice principles.
3. *The Center has a limited reach beyond TWTP to recruit student leaders.* Center staff can incorporate intentional outreach, visibility of other programs, and creative marketing strategies to attract more students to the Center.
4. *Partnering with campus centers and leaders can improve the TWC's programming and outreach efforts.* These collaborations also help build institutional capacity for social justice and diversity efforts.
5. *There is a lack of understanding and/or appreciation of the Center's name among multiple constituents.* The Center's name plays a critical role in marketing, student engagement, and giving. Therefore, careful consideration of multiple perspectives should be incorporated in any naming process for the Center.

A critical analysis of these themes led to six preliminary recommendations by TWC staff:

1. Re-brand the Center to highlight scholarly experiences
2. Develop reciprocal partnerships
3. Make a determination on the Center's name
4. Promote social justice and leadership development training for the campus community
5. Continue to assess programming needs
6. Preserve and honor the TWC's history

The Self-Study provided the TWC community the opportunity to look introspectively at areas where it excelled, as well as areas of growth. In preparation for the external review, a copy of the self-study was distributed to senior administrators, external reviewers, and all confirmed participants. Additionally, the self-study was published on the TWC website.

This section highlighted major areas that surfaced during the Self-Study. The next section discusses the External Review findings and recommendations.

External Review

The external review consisted of a two-day visit in March. Dr. Felicia Lee, Chief of Staff at University of California, Berkeley, and Mr. Rafael Zapata, Associate Vice President/Chief Diversity Officer at Providence College, met with 89 members of the campus community including: senior administrators, TWC staff, students, alumni, Campus Life & Student Services staff, key collaborators, Dean of the College staff, and faculty on March 7 and 8, 2013. At the conclusion of their visit, Dr. Lee and Mr. Zapata offered their preliminary findings, which mirrored several of the Self-Study findings:

Best Practices and Impact

- Student voice is listened to, valued, and appreciated in the TWC.
- Deep personal and professional investment in the success of the Third World Center is palpable and profound.
- The Center has been a crucial element of the Brown experience for countless students, faculty, and staff over the years - not simply a house. It has been a community experience - not simply a list of services and programs to affect retention and engagement.

Areas of Improvement

- One campus department, however impactful, cannot possibly serve all the varying student needs (and staff/faculty requests) at a university as complex and distinctive as Brown. However, by its very nature of promoting inclusion and social justice to honor the wisdom of the past and respond to the needs of the present, the TWC has tried to be accountable to each generational experience, layering current realities and desires over past context and needs.
- There seems to be a dominant model of social justice, activism, and leadership in the TWC that does not work for everyone and is shared by very few. The TWC can facilitate multiple frameworks and opportunities for students to explore these areas in meaningful ways.

Center's Name and Strategic Direction

- The TWC is one place where communities of color may feel affirmed and supported. Therefore, the Center's work should focus on this.
- There is too much breadth in the TWC's portfolio. Defining and clarifying the mission and scope of the Center to focus on depth will inform the budget priorities, programming, and name.
- It appears that multiple areas across campus support diversity initiatives. Therefore, an audit or assessment of this work is one method to identify gaps and develop a holistic plan for diversity.
- The refinement of the Center's mission and purpose should be situated squarely in the experience of its most important constituents – the current students.
- The majority of those who participated in the external review (approximately 70%) are ready for a name change. It is critical, however, that any discussion of the name involves an open and inclusive process. Additionally, it is important to clearly identify and communicate up front who has the final decision-making power in the determination of the name. Finally, the name should embody the Center's spirit and legacy.

Seven weeks after their visit, the consultants submitted five specific recommendations for each of the aforementioned areas:

1. *Clarify the mission of the TWC to focus and prioritize its objectives to meet the needs of the current generation of students of color.* The revised mission and goals must make a clear connection to the educational mission of Brown University, articulate social change and leadership as engaged in multiple ways, and position the TWC as a leader in (but not exclusively responsible for), the advancement of the diversity imperative beyond TWC. The TWC will then emerge as a space that fosters curricular, pedagogical, and intellectual innovation where serious questions are rigorously explored, analyzed and presented by students, faculty and community partners.
2. *Engage in a thoughtful, inclusive, and engaged stakeholder process to determine a new name for the Third World Center.* The majority of the stakeholder groups articulated the desire to change the Center's name. Almost all who were aware of the historical significance of the name rooted in Franz Fanon's concept of "The Third Way" affirmed its core, while others dismissed it as outdated, if not outright offensive. Consensus emerged that any new name should reflect a much clearer, meaningful, and contemporary characterization of the Center's mission while honoring its legacy of student activism and social justice. The challenging task is weaving history into a modern narrative that feels relevant and real in the present.
3. *Identify decision-maker(s) for the name change and communicate the process upfront.* In addition, determining committee membership, stakeholder involvement, timeline, resource requirements, communication plan, feedback loops, etc. should be discussed and vetted thoroughly.
4. *Develop an assessment plan to connect TWC goals and objectives to learning and retention outcomes.* An array of constituents expressed the need for TWC to become a space that also produces knowledge and develops skills central to student success. These must be systematically documented and assessed in order to analyze effectiveness and convey impact on outcomes such as retention, academic achievement, student satisfaction

and flourishing, (e.g., leadership development, communication and presentation skills, engaged scholarship, integrating diverse perspectives).

5. *Integrate the work of the TWC with Institutional Diversity efforts.* The TWC must be part of an overarching approach to Brown University's institutional diversity efforts. To do so effectively, we recommend a comprehensive audit of campus diversity efforts led by the Office of Institutional Diversity, to assess needs, enhance integration, innovation, and impact.

This segment explained external reviewer findings related to best practices and impact, areas of improvement, and the Center's name and strategic direction. Additionally, this portion outlined the formal recommendations that were submitted by the reviewers. The piece below articulates several additional considerations.

Additional Considerations

A few topics came up during the process that fell outside the scope of the External Review but do have an impact on the work of the TWC. These were brought up by Dr. Lee and Mr. Zapata in their formal report:

- Synergies between the Swearer Center, TWC, and other units could be much stronger. For example, many of the underrepresented communities where service projects are developing partnerships could benefit from the cultural knowledge and training skills currently available through the TWC student leaders and staff. At the same time, careful attention must be paid so that students of color and/or TWC staff are not overburdened with providing training and education on such topics. Instead, common diversity trainings around diversity, social justice and community engagement could be sponsored, facilitating substantive interaction among a diverse group of student leaders. Additionally, stronger collaboration with the Residence Life student leader program was also expressed.
- Strategic planning for cultural competency/diversity training and professional development for divisional staff members is desired. Can Brown develop more capacity and capability among staff/faculty across the campus to engage in meaningful dialogue on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. and not defer to a few select units or individuals to facilitate the work?
- How can the energy and commitment of the TWC alumni be strategically mobilized? The alumni are deeply committed and generated an array of creative ideas for a philanthropic approach to increase the financial viability for the Center. When donors are standing by, ready to assist, and receptive to new ideas, not tapping into the resource would be a missed opportunity.
- In addition to our recommended audit of diversity efforts at Brown University, how can the data and insights from the TWC self-study process be leveraged to inform and support the work of the recently appointed Associate Provost/Chief Diversity Officer?
- To what degree will the leadership, from the President, Provost, the Corporation, and other high level administration, move Brown University toward an institutional approach that goes beyond "diversity" to foster "full participation"? That is, creating a context and culture "that enable people, whatever their identity, background, or institutional position,

to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others” (Sturm, Susan S., Eastman, T., Saltmarsh, J. & Bush, A. 2011). Without a strong, sustained commitment from top leadership, responsibility for this important work will continue to be relegated to the TWC and other pockets of the campus community.

This section brought to light several matters that did not fulfill the primary objectives of the Program Review. Nonetheless, they are mentioned here as additional considerations for campus-wide conversations about diversity efforts that include the work of the TWC. The next part, University Response, includes reflections about the external review recommendations, as well as next steps.

University Response

Soon after the submission of the External Review Report, I met with Dean Bergeron, Vice President Klawunn, and Senior Director Gresh to discuss the consultants’ findings and the TWC’s next steps. Overall, we agreed with the reviewers’ observations and noted that their recommendations were appropriate and achievable. In addition, we determined that the top priorities moving forward are:

- Submit a formal response to the External Reviewers (to be completed by June 10, 2013)
- Inform the campus community of the External Review Findings and Recommendations (to be completed by October 31, 2013)
- Communicate a process for determining a new name for the Center that includes the campus community and key stakeholders, such as relevant alumni affinity groups, student organizations, faculty, University boards, councils, and committees (to be completed by September 1, 2013)
- Convene a Strategic Plan Working Group consisting of the Director of the TWC and senior-level administrators and stakeholders (to be completed by September 30, 2013)
- In collaboration with Provost Cariaga-Lo and Dean Bhattacharyya, conduct an audit of undergraduate co-curricular programs and services that support diverse students (to be completed by January 30, 2014)
- Publish and distribute the Center’s Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan (to be completed by July 1, 2014)
- Determine and launch Center’s name (to be completed by August 1, 2014)