

DIVERSITY CENTER

The Diversity Center is committed to empowering the PLU community to engage in dialogue, programs, and initiatives that promote and enhance equity, agency, and action. We value critical reflection, perspective taking and community. In 2015 The Diversity Center transitioned from a program to a department within the division of Student Life reporting directly to the VP of Student Life allowing for further collaborations within and across divisions. The Diversity Center's work has expanded in scope and continues to be focused on student learning and success, especially for minoritized students. Additionally, we see the work of supporting students to reach their full potential also encompasses shifting and adapting institutional priorities and culture. Thus, the goals of The Diversity Center are:

- To cultivate a sense of belong for historically marginalized populations
- To foster a university commitment to diversity, justice, and sustainability
- To nurture a diverse community of justice-minded leaders

The Diversity Center's expanded goals and scope has been made possible through a generous Casey Grant (2015, 2016, 2017) and Quigg Award (2010, 2015) and The Pride Foundation (2010, 2011, 2012). The following are initiatives of The Diversity Center:

Alongside leadership and support from The University Diversity Committee and Dr. Jennifer Smith, in 2016 a Bias Incident Response Team reporting structure and website was created to anonymously collect data regarding instances of experienced bias within the PLU community and monitor the type and frequency of such occurrences. More information about BIRT and its process can be found at www.plu.edu/birt

Coined by students as the space having the “comfiest couches and best conversations,” the dCenter is a leader in social justice education and a community on campus where people of historically underrepresented communities belong and matter. The dCenter continues to award 40+ student each year with the Rieke Scholarship who are committed to engaging in a year-long leadership curriculum exploring action for social change. Recently, the dCenter has expanded its offerings of intentional dialogue opportunities through iGroup, an intergroup dialogue focused on race and gender, and JTerm book group, reading groups for faculty, staff, and students that dialogue about perspective of a social justice text.

In collaboration with The Centers, The Diversity Center coordinates fall retreats for students of color and queer students offering affinity spaces for identity reflection within community. In 2017 opportunities to connect and celebrate in community grew to include a Diversity Center reception for incoming students of color and queer students at NSO and recognition of all graduating students of these identities at the annual Spirit of Diversity Awards. More information about the dCenter can be found at www.plu.edu/dcenter

In collaboration with the task force working with and for undocumented students, the dCenter has been a leader in developing support for undocumented students at PLU. This support includes financial support for course materials, a commitment to assisting with emergency concerns, and equipping the campus community with tools for supporting undocumented students. More information can be found at www.plu.edu/undocumented-students

Every other year The Diversity Center coordinates an Alternative Spring Break study away experience examining intersectional issues of diversity, justice and sustainability. This opportunity allows students to utilize their location as a learning lab to explore historical and contemporary issues. In 2016, The Diversity Center ASB visited Georgia to explore intersections of civil rights movements and environmental justice. In 2018, in partnership with Women's and Gender Studies, students will visit Washington DC for the credit awarding class of WMGS 387: Gender, Race & History in the Nation's Capital. <https://www.plu.edu/marcom/news/2016/04/21/alt-spring-break/>; <https://plu.useed.net/projects/357/home>

In Fall 2012 The Diversity Center hired a staff person to coordinate Commuter and Transfer Student Connections. Today, The Assistant Director of the Diversity Center in this role is responsible for student success, support, and advocacy for commuter (55% of undergraduate students) and transfer students (21% of undergraduate students) at PLU. This includes the coordination of The CAVE, a community for first and second year commuter students, Kreidler Lounge, a community for junior, senior, commuter, transfer, and veteran students, co-coordinating fall and spring commuter and transfer NSO components, and participation on the Care Team. In 2016, CTSC partnered with Residential Life to intentionally include commuter students in their linked living learning program. As a result, and in recognition of the significant commuter first in family population, a specific PLUS 100 course was developed for commuter and first generation students. Having instructors that were directly connected to the Diversity Center allowed for a natural support system to emerge. Additionally, in select FYEP writing 101 courses, commuter students were reserved seats in each class and were able to be part of the living-learning experience with residential students. The Cave student leaders (Community Advocates) are able to collaborate with Resident Assistants to offer joint programming for their linked course students. In 2017, 50% of first year commuter students have opted in to participating in the linked course experience. Intersections with the Cave, PLUS 100, and linked courses allowed for better social and academic integration for commuter students. Commuter students generally have a difficult time finding community and partnerships through CTSC help bridge some of these gaps. More information about CTSC and its resources can be found at <https://www.plu.edu/commuter-transfer/>.

The Coordinator for Sustainability Integration position began in The Diversity Center in Fall 2016 in collaboration with the University Diversity Committee and Sustainability Committee after transitions and changes from the Sustainability Department to Environmental Services/Waste Diversion. Sustainability Integration acts a connector to bridge cross campus committees and resources; advisor to the greater campus community around topics of diversity, justice and sustainability; and bring relevant and timely topics to demonstrate the intersections of diversity, justice and sustainability to the forefront for educational opportunities outside of the classroom. In addition to supporting the management of the student run PLU Community Garden, the Coordinator of Sustainability also advises the DJS FUNd Team, a team of six social justice and sustainability student leaders who make funding recommendations for the DJS Award. As of this date \$75,608.38 has been awarded for 34 student projects. More information about the DJS award can be found at <https://www.plu.edu/sustainability/diversity-justice-sustainability-award/>.

The Diversity Center has a very strong partnership with the Division of Marketing and

Communication. This relationship enables us to not only share in concern with minoritized students about representation in campus publications, ensuring that they are authentic, intentional, and culturally appropriate, but also to develop vision campaigns for institutional change. With the success of *My Language. My Choice*, The Diversity Center and MarComm continue to collaborate on social awareness campaigns, branding for The Diversity Center, and web presence that showcases the work of The Diversity Center specifically and PLU broadly in our commitment to DJS, inclusion, and student activism and success.

<https://www.plu.edu/dcenter/my-language-my-choice/>;

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153536000389654.1073741843.27998099653&type=1&l=ae96fce97a>; <https://www.plu.edu/listen/>