University Center (UC)
Assessment of 4th Annual Day of Dialogue: Discuss, Learn, Change

Submitted by Liz Roosa Millar, Associate Director, University Center and Molly Collins, Assistant Director, University Center Student Involvement

ABSTRACT
The Day of Dialogue (DOD) is a campus-wide symposium focused on the topics of race, gender, ethnicity, ability/disability, religion, sexual orientation, employment hierarchy, and academic discipline. The purpose of this assessment was to analyze information and feedback from participants who attended the 2009 DOD, held annually at The University of Montana since 2006, with the goal of continually improving the program. Attendance figures were also gathered and reported as a way of comparing change over time.

Participant counts indicate an increase in overall attendance. Survey findings show that a majority of the survey respondents thought that the 2009 DOD was “good” or “very good” (91 percent). DOD sessions received high quality ratings (“excellent” or “good”) and a majority of the respondents agreed the symposium helped them to be more aware (86 percent), want to learn more (86 percent), discuss diversity (84 percent), listen to others (81 percent), think more broadly (67 percent), find ways to improve campus (65 percent), and meet others (61 percent).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
During the DOD, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members deliver presentations, performances, workshops, and exhibits. Although the original focus of the program was a one-day educational symposium, it has evolved to consist of pre-symposium events and activities, performers, speakers, social gatherings, and remarks from campus leaders. The Day of Dialogue Committee established the following outcomes for the 2009 program:

- to expand campus-wide awareness about how diversity enriches the learning environment, and the importance of dialogue regarding cultures and traditions;
- to encourage conversations about barriers that separate us from one another, and about overcoming natural tendencies to relate more with people like ourselves; and
- to listen to one another in order to find ways of promoting a healthy, welcoming climate on our campus and in the Missoula community.

The following assessment was designed and implemented to analyze the planning committee’s efficacy in achieving these goals.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
The DOD was assessed using a survey and participant numbers. The survey captured demographic information of attendees, perceived quality of the sessions, overall rating of and comments about the program, and measurement of intended outcomes of the program. The online survey was conducted by the Assessment Subcommittee of the larger Day of Dialogue Committee, and administered approximately two weeks after the program using SelectSurvey. Respondents volunteered to participate in the survey by providing their names and email addresses on a sign-up sheet distributed during each session. Of the 221 participants emailed, 66 participants responded to the survey, for a response rate of 29.9 percent.

Participants were counted throughout all parts of the program (logistics permitting). Attendance for each session was determined through headcounts of the individuals in each room, taken by committee members and volunteers. Pre-symposium event staff counted participants either manually or by using the Griz Card system, through which students swipe their cards upon entry.

FINDINGS
Attendance
Overall attendance for DOD events has increased in the last two years. Figure 1 compares the 2009 DOD attendance with attendance during previous years. (2006 attendance data is not available.)
Session Quality

Participants were asked to rate the quality of the sessions they attended. Most sessions received high quality ratings (“excellent” or “good”) with only 4 of the 21 sessions receiving even one “fair” or “poor” rating. Table 1 provides these rankings and categories.

Table 1. Quality of the Sessions Attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Excellent/Good</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Fair/Poor</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Successful Dialogue between European Union Member States</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges for Individuals in Non-Traditional Career Fields (South Campus)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminalization of HIV: Should People who Spread HIV go to Jail?</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace out of Oppression</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing Your Rights: For Full Participation in and Protection from the Community</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference and Dialogue: Mediation and the Art of Integrative Problem-Solving</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity in English: In and Out of Class</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the Glass Ceiling</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting: A Frank Discussion Concerning Bicultural Adaptive Strategies for African American Students</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM Faculty Panel: Struggling for Civil Discourse in an Era of Incivility</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination and the U.S. Constitution</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Student Life</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact or Fiction: Challenging Myths Surrounding Disability</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Quality
When asked, “Overall, what did you think of the 2009 Day of Dialogue?,” 91 percent of the respondents said “very good” or “good.” This is consistent with the quality ratings assigned to individual sessions (data not shown). Open-ended responses participants provided when asked to share any comments, suggestions, or feedback about the program included the following:

- Insightful, good information (9)
- Wish I had more time to attend sessions (3)
- Sessions on how to interact with other diverse groups (2)
- Excellent, gets better every year (2)
- More student panels (2)
- More interaction during sessions (2)
- Did not attend many of the workshops (2)
- More workshops on Trans issues, Two-Spirit
- Frustrating, insulting, left me upset
- Evening keynote during working hours
- I received very positive reflections/feedback from my students, who were asked to select at least one event to attend. Most were quite positive in their assessments.
- Evening panel was dry
- Faces of the Pov- Great!
- Title confusion
- Great Native American Dancers
- Longer session times

Program Outcomes
As stated earlier, the Day of Dialogue Committee established the following outcomes for the 2009 program:

- to expand campus-wide awareness about how diversity enriches the learning environment, and the importance of dialogue regarding cultures and traditions;
- to encourage conversations about barriers that separate us from one another, and about overcoming natural tendencies to relate more with people like ourselves; and
- to listen to one another in order to find ways of promoting a healthy, welcoming climate on our campus and in the Missoula community.

The survey questions intended to measure these outcomes and results are presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Quality of the session(s) attended:</th>
<th>Excellent/Good</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Fair/Poor</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Equality March</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Treatment of Women in Politics</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming an Ally: Combating Homophobia and Heterosexism on Campus</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Portrayals in the Media: What you see, What you don’t see, and What you should see</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sports Race</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunnel Revisited</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keg Cups and Paddles: Debunking the Myths of Greek Life</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility: What You can do to Stand Out and Proud</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Outcomes
As stated earlier, the Day of Dialogue Committee established the following outcomes for the 2009 program:

- to expand campus-wide awareness about how diversity enriches the learning environment, and the importance of dialogue regarding cultures and traditions;
- to encourage conversations about barriers that separate us from one another, and about overcoming natural tendencies to relate more with people like ourselves; and
- to listen to one another in order to find ways of promoting a healthy, welcoming climate on our campus and in the Missoula community.

The survey questions intended to measure these outcomes and results are presented in Table 2.
**Table.** To What Extent Do You Agree/Disagree with the Following Statements Related to Diversity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today’s symposium helped me to:</th>
<th>Agree (5,4)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (2, 1)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be more aware</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want to learn more</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss diversity</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to others</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think more broadly</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find ways to improve campus</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet others</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1

The majority of participants who responded to this survey agreed the symposium helped them to be more aware (86 percent), want to learn more (86 percent), discuss diversity (84 percent), listen to others (81 percent), think more broadly (67 percent), find ways to improve campus (65 percent), and meet others (61 percent).

When asked “What other diversity-related opportunities would you like to see offered at UM?” the top three responses were:

- More Native American programming (3);
- Diversity training for ALL UM staff (2); and
- Find a way to bring together more diverse groups (2).

**Other**

Survey respondents were also asked, “what other diversity-related opportunities would you like to see offered at UM?” The responses included the following:

- More Native American programming (3)
- Diversity training for ALL UM staff (2)
- Find a way to bring together more diverse groups (2)
- Courses that offer evolution of oppressed groups, and their status in society
- Body image and look-based prejudice
- More opportunities for actual dialogue/conversation with faculty panel
- More diversity representation around music and art

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Attendance**

Although attendance has increased steadily for pre- and day-of events since 2007, the current committee will need to decide whether attendance should be the only indicator of program effectiveness. If the committee decides to continue using headcounts, goals for attendance should be established for the overall program and individual events (pre- and day-of). Finally, it may be important to find out who is not attending DOD events and why, in order to increase participation in the program, especially from those who may benefit the most.

**Participant Experience**

Currently, 91 percent of the survey respondents reportedly thought the DOD was “good” or “very good.” The planning committee should use this data to strive for continual improvement, increasing the positive response rate to 95 percent “good” or “very good” responses next year. Another recommendation is to add more questions to the survey to achieve richer data on the experiences of the participants.

**Session Quality**

The Day of Dialogue committee should strive for high-quality sessions each year. Because new and returning presenters are selected through a proposal review process, the Proposal Outreach and Review Subcommittee should determine the
appropriateness and quality of sessions and presenters based on the evidence collected through this survey. Evidence should also be shared with presenters so they may improve their presentation based on feedback from participants.

**Program Effectiveness**
Currently, the Day of Dialogue is measured for effectiveness by establishing broad intended learning outcomes and using a survey to determine whether the intended result was achieved. To do this, the Assessment subcommittee broke apart the statements into quantifiable segments of information. Measurable learning outcomes should be intentionally established in the program planning phase and should potentially include established and reliable measures of such outcomes on the survey, e.g., a scale used to measure outcomes such as multicultural competency and intercultural maturity.

**Other**
Although only two survey respondents mentioned diversity training for all UM staff when asked “what other diversity-related opportunities would you like to see offered at UM?,” the 2010 Day of Dialogue committee should consider offering a certificate of completion for attendees of the 2010 program because the program helps fulfill the University’s commitment to creating and maintaining a campus that values diversity.

**Assessment**
The Assessment Subcommittee should continue using the online SelectSurvey program to administer the survey. Incentives may garner more survey respondents especially for students. The survey questions should be refined and further developed. In addition, volunteers should be trained to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to be involved in the assessment.