

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

## Reflection: There's Always More To Their Stories



By Michael Santarosa, Associate Registrar

It has been a pleasure being employed by the University of Utah and participating in the Diversity Certificate program over the past year. Although the topic of diversity is not a new one for me, participating in the certificate program built on other previous experiences and informs my work with students in at least three ways. First, because there is much I should not assume about students, it's often better to hold a tentative stance in new relationships and endeavors and provide space for individual and collective stories to emerge. Second, because students are multi-dimensional beings there's always more to their stories than I have yet learned and therefore I need to keep listening and asking questions. And third, many students carry the pain from present and past injustices against them and people like them and need a safe and affirming place to learn if they are to succeed in college and take their place as leaders in a civil and just society. While I hope that I have internalized and integrated these truths about students and diversity into my practice as a student affairs professional, I realize that honoring and

respecting individual and group differences is an ongoing skill that requires constant engagement and development.

The program also furthered my own personal and professional growth as it raised questions again about my own identity, privileges, and vulnerabilities. I recognized anew my responsibility to wisely share my own story and reflect upon the ways it does and does not intersect with others' stories. And, the program strengthened my sense of responsibility to nurture a university community and culture that honors and respects the dignity of each individual person and vigorously defends each one's pursuit of a good and flourishing life.

Over the course of the last year there have been many, many times that I've been able to draw on the content received through the certificate program to challenge assumptions and practices in our work in the Registrar's Office to help further our goal of creating a more safe and inclusive campus environment. Some of these have been related to what we value and look for when hiring new staff members, what concerns are raised when considering exceptions to policies, and the amount of patience and understanding we bring when serving international and other under-represented students. Other times it involves offering perspective on why a diversity issue is important or relevant to our work.

While I believe the Student Affairs Diversity workshops and the certificate program are extremely important and effective in raising our awareness of diversity issues; I have also realized there is so much more work that needs to be done. An example of this occurred during the recent workshop where we attempted to have a dialogue about marriage between same-sex couples and the beliefs and

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## Reflection: More To Their Stories, cont.

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practices of the LDS church. The workshop facilitators gave us a taste of how strong and beautiful relationships among people of diverse perspectives and identities could become after 25 years of deep and purposeful engagement. That quality of relationships may be our goal for ourselves and our students, but it'll take lots of time and hard work (and lots of listening, acknowledging, and forgiving) to get there.

Additionally, I think our institutional commitment to students and staff of color needs to catch up with our rhetoric of inclusion. We just don't have the numbers of enrolled students and graduates as evidence to justify thinking that the cultural structures that selectively support the success of White majority students have been sufficiently modified to support the success of students from

the full-color spectrum. And, from some conversations with some staff of color, I have learned the disparity between rhetoric and practice is clearer to them than to me and many others from racially privileged backgrounds.

In closing, I want to say again how grateful I am to work with so many colleagues that care about individual student success and who want to progressively widen the scope of those we serve and how we serve them. The energy and enthusiasm around issues of diversity are contagious and help stimulate my creativity about ways to improve programs and services to increase student learning and degree attainment. This certificate program and the good work of the Student Affairs Diversity Council are much appreciated.

## Reflection: Encompassing and Celebrating the Differences



By Christie Ekins, Office of Admissions

I believe that I am a pretty simple person or maybe a person who likes routine. Every morning I wake up at 4:50am and go to the gym, come home to shower and get ready for my day of work. I work 8-5pm, go home and spend the evening with my husband. This routine doesn't vary much from day to day. Until I started attending the seminars, I didn't think much about diversity and what it is, what it means and how it plays a role in my life.

My first step to a greater understanding was defined by modules 1, 2 and 3. During each module, I learned so much about myself and the colleagues around me. This was probably one of the scariest things I have participated in with a few friends and "strangers." In the end it was worth it. Growing up I knew and was taught to not judge people

based on appearance and I hope the same respect was reciprocated when others looked at me (but knowing that is not always the case). During each module I hoped that others wouldn't judge me for my self-reflection. By discussing my reflection and hearing others insights, I knew that I was in a safe space and could express my feelings and opinions. By participating and putting myself out side of the box I could see my thoughts and actions begin to change especially as months went by I could see a real difference with my interactions.

I work in the Admissions Office and coordinate campus tours and prospective student programming. Each day is different. There isn't a day that goes by where I don't interact with a person who has different beliefs, cultural background or identifies differently than I do. For every interaction, I do my best to understand the needs of the individual. This can be difficult because not always do these interactions end the way I would like, but that is what I think is the benefit of working in a student affairs office. From the start of high school through college to now my eyes have definitely been opened to these differences that make each one of us unique. The seminars that I have attended have helped guide me to a better understanding of what diversity means.

From the start of the modules and seminars I have attended, I feel that I can say that my routine includes more than just waking up and going through the steps to get through the day. It encompasses and celebrates the differences in people and myself. I am excited to continue to see myself grow as I continue to attend the seminar series.

# Upcoming Campus and Community Events

Fri., April 4

**Fabulous Friday with the LGBT Resource Center**, every week from 3-5pm, Rm 409 in the Union



Fri., April 4 & Sat., April 5  
**Pioneer Theatre Company presents "Alabama Story" Staged Reading**  
8pm on both Fri & Sat, 2pm on Sat only Dumke Auditorium of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts [\[more info\]](#)



Tue., April 8

**Alley Week Event: Open Safe Zone Training** 9am-12pm, Rm 206 Browning Building [\[lgbt.utah.edu\]](#)



Wed., April 9

**Panel Discussion: A Critique of Allyship.** 10:45-11:45am, at the Hinkley Institute in OSH [\[lgbt.utah.edu\]](#)



Thurs., April 10

**The Annual Ally Social.** 3-5pm in Parlor A, Union Bldg [\[lgbt.utah.edu\]](#)

Thurs., April 10

**What is Peace?**, 12:30-2:30pm at the College of Social Work, Okazaki Community Meeting Room. Dialog on multi-faith and world peace.



Fri., April 11

**Rally To Break The Silence**, 1-2pm at the Union Patio [\[lgbt.utah.edu\]](#)



Sat., April 19

**42nd Annual "Sustaining Our Culture" powwow**, 9a-10pm at the Union. \_\_\_\_\_



For information about these and other events, please visit: [www.events.utah.edu](http://www.events.utah.edu).

## Diversity Seminar



### "The Imposter Panel"

Wednesday, April 16  
12:00-1:30pm  
Union Panorama East

Panelists include:

Mary Anne Berzins  
Assistant VP, Human Resources

Martha Bradley  
Sr. Associate VP, Undergraduate Studies

Debra Daniels  
Director, Women's Resource Center

Barb Snyder  
Vice President for Student Affairs

Belinda Otukolo Saltiban  
Diversity & Inclusion.

For more Info, visit: [sadc.utah.edu](http://sadc.utah.edu)

## Upcoming Diversity Modules

Module 1: May 7, 9am-12pm

Module 2: May 8, 9am-12pm

Module 3: May 9, 9am-12pm

For more information, visit:  
<http://sadc.utah.edu/trainings.php>



For more information and recourses, please visit:

[sadc.utah.edu](http://sadc.utah.edu)

Debra Daniels, Co-chair Women's Resource Center  
Kari Ellingson, Co-chair Student Development  
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office  
Karen Cone-Uemura, Counseling Center  
Branden Dalley, Union Administration  
Kris Fenn, Bennion Center  
Marcy Healy, Conference & Guest Services  
Scott Jensen, Housing & Residential Education  
Trisha Jensen, Orientation & Leadership Development  
Suzanne Jones, Registrar's Office  
Chris Macias, TRIO

Carol MacNicholl, Center for Disability Services  
Pablo Martinez, Office of Admissions  
Kai Medina-Martinez, LGBT Center  
Susan Miller, Campus Recreation  
Sana Muller, ASUU  
Rachana Patel, Office of Admissions  
Cynthia Powell, Student Health Center  
Valery Pozo, Career Services  
Erica Rojas, Financial Aid & Scholarships  
Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Diversity & Inclusion  
Adam Sibenaller, HRE, AREC