

Team Intervention  
**CONFLICT IN THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

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Dr. Jamie Gray, the most recent Vice Provost of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (MA) at a mid-west research university, took office almost two years ago after a controversial in-house hire. MA houses the Gay, Bi-sexual, Lesbian, and Transgender (GBLT) Programs Office; Women's Center; Disability Services; and Cultural Learning Centers (CLC) for American Indians, Chicano/Latinos, Asian Pacific Islanders, and African Americans. Each of these programs has traditionally had its own budget, facilities, and director.

Dr. Gray is generally viewed as a visionary leader, and staff report confidence in his leadership abilities. However, staff expressed concern with changes recently implemented by Dr. Gray without consulting with the directors. Dr. Gray negotiated with building management and secured new office space for all of the centers together on the fringe of campus. He gave the directors less than a week's notice about his decision to relocate all of the offices to the new location. All units but the Native American Cultural Learning Center (NACLC) re-located without resistance. Dr. Gray reorganized the personnel in the three cooperating CLCs by promoting the directors to that of Administrative Special Projects Coordinators and appointing a new Director to oversee all three CLCs. The CLC staff has noted significant improvement in teamwork between the CLCs now that they share a common budget, space, and new director. Dr. Gray has renamed the combined CLCs as the Multicultural Excellence Center (MEC) to reflect better the merger.

Dr. Gray has openly stated that he is disappointed that the NACLC has not cooperated with the re-location and new organizational structure. He has on several occasions publicly stated, "...the NACLC is not a team player." Dr. Tony Brown, the director of the NACLC, has resisted these changes, citing major cultural issues (like ceremonial space, tribal sovereignty, federal and tribal scholarships, and native languages) and budget concerns. Dr. Brown appears to have a great deal of support from the local Native American community (both on and off campus) and support from students.

However, Dr. Brown was granted a one-year professional development leave to pursue research, and, in his absence, Dr. Gray has implemented several programmatic changes to bring the NACLC more in-line with the other CLCs. He has offered NACLC staff rewards and incentives to engage in activities similar to the MEC. Dr. Gray has publicly denounced the retention and programmatic strategies of Dr. Brown, while praising current staff for their cooperation in establishing a new agenda.

During a recent interview, Dr. Brown said, "The federal government has always recognized Native American communities as sovereign entities and not simply another race." Furthermore, he added, "From an indigenous view, the whole is not always greater than the sum of its parts. Sometimes, the benefits of joining a larger group overshadow the values of the smaller group." For example, even though combining all the CLCs has resulted in larger

numbers and greater visibility, the uniqueness of the individual cultures has been lost. Rather than CLCs offering a specific cuisine for celebrations, celebrations have become a potluck of cuisines. Also, Dr. Brown expressed concerns about the top-down management style of the current leadership.