

2015 Associated Students

# Ethnic Student Center

AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee

## **Tactical Assessment Program Evaluation Report**



## Introduction:

The AS Ethnic Student Center (ESC) will present to the AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The currently approved mission statement of purpose is:

*The ESC is a community that supports historically underrepresented ethnic students and allies by providing a social atmosphere and inclusive environment where we engage in identity exploration and strive for cultural awareness and academic excellence.*

## Programs/Services Provided

- **Supports historically underrepresented ethnic Students and Allies:** To instill in all students making use of the ESC resources to gain necessary skills for success not only at WWU but after they graduate and leave the campus environment.
- **Social Atmosphere and Inclusive Environment:** Empower students of color and national origin by providing a comfortable, safe operating base of support for ethnic student organizations and international clubs.
- **Engage in Identity Exploration:** Working with local community organizations through utilization of their leadership, experience, expertise, and counsel and, conversely by offering channels for participation in ESC events and facility utilization.
- **Strive for Cultural Awareness:** Improve the quality of student life on campus by developing and implementing educational, cultural, and social multicultural awareness. This includes assisting the University in retaining students of color.
- **Academic Excellence:** Provide students with appropriate resources whether it is for personal or academic success. This includes; financial aid, academic advising, individual opportunities, housing services, and health care.

## What We Offer

- **Academic Support:** The ESC works in collaboration with the Student Outreach Services Office (SOS) in providing academic advising to our students. In addition, we provide tutoring and studying-in opportunities for our students, particularly during the time of final exams.
- **Variety of Events:** The ESC has 16 clubs and each club hosts between 2-4 events a year, these include heritage dinners and cultural awareness events. In addition, the Program Support Coordinator creates 6-8 ESC events a year.
- **Scholarships:** The ESC works with programs on campus to advertise and support scholarship opportunities available to our students.
- **Internships:** The ESC provides students with the opportunity of working in our office as interns. This gives them the opportunity to grow in their working, team-building and communication skills.
- **Mentorship and Advising:** In addition to academic advising, the ESC Staff also serves a means of mentorship and advising to our students for their own personal success and growth. More specifically, the Program Support Coordinator works as an advisor to club leaders in helping them grow as leaders and provides them with support in the creation and planning of their events, in addition to offering advice on how to keep their leadership teams strong.
- **Study Space and Computer Lab:** The ESC has a small office students can use to study as well as a small computer lab students can use to do their homework. However, with the high number of students seeking our resources, the ESC is looking for campus-wide support in finding a bigger space in order to provide our students with a bigger computer lab and study room they can all easily access.
- **Lounge to Socialize:** The ESC is considered to be "home away from home" to our students, we therefore provide them with a small room they can socialize and take a break from school in. Students also use this space to do their homework and have their club meetings.

**ESC ANALYSIS**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strong Student Leadership</b> ESC students have a higher percentage of graduating than those who do not feel connected to the campus due to a sense of belonging and self-worth</li> <li>• <b>Continual Collaboration</b> Other departments see the value of the ESC and show support by being an ally for referral to our students</li> <li>• <b>Program/Event Visibility</b> ESC creates a "book end" approach among programming where the ESC Conference is the beginning of a student experience and the ESC Commencement being the ending (graduating)</li> <li>• <b>Supportive Environment</b> Students explore and express topics related to ethnicity, culture, class, gender, and social justice</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Too much to do, not enough time/professional support</b> Current full time staff is feeling burnout from the amount support that is needed by students.</li> <li>• <b>Office Assistant Procedure</b> There is currently no allocation for ESC office assistants from the AS, all are workstudy</li> <li>• <b>Location</b> Center cannot provide the type of space students would like to utilize within the ESC</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opportunity for structural change</b> Students of color population grows at WWU, so does the demand of student support in the ESC</li> <li>• <b>Space Assessment</b> Administration is and VU staff are looking to assess and seek opportunities for the ESC to expand/relocate</li> <li>• <b>Academic focus</b> With an Academic Advisor in the ESC, student staff/leaders' grades are being tracked to make sure they are in good standing.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low Visibility</b> Many students say that they wish they knew about the ESC earlier</li> <li>• <b>Supply and Demand</b> ESC is always seen as the "diversity" place, and some students do not feel like they are welcomed creating an exclusive environment</li> <li>• <b>The four Fs: Fun, Fabric, Food, Festivals</b> The ESC is continually seen as strictly a program output center (putting on dinners, fun ethnic events, and celebration)</li> </ul>

## Recommendations 2014-15:

### 1. AS Board commit funding for the ESC Conference to be a 2 night/3 day conference (\$17,300 per year) starting the 2015-16 fiscal year

The ESC Conference has been an integral program that has been funded by the AS. Two years ago the ESC requested the conference to be funded for an extra day to accommodate the timeline and goals put on to the students. The board passed a temporary solution to pilot this idea for 2 year. This coming year will be the end of the request, and the ESC is requesting the board to establish a budget for \$17,300 under FXXEOR/ASBEAF, which will allow the ESC to continue programming the conference for 3 day/2 nights at Camp Casey. Assessment of the following two years of the conference can be found in the supporting documents in ESC assessment folder.

Having an extra day for the ESC Conference has been incredibly impactful, as evidenced in the assessments from 2013 and 2014. Students are afforded more of an opportunity to get away from campus to be in a sustained space focused on community, and there is much more time for relationship and connection-building. Students consistently have voiced that the 2 night/3 day set-up allows for an even more powerful and sustained experience.

### 2. AS Board consider vavins for front desk staff in the ESC

Some of our weaknesses provided in the SWAT analysis is feeling burnt out and our front desk staff being all workstudy. Currently, all ESC front desk assistants have been paid through work-study approval with the financial aid. Many of our qualified applicants were either non work-study status or have not properly applied for work-study in the beginning of the quarter. The process takes longer than expected to get interviews (finding students to sit on hiring committee, applicants not approved for work-study yet, Financial Aid status, HR paperwork). We lost many qualified applicants and typically this happens every year with our front desk. By making this position paid by the AS, this opens up the position for students not to rely on financial aid for income. This will serve students who are not getting the financial support they need from parents, financial independent students, students without papers, and many other students who need more support navigating higher education. With 33 weeks the whole year the budget would be around \$4700 for one position.

The importance of having the front desk assistant position filled cannot be overstated. The position is essential to maintaining day-to-day organization and management of the ESC, as the primary staff of the ESC are simply too busy to handle regular logistic and organizational tasks. In addition, the front desk staff is able to serve as a welcoming and helpful presence to those who come into the ESC by being immediately available. When we are unable to find someone to fill the work-study position, essential tasks are added to the plates of the already busy coordinators. Given that many students without work-study consistently express interest in the position and working for the ESC, having the position accessible to all students will not only ensure that the position and its necessary duties are filled but also that students who want to work for the ESC will have another opportunity to do so.

## ESC Long Term Goals:

In order to continue a cohesive vision for the ESC, the following is a list for future SPAC processes to know what goals the ESC hopes to achieve in the years to come. We hope that the AS and the SPAC committee can approve these goals for the ESC to hold accountability in future years.

### 1. Continued support for a full time academic advisor in the ESC

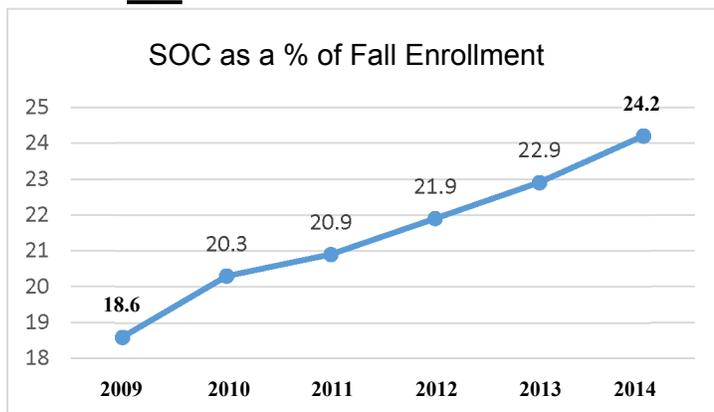
The ESC is currently strengthening their programming and outreach around academic excellence. In the past, there was no accountability to ESC students prioritizing their classes over involvement with clubs. In an effort to close the gap for ESC students failing out of WWU, Student Outreach Services office housed a part-time Academic Advisor in the ESC. As we see success grow with this position, so does the demand. It will not be too long until the demand from the part time advisor will be too large and will be needing additional hours will be needed.

### 2. Continue expansion/ relocation conversations with the ESS and AS/VU to move out of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and into a more prominent area

Students consider the ESC their "home away from home" and the staff tries the best they can to continue this appeal. With the ESC serving more students today because of the growing student of color population on campus, we are finding more competing groups trying to utilize the space. The center can only support one group at a time, and with 16 clubs associated to the ESC, many groups are pushed out and feeling like the ESC is not a "home away from home" anymore. With a bigger space on campus, in an accessible location, we will be able to serve the students we currently have but outreach to many more who do not know about the ESC. Supporting documents can be found in the ESC Assessment folder. Overall priorities are as follows:

- 1) Visibility/Placement
- 2) Appropriate space design
- 3) Space Utilization

### 3. Addressing the increased admission of students of color at WWU without increase resources of the ESC



The ESC has been around for more than 20 years and the resources hasn't changed much. The ESC started with 5 associated clubs/orgs and two full time staff. Since then, the ESC has grown to 16 clubs/orgs, 100+ student leaders. The staff now consists of the same 2 full time staff, 2 AS student salary positions and a front desk staff. We program 15+ large events mainly hosted by students. We are also seeing an increase amount of students of color attending WWU. We hope that the AS Board will find a solution to our

"growing pains" and give adequate financial and directional support to help retain our targeted demographic as it increases every year.