



“Queer Experience”

Proposed Motions: *Approve the Queer Experience as a targeted program.*

Sponsor: *Mayra Guizar, VP for Diversity*

Persons of Contact: *Clinton Kvistad-Renaissance, Queer Resource Center Assistant Coordinator*

Guest Speaker: *Clinton Kvistad-Renaissance, Queer Resource Center Assistant Coordinator*

Date: 1/28/14

Background & Context

This proposal is being brought to the board because Queer Experience is a targeted event that was created to address the lack of space for queer and trans identified students and community members to have a voice on campus. Queer Experience was created in 2010 and has grown over the past five years with varying cast sizes and over 400 people attending the culminating performance. The auditions for Queer Experience had been open to the general student population until last year when the former QRC Coordinator Briana Fitzpatrick felt it was important to target the event to queer and trans people.

Summary of Proposal

The QRC believes that the cast should be queer specific because the overall goal of the program is to create space for people who have been marginalized in some way due to their queer identity. Within this process, queer identified individuals are able to explore all aspects of their identity in a queer only space that is otherwise not available on campus. It is for this reason that we believe it is valuable to offer this process specifically to queer identified students and community members. The Queer Resource Center is proposing a casting call for March 4th, the weekly cast meetings that help the cast develop their monologues, and the final sharing of the cast’s truths on the production night May 9th be targeted to queer and trans people. Attending the final production(s*) is open to everyone, and we strongly encourage people of all identities to attend. The program fulfills the QRC’s mission by providing a safe community building space for queer and trans folks while providing an event that will share experiences and educate people of all identities. Despite the queer specific cast, other members of the community, such as allies, are highly encouraged to participate in other ways i.e. tabling, being an usher or attending the event. We acknowledge that part of having a strong community here at Western is having a strong support system, which allies are a crucial part of.

*after the cast is chosen we will be asking them if they would like to perform a second night

Fiscally There is no financial implication.

Rationale

By targeting the Queer Experience auditions and process to queer and trans identities we are allowing an opportunity for people to share their truths and experiences in a safe supportive environment. By participating in the development process the cast will be forming community in a safer space, as an all queer space is hard to find. It will allow students to feel more comfortable as they delve into their lived experiences, identity, and learning. The final performance will serve as a way for the cast members to break their silence- to be heard, and to educate those who attend on what it means to exist as a queer and/or trans person in our world. The final performance is open because the QRC feels it crucial that people of all identities can hear the truths of the cast and learn from their experiences. The event serves to benefit students and community members as a way to raise awareness and to spark further discussion of the oppression and experiences talked about in the performance.