

NOVEMBER 9, 2018 | VOL.1 NO.2  
**MSUM DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER**

Written by the Student Senate Diversity Committee

**Hello and happy November!!!** Can you believe there are only 19 days of classes left? There are no classes next Monday in observation of Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving break is from Nov. 21-23., and Study Day is Dec. 12 (night classes are still held); and then there's finals. So that means only 19 days of classes from now until Dec. 11!

### **Minnesota Out! Campus Conference**

On October 26th, 27th, and 28th MSUM and M-State hosted the Minnesota Out! Campus Conference (MOCC). MOCC is an annual LGBT+ conference held in a different city each year, with attendees from colleges in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

This year's theme was "Connect. Empower. Inspire.", as the conference hoped to connect, empower, and inspire their attendees. They certainly accomplished their goal, offering 19 different workshops, three different keynote speakers, a trivia & game night, a resource fair, free HIV testing, and more! The Rainbow Dragon Center, SPECTRUM, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion sponsored the conference.

### **Dia de Los Muertos Celebration**

On November 2nd, we celebrated Dia de Los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). In the Intercultural Center, there was a traditional altar and *pan de muerto* and students got to paint papier mache skulls and black and white rocks. In the Rainbow Dragon Center, there was an altar honoring trans people of color who have been murdered, and in the Women's Center., there was an altar honoring the women who were important founders of the feminist movement.

KVRR visited MSUM and made a news story covering our celebration and filmed a video of it. In the video, Jared Pigeon talks about the importance of celebrating each other's cultures, and other students get to share their reflection of the significance of celebrating Dia de Los Muertos. Check out the story here: <https://www.kvrr.com/2018/11/02/msum-students-celebrate-dia-de-los-muertos-by-getting-their-creative-juices-flowing/>

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Pictured above is the traditional Dia de Los Muertos altar in the Intercultural Center. Below on the left are some painted papier mache skulls, and on the right is the delicious *pan de muerto*.



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## An Interview with Olivia Matthews

Olivia Matthews is leaving her position at MSUM. Olivia has been part of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and has done tremendously important work around campus. Read an excerpt of our interview with Olivia below about her experience at MSUM (a full transcript will be released shortly).

**N: When did you start working at MSUM? What do you do at MSUM?**

O: My first day at MSUM was May the 4th of 2015. I remember that because it was an exciting day for me, but also because of Star Wars.

**N: Are you a big fan of Star Wars?**

O: I am. And Star Trek!

**N: That's cool that you like both of them. Usually people like one or the other.**

O: I don't think you have to like one or the other; I think you can like both! When I was young, I wanted to be Princess Leia when I grew up. Princess Leia was "goals" for me as a kid. I even grew my hair longer just so I could be Princess Leia someday when I grew up. But yes, May the 4th, 2015.

So I came here from Ohio. Before I came here, I worked as a graduate assistant in an Asian, Hispanic, and Native American center at Wright State University. So I did that for two years while I was getting my masters degree in student affairs. And I had gotten a bachelors degree in psychology before that.

As for what I do at MSUM.....*all the things* [laughter], so many things.

**N: Oh yeah, I know you're so busy! I see you helping with a ton of different things on campus. You do so much.**

O: And I love that about my job. It's never boring, and I never really know what to expect. I'll come in thinking I'm gonna get x, y, and z done, and then a, b, c, d, e, f, g come up! My primary role here is to provide support to students of color. So that's my #1 job, and we do that at MSUM through a lot of different ways. So we have some scholars programs, and I serve as an advisor for students in the scholar programs. Last year we had over a hundred multicultural and identity-based events. And that's between our diverse student organizations and the cultural and identity centers and ODI. I get to work closely with the students to plan those events, including our awesome programming assistants like Araceli and Emily.

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So we do advising and programming, and it's important just to be here, if students have any questions about anything. We want to be that go-to place for them to make sure that they find the person they need to so they don't have to run around, and they have the support and the tools they need to be successful, and ultimately, graduate.

Right now I also provide support for the LGBTQ+ center, the Rainbow Dragon Center. I serve as the advisor for SPECTRUM, and I get to work with them to host events and push through a lot of initiatives, like the Rainbow Dragon Learning Community. I worked with housing and the LC coordinator and SPECTRUM to be able to make that happen. Being able to see the students have that idea and go all the way through with it to make it an actual thing for other students was really cool to be part of. I've also helped with preferred name implementation, the SafeZone Training program that we run through the Rainbow Dragon Center, and the post-mentorship program that students and RDC started last year. So a lot of different things as far as support for LGBTQ+ students.

I also am our data evaluation and assessment person, because [laughter] I'm such a nerd. So I do most of that for our office because it's one of my strengths. So if you ever need to know retention rates, graduation rates, or percentages of anything, I do all the tracking for that. I also run our SMART Start program and SMART Start Scholars program, and I work with Jody to plan that and advertise that to students. This is the first year we've had that secondary planning program, so we're still figuring out what that looks like and growing that.

I do some other things too, but I would say those are the highlights of what I do.

**N: That's great. That really is so many things. That's even more than I thought there was.**

**Do you have a favorite experience from your time here?**

O: Can I tell you my favorite recent experience? Because if I had to pick an experience from my entire time here, we would be here all day!

**N: Yes that's understandable.**

O: The Minnesota Out! Campus Conference is going to be something I'll probably remember forever. One, because it's one of the last things I've gotten to do here at MSUM, and two, because the students here have always wanted to host something similar to a smaller version of MBLGTACC (Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Asexual College Conference).

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So we take students every year to MBLGTACC, and they've talked about how cool it would be if we hosted MBLGTACC on our campus, but we just aren't a big enough campus to do that. And Marisa Gonzalez from M State, who we work with through the quad-college LGBTQ+ group, came to me and was like, "Can we co-host the Minnesota Out! Campus Conference?" And of course we wanted to and were really excited about it. MOCC is like a mini MBLGTACC; it's smaller, more affordable, and you could actually fit it at MSUM.

Marisa and I went from writing a proposal to co-host the conference, and we went from being like, "Naw, we probably aren't gonna get it..." to "OMG we're going to host this conference!!!" and seeing a committee of students from both MSUM and M State come together to plan the conference. It was amazing to see these students run the conference like professionals, moderating workshops, presenting workshops, volunteering at the registration table; they didn't need any guidance, they just were on it. And it was really awesome to see students from twenty different colleges and universities in Minnesota and North Dakota.

To watch them and hear their questions throughout the whole weekend, to see how inspired, connected, and empowered they were (that was the theme of the conference), that's was just really amazing and that will stick with me. So that has been one of my favorite experiences. Anything that's working with students to create opportunities like that would be my favorite thing.

Dear Olivia,

You will be missed by greatly by all who've come to know you here. MSUM would not be the same place if not for you. You have given so much to this campus and impacted the lives of so many students, and your work will continue to impact future students even after you've gone. The passion you've shown for MSUM and for helping students in general is inspiring. We wish you the best of luck in the weeks and months to come and hope that we will be able to see you again.

Sincerely,  
The Diversity Committee

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## American Indian Heritage Month

November is Native American/American Indian Heritage Month! For the month of November, AISA's events will focus not only on local tribes, but cross-tribal topics as well. There will be film screenings that all American Indian nations can relate to as well as language and cultural revitalization events. These events aid in educating that Native peoples are not a people of the past, but we are still thriving in present day. Check DragonCentral for more details on each event.

### **Native American Film Screening and Discussion: Smoke Signals**

Thursday November 8th at 7PM, Library 103

### **Rock Your Mocs Day**

Thursday November 15th- Wearing your moccasins is a way to honor ancestors and indigenous people worldwide. Wear your mocs and share on social media!

### **Native American Film Screening and Discussion: Rhymes for Young Ghouls**

Thursday November 15th at 7PM, Library 103

### **1200+ Documentary Screening**

Friday November 16th at 2PM, King 110

### **Ojibwe Language Table**

Tuesday November 27th at 1PM, CMU 203

### **Importance of Maintaining Traditional Harvesting Rights**

Tuesday November 27th at 1PM, CMU 203

### **Sweat Lodge Ceremony**

Wednesday November 28th at 7PM, Sweat Lodge (Grassy by Center for Business)

### **Practicing Restorative Justice Conference**

Friday November 16th, CMU

For more information: <https://news.mnstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Conference-Flyer-Agenda-10-2018.pdf>

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Other upcoming events

**Nepal Night- Saturday November 10th, CMU Ballroom, 5-10PM**

Get together to celebrate Nepali festivals and share Nepal's colorful culture! Besides good foods and drinks, henna tattoos, and cultural booths, you will be entertained with a variety of cultural dance, Nepali fashion show, and euphonious songs.

P.S. Do you know how the flag of Nepal looks like? Read about the history of Nepal's unique flag here: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/nepal-flag-shape>

Thank you for reading! If you'd like to join the Diversity Committee or contribute to this newsletter, please email [nikna@mnstate.edu](mailto:nikna@mnstate.edu).

Need Help or Have Concerns ???

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