

Short History of the Greater La Crosse Area Diversity Council

(ahansen; 11/10)

July 2007-June 2008

UW-La Crosse Continuing Education and Extension received a small grant from UW-Extension Diversity Program Development Initiative (DPDI) grant to build workforce diversity programming and projects in partnership with La Crosse County and other area employers. The initial advisory group was limited to representatives from La Crosse County, the three higher educational institutions, the La Crosse School District, the City of La Crosse, Gundersen Lutheran, Franciscan Skemp Healthcare, the NAACP-La Crosse, HMAA, Workforce Connections and Seven Rivers Diversity Collaborative.

Activities and Projects included:

- 1) Support and collaboration with UW-L Office on Affirmative Action to sponsor work session on inclusion and diversity for lead employers and community leaders
- 2) Monthly advisory meetings for needs and resource identification, planning and relationship building
- 3) Research on existing workforce Diversity Councils in the state and nation
- 4) 2 Forums for community leaders on inclusion initiatives models:
 - City of Dubuque, IA
 - Rochester Diversity Council, Rochester, MN
- 5) Series: *Workforce Diversity initiatives: Strategies, Challenges and a World Café* (3/25, 4/15, 4/29, 5/6)
- 6) Presentations to following organizations
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Society of Human Resource Professionals-La Crosse Chapter
 - Western WI Workforce Development Board
 - La Crosse Economic Development Commission
- 7) Multicultural Resource Guide to the La Crosse area (prototype created)
- 8) Design of proposed "welcome circle" a resource for employers for recruiting and integrating newcomers
- 9) Ground work for membership supported Diversity Council

July 2008-June 2009

- Membership continues to grow
- Committee and membership structure established
- Mission and vision statements adopted
- Fiscal agency agreement established with Workforce Connections, Inc.

Programs included

- 1) Community information session on diversity councils, featuring Greater Rochester Diversity Council
- 2) Series: *Creating Inclusive Workplaces: Employers Embracing Diversity (9/11/08-10/9/08)*
- 3) Workshop with Chamber of Commerce Intercultural Network Committee: *Change is Inevitable but Progress is Optional* (3/26/09 with Bukata Hayes, Mankato Diversity Council)
- 4) Workshop: *Managing Diversity workshop* (5/27 & 5/28 with Clay Walker)
- 5) Worksite-based *Brown Bag Series* piloted at La Crosse County

July 2009-June 2010

- Membership and involvement continues to grow
- Lead memberships from La Crosse County and Ho-Chunk Nation
- Officers and committee chairpersons elected
- Website, display, and color hand-out designed and produced
- Coordinating service agreement with UW-L Continuing Education and Extension

Programs and Activities:

- 1) Presentation and report to La Crosse County Community Collaboration Committee
- 2) Exhibitor table at White Privilege Conference (April 2010)
- 3) Joint press event at 3 Rivers House sponsored by Ho-Chunk and La Crosse County
- 4) Workshop: *Its About Abilities: Creating Inclusive Workplaces* (6/30)
- 5) Multicultural Resource Guide revised

July 2010 - Present

11/9 Workshop: *Doing it Right: Creating and Maintaining an Inclusive and Respectful Workplace*

11/16 Open House at 3 Rivers House

Future Proposed Initiatives and Activities

- 1) Marketing of the region to prospective employees
- 2) Joint recruitment campaigns and projects
- 3) Establishment of local speakers bureau
- 4) Welcome Circle established to assist in recruitment and retention
- 5) Continued education on diversity management
- 6) Sharing of expertise, sample policies, and support for compliance and other human resource development needs
- 7) Exploration of increased cultural competency in Employee Assistance Programs
- 8) Posting of diversity and inclusion resources and events in region
- 9) Build intentional networks for diversity and inclusion managers and specialists

2010 Employers and Organizations Represented on Council

AAMAN, Inc.

County of La Crosse

Ho-Chunk Nation

Franciscan Skemp Healthcare

Family Resources, Inc.

Gundersen Lutheran Health System

HMAA

City of La Crosse

Logistics Health, Inc

Mathy Construction

City of Onalaska

Pathways to Independence

NAACP - La Crosse County Branch

School District of La Crosse

Seven Rivers Region Diversity Collaborative

UW-L Continuing Education & Extension

Vocational Rehab for Native Americans

Wal-mart Distribution Center #6085, Tomah

Western Technical College

Western WI Workforce Development Board

Western Wisconsin CARES, Inc

Workforce Connections, Inc

Viterbo University

YWCA of the Coulee Region