

My name is Monica Villa Meza, a current Junior at Missouri State University majoring in Sociology with a minor in Spanish and a recipient of the Multicultural Leadership scholarship.

“MSU students are behind on many key assessment indicators of academic challenge and seem to be weakest on cultural competence goals and measures.”

Because I agree with this statement from the climate study, I stand in affirmation of the resolution I propose to you today:

Resolved: The university ought to be held accountable to its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

Under the premise of equity and compliance, I will provide you with three ways the University can be held accountable.

1. The university needs to re-evaluate its hiring process.
 - a. The hiring process, as it as stands, does not sufficiency address the needs of our campus. With an influx of students of colors, there is higher demand for diverse representation in staff.
 - i. To meet this need, the university ought to *prioritize* hiring people of color. On many occasions that university explains efforts to hire diverse staff, however, it rarely declares it a top priority.
 1. Currently, the university has 11 Latino staff members, but gives the “Latino face” to only one.
 - a. The climate study states, “Hire more Latinos as support staff, academic professionals, faculty, administrators, etc. so Latinos are more visible as employees at MSU.”
 - ii. Hiring candidates outside of MSU graduates will help enrich the cultural climate.
 1. The the study suggest that the administrators should, “Hire faculty, administrators and staff who are not MSU graduates in order to support diverse thinking, new strategies, philosophies and approaches.”
 - iii. Evaluating cultural competence of applicants
 1. Before hiring, administrators should evaluate the applicant's experience with interpersonal relations, diversity training, and higher education.
 - b. There should be students involved in the hiring process
 - i. There should be established student-led simulations or interviews in which applicants are required to address issues that are current and specific to the needs of MSU students.
 - ii. Climate study suggests that “More comprehensive education require on diverse hiring that focuses on the retention of diverse

faculty and staff (not just recruitment and hiring) as well as biases in the search and hiring process (not just legalities).”

2. Consider the needs of staff/faculty of color
 - a. As it was mentioned in the climate study, “Although there were no differences between White employees and employees of color on perceptions regarding experiences of positive/inclusive, there were difference between these groups regarding negative/hostile climate at MSU, in which employees of color reported more negative/hostile climate experiences than White employee.
3. Hold faculty/staff accountable to inclusiveness
 - a. Prohibit discriminatory language.

Closing the loopholes in rehiring process, will bridge the gaps between cultures and lend to more and inclusive environment.

During my time here at MSU as a Latina, I have witness breakdowns in communication amongst students, staff, and administration.

- First of all, there is a misunderstanding of Latino culture in the university community.
 - We are governed by our values.
 - Collectivism: tendency to look at others to help guide decisions and opinions.
 - Respeto (respect): we hold a high esteem for authority and authoritative figures.
 - Simpatía (kindness): emphasis on being polite and pleasant even in the face of stress and adversity. This causes us to avoid hostility or confrontation. As a result, we may not feel comfortable openly expressing disagreement with faculty, resources, or policies.
- Secondly, there is a lack of communication between Latino students and faculty/staff and administrators.
 - There is racial division amongst the multicultural students a result of incompetent leadership. The results of this division manifest in the student organizations and programs.
 - Latino students are hesitant to participate in unfamiliar events because racial tension. Prejudice has penetrated our communities from the top down. The same group of students participate in events, because there is a lack of unity.
 - Disunity exists between the Assistant VP of Multicultural services/ programs and other Latino faculty that leaves the community feeling voiceless.
 - There are over 700 latinos on this campus, but the same 30 students are selected to participate in organization. Opportunities are discriminately distributed, which is hindering the Latino students from progressing.

The broken relationships and cultural incompetence within the Latino community is simply a microcosm for a glorified, but unfulfilled public affairs mission.