

**Nominator Information**

Nominator	Randy McCrillis	Email	randy.mccrillis@unlv.edu
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Thank you for taking the time to nominate your program or another program that is demonstrating best practices for student leadership programs. Please complete all aspects of the nomination form and feel free to include additional commentary on a separate sheet of paper.

The Student Leadership Program Knowledge Community (SLP KC) recognizes the contributions of members who are transforming higher education through outstanding and innovative leadership programs and services. All NASPA members are encouraged to share successes and highlight best practices. Individuals can nominate or self-nominate exemplary college leadership programs for the SLP KC Spotlight Series. Selected programs will be highlighted on our website, in our quarterly newsletter and recognized at the NASPA SLP KC Annual Conference breakfast.

**Nominated Program Information**

Program Title	Cultural Leadership Retreat
Program Contact	Carrie Sampson
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**Program Category**

Please check which category/s you are nominating this program.

Research & Assessment	This program demonstrates best practices in research and/or assessment of their student leadership program.	
Influences on Student Learning	This program influences student learning both in and out of the classroom.	
Theory to Practice	This program integrates leadership theory and exposes students to the application of theory.	X

## Questions

Please describe how the program exemplifies the SLP KC mission statement.

*“The mission of the Student Leadership Program Knowledge Community (SLP KC) is to serve as a resource for higher education professionals who have a professional interest in young-adult (i.e., college students) leadership training, education, and development. The Community will share best practices, provide critical evaluation of the field, examine standards for leadership programs, support national and regional efforts to develop student leadership programs, make contributions to the literature, recognize exemplary programs, and cultivate a forum for the presentation of new ideas.”*

The Cultural Leadership Retreat is designed to facilitate students’ understanding of multiculturalism, social justice and diversity within the context of leadership. In this three-day, overnight weekend retreat, participants attend interactive workshops designed to create an environment for individuals to explore cultural identity, share experiences and discuss the meaning of leadership with the context of a diverse society. The workshops create a safe climate for sharing activities. Lastly, the retreat content is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership Development and the Principles of a Just Community.

The Cultural Leadership Retreat is a unique opportunity to learn more about oneself, connect with other students and staff, and to make a positive impact at UNLV.

The mission of the Cultural Leadership Retreat is to facilitate students’ awareness and deeper understanding of how we express culture within the context of leadership.

The following goals have been designed for participants of the retreat:

- Gain an awareness and deeper understanding of personal and others cultural identities.
- Create a safe environment that encourages personal reflection and growth while learning about others.
- Promote self-exploration of values, beliefs, preconceptions and prior learning
- Learn the Social Change Model of Leadership Development

The Cultural Leadership Retreat has the following Learning Outcomes:

- Gain an awareness and deeper understanding of personal and others cultural identities.
- Students will be able to define and create safe environment
- Students will learn how to personally reflect
- Students will learn how to effectively share personal identities
- Students will learn how to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, preconceptions and prior learning.
- Students will understand the application of the Social Change Model with relation to personal and social change, and create strategies for social change.

In order to make the retreat a success we have designed both large and small group activities.

Participants are placed in small family groups which are facilitated by volunteers from across the campus community. Family group Facilitators at the Cultural Leadership Retreat have several essential responsibilities during the weekend. Their primary responsibility is to work with a group of 8-12 participants. The Family group Facilitator serves as the group’s resource, catalyst, and coach. The family group Facilitator is not a parent or gatekeeper. Instead, the Cluster Facilitator serves as a bridge between the Large Group Sessions and learning application in the family groups. Specific roles include:

- Modeling positive and inclusive behavior
- Clarifying, summarizing, and sharing ideas

- Guiding group discussions
- Facilitating selected segments of the curriculum
- Establishing a climate conducive to learning
- Challenging assumptions and encouraging reflection and feedback
- Maintaining an energy level that matches the pace of the Cultural Leadership Retreat

This year we celebrated our 11<sup>th</sup> year of coordinating the Cultural Leadership Retreat with over 50 participants and 12 family group facilitators. Each year as a commitment to understanding the world around us the curriculum changes to reflect the current events and realities impacting diversity education, for example this year we added in a diversity dialogue component where students could select from a variety of topics including “Is having Obama as President mean that racism is gone?,” to “Understanding the impact of the black/brown divide.” It is through this commitment to leadership within a diverse community that sets this program apart from other experiences on campus. The lens of inclusion and community impact changes how students perceive as well as understand their role as a leader. This also creates for greater capacity building within non-dominate groups where this style of leadership resonates with individuals.

Here are some quotes from the participants

“We were challenged and made to think which was the food my brain had been craving. I was taken out of my comfort zone and pushed to not only work with people I have never met but I normally would never hangout with. We all opened up about everything from discrimination to oppression. Topics I had never been able to dialogue in the depth that I did here.”

“The retreat was a huge step in my growth as an individual. I would totally love to see others receive the same opportunity I did in attending the retreat. I am very grateful to have experienced this life changing event, and I hope to help others learn the things I learned while at this retreat. This is a movement that I hope to keep passing on. Thanks.”

**What category/s are you nominating the program for and why? (Research & Assessment, Influences on Student Learning, and Theory to Practice) Please describe what qualities and best practices make the nominated program an exemplary program.**

Through the use of community leadership and ally development models the participants of this program are asked to first understand these theories and then put each into practice during the retreat. An example of this is through the community leadership model members of a community are shown taking personal ownership for how their community functions and holding each accountable to an agreement about normative behavior. The students at the Cultural Leadership Retreat are given “Get Out of Jail Free” cards as a way to promote each students ability to ask those difficult questions and say what is on their mind without being put in “jail,” by their peers, it gives a way for students to frame their questions and responses in a way that others might be more willing to hear each other out. This past year a participant used her card to express an idea and immediately the group responded with negative comments and the individual student shut down. Immediately following this experience one of the group members took a leadership role and asked the group to reflect on the meaning of the “Get Out of Jail Free” cards to see if they had acted in accordance with their agreement about its use in the community. This led to an incredible discussion where numerous students took the lead to deepen the conversation which allowed

this community to move forward as a collective whole in their understanding of non-positional leadership and how each person can have a major impact on a community as a whole.

Signature of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_