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Academic Affairs Update, January 2017

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January Academic Affairs Update



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An Affinity for Inclusiveness

By Gabriela Olivares, Department of Languages & Literatures; UNI-NCBI Diversity Fellow

In Fall 2015, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President began sponsoring a series of new Affinity Group events, bringing together faculty and staff to strengthen campus as a welcoming environment.

Noting national demographics, UNI-specific institutional reports, and the impact of the African-American Affinity Group facilitated by Celeste Bemby and Stephanie Logan in 2014, Diversity Fellow Gabriela Olivares cultivated additional Asian and Spanish Affinity Groups.

The Fall 2016 semester included African-American, Asian, and Spanish Affinity dinners as well as an all-inclusive gathering. These events provided a space for colleagues who otherwise may not have frequent opportunities to meet.

Elizabeth Minard, Assistant Director of Gift Aid and Multicultural Relations at the Office of Financial Aid, attended the Spanish Affinity Group dinner.

"I was able to bring my husband and kids, which made it relaxed and fun," she said. "It was great to see other faculty and staff who relate to Spanish culture."

"It was a good way to network and practice my Spanish speaking skills, too."

Anyone interested in participating, suggesting a new Affinity Group, or seeking additional information is encouraged to contact Dr. Olivares.

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Academic Affairs Update is edited by Dr. Adrienne Lamberti (Languages & Literatures)

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