Disabled Student Cultural Center

January 17, 2014

Student Services Fee Request for 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

300 Washington Ave SE, Room 213 Minneapolis, MN 55455

Address

612-624-2602 dscct@umn.edu

Phone Fax Email

“We acknowledge that the Fees Committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the Fees Committee.”

Abdirahman Hassan Earl Wilson John Wilson

Preparer’s Name Co-Preparer’s Name Co-Preparer’s Name

Hassa190@umn.edu Wils1551@umn.edu wils1442@umn.edu

Preparer’s Email Co-Preparer’s Email Co-Preparer’s Email

Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes __________ No X __________

If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):

General Operating Support: X Start-Up Costs: Capital:

Project / Program Support: X Technical Assistance: Other (List):

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested $ 30,779.31
Total Annual Organization Budget $ 32,000.00
Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $ 22,000.00
Disabled Student Cultural Center 2013-2014 Fees Request

Section 1
Narrative

The History of the DSCC

The Disabled Student Cultural Center (DSCC) was established in 1991 as the first student organization in the United States to recognize Disability as a cultural group. The organization was founded to meet the social, academic, and accessibility needs of students with disabilities and to serve as a resource and learning center for all students on campus, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It was also created to build a sense of community and pride among students with disabilities. Its goal is to provide a forum through which the University of Minnesota’s community can learn about and better understand disability issues.

Mission, Vision Statement, and Organizational Goals

The DSCC is composed of students with and without disabilities. Our mission is:
- to foster the culture of individuals with disabilities.
- to provide learning opportunities for all students.
- to support a completely accessible environment.
- to increase the level of disability awareness on campus.
- to serve as a resource for disabled students and non-disabled students.
- to create a social area for students.

Our goal is to raise the level of awareness and acceptance of disability on campus and also to further integrate students with disabilities in campus life. Through our activities and efforts to ensure that the University of Minnesota is accessible to all students, we seek to break barriers and foster inclusion.

As part of our vision we have developed a theme of “What Is Normal?” Our goal is to promote disability pride and cultural acceptance. There are barriers facing people with disabilities today, but one of the biggest obstacles is the sense of negativity that students with disabilities often feel about themselves. By having the “What Is Normal” theme, we are hoping to change the identity of disability from one of shame to one of pride.

Relationship with Other Organizations

The DSCC works closely with Disability Services (DS) at the University of Minnesota and shares its responsibility to meet the accessibility needs of students on campus. DS is a University entity for both staff and students that ensures accessibility for academic and work-related activities and serves as a resource for other University departments. The DSCC shares similar goals by working to promote accessibility through activism and awareness by sponsoring events and spotlighting disability on campus. The relationship between the DSCC and DS remains very close, and the DSCC receives two staff members from DS that serve as advisers to our organization.
In addition, we co-sponsor many events with them and publicize these events through DS’s monthly newsletter and flyers posted around their office. This reaches approximately 2000 students, staff, and faculty members each month. Furthermore, DSCC has worked with DS adviser Dan Trainer in making 624-walk, the university escort services, for the hard of hearing and deaf members of the University of Minnesota.

The DSCC also has a lot in common with another student group, the Queer Student Cultural Center (QSCC). Both the disabled and GLBT community have historically experienced social stigmas, exclusion, and lack of a community-based identity until only the past few decades. Despite advantages gained in that period, serious problems of exclusion and misunderstanding persist for both communities, and it is part of both groups’ goals to make society more accepting and aware of their differences. The DSCC and the QSCC have worked together to plan and co-sponsor events forming a strong relationship. Last Academic year the DSCC held an event titled “Igniting the Power of Disability and Diversity” that was co-sponsored by the QSCC. The event featured DSCC founder Gene Chelberg. Gene spoke about his life as a gay man who is blind, and how he navigated college and his professional career to where he is now the Vice President of Student Affairs at San Francisco State University. Gene also led a workshop, attended by various students from the many cultural centers on the second floor as well as staff members, which explored the concept of how to be an ally to each other and how important this is to leadership. The DSCC intends to continue its strong relationship with the QSCC by planning and co-sponsoring events together in the future.

The DSCC continues to maintain a close relationship with another disability-related student group, Active Minds, which highlights the DSCC’s commitment to supporting other student groups while also increasing the scope of its own mission and visibility. Active Minds is a student group that addresses mental health issues by building awareness with the goal of reducing stigma for those with mental health issues. Active Minds uses the DSCC’s facilities for its weekly meeting and both groups try to work with one another as they pursue awareness and acceptance. Three years ago the DSCC and Active Minds collaborated and participated in “Send Silence Packing,” a flash mob which was held outside of Coffman Union. The event involved the displaying of 1,100 back packs, each representing one of the 1,100 college students that commit suicide each year on college campuses. In addition, last academic year the DSCC co-sponsored events with Active Minds for Mental Health Awareness Month. These events were aimed at raising awareness about mental health issues on campus and in the community. Next year, we plan to enhance our relationship with Active Minds and co-sponsor additional programs that reduce stigma for those living with mental illness. We plan to host an event Active Minds in the fall of 2014 called “addressing mental Health stigma”

DSCC added a subgroup (Deaf Ambassadors) of students who are deaf, most of whom live in Comstock Hall in the newly created ASL House or whom are part of a newly formed group of deaf student ambassadors. This partnership has increased our relationship and involvement with the deaf community. They meet weekly in the DSCC office, and we continue to partner with them on events to raise awareness
about deafness as a disability condition. Furthermore, we have partnered with two more
groups this academic year. American Sign Language Club and Tourette Syndrome support
group. They hold their weekly meetings in our room. These new partnerships make our cultural
center a Mecca for students with varying disabilities. We are seeking more partnerships and we
hope to become an umbrella group for all disability related student groups.

The Importance of the DSCC in the University Community

Other campus organizations such as Student Health Advisory Committee and the
Senate Committee on Disability Issues depend on input from the DSCC to ensure that the
voices of students with disabilities are heard and that their needs are acknowledged.
Through its participation with the Senate Committee on Disability Issues, the DSCC
represents the concerns of students with disabilities.

One concern some of our deaf and hard of hearing constituents brought to the
attention of the DSCC board was the inaccessibility of 624walk. 624walk is accessible to
the hard of hearing only if they utilize the Minnesota Relay services. The service requires
students to use specific phones. This is severally limiting to students and staff alike. In fact
when we discussed this with Escort services they reported only one individual used the
Minnesota Relay service over the past two years. There have been too many criminal
activities on our campus this past semester for this service to continue being inaccessible to
a group that might need it the most as they are not able to hear an approaching criminal. As
a result, we made it our mission to make the program accessible this academic year. We first
presented this issue to the Student Health Advisory Committee in the beginning of the 2013
fall semester and unfortunately not enough progress was made. On November 8th 213, Dr.
Danita Young, the vice Provost of Student and Academic Affairs joined us for our general
body meeting. In the meeting, we informed Dr. Young about the issue and right away she
sent an email to the director of the Police department, Escort Services, Boynton Health
Services and directors of Coffman and Student Union and Activities. Afterwards, our
president met with the Director of Boynton Public Health Services and adviser to the
Student Health Advisory Committee, Dave Golden, to organize a meeting between the
manager of Escort Services call center, Jeff, Disability Services Adviser Dan trainer and
DSCC board members. In the meeting, DSCC’s president Abdirahman Hassan did a
presentation in how to make Escort Services accessible via Google Text. Office of
Information and Technology currently uses Google Text to make their service more
accessible and because Abdirahman is an employee of the Office of Information and
Technology and as a result he was able to purpose this unique solution. Escort services
were satisfied with the proposal and they will make their services accessible using Google
Text in the spring of 2014. This will allow any student who is deaf or hard of hearing to text
in a request to get a security escort anywhere on campus.

During the process of making Escort Services accessible, we were able to identify
other services that need to be accessible. For instance, Gopher chauffer, a service that drives
UofM students from one campus location to another in the hours between 10pm-2am
Thursdays to Sundays is not accessible to heard of hearing and deaf students. This service
reduces the chance of students becoming victims of crimes when they go out at night. This
service is not accessible to the hard of hearing and deaf students because to request a ride
you can only call in. Students with hearing disabilities are not able to accomplish this. Dave Golden is in charge of the service and he was present during the presentation we gave to Escort Services. He informed us he will also utilize the same text service to make gopher chauffer accessible.

The DSCC also participated in the forums regarding student space allocation on the second floor of Coffman Union last fall. The DSCC’s participation highlighted the importance of having a space on campus for students with disabilities to gather, meet, and share concerns. Students with disabilities often report feeling isolated on campus. In addition, it is often difficult to meet with other students who have disabilities and share similar problems and experiences. Having the DSCC as a gathering place allows connections to be made amongst students with disabilities and their allies. In addition, the DSCC strives to help students overcome this barrier by ensuring that University programs, activities, and campus structures are accessible and welcoming to students with disabilities. Likewise, the DSCC has encountered students without disabilities that would like to meet and form relationships with students who are disabled. Social and learning events such as our monthly Lunch and Learn program and disability movie showings facilitate relationships and learning thereby enriching campus life. These events significantly increase the visibility of disability in the University community.

Like other student group offices that serve as gathering places, the DSCC opens its doors to everyone and offers its facilities to students for studying and socializing. In this way, the DSCC provides a unique service on campus. The DSCC provides a place for students to create lasting ties and friendships with other students, especially for those with accessibility needs that may not be met elsewhere. The relationships formed through the DSCC are with caring individuals who offer a wide range of advice and expertise. For some students, these relationships are the foundation of the support which helps them through the more difficult times of dealing with a disability. The DSCC offers assistive technology including screen readers, a Closed Captioned TV [CCTV], a video phone, and other accessible equipment that no other student organization has available on campus. With the number of reliable accessible computers on campus being low, the use of DSCC computers has been on the rise. This makes the DSCC a very important University resource. To ensure that we keep our computers completely accessible, this year we installed the most up-to-date assistive technology available for students with disabilities and we plan to update the technology every year.

Finally, the DSCC is an excellent resource for students interested in leadership positions on campus. With all leadership positions open for students with and without disabilities, the DSCC provides valuable training for students in a diverse environment similar to what they will encounter in the working world. Many students have found leadership opportunities within the DSCC first as participants at events, then as volunteers at activities, and finally as members of the board. Some of these board members eventually fill co-director positions in our organization.

*Student Benefits from the DSCC*

An important part of the DSCC’s mission is to build relationships and raise
awareness. These two key goals are accomplished through events and activities open to all students during the year. The DSCC has co-sponsored popular films in the Coffman Theater and Residence Halls that relate to disability issues. It has also invited entertainers with disabilities from across the country to perform in The Whole Music Club for all students free of charge. For example, we will have a disabled artist show in the Great Hall 04/07/14. We will include artists with various disabilities to show the diversity of our community. It will include a blind Magician named The Amazing Jeff, a deaf play presented by mixed blood theater and a wheel chair bound musician. Activities such as these benefit the student body by raising awareness of disabilities and providing opportunities to relax and enjoy themselves. Additionally, the presence on campus of an organization designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities helps to create a community and a network of support where none might exist otherwise. Students experiencing disability for the first time have come to the DSCC to connect with a new community and learn about living with a disability. Likewise, students who have lived with a disability for all or most of their lives find an outlet to use their experiences as a type of expertise and as a foundation on which to base relationships.

Yet, the DSCC offers potential benefits to students without disabilities as well. Many have come to the DSCC in search of information on disabilities for class projects. Also, journalists from the Minnesota Daily have interviewed DSCC members on numerous occasions for stories about disability. This academic year our program co-director, John Wilson, our President Abdirahman Hassan were featured in an article titled “The Forgotten Minority” which discussed the barriers disabled individuals still encounter at the U of M campus. Similarly, students without disabilities who are interested can find a niche within the DSCC as participants in activities or board members. The DSCC offers a space where students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to build relationships and learn from one another.

Involvement

The DSCC encourages involvement from students with and without disabilities. By simply entering the office, students are showing an interest in learning about disability culture. There are many opportunities for further involvement as well. Volunteer opportunities at the DSCC allow students to help out at events in numerous capacities on a flexible basis to which it is easy to commit. This interest in volunteering usually grows into the desire to educate other students on campus and promote accessibility and awareness to a more permanent degree. Hence, students can become board members. A board member’s commitments include five hours per week spent at the DSCC office, attendance at weekly board meetings, and involvement at events. Board members plan events and carry out DSCC functions such as daily office work, writing for and publishing newsletters, planning and implementing awareness events, and talking to students that come in and inquire about the DSCC. Through the DSCC, students have the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and effect positive change.

Section 2: Organizational Chart
Organizational Chart

University of Minnesota

- Student Body
  - Students without Disabilities
  - Students with Disabilities

- Disability Services (DS)
  - Advisor

- Disabled Student Cultural Center (DSCC)
  - DSCC Board
  - Chair-of-the-Board
    - Secretary
    - Treasurer
    - General Board
  - Co-Directors
Section 3: Performance Report and Evaluation

- **Short- and Long-Term Success**

  The DSCC uses attendance at its events and student feedback as the primary means of gauging its success. Events that bring many participants and generate positive feedback are most successful whereas those which do not are considered less successful. Evaluating the DSCC’s success in this way helps its board members decide which events to keep for future years and which to change. For example, Lunch and Learn events have become very popular among students with attendance increasing. Each year, the DSCC improves on this old favorite and continues to use it to generate more interest in other activities.

  We also determine our success based on accessibility problems we resolve each year. For instance this year we wanted to make 624 walk accessible. We took the steps of approaching the right people to resolve the problem. We proposed a solution to resolve the problem and it will be implemented by the spring semester.

*Evaluation of Goals*

Like other student organizations, the DSCC is evaluated annually by the Student Service Fees Committee, and part of our success will be determined by the funding that it is granted. Student feedback is also important to us. The DSCC is currently developing online surveys as part of our initiative of receiving feedback from the UofM community. We are adding a position to our board titled Technology Specialist, whose job would be to create those surveys. Currently, we have a suggestion box anyone can utilize in providing their input. Another way we get feedback is by taking attendance at events and by asking attendees questions such as how they found out about the event, what they thought of the event, and any future improvements we can make.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Students Served</th>
<th>Survey results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/05/13</td>
<td>Ice cream Social Social</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>“Students reported they were excited to take part in future Dscc events. They greeted us and we told them about our upcoming events. Overall feedback was positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/13/13</td>
<td>September Lunch and learn</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/13</td>
<td>October Lunch and Learn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/08/13</td>
<td>November Lunch and learn</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final exam jam</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28/13</td>
<td>Real Story Premier in McNamara</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Overwhelmingly positive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/04/13</td>
<td>Real Story The great Hall premier</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Overwhelmingly positive feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 4: Reserve Accounts**

We do not have a reserved account. We have a checking and a savings account with US bank. This account is under the name Disabled Student Cultural center Abdirahman Hassan, President and Earl Wilson, finance director. In each academic year, we save some of our student service fees to cover our expenses at the beginning of the next academic year. Student service fees are not distributed until the beginning of October. As a result, we save some funding for our Lunch and Learn event, as well as our open house event in the month of September.

This upcoming year, we are looking to set up a reserve account. This account will hold funds we get from fund raising events. These funds will then be placed in savings account to accumulate interest.
Section 5: Fees Request

2014-2015 Fees Request

For 2014-2015, DSCC requests $30,779.00. This amount is a $2000 increase from last year’s request. For the coming fiscal year, the DSCC will increase its programming with events such as retreats, open houses, panel discussions, a Disability employment fair, Disability artist shows and a Disability Services Fair. We will be hosting a disability artist showcase this spring and for the upcoming year. We hope to bring in world and/or nationally renowned artists such as Sign Mark. Two years ago, we were a major sponsor of an event by a rap artist named Sign Mark. Sign Mark is the first deaf performance artist to get a record deal. He is a rap artist who uses sign language to convey his message. Artist such as Sign Mark cost a lot to bring to the U of M and as a result we need more funding than last year. However, to minimize our requested amount, we will reduce our operating costs. One operating cost we have every year is the updating of our accessible software such as jaws for Windows. For this year, when we updated Jaws we paid an extra 200 dollars to get the next two updates for free. Deals such as this will reduce our operating cost. Furthermore, we will seek other funding such as Minnesota Student Association grants and Coca Cola grants.

Compensation for student employees

Our organization has two paid positions. The two positions are the Co-executive Programming Director and the Co-Executive Finance Director. Individuals working in these positions work 15 hours a week and they are paid at university minimum wage of 8.00 dollars an hour. The programming director is responsible for creating and organizing events, developing and maintaining strong connections with other University and community organizations, recruiting new members, maintaining a clean room, writing the narrative portion of the student service fees application and implementing marketing strategies. The finance director’s position responsibilities are: to keep records of accounting matters and budget records; pay all bills; make purchases; update financial records weekly, write the finance portion of the student service fees and maintaining a clean space for the organization. In addition, both positions are responsible for miscellaneous duties. These duties consist of all other tasks necessary for the proper functioning of the DscC.

Summer 2014

The DSCC will be open about 20% of the time that it is normally open during fall and spring semesters during the summer of 2014. This will help students with and without disabilities to use our room for purposes such as utilizing assistive technologies, like a videophone.
Section 6: External Funding

100% of our organization’s funding is from student service fees. We are aware that we need to diversify our income and we plan to do that this upcoming year. In hosting our two big events this past semester, we collaborated with off campus organizations to reduce the cost of our premiers for The Real Story. For instance, we collaborated with Handi medical and U care on these premiers. U care took care of the advertising and as a result we didn’t have to pay a lot in promoting our event. Furthermore, Handi medical paid for the cost of hiring a professional public relations officer. Even though our primary and only income is student service fees, we seek sponsorships to reduce our expenses.

In addition to sponsorships, we will take measures in securing funding other than student service fees. We plan to apply for Minnesota Student association grants and Coca Cola grants. Student Service fees are critical for our organization because it helps us serve university students. There is no other funding that can meet the demands of our operating and programming costs. We have a long history of being a vibrant and effective organization here on campus. We are the first student organization in the nation to serve the needs of students with disabilities and we have existed in the university for over 23 years.