

# Student Life

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

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## ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

### *Unit/Department*

KIRBY STUDENT CENTER

#### *Describe your department's year.*

Kirby Student Center began the 2019-2020 academic year with a series of new initiatives. We implemented a new program model for Bulldog Beginnings (formerly Bulldog Welcome Week), launched the new KirbyLead certificate program, successfully transitioned to a new Greek Life advisor, and perhaps most importantly, opened the newly-renovated Multicultural Center. Our forward progress continued throughout the fall semester and into the early part of spring when we turned our attention to planning for summer 2020 and the fall 2020 semester. As everyone knows, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March changed the trajectory of the spring semester and beyond. Although our facility was closed from mid-March through July, our staff continued to offer virtual programs and services in order to best meet the needs of our students and campus community.

#### *Summarize the impact of COVID-19 on your unit's operations.*

The Kirby Student Center facility closed in mid-March 2020 and re-opened in early August. Considering that our mission -- Creating Community at the Heart of Campus -- is traditionally place-based, the closure of our building forced us to think quickly about new ways to build community. Throughout the remainder of the spring semester and the summer, our staff worked to develop robust guidelines and procedures to ensure that we could operate our programs, services, and facility safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. We adjusted meeting/event space capacities, developed new cleaning procedures, established and communicated new requirements for meetings and events, created virtual programs to support students and student organizations, and adapted our Bulldog Beginnings program to an entirely virtual format. While there certainly were challenges associated with COVID-19 impacts, we found positives in the development of new ways to engage with students, the opportunity to re-think how we work with student groups and campus departments to plan events, and a deeper appreciation for the importance students place on social connection to support their personal and academic wellbeing.

*Provide an assessment result that was important and informative for your department. What did you assess and what did you learn?*

We took a less traditional approach to assessment of student learning in 2019-2020, focusing on teams of our student workers rather than on the group as a whole. One of our learning outcomes for our student managers (six students working with four different program teams) was: Student managers will understand and successfully implement the transition from peer to peer leader.

Our student managers for Welcome Desk, Kirby Tech, Kirby Program Board, and Bulldog Beginnings are chosen from the existing student worker team, and therefore every new student manager must transition from being a peer to being a leader of their peers. In 2019-2020, student managers met bi-weekly with a Kirby Student Center professional staff member to explore the transition process, share their challenges with one another and brainstorm possible solutions, identify transferable skills that may be useful post-graduation, and to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between a student manager and their professional staff supervisor.

At the end of the spring semester each student manager was evaluated by their professional staff supervisor and by the KSC Assistant Director who took over responsibility for the group when their assigned professional staff member left UMD for a new position. Each of the six student managers showed improvement on communication skills with their student worker team and with their professional staff supervisor, reported fewer role conflicts with their student worker team than in previous years, and was better able to articulate their transferable skills than at the beginning of the academic year.

*Summarize the condition of your departmental budget at the end of the year. Discuss revenues, expenses, and (if applicable) refunds in broad terms.*

COVID-19 presented significant budget challenges for the last quarter of fiscal year 2020. The onset of the pandemic caused cancellation of hundreds of meetings and events in Kirby Student Center, resulting in a loss of \$38,500 in room rental revenue through June 30, 2020. The move to online-only classes for the Summer 2020 session caused an additional loss of approximately \$21,000 in Student Services Fee revenue, and our inability to host summer events and conferences further decreased non-SSF revenue by \$31,000. Financial challenges continue into the 200-2021 academic year with ongoing losses in room rental revenue, Student Services Fee revenue, the loss of ATM lease revenue. We have worked to mitigate costs by deferring facility projects, reducing custodial expenses, leaving two open professional staff positions vacant, and reducing student worker hours.