

**Queer and trans
Black,
Indigenous, and
people of color
(QTBIPOC): the
Sun of LGBTQ +
rainbow**

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SOL: LGBTQ + Multicultural Support Network

- An initiative created to uplift students who are at the intersections of queer, trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of color (QTBIPOC) identities.
- SOL is a practical model for other colleges committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to apply to uplift the lives of students with multiple marginalized identities, who are often neglected on campuses and would benefit from additional research within the field of higher education (Duran, 2019).

History of SOL

- In Spring 2004, Derron Rafiq Coles, a Black graduate student, founded SOL as an organization that allowed students to embrace all parts of their racialized, gender, and sexuality identities when searching for community => A result of students' activism. Met with many obstacles to raise funding for SOL.
- The theoretical tenets of *intersectionality* which as Crenshaw (1989)
- The number of students of color, as well as the number of out LGBTQ + students seeking resources and services, has grown. However, students from these growing populations, when coming to the SOL, express that they continue to experience a lack of a sense of belonging at this institution.
- => This means the need for SOL to create more inclusive spaces is growing, and the impact of SOL on campus needs to be emphasized and bolstered

Goals



Create a sense of community and belonging for QTBIPOC students



Help QTBIPOC students feel empowered in who they are and uplift their needs and experiences



Support the holistic wellbeing of QTBIPOC students



Strengthen relationships and partnerships among LGBTQ + and people of color organizations

Key design factors

SOL is a student-fee-funded initiative, designed to focus on the holistic wellbeing of QTBIPOC students, who are both the student staff and the students it serves, allowing it to challenge the burnout experienced by so many queer and trans student activists of color (Vaccaro & Mena, 2011).

As a part of the Department of Diversity & Cultural Engagement (DCE), SOL is the only free-standing initiative organized on par with all the Cultural Resource Centers. While SOL has been housed in the Pride Center for the past eight years, it is designed to function independently, with its own, albeit smaller, budget. SOL has a student-employee structure that follows the model of the CRCs.

Intersectionality & Interdependence

- Interdependence, a concept defined in a. m. brown's (2017, p. 87) *Emergent Strategy* as 'mutual reliance and shared leadership, vision', is one of the key values in the department
- CRC directors work together to plan and lead student staff training and professional development, hiring processes, and assessment.
- Student workers from different CRC collaborate for events & programming, etc.
- Example: One year, a SOL student worked with a Kaku-Ixt Mana Ina Haws student to create an event on Indigenous Two-Spirit experiences, while other students created collaborative events and projects with other cultural centers based on shared goals.

Impacts

- During the 2022–2023 academic year, SOL garnered approximately 2000 attendees at all events. Two events attracting the most attendance were *SOL Flea Market*, a market and socializing event for student artists of color, with around 200 participants; and *SOL Food for Talk*, an event held each term that invites student speakers and activists of color to discuss and workshop their social justice practices, with approximately 100 attendees. Most of SOL events have been collaborations with other CRCs and campus organizations, with the Pride Center being the most frequent partner. Some prominent collaborative events include *Trans Awareness Week*, *Trans Day of Remembrance*, and *Black Queer History Week*.

2023-2024: Institutional Cooptation & Betrayal

- Things unravel and go downhill this academic year.
- The full-time leadership team of this institution's DEI group goes back on their words:
- Threaten students who express different opinions on the direction of SOL:
- Micro-managing, Job termination threats, Treat student staff differently: vocal trans students of color are most at risk of constant bullying.
- Use institutional power to suppress students' activism, ESPECIALLY after Oct 2023.
- Divide and Conquer: Divide between student staff so they have conflicts with each other

Institutional DEI using Corporate's Moves

Fire or Forced quit all three student activists who are trans students of color on staff.

Silencing students' activism with threats and corporate-style meetings

Call cops on queer & trans students of color during AAPI month & Pride month. (The cops came straight from the on-campus student encampment).

How do we get here?

- Great model and an essential space for queer students of color.
- SOL comes from students' activism
- HOWEVER, the current leadership team governing SOL (cis-straight men of color & white women) forgets and betrays its roots while adopting corporate and institutionalized moves.
- They protect each other in their corporate leadership, but NOT the students they serve, especially vulnerable QTBIPOC and international students.
- WHAT DO WE DO TO NOT GET HERE, DESPITE ALL THE TRANSFORMATIVE IDEAS & THEORIES?



THANK YOU

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