

Pride Centre planning meeting, May 16, 2018

Present

Students: Aria Burrell, Ray Hanson, Nathan Lawley, Jon Lazo, Eddy Robinson, Em Shibley

Staff: Shayla Breen, VP Student Life; Tanya Ross, Relationships, Identity and Sex Program Coordinator; Shereen Samuels, Director of Student Services

Agenda

1. Review of full focus group notes for accuracy and completeness

Students present were asked to review the focus group notes and agreed that they fully and accurately represented the content of the focus group they had attended (either April 17 or May 8). Aria asked for a small addition to the (May 18th focus group) section around room mentors/admin assistants, to specify that any such role would be dedicated to the Pride Centre. There was some discussion about next steps; Shereen confirmed that all the items asked for would be acted on. It was also acknowledged that work like programming is often ongoing, and so, for ongoing programs, there would be no deadline. However programming with a September deadline will be in place and the RIS coordinator will have the proper supports for the planning and implementation. . Items that will be completed are (1) the full-time staff presence, (2) a developed volunteer role with appropriate training, and (3) the structure and preparation for an admin assistant to be hired by September.

2. Planning and logistics discussion re. link room issues and options

Shereen provided the context for the next discussion. During Student Services team planning meetings on May 10, one of the items the team wanted to discuss was space usage and effectiveness. One of the spaces that was the source of some friction this past year is the linking room between PSC and Pride. There were several main points in the discussion:

- When the linking room was repurposed from a full-time Fort Room into a flex space that could be used occasionally as a confidential interview space, some staff and students noted that one of the purposes the Fort Room was being used for was an under-the-radar transition from PSC to Pride; this function was lost in the repurposing
- PSC is in need of an occasional and more accessible second interview space.
- Staff has discussed that PSC and Pride had different functional needs for the linking room, and were unsure how to resolve the issue so that both centres got what they needed
- During the staff discussion, it was brought up that Pride and PSC had different needs and identities and it was suggested that they don't need to be services that shared a space. PSC requires the kitchen, but Pride is more flexible
- Staff had a broad and lengthy discussion about possible space re-allocations for more effective use of space for all services on the second and third floors. The current standing of the Pride centre within the community was taken into consideration and it was agreed that to resolve the issue of the linking room, we needed to ask for input from the Pride Centre community. The May 16 meeting invitation was sent out shortly after that staff meeting.

Shereen clarified that although this issue didn't arise specifically as a result of Pride Centre consultations, but as a part of larger planning discussions, staff would abide by whatever decision was

made at this meeting – either to stay in the current location, or to move to a new location still on the second floor.

- Because many other pieces of our planning process depend on this decision, the group acknowledged that the decision felt hasty, but it was expressed that if the student group present felt that there was not enough information to make a good decision, that it was okay to decide to stay put.
- A decision to stay in the current space doesn't have to mean staying there forever; it would mean staying in the current location for the coming year, while more extensive community consultations happened.
- The students present initially expressed they were uncomfortable being asked to make a decision on behalf of the whole community. It was clarified that the people who were invited to this meeting included the RISPIC, the focus group participants who had asked to be followed up with in planning discussions, and the focus group participants who had signed a list expressing interest in becoming volunteers.
- The students present pointed out that proposing the idea of a space move was a risk, given the fragility of the confidence the community currently has in SAMRU's commitment to following through on promises. Shereen reiterated that SAMRU did not want to break any promises to the community, and that SAMRU had promised no big changes unless the community wanted them.
- Staff encouraged the group to simply engage in a pros and cons discussion of staying vs. moving to a new location, to see if any clarity could be achieved in this meeting. Staff also made clear that they would not be participating in the discussion, or sharing their opinions, until students had had a full opportunity to explore their thoughts on the matter. Both staff took notes, with Shereen taking notes on a whiteboard for the group to see.

The suggested space is Z211, the current 'Volunteer Hub' or 'Green Room' and where Tanya's office is currently located.

Stay: pros	Stay: cons	Move: pros	Move: cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A move might be seen as kicking people out of their space ● Existing space is well known and has connections for campus community ● Linking room provides low-profile entry opportunity ● Increased vitality in Pride could mitigate issues experienced this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The space is tainted by bad experiences many people have had ● Linking room also provides problematic people the chance to bypass the front door and all the messaging that entry provides ● This space is often treated as PSC overflow ● The loss of the Fort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A move could be a really important way to indicate a reset of space, community, intentions ● While things are changing, it's a good idea to do it all at once ● 2nd office space could be a breakout space, similar to the Fort Room ● Similar square 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insufficient consultation on a move could create further conflict ● Moving might be a surprise when people return in September ● We're trying to re-establish stability and continuity; would a move reflect that?

<p>year related to the linking room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linking room can provide a quiet retreat space rather than a flow-through 	<p>Room was a loss of atmosphere and function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of the craft closet, since Tanya would have to move into this space ● Odd room shape is hard to make welcoming; bottleneck near door is intimidating for newcomers ● Not sure where an admin could be placed ● Significant confidentiality issues with sound bleed between offices ● This is a Wi-Fi dead zone 	<p>footage to current space, just different shape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pride will definitely be seen as separate from PSC, with its own identity ● Creating a new space is a good opportunity for building community ownership ● Craft closet can be kept ● Decorating the new space could be a programming opportunity ● More 'storefront' both inside the bowl and looking out onto West Gate 	
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Other notes: Both the current Pride room and the proposed new pride room will be undergoing some basic building maintenance such as new paint jobs.

As the discussion progressed, and after a visit to the potential new space consensus developed that there is a lot of negative energy attached to the current space, and that if handled carefully, communicating a move could be seen as a positive change, with lots of opportunities for the community to help create and put their stamp on the new space. An intentional communications rollout over the summer with lots of opportunities for pictures, informal polls and conversation could mitigate the possibility of people feeling surprised or unprepared when they return in the fall. And the move could be a positive, exciting development culminating in a grand opening celebration in September. By the end of the discussion, the group felt positive and excited about the possibilities inherent in the move, and gave their unanimous support to moving the Pride centre to Z211 as it is an opportunity for Pride to start to rebuild its identity.