This report assesses and evaluates the activities of the CLA Change Team in planning and executing a multi-stage project for enhancing the university climate through a series of events focused around the study and practice of empathy. *Cultivating Compassion: Empathy, Leadership, and Social Change*, we believe was a stunning success. As we move this work forward, we will build on this success and develop opportunities for improvement.

**Abstract of Event:** The CLA Change Team, along with its campus partners, developed and hosted the *Cultivating Compassion: Empathy, Leadership, and Social Change* Conference. The conference on March 6, 2013, included presentations from UMD faculty (from four colleges), St. Scholastica faculty, a visiting scholar in social entrepreneurship from Montreal, community expertise from local nonprofits, and a local expert in nonviolent communication. More than 400 registered attendees explored the critical and practical aspects of empathy over the course of the day. While the majority of attendees were students, a healthy representation from faculty, staff, and community was present. Follow-up workshops were held to continue the work begun at the conference.

**Event Summary:** At the March 6 conference, attendees were taught empathic communication techniques, leadership strategies for empathic action, and insight into social change made possible in a culture of empathy. Equipped with this knowledge, the conference planners hope to seed a more positive climate at the interpersonal, institutional (e.g. campus), and larger cultural levels.

Attendees were welcomed by Vice Chancellor Lisa Erwin, and CLA Associate Dean Olaf Kuhlke presented the plenary session on cultural entrepreneurship. The keynote address was delivered by Anita Nowak, the Integrating Director of the Social Economy Initiative at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Throughout the day, participants chose from 16 breakout sessions on topics related to empathy and social change presented by 18 UMD faculty and staff members (from four colleges), St. Scholastica faculty, community expertise from local nonprofits, and a local expert in nonviolent communication. The conference day was enriched with artistic expression from the Duluth community centered on themes of empathy, compassion, and social justice. These offerings included music by Sara Thomsen and the Echoes of Peace Choir; poetry by Deborah Cooper, and a speech and dramatic reading by the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial board.
More than 420 registered attendees explored the critical and practical aspects of empathy over the course of the day. Among the attendees, while the majority were students (estimated at 250), healthy representation from faculty, staff, and community was present. Several area teachers from the College in the Schools Program and the Lake Superior Writing Project also attended the conference for professional development enrichment.

Our efforts were supported by the following campus partners: Kirby Leadership Institute, Office of Civic Engagement, Office of Cultural Diversity, Global Alliance (on the UMTC campus), Department of Writing Studies, College of Liberal Arts, and Instructional Development Services. Our process of collaborating with these partners offered another opportunity to practice openness and inclusivity on campus.

The following 1.5 hour workshops -- facilitated by Ann Harrington extended the conference conversation for groups of faculty/staff and students:

**Thursday, March 28, 2013**
**Cultivating Empathy 1: Courage to Lead with Compassionate Honesty**
As human beings, we all have opinions and valuable input to contribute. This session will provide insights and communication skills for those who want to: contribute confidently yet with humility; honestly speak their minds without triggering defensiveness; constructively express anger in a way others can hear and lead by communicating authentically with compassion and honesty.

**Thursday, May 1, 2013**
**Cultivating Compassion II: Courage To Lead with Empathy in Conflict**
We know how to communicate and connect when things are “going well” in relationships, whether personal or professional. But disagreements and conflict tend to bring out other communication patterns that are disconnecting, awkward, stressful and often unproductive. How can we stay connected to ourselves and others and actually communicate constructively in the midst of conflict? Experience how leading with heartfelt empathy can transform conflict.

**Sustaining Our Work:** We plan to continue exploring events that bring the entire (campus and Duluth) community into dialogue the way this conference on empathy did. Anecdotally, this project has begun to effect change in the campus climate -- several faculty members have integrated the study and practice of empathy into their courses, and at least one member of the CLA Change Team has presented research in the scholarship of teaching on the integration of insights from this event into her classroom. Student feedback indicated that the conference impacted their understanding of empathy as something that goes beyond feeling to action. This kind of dissemination, one teacher, one staff member, one student at a time, is the real key to measuring the impact and sustainability of insights into *Empathy, Leadership, and Social Change* for the UMD campus.