Members: Ashley Singleton (Housing & Residence Life), Robin Mensinger (Health Services), Kristi Dalbec (Transportation & Parking Services), Wendi Christenson (UMD Stores), Mick McComber (Recreational Sport & Outdoor Programs), Molle Nelson (Alumni Relations), Amanda Perrin (Housing & Residence Life), Laura Young (Kirby Student Center), Jenifer Barnes (Budget and Personnel), Jonna Korpi (Office of Sustainability), Brenna Hucka (Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution), Jody Elwell (Disability Resource), Daemon Williams (Dining Services).

Co-chairs: Ashley Singleton, Mollie Nelson

Student Life Change Team Mission:
To provide leadership within the Division of Student Life to further social justice, equity, and respect for diversity in all its forms.

2018-2019 Team Overview:
With six new members, we spent time building community and forging relationships among the group, as well as furthering our Goal 2 knowledge by sharing resources and having discussions during our meetings. We utilized some resources shared by the Campus Change Team for these discussions and learning. We made progress on our four workgroup projects; each project is outlined below, with suggestions for future work. This year, SLCT met every three weeks, totaling 11 meetings. Workgroups met additionally outside these meetings.

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SUB-COMMITTEES

1. Student Employment
   Members: Kristi Dalbec

   **Purpose:** To identify ways to increase the diversity of our student employees in Student Life Departments. To achieve this goal we gathered data from different sources and sought input from student hiring authorities and others to help us develop a plan. We are also currently exploring different ways to create an inclusive environment that helps retain all student workers, especially students from diverse backgrounds.

   **Description of Work, Accomplishments:** Conducted data analysis of FY15-19 of student employment diversity in Student Life. [A document with this analysis is shared with this report.](#)

   **Next Steps:** Sharing PowerPoint with SL student employee supervisor group; work together to promote more diversity when hiring for our individual departments.

2. Observing Holidays on Campus
   Members: Jen Barnes, Wendi Christenson, Laura Young, Daemon Williams

   **Purpose:** The purpose of this subcommittee is to increase a sense of belonging within Student Life among students and staff by finding a way for all to celebrate who they are and their culture through the mode of holidays. Past collected information shows that our current campus members believe that
holidays are stifled, and thus, people feel frustrated. Our hope is to minimize or eliminate this perception and celebrate the humans that makeup what UMD is as a community. Realizing that holidays and cultural celebrations are part of who people are, this is a priority for our Student Life Change Team to tackle.

**Description of Work, Accomplishments:** Research from the previous year were reviewed. It was decided there would not be a policy on this subject, however, we can lead by example in each of our units. We met with Susana to discuss what would be the best way to poll students in the multi-cultural center. It was decided to attend a leader meeting to learn how best to represent each group. This meeting did not come to fruition in the spring but will be scheduled in early fall so we can react accordingly.

Members of SLCT also worked with people in their departments to consider the celebration of holidays. Wendi will discuss holiday celebrations with all students and staff for the upcoming year. The goal is to have planned celebrations with the student/staff's assistance to help recognize their culture. Laura discussed using Kirby Student Center, particularly the lounge & Welcome Desk areas as places to possibly showcase or decorate for various cultural displays if students show interest.

3. **Deeper Dive: Space for Dialog Series**
   **Members:** Ashley Singleton, Mollie Nelson, Robin Mensinger

   **Purpose:** The language of diversity requires awareness, understanding, and skill similar to developing intercultural competencies in other areas of our personal self. The purpose of this sub-committee is to provide resources to Student Life staff on fostering inclusive and intentional dialog around challenging and difficult conversations. The goal is to equip staff with the tools to effectively speak up and bridge ideas and relationships.

   **Description of Work, Accomplishments:**
   In November 2018, the committee hosted a deeper dive series in the Garden Room with a discussion around white privilege. The article *“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”* by Peggy McIntosh was used as a tool to reflect on the privileges/advantages that dominant groups have, and how people that belong to those groups can have a greater awareness of their impacts on marginalized communities. **Attendance:** 15 SL Staff

   **Next Steps:** At the end of this year, we have decided to put this project on hold. Getting staff together to share resources and conversation is very valuable, however, it is challenging to do among all of the other training and learning opportunities that already happen on campus. Additionally, finding times for folks to gather when Student Life staff work such varied positions and hours is difficult. We have decided that our energies might be better served on other projects. An idea that did not come to fruition this year is sending out a periodic email update from SLCT to the Student Life listerv. This email could include updates about what SLCT is working on so that SL staff are better aware of what the group is doing, as well as some resources for continued learning and work around Goal 2. The resources could vary, such as promoting events/trainings happening on campus, videos/podcasts folks can listen to, articles/books that folks can read, etc.

4. **Retention of Student Life Staff**
   **Members:** Jody Elwell, Jonna Korpi, Amanda Perrin
**Purpose:** Recently, Student Life has been improving recruitment and onboarding practices for full-time staff members. For recruitment specifically, there have been efforts to attract applicants from marginalized backgrounds, along with training around bias in the hiring process. Student Life also has a welcome team for onboarding new staff members, which SLCT has gathered feedback on and made recommendations for continued adjustments. A current gap in all of these efforts is retaining staff that have been recruited, hired, and onboarded. With this in mind, SLCT would like to work this academic year to examine what efforts are currently in place to support SL staff and them persist in their roles on campus, as well as what staff retention statistics are.

**Description of Work, Accomplishments:**
We split up content to begin doing research on best practices for retention, both inside higher education and in the private sector, recognizing that retaining staff means retaining both the employee and the people who come with them in the move. We set forth to ask what is currently done to onboard new staff in each area of Student Life, not just to SL, but to the university, benefits, department culture, etc. Once research area topics were divided, we struggled to get back together as a collective based on schedules and additional obligations. There was a lot of internal confusion as to which direction to pursue in regards to staff retention, which also may have added to a lack of moving forward. One hope for this project has been to work with the Director of Budgets and Personnel to gather data about Student Life staff retention. Unfortunately, this did not come to fruition, since this position was vacant for a portion of the academic year.

**Next Steps:** Option 1: Continue to research best practices around retention of employees. Present findings and 2-3 recommendations for improvement/support to directors team. Option 2: Abandon this area of inquiry as SLCT project because it falls outside of our groups’ role. This may be something that HR could take up as a cross-campus need or special focus area for student life. Also, the Student Life Engagement Team may serve to increase retention and improve SL culture through greater cross-department mixers and events and appears to fill the niche that some of our initial research was revealing around employee connection and enjoyment of their work.

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**BUDGET**
While the Student Life Change Team does not have a budget, the Chair(s) requests funds as needed and according to the support required as determined by special projects and team development. In 2018-2019, no funds were required.

**SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**
The Student Life Change Team made progress on our projects during this past year, and encountered some roadblocks in our work, which is not uncommon for change work. Something our committee spent some time reflecting on this year is, how do we create the time and space to gather and work toward meaningful change? The co-chairs recognized the on-going struggle of getting people on the change team together, the fact that people on the change team can struggle to find time to work on projects outside of occasional meetings, and that Student Life staff throughout the Division can struggle to find time to attend trainings/workshops/events based on their busy workloads and variety of schedules. This led the co-chairs to discuss how departments support the member from their office who is on the change team - how are they allowed space to come to meetings or work on projects in a real and meaningful way, rather than it simply being an addition to everything else in their regular workload? Moving forward, this is a topic for SLCT in conjunction with Dr. Erwin and CCT
to continue to explore. Additionally, continuing to build SLCT members knowledge and skill set in cultural competence and culture change will be helpful to advancing division change initiatives.