

Diversity forum sees low turnout

Miscommunication plagues Diversity Universe-ity meeting

Carl Walz
for the Index

The Diversity Universe-ity Forum had as many problems as it did attendees.

Junior Silviya Valkova, Student Senate campus diversity chairwoman, said she wanted the forum, which took place Nov. 5 in the SUB Alumni Room, to provide campus organizations with a chance to interact, network and perhaps collaborate on future events.

However, before the event even could get off the ground, problems started.

Despite sending out e-mails and hard copy invitations to about 197 organizations as early as Oct. 7, potential attendance appeared extremely low. Valkova said she had only eight organizations say they would send a representative.

"Some of them approached me and told me that they didn't have any events or anything that they are planning on, and they are still discussing that," Valkova said.

"I am thinking that most of them lost the message on the way, or they just didn't want to participate in something that is outside of their organization."

Valkova said she expressed her worry about the forum's probable attendance at the Stu-

dent Senate meeting Oct. 30.

"At the last committee meeting, I said that if we don't have any more responses than we do at the moment, I would wait a little bit longer, but I would most probably cancel it," Valkova said.

Days after that meeting, the master calendar on TruView listed the event as canceled, as did the Nov. 3 issue of the Index.

Valkova said she does not know who told those two outlets the forum was officially canceled.

Junior Justin Fager, student affairs chairman for Student Senate, said he thinks the premature cancellation of the event had little impact on the final attendance.

Fager said the deadline to register for the forum passed at

least a couple of days before the false cancellation appeared on Truview and in the Index, and at that point only 10 people from eight organizations were set to attend.

He later said only one group contacted Valkova inquiring about the event's cancellation, and Valkova sent that group an e-mail stating the event still was going to happen.

Fager said the fault for low turnout fell mostly on the organizations.

"Perhaps we could have had a more clear mission, but really it's entirely up to them," Fager said. "We invited them plenty in advance, and it required very

few resources from them, and it was sad to see that there wasn't more representation."

When the event finally got started, the participants found themselves sitting down cross-legged in a small circle in the middle of the Alumni Room surrounded by at least 25 empty chairs.

Each person at the event introduced him or herself and briefly spoke about what his or her organization planned on doing in the future.

About halfway through the meeting, another problem arose.

Senior Steven Chau of the Society for Sino-American Studies decided to leave the meeting in part because of a disagreement about the forum's purpose.

"For one thing, it was four hours [long], and the impression I was getting was that they wanted to know what the organization can do for [Student Senate]," Chau said. "I was hoping for a 'what could organizations do for each other' type of thing."

Fager said that despite the problems before and after the forum, he thinks the event was successful on a small scale.

"Any situation where you are sharing ideas is effective," Fager said. "This was supposed to be a formal meeting, but we were sitting very casually and got to know each other first, and that really helped. When you network and get contact information from people it helps build cooperation and understanding. Again, you start small and you hope to grow bigger and collaborate on any number of events to come."

Both Valkova and Fager said they hope to make the Diversity Universe-ity Forum an event that occurs each year.

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Justin Fager
Junior Student Affairs Chairman



Native American History photo by Chris Waller Musician Howard Lyons beats a drum during his performance in the SUB Down Under as part of the University's Native American Heritage Month.

Former Kirksville Airport director turns gaze toward the skies

Jessie Gasch
Assistant News Editor

Marty Cupp always knew he wanted to fly.

The former Kirksville Regional Airport director submitted his resignation Oct. 19 so he could return to the skies. Former airport operator David Hall became the new director Oct. 28.

Cupp has taken a job with Midwest Airlines as a Boeing 717 pilot. "You don't have to bring your work home with you," Cupp said of piloting. "You get to spend time with your family. It's more enjoyable than sitting behind a desk, and pay-wise there's really no comparison."

Cupp, who was employed by several national air carriers in the past,

left Sunday for Milwaukee, Wis., to go through training again. He said his schedule will change monthly, but the airline flies to about 20 Midwestern cities.

Cupp became airport director in March, accomplishing much in his seven months there. One of his most time-consuming responsibilities was writing the airport's manual, he said. Now a draft has been sent for approval to the Federal Aviation Administration. Training standards also were improved, Cupp said.

He said he was open from the beginning about his desire to return to piloting.

"It was full-time to them, but it was interim to me because the first chance I got, I knew I wanted to go back to that," Cupp said.

Still, the experience was valuable, he said.

"I think anything you can do is a good experience — anything you can do that is not in your normal line of work," Cupp said.

City Manager Mari Macomber said she had known that Cupp might only work as director for a short while.

"I knew from the beginning that he was interested in retaining employment as a pilot, so it wasn't really a surprise," Macomber said. "We needed somebody with some experience to write a manual for us. Once Marty completed that and sent it off to FAA, there was no, 'Well, now that you're done,' ... the employment would have continued."

She said she had confidence in Hall's ability to take over the duties of director.

"He's done a pretty good job so far in keeping me informed," Macomber said. "He's already made

a few changes in trying to improve the operations, and he already has a good rapport with the users of the airport."

Macomber said Hall's long history at the Kirksville airport — more than 21 years of employment — has provided a good foundation for his new position.

Hall said he agreed. "Obviously working here that long, you kind of have a feel what [the job] entails," he said. "On the other side of the coin, it's been real interesting in just the week that I've been here. There's a lot of those things you don't know when you're on the other side of the fence, the administrative side."

Hall also owns an airplane maintenance shop on the airport property. He is certified as an inspector of some aircraft and as a

mechanic. Hall, who was raised in Novelty, Mo., said he initially did not aspire to be part of the aviation business.

"Life has a way of throwing us those kind of curves," said Hall, now 46. "I grew up on a farm, and as a matter of necessity, I came to work at the airport and found out I really had a niche."

He said he thinks the airport is progressing quickly, but there are still several areas he will concentrate on improving during his time at the Kirksville airport.

"It's kind of an exciting time because we have this new building, ... a first impression for people that walk through the door," Hall said. "It's going to be nice to be able to put a good foot forward and be able to welcome people to airport. But we've been a little lacking in technology, and

some of that is where I'd like to improve on the local level."

The long-awaited instrument landing system, a precision program that helps aircraft to land smoothly, hopefully will arrive within a few years, Hall said.

Both Cupp and Hall expressed concern about the future of the airport.

"My main concern is for the air service," Cupp said. "The loads have improved a little bit, but if the economic situation doesn't turn around, ... it's just not 100 percent safe at all."

Hall said he hopes Kirksville citizens will continue to recognize the importance of the airport in the community.

"I have some ideas, but we only have limited resources for funding, so it's going to be a delicate balance," Hall said.

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