

# The University Register

Campus newspaper of the University of Minnesota, Morris

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## Tenth annual MSLR congregates leaders

EMAIL

Written by Ashley Gaschk  
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University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) students, faculty, and staff spent the weekend of January 25-27 at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center near Fergus Falls, MN for the tenth annual Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat (MSLR). The retreat intended to "bring more than 50 student leaders from key components of the UMM campus together for an extended, in-depth exploration of diversity issues," as the retreat's application touted. According to Dave Swenson, Director of Student Activities here at UMM and MSLR coordinator, the weekend brought 38 student participants, four student small group facilitators, four faculty/staff large group facilitators, and four MSLR vision committee members together for a weekend of activities designed to promote knowledge of diversity as well as the practice of servant leadership.

Two members of the staff of DePaul University came from Chicago to host the retreat's events — Georgianna Torres Reyes, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Art Munin, Assistant Dean of Students. The weekend began with the creation of participant mailboxes, which were supposed to convey something about the owner's personality and were made available for participants to write each other letters over the course of the weekend.

A main focus of the weekend was identifying and addressing privileges held by groups of people, such as whiteness, wealth, maleness, and Christianity. Reyes and Munin stressed that while it was important not to discriminate against people not in the privileged groups, those characteristics should not be completely disregarded either, as they are an integral part of a person's identity.

Additionally, the groups learned extensively about servant leadership, a leadership structure conceived by Robert Greenleaf. Under the servant leadership construction, leaders strive to serve the other members of their organization while both advancing the general interests of the organization and ensuring its longevity.

Much of the time was spent in discussion groups, reflecting in-depth on what they had learned. Participants stayed in the dormitory facilities at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, but unfortunately didn't have much spare time to explore the wetlands.

Much of the planning for the retreat was done far in advance by members of the Vision Committee: Dave Swenson, Campus Sustainability Coordinator Troy Goodnough, Dining Services General Manager Donna Bauck, and Assistant Director of the Multi-Ethnic Student Program Mike Miller, MSLR intern Latrice Robinson, and students Huck Brock and Sarah Estep.

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