

MCC's removal...

Two views of the controversy

MCC is over privileged and over represented

MCC represents the minority

by John Rossomondo
Collegian Staff

The Multi-Cultural Council presents an undying dilemma. Why should their constituent organizations be granted privileges that no other campus organization has.

I know of no other student clubs on this campus that have their own office or have more clout. The question here is not whether the Multi-Cultural Council provides services to its members or to a certain extent, the campus community. While it is true that the MCC represents ethnic minorities and provides them with social outlets. It is also true that they possess privileges that are not extended to other student organizations.

When it comes time to enact reforms that would result in a level playing field in SGA for all student organizations the MCC works to maintain the status quo. How many organizations on campus have voting members of the SGA budget committee. Does the German Club or say the IEEE have a representative to help them pass their budgets in SGA. Last year the MCC received \$10,000 in allocations while the average organization received around two or three hundred dollars. Influence has its rewards.

They argue that their representative is fair and unbiased, and that all student organizations have the ability to get a hearing on their budget items. The big difference with the MCC in the past has been that they have had an organizational structure to effectively promote their interests, where as the average organization has not.

I commend SGA for removing all Councils from the Budget committee so that all organizations can have equal consideration in the



budgeting process. To give the MCC or any other Council a vote on the Budget Committee would have been tantamount to allowing a child to keep its hand in the cookie jar.

MCC opposed this measure because they knew that it would be a blow to their power on campus.

He who controls the purse strings has control of all. Money is power and power is influence. Who would blame a powerful organization such as the MCC for working to retain their power and influence.

I am sure that my MCC friends would argue that they and their subsidiary organizations deserve an office because it promotes their visibility. The fact that they have been given an office further promotes their power because it gives them a base to work from. I have nothing against the MCC having office space, but on the condition that they are willing to share their office space with any organization on campus that desires to have an office.

We cannot grant a certain group of organizations privileges without also granting them to other groups.

As I recall, the MCC used to have just one office for all of its organizations, when SGA still occupied the area across from the mailroom. Why now does each organization represented by the MCC have their own office? I urge SGA to consider passing a resolution calling on the MCC to open their office space to all interested organizations on campus. I ask the MCC why should their organizations have an office and the seventy other registered campus organizations be denied an office? There is absolutely nothing wrong with the MCC having one office for all of their organizations on the grounds that the Commuter Council, SPC, and Lion Ambassadors have an office, but a suite of offices is ridiculous.

I urge the presidents of the organizations on campus to submit requests for office space in the MCC suite.

Submit your requests to the SGA office or be present at the next students speak out. Why the MCC office, because it is the only spot on campus where student organizations can establish offices. It is simply unfair and discriminatory for one group of organizations to have an entire suite of offices while no other organization or group of organizations do not.

I know many members of the MCC and overall they are decent people, but the ideology that they stand for results in the division of the campus community rather than the unity of the campus community.

I say this because I can only speak about what I can see with my own eyes. Most students see MCC events and say, "There is another

one of those useless events that I could care less about."

I am the first person to condemn racism and bigotry, but I see a total failure by the MCC to embrace the community. While their social functions are open to the entire campus community, in the end, only their members attend because they intimidate some people. They intimidate many white students because they perceive the MCC as a "minorities only" organization.

I know this is irrational thinking, but perception is reality. I have been at Behrend for four years now, and I have yet to see the MCC make constructive efforts to reach out to the majority community. It is nice that they have their events, but they have failed to appeal to the majority of white students on campus.

Diversity is integration, but MCC as it stands today is more or less a segregated organization.

I really don't believe the MCC projects a positive image to most white students. I for one would never think of joining an MCC organization because I really don't think that I would be accepted as a conservative white Roman Catholic male.

The MCC could do a lot of good on this campus if it would aggressively work to promote a positive image among white students. The best way to fight racism and ethnicism is not to go all out in showing your pride in your heritage because most people are turned off by that approach. I advise the MCC to make a conscious effort to make white students comfortable and then move slowly on the right course. Don't try to do too much too quickly or you will fail.

by Colleen Fromknecht

There has been some talk in recent weeks that MCC, along with other councils who sit on SGA, are "special interest" groups. The phrase special interest is said with a sneer, as if those who are members of this body of mysterious people somehow must be bad boys and girls. Everyone knows that "special interests" are evil people who try to take over any group they are affiliated with in order to force their views (and make a profit) on the poor unsuspecting public. Wake up, people! Everyone who breathes and has a rational thought is a member of a special interest group! Do you buy text books? Oh oh! The dreaded special interest group has raised its ugly head again. Didn't you know that consumers are a special interest group? Do you drive? Do you play sports? Do you go to religious services?

Now it seems to be a trend to use the term special interest as a buzzword to rally people toward the conservative, right wing view of life. Groups like MCC are particularly vulnerable to this tactic. It put MCC on the defensive and implies that the members are doing something wrong by joining forces. This has got to stop! MCC is an organization of underrepresented students, nothing more and nothing less. Its members do not have magical powers that can be used to sweep down and grab gobs of money to funnel for their nefarious purposes. Members do not pull the strings of the people of SGA so that these members will do exactly as MCC wants it to do. (If I

were an SGA member I would be insulted by this one; puppets have no minds!)

What MCC does is to provide a place where any student can come to meet with MCC members and gain the feeling that they are not alone. The MCC Resource Center is a meeting place for many different types of students on campus. The one common denominator MCC members have is that we are all "minority" groups who are underrepresented on campus. We are the voice and the listening post for those who do not "fit the mold" of the average college student.

MCC organizations hold many events throughout the year. These include (but are not limited to) Friday Fiesta which kicks off Cultural Week, the Kwanzaa Dinner, The Holiday and Easter Carnivals, Buddy Weekend, Ally Day, Take Back the Night, Harambee Dinner, Cultural Fiesta, poetry readings, and various events during Orientation.

Members work hard throughout the year to "Reach out" and try to communicate with as many students as they can. I heard that even an SGA Senator showed up at Friday Fiesta. We work hard and will fight even harder so the certain "special interest" groups who want to deny MCC their rightful place in the student body will come to realize the error of their ways.

Stop by when you have a minute, and I'll clear up any uncertainties about MCC's position at Behrend. I'll even spring for coffee!

Chad's turn

by Chad Clouse
Opinion Editor

As you can tell, both John and Colleen are very passionate about their positions on this issue. John, as a member of SGA, feels defensive and tries to rationalize the situation to explain SGA's position. Colleen, who is a member of an organization in the Multi-Cultural Council feels victimized and lashes out in violent sarcasm at John's position.

I do not want to take up either position, but instead, try to understand what happened and propose a solution.

SGA claims that MCC is in fact over represented in the SGA budget committee. As a voting member, they could be present and lobby for all their umbrella organizations.

The MCC organizations reactions are quite stereotypical, we are underrepresented on campus and the council is our way of coping with our minority status. However, our representative to the Budget Committee is not bias.

This week Colleen has changed that position to, yes, we are bias, but so is everybody else. All members of the budget committee have an agenda and belong to other organizations, and besides, everybody gets to argue their budgets before the committee.

Colleen's position is more understandable this week, but it still is not a correct assessment of the situation. Not every organization has somebody on the SGA Budget Committee, and therefore never has a sure vote. MCC organizations have a sure vote. Even MCC must admit that it is not fair to have a sure vote for their organizations when others are underrepresented.

SGA has removed MCC from the Budget Committee, and now MCC argues that the voting members are still members of other organizations, and while they have taken away the sure vote from MCC's organizations, they remain and vote in favor of their own organizations. Yes, they do still have a sure vote. The answer then is not to argue with SGA about policy. SGA is notorious for being unmovable in their decisions. In fact, it's like banging your head with a sledgehammer. The answer is to find another way onto the Budget Committee to again be represented. It will not be through the MCC. The organizations in MCC, as they have already banded together, should back a candidate for SGA office. It is very possible to stuff the ballot box in the SGA election as only about two hundred people voted in the last election.

MCC can come up with the power to elect one of their members to an SGA office. Nothing can be done this year, the damage is done, as they say. In think for next year, a candidate is the way to go. Once in an SGA office, the constitution could be changed back to allow MCC on the Budget Committee.

John points out that MCC has too much power. As a community of organizations they can throw around weight, the elections are an example of the exploitation of this power. The current members of SGA can not win re-election without a serious opposition from MCC.

If I were a current member of SGA I would not be afraid. MCC lacks the organization to pull off anything as big as the election. The organizations under MCC have little in common, even their minority status divides them on important issues.

In actuality, the MCC organizations received 53 percent of the SGA allocated funds this year. Their six organizations received \$47,000. Yes, this does include SPC which provides entertainment on campus.

Still, six organizations took up half of the money. SGA took another 17.3 percent and *The Collegian* 11.7 percent. The organizations that should be angry about the budget committee are the other organizations that received fractions of a percent.

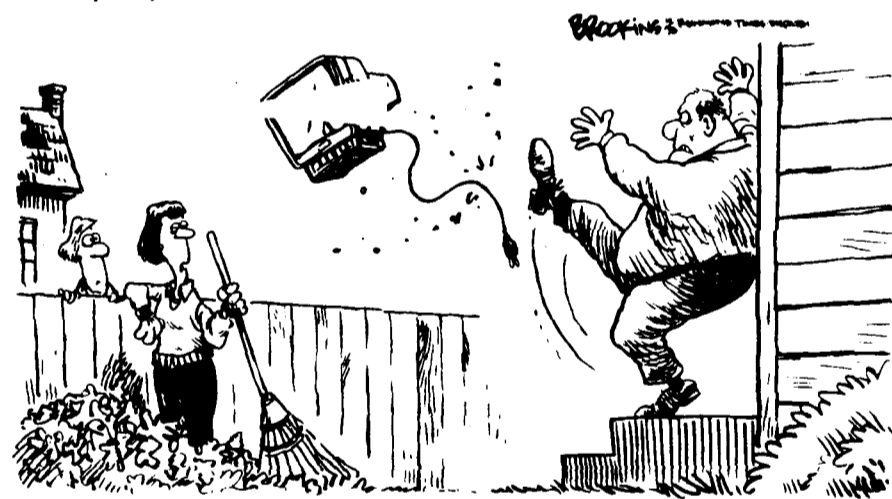
What is the answer to this whole mess? MCC organizations receive 53 percent of the budget and probably will next year even without the vote.

There is a movement to limit the number of organizations on campus, therefore the remaining organizations can receive more money. The question is, which organizations go? Who should have the right to say which group is less important to the academic atmosphere here at Behrend? The existing rules for organizations are not followed and are often bent to make way for new organizations. Part of the answer may be in enforcing the membership requirement. All organizations must have at least a set amount of members to exist on Behrend.

Another way to thin organizations may be to remove funding for those organizations that do not contribute to the community of Behrend.

I'd like to point out that John's suggestions to minorities has always offended me in there blind simplicity. His suggestions on how to become a better citizen will never help. He is, in his advice giving, propagating the oppression that he intends to illuminate. I am White Male, I have the answer. Come minorities, listen to me.

In the same sense, my suggested answers are not to be trusted, although I in no way suggest an easy answer. I have not solved the problem, but only complicated it. The politics are warped on both sides. As intelligent people we understand the positions and should filter the facts through the speaker. In this case both articles are very opinionated to the point that they are unhelpful. Both writers believe that there position is obviously the correct one, and needs little explanation. As a consequence they fall into lost sarcasm, and drift into giving advice to those less fortunate.



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Student Government Association STUDENT GOVERNMENT TREASURER

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Student Government Treasurer is responsible for:

- 1) holding 20 office hours per week
- 2) keeping the records of all organizations who are recognized by SGA.
- 3) producing monthly financial reports for all organizations and some administrative offices.
- 4) attending the weekly SGA meeting to state the balances of certain accounts.
- 5) closing out the books for the fiscal year.
- 6) depending on the semester, acting as the Student Government Association's Treasurer who is in charge of the SGA club account,
- 7) sign checks, purchase orders, etc. during the semester.

POINTS OF INTEREST

The position of Student Government Treasurer receives a \$400 stipend per semester along with an additional stipend for limited summer duties. The preferred applicant will be an upper division student who may wish to obtain academic credit for work during his/her seventh and eighth semesters. (Three accounting internship credits may be acquired).

All interested students should contact either Chris Rizzo, Director of Student Activities, at 898-6171 or John Butler, SGA President, at 898-6220.