

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE STUDENT SENATE**  
**IN CONDEMNATION OF THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL**  
**AFFAIRS & BLUGOLD BEGINNINGS MERGER**

1           WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UW-Eau Claire) Student Senate  
2 is the official voice of the student body; and

3           WHEREAS, in October of 2021, the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and  
4 Student Affairs (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Student Affairs) began conversations about  
5 “merging” Blugold Beginnings and Office of Multicultural Affairs; and

6           WHEREAS, conversations indicating that these two programs would be integrating  
7 became largely known as of February 10th, 2022; and

8           WHEREAS, both the Directors of the Equity in Student Matters Commission and  
9 Student Senate Executive Administration were informed after this date; and

10           WHEREAS, Student Senate leadership also conducted several meetings to address  
11 and discuss concerns with university students, staff, faculty, and administration, as noted  
12 in Attachment A; and

13           WHEREAS, the offices within the Office of Multicultural Affairs have provided  
14 several multicultural student organizations with the space to hold their meetings; and

15           WHEREAS, these offices have also served as safe spaces for students of color on  
16 our predominantly white campus; and

17           WHEREAS, students of marginalized identities have historically utilized the Office  
18 of Multicultural Affairs daily to form cross-cultural and interpersonal relationships; and

19           WHEREAS, these relationships have proven to be vital during a political and social  
20 climate of strife between affinity groups; and

21           WHEREAS, the current merger of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold  
22 Beginnings plans to re-allocate these office spaces to accommodate for the integration of  
23 both offices; and

24 WHEREAS, the removal of spaces will significantly harm the interconnectedness  
25 of multicultural student identities on this campus; and

26 WHEREAS, the conversations surrounding the potential and continued merger of  
27 the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold Beginnings have excluded students in the  
28 planning in regards to the redesignation of student office spaces; and

29 WHEREAS, the rationale behind reassessing the space has been surmised to  
30 future demolition of infrastructure (Brewer Hall), understaffing in both offices, and the  
31 existence of available “cultural spaces” for the same identities that hold Office of  
32 Multicultural Affairs offices; and

33 WHEREAS, these campus cultural spaces include the Critical Hmong Studies  
34 Resource Center, Black Cultural Center, LatinX Cultural Center, the Center for  
35 International Education, and the Inter-Tribal Learning Center; and

36 WHEREAS, there is a current gap in spatial representation for African American  
37 students, in addition to many of pre-existing spaces being designated for academic or  
38 university service purposes; and

39 WHEREAS, looking at the services that these two programs offer, they evidently  
40 support students of marginalized identities in different ways, either through  
41 multicultural spaces for students or funding scholarships for low-income students; and

42 WHEREAS, programmatically, the merge would have students of color meet with  
43 cultural coordinators for all their needs; and

44 WHEREAS, coordinators would then keep notes on their students and share them  
45 with other coordinators in situations of unavailability; and

46 WHEREAS, this would invite coordinators of different identities to discuss  
47 students' issues that they may never truly understand; and

48 WHEREAS, this has sparked uncertainty and concern as to how students of  
49 marginalized identities using these spaces through the Office of Multicultural Affairs,  
50 low-income students depending on aid from Blugold Beginnings, and others in need of  
51 assistance and safe spaces on campus will receive support; and

52 WHEREAS, a variety of people interacting within the two programs have  
53 expressed concern such as students utilizing the space to staff and have been met with  
54 the same general statement that their worries would be taken into account; and

55 WHEREAS, students have been deliberately excluded from deeper conversations  
56 about the planning of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold Beginnings merger in  
57 regards to physical office space allocation and programmatic changes that will heavily  
58 affect students across departments; and

59 WHEREAS, the quantity of Office of Multicultural Affairs Interns will also be  
60 reduced, creating confusions with who will be able to reapply for their positions and  
61 what positions will even be available; and

62 WHEREAS, a 27-student coalition met to discuss the ongoings of the merger on  
63 February 24th, 2022; and

64 WHEREAS, this group expressed concerns over placing white-identifying  
65 individuals in positions of interim leadership for major EDI offices; and

66 WHEREAS, they discussed a dissatisfaction for the merging of the two programs  
67 and the physical spaces; and

68 WHEREAS, after an informal vote, 11 students outwardly condemned the merger,  
69 and 8 students expressed interest in at least entering a trial phase; and

70 WHEREAS, while the majority of these students would like to see Blugold  
71 Beginnings and the Office of Multicultural Affairs maintain their independent spaces and  
72 programs, they recognize this may not be feasible; and

73 WHEREAS, the majority of the concerns come less from the offices sharing a  
74 physical space, but more so for the programmatic adjustments; and

75 WHEREAS, student leadership in Blugold Beginnings and the Office of  
76 Multicultural Affairs came to a consensus that a temporary program merge would be  
77 acceptable until staff replacements can be hired; and

78 WHEREAS, if clearly defined documents outlining a combination of the two  
79 programs can be authored, the group is in support of revisiting conversations of a merge;  
80 and

81 BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the UW-Eau Claire Student Senate does not support  
82 the current timeline and plans for merging the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold  
83 Beginnings; and

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, on behalf of the entire UW-Eau Claire student  
85 community, we request an immediate cease to physical and programmatic aspects of  
86 this merger; and

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, before any logistics or action is taken to further this  
88 restructuring, we request campus-wide dialogue and collaboration, further detailed in  
89 Attachment A; and

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold  
91 Beginnings merger must be halted until a detailed plan is presented to students within  
92 Office of Multicultural Affairs, Blugold Beginnings, and shared governance; and

93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a detailed plan defining what specific programmatic  
94 changes will be made when combining both programs must be published to the entire  
95 campus community; and

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this detailed plan must also breakdown the budget  
97 and line items for this combined program including how much the director(s), the  
98 coordinator(s), and the intern(s) will be paid along with budgets for event planning,  
99 travel, and general operations; and

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the plan must also explain how the Blugold Beginnings  
101 Living-Learning Community will operate and also include the position descriptions for the  
102 director(s), coordinators, and interns; and

103 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the interim director position must be filled by  
104 someone who either has experience in both the Office of Multicultural Affairs and  
105 Blugold Beginnings or a neutral position on campus; and

106 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this individual should come with the capacity to  
107 support both groups and remain steadfast to the success of students; and

108 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a timeline of search and hiring processes for the  
109 director position and coordinator positions must be outlined for the start date and the  
110 target date for hiring; and

111 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, job descriptions must be completed before Spring  
112 Break for the director position(s) and coordinator positions; and

113 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, more opportunities must be provided for students to  
114 give input and provide feedback on the merger; and

115 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, students from both the Office of Multicultural Affairs  
116 and Blugold Beginnings must be given the opportunity to be apart of the planning for the  
117 program and the search for the director(s) and coordinator(s); and

118 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, while we recognize that there are concerns associated  
119 with exclusively hiring people of color from a human resources perspective, we  
120 recommend the inclusion of “ability to sympathize and connect to students of specific  
121 racial and ethnic identities” within job descriptions; and

122 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, future search committees for cultural coordinator  
123 positions should understand and heavily emphasize the need for applicants to identify  
124 within the communities they would represent; and

125 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the students of color at UW-Eau Claire would prefer  
126 for Blugold Beginnings to be allocated a new space in light of the forthcoming demolition  
127 of Brewer Hall as opposed to going into the Office of Multicultural Affairs; and

128 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, other spaces on campus, such as the Schofield  
129 Admissions space or within Centennial, must be explored to provide the Blugold  
130 Beginnings program with adequate facilities to continue their work; and

131 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the current allocation of cultural spaces must be  
132 reassessed with finding new, accessible, and visible spaces for students of color; and

133 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the African Student population must be delegated a  
134 space before the student of color population at UW-Eau Claire can support a Office of  
135 Multicultural Affairs and Blugold Beginnings merger; and

136 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, transparency is demanded to why funding to the  
137 amount of \$50,000 was taken from the Office of Multicultural Affairs’s travel budget and  
138 reallocated to Services for Students with Disabilities; and

139 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, any future, large-scale restructuring efforts should be  
140 passed through all general bodies of shared governance and presented to the full  
141 campus; and

142 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, any faculty or staff member should connect with their  
143 respective shared governance entity to express further concerns or with requests to be  
144 included in these small discussions; and

145 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, upon passage of this legislation, Student Senate will  
146 transmit the attachment to campus media and the included transmission list; and

147 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Student Senate will continue to request small  
148 dialogues with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor of EDISA, and shared governance with  
149 student delegates; and

150 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that upon passage, President Mikoulinskii will transmit a  
151 copy of this resolution to Dr. James C. Schmidt, Chancellor; Dr. Patricia Kleine, Provost  
152 and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Olga Diaz, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity,  
153 Inclusion & Student Affairs; Billy Felz, Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management; Grace  
154 Crickette, Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration; LaRue Pierce, Dean of Students;  
155 Dr. Evan Weiher, Chair of University Senate; Gary Wheeler, Interim Campus Director,  
156 UW-Eau Claire Barron County; Grace Arrigoni, Student Body President, UW-Eau Claire  
157 Barron County; Cheri Snobal, University Services Program Associate, Blugold Beginnings;  
158 Rochelle Hoffman, M.Ed, Assistant Director, Blugold Beginnings; Maggie Jensen,  
159 Associate Student Services Coordinator, Office of Multicultural Affairs; Jackie Nevarez,  
160 Associate Student Services Coordinator, Latinx, Office of Multicultural Affairs.

**AUTHORED BY:**

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