

**MCC Monthly VISTA Feature - November 2011**  
**Nick Mueldener**  
**Lawrence Technological University**



Nick Mueldener serves as the VISTA for Volunteer Programs in the Office of Leadership Programs and First Year Experience at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan. Nick is a recent graduate of North Carolina State University (NCSU) in Raleigh, North Carolina where he received his Masters of Education in Higher Education Administration. Nick also earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Women's Studies and Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Northern Arizona University (NAU) in Flagstaff, Arizona. During his time at NAU and NCSU, Nick was involved with a number of campus offices and organization including University Housing, the Residence Hall Association, the Women's Center, the Graduate School, and the GLBT Center. Shortly after becoming a Resident Assistant, Nick found his passion doing diversity work in Student Affairs, and has worked on a college campus ever since.

Since he has been at LTU, Nick has been involved with the following projects:

**LTU Project Safe:** Project Safe is a LGBT Ally training program designed to educate all LTU students, faculty, staff, and allies who may have questions and/or concerns related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues. Project Safe strives to provide a safe, nonjudgmental campus environment and promote understanding and support for all members of the LTU community. This type of LGBT Ally training program has been called many other names (most commonly Safe Zone) at other colleges or universities, however Project Safe specifically comes from North Carolina State University developed in 1997. During his time at NCSU, Nick was trained as a Project Safe Trainer and has since redesigned the program to meet the needs of the LTU and Michigan community. Nick offered a session of Project Safe training to faculty, staff, administrators and students during LTU Pride Week, the first of its kind ever offered at Lawrence Tech.

**Make a Difference Day:** This is the third year in a row the Lawrence Tech VISTA has organized participation in Make a Difference Day. Partnering with The Greening of Detroit, Nick and 160 volunteers planted around 150 trees in two downtown Detroit neighborhoods. This year marked the biggest Make a Difference Day at LTU with more than double the number of participants from last year.

**Homecoming Service Project:** Kicking off the two weeks of the first Homecoming celebration at Lawrence Tech, Nick collaborated with Campus Facilities and coordinated 60 student volunteers who cleaned up path to Lawrence Tech's soccer field. Volunteers created a much safer and beautiful walk to the Homecoming soccer game by laying wood chips, picking up trash, and roping off a path.

Both the Make a Difference Day and Homecoming Service Project provided an opportunity for first-year students to complete service-learning hours as part of their University Seminar course.

**Supervisor:** Melissa Grunow, Director of Leadership Programs and First Year Experience

**Supervisor Note:** “Nick has built capacity for a more equity-oriented Lawrence Tech campus. He uses innovative approaches of student engagement for raising awareness about the systems of oppression that exist in our communities, namely poverty and LGBT issues. He has unwavering commitment to student leadership development in diversity and service. Poverty is one repercussion of marginalization of target groups in our society. Nick’s work not only gives voice to ‘silenced,’ individuals, he equips our students with the tools and language they need to continue to strive for the alleviation and eradication of poverty in our community.”