Feedback on Climate Survey Findings
Revised September 2014

The Office of Campus Community Relations requested that Staff Assembly specifically focus its feedback on the section Key Findings – Opportunities for Improvement, namely the findings that read:

- “24% of respondents believed that they had personally experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct; 8% of respondents indicated that the conduct interfered with their ability to work or learn.”
- “A higher percentage of Staff respondents reported experiencing [exclusionary conduct] as compared to Faculty or Students.”
- “A higher percentage of women, transgender, and genderqueer respondents than men respondents experienced this conduct.”

Staff Assembly Feedback

Staff Assembly offers the following recommendations to help the Office of Campus Community Relations prioritize the programmatic initiatives it plans to implement in January 2015. Our recommendations fall into four categories – Campus Communications, Mandatory Supervisor and Staff Training, Release Time Policy Review, and Enhancing Campus Resources. Improvements in these areas are a priority for Staff Assembly; echo the recommendations of other campus constituency groups; and mirror the themes that came to light in the Staff Assembly’s own communications survey, the 2012 CUCSA staff engagement survey and the UC Davis Office of the Ombuds Annual Report.

Staff Assembly appreciates the OCCR’s efforts to engage the campus community in discussions around this survey and hearing our recommendations as you endeavor to create new programs, and enhance existing programs that improve the climate on campus and working conditions for all staff. Staff Assembly will make itself available to assist your efforts as needed.

Category 1 – Campus Communications

If everyone was better at communicating, we may not have some of the problems we do. Further, breaks in the flow of communication, both from the top down as well as the bottom up, allow the potential for staff to be excluded. “Positionality” or position status, emerged as a contributing factor among staff who reported experiencing exclusionary behavior.

Recommendations

- Committees engaged in work and projects to improve campus climate, like the Campus Community Council and other Administrative Advisory Committees, need to share updates on their efforts and progress toward goals with the entire campus community. Simply assuming individual delegates on the
committees that represent various constituencies are relaying the message to a broader audience may not be sufficient. Staff Assembly welcomes the opportunity to publish updates from committees working to improve the campus climate in the Staff Voice newsletter, particularly when the news impacts staff. Dateline and consistent email messages from the Chancellor may be even more effective for communicating important campus news and updates.

- All segments of the campus community should be represented on campuswide committees, not solely administrators.
- Investigate and institute mechanisms for staff to share their concerns and ideas directly with administrators. The Breakfast with the Chancellor program is one such initiative that allows staff to negate any potential communications barriers imposed by supervisors.
- Audit how top-down communications are being handled within various departments to ensure all staff have the same access to information and the same opportunity to share ideas and concerns. Units holding all-staff meetings on a regular basis is one means of ensuring equity in information sharing. Additionally, investigate ways to implement systems where supervisors are accountable for escalating ideas/concerns raised by staff or providing an explanation as to why nothing was done.
- Institute annual 360° evaluation processes for supervisors and managers. Employee perspective may prove valuable in understanding what behaviors most contribute to staff experiencing exclusionary conduct, which would allow the administration to identify avenues (training programs, communications programs) for correcting the situation.
- Collect exit surveys to identify patterns of behavior by individuals or policies that produce conditions that negatively impact climate.

Category 2 – Mandatory Supervisor and Staff Training

Not everyone is properly prepared to lead on this campus and it has far-reaching implications beyond just impacting campus climate. Effective communication, leadership, conflict management, cultural competency and staff development skills are just a few of the basic standards which all supervisors should possess. Additionally, while staff reported experiencing higher incidences of exclusionary conduct, the survey results indicate staff were also the source of a significant amount of exclusionary conduct.

Recommendations

- New-to-role supervisors are required to attend training on topics aimed at preparing them for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities supervision presents. However, it is imperative that supervisors be held accountable for completing required trainings, which requires instituting a mechanism that tracks their attendance and participation in a similar fashion to the way we track employee completion of the systemwide ethics training.
- Require all current academic and administrative supervisors/managers to attend annual communications training and annual diversity training, as well as training on identifying and resolving exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct in the workplace.
- Require new staff to complete the Living the Principles of Community course, which may foster greater inclusiveness and respect in the workplace.
- We feel the types of courses described above would be best delivered using a blended format, which incorporate a mix of online and classroom teaching methods. Our concern is that transitioning to an e-learning format, though potentially cheaper, doesn’t produce outcomes as effective as courses that
require attendees to engage in person-to-person interactions as well as group discussions. Additionally, selectively recording and posting trainings online, would increase their accessibility to staff.

- Create opportunities for trainers to have follow-up and/or periodic feedback loop with attendees for the purposes of furthering the educational impact of training.

**Category 3 – Release Time**

Staff deserve the opportunity to take advantage of beneficial resources available to them for their service to this campus. Supervisors who hinder staff access to the resources available through SD&PS, as well as the experience of volunteering for campus committees and other campus events, are excluding those individuals from professional growth opportunities and making contributions to campus. This is particularly problematic when staff are unable to attend courses focused on diversity, communications and leadership, all skills which would allow staff to advocate for themselves and diminish some of the negative effects caused by “positionality.”

**Recommendations**

- Review the campus policy on release time and workplace flexibility and revise language that creates barriers for eligible staff to participate in activities that develop one’s career.
- Include a line item in staff position descriptions for volunteer service and career development to ensure these opportunities are both made available to and realized by staff.

**Category 4 – Campus Resources**

There are many helpful resources currently available to staff that could help them should they experience adverse workplace conditions. These resources should be continued, enhanced, expanded and communicated to staff.

**Recommendations**

- The Ombuds Office should continue to operate as a functionally independent unit that tracks and reports on systemic issues that permeate the campus. Further, services available through the Ombuds Office and its website should be communicated to staff.
- The Academic Staff Assistance Program (ASAP) should continue offering confidential, cost-free services to staff. The assistance this group provides can aid staff that experience adverse workplace conditions.
- Improve the functionality of the OCCR website as an information repository on diversity issues and tools, trainings, policies and techniques for handling exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct in the workplace.

**Next Steps**

**Follow-up Survey**

- The Climate Survey asks whether staff have experienced “exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct.” We feel these various conditions should be isolated and further explored to fully understand the situation on campus and which of these most negatively impacts staff perception of climate, as well as programs/initiatives/training that can be created or made mandatory in order to remedy the situation.