

Action Items to Enhance Campus Climate

Faculty Experience Workgroup

Final Report

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Executive Summary

President Wintersteen charged the Faculty Experience Workgroup to recommend action items responsive to the recently completed Campus Climate Survey. This report summarizes the Workgroup's recommendations based upon the results of the Campus Climate Survey; the most recent COACHE survey¹ on faculty work-life satisfaction; ideas and prioritizations received from faculty through open forums and the Faculty Senate discussion; feedback received from faculty through anonymous comments submitted online; and the views of Workgroup members. The Workgroup identified the following action items of highest priority:

1. **Creating and Promoting the *Cy for Civility* Culture Shaping Campaign**
2. **Developing Campus Wide Policies, Guidelines and Practices Against Bullying**
3. **Increasing Access to High-Quality Child Care**
4. **Enhancing Departmental Interactions Among Colleagues**
5. **Becoming Inclusive: The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative**

While the Workgroup's recommendations focus on faculty experiences, the priorities represent opportunities to improve the campus climate for all – faculty, professional and scientific staff, merit staff, students, and visitors. The recommendations are interrelated and, if implemented, advance Goal Four of the university's strategic plan, which emphasizes the importance to *“continue to enhance and cultivate the ISU experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other.”*

¹ Iowa State administered the COACHE (Collaborative on academic careers in higher education) survey to faculty most recently in 2016-2017, with a 49% participation rate. One of the strengths of the COACHE collaboration is that Iowa State is able to compare findings relative to other institutions – a comparator group of 112 schools that participate in COACHE and are substantially similar to ISU (e.g., doctoral and research intensive universities), and additionally to 5 peer schools that we select.

Development of Action Items

In fall 2018, the Faculty Experience Workgroup was formed and collaboratively led by the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost to identify and recommend to President Wintersteen action items of highest priority, as identified by faculty, to enhance campus climate. The Workgroup is one of four charged by the President last spring with developing initiatives that improve the experience of undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and merit and professional and scientific employees.

In order to gather information and to develop the action items, the Workgroup proceeded in a systematic and inclusive manner. A diverse and representative team of faculty agreed to serve on the Faculty Experience Workgroup. The Workgroup analyzed results of the Campus Climate Survey and the COACHE survey to identify important topics and themes consistent across those reports, and prepared handouts summarizing findings (attached). The Workgroup presented results of those surveys to the Faculty Senate and requested feedback and ideas from senators on high-priority action items. A website was developed through which faculty could obtain information and submit anonymous comments, and an article appeared in Inside Iowa State on the Workgroup's activities. The Workgroup held two interactive open forums on October 17 and November 1, 2018. Forum participants discussed all items at a roundtable meeting (first forum), and through "round-robin" discussion groups (second forum). Through this process, Workgroup members developed a broad set of initial ideas for action items, which are listed on the following page and organized around six themes.

The Workgroup next prioritized to recommend a manageable set of initiatives that would provide the greatest benefit to the campus community, while recognizing that other worthy ideas should be retained for subsequent analysis and action. The recommended five initiatives are summarized after the list of thematic areas.

Summary of Thematic Areas

1. Departmental Initiatives

- a. Develop guidelines to chairs for incorporating diversity and inclusion work into PRS's and annual evaluations
- b. Improve awareness of guidelines and support to chairs for faculty mentoring and retention efforts
- c. Develop resources for conducting effective meetings
- d. Improve recognition of faculty through internal and external awards and honors, including recognizing work in diversity, equity and inclusion

2. Faculty Work-Life Initiatives

- a. Initiate a standing faculty work-life balance/integration committee
- b. Improve university child care including on-site facility with nurse
- c. Intentionally consider faculty workload, morale, and stress when making decisions at all levels – department, college and university
- d. Improve Faculty Handbook policies, develop online training, and support bystander intervention on workplace bullying

3. Faculty Awareness Initiatives

- a. Improve awareness of access to flexible faculty work-life policies
- b. Provide alternatives to appeal and grievance process
- c. Start marketing campaign to build campus culture and articulate social norms

4. Teaching Initiatives

- a. Have student evaluation of teaching task force consider assessment on faculty respecting and valuing views of students, and on gender, race and language bias
- b. Promote teaching and learning circles

5. University Initiatives

- a. Improve salary competitiveness
- b. Promote conversations and understanding of shared governance at all levels – department, college and university
- c. Increase faculty awareness, participation and engagement with Green Dot program
- d. Improve awareness of counseling and mental health support resources for faculty via EAP
- e. Develop a faculty club to support collaboration
- f. Consider designating a professional day for faculty and staff to catch up with training and reporting demands
- g. Review scholarship criteria for faculty evaluations that would appreciate activities consistent with the land-grant mission

6. Community Navigation Initiative

- a. Coordinate with ISU offices for links on community resources (D&I, HR)
- b. Develop coordinated website for faculty and community resources
- c. Explore connections to Ames Chamber of Commerce
- d. Promote needed community support services for family members (e.g., counseling and mental health resources, Employee Assistance Program, medical resources, elder care, children with special needs, school programs, multicultural community groups, religious affiliation groups)

Action Item 1

Creating and Promoting the *Cy for Civility* Culture Shaping Campaign

There is a need to provide exemplars of civil behavior and reminders that civility is for everyone's benefit and is everybody's responsibility. The campaign involves mass media (e.g., PSA advertising), social media (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), promotional materials (e.g., buttons, magnets, pens, pads, etc.), engagement incentives (e.g., prizes for best *Cy for Civility* stories) and reoccurring public relations events around engagement and media initiatives. This initiative is envisioned as a multi-year, multi-media campaign focused on campus constituents, and will involve outreach to students, faculty, and staff across colleges and athletic programs. We will extend to Extension and Outreach offices throughout the state as well as ISU alumni and allies.

The campaign's primary objectives are: 1) to make the civil and uplifting treatment of others the default, regardless of circumstances or issues in play; and 2) to empower people (e.g., students, professional staff, merit staff) to encourage ISU community members to become exemplars for civil behavior.

The campaign will celebrate civility through repeated and entertaining messaging, varied public narratives that exemplify civil behavior, and ubiquitous reminders of the civility for all message. *Cy* will be integral to messaging and widespread reminders. The campaign will rely on messaging that addresses civil behavior and the individual and community benefits that flow from civility (e.g., trust, collaboration, reduced stress, communication, affinity, identification).

Action Item 2

Developing Campus Wide Policies, Guidelines and Practices Against Bullying

There is a need to decrease bullying on campus and create a more affirming and inclusive climate. This goal requires an atmosphere of civility and respect, which can be enabled through structured guidelines, practices and policies which codify expectations and provide mechanisms for accountability. Other universities offer exemplars. Oregon State defines bullying as:

[C]onduct of any sort directed at another that is severe, pervasive or persistent, and is of a nature that would cause a reasonable person in the victim's position substantial emotional distress and undermine his or her ability to work, study or participate in his or her regular life activities, and actually does cause the victim substantial emotional distress and undermines the victim's ability to work, study, or participate in the victim's regular life activities.

A growing list of institutions of higher education have workplace bullying policies: Clemson, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Old Dominion, Connecticut, Georgia, Virginia, and Washington State. The University of California system identifies bullying as abusive conduct². The Colorado State University policy recognizes that bullying behavior is context dependent and may not have an intended individual target³. The McNeese State policy emphasizes that bullying results in victims experiencing fear of negative consequences such as social exclusion, humiliation, or the use of force⁴. The Penn State policy recognizes that bullying “creates a risk to the health and safety of the employee(s).” Bullying guidelines and policies, developed in consultation with faculty, staff, and student governance bodies, would complement existing resources regarding discrimination and harassment and add further clarification about acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In addition, training for the entire campus community will need to be developed.

² <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000647/AbusiveConductAndBullying>

³ <http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=729>

⁴ https://www.mcneese.edu/policy/anti-bullying_policy

Action Item 3

Increasing Access to High-Quality Child Care

A need exists for increased access to high-quality child care on or near campus, including emergency and back-up care after business hours, and financial assistance to underwrite costs to families. In 2014, Iowa State University's Office of Child Care and Family Resources completed a Child Care Feasibility Study. At that time and today, ISU houses three nationally accredited child care centers on campus. In 2018, a private sector childcare center, Lily Pad Learning Center, opened at the ISU Research Park.

However, faculty continue to identify an acute ongoing need for access to child care. The cost of child care is an additional vital factor for faculty, staff, and students. In the Campus Climate data, only 23% of faculty "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that child care benefits at Iowa State University were competitive. Three ISU centers operate at capacity every year with long waiting lists. Currently the waitlists at the Centers are: Lab School: 196 children; UCC, 237; and Vet Med CCC: 193.

Approximately 80% of these wait lists are infant/toddler/two-year-olds, and 20% are 3-5 years old. There is a need for school-age child care initiatives including emergency back-up care, holiday and vacation care, and summer day camp care. A center that includes these types of care was ranked highly by faculty, and the issue will become only more important in the future.

Action Item 4

Enhancing Departmental Interactions Among Colleagues

There is a need to improve employee relations with one another particularly at the department level. The Campus Climate Survey demonstrated that 26% of faculty respondents experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile behaviors, and reported the following as sources: colleagues within the same department – 55%; other faculty – 37%; department chair – 28%; and students – 21%. The results further identified that a 10% decrease in positive work environment exists at the department level as compared to the entire university.

The overarching priority of this initiative is to provide professional skill development and toolkits for both faculty and department chairs through training, best practices, action steps, role delineation and responsibilities, as well as the enhancement of new and existing guidelines, practices, and policies to assist faculty and department chairs to facilitate and lead a positive work environment. This initiative would focus on: 1) creating toolkits for faculty and department chair professional developments via identification of training priorities, needs, and gaps, and clearly defining core faculty and chair roles and responsibilities; 2) identifying and leveraging resources that enhance departmental interactions and roles among faculty; 3) creating department focused best practices derived from faculty and department chair surveys and forums; 4) providing guidelines for transparent communication, especially for faculty advancement and mentoring; and 5) using applicable resources to benefit the university community. Therefore, the goal is to provide tools to improve interactions of faculty with other faculty within and outside their home departments, and faculty with department chairs, to enhance the work environment throughout the university.

Action Item 5

Becoming Inclusive: The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative

There is a need for long-term commitment to promote a more welcoming and inclusive climate for underrepresented faculty on campus. The Campus Climate Survey found that faculty of color (Asians included) and multiracial faculty felt less comfortable, compared to other faculty. Moreover, about 26% of participants identified having: 1) experienced negative interactions with colleagues or department chairs that led to feeling intimidated, isolated, unappreciated, and devalued; 2) encountered negative behaviors due to gender, faculty status, race or ethnicity, age, philosophical views, political views; and 3) experienced negative behaviors of intimidation, incivility, isolation, hostility. About 33% identified unfair, unjust, or inhibiting hiring practices. Additional challenges via forums and input were related to negative experiences for women and underrepresented faculty.

This Initiative will strive to foster an environment of inclusion where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel more welcomed and engaged in workplace culture. The overarching priority is to help ISU become a model of inclusion to which other universities can aspire by: 1) increasing resources for underrepresented individuals via identification of needs and gaps; 2) identifying and leveraging interactions among faculty from diverse backgrounds to develop a sense of community; 3) providing guidelines focused on best practices in promoting and understanding differing cultural practices; 4) improving the recruitment and hiring process for underrepresented individuals; 5) addressing cross-cultural communication and the understanding of commonalities and differences of perspectives and experiences by diverse groups; 6) ensuring that work/life benefits and services are communicated to underrepresented groups; 7) finding ways to decrease the “upstream swim” that underrepresented faculty face; and 8) interfacing with the Ames community to increase opportunities for underrepresented faculty to feel more at home in Ames.