

2020 University Climate Survey Focus Group Results

OVERVIEW OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

During the Summer of 2020, we conducted focus groups, each with of up to 20 participants, to gather information to supplement the specific issues raised by respondents in the 2020 University Climate Survey.

We conducted four student focus groups, on the topic of accessibility concerns, and on issues experienced by international students, LGBTQ+ students, and students of color.

We conducted four faculty/staff focus groups, on the topic of policy consistency, and on issues experienced by international faculty/staff, faculty/staff who are women of color, and faculty/staff who are women.

Each focus group was conducted during a weekday afternoon and lasted up to two hours.

Moderator Information and Opening Script:

Donald A. Saucier, Ph.D., conducted each of the focus groups. Dr. Saucier is a Professor of Psychological Sciences and the Faculty Associate Director of the Teaching & Learning Center at Kansas State University. He was invited to conduct the focus groups by Dr. Bryan Samuel, Kansas State University's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer because the Climate Survey Team wanted one moderator to provide consistency and structure to the conversations. Dr. Saucier has been active in K-State's diversity and inclusion initiatives, deeply involved and invested in K-State's teaching mission, and has conducted and published research on processes and expressions of discrimination related to gender, race, sexual orientation, and disability.

Dr. Saucier (a middle-aged, straight, cisgender White man) acknowledged his majority group membership to the focus group participants, and further stated:

"I may not have had your experiences, but I am deeply interested to hear about them. We are here today because the voices at K-State have identified our theme today as an issue. The voices at K-State have compelled our administration to explore our theme through our discussion today. Our administration is listening, and I am committed to take our discussion today to our administration to make K-State a better place to work and learn. I am honored to work toward that goal with you today.

I want to address with you why I am moderating these focus groups rather than a member of our upper administration, such as Dr. Bryan Samuel. It was our concern that having an upper administrator attend the focus groups would potentially hinder our ability to have an open and honest conversation about these issues.

We want you to provide your honest comments and reactions during this focus group today. To allow you to do that anonymously, before we begin I am asking that you stop your videos during our discussion. I am also offering you the opportunity to select a name other than your own to use as an alias during our discussion. When you stop your video and change your name, we can better protect your anonymity during our discussion. Even your comments in the chat will be associated with your alias and not your real name. We will be recording this focus group's discussion to help with our analysis of our conversation, but we will not start the recording until you have had the opportunity to stop your videos

and select aliases. Further, no one beyond the analysis team will have access to this recording, and no one on the analysis team will associate any comment with any individual person.

Our goal today is to identify patterns and trends in the discussion, not to identify any individual. As such, the questions will be phrased to get at types of issues that K-Staters face, how these issues impact K-Staters, and how to address these issues in the future through specific actions at K-State.

I do have to note that if anyone shares an experience in specific detail that is an instance of discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, etc., we do have to make a mandatory report to our Office of Institutional Equity.

You may make your comments and responses verbally during our discussion and/or by writing them into the chat. We have a list of questions that will guide our conversation today.

Are there any questions about our procedures today?

Now please stop your videos and select your aliases. We will start recording the focus group in a minute as we consider our first question for discussion.”

Question Schedule:

The moderator asked the following questions to engage the participants in discussions during each of the focus groups:

How do challenges related to _____ typically manifest at K-State?

How do these challenges hinder the success of K-Staters? (as a follow-up if needed)

What are actionable steps that K-State can take to address these challenges?

Are there any other experiences, comments, or suggestions that you would like to share today before we conclude our discussion?

Debriefing

Dr. Saucier debriefed the participants and thanked them at the end of each focus group using the script below:

“Thank you so much for sharing your experiences, comments, and suggestions this afternoon. I am so grateful that you participated today to help make K-State a better place. I will be summarizing our conversation and sharing it with the Climate Survey team. These results will be presented to our administration. They are listening – thank you for sharing your voices with me so that I can share your voices with them. If you need to reach out to me for any reason after this session, please feel free to do so. My email address is in the chat. Thank you again for contributing your voices today. It is now our job to use your voices to take meaningful action at K-State. We will publicize what these actions and outcomes are to the K-State community over this coming year. We may not be able to do everything that you suggested, but we are committed to working on this issue. Thank you so much for helping us make K-State a better place.”

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Below is a summary of the major themes that emerged in each focus group in identifying the major challenges related to the issue or target group and the actionable steps suggested to resolve the issue at Kansas State University. Some participants provided additional information (e.g., by email) after the conclusion of their focus group, and their comments are summarized in the focus group reports as well. As indicated above, the objective was to collect general experiences, and this report is written so that the experiences and comments summarized do not reveal the identities of the participants.

Focus Group: International Faculty

Challenges

General experiences of hostility and discrimination. Comments discussed that “international faculty” are a large, diverse group that cannot easily be categorized, and have variable experiences. Comments discussed that the achievements and performances of international faculty are unknown or discounted (e.g. as “good for a foreign teacher”), that international faculty do more than do other faculty because they are international (without credit or recognition), and that international faculty face issues of stigma due to their accents (with one participant noting they were uncomfortable speaking in the focus group, preferring to write comments in the chat, due to their accent making them identifiable). Comments discussed that awards are a political matter, and that international faculty generally do not win them. Comments also discussed issues with research awards being systematically biased to favor those in STEM disciplines. Comments also discussed intersectional issues, such as when female international faculty are the only women in their department, and the compounding difficulties of being an international female faculty member in a STEM discipline. Comments also discussed general issues with the climate at K-State allowing for hostility, discussing how individuals behave badly toward each other (e.g., faculty yell at students and each other, administrators yell at faculty) and have trouble treating others in respectful ways. Comments discussed issues of discrimination by faculty who are not international who “don’t want to be told what to do by a foreigner”, who are resistant to perceived efforts of international faculty to change the existing culture, who mistrust international faculty, and who create barriers to the success of international faculty. Comments discussed that, while we have policy to prevent and protect against this behavior, there is not much faculty can do when they are mistreated and not much happens when they do report mistreatment.

Experiences of discrimination from students. Comments discussed that international faculty have more issues with students than with faculty colleagues, and indicated that most international faculty have had negative interactions with students. Comments discussed that there are relatively few international students at K-State (and noted that being in Kansas is particularly challenging), and that international faculty’s experiences with American students are variable. Comments discussed the challenges that international faculty face when teaching. Comments discussed that some American students engage well in courses, but others are reluctant, and international faculty are not sure if the issue is due to accents, content matter, etc. Comments discussed issues with many students not being majors or having experience with the content previously in the courses taught by international faculty, and that international faculty consequently had to adjust to accommodate the students, and that many students failed. Comments discussed that K-State has a broader problem with diversity that is inspiring student disrespect toward international faculty, such as from students having little contact or exposure to others who are different from them or have different accents, and that students are impatient and not generous when working with international faculty (e.g., not willing to work to understand an accent). Comments discussed that K-State’s land grant mission should compel K-State to want to expose

its students (and Kansas students by outreach) to diversity, but that K-State seems uninterested in doing this well (with one comment describing “horrible outreach” that would be improved by including international faculty in extension and community engagement efforts) and that the “university doesn’t seem to care.” Comments discussed that international faculty experience harassment, but that the policies are structured to protect students from faculty, but not vice versa.

Specific experiences of bias in teaching evaluations. Comments discussed several issues that international faculty face in the teaching evaluation process (i.e., TEVALs) at K-State. Comments discussed that the TEVAL form and process comprise a biased and uninformative approach to assess teaching effectiveness, that is more a “popularity contest,” assesses how happy students are with their grade, that the comments are unhelpful (and even cruel), and allow students to troll behind their anonymity because they are not held accountable for their comments. Comments discussed other limitations of the TEVALs, including that the responses tend to be bimodal. Comments generally expressed strong negative feelings about TEVALs, calling them needlessly expensive, “worthless”, and “a disservice to the teaching mission” at K-State. Comments also discussed that administrators and department heads either do not really care about teaching evaluations (e.g., do TEVALs just to do them), believe in them too much, or create the potential for discrimination by administrators and department heads who can use them inconsistently or inappropriately to target international faculty when they have “an ax to grind.”

Issues with administration. Comments discussed several challenges that international faculty face from the administration at K-State. Comments discussed how there are not enough international faculty in administrative positions, and that international faculty are not given enough opportunities to achieve higher positions at the university. Comments stated that K-State has too many administrators; that our administration is too costly, ineffective, causes rather than anticipates or solves problems; and that this is “the biggest problem” K-State has. Comments discussed that some of these problems with administration may stem from their not having been faculty themselves, and that this limits their perspective in leading our institution.

Consequences. Comments discussed several tangible consequences for international faculty due to these issues, including difficulties in earning promotion and tenure, salary disparities and inequities (e.g., such as that produced due to delayed or denied promotions or professorial awards). Comments discussed the connection of these consequences to negative student evaluations. Comments also discussed that these issues converge to create a climate for international faculty at K-State that is “not a healthy situation” that causes international faculty to feel hurt by and disappointed in the climate at K-State, to fear their chances for promotion and tenure, and to want to leave K-State (i.e., are hard to retain) because they do not feel valued here. Comments discussed the difficulty international faculty face in having to achieve at high levels while being silent about the issues and mistreatment they face. Comments discussed that is it difficulty to identify the motivation for others’ inappropriate behavior and unfair actions, making it difficult to do anything about it. Comments discussed the additional cognitive and emotional burden that international faculty carry in educating others about their experiences as international faculty. Comments discussed that international faculty have to rise to the challenge of being better than other faculty to succeed, but face issues if they make others look bad as a result of their success. Comments discussed how these consequences combine to “depress you massively” and inspire disengagement because it is “hard to make the effort through an unhappy environment and hostility” as the contributions of international faculty are not valued or recognized. Comments also discussed how these challenges and their consequences are not apparent when international faculty are hired, and they are not prepared to deal with them when they come to K-State. Comments discussed that these issues and concerns can create stress and mental health issues for international faculty.

Actionable Steps

Recognize and reward the contributions of international faculty. Comments stated that there should be salary equity for all faculty. Comments suggested that more awards be given and more incentives be offered (e.g., monetary awards, fellowships, plaques) to international faculty for their performances (e.g., making sure the winners include international faculty such as by a rotation; or by creating awards specifically for international faculty such as international faculty member of the year, in research, teaching, community engagement, etc.). Comments suggested that a committee be designated to nominate international faculty for awards (to ensure representative pools of nominees), to help international faculty with the time and efforts that applying for awards requires (and acknowledgement that these expenditures in time and effort may dissuade international faculty from applying given their belief that there are low chances of winning). It should be noted that comments suggested some ambivalence for awards for international faculty being a special award that could be discounted and motivated as “box checking” rather than true recognition. Comment discussed a need for K-State to recognize the international recognition achieved by international faculty (e.g., by professional associations) in awards, promotion, and tenure. Comments acknowledged the scarcity of resources that may be an obstacle to these rewards and incentives, and suggested the possibility of cutting administration to free up funds for these rewards and incentives.

Increase support and protection for international faculty. Comments discussed the need for guidance and mentoring to help international faculty succeed initially and continuously at K-State (e.g., helping them understand University, college, and department policies and procedures; the resources for faculty, staff, and students available and not available at their specific campus; TEVAL procedures; the demographics and experiences of the students they will be teaching and the issues they may face in doing so). Comments indicated that the Manhattan campus resources may be needed to help support international faculty and students at the other K-State campuses. Comments also discussed the need to protect international faculty against mistreatment. One comment suggested having an ombud devoted specifically to concerns brought forth by international faculty. Comments discussed how Human Capital Services needs to play an important role in educating administrators (and department heads especially) in how to support international faculty and take seriously the concerns experienced by and challenges faced by international faculty. Comments discussed that Human Capital Services have been too passive in addressing these concerns in the past, and should be empowered to compel fair treatment and evaluation of international faculty, to investigate and resolve the concerns brought forth by international faculty, and to have “teeth” in doing so. Comments discussed a need to create, clarify, and implement policies to compel students to behave appropriately toward international faculty. Comments discussed the even the honor and integrity policy creates little accountability for students who violate it, that the policy is not a deterrent, that cheating is widespread, and it is often not worth it to report cheating given the weak consequences for students but negative reactions from students.

Increase support for a community of international faculty. Comments discussed the need to create opportunities for international faculty to meet and to foster a community at K-State of international faculty to allow them to create social connections through shared experiences and contexts.

Revise the teaching evaluation process. Comments discussed that the issues with TEVALs at K-State compel a revision to how teaching is evaluated. Comments discussed other ways that TEVAL responses may be analyzed, such as by using artificial intelligence to evaluate TEVAL open responses and discount them from TEVAL scores, or administered, such as being used as a “double-blind indicator”

earlier in the semester when students cannot yet anticipate their final grades and use their TEVAL ratings to retaliate against instructors when they do not earn the grades they wanted. Other comments discussed that TEVALs should be “abolished.” Comments discussed how teaching observations, for example, may be more informative and appropriate.

Revise the evaluation process of administrators. Comments discussed a need to provide international faculty (and other faculty) with the opportunity to evaluate their supervisors (e.g., department heads). Comments also discussed a need for external evaluation of administrators (e.g., department heads). Comments discussed that department heads have too much autonomous control and have too much opportunity to retaliate against negative feedback from their faculty, consequently rendering yearly evaluations of department heads by their faculty meaningless because faculty are scared to be candid in these evaluations. Comments discussed the lack of transparency in the evaluations of administrators, and discussed how faculty assume risk in raising issues; see no action, consequences, or follow up; and thus have no expectations for change. Comments stated that evaluation is essentially one-sided (i.e., administrators evaluate faculty, but not vice versa). Comments discussed that retaliation is real, and that administrators can minimize or dismiss accusations of retaliation easily.

Change the structure of administration. Comments discussed a need to hire administrators who are accomplished teachers and researchers (who will empathize better with the faculty perspective), and the advantages of hiring administrators internally (although other comments discussed a preference for hiring administrators externally), and of hiring international faculty into administrative positions. Comments discussed a lack of representation of international faculty in upper administration (with notable exceptions) and a general lack of diversity in K-State administration. Comments discussed that without representation, administrators (e.g., department heads) may not legitimize the challenges faced by international faculty and leave them “to fend for themselves.” Comments also discussed the utility of rotating administrators (including department heads) out after serving their terms (e.g., of three years) or after having reached term limits. Comments also indicated a need for representation in Faculty Senate by international faculty as well as for a Faculty Senate committee designated to addressing the experience of international faculty and our international community more broadly.

Provide and mandate diversity training. Comments discussed the need to train all faculty, staff, and administrators (including department heads) to understand and deal with issues of diversity and inclusion, and their own unconscious biases. Comments stated this training should be mandatory and continually updated. Comments also discussed a need to educate students about the contributions made by and the value at K-State added by international faculty.

Do something. Comments indicated a need for this process to result in change, to make K-State a better place for international faculty, to do more than “lip service” to the issues and concerns articulate by international faculty, and to “break the trend” of inaction (highlighted by one comment that “nothing changes”). Comments expressed indignation toward the tagline that statement that “K-State is a family”, stating that there has been commitment or loyalty to international faculty by the University. Comments indicated a need to talk to “regular Kansans” in the community to educate them about the contributions and value of international faculty. Comments indicated that an external review or external consultants may be needed to identify the issues and actions needed at K-State. One comment stated a desire “to see at least one concrete action” to improve the climate for international faculty at K-State as a result of these focus groups.

Focus Group: Policy Consistency

Challenges

Inconsistencies across colleges and units. Comments discussed that people talk across the University and discover inconsistencies that manifest in several ways. These inconsistencies occur both between and within colleges, departments, units, and offices. Comments indicated that even when the policies are the same (such as those dictated by HCS), the interpretations and implementations (such as by individual supervisors) of the policies are often inconsistent. Comments indicated that these inconsistencies in policy interpretation and implementation occur in several areas (and are more common than policy violations), including support for professional development opportunities, flex policies, being classified or reclassified as having “regular” versus “term” appointments, sick leave, vacation leave, tuition benefits, access to benefits, pay grades, promotions, conference opportunities and travel possibilities, overload and summer teaching opportunities (with preference for the latter often given to the most senior faculty who already make higher salaries). Comments indicated that policies may be vague or people may have different business practices, and that the comparison across units may be an issue because what works for one may not work for all, that policy implementation is difficult, and there is no place right now to even discuss inconsistencies. Comments noted inconsistencies may be biased against University Support Staff, included their lacking opportunities to use professional development benefits because of an inability to have someone cover their leave if the benefits would be used during regular business hours – comments indicated the benefit may only be used if doing so does not create a detriment in the office. Comments indicated this latter issue is greatest in offices with fewer staff members (especially in the extreme case of a one-person office) because they are less able to cover an individual taking a course, for instance. Comments also discussed inconsistencies in the work schedules that are allowed for faculty versus staff (with staff having less flexibility available to them, and therefore staff may be forced to work standard hours while faculty can choose to work when they are most productive), with the allowance of flex time (which comments indicated administration claims to support, but this message has either not been conveyed to or has been ignored by supervisors). Comments also indicated that, when there are conflicts, staff (e.g., administrative assistants) have to conform to faculty’s preferred schedules. Comments indicated that some units remain remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while others are brought back to campus for the same jobs. One comment also stated that there are consistency issues with who is allowed/invited and not allowed/not invited to attend First Tuesdays. Comments indicated issues in that there are defined salary benefits for moving up the ranks as tenured/tenure-track faculty, but not for the teaching faculty ranks, that raises are not consistent for these ranks/positions across departments, and that some definition for these ranks, positions, and benefits would be helpful.

Issues with communication and lack of transparency. Comments discussed issues with communication about policies and a lack of transparency in their interpretation and implementation. Comments indicated that communication is not consistent; not everyone knows the same things; there are rumors, gossip, and hearsay that make people unhappy; and policies are not communicated clearly and accurately. Comments indicated that access to benefits is inconsistent, and that the benefits one will receive are not made clear when the individual is hired. Comments indicated that it is not made clear if the individual being hired is “regular” or “term”, or what that distinction will mean in terms of the benefits and support the individual will receive. Comments indicated that there is little explanation for policy discrepancies and lack of transparency. Comments indicated that administrators reply to concerns about inconsistencies that it is up to the supervisors. Comments indicated that there is a lack of responsibility at any level taken for the inconsistencies, and that everyone says it is someone else’s issues. Comments indicated that administration needs to take control because there are too many cheat zones and siloes, and that local control and decisions create issues and unfairness.

Issues with Human Capital Services (HCS). Comments indicated that HCS has stated that it is not their job to enforce policy, leaving little opportunity for communication, reporting, or resolution when policy inconsistencies are experienced. Comments indicated dissatisfaction with HCS for not sharing information with campus about competencies, not sharing the information that they are paid to gather and share, and not setting or implementing career ladders and employee growth appropriately based on competencies. Comments also indicated that some of these issues are because HCS claims to be overworked and understaffed, but so is everyone.

Issues with the evaluation of administration, supervisors, and employees. Comments indicated that while much of the issues of inconsistencies in policy interpretation and implementation may be attributed to individual supervisors, the evaluation process to provide feedback to them is either not available or is not safe. Comments indicated that despite having “a lot of bosses”, employees are not able to regularly or safely evaluate their supervisors’ performance. Comments discussed how evaluations are not always frequent (occurring every five years for some administrators), that the comments on the evaluations are not secure and may be connected back to the individual, and that the comments may not be submitted anonymously. Comments indicated that the evaluation process itself is inconsistently applied across the university, and that evaluation may be meaningless because there is not enough time or investment devoted to the process, the criteria for evaluation may not be applicable, meaningful feedback is not provided in the feedback to employees, there is enough time to digest the feedback that is provided, administrators are not trained to supervise, supervisors are not trained to evaluate, and not all employees are evaluated.

Issues with teaching evaluations. Comments discussed issues with how teaching evaluations (i.e., TEVALs) are used. Comments indicated inconsistencies in the evaluation of instructors using their TEVALs, including that senior faculty (who vote on contract renewal, tenure, and promotion of junior faculty) evaluate TEVALs subjectively and inconsistently in these processes. Comments a need for objective metrics to evaluate TEVAL scores and also teaching in general. Comments indicated that despite TEVALs supposedly being the “property” of individual instructors, some instructors are pressured to sign waivers allowing their TEVALs to be sent directly to their department heads before they even see the TEVALs themselves.

Consequences of these inconsistencies. Comments indicated that these inconsistencies affect individuals’ general levels of morale and their levels of subjective well-being, making them unhappy, and their mental health. Comments indicated that the inconsistencies related to flex time do not allow people to work when they are most productive hindering their success and the success of their unit. Comments indicated that these issues result in less job satisfaction, result in less retention of employees generally, and promote job hopping to another unit at the University that applies policies differently. Comments indicated that having to hire new people is time-intensive and expensive, and it may be hard to hire new people if the people leaving are unhappy, making K-State look uninviting and unsupportive to potential hires. Comments indicated that these searches exhaust time, effort, and money. Comments expressed that there is the belief that “A move is the only way to get a raise”, with few existing career ladders or opportunities for advancement (but also noted inconsistencies here, because some people do advance and get raises depending on inconsistent decision making by supervisors). Comments indicated that some supervisors fight for their people (and get them raises and opportunities), while others do not. Comments indicated a need to retain staff – they have stepped up during the pandemic.

Actionable Steps

Increase transparency in decision-making. Comments indicated that reclassifications of employees are inconsistent, and are not applied correctly or appropriate to what employees are doing. Comments indicated that there is no consistency or transparency in faculty searches that are allowed versus denied, that all open positions are important, and there needs to be transparency in how these positions are ranked and consequently how hiring decisions are made. Comments indicated that the University continues to hire upper-level administrators with high salaries, but not the “folks in the trenches.” Comments indicated how support positions without backups are eliminated even those could be hired more easily and plentifully than upper-level administrators. Comments indicated the HCS allows units to have discretion in how to make hires, but policies related to hiring need to be standardized and made consistent (e.g., in terms of benefits). Comments also indicated a need for greater transparency, consistency, and fairness (which is important, but not the same thing as consistency) in all decisions, but especially for how evaluations of employees are made, with the example of evaluation of instructors being informed by consistent metrics (e.g., against department averages on TEVAL scores and class grade distributions).

Training for administrators and supervisors. Comments indicated that training for administrators and supervisors should cover several areas, including in how to apply university policies (because the issue often is not the policies themselves, but their inconsistent interpretation and implementation); how to conduct performance evaluations; professional development in the areas of soft skills (such as listening to and relating well to others), leadership, and communication; mental health awareness (to include support for students, staff, faculty, and administrators); team building; working with people in distress; sensitivity training; and Safe Zone training. Comments indicated that current training for supervisors is very good in several ways, but should be mandatory (with penalties for noncompliance). Comments indicated that administrators and supervisors were promoted to their positions for being good at something else (perhaps because these promotions are the only way to earn pay increases), and this training is therefore appropriate and necessary. Comments indicated that administrators should be administrators, not academics, and therefore should go to conferences for leadership and administration (but did suggest that administrators may retain some academic responsibilities in some cases, such as if they are still teaching or serve as Department Heads).

Accountability for administrators and supervisors. Comments indicated that administrators and supervisors should be evaluated and held accountable for being excellent. Comments indicated the need for annual evaluations as a moment for accountability and to ensure that administrators and supervisors are enacting their training. Comments indicated that evaluation procedures of administrators and supervisors need revision to allow all employees to provide the evaluations and to do so anonymously. Comments indicated a need to decide where these processes and oversights will be “housed” due to trust issues, and suggested HCS, the President’s Office, another administrative unit, or a representative group across the University. Comments also indicated the need for a space in which to air grievances about inequities as well as a committee or group to assist in the resolution of inconsistencies.

Offer and support professional development opportunities. Comments indicated a need to offer and support more and better professional development opportunities, especially for staff members, including in areas such as inclusion, equity, diversity, goal setting, intercultural skills (the IDI was discussed), development, soft-skills training, Excel, Qualtrics, technology, business/leadership training (Fred Pryor training was mentioned). Comments indicated that there is an expectation that every employee do professional development (for some it is listed as 10% of their job description). Comments indicated that the trainings that are offered are scattered and often inconvenient, and that a central K-State website would be helpful to provide easy access to and communication about professional development opportunities. Comments also suggested a mandatory KSU conference that

would be offered when other things are shut down to allow people to attend to provide way for people to get to know people across units through planned, organized activities. Comments also indicated the employees' work schedules and responsibilities should be reasonable to accommodate their professional development efforts.

Offer and support flexibility and technology to improve abilities to work well. Comments indicated that, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to make better access to and use of technology to ensure the functioning and productivity of the University. Comments indicated that social distancing creates the need for us to be more nimble, and that we need better tools to communicate (such as options for texting with students and better phone systems for remote work). Comments indicated that the University has this technology (e.g., Echo 360, texting capabilities that come back to email so employees do not have to use their personal phones), but has not implemented this technology across all units. Comments indicated that the information given to employees during and about their remote work has been inconsistent and/or inaccurate. Comments indicated that flexibility is more possible than supervisors and administrators have indicated, that employees do not need to be in their offices physically, that departments and units can still function, and that the University needs to rethink how/when/where employees can do their jobs. Comments indicated that supervisors can/should be more flexible, need to allow more work-life balance, do not need restrict employees to work from 8 to 5, and should allow meetings to be more flexible. Comments indicated a need for more flexible perspectives because things will be different moving forward, that our policies and procedures can be more creative and nontraditional, and that this is consistent with what students want. Comments indicated that the pandemic and the social justice issues in current times elevates this conversation about inconsistencies and inequities, and that the University needs to take immediate and serious action, and needs to be cognizant and proactive (not reactive) in addressing these issues.

Focus Group: Women of Color

Challenges

Experiences of discrimination and exclusion. Comments indicated that women of color (WOC) have frequently experienced discrimination and exclusion at the University. Comments described that WOC have been dehumanized, minimized, silenced, cut off when speaking and presenting, and been targeted constantly by microaggressions. Comments discussed microaggressions as being abusive, preventing WOC from contributing or speaking up, creating feelings of learned helplessness for WOC. Comments indicated that WOC are not given the respect they deserve at the University, and that students are particularly mean and insensitive to WOC. Comments indicated that WOC are often assumed not to have the training or background for their positions at the University, or are assumed to "not be a fit for K-State." Comments indicated how WOC have their statements and experiences undercut or disregarded at the table. Comments indicated that intersectionality (e.g., being Black and identifying as female) plays a big part in how WOC are treated at the University, and that it is hard to know if being a woman versus being a person of color (POC) is influencing their treatment. Comments discussed a need to differentiate White women and WOC, because White women are regarded more highly at the University than are WOC. Comments indicated that WOC suffer a greater pay gap and poorer treatment at the University than do White women. Comments indicated that, for WOC in particular and POC more generally, "K-State is not a family" and that the University's mission is failing WOC/POC.

Lack of support for women of color. Comments indicated that there is little or no support for discrimination or harassment reporting at the University. Comments indicated that administration does

not believe when issues of inequity or harassment are raised, instead believing “that can’t happen here”, which allows the hostile environment to continue.

Comments discussed how, even when WOC “do everything right” in reporting harassment or inequity, nothing happens and there are no consequences for the harassment or inequity. Comments indicated that when WOC stand up against microaggressions, such as to offensive jokes, they are considered hypersensitive, and their resistance is ignored. Comments indicated that if “K-State is a family”, it is not a good family for WOC (who are often asked to do more menial tasks than others of the same position or rank, e.g., being asked to “pitch in” by cleaning the office). Comments indicated that the dynamics at the University require that WOC need allies (e.g., White men) to represent their voices (i.e., WOC are not able to represent themselves) – but the ability of allies to represent WOC depends on the allies understanding the experiences of WOC, and allies cannot truly empathize with the experiences of WOC. Comments indicated that allies are not represented correctly, that others try to do the “right thing”, but get it wrong and do not take feedback to learn. Comments discussed the environment at the University does not support the hiring and retention of WOC, noting inequities in pay and value, and also noting an overarching issue that the University has not adapted beyond its colorblind perspective to accept WOC at the table and hear their voices. Comments indicated that WOC must continually justify their place at the table, and are excluded by majority group members who display ingroup bias in their collaborations and discussions. Comments indicated that WOC validate themselves, and do not need others to validate them. Comments indicated that WOC have the voices to make changes, but are not invited to the table. Comments indicated that when they are invited to the table it is as a single voice that is not heard, acknowledged, or accepted, but rather is dismissed or ignored. Comments indicated that WOC have solutions to the issues they face, but are not asked to contribute solutions or for feedback. Comments indicated that these issues are especially concerning for support staff whose voices are blatantly ignored (versus faculty whose voices are heard more). Comments indicated that affinity groups (or one representative from an affinity group) may be tapped for solutions, but more WOC and POC should be included in these conversations.

Lack of representation by and advancement opportunities for women of color. Comments indicated that WOC are not empowered or allowed to have influence at the University. Participants asked if they are able to come to the table to make decisions that matter, how many women are at the table, and are their voices heard? Comments discussed that WOC are hardly represented at the University. Comments discussed an issue with numbers – that there is simply a need for more WOC in faculty and administrative roles. Comments indicated that there are not enough opportunities offered or taken at the University to advance WOC. Comments discussed that there is a lack of WOC in leadership at various levels at the University, and that most upper-level administrators are men. Comments indicated that the University welcomes women, but noted that no people of color (POC) in general or WOC in particular were shortlisted for recent administrative hires. Comments indicated that roles and positions are written so that WOC are not qualified, and that the University will often conduct a national search to fill positions rather than hiring or promoting local WOC. Comments indicated that even when local WOC perform the positions well in interim roles, they are replaced by external hires. Comments indicated that committee members who conduct national searches do not want to work under the authority of POC candidates, and thus deem them “less qualified.” Comments indicated that WOC are invisible and excluded, until they are needed for committees (for diversity, to “check the box”). Comments also indicated that there is no room for growth in unclassified positions. Comments indicated that there are also issues in the classified system, and that WOC staff are particularly underrepresented in any positions or committees of influence (due at least in part to the preference to have faculty in these roles, despite staff outnumbering faculty at the University).

Contributions by women of color are not recognized or valued. Comments discussed the general issue that WOC are not acknowledged, recognized, or rewarded for their contributions at the University. Comments discussed the invisible labor that is performed by WOC that is essential to the University, but is not valued – this invisible labor includes the time and emotional labor in being sought out for mentoring and guidance by students of color that is not credited as part of their service. Comments indicated that even taking on substantial extra work in this regard is not valued in evaluations for merit pay increases or for promotion and tenure. Comments discussed how WOC frequently have to accept positions that they are overqualified for in order to take care of their families, and consequently have little or no hope for promotion or advancement. Comments discussed how the research interests, efforts, and productivity by WOC are not supported or valued at the University, and that this lack of support and value is sometimes intentional, and sometimes due to ignorance. Comments discussed that WOC have to justify their research against accusations that research examining the experience of POC is not reputable research. Comments indicated that the journals that publish this research are discounted – and that these accusations are not brought similarly against the research conducted by majority group researchers. Comments discussed the research conducted to examine the experience of POC is only acknowledged and valued when it is conducted by or in collaboration with majority group researchers. Comments indicated that WOC feel invisible – they contribute to units, but are not acknowledged as the contributor and they are excluded from the publicity for the efforts they have contributed to. Comments indicated that statements made by WOC are not heard or taken seriously until a White male colleague makes (and gets credit for) the same statements. Comments indicated that majority group colleagues feel they are culturally competent or that they are allies (because they go to events, are on certain committees, or have collaborated with POCs) – but that these majority group colleagues have blind spots. Comments indicated that these blind spots are common and manifest when the moment arises to recommend someone for a promotion or to be hired or to lead a project, the support for WOC is not there – the support only there when it is easy and visible. Comments indicated that new majority members are more valued and effect more change than do WOC with seniority. Comments indicated that WOC are not heard, not understood, and are prevented from creating change. Comments indicated that not having diverse voices hinders the University and that the University tends to “recycle people”, thus having no opportunity for new ideas. Comments indicated that it is helpful to include POC in conversations about issues of bias to prevent future misunderstanding. Comments indicated that participants were happy to see POC using their voices and being heard through #BlackAtKState and hoped they would not be quieted.

Lack of transparency in policies. Comments indicated that WOC are not aware of how much they are or are not represented, and that the University needs to be more transparent about who is representing, who is being represented, and who is empowered. Comments indicated that there are a lot of meetings “behind closed doors” at the University that impact, but do not include, WOC. Comments discussed systematic issues with policies and procedures, such as with reclassification – that these processes are not transparent to employees, that HCS only deals with supervisors, and that WOC are trivialized unless they go to the Office of Institutional Equity.

Issues in promotion and tenure process. Comments discussed that WOC face challenges in the promotion and tenure process, including the lack of value given to their research and service efforts, lack of recognition for their invisible labor. Comments discussed that these different standards for the contributions and productivity of WOC are based in ignorance (i.e., failing to understand the contributions) and intention. Comments discussed the extra work that WOC face, as well as the additional emotional fatigue that creates a tax on the efforts of WOC that systematically creates disadvantages in the promotion and tenure process. Comments discussed the expectation that WOC

contribute to or lead diversity efforts, without valuing those contributions, creates an additional systematic disadvantage.

Consequences. Comments indicated that these challenges combine to create “a lot of background noise” that affects WOC in many detrimental ways, including having negative physical health outcomes and negative mental health outcomes, including fatigue, fear, anxiety, and disillusionment. Comments discussed that inequities mean that WOC have to work harder than their White colleagues. Comments discussed how the invisible labor performed by WOC hurts exhausts their time and energy in systematic ways that hurt their research productivity and disadvantage them in the tenure and promotion process. Comment discussed that these issues contribute to inability to attract and retain WOC as faculty, staff, and students at the University. One comment succinctly stated that, “It’s exhausting to work here.” Another comment stated that, “K-State it not an easy place. It is racist and it is sexist. It is toxic.”

Actionable Steps

Acknowledge and act on these concerns. Comments indicated a need for the University’s administration to acknowledge the existence of these concerns, and that stronger leadership is demonstrated in speaking out against social injustices. Comments indicated that it is important to acknowledge how difficult it is for the issues and challenges facing non-mainstream groups. Comments indicated that it is necessary to acknowledge the land grant mission, to acknowledge the people who are native, and to understand we are in a space that has a hard history. Comments indicated that public acknowledgement of these realities and concerns is a necessary start and will provide some relief, but that further action to address these concerns must follow. Comments indicated a need to capitalize on the momentum of current social issues and to develop a timeline and action items for change, noting that actions speak louder than words.

Revise evaluation and promotion policies. Comments indicated a need to review and revise evaluation and promotion, etc., policies to value the work done by women of color. Comments indicated a need to make these policies fair, consistent, and transparent. Comments indicated a need to include in these policies articulation, documentation, and credit given to WOC for their invisible work toward working with POC and diversity, equity, and inclusion contributions. Comments indicated this work should be indicated by a percentage of effort in the responsibilities performed by WOC, and should be acknowledged by certificates. Comments also indicated that teaching evaluation procedures should account for the issues that students raise about POC styles of teaching (for which POC are penalized), while majority group teachers are not similarly penalized for teaching the same way.

Make women of color feel welcome and valued at K-State. Comments urged the University to not forget about women of color, because the University needs them. Comments indicated a need to establish a foundation of respect that ensures respect is given and received by all. Comments indicated that the University empowers others to allow their voice, fosters a community in which individuals support each other, and allows WOC to promote their own voice and the voices of others.

Create career ladders for staff to advance. Comments indicated that career ladders and classification processes be made clear and consistent. Comments indicated a need to correct systemic issues and inconsistencies in the current classification process used by HCS (and to include staff voices and feedback in doing so). Comments indicated that rules often apply to some people but not to others. Comments indicated a need to restructure guidelines to allow unclassified staff to participate in events, on focus groups, and on committees, because supervisors vary in how supportive they are in allowing

these activities. Comments indicated a need to empower staff to use their voices while participating in the University community without having to use their leave to do so.

Hire, promote, train, mentor, and retain WOC/POC faculty and staff. Comments indicated an overarching need to hire, promote, train, mentor, and retain POC in general and WOC in particular. Comments indicated that POC and WOC are insecure in their employment, and are dismissed at greater rates – especially during times of crisis (such as during the current pandemic and continuing financial challenges). Comments indicated a need to especially hire WOC into leadership positions at the University and to trust them to lead after they are hired. Comments indicated doing this will require the University to advertise positions in ways that allow POC to see them. Comments indicated that the University needs to make sure we are giving POC the tools to succeed and to make efforts to retain them. Comments indicated that these efforts include making POC feel welcome, providing them with mentoring programs (and to credit senior WOC for mentoring junior WOC), providing opportunities and funds for professional development that lead to tangible benefits (e.g., merit pay increases, promotions). Comments indicated that searches need to allow WOC/POC to compete, rather than hiring their apparent majority group members. An emailed comment cautioned that, “... the consequences of not prioritizing women of color on this campus as important employees that are worth retaining will be felt by all and will continue to be a lasting legacy of this institution.”

Cultural sensitivity training. Comments indicated that there should be key trainings for cultural competency and sensitivity, and that these trainings should be mandatory. Comments indicated that majority group allies, including the focus group facilitator, should use their voices to advocate for these trainings.

Do something and continue to make progress. Comments indicated the WOC are fatigued and taxed by this process of surveying their opinions, that they have used their voices in these conversations previously without seeing any progress, that this is exhausting and straining. Comments indicated that these are teachable moments and it may be necessary to engage in these efforts, but it is draining to do so. Comments did indicate some cautious optimism that perhaps this is a good time for the voices of WOC to be heard to effect real change at the University given the momentum created by recent awareness of social issues at K-State and across the country. Comments indicated that WOC do not need or want more apologies, and that WOC will be further demoralized if these conversations produce nothing. Comments indicated a need for actions, not more words. Comments indicated that K-State needs to establish a better foundation of respect and cautioned not to forget about WOC because “you need us in the future.” One participant noted that she stays at K-State because she sees hope, and she wants to make it better for the future. One comment suggested that future retirements may allow opportunities to make positive changes at the University. Comments indicated that it is important to continue to ask these hard questions at the University and to circle back when people do not have all the answers. Comments, in the focus group and in later emailed comments, indicated a need for all members of the University community to commit to positive changes in uplifting and empowering WOC, including a need for WOC to support each other, rather than competing for resources. An emailed comment after the focus group summarized much of this discussion by stating:

I think to move forward or at least take things at face value is that we need to have stronger leadership that are willing to take risks to not only speak about social injustices, but to have the guts to take action regardless of the social repercussions. We need to have leaders who understand the current justice system and the histories we live on through to the very fine details and how to push back with facts so that our perceptions (biases and differentials) have

that back up. We have to not only demand change with voice, but demand change with knowledge. There is little room for fear and doubt, as women of color we need to stand up and run to action.

Focus Group: Women's Issues

Challenges

Experiences with discrimination and exclusion. Comments indicated that women experience discrimination and exclusion in many forms at the University. Comments indicated that women experience hostility at the University and that the University has a “culture of gossip and bullying”, with this culture mentioned as permeating all levels of the University including upper administration. Comments indicated the continued prevalence of gender hierarchies in which men are given advantages and taken more seriously than are women. Comments indicated that women must be careful to tailor their presentation, manage their tone, and frame their comments (e.g., to be subtle) to avoid being perceived as aggressive, with their disagreement with men being perceived as not liking the other person or being unkind. Comments indicated the hostility is often directed at women when they discuss issues of diversity in their classes and give invited “diversity talks.” Comments indicated that hostility from men causes women to have to give up their seats at the table literally and figuratively at the University, and several participants provided examples of their experiences with this hostility from their male colleagues and reported that these examples happen regularly. Comments did indicate that there is some improvement as older men retire, but the experiences are still common. Comments indicated that women experience microaggressions and mansplaining from their male colleagues. Comments discussed how language is used to minimize the contributions of women, that men will repeat what women say to soften the contribution, and while this may be intended to show advocacy or support, the women already said what was needed to be said. Comments indicated that men take credit for women's accomplishments. Comments discussed women experiencing unacknowledged gender bias in teaching evaluations, women being held to higher standards in teaching than are men, and women having comments made about their appearance. Comments indicated that marginal and dismissive treatment has also been perpetrated by men from other countries, and examples were shared about international men being resistant to being advised by women. Comments indicated that experiences of discrimination and exclusion also result from an intersection of gender and age, with younger women being discredited for their experience (e.g., experience gained prior to coming to the University) and being told that they have not been at the University long enough to have a seat at the table or to share their perspectives, while older women are expected to do more with less. Comments also indicated intersections of gender and race, such that women of color are often accused of being oversensitive, overreactive, and overly dramatic, and that these perceptions serve to silence them. Comments further indicated that having to be called “women of color” and not just “women” demonstrates how they have been historically excluded and unrepresented, and that there is a history that has led to this exceptional categorization that fuels stereotypes and low expectations for women of color. Comments indicated that the well-publicized discriminatory incidents that happen periodically are only the most public manifestations of a larger problem at the University, and that the University has not made those who perpetrate these incidents accountable for their actions (sometimes claiming to protect their right to free speech). Comments indicated that the culture of discrimination at the University is rooted in a national history of invasion and exclusion that we forget as the majority group (perceived as deserving their positions and privileges) sets the standard for what is normal and admirable (and causes minority group members to see themselves as substandard). Comments indicated that this permeates our language in lack of awareness of the meaning of terms and hierarchical applications of language (including how we use the terms: diversity, inclusion, exclusion, culture, and multicultural).

Experiences with inequity. Comments indicated that women experience inequity in many domains at the University. Comments indicated that women get lower salaries than similarly qualified men, that there is a lack of transparency for this pay inequity, and that HCS and OIE are not doing enough to address inequity. Comments also indicated a lack of transparency in terms of what is needed for the advancement and promotion of female faculty and staff, or for their professional development and growth. Comments also indicated that it is hard to find time for self-advancement or professional development amid the other responsibilities women have at the University, but also noted the lack of opportunities available for professional development. Comments indicated that divisions of tasks and responsibilities are often inequitable, with “domestic” chores and service work (e.g., note taking at meetings, organizing social gatherings, mentoring) being given to women more than to men (with this additional work and emotional labor justified by claiming that women are more empathetic). Comments indicated that these experiences were exacerbated by the challenges of online/remote learning during the pandemic. Comments indicated that historically women were the staff while men were the faculty, and that this hierarchy remains even though the numbers have shifted – female faculty are discredited and not taken as seriously as are male faculty. Comments indicated that women are expected to engage more in service and diversity work (including junior women faculty having to chair committees because senior male faculty are unwilling), but that this “invisible labor” is expected but discredited for purposes of tenure and promotion, and that this work consequently does not promote the advancement of women in terms of their ranks or salaries. Comments indicated that women are denied tenure and promotion for reasons that would not affect men adversely. Comments indicated that women may be disproportionately affected by furloughs and layoffs at the University. Comments indicated that women sometimes go along with the inequity (“go along to get along”) because they do not know how or when to defend themselves against it. Comments indicated that despite the tagline, K-State is not an idealized family. Comments indicated that families can be messy, there may be differences in the meaning of “family” for different members of the family (e.g., some may feel like they belong more or less to the family), families are not always safe, and family members are not always heard or seen. Comments indicated that KSU uses the term “family” as an idealized state, is motivated to maintain positive perceptions of the family, and consequently promotes silencing issues inconsistent with this idealized state. Comments indicated this is detrimental to members of the University community, the University may not realize the issues and consequences until much later, and does not invest in critical thinking about ways to prevent, manage, or resolve these situations. Comments indicated that it is hard to get administration to listen to concerns or solutions about or to acknowledge these inequities.

Issues with work-family balance. Comments indicated that women are affected more than men by their family roles and responsibilities, and these are held against them at the University. Comments stated that women without children are given preference at the University (e.g., for opportunities) over women with children. Comments described the challenges of having children as women at the University, including having to adapt from having no children to having young children and feeling guilty trying to live up to the standards of work productivity by those without children. Comments indicated that opportunities for work-family balance are inconsistent across campus and from vary supervisor to supervisor (e.g., some allow more time off for family) and that more consistency and direction from the University would be helpful. Comments indicated that these issues are compounded by a lack of work flexibility despite women having proven that they can pivot to working remotely while being innovative and productive. Comments indicated that the successful pivot to working remotely provides an excellent case that it is possible to make the workday more flexible through flex time, with may help women who are primary caregivers who have more invisible work when working remotely with those they are taking care of in the home. Comments indicated that working from home and nontraditional work schedules may help women be more productive and to engage in more professional development efforts to

advance themselves. Comments indicated that time cards and Kronos make the work environment restrictive, and noted that this issue is more of a structural problem for staff than for faculty.

Lack of representation. Comments indicated that women are not represented in the University leadership and administration. Comments indicated that current high-level administrators are more likely to be men, and are more likely to hire men. Comments indicated that even departments that are female-dominated often have male department heads. Comments indicated that people in power do what is best for them, not for the system, and indicated a need for both diversity of thought and diversity of culture at the University. Comments indicated that without this representation in leadership and administration, and without increased diversity, women's voices will not be heard at the University. As an example, participants noted that this focus group was facilitated by a White cisgender man, and that women's voices would not be heard without being channeled through him as "the embodiment of safety". Comments indicated that there are other well-meaning people who are willing to hear the truths and realities of others. Comments indicated frustration that women are unable to amplify their own voices and the voices of other women at the University. Comments indicated that it is hard for women to advocate for other women – it is time consuming, it is hard to put women into positions because you do not know if their efforts will be valued, and it is hard to know when to push forward and when to pull back and protect.

Consequences. Comments indicated that women feel excluded, silenced, and demoralized at the University. Comments indicated that women do not feel that they have a voice at the University. As a result of these negative effects, comments indicated that women are less likely to seek advancement and promotions at the University. Comments indicated that these are not new concerns at the University, and that it is exhausting to have these conversations again and again without seeing any change.

Actionable Steps

Address issues with pay inequity. Comments indicated a need to conduct a pay equity study to evaluate the pay gap, to make the pay (in)equity data visible, and to change salaries accordingly. Comments also indicated that the University must make sure that all employees are paid an actual living wage. Comments indicated a need for the Climate Survey to collect data about individuals at the University having to work other jobs to make ends meet to provide a more informed picture of the compensation the University pays its employees. Comments indicated the University must also identify and address inequities in how opportunities are offered to women and in how conflict of interest issues are addressed.

Transparency in policies and decisions. Comments expressed a need to make policies and decisions (e.g., related to hiring, performance evaluation, tenure, and promotion) fair, consistent, and transparent. Comments indicated a need for clear and transparent evaluation procedures, clear paths for women's advancement and career ladders. Comments indicated a need for transparency in sharing the data about the demographics of employees who were furloughed and laid-off during the pandemic, and that an analysis of these demographics should be shared with University stakeholders. Comments indicated a need to recognize and value the unique contributions of women at the University (especially as these relate to service) in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, and tenure processes.

Recruit, hire, mentor, and retain women. Comments indicated that the University does not practice what it preaches in valuing diversity in hiring, often failing to interview women and people of color for positions. Comments indicated a need to hire women to come to the University, especially into

leadership roles and administration. Comments also indicated that there is diversity at the University already, and that there should be an effort to prioritize retention of the strong women we have at the University already over recruitment of new people, and that the women here should be provided the opportunity to tell administration what they need to stay and be successful at the University. Comments indicated that candidates should be evaluated for their holistic contributions and qualities they will bring. Comments stated the “personality” should not be included in evaluations and hiring and promotion decisions, but that evaluation should be tied to competencies. Comments recommended that “rabble rousers” who have demonstrated their passion in their willingness to speak up about these issues be hired and promoted because they care and will effect positive change. Comments indicated a need to make sure that diversity hires are done well, with recognition of the inherent inequities that exist, without “ghetto-izing” the process. Comments indicated a need to value people – both those who are here already and those who come to the University – and to recognize, allow, respect, and embrace their real contributions (rather than to include them to “check the box”). Comments indicated a need for coaching and mentoring programs to support the success and advancement of women at the University. Comments indicated that mentorship should be aware of power dynamics, should help women maneuver the politics and history of the institution, and should consist of mentors both in and out of women’s home departments. Comments indicated that women need to be equipped and have access to professional development, and need to be able to amplify other women without competing for “the same piece of the pie.” Comments indicated a need for exit interviews for those who leave due to these issues (e.g., women faculty, faculty of color, queer faculty).

Increase representation of women at K-State. Comments indicated a need to recruit women and women of color into upper administration at the University. Comments indicated increased representation of women is needed to support and amplify women’s voices at the University. Comments indicated that women should be lifted up, celebrated, and encouraged, specifically by other women. Comments indicated that the University needs to create space and permission for courageous and protected conversations to help women connect and work together, and to engage in conversations for women to affirm and develop each other. Comments also indicated it cannot just be women better supporting women. Comments indicated that men (especially given their domination of the positions of power at the University) need to be held accountable for understanding the experiences of women, need to understand that their positive intentions do not always have the intended impact, and need to see their blind spots in their perceptions of women and the issues at the University. Comments indicated that women must be included in the review and revision of policies (e.g., sexual harassment and violence). Comments indicated that women must be included to expand the voices and diversity on committees, but must be listened to on those committees. Comments indicated that upper administration (e.g., the President’s Cabinets) and several high-level committees, including those that are tasked with addressing women’s issues (e.g., the President’s Commission), need to have a more diverse composition (e.g., beyond the “usual suspects”). Comments indicated that committees should stop seeking consensus on committees, because the goal of consensus does not honor diverse voices.

Promote diversity awareness. Comments indicated a need to provide diversity awareness training (possibly through HCS) for students, staff, faculty, and administrators (including international students, staff, faculty, and administrators). Comments indicated a hope that administrators were engaged in similar focus groups and similar reflection. Comments indicated a need to offer courses that promote diversity awareness, recognition of similarities among peoples, and respect for differences among peoples. Comments indicated that these courses need to be perceived as important as other courses in the curriculum (e.g., so students will recognize their value, such as by making the students more globally marketable). Comments indicated that these trainings and courses should be mandatory, and will provide opportunities for majority group members to engage in self-reflective work on these

issues. Comments indicated that these trainings should be valuable and delivered well (versus long, online trainings with little obvious value). Comments indicated these trainings should promote attendees and students to value and respect all people; to be aware of the issues with our language and what it implies; and to understand human individuality, complexity, and nuance. Comments indicated these trainings should include topics such as recognizing bias against women; stereotypes about women; recognizing common harmful treatments of women such as minimization, silencing, and sexual harassment; intersectionality (e.g., experiences of women of color); and LGBTQ+ issues. Comments acknowledged that these trainings and classes may promote anxiety for White attendees and students, but these will help them to be better people in the world, to take responsibility for thinking before speaking, and to reflect on their thoughts. Comments indicated that trainings by themselves will not change the University's culture. Comments indicated that attendees and students should work to be "the best for the world" rather than "the best in the world." Comments indicated a need to make land acknowledgements (e.g., at the beginning of classes) and to discuss what it means to be a land grant institution.

Hold those accountable for discrimination, harassment, and violence against women.

Comments indicated that administration must address systematic issues of inequality and hold those who perpetrate discrimination, harassment, and violence accountable. Comments indicated a need to conduct and publicize the Title IX survey (and that the Diversity Office should oversee the survey). Comments indicated a need to review and modify the reporting structure for sexual harassment and issues of discrimination at the University. Comments indicated the reporting structure and OIE (with is understaffed and underfunded) currently are not sufficient to handle the issues occurring at our University, and that too much labor unacceptably falls on those making the reports. Comments indicated that OIE is understaffed and underfunded. Comments asked for transparency about the funding of the Office of General Counsel versus OIE to see if realignment is warranted or would be helpful at the University – noting the University spends a lot of money contracting out for external legal counsel, and not as much for internal investigation of inequity (or at least does not do so visibly). Comments indicated a need to revise the Title IX policy and PPM 3010 to provide more appropriate protection for women at the University (including when harassment or violence happen between students, but occurs in areas considered off campus) and more severe punishment of perpetrators. Comments indicated the current policies regarding sexual violence on campus has produced mistrust by those at the University and does not serve survivors well.

Listen to and act on these concerns. Comments indicated that there is not enough funding for diversity offices and efforts, that the University remains reactive to problems rather than proactive with solutions. Comments indicated a need to put people (e.g., more than one person tasked with these issues in each college, an ombud devoted to managing these issues) and money behind initiatives to improve the situation. Comments indicated that these initiatives include everyone at the University (including upper administration doing so publically) rather than just individual offices (e.g., there must be a University effort to end violence against women rather than leaving it, for example, to the CARE office). Comments indicated that these initiatives may also require an investment in outside programs and resources (e.g., NCFDD) to promote the investment in our people and community at the University. Comments indicated that making everyone part of the initiatives would have a more positive overall impact on the system. Comments indicated that simple solutions do not exist, and that it is impossible to come up with a standard operating procedure to deal with diversity issues because this fails to acknowledge the complexity and nuance of these issues – a more dedicated plan is needed. Comments indicated that the current Climate Survey must be compared to the previous Climate Survey to identify action steps that were not implemented and issues that were not resolved. Comments indicated a historical lack of action by the University in recognizing and resolving these issues, and that having to

have these conversations again is exhausting. Comments indicated that real action is needed rather than the formation of powerless committees. Comments indicated pessimism in the process of these focus groups and what would come from them (especially given budget issues at the University), with participants asking if they would be able to provide feedback on the report, how they would be updated on progress toward the action items, and how transparent actions would be. Comments recommended that action start with smaller steps and build momentum, and recommended that the University prioritize the action items and provide transparent updates to the University community.