Many Voices.
One University.

Recommendations of the Syracuse University Climate Assessment Planning Committee

BACKGROUND

The Syracuse University Climate Assessment Planning Committee (CAPC)—in collaboration with Rankin & Associates Consulting—developed a comprehensive assessment of all students, faculty and staff designed to assess the learning, living and working environment at the University and elicit data to support the ongoing efforts to foster a safer, supportive and inclusive campus that enables all of its members the opportunity to realize their unique potential.

The Syracuse University Climate Assessment Survey was conducted in February and March 2016. The idea for the survey originated with the Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy, as one of the 24 recommendations in the workgroup's final report.

The online survey consisted of 118 items (29 qualitative and 89 quantitative) focused on the experiences and perceptions of various campus constituent groups related to sexual harassment and sexual or relationship violence, race, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability services, the academic environment for students, the workplace environment for faculty and staff, and other topics. Nearly 6,000 members of the University community completed the survey.

Rankin & Associates conducted a detailed analysis of the survey responses over the summer and early fall 2016, after which the complete survey report and the survey executive summary were provided to the University. Project consultant Susan R. Rankin led two public presentations on the survey findings on Oct. 27, 2016. The full report was made available on MySlice. The executive summary and a PowerPoint of Rankin's presentation were made available on the project's informational website: *survey.syr.edu*.

Subsequent to the release of the survey findings, four public "Campus Conversations" sessions were held in November and December 2016 and January and February 2017 to obtain additional input from members of the University community to inform the CAPC's final recommendations. Individuals were also invited to submit commentary via an online comments form accessible via *survey.syr.edu*. In addition, a "conversation toolkit" was created on *survey.syr.edu* to assist units interested in hosting their own small-group climate conversations. Those who did: Maxwell School staff and students, Bird Library staff, College of Arts and Sciences faculty and staff, Human Resources staff, Office of Health Promotion

peer educators, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment staff, and Office of Residence Life resident advisors and staff.

The CAPC considered information from the survey report and executive summary, all of the conversation sessions and input from the online comments form in determining its final recommendations.

Before presenting its recommendations, the CAPC wishes to acknowledge those at Syracuse University who are already involved in developing strategies involving campus climate issues, including:

- Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion
- Chancellor's Workgroup on Sexual Violence Prevention, Education and Advocacy
- Chancellor's Task Force on Sexual and Relationship Violence
- Council on Diversity and Inclusion
- Intergroup Dialogue Program
- Internationalization Council
- University Senate Committees on Diversity; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Concerns; and Women's Concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are recommendations of the Climate Assessment Planning Committee based upon analysis of the key findings of the SU Climate Assessment Survey and additional feedback gleaned from members of the University community.

Recommendation 1: Create a Shared First Year Forum for All Undergraduate Students

We recommend all first-year students be required to complete a first-year course that introduces basic concepts of campus climate, including education about available campus resources, diversity and inclusion, sexual and relationship violence prevention, and fostering students' sense of belonging. First-year forums, where currently offered, offer an opportunity to begin providing this education. Ideally, the first-year forum would be for the entire year, which would allow the course to include not only the above-mentioned content on climate, but also school/college/academic program integration, academic success strategies, life skills, etc.

While there are current offerings at Syracuse University that address concepts of campus climate, the reach of these offerings is limited to those students who voluntarily participate. Further, students who participate in one-time programs may be exposed to only certain facets of campus climate issues, depending on their self-selection to participate in certain programming.

Co-curricular programming provides opportunities for practical application of skills learned in the curricular setting and additional experiential learning. This may include strategic programming within the residential first-year centers and learning communities and better utilizing existing co-curricular programming to reinforce first-year course curricula.

This requirement will be connected to the Syracuse University 4+4 learning outcomes, specifically the Civic and Global competency, defined as: "Civic and global competence is the ability to understand, appreciate and engage with people from differing cultural, social, economic and geographic contexts, combined with the ability to demonstrate and promote responsible citizenship locally, nationally and globally." The Syracuse University 4+4 proposes that students engage in signature experiences and/or signature activities and be part of a co-curricular transcript.

Parties responsible for developing and implementing this recommendation: a) the vice chancellor and provost and b) the senior vice president for enrollment and the student experience.

Recommendation 2: Create a Coordinated Education and Professional Development Strategy for Campus Climate-Related Issues

A recurring theme that emerged in the Climate Assessment Survey feedback process was the need for more education and professional development on climate-related issues for University faculty, staff, students and administrators. We recommend a comprehensive education and professional development strategy be created; delivered via appropriate mechanisms with specific audience needs in mind (student, faculty, staff, administrative unit, etc.); and assessed on an annual basis. Portions of this training could be mandatory (i.e., Title IX training for student leaders).

Internal expertise, external expertise, and benchmarking of other campuses would help in identifying strategies that are successful at other institutions and could be adapted for the Syracuse community. Climate-related issues covered in educational and professional development opportunities should address staff supervision and support, diversity and inclusion, implicit bias, pro-social bystander education, sexual violence and relationship violence, sexual harassment and stalking, among other topics.

Parties responsible for developing and implementing the various educational and professional development programs:

- Office of the Vice Chancellor and Provost
- Office of Human Resources
- Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience, in collaboration with the Student Association

We recommend these efforts also involve the following University Senate committees: Academic Affairs; Diversity; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Concerns; Services to the Faculty and Staff; Student Life; and Women's Concerns.

Recommendation 3: Establish an Advisory Work Group on Staff Climate Matters

Strong participation from staff at all stages of the climate assessment process indicated substantive concern on campus about staff-related issues. We recommend an advisory committee be created, with broad-based representation of staff. The charge of the committee is to examine and form recommendations related to issues emerging from the climate assessment, including:

- concerns involving staff morale, why staff leave and what can be learned from staff who do not leave;
- source of and solutions for hierarchy concerns and classism experienced by staff;
- availability of career pathways and training opportunities;
- availability of avenues for addressing concerns; and
- review of policies and procedures affecting staff for differences in approach or treatment.

Responsibility for assembling and facilitating progress of this committee lies with the Office of Human Resources in partnership with major units across the University and the University Senate Committee on Services to the Faculty and Staff.

Recommendation 4: Develop ongoing overt communications pertaining to climate

The findings of the Climate Assessment Survey indicated a need for more transparency elevating the visibility of climate matters. We recommend creating an educational communications strategy to support ongoing improvements to the campus climate. Elements of this strategy could include:

- periodic communications from the Chancellor;
- an online mechanism for better internal and external communications on campus climate matters; and
- discussions within academic units around the question "How does your classroom/program/department contribute to the creation of an inclusive campus climate?"

The parties responsible for developing and implementing this recommendation:

- Office of the Vice Chancellor and Provost
- Office of the Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communications
- Office of the Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Recommendation 5: Continue to Assess the Syracuse University Climate

We recommend repeating selected portions of the assessment survey to monitor changes in the campus climate: separating and repeating items related to sexual and relationship violence every other year and repeating the remaining climate-related items as appropriate in 3-4 years, when impact of the other recommendations resulting from this assessment have had time to take effect. In addition, we believe academic and non-academic leaders should be encouraged to conduct climate conversations on a periodic basis.

The Climate Assessment Planning Committee co-chairs are responsible for ensuring this continued assessment strategy takes place, with participation from current committee members and new committee members.

This report is respectfully submitted by the Syracuse University Climate Assessment Planning Committee:

Libby Barlow, assistant vice president for institutional research and assessment (co-chair, principal investigator)
Rebecca Reed Kantrowitz, interim senior associate vice president and dean, Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience (co-chair)
Katelyn Cowen, director of the Office of Health Promotion
Bea Gonzalez, vice president for community engagement
Sheila Johnson-Willis, interim chief equal opportunity and Title IX officer
Andrew S. London, professor of sociology and associate dean of finance and administration in the Maxwell School
Mary E. Lovely, professor of economics and chair of the International Relations Program in the Maxwell School
Kevin Morrow, executive director of public affairs strategic communications, Division of Public Affairs
Daniel Moseson, graduate student, Department of Religion
Terra Peckskamp, director of the Office of Residence Life
Jonathan Schmidt, senior, College of Arts and Sciences
Barry L. Wells, special assistant to the Chancellor