Assessing Organizational Climate

Part I:
Why Assess?
What is the Process
Where do I Start?
Setting the Context for Beginning the Work

- Examine the Research
- Preparation = Readiness
- Addressing the Challenges
The Change Agent States for Diversity (CASD) project represents a catalytic step in leading change within the Land Grant University System.

In December 1998, the National Sub-Committee on Extension Diversity (SED) developed this visionary project in which eight states were selected to participate in a pilot effort focusing on diversity.
In October 1999, representatives from the eight states and selected members of the SED began working together to develop and implement a plan of action to address diversity in their organizations and institutions.

The Assessment Subcommittee of the CASD was charged with developing plans, related tools, and an implementation strategy for the eight states individually, and the CASD as a whole, to use in determining the organizations’ status and climate as it relates to diversity.

The committee determined that the first step in this process was an internal assessment of the current climate at each location.
Beginning in fall 2000, CASD contracted with an outside consultant to identify challenges confronting the CASD community with respect to underrepresented groups through an internal assessment.
Why conduct a climate assessment?

- To foster a caring organizational community that provides leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world.
- To open the doors wider for underrepresented groups is to create a welcoming environment.
- To improve the environment for working and learning.
What should a climate assessment provide?

- **Who are we?**
  - Determine community member’s demographic information

- **What are our Experiences?**
  - Review community member’s personal experiences

- **What are our Perceptions?**
  - Understand community member’s perceptions of the organizational climate
What should a climate assessment provide?

- What is the organization doing to address climate issues?
  - Community member’s Perceptions of Organizational Actions Relative to Diversity Issues

- What are our recommendations to make it better?
  - Participant Input into Recommendations for Improving the Organizational Climate
Institutional Transformation Model: Maximizing Equity©

- Current Campus Culture
- Access Retention
- University Policies/Services
- Research Scholarship
- Curriculum Pedagogy
- Intergroup & Intragroup Relations
- Assessment
  - Baseline Organizational Challenges
  - Systems Analysis
  - Local / Sate / Regional Environments
  - Contextualized Campus Wide Assessment
  - Advanced Organizational Challenges
  - Consultant Recommendations
- Transformation via Intervention
  - Symbolic Actions
  - Educational Actions
  - Fiscal Actions
  - Administrative Actions

Transformed Campus Culture
- Access Retention
- University Policies/Services
- Research Scholarship
- Curriculum Pedagogy
- Intergroup & Intragroup Relations

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Proposed Phases in Transformational Process

- Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Implementation & Accountability
Assessment
Initial Focus Groups

✓ to identify baseline organizational challenges
✓ to assist in developing survey questions
Assessment Systems Analysis

✓ to examine mission, structure, current policies, etc. in the organization

✓ to assist in developing survey questions
Assessment

Environmental Considerations

✓ Examine local, regional, and state environments

✓ to assist in developing survey questions
Assessment
Contextualized Campus-Wide Survey

✓ Organizational input
   (students, faculty, staff, & administrators)

✓ Web-based; paper & pencil; combination of both
Assessment
Reconvened Focus Groups

- to identify advanced organizational challenges / recommendations
- to assist in developing strategic plan
Assessment
Additional Recommendations

✓ Benchmarking, best practices, current research, etc.
✓ to assist in developing strategic plan
Organizational Prerequisites

1. Committed Top Leaders
2. Written description of the changed institution
3. Conditions that preclude maintenance of the Status Quo
4. Likelihood of a Critical Mass of Support
5. Awareness of resistance and the need to honor it

1Adapted from Beckhard, 1992
Organizational Prerequisites

6. A medium – long range perspective
7. Awareness of the need for education
8. The conviction that the change must be tried
9. Willingness to use resources
10. Commitment to maintaining the flow of information
Assessing Institutional Climate: Results of a National Study

- Purposeful Sampling
- Snowball Sampling
Survey Respondents Position

- Undergraduate students: 7347
- Staff: 3244
- Faculty: 2116
- Graduate/Professional Students: 1745
- Administrator: 577
- Declined to respond: 326
## Survey Respondents Sexual Identity

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Survey Respondents
Gender Identity

- Female: 9807
- Male: 5293
- Transgender: 38
Racial/Ethnic Identity (Duplicated Total)

- Middle Eastern
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Chicano(a)/Latino(a)/Hispanic
- African American/Black
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- White

- Middle Eastern: 335
- American Indian/Alaskan Native: 598
- Chicano(a)/Latino(a)/Hispanic: 908
- African American/Black: 1,098
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 1,341
- White: 11,923
People of Color & White People (Unduplicated Total)

- People of Color: 5,559
- White: 9,797
Other Selected Demographics

- Citizenship
  - 90% U.S. citizen (born in U.S.)

- Age
  - 22 and under = 45.2%
  - 23 – 32 = 18.3%
  - 33 – 42 = 12.5%
  - 43 – 52 = 14.7%
  - 53 and over = 9.3%

- Status
  - 94% of respondents were full-time students or employees
Other Selected Demographics

- Physically/mentally challenged
  - 4% of respondents (n=491)

- Student Residence
  - Off campus = 45.2% (n=4,253)
  - Residence hall = 43.3% (n=4,071)
  - Fraternity/sorority house = 6.4% (n=605)
  - Other campus housing = 3.1% (n=296)
  - Family student housing = 2.0% (n=185)
Challenges and Opportunities
25% (n=3767) of respondents reported experiencing conduct that interfered with their ability to work/learn on campus within the past year
Who is experiencing the conduct?

- Similar by position; e.g. equal percentages of students, faculty, staff, and students
- More often experienced by members of underrepresented groups:
  - 30% of people of color; 22% of white people
  - 28% of women; 19% of men
  - 42% sexual minorities; 24% heterosexual
Who is the source of the conduct?

- Students (53%)
- Faculty (30%)
- Staff (22%)
- Administrators (17%)
Who was the source of the conduct (%)?

- **Source = Student**: 60
- **Source = Faculty**: 30
- **Source = Staff**: 22
- **Source = Administrator**: 10

**Legend**:
- Source = Student
- Source = Faculty
- Source = Staff
- Source = Administrator
What form is the conduct?

- Derogatory remarks were the most common form of harassment (82%)
- More recent institutional studies indicate more subtle forms of harassment (ignored, excluded, intimidated, etc.)
### Perceptions of Climate People in Offices Accepting of:

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Perceptions of Climate “ism’s”

- **Racist?**
  - People of color (33%)
  - White respondents (17%)

- **Sexist?**
  - Women (26%)
  - Men (18%)
  - Transgender (46%)

- **Heterosexist?**
  - LGB (55%)
  - Heterosexual (35%)
Institution Addresses Race/Racism

56% respondents agree; 21% respondents disagree

People of color 49% agree; 28% disagree

White people 60% agree; 17% disagree
Institution Addresses Gender/Sexism

54% of respondents agree
23% of respondents disagree

Women 50% agree; 26% disagree
Men 61% agree; 16% disagree
Institution Addresses Homophobia/Heterosexism

49% of respondents agree
23% of respondents disagree

Heterosexual 51% agree; 21% disagree
LGB 35% agree; 45% disagree
“Often times I keep my mouth shut or don’t rock the boat so that I don’t fear for my job.”

“…I have heard or seen many cases of a chilly gender climate, not based on sexual harassment but rather on issues of power. That is men in power sending messages and behaving as if women belong in inferior positions.”

“As a Chicana, I felt ostracized even more. Forget about feeling a sense of community when you’re a member of two minority groups”.

“The events of Sept. 11 have generated a strong anti-Muslim, anti-Arab sentiment among many people in the country. The campus is, unfortunately, no exception.”
Next Steps….CASE

- In June 2004, seven new states were selected to participate in Change Agent States for Engagement (CASE), under the umbrella of the national Extension Diversity Task Force. These included the following states:
  - Western Region: Idaho, New Mexico, Washington
  - North Central Region: South Dakota
  - Eastern Region: Delaware
  - Southern Region: Louisiana, Mississippi
Questions....??
“Resistance begins with people confronting pain, whether it’s theirs or somebody else’s, and wanting to do something to change it”

--- bell hooks, “Yearning”
What did we Find?

“Resistance begins with people confronting pain, whether it’s theirs or somebody else’s, and wanting to do something to change it”

--- bell hooks, “Yearning”

TO BE CONTINUED.....