

Appendix A Comments Analysis

Out of the 577 surveys received from the UW Extension climate assessment, 489 different respondents contributed remarks to one or more of the open-ended questions throughout the survey. No respondents answered all open-ended questions. As the first several items were follow-up questions that allowed respondents to provide more detail about their answers to a previous question, the comments provided for those several items were included in the body of the UW Extension full report. This section of the report summarizes the comments¹ submitted for the last seven survey questions, and provides examples of those remarks echoed by several respondents.

Suggestions to Improve the Climate

Approximately 78 respondents offered suggestions for how to improve the climate at UW Extension. A few of the respondents indicated they thought the climate at UW Extension was positive and needed no improvement. Some people suggested that attention to diversity and inclusion comes at a cost to a dedicated and knowledgeable workforce. Several respondents offered concrete suggestions to improve the climate, including: providing mentors for all new employees (not just minority hires); creating diverse applicant pool for new hires; re-training all employees on conflict resolution; and leaders who affirm and direct the charge for diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Specific, and representative, comments included:

- *I think we should be providing mentors for all new co-workers (minority and non-minority) regardless of job title (un-classified, academic staff, classified, etc.).*
- *Provide more than lip service.*
- *Re: Mentors - I think all new EXT employees would benefit from a mentor, not just those from a minority culture/group however broadly that may be defined.*
- *It MUST come from top-down. When the leaders of the department (Chair, tenured faculty) are allowed to be less than exemplary, there seems to be no repercussions for non-professional behavior/communication.*
- *Allow for pay raises. My salary has only decreased over the past 3 years. That is why I am leaving UW Extension soon. There is no incentive to stay.*

¹ This report provides respondents' verbatim comments.

- *Have never seen a problem in these areas and so feel that most of these programs are a waste of resources.*
- *Recruiting a diverse pool of applicants for each opening is important and would be helped through advertising with media geared for minority audiences.*
- *Stop the lip service to a respectful workplace and implement one. Start with HR--they could use the training.*
- *I think we need to fix the classism issue instead of focusing on diversity, equity, and awareness.*
- *Get the county staff involved in these trainings!*
- *Leaders who listen to, interact with, and advocate for all of their staff create a respectful work climate.*
- *All managers/supervisor should be encouraged to take 2 inclusivity/multicultural professional dev offerings and a performance plan developed around measurable increases of awareness and behaviors in line with inclusive excellence.*
- *Administrators and HR Directors who act when the encounter and do not blame the victim.*
- *We are being "hit over the head" with "respect diversity" that there is starting to be some push back....sometime I feel like screaming "enough already I get it".*
- *Efforts targeted to specific groups actually cause additional alienation by the majority group having the exact opposite effect desired - simply put all must be treated equally and have equal access - if a program is specific for a minority group, need to defend that the majority group also has access to the same programs.*
- *Consider training and better mentoring of Division and Department leaders. Supervise these people, too! Make them accountable for climate issues like diversity, inclusion, best practices for hiring, budget articulation & management.*
- *Increase openness, transparency, create more equitable pay across counties and positions, pay a living wage, commit to flexible working schedules, don't expect more than 40 hours a week, get rid of dictatorial district directors, and ALWAYS SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEES FIRST!!!.*

Additional Thoughts on Campus Climate

Question 72 allowed respondents to elaborate on any of their survey responses, further describe their experiences, or offer additional thoughts about climate issues. About 131 people offered additional comments regarding their experiences and opinions. Several respondents felt that UW Extension was fair and inclusive, yet lacked numbers in terms of minority/underrepresented employees. A number of respondents wrote about state and local politicians and the effects their actions have had on the UW System and its employees. By and large, respondents wanted leaders to include them in decision-making and to be transparent in the processes. Several respondents described incidents of institutional classism, where some employees were treated

differently from others based on academic backgrounds and positions held at UW Extension.

Staff felt tensions from administrators and faculty.

- *Competitive salaries would help.*
As I answered this survey I thought of my years in the system. I would have to say the climate has improved over the past three to four years. There was a time when there were a number of unwritten rules that governed pay raises and promotions. This has caused several of the problems we have today. Unfortunately the current leadership is unable to correct these situations thus we still suffer with compression.
- *Communication skills are very important in creating a strong climate... how we give feedback and when. We are very conscious of our power structure here, which is based upon those with upper class status, higher level degrees, (in our division mostly male -- all new appointments have been), all are white... so often our leaders communicate very sharply from this "upper level" viewpoint...*
- *I feel the practice of requiring closed session for faculty tenure review and professorship is unfair to candidates and protects those on the committee. Unfair and discriminatory statements come out but candidates cannot defend themselves because all items discussed during closed sessions cannot be used.*
- *I think the biggest issue I have felt personally is the "classism" between different staff- County vs. state, academic vs. faculty, classified vs. unclassified. The talk is about equality but some of the policies (professional development funds and opportunities) and attitudes at mixed staff statewide gatherings do not reflect that same feeling.*
- *Provide a way for Classified Staff to compete for merit raises. Make it easier for reclassifications to happen and encourage supervisors to "go to bat" for their staff.*
- *We have a real issue with classism within the organization. Salary compression leads to some of this. We have things to fix internally since we are doing a great job externally.*
- *Again, I feel the climate overall at UW Extension is very positive. I think it is within some individual county work units, that the climate could be improved somewhat.*
- *In general, there are not enough minority hires and we also come up short in our understanding and treatment of conservative Christians. There is too much bending over backwards for gays and other unusual lifestyles while the Christians who comprise a majority of the citizenry have little input.*
- *Included in the climate is a feeling that the diversity effort in some ways negates the non-diverse. It would be good to discuss this along with strategies to prevent these feelings*
- *Recognizing the issues of having people with part-time appointments with full-time responsibilities who work in a department/unit where everyone else is full-time and available five days a week. Recognizing that part-time staff does not have that same level of availability to staff meetings, unit meetings, and other events. Recognizing how that can make part-time staff feel isolated, biased against, and of lesser class.*

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey and process itself. Some applauded UW Extension's participation in the assessment and wanted to make certain that the results of the survey were made public and used to better UW Extension. Several respondents insisted that

UW Extension leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result.

- *Curious to know how this survey will be implemented to improve the climate and working environment. A follow up sent to ALL would be helpful.*
- *This survey addresses personal diversity (cultural, sexual, religious) but does not address work interactions such as team building or other substantive content-based parameters.*
- *This is a good survey must be continued periodically.*
- *This strikes me as a poorly designed and confusing survey. It's insular. It's all about the survey designers and not the survey takers. It's full of insider assumptions and insiderspeak. I'm sure I'm not the only one who became increasingly annoyed with it. I don't think you will be getting valid data. A poor tool for a laudable goal.*
- *When I saw this survey asking about the climate of employee attitudes in the organization I thought it was going to be in reaction to the value and respect of state employees in light of Governor Walkers hateful budget. Instead I find that it's focused on issues of prejudice over race, color, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Things we should have learned to deal with in kindergarten.*
- *didn't like inability to move between screens,,, going back arrow, I lost some work and had to start over*