Leadership Council Notes

March 26, 2014
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
California Room

I. Welcome

As Chancellor Leland was unable to attend due to illness, Assistant Chancellor Annette Garcia welcomed the group to this World Café session and introduced the presenters of the short agenda prior to the World Café.

II. Brief Announcements

**Staff Excellence Awards**
*Staff Assembly President Unruh*

In Katie Unruh’s absence, Past President Rachael Martin announced that Staff Assembly has only a few nominations and the nomination period closes on Monday, so the group is encouraged to consider submitting nominations.

III. General Remarks on Campus Climate

**Overview of Campus Climate Survey**
*Assistant Vice Chancellor Collins*

Most of the attendees were aware that this survey is almost two years old now, and the data is just now being received. Good news is that 65-70% students responded and indicated that they are almost entirely comfortable in classroom climate. Opportunities have been revealed to address the bad news, which is that 26% respondents that were members of staff felt that they had fallen victim to some sort of hostile behavior. Additionally, 2% of staff respondents indicated that at some point they had been sexually harassed in the last five years. Chancellor Leland has announced that she will increase the size of the advisory council and task them with addressing these issues.

**Revised Principles of Community**
*Assistant Vice Chancellor Collins*

UC Merced’s Principles of Community were updated through an interactive process led by the Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture and Inclusion (CCCI). The revised principles were officially issued on March 26, 2014 and a copy was distributed to the Leadership Council attendees.
IV. World café Introduction & Instructions

Ombuds De Acker introduced the table hosts and explained that the group would be presented with a question and the host would help facilitate conversations in their small groups while taking notes. After a fifteen-minute period, the participants would be changing tables and receive a new question. De offered some definition of “climate” as the prevailing attitude, standards or environmental conditions of a group. The campus climate is a model of diversity, and creates the quality of respect and support felt by all members of the campus community. De indicated that after the notes are collected from the “harvest,” the information will be provided to the Campus Climate Committee.

V. World Café Interactive Session

Question Round One
“In your personal experience, what are the areas that could be improved in terms of campus climate?”

Question Round Two
“How can we enhance campus climate and encourage respect and inclusion on an institutional level?”

Question Round Three
“What will you do personally to enhance climate and encourage respect and inclusion?”

Harvesting of Ideas

A pause was offered for the participants to personally reflect on what they got from their sessions and what they might like to report. The group was then encouraged to report to their host what they would like shared with the group in the harvest session and some key points that they would like to see shared from the table.

Summary Notes from Discussions:

- Always assume the best in our colleagues and not the worst.
- Cultivation of professional relationships should be a priority.
- Encourage personal calls and personal conversations versus emails and texts.
- Need for appreciation of the importance of formal communication and information sharing between supervisors and employees.
- More informal communication should be encouraged across campus and between departments to build a stronger sense of community.
- There exist both challenges and opportunities within our community. Our awareness of the need to support our student diversity can help to frequently remind us of this.
- Our culture is changing for the better; from “get it done” to “get it done correctly!”
• There is the opportunity to not only respect our stakeholders, but to build a culture of excitement and greater sense of community.

• We need to allow the time to develop relationships, despite the fact, or perhaps because of the fact that everyone is so busy.

• To positively change the climate, protect confidentiality.

• The connection between leadership and staff can be greatly enhanced in other settings outside of formal meetings and interactions.

• We should remain aware of the document regarding our principles of community in our daily actions.

• There is a need for addressing inherent tensions and addressing those tensions, even if that might mean gently holding people accountable for their lack of civil behavior in order to increase their awareness.

• Make the principles of community a daily awareness.

• There needs to be a freedom to feel it is allowed to gently hold people accountable for their actions.

• We need to be recognized for our individuality.

• Emails should be positive at beginning and end, even when conveying a problem or challenge.

• There is more need to encourage employees and offer rewards for their hard work (such as the past Top Cat Awards).

• We need to think about going out of our way to encourage employees more often.

• There are just too many of many emails and information becomes overlooked or diluted by the volume.

• We need clearer business processes as these could help reduce conflicts and frustrations.

• We might rethink about our new employee orientation to encourage principles of community, acknowledging that not all new employees are familiar with the higher education context which can differ from other environments.

• There is too much cc-ing “of the world” in emails, especially with emails that contain negative comments.

• Encourage staff to expand interaction of departments and from small groups to larger groups.

• Avoid carrying forward old or ingrained “negative opinions” about other departments and allow for opportunities for improved relationships to evolve.
• Communication can be difficult or greatly discouraged when it’s all but impossible to get on someone’s calendar for a one-on-one conversation.

• There are perhaps more opportunities for outreach to be considered. For example, one might extend an invitation to a colleague or colleagues and encourage casual discussions over lunch at locations such as our Dining Commons.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Crescent Arch Room.