Campus Culture Report DRAFT – Feedback welcome

BACKGROUND

In May 2019, Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox appointed the Campus Culture Task Force, co-chaired by Associate Vice Chancellor Mariam Lam and Dean Christopher Lynch, as part of a larger effort to foster a more supportive campus culture that reflects UCR's Principles of Community. The Chancellor's charge was simple and straightforward: propose concrete, clear recommendations for individual and collective changes based on best practices; and define what success will look like.

Previous campus climate surveys have highlighted the importance of creating and sustaining a healthy campus culture. The importance of campus culture was recently heightened by egregious violations of UC policies by a former senior administrator. These violations have prompted some important changes to formal policies and procedures; they have also prompted reflection about the informal practices that shape the culture across camps. The Task Force was asked to review previous data, develop recommendations, and offer guidance on implementation with a goal toward improving both formal and informal campus systems, processes, and protections for members of our community.

The scope of this task force largely focuses on the campus culture concerns of staff and faculty. However, it is important to recognize at the outset that there are significant campus culture concerns from students as well. Some of those concerns will overlap with the framing and recommendations here; others are unique and deserve their own focus and consideration. Part of the process of gathering feedback from the UCR community will include consulting with Student Affairs personnel and student groups about the best ways to develop a uniquely student-centered focus on campus culture in the near future.

PREVIOUS DATA

The Council of UC Staff Assemblies (CUCSA) administered engagement surveys in 2015, 2017, and 2019. The most recent survey showed selective, modest improvement. However, UCR remains below the U.S. norm across the range of categories included in the instrument, and below the UC system in most categories. A summary overview is included below.

University of California System
Staff Engagement Survey (UCR Results)
2019

Strengths *(highest % favorable)*	Opportunities for Improvement *(lowest % favorable)*
1. I believe strongly in the teaching, research, and public service mission of the UC system (94% agreed; equal to UC average; 3 points above national average).	1. Most of the time it is safe to speak up in this organization. (50% agreed; 9 points below UC average; 19 points below national average)

2. My supervisor is supportive of my participation in health or wellness-related initiatives and programs offered at my campus/location (75% agreed; 1 point above UC average; custom question, no national benchmark available). 3. I am proud to be associated with the UC system (88% agreed; 1 point above UC average; equal to national average).	2. At the present time, are you seriously considering leaving the UC system? (53% agreed; 6 points below UC average; 19 points below national average) 3. I think I could report instances of dishonest or unethical practices to the appropriate level of authority without fear of reprisal (60% agreed; 7 points below UC average; 19 points below national average).

In 2014 Sue Rankin, Ph.D., of Rankin & Associates Consulting, was engaged by the University of California to conduct a system-wide climate study. Dr. Rankin's findings included four areas of strength and three opportunities for improvement at the Riverside campus, that are summarized below. In her analysis, Dr. Rankin stated, "The findings for the University of California are consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country based on the work of the consultant."

University of California System
Campus Climate Project Final Report (Rankin)
March 2014

Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
● High levels of comfort with the climate at the University ● Faculty and Staff - Positive attitudes about work-life issues ● Students - Positive attitudes about academic experiences ● Students and Trainees – More than half of all Student and Trainee respondents found the courses offered at UC contained materials and information that reflected diverse perspectives and experiences	● Some members of the community experienced exclusionary conduct ● Several constituent groups indicated that they were less comfortable with the overall campus climate, workplace climate, and classroom climate ● A small but meaningful percentage of respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact

Although the two studies were not intended to accomplish the same goals, they provided useful reference points for the Task Force in identifying issues and specific problems, and crafting recommendations that aimed at improving campus culture in the years to come.

DEFINING THE FUTURE STATE

UCR seeks to embody best practices in addressing abuse of power dynamics inherently present among campus constituencies, including senior leadership, middle management, supervisors, individual staff members, faculty members, and students. The future state would align UCR's Principles of Community and core values (integrity, excellence, accountability, and respect) with employee and student behaviors, in ways that are universally understood, continually reinforced, and observable in daily campus activities. What follows is a more detailed description of the desired future state.

Leaders, managers, and supervisors will be responsible and accountable for fair, respectful treatment of faculty, staff, and students. The atmosphere will be constructive, collegial, and respectful of shared governance. A commonly defined code of conduct will guide interactions in every area of campus, and will be introduced to new faculty and staff members upon joining UCR. Leaders will create an environment where mentoring relationships naturally develop between and among generations, races, genders, orientations, disciplines, ideologies, and perspectives. Campus leaders will work closely with each college, school, or administrative unit to develop accountability processes and mediating structures where all faculty (including lecturers, adjuncts, and junior faculty), staff, and students can safely report uncomfortable or inappropriate behaviors to departments, with confidence that the behavior will be addressed and without fear of retribution.

People will seek to learn from others with different life experiences. These professional and collegial relationships will encourage constructive feedback and hold individuals accountable for inappropriate behaviors without fear of retaliation. The employee performance review processes for faculty members and staff members will provide timely feedback to employees. These feedback opportunities will be tools for change in which everyone participates with confidence that their voice is heard.

Faculty members participate in mentoring of junior colleagues and students. Faculty members at all levels will receive ongoing support in navigating evolving expectations and norms. This mentoring is part of their responsibility to demonstrate a strong teaching and mentorship portfolio in addition to a strong research and teaching record during the merit and promotion process. Students are aware of the resources available to them for reporting abusive behavior and for advancing their own wellness. They participate confidently in providing constructive feedback.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force identified three major categories of issues and created recommendations to address each. Some of the recommendations will speak to multiple issues, but are listed below under the main problem each is primarily intended to address. A larger list of tactics is included at the end of this report.

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I. Recommendations for Senior Leadership: Build Trust, Accountability, and Transparency

The current campus culture has been shaped by many factors. There has been significant senior leadership turnover during the past decade, as well as a recent case of a former vice chancellor's malfeasance. There has also been growing cynicism associated with a perceived lack of transparency, leading to declining trust in leadership and management. Many campus organizations are structurally deep; and multiple layers of management create line-of-sight challenges between leadership and front-line staff. Moreover, accessibility and visibility of leadership has been described as a major concern among students, staff, and faculty. It has become increasingly common to suspect the motives of those in authority; and that dynamic appears particularly relevant to UCR's present culture.

The university's senior leaders are ultimately and collectively responsible for fostering a positive culture across the campus and, importantly, within their respective divisions and organizations. Senior leadership in this context is broadly defined as the Chancellor and Provost, Vice Chancellors, Associate/Assistant Vice Chancellors, Deans, Vice Provosts, Associate/Divisional Deans, Associate/Assistant Vice Provosts (generally administrators who are senior to a department chair role or director role). There are times when specific observations and recommendations will be directed at unit heads, and others when it is the tier of management who report to those leaders.

Managing a broad diversity of employees – faculty, staff (represented, non-represented), students – defies a single approach, but the Task Force agrees all senior leaders must be held to a shared set of values and principles. Shared governance places additional complexity on decision-making and culture-building. Consultation and deliberation are prized and valued by our community, but can be confusing for those joining UCR from outside the UC system.

For leaders, multiple pressures distract from focusing on building a healthy culture. Competing demands reduce time to reflect and attend to the needs of teams. Yet, research has shown that culture and performance are linked; and these connections are reinforced in UC Personnel Policies for Staff Members. Students are held to distinct expectations of behavior, adjudicated by Student Conduct & Academic Integrity Programs.

Sample Recommendations & Action Steps for Campus Leaders (see also the full table)

- Have regular two-way communication with direct reports and at least two levels down
- Model desirable values and behaviors toward culture and climate goals
- Focus on one value per year and develop speakers, resources, communication at all levels
- Define and develop mechanisms to monitor signs of abusive power
- Identify why leaders fail to act, and provide resources to help assess situations and respond to complaints
- Promote training opportunities for improving campus culture
- Collect data on campus culture in a systematic way to measure progress

II. Recommendations for Supervisors and Faculty: Foster Ethical Use of Power

The power differential in relationships between supervisors and staff, faculty and students, and senior and junior faculty, are characterized by inherent power imbalances and opportunities for impropriety. Unfortunately, this power differential can further lead to real and perceived misconduct. While the campus compiles and releases statistics on formal misconduct complaints, such as Title IX and whistleblower statute violations, the extent to which more subtle or insidious behavior pervades campus culture is only known anecdotally. Such incidents must be addressed by professionally-trained staff to provide resolution, in order to prevent future misconduct and to educate faculty, students and staff on expected behaviors in the workplace.

At the root of dissimilar treatment of and consequences for misbehaving faculty and staff is the faculty tenure system and the different standards of evidence used in senate disciplinary proceedings that elevate faculty roles to a more privileged status. These realities can be perceived to mean faculty are held to more lenient cultural norms and are entitled to differential treatment, which can lead staff and students to view faculty members (and physicians) as being "untouchable," or normalizing of uncivil behavior ("that's just how 'they' are").

Academic Senate members' behavior is governed by the Faculty Code of Conduct, Policy 15 of the Academic Personnel Manual, that describes processes and procedures different than those for other employees, as well as the *UCR Principles of Community*, which apply to the entire campus. A key distinction for Academic Senate members is that findings of misconduct are not considered in professional advancement determinations – a privilege unique to faculty members, and one difficult for those not governed by the same rules (staff, students) to embrace.

Faculty workload is extraordinarily high at top tier research institutions and the pressure to establish a high-profile research program and secure external funding under fierce competition is intense. This pressure is felt acutely, particularly for untenured assistant professors who are also in a relationship with an inherent power imbalance with senior faculty. This pressure to succeed can directly or indirectly create strain on students. Among graduate students this can lead to real or perceived unreasonable workload expectations and among undergraduate students a sense that faculty don't care about teaching and only value research. Graduate students' uncertainty, and surprise, about what a normative workload for success in academia entails can create frustration and resentment, ultimately leading to low morale and potential micro-aggressions. This can lead to acrimony and demoralization within the research group and throughout the workplace.

Faculty members are not immune to mistreatment, particularly when they belong to a minority group; for example, junior women of color, queer faculty, and trans faculty are vulnerable to discrimination by students in lectures, labs, discussions, anonymous student evaluation surveys, and by faculty across all facets of academic life. Such discrimination based on race and gender sometimes occurs under the guise of academic reasoning or freedom. Women and underrepresented minority faculty members report heightened expectations of faculty workload

where they are expected to expend greater emotional labor in mentoring graduate and undergraduate students (Moore, Acosta, Perry, and Edwards, 2010).

Students and junior faculty members have expressed a justifiable concern that complaints through formal or informal channels could damage their professional careers. These fears are stoked by the confidentiality surrounding faculty misconduct charges and resulting sanctions; a common view is that faculty "protect their own." The Task Force acknowledges that there are times when discipline may not be disclosed under Appendix 5.3.1 of the UCR Academic Senate Bylaws, which provide a high level of protection for the privacy of faculty members whose cases are reviewed by the Charges and Privilege and Tenure committees.

In a recent survey 20.4% of UCR graduate student respondents noted that they had experienced hostile or exclusionary behavior in labs from faculty, other students or staff. Behaviors range from obvious cases of misconduct (bullying, sexual harassment, sexist/racist/homophobic behavior) which have avenues for formal complaint, to less overt misconduct such as passive aggressive behavior, disrespect, lack of professionalism, and exortations to develop a "thick skin" – micro-behaviors that build up over time. Undergraduate students associated with underrepresented groups report experiencing disrespect and microaggressions from faculty or TAs in the classroom as well as from campus authorities.

Sample Recommendations & Action Steps for Supervisors and Faculty (see also full table)
Training and support for staff supervisors, academic leaders, and faculty, enabling:

- Open, inclusive communication
- Effective meeting facilitation
- Healthy power/gender/race dynamics
- Succession plans and mentoring
- Broad participation in leadership across campus

Accountability:

- Feedback loops - 360 reviews, engagement surveys, exit interviews, merit/promotion
- External reviews & coaching
- Improved follow-up with complainants
- Annual performance goals related to climate

III. Recommendations for Individuals: Exercise Personal Role in Improving Climate

We know that bad actors on campus sometimes seem to remain unchecked. In some instances, this is because the misconduct has not been detected or established through a formal investigation and due process. In cases where the misconduct is established but not visibly or acceptably addressed, the campus appears to tolerate behavior defined by our own standards as intolerable, such as harassment or retaliation.

There are currently units in which it may appear that small infractions are amplified and immediately addressed while addressing more egregious behavior is avoided or handled in a

confidential process, creating a confusing environment where discipline seems more common for less serious misconduct. This may reflect supervisors' reluctance to manage conflict or implement corrective action or progressive discipline in proportion to infractions – an abrogation of a manager's core duty. The campus response to misconduct can appear disproportionate and inconsistently applied.

Misconduct may go undetected due to reporting barriers or failure to effectively intervene or investigate. Communication and reporting channels must be clear and safe, and the culture must support and encourage reporting of behaviors that do not align with UCR's values and policies. When a report is made, it must be promptly and thoroughly reviewed, or we risk failing to identify bad actors. Interventions must be consistent, decisive, and effective, and may include performance improvement plans, training, or more serious discipline if circumstances warrant.

Culture and climate are impacted by infrastructure, particularly staff and systems. By any measure, UCR's staff ratios are substantially lower than at sister campuses (UCR Institutional Research, 2019). If resources are not invested in staff capacity or if reductions in workload expectations do not occur through such mechanisms as process improvement, increased use of automation, or reducing or eliminating low priority/low impact activities, tension will increase and culture/climate improvement may be hindered. Honoring standards, including providing supervisors with training and resources necessary to hold people accountable, requires adequate staffing.

Defining abusive behavior and distinguishing it from appropriate managerial actions such as addressing poor performance, is essential. There are compounding factors of power and authority that indicate a need to clarify the points of accountability for leadership. Leaders should have clearly defined policies for managing performance and reporting significant misconduct. They should also be prepared to regularly communicate positive expectations for work culture; this may include providing informal interventions and continuous feedback as they see harmful behaviors that may not rise to the level of an official complaint but do not promote a healthy culture.

Sometimes bad actors may be peer colleagues, and part of improving campus culture is learning how to appropriately and constructively call out behavior that contributes to a toxic work culture among co-workers. While the focus in this section is largely on improving reporting, much of toxic behavior needs to be addressed by broad use of conflict mitigation strategies, such as the facilitator moving the discussion from the individual to the issue.

<u>Sample Recommendations & Action Steps for Individuals (see also full table)</u>

- Familiarize yourself with the processes for reporting abuse, including grievance process
- Utilize and share resources and tools (mental health support, approaches for resolving interpersonal conflicts, bystander training)
- Participate in healthy communication in departments
- Honor rights & responsibilities as laid out in the Principles of Community, codes of conduct, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

Recommendations	Action Steps
Hold campus leaders and managers responsible for a healthy campus culture	● Institute manager/leader meetings and interactions with team members beyond direct reports (at least 2 levels down) ● Incentivize managers (staff & faculty alike) to engage in training as part of their professional development ● Incorporate culture management into annual performance management process for leaders and managers ● Separate evaluation of managerial competence from evaluations of teaching and scholarship; clarify accountability for faculty supervisors ● Create departmental succession plans ● Define abuse of power and develop intervention strategies when warning signs are observed ● Develop a list of acceptable behaviors/norms to provide clarity on Principles of Community ● Identify reasons leaders fail to act and identify resources to assess, weigh options, and respond ● Distribute regular surveys to provide upward feedback; consider 360 reviews ● Provide suggestion boxes (physical and email) ● Establish a standing "culture transformation committee" to guide implementation and provide periodic evaluation of outcomes / improvements
Create expectation that individuals will confront or report behaviors that violate our Principles of Community or UC values	● Identify reasons campus community members choose not to report ● Provide additional anonymous reporting options ● Highlight mental health resources to overcome fear of reporting ● Make the grievance processes clear, lower perceived barriers to reporting ● Communicate results to complainants as allowed by law and policy ● Create a dashboard or regular report (like Clery) that shows overall responses
Establish systems, structures, and processes for clearer communication of expectations for faculty, staff, and students	● Clearly communicate faculty code of conduct expectations to campus ● Create comparable rights/responsibilities/expectations documents for staff and students ● Widely distribute and publicize campus resources for faculty, students, and staff ● Clarify and articulate range of sanctions for violating code of conduct ● Address problematic conduct directly, firmly, and in a timely manner ● Escalate response to more serious behaviors quickly ● External peer reviews of units/departments
Increase training and support for staff supervisors and academic leaders	● Develop retreat toolkits ● Disseminate National Academies of Science (NAS) report on faculty-graduate student interactions, departmental toolkits, references, social norming prevention initiatives ● Create tools to develop clear mission, shared values, communication norms ● Educate community on bystander interventions ● Offer training on: ○ Emotional intelligence and how to create psychological safety

	○ Effective meeting facilitation ○ Implicit Bias ○ Power/gender/race dynamics and on understanding microaggressions ○ Active listening and feedback skills ● Develop assessment and accountability measures for training ● Provide department chairs with assessment timeline for meeting learning outcomes with graduate students ● Develop additional recognition mechanisms for staff and faculty
Increase training and support for faculty and strengthen support for graduate students	● Train graduate chairs on accountability structures, mentorship and anti-oppression frameworks ● Consider include letters from former students in the merit/promotion process to make the process more holistic and mitigate retaliation fears ● Develop & share best practices for departmental faculty mentoring programs ● Institute faculty mentor training with hiring process for graduate students ● Disseminate training/tools/modules from National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity ● Develop checks and balances for faculty members on individual student decisions ● Share policy information in student orientation in departmental handbooks
Improve faculty onboarding	● Create new faculty orientation that is more of a normalized and integrated process of initial introduction ○ Use case studies for hands-on training + role-playing scenarios ○ Emphasize importance of teaching + mentorship alongside research + publication ● Adopt onboarding mentorship "circle" approach with multiple mentors ● Create a clear set of guidelines and expectations for student mentoring and creating a healthy class climate via an anti-oppression framework. ● Articulate clear student effort and time expectations ● Uniformly include in syllabi lists of support resources
Collect and share data in a continuous and organized way	● Adopt a shared survey instrument ● Create a campus-facing progress dashboard on culture/climate metrics ● Conduct local biannual climate surveys alternating with CUCSA ● Improve exit (or "stay") interview process to produce useful data ● Promote, disseminate qualitative research on campus climate ● Publicize improvements in infrastructure and culture
Improve communication and morale	● Recognize and highlight good examples (role models) ● Share lessons learned from books, articles, conferences, or other settings that can contribute positively to culture ● Provide executive coaching aligned to core values and Principles of Community ● Select one leadership-led value per year to explore more deeply ● Ensure evaluation criteria that fairly and consistently rate employees across departments ● Generate realistic messaging about campus resources v. capacity ● Create climate and culture goals for UCR's strategic plan

COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a number of stakeholder groups that can provide important feedback in the development of these recommendations, as well as the eventual implementation of the finalized recommendations:

- Employee Labor Relations
- Campus Leadership retreat
- Subset of staff/faculty - to ask for feedback on the list of reasons people do not report
- Academic Senate (faculty welfare and executive council)
- Staff Assembly
- Department chair forums
- Compliance Office Team
- ASUCR / Dean of Students office - organizing student groups
- 5 year review or check-in on the progress on these recommendations

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Mariam Lam (co-chair)	Chris Lynch (co-chair)		
Mary White	Karla Aguilar	Ertem Tuncel	Kiersten Boyce
Dan Jeske	Drew Hecht	Helen Regan	Georgianne Carlson
Peter Hayashida	Liz Mondragon	Crystal Baik	Ross French
Andrew Larratt-Smith	Boniface Fokwa	Katina Napper	

TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

The main committee consisting of all members met every two weeks.

The main committee was divided into four sub-committees that each met two weeks to address topical issues in key areas of:

1. Campus Leadership: Setting the tone for shaping culture and power dynamics

2. Department Chairs / Directors: Creating healthy micro-cultures in departments and units

3. Faculty and Students: Interactions at all levels including UG, G, TA, lecturers, faculty

4. Supervisors and Staff: Interactions both horizontally and vertically across units

CAMPUS CULTURE TASK FORCE GOALS

The campus culture task force was established with three broad goals:

1. To foster a "Thriving Campus Community", reinforced by our Principles of Community and a collective commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment in which each person has the opportunity to grow and develop.

2. To strengthen our commitment to addressing and eliminating all instances of sexual violence and sexual harassment (SVSH), and other forms of abusive and inappropriate conduct, such as discrimination, incivility, bullying, retaliation, and favoritism.

3. To hold ourselves and each other accountable to achieve the above goals, by communicating our formal policies and procedures, as well as providing informal strategies, resources, practices, and interventions.

REFERENCES

Helen A. Moore, Katherine Acosta, Gary Perry & Crystal Edwards (2010) Splitting the Academy: The Emotions of Intersectionality at Work, The Sociological Quarterly, 51:2, 179-204, DOI: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2010.01168.x

APPENDICES

Case studies prepared by the sub-committees will be available upon request.