

Equity and Inclusion Educational Outreach¹ Working Group 'White Paper'² Fall 2017

Overview

Context and rationale: This white paper was developed by the Equity and Inclusion Educational Outreach Working Group as a contribution to a wider effort in thinking about issues of equity and inclusion on our campus. The working group was sponsored by Dr. Luoluo Hong, Vice President of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management (SAEM), and its composition was determined through extensive consultation with units of Academic Affairs and with Associated Studies, Inc.

We have developed this white paper with an awareness of the forthcoming campus climate assessment and the work of campus task forces and engagement strategies. We seek to make a contribution in the realm of theory that consciously precedes the development of the assessment.

The context of this work is the presence of indicators of systemic, pervasive exclusion experienced by some communities on campus. The assessment will no doubt reveal more information about these experiences, but even prior to the survey we see evidence of campus unrest and mobilization through a series of protests, free speech demonstrations, media attention regarding the campus reputation, responses to an LGBTQ campus climate survey conducted by an MA student in Sexuality Studies, recent departures of some high-level staff, and a broad disparity in data about graduation rates across communities at SFSU.

The problem: We have a campus environment that is not affirming and inclusive of all communities, as evidenced by the aforementioned examples of campus discord. This climate negatively impacts academic performance, health and wellness, safety and self-expression, student success, and graduation.

¹ Members named to this working group including Beverly Voloshin, Leticia Marquez-Magana, Trevor Getz, Colleen Hoff, Richard Nizzardini, Aimée Barnes, Manuel Alejandro Perez, Johnetta Richards, Rachael Cunningham, Chantel Heard, Gabriela Cerros, Yusra Oweis, Janet Lopez, Esperanza Castillo, and Mohammed Alnuzaili.

² We use this term advisedly. White Papers developed as an official bureaucratic term in early 20th century Britain for brief documents generated by individuals or small groups meant to inform and educate a readership. They were distinct from Green Papers, which involved greater consultation with a broader public.

Hypothesis: We predict that three inter-related activities that include a focus on theory, practice, and iterative evaluation have the potential to create the necessary changes for improved campus climate. These activities will improve the institution by growing community, creating public accountability, and dismantling hegemonic systems of power and hierarchy.

Procedure and Approach: This white paper is submitted to Vice-President Hong for further consideration and possible implementation of three inter-related proposals that follow to inform and leverage the campus climate in an iterative fashion. The process will include the following (not necessarily sequential) steps.

Step 1: Dissemination of this white paper as a framework for guiding university-wide efforts that create an affirming and inclusive campus community and eliminate the Equity Gap.

Step 2: Broad consultation and engagement with multiple communities on campus about the appropriateness, desirability, and processes for implementing the SAFE model, the campus climate survey, and the proposed evaluation process. Once feedback has been received, and in the wake of the campus climate survey, successors to this working group will conceivably seek input on processes for implementing changes. Immediate consultation should include the Student Success and Graduation Initiative (SSGI), Academic Affairs Council, President's Cabinet, colleges and departments, student groups, and other units of SAEM.

Step 3: Approval (as modified, if necessary) by the Division of Equity and Community Inclusion of the proposed organizational model.

Proposal 1

“Grow the SAFE environment” across the university: increase the capacity to have conversations, largely through trainings that culminate in behavioral shifts.

We propose the adoption of a campus-wide model to guide implementation of activities aimed at improving the campus climate. The SAFE model created by the EIEO workgroup:

1. Includes evidence-based strategies developed and tested at SF State;
2. Aims to promote better understanding of SF State history, culture and students; and
3. Fosters systemic opportunities for self-reflection, and learning, to elicit change,

The SAFE (Signaling Affirmation for Equity) model includes a series of interventions that are expected to grow a positive environment and to create agents of change. In particular, their implementation is predicted to result in contextual shifts (i.e., an affirming and inclusive campus community) that will in turn promote psychosocial shifts (improved academic efficacy, sense of belonging and dignity) to attain behavioral shifts necessary for all students to succeed and thereby eliminate the Opportunity Gap. This model was created by members of EIEO based on data gathered by several units on campus and can be modified as necessary to incorporate new findings identified from the campus climate assessment.

Proposal 2

Develop and Institutionalize Baseline Competencies in equity and inclusion for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

In support of campus equity and inclusion efforts and student success objectives and guided by the implementation of the SAFE model, we propose that SF State create a multi-pronged strategy for equipping faculty, staff, and administrators with the tools to meet the needs of our diverse student body in the classroom, advising, and beyond; and to align mastery of these competencies with the development of best practices and policy standards. These strategies might include:

- University-wide compulsory training for faculty and staff to engage curricular decolonization, acquire culturally-relevant pedagogies, develop accessible and inclusive advising practices, and learn tools for stereotype threat mitigation. These trainings may be designed both for faculty in formal learning spaces and for staff supporting learning in spaces outside of the classroom.
- Implementing hiring practices that include basic requirements for incoming faculty and newly-hired administrators to demonstrate proficiency in equity and inclusion in order to make these efforts sustainable; and the provision of equitable strategies for hiring, recruitment, and onboarding for new faculty, staff, and administrators to the campus
- Scheduling dedicated time for the practices that support equity and inclusion.
- Alignment of university-wide RTP practices to reward training, implementation, and leadership in inclusive teaching and advising.

Based partly on the results of the campus climate survey, these activities may be explored through collaboration between major groups including: SSGI, Academic Senate, CEETL (Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning), Academic Affairs administrators, Equity and Inclusion (SAEM), and CFA (California Faculty Association).

Proposal 3

Proposed structure of an advisory body to support the work of the Division of Equity and Community Inclusion

We propose that the working group be replaced by an advisory board with the following charge:

- 1) Provide guidance and recommendations to communicate campus resources available to faculty, staff, and students working to achieve equity and inclusion.
- 2) Provide consultation and assistance in the development, review and revision of departmental/unit policies and procedures so as to minimize barriers to educational equity and to enhance access, and success for all students.

- 3) Mobilize the expertise on campus to identify general guidelines of high impact practices and learning outcomes/objectives for equity, diversity, and inclusion that can be universally applied to their training programs and activities for student employees/interns, staff, and faculty departments.
- 4) Provide accountability by identifying specific learning outcomes for students, staff, faculty, and administrators engaging with specific actions, programs, and initiatives sponsored or lead by the Equity & Community Inclusion Division ensuring measureable results and report back mechanisms to the broader campus.

The advisory board will also oversee the work of several committees (on a standing or ad hoc basis), for example:

- A committee to support implementation of the SAFE model through the development of campus-wide capacity building for its adoption. This will be informed by ongoing campus climate survey efforts, community input, and established principles and competencies of equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- A committee to support faculty development of affirming and inclusive practices that address racial & cultural illiteracy and incompetence. The primary focus will be to develop and assess culturally-relevant pedagogy and systemic procedures, and practices of engagement with students.
- A committee for the development and implementation and evaluation of a campus climate assessment tool that will monitor improvement in eliminating hegemonic and exclusionary practices embedded within the university and ultimately provide evidence for course corrections to foster a SAFE environment for all members of the SFSU campus community.