

Campus Climate Implementation Committee – Faculty Issues ACTION PLAN

Submitted by: Debbie Morrow

Sub-Committee members (have attended at least one meeting):

Tamie Luce, GVSU Campus Dining, Co-Chair
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Muthoni Imungi, School of Social Work
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The Faculty Issues CCIC sub-committee made an initial observation that what appears to be a significant proportion of faculty have at some time considered leaving Grand Valley for reasons related to climate. Out of 705 total valid MyGVSU 2011 survey responses from Faculty, 25% (n=175) indicated that at some time these respondents have considered leaving Grand Valley because of the climate (Ques. 6). The survey can't tell us anything about faculty who have, in fact, left Grand Valley in the recent past for reasons that could include campus climate issues; but we are interested in exploring the range of issues implied in the responses of the 175 who have considered leaving but are still at Grand Valley and responded to the 2011 MyGVSU survey. In particular we want to look for the existence of any evidence suggesting that climate issues addressed in the survey are demonstrated differentially among faculty within any categories that could include gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, or college affiliation.

We have been limited in the quantitative exploration of these questions beyond a certain depth, because the numbers of responses become too small and confidentiality agreements prevent them from being reported out. We have made some alternative quantitative evaluations, differently focused to look for possible issue areas throughout the data where there appear to be clear discrepancies between faculty who indicate they have never considered leaving GVSU due to reasons related to climate (n=530) vs. those who have considered it, though were still here and responded to the survey (n=175).

The committee has identified the following areas of interest from the climate study in regards to FACULTY:

1. Insufficient selectivity or training for administrative duties involving personnel management and management of mentoring
2. Need for clarity and consistence in processes for tenure/contract renewal/promotion; workload assignment and management; acceptance and support for research agenda; service responsibilities
3. Differential treatment of faculty *with* vs. *without* children
4. Bullying or retaliation – may be peer to peer, senior to junior, supervisor to subordinate, or may be the reverse of any of these: Cross-tabs between Q6 and Qs 74,75,77,78. We are also aware that bullying as an issue has been brought up through the Provost's Office, and through other channels in the university.

Our overall focus was initially influenced by the opportunity to review and categorize the short-answer responses (Q7) offered by ~160 faculty who had indicated on Q6 that Yes, they had at some time considered leaving GVSU for reasons related to climate. About 40% specified a year implicitly or explicitly since 2006 (i.e. pretty recently); approximately 40% made responses that actually were more "why" responses than "when" information, e.g. "after my first contract renewal process"; perhaps 15% in one way or another indicated "frequently," "all the time."

The areas of interest and the proposed Action Plan items have been primarily drawn from sub-committee review and discussion of crosstab Q6 x Q22,24,26,28,30,99 (see Appendix A), and some frequency and crosstab data generated from Q6 x Q33,34,35,42,71,72,74,75,77,78 (see Appendix B).

Action Plan

The committee proposes the following actions to move forward, and to address some issues tentatively identified in climate study.

1. Project-wide:
 - a. Request: Update(s) to the campus community about the status of the 2011 MyGVSU survey. Considerations: how to reach all constituencies effectively. I.e., will messages be “heard”? who will our target audiences pay attention to?
 - b. Recommend: Changes in next MyGVSU survey. Determine whether data is adequate to reveal possible problem areas other than by protected classes. Considerations: Would this require additional/different demographic data? or is it a matter of asking the right questions? E.g. the “bullying” issue most likely extends beyond experiences and perceptions of protected classes, so the demographic data we have presently isn’t necessarily the (whole) story behind reports of bullying behavior experienced or observed.
2. Faculty-specific:
 - a. Recommendation to investigate increasing participation: Exit interviews for faculty. Considerations: The MyGVSU survey cannot capture any feedback from people who have considered leaving GVSU for reasons related to climate, and have done so; and faculty do not routinely participate in exit interviews. Is there some way that this could change? What are the ramifications, pros/cons? Are there academic institutions that have a successful program of conducting meaningful exit interviews with departing faculty? Or conversely, evidence suggesting that this is not practical or possible with faculty in academia?
 - b. Recommendation to review: Expectations/criteria for contract renewals, tenure, promotions, and post-tenure. Considerations: All Colleges and the University Libraries have been required (in the last decade at least) to develop criteria for personnel actions defining expectations for performance in teaching/professional effectiveness, scholarship, and service. We suggest there would be value in doing an overall review of the faculty personnel processes used in each college, to develop some “best practices” for carrying out all types of faculty personnel processes. An additional goal would be looking for consistent alignment with the university’s mission, vision, and goals regarding faculty personnel.
 - c. Recommendation: Be part of active efforts to understand “bullying” behavior reported by faculty. Considerations: “Bullying” within faculty ranks seems to be a topic emerging in higher education literature nationally as well as in complaints coming from faculty locally. Bullying is not necessarily the same as harassment or discrimination, in that legally protected categories among employees are not necessarily involved. It’s more a civility or maturity or stress management issue.
 - d. Recommendation to explore: Training for effective personnel management. Faculty who seek, or accept, Unit Head or other managerial/administrative roles that include personnel management are not always especially well-equipped to manage their peers skillfully. The results can contribute to 2(b) and 2(c). For example, William Crawley, Associate Dean, CCPS, is presently piloting a “leadership development program for unit heads.” Perhaps that program could serve as a model for addressing areas of concern raised in this report.
 - e. Recommendation to explore: Expectations for faculty with children vs. those without. Considerations: The quantitative data suggest the possibility that some faculty members without children believe that more scholarship, more service, or less desirable teaching schedules may be expected of them whereas faculty with children are permitted some tacit leeway because of their “family responsibilities.” It would be very helpful to know if the qualitative data support this interpretation of the numbers (crosstab Q6 w/Q26).
3. Qualitative questions for future analysis:
 - Review the qualitative data associated with the questions identified above.