

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Campus Culture and Climate

This Action Applies to Rubric Item: 1, 8, 9, 10 #Retention; 15, 23, 24 #Response and Evaluation

Description of the work

In 2018, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (OVCDEI) created the Office of Academic Inclusive Excellence (AEI) and hired its first Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity. In the summer of 2019, Academic Inclusive Excellence expanded its efforts to include assessing campus climate in departments, colleges and institutes and the office hired its first ***Director of Campus Culture and Climate***.

The director is working collaboratively with academic departments and several other units in developing assessment plans to evaluate climate to later incorporate deliverables to improve the climate and culture. Another addition to the office is in the area of Curriculum Development and Education. Both units are integral in delivering training and resources in the area of prevention and education by closely working with departments and units.

Purpose and goals

Recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty, staff, and students are highly correlated with a healthy learning and working environment. It is the goal of the office to work with colleges, research institutes, and administrative units (hereinafter referred to as “unit”) to conduct climate assessments* of their departments and programs. The Director also works with academic and administrative departments in a consultative capacity. In cooperation with the Director of Curriculum Development and Education (area added in the Spring 2020), the office provides guidance to departments on creating an infrastructure that supports DEI principles. In addition, both Directors jointly consult on a variety of issues including: establishing a departmental diversity committee; creating and or operationalizing diversity commitment statements; providing workshops on unconscious bias, equitable hiring practices, microaggressions, etc.; inclusive classroom and workplace best practices, developing diversity-conscious curricula; and actively working towards becoming anti-racist/anti-sexist organizations.

On October 16, 2019, the Director of Campus Culture and Climate, in collaboration with other units, organized the *“Cultivating Bravery, Changing Culture: the Illinois Summit on Sexual Harassment”*. The summit brought together senior leadership from across the university, including deans, directors, and department heads, as well as faculty senate leadership, to provide them with the tools and knowledge to move beyond a culture of compliance and understand our collective responsibility. Over 100 participants attended this day-long event,

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which included several presentations by nationally recognized scholars in the field. Attendees had an opportunity to safely ask questions as well as discuss how they as leaders can facilitate the implementation of report recommendations and to be culture change agents. Due to COVID19 the annual summit has been moved to late Spring or early Fall.

***Note.** Each climate assessment is tailored to the needs of the unit with a goal of developing sustainable practices towards a healthy departmental culture. Units work collaboratively to determine which assessment methods will be employed (survey, focus groups, interviews, or a combination thereof), prioritize the populations that will take part in the assessment (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and/or staff), and to develop the assessment instruments. The new structure allows the team to seek IRB approval, administer the survey, conduct the focus groups and interviews, analyze the data, provide recommendations, and where applicable, help to implement recommendations. Currently, we are in the initial steps of assessing climate with **three colleges** and **two institutes**.

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