University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota Organizational Climate Assessment

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): 3,10,15,23 and 26

Description of Work:

Background.

The University of Minnesota developed an institution-wide initiative, the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct (PIPSM) in 2017. PIPSM is institutionalized with a permanent home in the University of Minnesota Office of Human Resources. PIPSM consists of a Steering Committee, a large diverse stakeholder Advisory Committee, five standing committees and a committee of Institutional Accountability and Responsibility, on which the University of Minnesota representatives to the NASEM Action Collaborative sit.

Purpose and goal.

PIPSM undertook a multi-stage, collaborative, community-informed process to build an "Organizational Climate Inventory" that departments would use *"to identify perceptions of the organizational climate from diverse perspectives within the unit"* *in order to recognize strengths, identify gaps, and create plans of action to establish best practices for respectful interactions."*

Methods.

The development of the inventory took multiple stages and multiple stakeholders. It was piloted and revised. The final iteration occurred in June of 2020 and the assessment is now ready for implementation in departments during the Fall of 2020. The process is described below:

Stage 1: April, 2018; Charge to develop an "Audit Framework"

In April, 2018, PIPSM issued a **"Charge" to the 'Audit Framework' Group** based on an agreement that the Advisory Committee should facilitate *Institutional Accountability and Responsibility.* The charge included:
- Conduct an inventory.
- Develop a series of sexual misconduct scenarios and test these against a matrix of policies, procedures, and training.
- Use an iterative process of inventory and testing to further develop the framework.

The group sought input on inventory development from the PIPSM Advisory Committee in May, 2018. The group developed an audit/assessment "Inventory Framework" of department level practices and policies to understand the nature of and barriers to dynamics involved in culture change and what potential resources were needed to provide this level of systemic support.

Stage 2: June 2018: Pilot of the "Inventory Framework"

A pilot of the "Inventory Framework" was conducted in summer of 2018 with three units (academic and administrative). Feedback from the pilot included that the inventory was easy to understand and complete. One unit found it compliance heavy. Importantly, feedback indicated that the act of implementing the pilot brought a number of questions about 'intentionality' with regards to sexual misconduct awareness and action: "Upon reflection and in conversation, this simple question of 'who is responsible' brought to light the need to intentionally consider how we as a unit address this important structural need going forward."

The pilot results were presented to the Advisory Committee in **October, 2018** and feedback sought on these questions:
- How detailed should the guidelines be?
- How should the Inventory be administered (in-person/volunteers)?
- Should we think about the Inventory as a multi-phased activity?
    - Is this a one-time implementation?
    - Are there just a couple of areas we think are MOST important to understand now to get the most impact?
    - Do we implement the entire tool but in different phases?
- Shall we seek to pilot this again with modifications as the next step?

Stage 3: February, 2019; Iteration of unit assessment to "Organizational Climate Inventory"

PIPSM held additional stakeholder group meetings. The tool evolved to assess issues of climate in units across a more quantifiable rubric based on key prevention indicators.

An overall theme that came out of the discussion was to have the inventory framework be structured as guiding questions that scaffold a department's self-assessment, engaging departmental leaders and stimulating communities to assess their knowledge, practices and processes. A goal was having units identify whether they are engaging in best practices for prevention and responding appropriately to all kinds of bad behavior (i.e. not just sexual misconduct—build in assessment of abuses of power, non-sexual harassment, and bullying).

The key questions being asked are; What do we want an academic unit to accomplish/get out of an assessment? And what do we want the institution to get out of it?

The stakeholder group wanted to:

- Identify gap(s) between policy vs. the implementation, knowledge of policy and/or practice
  - At all levels: student, staff, postdoc, faculty, leadership
- Find a path to address revealed gaps by being guided towards relevant best practices and resources
- Flag units that need additional attention/intervention from e.g. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office (EOAA) or Human Resources
  - units that are attempting to improve processes but need additional guidance or monitoring
  - extreme cases of dysfunctional lack or opposition to effective processes

A revised audit framework was created called the "Organizational Climate Assessment". Categories addressed (what issues do we want people to think about?) were drawn from the EOAA office's "FAQ for Academic Leaders," trying to capture the recommendations for how to handle preventing, responding, and communicating about sexual misconduct. Items were designed to collect the range of possible knowledge and opinions about each point from multiple constituencies in a unit (students, staff, postdocs, faculty, leaders).

Stage 4: October, 2019; Advisory Committee input on newly revised tool

The revised tool was presented to the PIPSM Advisory Committee in October 2019. Questions for small group discussion were: (1) Are there any gaps/components missing in assessment domains? (2) How should this resource be implemented? (3) What key resources should be tied to it? and (4) What departments might we name as models for categories?
Key feedback included a need to revise the rubric for ease of use, interpretation, and scoring.

Current status.
Stage 5: June, 2020; Revised "Organizational Climate Inventory" presented to Advisory Committee

The revised inventory (June, 2020 version) was presented to the Advisory Committee in June, 2020 and is considered ready for use in units. The introduction reads:

*"This assessment serves as a guide for departments and other units to review procedures, practices and/or policies in order to foster civil and respectful conduct amongst unit members. The goal is **to identify perceptions of the organizational climate from diverse perspectives within the unit** in order to recognize strengths, identify gaps, and create plans of action to establish best practices for respectful interactions. Participation in this assessment should **include constituents from all levels** (e.g. faculty, academic leadership, staff, students and other professional trainees such as fellows and postdocs). Please create follow-up opportunities for*

review and dialogue between unit members about best ways to address gaps and issues identified. "

Next Steps**.**
We identified two ways this tool will be used during 2020-21.
(1) Each of the eleven rubic areas will be incorporated into our fall, 2020 PIPSM Twin Cities internal communication strategy campaign. This campaign will be implemented across five consecutive waves in fall, 2020 and designed to reach unit leaders (deans, chairs, heads, supervisors and managers) and focused on key messaging and action at the unit level to increase awareness about the building blocks of a healthy culture of respect free of harassment, communicating PIPSM's strategic priorities, and facilitate the capacity building to create change, and promote more in-depth support for department level conversation and action.
(2) PIPSM is currently collaborating with the Office of Human Resources to develop an implementation guide to include a list of supporting definitions and resources for wider dissemination. Human Resource Directors and Unit Leads will be trained on the tool and how to promote the facilitation of its use and how to access resources and training to aid in positive unit climate development.

We also plan to train the Department Development's Climate Support Network to facilitate and support use of this tool in their units.

Evaluation.

PIPSM's Evaluation Committee will aid in development of process (reach, satisfaction, usability) and outcomes metrics (change metrics related to practices, procedures, and unit level policy revision and/or development) of the inventory. Additionally, metrics related to overall climate change will be included in our 2021 spring sexual misconduct system wide survey.

Website for further information (if applicable): NA

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