

2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Connecticut

Something's Happening Committee

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Prevention - Civility or Respect Promotion Programs
2. Prevention - Leadership Education and Skill Development
3. Evaluation - Other methods for monitoring climate on an ongoing basis
4. Evaluation - Using Climate Assessments to Inform Action
5. Pursuing Organizational Change - Campus climate committees that incorporate the principles of Coordinated Community Response (CCR)

Description of Work:

The "Something's Happening" Committee (SHC) originated and acts as an independent, self-managed, employee driven, grassroots group of individuals committed to mobilizing action, observing trends in behaviors, monitoring accountability, and facilitating continued progress in pursuit of a respectful, civil, dignified, ethical, diverse, inclusive, and safe workplace environment. The committee, comprised predominantly of representatives identified by administrative units and unions and interested stakeholders, proactively solicits, gathers, and monitors information and data to inform its projects and priorities. Priorities are centered around influencing action or changes in the areas of training and development, accountability and engagement, and policies and procedures.

The SHC accomplishes this by leveraging the collective knowledge of the committee and the information it attains to annually set goals for its actions through a consensus decision making model. Focus areas include:

- Creation, distribution, and analysis of campus-wide workplace climate survey, which has had the support of the President's Office;
- Recommendations to leadership on areas of concern, skill building needs, and communication and resource gaps which includes suggestions for mitigation;
- Host trainings and workshops to facilitate dialogue and provide information to university employees;
- Leverage committee's networks and direct access to employees as a means to communicate and to collect and disseminate information and data;
- Serve on university task forces and committees to advocate, educate, and serve the voices of university employees;
- Ensure that university employees are knowledgeable and aware of policies, departments, and resources available to them for resolving workplace concerns.

The goal of the SHC is to aid university leadership and employees in the creation, awareness, and implementation of proactive, positive behaviors and interventions which ultimately lead to a community of dignity that ensures all individuals feel recognized, listened to, are treated fairly, and afforded a sense of safety and belonging.

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Previous accomplishments of the SHC include:

- Educational campaigns - One of the first initiatives of the SHC was to organize workshops for members of the administrative support and facilities unions. The professional employees' union requested similar programming, so the SHC organized one for members who were supervisors and one for those who were not. The SHC also hosted sessions on several of the regional campuses. These brought together key offices to educate the members on relevant policies and procedures and to explore relevant case studies. The SHC also developed and implemented the "[Our People](#)" posters, which are part of a university campaign promoting a respectful workplace environment for all members of the University of Connecticut community.
- Ombuds/EAP - During the early years of the SHC, the committee advocated for the return of a University Ombuds and for on-site access to EAP. Both of these positions were filled and meet with the SHC on a regular basis.
- Establishment of the University's Spirit Awards - A recommendation from our first climate survey report was to establish a tradition of an annual campus-wide event hosted and promoted by the President that focuses on employee appreciation and promoting civility. The President's Office established the University's Spirit Awards, which celebrate individuals and teams who exceed expectations and contribute positively to the workplace and the University. The spirit of the program is to acknowledge outstanding contributions and nominations are solicited from the campus community.
- New Employee Orientation (NEO) for all employees - A recommendation from first climate survey report was to mandate NEO for all employees to ensure everyone received the same information and to create opportunities for staff and faculty to interact outside of the silos of their departments. Human Resources implemented this.
- Climate surveys – The SHC has conducted two workplace climate surveys, in 2012 and 2017, with the public endorsement and financial support from the President's Office. Both reports included the analysis of the results and a set of recommendations for action for university leaders.

Although the committee was established in 2006, this year we expanded our membership to include representation from UConn Health, which has resulted in synergies and collaborations across the UConn campuses in support of our One UConn aspiration. This committee is uncommon for the higher ed community in that it brings together stakeholders that are often "across the table" and operates on a consensus model.

We are planning our third Workplace Climate Survey this fall, which will be rolled out to the UConn Health employee community this time and will be an indicator of the success of our previous efforts on the Storrs campus.

Website for further information (if applicable): [| Resources for a Respectful Workplace \(uconn.edu\)](#)

Point of Contact Name: Kathleen Holgerson

Email Address for Point of Contact: Kathleen.Holgerson@uconn.edu