Strategic Plan Leaders Seek Feedback on Campus Climate

A series of workshops on main campus and beyond will provide employees with an opportunity to give input about the UA's campus climate, which will be used by those implementing the University's strategic plan.

A series of Campus Climate Praxis Workshops [1] began earlier in March and will run through April 17, with sessions on main campus, in Phoenix and at the UA South [2] campus in Sierra Vista. The workshops serve as a follow-up to the Occupational Health Index survey sent to UA employees in the fall, and were organized by Andrea Romero and Sara Knepper, co-chairs of the Reinforcing Our Cultural Aspirations initiative. The initiative is part of the strategic plan's fifth pillar, which is focused on institutional excellence.

"We thought the first step was getting a little more input from people before we just come and say, 'Here are the things to work on,'” Romero, vice provost for faculty affairs, said Tuesday during a presentation to members of the Appointed Professionals Advisory Council [3]. She was joined by Knepper, director of academic advising in the College of Education [4].

"We really want to make sure it's not just top down ? that it really is all of us coming together and agreeing on what are the areas for action," Romero added.

Of the nearly 13,000 UA employees invited to take the OHI survey, about 4,200 completed it. Classified staff and appointed personnel made up 71 percent of respondents, while faculty made up about 25 percent. Postdocs made up 1 percent and the remaining 4 percent were classified as other types of employees.

Key findings [5] from the survey include:

- Employees largely feel that their colleagues are motivated and talented, but not enough is being done to foster motivation.
- Employees feel that accountability at the UA is low.
- Employees don't have a clear understanding of the UA's mission and strategy.
- Employees feel the UA is good at recruiting talented employees, but could do better at managing, developing and inspiring them.

After receiving the results, a group of about 50 campus leaders met to identify four areas to make improvements, Knepper and Romero said. Those areas are:

- **Strategic clarity** ? Communicating a clear vision and strategy for the UA.
- **Role clarity** ? Ensuring employees understand what is expected of them and that they have the authority to make decisions.
- **People performance reviews** ? Improving the review process so it more adequately assesses employees' strengths and potential.
- **Operational management** ? Outlining clear expectations and operating metrics for
individual units to follow that tie into the UA's mission.

The workshops, Knepper and Romero said, will focus on these four areas.

At the sessions, participants are first asked to provide written individual reflections on institutional health, and then are given a brief overview of the survey. They can then read detailed information about the survey's findings on posters placed around the room. Participants can also write feedback about the survey results on the posters.

"Praxis really is about reflection and action, so it really is a combination of those two things coming together," Romero said. "And it truly is a workshop? it's not just us talking at people."

Participants break out into small groups, each focused on a specific topic, to discuss action items. The aim, Romero added, is to use the feedback to form action planning committees for each of the four focus areas. That should be done by summer, she said, or fall at the latest.

Find the full list of workshop dates on the strategic plan website [1]. Employees are free to choose the sessions they would like to attend.

**Strategic plan overview**

APAC also heard from Jane Hunter, vice president for strategic initiatives, who provided an overview of the plans five pillars [6].

Initiatives for the plan, Hunter said, were prioritized based on their relative impact, boldness and return on investment. Many initiatives were flagged to receive funding in the next 18 months. Others were identified as opportunities for the next UA fundraising campaign.

Hunter noted that although some units may have more immediate operational issues to address, investing in the strategic plan is an important step toward institutional success, and benefits all UA units.

Hunter ended her presentation by encouraging employees to get engaged in the strategic plan by getting involved in initiatives, collaborating with colleagues across campus and thinking outside the box.

"When I think about how we will be successful in a year, two years, five years from now, I think everyone stepping up and getting involved in one way or another is what will get us there," she said.

APAC's next meeting [7] is scheduled for April 30, from 3-5 p.m., in the Ventana Room at the Student Union Memorial Center.

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