

PROCESS OVERVIEW

HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?

In November 2005, President Shirley Strum Kenny invited a cross section of the campus community comprising faculty, staff and students, to serve as a Campus Climate Task Force Steering Committee. Prior to appointing the Steering Committee, she had asked Associate Dean Al Jordan and Assistant Vice President and Deputy to the President George Meyer to serve as the Task Force Co-chairs, and they in turn requested that faculty member and Assistant Dean Carolyn Peabody and Christina Vargas Law, Director of the Office for Diversity and Affirmative Action, serve as Vice co-chairs.

The Task Force was initiated by the President with the approval of her cabinet, as a means of devising a plan to address issues identified in the Campus Climate Survey of 2004-2005, which had been administered to all 12,500 employees (at the time) and had yielded a 23% campus-wide response rate.

Context of the Report

Stony Brook has achieved extraordinary levels of growth and excellence since its inception. By many measures, over its first 50 years, Stony Brook has burst forth on the academic, educational, research, health, cultural, national, and even world stages. The University plays an enormous role in the economic life of Long Island and the State, contributing more than \$2.5 billion to the local economy. Academically, the University has been ranked in the top two percent of all universities in the world, and we have joined the ranks of the 62 most prestigious research universities in North America by being elected to membership in the American Association of Universities (AAU). Indeed, Stony Brook research-driven patents account for 90% of the royalty income among the 64 campuses in the SUNY system. Our increasingly excellent academic reputation is reflected in the average high school GPA of our entering class, which has topped 90.5, and in their SAT's, which now average 1177. Indeed, we have much of which to be proud.

Yet even as we revel in the many indications of Stony Brook's success, we must not ignore continued indications that there is another more troubling part of the story at Stony Brook. It is a part of the story that involves many of the very same people who have and continue to help to create Stony Brook's success. As we strive to excel in all the aspects that comprise a great University, we must ensure that we put forth equal efforts at becoming the most inclusive University, one that is characterized by the attributes of inclusive institutions and reflective of its diverse employee and student populations.

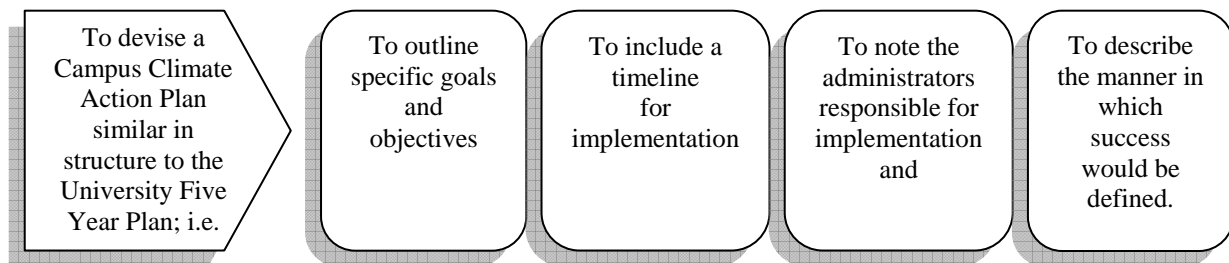
The first order of business for the newly appointed Task Force co-chairs and vice co-chairs was to compare the analysis of the Campus Climate Survey results of 2005 with prior results obtained from campus surveys dating back to 1989 of issues on inclusion, employee morale and satisfaction, and the work life perceptions of members of underrepresented groups. In addition to the 2005 Campus Climate Survey, eleven prior surveys in all were analyzed for evidence of the themes outlined in Cornell University's "Attributes of Inclusive Organizations," and the

results were plotted on a matrix to make cross-comparisons easier and to easily identify the frequency with which all of the twelve (12) Cornell attributes appeared in the twelve (12) reports. (see Appendix A.)

Having performed this comparison and analysis during the fall 2005 semester, prior to the convening of the Task Force, the co-chairs and vice co-chairs of the Task Force had reviewed the work of the many Stony Brook faculty and staff and graduate students who had served on past committees and task forces. In so doing, they enabled the work of the to-be convened Campus Climate Task Force to benefit from the collected wisdom of past efforts, noting recurring themes more easily.

President Shirley Strum Kenny convened the Steering Committee of the Task Force for its first meeting on November 29, 2005, charging the group with several objectives.

Task Force Objectives



The members of the newly convened Task Force were given the opportunity to add members to the suggested lists of Task Force members by subcommittee, ultimately yielding five (5) subcommittees and a steering Committee totaling seventy-nine (79) people. A few individuals from off campus and a few students were invited to join the subcommittees. Student representation was limited since the focus of the Task Force was the University's employees; based on the premise that their perceptions of the University and their overall sense of belonging would ultimately affect the students they served. The Task Force would touch students' lives by affecting the lives of faculty and staff in a positive manner. The Campus community at large was represented, including individuals engaged in a variety of roles on campus, from union representatives to affiliate group coordinators to high-level administrators.

The Steering Committee was given the spring 2006 semester to devise a draft Action Plan, which would be discussed by the campus in the fall 2006 semester through a series of town hall type meetings, briefings and focus groups.

Indeed, the five subcommittees used a variety of techniques to identify issues and solutions within their five (5) subcommittee foci:

Building Internal Community
Building External Community
Hiring and Employment
Mandated Employee Education
Participation and Empowerment

Wanting to ensure that the process of devising the draft action plan modeled many of the twelve (12) attributes of inclusive organizations, the subcommittee co-chairs led their respective committees in open discussions, often inviting other members of the campus community to attend; conducted focus groups and mini town-hall meetings; surveyed relevant data and statistics; interviewed key administrators responsible for the areas under study, and shared their on-going results with other subcommittees and Task Force chairs via a web-based Task Force library, meeting notes, and through verbal reports presented at the Steering Committee meetings during the spring 2006 semester.

In order to insure that the process was well grounded in realistic information and expectations, several of the Vice Presidents and Deans were invited to a discussion of the emerging themes with the Steering Committee. This proved very helpful to the Steering Committee's continued progress, and ensured that those who would ultimately be asked to implement the Action Plan (Vice President's) had contributed to and were familiar with the process that had yielded the recommendations.

Just as the Task Force co-chairs and vice co-chairs had studied the prior surveys and reports of the Stony Brook campus community preceding the work of the Campus Climate Task Force, the Task Force had access to other institutions' current and recent past reports on issues of campus climate, inclusion, civility, and diversity. The Task Force is grateful for the work of their professional colleagues at other major universities who gave valuable time and energy to bringing about change in these areas, and who have published their work in reports and white papers. A partial list follows and the reader is encouraged to access these resources on the web through our Campus Climate web site:

- AAC & U – Diversity Web & Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective
- Pennsylvania State University – A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State – 2004 – 2009
- University of Kentucky – President's Commission on Diversity 2004-2005 Goals.
- University of Missouri – Report of the Task Force for Campus Climate and Training,
December 2005
- University of Virginia – Voices of Diversity

The co-chairs and vice co-chairs initiated a spring 2006 semester campaign to ensure that the campus community had the opportunity to participate in the work of the Task Force by offering their comments and suggestions through a secure and anonymous website and by attending the town hall meetings provided during the semester.

At semester's end, the Steering Committee and the entire Task Force met with President Kenny to present the emerging issues and discuss its work to date. Subsequently, a Steering Committee retreat was held at Sunwood and several additional Steering Committee meetings focused on refining and summarizing the information into the format prescribed by Dr. Kenny, which is contained in the draft report preceding the appendices.

The campus community is invited to read the draft report and submit comments and suggestions during the months of October and November 2006 via the website, to participate in town hall meetings and briefings for the same purpose.

The Steering Committee will endeavor to include all comments and suggestions as it crafts the final report by the end of the fall 2006 semester, with first implementation scheduled for spring 2007, subsequent to the final Plan's discussion by the cabinet and approval by President Kenny, and after the mapping process outlined by the committee has been implemented by the Vice Presidents.

Once the aspects of the Plan that require more feedback and time are implemented beginning in the spring 2007 semester, the Steering Committee will continue to serve as a resource for those given responsibility for implementation, and will actively monitor progress over the course of the Plan's three year life. The intention is to keep communication lines open with those who devised the Plan and who understand its intent, and to ensure that the responsible parties have the resources and perseverance needed to integrate the objectives into the regular life and culture of the University.

Accountability

As the Vice Presidents and others responsible for implementation of the Action Plan exercise creativity and collegiality in facilitating the desired outcomes, both they and their constituents must be held accountable for achieving the results outlined in the Plan. While every member of the campus community is responsible for affecting campus climate, those who are entrusted with the authority to bring about institutional and systemic changes have a special obligation in this regard.

As mentioned in the previous section on implementation, ongoing progress reports at various levels of the implementation team will provide one means of serving as a reality check. For example, Vice Presidents make reports to the President's Cabinet, Vice President's Campus Climate designees make reports to the Campus Climate Steering Committee, Campus Climate sub-committee chairs make reports to the Steering Committee, and the Campus Climate Task Force co-chairs and vice co-chairs make reports to the President and the campus community. In addition, the conducting of on-going "accountability" town hall meetings with senior administrators will both ensure that they remain in touch with the perceptions of the campus community, and concurrently provide the committee with the opportunity to give feedback while the community gains the perspective of those charged with implementation.

Finally, the President can reward exemplary practices through a variety of means that provide further real motivation, such as allocation of financial resources, regular public

acknowledgement and celebration of success, and keeping the issues impacting campus climate a key focal point of all high level meetings. Tracking progress in a coordinated and longitudinal fashion and 360° communication are essential to assessing whether the institution's culture is undergoing positive change.

Divisions or units who fail to implement the process and/or who fail to achieve the objectives entrusted to them will risk receiving Presidential disincentives as a means of last resort to influence positive progress.