COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY & RACIAL EQUALITY

Summary of Campus-wide Listening Sessions 1-9

CODRE hosts campus-wide listening sessions throughout the year to provide opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in discussion on topics relevant to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. CODRE hosted nine campus-wide listening sessions from Spring 2021 – Spring 2022.

To read the full reports from each listening session, click the session title below or visit the following link: https://louisville.edu/codre/codre-publications/campus-wide-listening-sessions

Session 1: Black and or Latinx: Exploring Racial and Cultural Identity

Session 2: Retention within our non-white communities

Session 3: The Impact of Racism and Discrimination on Mental Health

Session 4: Returning to Campus During a Pandemic, What is Your New Normal?

Session 5: Work, Life, Balance

Session 6: Student Mentoring by Both Faculty and Staff: Benefits and Barriers

Session 7: Our Next University President Search

Session 8: How is UofL Developing Future Leaders?

Session 9: Student Voices, Is Anyone Listening? & Paying for School – Obstacles, Barriers, and Resources

Contents

This report summarizes kudos, concerns, and recommended action steps based on the feedback from the campus-wide listening sessions.

After sharing general kudos, the report will present concerns expressed by students and employees. The report then presents recommended action items for campus administration and CODRE.

Kudos

- In the listening sessions, kudos and appreciation were shared in the following areas:

- The university's commitment to being an anti-racist university.

- Advocacy and support groups for different identities such as the Black Faculty and Staff Association, Hispanic and Latin@ Faculty and Staff Association, LGBT Center, and the Cultural Center.

- Campus resources for students and employees – Student Success Center, Employee Resource Groups, and different mentoring programs.

- University benefits such as vacation time, sick time, and tuition remission.

Concerns

Students

- Student concerns included experiencing racism, a lack of diversity on campus, and confusion and apprehension about reporting concerns. Students expressed intimidation in addressing problems with faculty members or reaching out to higher-level administration. Students asked for more transparency in reporting concerns, the protocol for filing reports, and the follow-up process.

- Most student concerns are related to the experience of international students who feel they do not have access to the same resources and support as other students. International students feel neglected, overlooked, and unsupported. International students experience silos, often being sent to the International Student Office rather than faculty and staff being able to adequately support them. Overall, there is a concern about a lack of knowledge on what international students need and a lack of resources, support, and mentoring for international students.

Employees

- Common concerns among university employees included lack of compensation and support. BIPOC employees feel tokenized, not recognized for their value, not adequately or appropriately compensated, disenfranchised, and siloed. There are feelings of anxiety, fear, and hopelessness in the face of discrimination and a lack of consequences for aggressors in bias incidents. Employees feel there is a lack of faculty and staff of color in leadership positions. Employees of color expressed not being heard or acknowledged during meetings. Employees of color also expressed that they are asked to do more labor by serving on different committees which can impact productivity and lead to low retention. One person expressed, "we are at the point of an exodus of Black faculty and staff."

- Employees are feeling exhaustion and burnout, yet many find it difficult to take breaks because they fear being judged or can't afford to take a vacation. There are equity concerns around the implementation of the Remote Work policy and there is a sense of a divide on campus because of the inconsistency in being able to work from home.

Recommended Action Items

Senior Leadership and Campus Administration Accountability

- Update policies and procedures to promote equity and inclusion and to ensure people are held accountable for their actions.

- Provide safe opportunities for feedback and evaluations.

Compensation and Promotion

- Increase pay equity and provide more transparency about the Compensation Study.

- Provide merit-based raises and promotions.

- Promote people of color to leadership positions and ensure employees of color are supported.

Flexibility and Accommodations

- Provide more flexible work options and accommodations.

- Train supervisors on how to manage remote work and redesign spaces to support hybrid learning.

Retention and Recruitment

- Increase recruitment and retention of BIPOC students, staff, faculty, and administration.

- Improve the exit interview process for authentic opportunities for feedback.

Commitment to Anti-Racist Agenda

- Provide funding and support to the Cardinal Anti-Racism Agenda through a line in the university's budget and increase resources for related offices and positions on campus.

- Include diversity standards in the hiring process, performance appraisals, promotion and tenure, and funding requests.

Procedures for grievances, reporting discrimination and bias

- Improve bias reporting mechanisms and ensure a safe space is provided to report grievances and discrimination.

- Create a policy around discrimination and bias incidents and make the Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) a funded position under the DEI office.

Support and Appreciation

- Increase support and resources for international students.

- Provide bonuses to all employees, not just administration.

- Develop more offerings for mentoring that include training and expectations.

- Create a memorial for the staff, faculty, and students who lost the battle against COVID-19.

Student Recommendations

- Have a centralized hub/webpage with all the scholarships, resources, assistance etc.

- Have a webpage for students regarding funding their education with FAQ's and resources.

CODRE

- Hold the university accountable for its diversity mission.

- Be represented on the presidential search committee.

- Work with the Campus Environment Committee to develop the appropriate types of interventions to recommend to the university.

- Ask the leaders who have taken on CARA what they need to feel that their labor has been supported, honored, and compensated.

- Add cultural competency training to the Anti-Racism Agenda.

- CODRE should be included in the HR Orientation process.

- CODRE commissioners should sit on every search committee possible to ensure we are hiring people who have a demonstrated commitment to anti-racism.

- Strengthen the relationship between CODRE committees and the rest of campus, especially by involving student voices.

Conclusion

CODRE encourages the entire campus community to take responsibility for promoting diversity and racial equity. CODRE asks deans, chairs, administrators, and all individuals on campus to consider both the concerns and action items that were shared in the campus-wide listening sessions. Let's all explore ways in which we can take action to address these concerns and make the University of Louisville a safe, equitable, and welcoming space for everyone in our community.