

Thematic Analysis of CODRE Campus-Wide Listening Session #2

Topic: "Retention within our non-white communities"

Reasons for Choosing UofL

- I came because I heard about the goal to increase international students
- I came to UofL to work in a learning environment
- I came to make a difference in the lives of students--at the time Black students who were enrolling at U of L
- I chose UofL twice, first as a student in the 80's (not a good experience) and 2nd as a professional in hopes of using skills gained in my career to help drive adoption of technology in education and broaden access for URM groups
- I had reservations due to past UofL reputation but was impressed with the LGBT ratings
- I really didn't know much about the University, but I knew they offered good benefits, so that was what drew me in
- I came for the tuition remission

Reasons for staying at UofL

Personal

- Sometimes it is hard to leave. Reasons like I am waiting for the kids to graduate, or for the job market to improve.
- Tuition remission for my daughters and eventually myself.
- Would be nice to reinstate tuition remission for spouses, it was difficult for some when they took away the tuition remission at other KY universities
- Need to pay bills

Professional

- For the most part, I feel valued and respected. Doing the work that I LOVE. Most inspiring leadership I've seen since I began 27 years ago. I love UofL. Just like a family, sometimes they piss me off, but I want the best for UofL. Just like with family, I am committed to holding them accountable.
- The closeness of those I've met over the years, all the way from those in physical plant to those at the top level.
- The students and my work and co-workers - Plus BFSAs!

How employees feel about UofL

- Words of appreciation from faculty and sometimes administration
- I do not want special treatment, just fair treatment
- I feel respected by my peers, but I am paid less and have less resources. You want to be shown respect by materialization of resources. I wish that we were all equal
- Citizenship status is questioned if you don't look like you are "from here" an employee was labeled as a non-citizen for several years. It was only recently they found out, and it was very hurtful.
- Executive leadership feels like a black box, I don't feel like we are getting information out of leadership.
- Feels like our system is part merit, and part "how much is this person like me and clicks with me."

- People love my insights, my ideas, my work ethic. They take it for granted and I give way more to my office than what I get from it. I don't feel valued as a person. I don't feel respected. I don't matter in the way of being someone who has aspirations and interests outside the tiny box my 9-5 puts me in.
- Their actions don't reflect their sentiments which slowly makes me feel more and more discouraged over time. Though I'm told I'm valued, this is used to take advantage of my work ethic rather than respect and support me.

UofL's biggest issue with retention as it relates to non-white employees

- The president gets awards and students and staff can't feel safe?
- The lack of connection/ community is a big reason
- There is a productivity tax for people of Color, expected to be on all these committees and do special projects and other work which may not be directly associated with your job. This work is emotional labor which impacts productivity and can be led to low retention among faculty and staff of Color.
- A lot of people are pulled into those committees (CODRE, CARA, COSW, BFSa) are being taxed in other ways. They are also in entry-level positions, which probably contributes to the lack of retention.
- Burnout really easily very fast, the exhaustion of lack of change takes its toll
- UofL is great at "we have this two-by-four box for safe-space/ support!".....but as has been said--we need supportive people, we need visibility, we need accountability at EVERY LEVEL. I feel like UofL "outsources" the justice work to a single office or committee--which isn't fair to anyone, and only holds the university back
- UofL wants sycophants, encourages that behavior and rewards it. As long as that is the climate and culture, faculty of color who are able will continue heading for the door.
- Being siloed is another reason why people leave. UofL gets touted as a community, but if you're not the Right Kind of Person, you get excluded and ignored (even from those spaces that are "supposed to be safe" for minorities). People don't reach out, they don't engage with you. They're 'polite' but the only way they know you're gone is when your work doesn't get done.
- Being overworked for (what feels like) minimal pay
- Having a way to combine the work that one does with the passions/things one cares about.

Accountability

- The campus climate surveys do not feel like a safe place to share concerns. Nothing gets done. Seems like a waste of time. I stopped responding.
- Agree about the surveys. All the talk about diversity, inclusion, anti-racism is just that: talk. Since I have been here, people have done everything they could possibly imagine to drive me away.
- Those reports make all of us furious because we KNOW what is going on and it is not fixed!
- They do not value accomplished faculty especially when those faculty members are Black. This is my personal experience as well as that of the 3 or 4 Black male faculty who have left in the past 3 years.
- Racism. I experienced it as a student and not long ago received a copy of a letter from a current black female student I could have written in the 80's.
- I have spoken with the person in charge of diversity on this campus. She listens and supports what I have to say and even agrees with me, but nothing ever changes.
- This is not "unconscious bias" we totally KNOW and have data. We need to fix the conscious decisions
- We need to be willing to lose racist donors and fans

Retaliation

- Staff and junior faculty won't be honest for fear of retaliation
- All grievances are not safe - they report the grievance to your supervisor
- I have been a witness to many instances of retaliation at UofL, specifically at the CEHD. Several years ago, this was widespread. I'm not telling tales out of school because I think that a lot of people are aware of what happened at the CEHD a few years ago. And I don't mean as far back as under Felner. Much more recently.

What does the ideal inclusive environment look like at UofL?

Increased compensation

- Diversity & Equity offices need more employees and resources - MONEY
- Compensation, representation at all levels
- Hiring/promotion based on merit, increased recruitment/retention of BIPOC student/staff/admin/faculty
- Pay equity,

Support for Diversity and Inclusion

- Being with HLFSA and CODRE have been what kept me here !
- To see more diversity at the leadership table, educating folks and holding people accountable for their actions (microaggressions)
- Individual investment. and this isn't necessarily quantifiable, but I'd argue that the ideal is when you can feel that investment in the air. you know when someone means it. so.... I guess an ideal would be, the sense that individual people are invested in equity and justice and inclusion--not just this one office, this one committee. (cause we all feel what's missing. let me feel that they're doing the work.)

Policies and protocols to protect against discrimination

- A policy around discrimination/bias incidents - 3 strikes you out or better no tolerance
- Changes in the Redbook to address discrimination, micro aggression, etc.
- The Redbook needs to be burned...lol. It would never pass a racial equity analysis
- ALL of our policies need to be run through a REAP
- SAFE 360 evaluations
- Exit interviews have to be conducted by a neutral person. The provost or another person associated with the University is not the ideal person to conduct exit interviews. This suggestion has been made before, but it hasn't been taken up.

Grievances

- I was a victim of discrimination and mockery and I had the whole faculty of my program as witnesses, and the person who did never had to explain herself or got any kind of training. It was awful! We have to have grievance mechanisms for these (Bias) incidents. Grievances are very straight forward, little room to advocate and to show discrimination or retaliation
- We need a safe place to share our concerns and to get mentored as to avenues to address them. HR, upper administration and Ombudsman office seem to me from my experience a place where concerns go to die.
- Make Bias incident response team (BIRT) a funded position under DEI office and not volunteers who provide time on top of their 40+ hour job

Commitment to UoL's Anti Racism Agenda

- Sit on every search committee possible, to ensure we are hiring folk who have a demonstrated commitment to anti-racism.
- Make people sign that they are committed to CARA and cardinal principles at first application process, and fire if violating
- Until diversity standards are included in performance appraisals, promotion and tenure, funding requests, etc....folk won't change. Accountability MUST be enforced.
- Look at rate of furloughs and length for BIPOC and females
- Implement mechanisms to help on-boarding/new hire mentors with non-white folks without over-taxing current employees?

Resources for hiring BIPOC? As in advertising available positions?

- Kentucky Association of Black Higher Ed professionals <https://www.aabhe.education/>
- <https://kabhe.wildapricot.org/>
- <https://louisville.edu/career/resources/diversity-resources>