

Diversity and Inclusion Listening Sessions
Summary of Findings

General themes across all constituencies (faculty, staff, and student listening sessions):

- Perhaps the most common sentiment shared across each of the constituencies (faculty, staff, and students) was the difficulty in how to handle “respectful disagreement.” Many students, in particular, showed a reluctance to speak up in sessions such as these, for fear of offending their fellow students when discussing topics on diversity they admittedly do not fully understand.
- Also commonly discussed were the ambiguities and difficulties associated with defining the word “diversity.” Participants in the diversity sessions expressed the importance of trying to articulate a clearer definition of the term or, if a strict definition is not possible, at least the importance of having productive community discussions about what the word “diversity” really means. There seems to be tension between racial/ethnic diversity and socio-economic diversity, as one person in the faculty session remarked, “socio-economic and racial/ethnic diversity, as well as international or domestic diversity, are seen as being in competition with one another, and also conflated; this is problematic.” Both staff and faculty members commented that socio-economic class differences are perhaps the most divisive on campus, especially for students on block breaks.
- “Inclusion” was another word that faculty, staff, and students mentioned, in one form or another, as being an inherently ambiguous and difficult term to define. As was the case with “diversity,” community members expressed the need to have open discussions concerning the CC community’s understanding of the term. One student remarked, “(we) need a better campus understanding of what it means to be included. More broad understanding on who is included. Look at CC brand. Emphasize what makes us stick out – but also make sure this doesn’t exclude students.”
- All of the groups, particularly students and staff, expressed a desire to continue having discussions and conversations about institutional values, like these diversity and inclusion listening sessions. Staff in particular indicated interest in having these discussions with students and faculty.
- Some faculty need help in understanding and engaging students on the topics of diversity and inclusion. While several students commented on some faculty members’ difficulties in handling such conversations both inside and outside the classroom, this was a sentiment expressed most frequently by faculty, who indicated frustration with offensive comments and general ignorance concerning issues of diversity from some of their fellow faculty members. One faculty member commented, “diversity is not just about numbers. How do we help faculty, staff, and students thrive? We need structural/institutional changes to create inclusive climate, not just some individuals who care.”
- Students and staff indicated their appreciation for the college’s direction with respect to creating a more inclusive and diverse community. One of the common themes in the staff sessions document showed “lots of positivity and encouragement to ‘stay the course’ and not overreact.”

Student themes:

- Many students expressed a desire to discuss these issues in a smaller group or one-on-one setting.
- There is a widespread sense that student campus culture is not as cohesive as might be desired. Several students also indicated frustrations with the process of creating relationships with others from different backgrounds. One student remarked, “how (do we) make friends that do not share

a similar background? Where do we meet them? It doesn't work for me to just 'walk up to people at a table to ask to join in' as some have asked me to do."

- Many students want to bring up campus culture and climate, to include goal of diverse and inclusive campus, at NSO. Students also expressed their appreciation for events like First Mondays and indicated an interest in organizing more events like this that allow students a forum in which to discuss issues of diversity and inclusion.
- Students can build more collaboration between student groups. Students also indicated a need for better communication across student groups, with one mentioning a need for "enhanced communications between student groups. Shared mission. Collaborative space can develop a community of supportive people. Maybe in Butler Center or somewhere else."

Staff themes:

- As mentioned above, staff members seem particularly interested in "seeing more meaningful conversations about the campus (climate, and other) that include faculty and students with staff/administrators."
- Unlike the other two groups, staff express a "shared sense of less trust on campus" over "fears that people are being fired left and right." One staff member commented, "If people are leaving for performance reasons, people want to know what they can do to avoid that fate. This sense of fear inhibits meaningful conversations."
- Several staff members mentioned that "students come to staff for answers – particularly about controversial subjects, like the *Cipher* articles." It is important to staff that they "have appropriate information to share with students."

Faculty themes:

- Several faculty members commented on the personal behavior and beliefs of fellow faculty members, with attitudes that ranged from the generous to the profoundly impatient with insensitive faculty. A common theme from the faculty diversity sessions mentioned that faculty members are seeking "how to build contexts to ensure that these conversations are taking place" and also expressed a desire "to learn better techniques for dealing with obstructionist colleagues" and "building groups of senior faculty as a means to shift institutional norms across disciplinary or departmental lines."
- Faculty also commonly discussed the hiring process with respect to building a more diverse and inclusive community. Some of the ideas generated in these sessions included "institutional priorities driving the hiring process over departmental ones, such as finding the scholars we want distinct from the tenure-track line, cluster hires, hiring more senior faculty with tenure, raising awareness of *how* to hire a more diverse faculty – recruiting, posting positions, reading CVs differently... valuing modeling and mentoring for students in tenure decisions."
- Departmental reform was perhaps the most frequently mentioned topic for faculty. Faculty members suggested reform that "includes curricular shift away from Western norms, adding classes to the major based on what faculty teach – versus marginalizing non-Western, white, male specialties." One faculty member remarked, "departments have to change to support candidates of color. Not done intentionally, but they were marginalizing colleagues of color, with very traditional curricula, and making the faculty of color's courses marginal (electives) and not central to the department. Almost always junior faculty."