Share-out: Campus Climate and Listening Session Results – 2023

5 March 2024

JEDI Data Collection Subcommittee

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Centralia College JEDI Data Subcommittee

BACKGROUND

In 2021, The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5227 (SB 5227), requiring institutions of higher education to collect data on diversity, education, and inclusion within their campus communities. The resulting RCW 28B.10.147 mandates that colleges and universities collect this data through the regular implementation of listening sessions and campus climate assessment (CCA) surveys. In 2023, Centralia College engaged in our first round of data collection. In the winter quarter, the college contracted with an outside provider, SoundRocket, to conduct an online CCA survey. In the spring quarter, the college followed up with a series of listening sessions for student and employee groups. The student listening sessions were conducted one-on-one, in-person with a representative from the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Data Subcommittee. The transcribed student responses were analyzed by an independent outside consultant, Dr. Maureen Pettit. The employee listening sessions were organized into classified, exempt, and faculty groups. The listening sessions were virtual and facilitated by Dr. Pettitt. The purpose of the survey and listening sessions was to learn more about student and employee experiences and perceptions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at the college.

Overall, 478 members (16%[1]) of the campus community responded to the CCA survey, with 191 (35%) employees and 287 (11%) students responding. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) employees had the highest response rate (63%) of the demographic groups, while men students had the lowest response rate (11%).

Table 1. Survey Respondents Compared to College Population[2]			
Population	Survey Respondents (% of Survey Resp.)	College Population Winter Term 2023 (% of College Pop.)	% Response Rate by College Population
Students			
Women	193 (69.7%)	1,168 (62.9%)	16.5%
Men	72 (26.0%)	688 (37.1%)	10.5%
BIPOC	83 (31.2%)	597 (28.5%)	13.9%
White	183 (68.8%)	1,496 (71.5%)	12.2%
Employees			
Women	137 (72.9%)	300 (68.8%)	45.7%
Men	46 (24.5%)	136 (31.2%)	33.8%
BIPOC	43 (23.5%)	68 (16.5%)	63.2%
White	140 (76.5%)	345 (83.5%)	40.6%

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[1] Throughout the body of this document, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

[2] While transgender and nonbinary individuals responded to the survey, the college has not collected information on these demographic groups to provide a population comparison.

Listening session participation was lower, with 31 students, 19 exempt staff, 13 classified staff, and 16 faculty attending a listening session.[3] Demographic information was not collected from listening session participants.

The Data Subcommittee is deeply appreciative of the experiences and perspectives shared by those who participated in the CCA and/or a listening session. While the overall response rates were lower than hoped, the information shared is an important reflection of the campus climate as experienced by those participants and respondents. The low response rates themselves may also communicate some important messages about our campus climate, including that many in our campus community feel distrustful or skeptical of the process and/or impact of these data collection endeavors. Moving forward, the Data Subcommittee will work to improve the methodological issues that were present in the survey and listening sessions (see "Data Collection – Lessons Learned"). It will be a long-term, campus-wide endeavor to build the trust and confidence that will lead to greater participation in these DEI-focused data collection projects.

CENTRALIA'S CAMPUS CLIMATE – CORE ISSUES

Results from the listening sessions and CCA identify various DEI deficits, gaps, and barriers. Although respondents and participants shared positive experiences, the intention here is to bring attention to the inequities and injustice experienced by students, staff, and faculty. Identifying and understanding these issues yields potential for change and improvements that develop a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

The Data Subcommittee identified three key areas of concern that emerged from the survey and listening sessions.

1. Students and employees are experiencing harm, and this harm has disproportionate impacts.

Campus Climate
- BIPOC students were more likely (9%) than white students (5%) to report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the overall campus climate. Among employees, BIPOC respondents were less likely to report feeling satisfied or very satisfied (52%) than white respondents (60%) and more likely to report feeling neutral (31% compared to 23%)
- BIPOC students and employees and men students reported lower rates of feeling valued or experiencing a sense of respect and belonging, based on a variety of measures (see Table 2 below).

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[3] Throughout this document, we refer to individuals who completed the survey as respondents and those who took part in the listening sessions as participants.

Table 2. Levels of Agreement with Statements About Campus Aspects (% Strongly Agree + Agree Responses)		Gender Identity		Race/Ethnicity	
	Total	Woman	Man	White	BIPOC
Students					
I feel valued as an individual at Centralia.	70.2% (177)	72.2% (127)	63.1% (41)	71.9% (120)	66.7% (50)
I feel I belong at Centralia.	67.1% (169)	69.5% (123)	58.5% (38)	66.7% (112)	66.7% (50)
I am treated with respect at Centralia.	82.8% (212)	84.4% (151)	78.8% (52)	83.0% (142)	81.3% (61)
I feel others don't value my opinions at Centralia.	10.0% (25)	10.2% (18)	7.8% (5)	8.4% (14)	13.3% (10)
I have to work harder than others to be valued equally at Centralia.	12.0% (30)	13.8% (24)	9.2% (6)	9.6% (16)	18.7% (14)
Employees					
I feel valued as an individual at Centralia.	65.4% (121)	65.4% (87)	68.9% (31)	66.9% (93)	61.5% (24)
I feel I belong at Centralia.	66.5% (123)	69.2% (92)	62.2% (28)	69.8% (97)	56.4% (22)
I am treated with respect at Centralia.	73.5% (136)	73.7% (98)	73.3% (33)	76.3% (106)	66.7% (26)
I feel others don't value my opinions at Centralia.	23.5% (43)	26.0% (34)	13.3% (6)	20.3% (28)	34.2% (13)
I have to work harder than others to be valued equally at Centralia.	29.9% (55)	34.8% (46)	17.8% (8)	23.2% (32)	51.3% (20)

Discrimination & Derogatory Behavior

- 6% of student respondents overall and 11% of BIPOC student respondents reported experiencing discrimination on campus in the past 12 months. Students most frequently reported discrimination related to age (14%), political orientation (12%), and racial/ethnic identity (6% of students overall and 16% of BIPOC students reported experiencing this form of discrimination).

- 13% of employee respondents overall and 24% of BIPOC employee respondents reported experiencing discrimination, most frequently based on age (19%), political orientation (17%), sex (13%), and racial/ethnic identity (12% overall, 36% of BIPOC employees).

- BIPOC student and employee respondents also reported experiencing higher rates of discrimination based on factors other than race/ethnicity. These patterns were particularly notable for BIPOC employees, who were considerably more likely than white employees to report that they had experienced discrimination based on age (28% of BIPOC respondents compared to 19% of total respondents), national origin (22% compared to 6%), social class (19% compared to 9%), mental health status (19% compared to 7%), and religion (17% compared to 9%).

- Employee listening session participants expressed concerns about many forms of harm targeting minoritized populations on campus. These included experiencing and witnessing a lack of support for employees of color and recurring or frequent instances of racist language, microaggressions, stereotyping, and discrimination against people of color. They also reported observing derogatory comments about colleagues' weight; being targeted by age discrimination and observing ageism in hiring committees; and experiencing intimidation by coworkers. Other examples included the removal of pride flags and the presence of discriminatory graffiti on campus.
- Listening session participants also reported barriers and a lack of accessibility for students and employees with disabilities. Concerns were voiced about the difficulties and delays with establishing academic accommodations and slow responses to issues such as broken automatic door openers around campus.
- Employees in the listening sessions pointed out practices that result in inequities for students, including discriminatory scholarship and financial aid support, and a lack of action to address language barriers. They also noted that some students are treated poorly on campus due to factors such as being in recovery, unhoused, or low-income. Student listening session participants also described ways other students and employees directly targeted them due to disability, homelessness, gender, neurodiversity, and other factors.

Student-specific Experiences
- Student respondents reported feeling listened to within the classroom and by their instructors at higher rates than outside the classroom by other students and employees (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. Levels of Agreement with Statements About Classroom Aspects and Outside Classroom Aspects (% Strongly Agree + Agree Responses)		Gender Identity		Race/Ethnicity	
	Total	Woman	Man	White	BIPOC
In my classrooms and classroom settings (e.g., lectures, seminars, labs, workshops, studio sessions, etc.), I feel listened to by:					
Instructors	80.3% (196)	82.1% (138)	78.1% (50)	79.5% (128)	79.5% (58)
Other students	72.0% (175)	73.7% (123)	68.8% (44)	75.6% (121)	61.6% (45)
In spaces outside the classroom, I feel valued by:					
Faculty instructors	75.8% (179)	76.8% (126)	75% (45)	74.1% (117)	77.9% (53)
Other students	65.5% (154)	66.3% (108)	60.7% (37)	66.0% (105)	60.6% (40)
Staff	65.5% (154)	68.1% (111)	60.7% (37)	64.6% (102)	64.7% (44)
College Administrators	61.2% (145)	63% (104)	57.4% (35)	60.4% (96)	62.3% (43)

Workplace Dynamics

- Employee respondents expressed feeling overwhelmed by workload or environment (69%); this was especially evident among women (73%) and white (73%) employees. Concerns about workload were echoed in the listening sessions, and participants identified this as a factor impeding DEI efforts.
- Employee responses indicated concerns about workload distribution and feeling acknowledged, supported, and rewarded within their departments (see Table 4 below). Racial and gender disparities were evident in several of these concerns.

Table 4: Levels of Agreement with Statements About Department/Unit Aspects (% Strongly Agree + Agree Responses)		Gender Identity		Race/Ethnicity	
	Total	Woman	Man	White	BIPOC
I have a voice in the decision-making that affects the direction of my department/unit.	66.5% (117)	62.4% (78)	77.8% (35)	70.7% (94)	56.8% (21)
The teaching workload is fairly and equitably distributed in my department/unit.	40.2% (68)	39.7% (48)	42.9% (18)	41.7% (53)	38.9% (14)
Rewards for work performance are fairly and equitably distributed in my department/unit.	41.1% (72)	40.2% (51)	42.9% (18)	43.6% (58)	33.3% (12)
Support is provided fairly and equitably in my department/unit.	70.6% (125)	69.0% (87)	73.3% (33)	75.4% (101)	54.1% (20)

- Listening session participants expressed concerns about the siloing and isolation of individuals and departments on campus. 28% of employee respondents overall and 31% of women employees reported feeling intimidated or coerced by peers.
- 43% of employee respondents overall, 47% of women employees, and 57% of BIPOC employees reported feeling intentionally left out or overlooked.
- Listening session participants reported that dominant personalities and a repressive climate have left some employees afraid to speak up in meetings.
- Listening session participants noted there is a lack of consideration by the college for diversity and inclusion within the campus community. Examples such as the lack of non-Christian religious observances and the lack of options for individuals with dietary restrictions, minimize or prevent individuals from participating in campus events.

2. People are considering leaving as a result.
- 21% of employee respondents overall and 26% of BIPOC employees "have considered leaving Centralia because [they] feel isolated or unwelcomed."
- 10% of student respondents overall and 12% of BIPOC students reported the same.

3. Employees report a lack of accountability, transparency, and action in addressing campus issues, resulting in a lack of trust.
- Employee listening session participants reported concerns that the college had not taken action to address incidents of peer-to-peer intimidation and campus issues such as the removal of

pride flags and instances of graffiti. They suggested the lack of responsiveness by the college may have encouraged patterns of underreporting.

- While 67% of employee respondents agreed that "Centralia has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion," only 51% agreed that the college "provides sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of a diverse faculty/staff," suggesting a perceived mismatch between the values and the priorities/actions of the college. This was also reflected in listening session responses that indicated a need for concrete action plans.
- In the listening sessions, employees reported recurring concerns about communication and a lack of transparency in disseminating information.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY FOR IMPROVING THE CAMPUS CLIMATE

Employees in the listening sessions placed a high value on diversity, equity, and inclusion. They noted that many individuals and groups in our campus community have been actively working toward improving DEI on campus. Some participants felt there had been visible growth in DEI areas over the past few years. Specific examples reported as contributing to this growth included:

- Improved opportunities for engaging in discussions and expressing grievances.
- Some improvements in training and hiring practices, including expanded outreach efforts and Spanish translation of materials.
- The Student Advocacy Activities Leadership Team's (SAALT) organization of activities.
- Creation of a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ students.
- Support and accommodation provided by Disability Services.
- Outreach to the larger community.

Student listening session participants appreciated several ways the college focused on DEI, such as:

- Diverse clubs, cultural events, and activities.
- Programs such as SAALT and TRiO, which students identified as particularly diverse and inclusive environments.
- All but one participant agreed that their "courses provide opportunities...to learn about cultures, backgrounds, and experiences different from [their] own," and all but two participants agreed that they "feel a sense of community at Centralia College."

Participants' commitment to DEI and the college was reflected in suggestions to enhance (or create) inclusive learning and working environments resulting in a more positive overall campus climate. Some of these focused on continuing and amplifying current strengths, while others suggested a need for new initiatives or changes to existing ones.

Promote diversity and inclusion through a variety of programs and events at Centralia College.

- Promote, and provide more support for, diverse clubs and culturally diverse programming.
- Offer additional, and more inclusive, events, such as cultural fairs, speakers from diverse cultures, cultural celebrations, and events with culturally diverse food.
- Improve the messaging about clubs, events, and "safe spaces" on campus to increase awareness of these resources.

- Host debates to promote diversity of thought and opinion.
- Bring back the international student program.

Foster diversity and inclusion within the classroom.
- Invite diverse speakers into classes.
- Work on greater inclusion in classroom discussions.
- Incorporate diverse perspectives and viewpoints in classes.

Improve access to services and employee awareness about student needs.
- Improve awareness about resources for accommodations.
- Expand services and support for students with disabilities (e.g., help with study skills, anxiety).
- Provide more training for faculty and staff on a variety of disabilities.
- Provide additional support and resources for English-language learner and American Sign-Language students.
- Make Spanish translation of materials standard and compensate employees for translation work.
- Provide additional support (including showers and affordable food options) for unhoused students.
- Increase the number of gender-neutral bathrooms.

Produce strong, visible representations of DEI values at Centralia College that reflect the institution's commitment and priorities.
- Create a visual representation of DEI on the college website and in physical spaces (e.g., hang posters).
- Change the mascot.
- Celebrate Pride month.

Provide more (and better) professional development related to DEI.
- Create a shared language/foundational understanding of DEI issues and concepts.
- Address the stereotypes in the current GET Inclusive training related to family size and single parenthood.
- Provide DEI training that meets various needs across campus and promotes ongoing dialogue and relationship-building.
- Find ways to increase "buy-in" related to DEI efforts rather than presenting training opportunities in a way that can feel coercive, meaningless, and/or counterproductive.

Foster a more diverse/representative group of employees.
- Hire more diverse staff, faculty, and administrators.
- Provide mentorship and support programs for new employees.
- Improve the onboarding process.
- Engage in targeted recruitment of employees of color, including advertising positions in journals targeting specific BIPOC publications.
- Scale up the Search Advocate program.

Create a more welcoming, inclusive, fair, and collaborative work culture.
- Increase collaboration and communication between departments.
- Promote the sharing of diverse views and experiences.
- Provide multiple platforms through which employees can express their views (some people are engaged but not comfortable voicing their views in meetings).
- Address committee dynamics and structure. A small number of people regularly participate; others are unwilling, uninvited, or feel unwelcome to participate.
- Reduce workloads for those who are doing too much. These heavy workloads can represent unfairness in work distribution and impede some employees' ability to engage with DEI efforts.
- Provide more social events and opportunities to meet face-to-face.
- Make social events more accessible and inclusive. Be aware of non-Christian/federal holidays, provide a wider variety of days and times for events, and recognize dietary needs when providing food.
- Invite adjuncts to meetings and events.

Improve communication and transparency.
- Engage in more frequent communication/information-sharing across the college.

Create and improve reporting and accountability.
- Create a clear protocol for reporting discrimination/harm.
- Create and enforce an anti-bullying policy for employees.
- Meaningfully respond to reports of bias, discrimination, bullying, unfairness, etc.
- Protect reporters from retaliation.
- Improve the process for making Title IX complaints.
- Collect data on reported incidents and responses/resolutions.

Demonstrate a commitment to DEI in leadership practices, priorities, and policies.
- Develop and share a clear and concrete action plan to improve DEI.
- Dedicate resources (including work time) toward, and provide a budget for, DEI efforts.
- Include DEI in the faculty contract.
- Engage in DEI efforts and initiatives that are meaningful and serious rather than performative.
- Increase leadership presence/participation in DEI-related events and work.

DATA COLLECTION – LESSONS LEARNED

2023 marked the launch of ongoing campus climate assessment surveys and listening sessions. Based on the timeline established by RCW 28B.10.147, the surveys will be conducted every five years, and the listening sessions will be conducted annually, during periods between campus climate assessments. The responses received during this first round provided important baseline information to guide campus-wide efforts to improve the campus climate and to which we can compare future results.

The Data Subcommittee has several recommendations and points to consider as we move forward in this ongoing data collection process.

Timing

The 2023 listening sessions took place at the end of spring quarter. This was not ideal timing; late spring is an especially busy time for both student and employee groups, hindering availability for robust participation. Future listening sessions should be conducted earlier in the year, ideally in the fall quarter for students and winter for employees.

The college should revise its timeline for contracting with services to help garner more participation and to facilitate more efficient data compiling and sharing.

Messaging

Better planning/timing would also allow for more effective messaging about the survey and listening sessions. We anticipate improved communication and collaboration across campus to get the word out and increase participation.

Access

Members of the campus community reported issues accessing the CCA survey. Students found it difficult to locate the email invitation to complete the survey even when they were specifically looking for it. The college should address this issue before the next survey is implemented.

Increasing Representation

The Data Subcommittee was encouraged to see that many groups that are underrepresented in our college population were overrepresented in the survey sample, including individuals with disabilities and individuals identifying as BIPOC and LGBTQ+. The lowest response rates for students and employees were among men and white individuals, suggesting that improved representation among these groups would be especially helpful in improving sample size and representativeness (see table on page 1).

However, the most significant limitation came from the wholesale exclusion of two groups of students: those in Running Start and corrections education. These groups were excluded from participation due to ethical and legal constraints on involving minors and incarcerated individuals in research.

Sharing Results

In addition to improving the timing of data collection, the Data Subcommittee aims to be timelier and more transparent in communicating the results of the survey and listening sessions to the campus community. Completing the listening sessions in fall and winter quarters will help with this (allowing the analysis and reporting to happen in spring, without the summer gap); so will the development of a more routine process to be conducted annually (cutting down on the time needed to develop/set up the logistics) and the college's new addition of a Director of Equity, whose time will be focused on projects such as this.

Based on feedback from the campus community, there is also a need for access to more information from the surveys and listening sessions.

Promoting Trust

The Data Subcommittee received informal feedback that many individuals in our campus community chose not to participate due to a lack of trust in either: (1) the confidentiality of the data; and/or (2) the intention to act meaningfully on the information learned.

Building trust will be a complex and ongoing process; we anticipate the following steps will help facilitate the process:

- *Engage in the highest standards to uphold confidentiality with the data already collected*. The Data Subcommittee does not have access to information about the identities of respondents, and we have chosen not to include quotes or other details that could potentially be identifying.
- *Effectively communicate practices around confidentiality during future data collection*. This communication will only be effective if the standard above is upheld.
- *Continue to contract with outside providers to implement the survey and listening sessions.* Having third parties collect and safeguard the data will help to instill confidence that members of the campus community do not have access to identifying information.
- *Act on the results to improve the campus climate in meaningful ways and at all levels/areas of the college.* The best way to convince people that participation is worth their time is to act, based on the information they provide, to optimize the campus climate.