SWC

SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

Agenda Item Details

Meeting	Oct 24, 2017 - GB Special Meeting
Category	4. BOARD WORKSHOP
Subject	C. Fostering a Climate of Respect, Trust, and Openness (Murillo)
Access	Public
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Public Content

SUBMITTED BY: Kindred Murillo, Ed.D., Superintendent/President

OVERVIEW

This workshop agenda item is intended to solicit feedback from the Governing Board (Board) on the College's path forward on achieving a more respectful, trusting, and open environment through building a college culture of fairness, equity, and inclusion.

The Southwestern Board agreed upon six goals for the Superintendent/President and noted they were in priority order. After reaffirming accreditation, the Board noted the following goal was a priority:

2. Foster a climate of respect, trust, and openness through building a culture of fairness, equity, and inclusion.

a. Assess underlying issues.

b. Address all investigations, personnel matters, and lawsuits immediately and effectively.

c. Develop and implement a cultural change strategy.

> *i. Conduct training and development for senior leaders and administrators to ensure accountability, realistic/honest evaluations, and processes are followed*
>
> *ii. Work with constituencies to build partnerships*
>
> *iii. Provide constituencies with the opportunity to constructively address race/inclusion issues on campus*
>
> *iv. Work with the Board to build a strong working relationship based on trust and supports effective trusteeship*

d. Communicate to the Board of Trustees appropriate information.

> *i. Ensure goals and actions are prioritized and aligned*
>
> *ii. Build transparent and timely Board agendas*
>
> *iii. Encourage college employees to use established processes*

e. Ensure marketing and outreach messages are student focused.

Southwestern College (SWC) is embarking on an intentional, strategic focus on inclusion and race relations. As part of this initiative the college leadership is taking several steps to ensure a holistic, sustainable culture change through building on the following principles:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral components of the highest quality academic programs and a strong campus climate to ensure a sense of belongingness for students, faculty, staff, and administration
- To reinforce the SWC Values, Vision, and Mission Statement
- A multi-pronged approach
- Reinforce Southwestern Governing Board Policy 3050 Institutional Code of Professional Ethics. Link to Board Policy 3050
- Reinforce a commitment to public discourse that honors First Amendment Rights
- A recognition of all groups of students, faculty, staff, and administration through the inclusion of support for LGBT+ and ability challenged members of our community
- An approach that respects and lifts all communities on campus without lessening the importance of others through recognizing and valuing the unique identities and cultures as the table grows larger
- Honest, courageous, respectful, and civil conversations

Internal and external environments will challenge the process of focusing on behaviors that are respectful, civil, and inclusive. This initiative will require tenacity, focus, commitment, and some pain. The Governing Board and college leaders have committed to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that reflects the SWC community and state. This work takes courage, and will be dependent on keeping the focus on "who we want to be as a college."

Completed and Ongoing Actions

During the last nine months, the Superintendent/President has worked with the senior administration and college constituencies to assess the underlying issues, address all investigations, personnel matters, and lawsuits immediately and effectively. Throughout the assessment of issues and investigations, the theme of racial tension has arisen as an area that needs healing through a cultural change strategy. An area for additional work for the college is to learn to resolve conflict in a more respectful and appropriate manner. If the college community can learn to address the underlying racial tensions through training, leadership development, and respectful dialog, it will help in addressing day to day employee to employee conflict. The underlying foundation for the culture change strategy is inclusion. Respect, trust, and openness cannot grow and flourish in an environment of racial tension and conflict.

The senior administration has committed to ensuring we develop future leaders, and hold ourselves and our employees accountable to Board Policies and Procedures. As part of this overall strategy, a task force is being finalized to address how to build a more inclusive college culture and address race relations.

Several initiatives have been developed to begin moving the college toward a more inclusive and respectful environment:

- Developing and conducting a College Management Retreat around inclusion through interactive discussions regarding trust and race.
- Developing and conducting a Shared Consultation Council retreat where participants engage in meaningful dialogue about race.
- Developing and implementing a pilot developmental opportunities hiring process to fill a vacancy in order to build internal leadership capacity. This pilot provides feedback to the applicants to develop skill sets.
- Focusing on hiring practices to ensure inclusive practices and revising hiring policies and procedures.

  o The College Management Team will participate in unconscious bias in hiring training with the Academic Network in November.
- Reviewing policies and procedures from the framework of inclusion and recommending language that eliminates unintentional bias. (e.g. moving away from "he or she". Board resolution on travel to states.)
- Conducting retention interviews to understand what helps employees feel valued and respected.
- Creating and maintaining an email communication with all employees through Things to Know to:

  o Increase communication and transparency regarding actions and issues
  o Promote cultural competence through resources for creating learning (inclusion, equity)
  o Provide reminders of Governing Board Policies and Administrative Procedures
  o Highlight accomplishments of students, employees, and programs (morale, openness)
  o Encourage participation at College events that support inclusion

Steps Moving Forward

In November, the college will undergo a racial climate assessment by the USC Center for Race and Equity, through structured focus groups that will engage between 300 and 400 participants. The President's Advisory Task Force on Inclusion and Race Relations will be assembled and will develop a vision and operating boundaries through facilitated meetings centered on building a trusting and inclusive environment. During the spring the President's Advisory Task Force on Inclusion and Race Relations will undergo Equity Institutes that will include the following:

The USC Equity Institutes aim to bridge a specific gap: professionals often ascend to leadership roles without having had a proper course of study on how to effectively address persistent and pervasive racial problems, how to responsibly act in periods of racial crisis, or how to achieve racial equity. The USC Equity Institutes enable institutional leaders to achieve long-term, significant, and sustainable organizational change.

The Institute consists of a 4- or 8-week program in which expert faculty provide instruction to 20 participants per Equity Institute across a customized 8-module curriculum.

Institutes focus on opportunities and challenges pertaining to equity, diversity, assessment, accountability, leadership, organizational change, and learning.

Institute Structure

The USC Equity Institute accommodates senior-level executives and working professionals by leveraging the successful format of virtual, executive-style learning programs. Southwestern College's participants will attend courses through a customized, synchronous online learning portal, in which they are able to engage virtually using web cameras on their home and office computers. The program intentionally uses collaborative and reflective learning models from a national community of educators to aid educational problem solving.

Using webinar style lectures, one-on-one and small group breakouts, and open portal access throughout the program, participants can seamlessly receive instruction, collaborate with one another, and schedule virtual group meetings between class sessions. Following completion of the program, graduates are provided access to virtual communities of practice to remain connected to one another, institute faculty, and educational resources.

Curriculum and Instruction

The curricular plan for each Institute is developed by the co-directors of the USC Race and Equity Center and administered by a curated list of institute faculty from top schools of education and other leading educators, policy-makers, and practitioners throughout the country.

While the overall objectives of each Institute are developed here at USC, each faculty member is given liberty to deliver against the objectives in their own unique pedagogical style.

Learning Strategy

- Introduce participants to topics, frameworks, evidence-based readings, books, and practical tools on racial equity.

- Create space for colleagues to talk honestly with each other about seemingly explosive racial topics.

- Leverage the expertise of USC Race & Equity Center researchers and faculty affiliates, as well as highly respected others in our network.

- Cultivate cohorts of equity-minded colleagues and collaborators.
- Teach participants how to strategically achieve racial equity, inside and outside of the classroom.

- Create sustainable projects that build on and outlive a short-term professional development experience.

Four teams design racial equity projects to be sustained after the Institute. Equity Institute faculty offer guidance and feedback.

Assessment and evaluation

- Formal quantitative evaluation following each individual module, and a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the 4-week experience.
- Virtual focus groups two months after the Institute ends that focus on the launch of each team's racial equity project.
- Formal quantitative evaluation one year after the Institute that focuses on individual-level progress and institutional-level change. Plus, virtual focus groups that focus on each team's racial equity project.
- Assessment data from the four equity projects.

The Equity Institutes Director will work with a campus-based contact to identify and select eight (8) modules that are contextually appropriate from the following menu:

- Talking about Race, Racism, and Racial Inequities Understanding and Navigating Identity as Faculty
- Enacting Race-Conscious Leadership in Higher Education Measuring, Understanding, and Confronting Implicit Bias Making Curricula Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Leading in Moments of Racial Crisis
- Managing Institutional Responses in Times of Racial Crisis Responding to Campus Unrest and Student Protest Improving Campus Racial Climates
- Assessing Racial Equity and Disaggregating Data
- Gender Equity and Inclusion On-Campus Cultivating Trans Inclusive Campus Environments
- Classroom Incivility and Productive Conversations about Race Reducing Microaggressions in the Classroom
- Reducing Stereotype Threat in the Classroom
- Reducing Implicit Bias in the Search and Hire Process Inclusive Pedagogy and Classroom Transformation
- Recruitment, Selection, and Retention of Diverse Talent Resolving Racial Tensions in the Workplace
- Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Employees of Color Planning and Strategic Action for Racial Equity Messaging Commitment to Equity and Inclusion
- Dismantling Persistent Equity Problems in STEM