Campus Climate: Real Stories. Real Talk. Real Impact.

This is a summary document for the student conversation that took place on Wednesday, October 8, 2014, 6:00-8:30pm, in the Mississippi Room on the 3rd floor of Coffman Memorial Union. Forty-five undergraduate, graduate, and professional students participated in the event hosted by members of the Campus Climate Planning Team and sponsored by the Campus Climate Work Group.

“The only way we can break through the barriers that exist amongst gender lines, amongst class lines, amongst racial lines, amongst superiority lines is to have the dialogue to bridge an understanding on one another’s experiences to create allies out of one another because what you find easy another student might struggle with.”

*Ken Gonzales, Campus Climate Planning Team member and Vice President of the Multicultural Greek Council*

“Thank you so much to each of you here tonight for taking the time for this critically important conversation. This university has great ambitions- but we cannot succeed if we don’t have a climate where everyone feels welcome. I am very interested in what these conversations surface. We will implement changes based on suggestions from our campus community.”

*Eric Kaler, University of Minnesota President*

“Despite the efforts and progress that so many people have made across the span of many years, there is still significant work to be done. We want this process to create a new kind of space to share stories, concerns, ideas and hopes for change, so that we can recommit to co-creating a campus community that honors all who learn, teach, work, and visit here.”

*Danita Brown Young, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*

**The shortest distance between two people is a story.**
The purpose of these conversations is to help create a welcoming and inclusive campus climate by sharing our individual and collective experiences so we can create and foster a campus climate where all persons are treated with civility and respect, allowing everyone the opportunity to succeed.
SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

6:00 Welcome Reception
6:15 Kick-Off
6:35 Introduction of the World Cafe Process
6:40 Round One Conversation
7:05 Round Two Conversation
7:35 Round Three Conversation
7:55 Sharing
8:15 Closing Ceremony
8:25 Gratuities and Next Steps
8:30 Farewell

Tell a story about how you are experiencing or seeing the university. REAL STORIES

Round One Conversation
From all of the experiences you have heard and shared, what is standing out for you?

Round Two Conversation

- Lack of communication between student groups and administrative staff
- Simplify process to form student organizations (could be hindering innovation) (say 2 officers, advisor, constitution needed only)
- No more silence
- Knowledge of student groups (transfer, etc..)
- 2nd floor and the importance of finding a place
- Student groups serve a great purpose in feeling welcome at the U... for everyone
- Displaying all student groups on 1 single day at a big place - like a big market of agricultural community, e.g. farmer's market
- Finding friend groups
- Misunderstandings of perspectives (race, ethnicity, privilege)
- “Tolerance” vs. cultural humility/inclusion
- Gender neutral bathrooms (of single use) (not being changed to gender neutral)
- Feeling marginalized
- A sense of isolation
- The portrayal that crime has a color - over-representation and under-represented groups
- Engagement

Participatory Leadership in Action

Participatory leadership principles and practices were used to leverage the collective experience and wisdom of all who attended. We had the opportunity to engage in multiple rounds of 20-30 minute conversations in groups of four around powerful questions. The guidelines for conversation were to contribute our thinking, listen attentively to others, focus on what matters, link and connect ideas, listen together for deeper insights, play, doodle, draw, and have fun. Between rounds of conversation, we moved to other tables which provided an opportunity to forge new connections and cross-pollinate ideas across the room. Some volunteered to be table hosts after each round, welcoming others to the table and providing a summary of the previous conversation.

- Openness
- Don’t generalize and consolidate things like ‘Cultural Center’, ‘Ethnic Studies’, departments MCAE. They are distinct and we should be proud of them.
- Community connections and opportunities
- Getting perspective from study abroad - can be a skewed view BUT CAN ALSO give insight to an “other” experience
- Transfer students become very involved
- Size
- Belongingness
- Location impacting your experience - which campus, which bank(s), what buildings, what college, where you live
- Outsider (international, transfer, out of state) / Insider (location wise, feeling resources/connected to opportunities @ the U)
- Common portal/calendar for campus events (not college-specific)
- Finding your own niche to make a big community smaller, but keeping an open mind
- Commended friendliness and approachability of Minnesotans
- Learning/Context
- University as a whole making it more explicit now to find relevant student groups, what resources/groups are available
- Student-led change
What exactly needs to change to make the campus a more welcoming and inclusive place for all?

**REAL IMPACT**

- Making student groups accessible and not exclusive (e.g., not major/college-only)
- Making student groups more known. Specifically targeting transfer, graduate, and professional students. (possibly a few to accommodate schedules)
- Require conversations with student orgs on diversity climate.
- Breaking Barriers - forums, spaces to bring together domestic and international students. Mix orientation. Students groups, departments → topic-centered
- Add liberal education requirement or change to diversity/cultural studies
- Change 2 yr language requirement to 2 year cultural studies class
- Make a common, accessible platform for campus events, including: colleges, student groups, athletics, professional events, cultural events
- Report sexual assault crimes on (and near campus) as much as other crimes in Crime Reports
- Washington’s football team’s name should NOT appear on OUR campus. Proceed from game should entail scholarship for Native American Student Advancement
- Mandatory tours to welcome week for all new students, not just 1st year undergrads

**Graffiti Wall Statements**

This meeting did a great job of exposing good and bad quality of life here at the UMN, but did not help me deal with some of the areas still in need of growth in my and others’ life/lives.

Let’s have a place to be spiritual and pray freely.

We need a commitment to include more mandatory diversity and inclusivity forums. Too many people are ignorant as to how their everyday actions perpetuate discrimination because they are not overtly prejudiced.

Race in crime alerts leads to increased likelihood of bias and prejudice against people of color and there is not evidence it helps. Excuses to keep race in crime alerts is racist.

Why is everybody so sensitive? Why don’t you just ignore the “climate” around you and focus on the work on your desk? If you witness someone doing/saying something unacceptable towards another student, do not be shy to call them out on it in a civil manner.

I am so thankful to have open conversations like this and learn and meet people I otherwise would not of had this experience with.

I feel welcomed at Appleby Hall, Weisman Art Museum... DSCC and second floor Coffman... La Raza Office, GAPSA Office, St. Paul Campus, quiet... BAM! (Business Association of Multicultural Students)

Gender-neutral restrooms matter to a lot of people, old buildings need updating.

This group is a great way to address concerns and topics that aren’t addressed day-to-day. It would be great to see more of these and even see these talks between colleges, Res-Halls, Student-Groups, and even students to administration.

Everyone regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, abled or disabled is unique and beautiful.

How can we start being inclusive? By creating spaces to discuss and share ideas amongst us. When we walk, the “differences” don’t remain and we connect with one another.

Lead by example/initiative. I hear so many complaints for the administration when those issues aren’t issues and the real issues are overlooked.

Chill out and re-evaluate. Sheesh!

I would love to make a difference in both multicultural diverse students and educations by sharing my knowledge, experiences, and expertise as an educator.

I am currently moving forward to implement my goals by joining more World Cafes and being involved in the Educators for Excellence in Multicultural Policy Team.

There should be more of an explicit effort to attract graduate students of color. When I came here, I wish I would have known more explicitly about resources available and student groups.

Students of color need to know these things are available and that the university cares from the time we visit during prospective/ interview weekends.

Compliments from Active Minds coming soon!

We need more diverse news sources available to students (in the Daily, for example).

Language awareness posters on campus (in bathrooms, etc) Breaking down stereotypes and promoting gender-neutral, inclusive, kind language.

Ex. ‘You all’ instead of ‘You guys’. Can we please make “Engaging Justice” or some G.W.S.S. (social justice/equity & diversity related) class mandatory as a L.E. or requirement? (We’d need to train more teachers for all the debate/talk)

Would be tough to implement but soooo worth it! I know the strategic plan just change though... My religion & beliefs do not make me a bigot. (even if you don’t understand them)

How can men and women work together to address gender inequality? Likewise, how can different races, religions, etc work together to build an inclusive world? The U and students need to collaborate more frequently and with more depth.

Think of the impact we can have on how society handles diversity. SUA needs to listen when students ask them to, not just when it is convenient for them.

Contribute my passion and insights. Bring culture perspective that I am willing to represent! Be a pro-active leader and participant to care about this university, this country, this beautiful world! I want to fight for human equality and preserve cultural difference for whole life.

The 2nd floor murals were destroyed and this injury to trust has not been remedied.

There is a lot of talk about these issues but not a lot of action, at least not that is apparent. The U Administration needs to be more open about the specific actions they’re taking and how they’re meeting these goals.

The Rec Center T-shirt policy is sexist
NEXT STEPS

World Cafes for staff (Nov. 11) and faculty (Nov. 20). An Open Space Technology meeting for all members of the campus community will be held in Feb. 2015. All feedback gathered during these events will be shared with senior leaders on the Campus Climate Work Group to inform their decisions on action steps to improve campus climate.