

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well
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Consultative Committee

Campus Governance

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Consultative Committee

Moccasin Flower Room

March 28, 2013

9 – 10 a.m.

Committee members present: Co-chairs Brook Miller and LeAnn Dean, Jim Barbour, Chad Braegelmann, Molly Donovan, Jim Hall, Nancy Helsper, Bonnie Tipcke, Heather Waye

Guests: Troy Goodnough and Sarah Mattson

Discussion about campus climate issues

Sarah Mattson and Troy Goodnough were invited to discuss campus climate with us. Sarah began with an overview and discussion of resources already available on campus. When issues of workplace civility or bullying arise, many people visit with Sarah in HR, or talk to their managers, or talk to the HR consultant in the cities. Sarah distributed a number of brochures which detail the resources available to address specific issues, such as discrimination, workplace disputes, personal and work consultation, and anonymous reporting of concerns.

The primary goal is to establish one-on-one meetings with the parties involved in the dispute to set boundaries and establish working relationships. The challenge is to deal with these issues without involving too many people, and to separate the facts from emotions to generate a useful response. People are encouraged to deal with the problem with the other person directly, if they feel comfortable, and to address the problem early before the emotion builds. If that does not work, there are resources they can use. U-report is online and confidential, and reports go to the TC campus. If the report involves UMM it is sent to Sarah. Employee Assistance Programs involve personal and work consultation, if there are financial, legal, emotional problems that affect well-being. Concerns about conflict, incivility, or discrimination can be addressed using resources on campus, and these resources should be made known to the campus. If there are conflicts and concerns that HR doesn't hear about, it can't address them. On the other hand, the campus won't know when HR is addressing confidential issues.

Sarah offered to answer questions from the committee.

- In the past, the words "discrimination" and "harassment" were used, and now "bullying" is more common. Is "bullying" different? Harassment and bullying may be more alike, while discrimination is denying advantages based on some characteristic of the person.

- You said that when someone comes to you with a complaint, you only want to hear about the most recent incident. The goal is not to go through the entire list of complaints, but to sort it out, identify the core problems, and determine how to address them. Confronting the aggressor with a list is not effective. The main concern is that if there is an issue, people bring it forward, and that they know there are multiple channels they could use.

Troy began with a different question – "Do we have a civil workplace?" As the Sustainability Coordinator he often deals with sensitive issues and the question of civility is important to him. He recommended "The Business Case for Being Kind" and "The 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct" by Dr. Forni. Culture is King – we create and shape our culture, so how do we invest in a peaceable workplace? Is incivility an actual problem? Or have we become too sensitive? A recent country-wide poll found that 43% of respondents had experienced incivility, and 38% thought that society had become increasingly disrespectful. Stress in the workplace costs businesses in terms of sick days, legal fees, and loss of employees. The number one cause of stress at work is now other people's behavior. The bottom line for a civil workplace could be financial, or should the bottom line be how we are treated?

What is workplace incivility? Many institutions recognize that most issues are problems with personal communication. We see incidents of incivility all over in high-profile people, so this becomes normal and we're expected to "suck it up" and live with it.

What could we do? Some suggestions include:

- dialog on campus – how to address behavior and identify what kind of culture we want on campus
- advocate for others – establish a culture of allies
- promote appreciation (for example, thank-you notes)
- promotion of civility by students and by campus leadership
- invite speakers, start a book club, hold a forum on campus
- incorporate the discussion into professional development programs

Brook summarized that Sarah talked about resources for reporting issues while Troy talked about a culture of civility. We're hearing from people about some things that are reportable, others that are less so. There is fear of reporting based on an apparent lack of accountability, which indicates undercommunication or a lack of awareness of the available resources. Nancy suggested that a workshop with examples of how to respond to these issues would be helpful. Jim agreed that one problem is how to deal with uncooperative colleagues. There is a perception that being nice or civil is incompatible with being honest, and excuse incivility as honesty. What do we mean by "civility"? People don't think they "bully" so perhaps it will be more effective to frame the issue as "civility". Molly said that this conversation should be broadened to include civility between students. Brook asked if a project to make Sarah's resources more visible would integrate with Troy's initiatives. A conversation about civility will bring these issues to the surface, so we should be ready to point people in the right direction to the available resources. Perhaps one big campus event would help to get things started – how much would it cost to bring Dr. Forni to campus?

The next step will be to synthesize this discussion and draft a memo to Sarah and to Chancellor Jacquie Johnson with recommendations for training and for follow-through with individual groups.

Submitted by,

Heather Waye