CAMPUS CLIMATE

NOTE: Refer to the University Faculty website (http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/forums/) for most current legislation.

According to the bylaws of the university, the “…functions of the University Faculty shall be to consider questions of educational policy which concern more than one college, school or separate academic unit, or are general in nature…”

Responsibility of: Campus Climate Committee. The Committee facilitates efforts on campus to create and to institutionalize a respectful, inclusive, diverse community where all learn through reasoned, sustainable, and civil discourse; and pursues the challenge of breaking down barriers and promoting greater interaction across the campus community. It reports to the Faculty Senate.

December 9, 1998, Records, pp. 8179-8181S
February 10, 1999, Records, pp. 8187-8198S
March 10, 1999, Records, pp. 8212-8215S
April 21, 1999, Records, p. 8258S
September 8, 1999, Records, p. 8297S, Appendix K
November 10, 1999, Records, pp. 8843-8849S, Appendix J
December 8, 1999, Records, pp. 88588-59S
April 12, 2000, Records, p. 8925S
September 13, 2000, Records, pp. 8974-8975S
May 9, 2001, Records, pp. 9199-9204S, Appendix 6

In December 1998, Associate Professor Kerry Cook, Soil, Crop, and Atmospheric Sciences, and member of the University Faculty Committee, invited the Senate to provide input to the Committee on campus climate issues.

Following discussion, the Speaker called for a straw vote on directing the Dean of Faculty to move forward in this area. The vote carried.

At the February 1999 meeting, John Ford, Robert W. and Elizabeth C. Staley Dean of Students, reported on the racial harassment incidents targeted at students the previous fall. They included racist email messages, phone calls, late night street confrontations and suspected arson attempts to provoke fear. He indicated that as the crisis subsides, more faculty leadership is needed to make this a more cohesive campus.

Dean Ford suggested the following initiatives:
• Require students to work with people different from themselves.
• Develop a university-wide course requirement.
• Support existing programs (i.e. ethnic studies and ethnic theme houses).
• Participate in the newly formed Campus Climate Planning Committee that will engage students, faculty, and staff in every department in discussions of race and diversity.

Professor Cook introduced a resolution expressing the Faculty Senate’s concern for and interest in the intellectual and social environment at Cornell. Following discussion, and some proposed amendments that did not pass, the original resolution as written was adopted as follows:

WHEREAS, Cornell University is committed to providing an environment that permits equal opportunity for all members of the community to fulfill their potential for intellectual and social growth and that also permits the free and open exchange of opinions and ideas, and

WHEREAS, the use of harassing speech or actions directed against particular individuals or particular groups of individuals on the basis of their race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or religion is not a legitimate part of that exchange, and damages the trust and mutual respect essential to the well-being of our community,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cornell Faculty Senate urges the Cornell faculty to play a more active role in ensuring a safe and open campus environment.

Professor Robert Harris, Africana Studies and Research Center, made a presentation on campus dialogue at the March 1999 meeting. He responded to questions.

At the April 1999 meeting, Robert L. Johnson, Director of University Ministries and CURW, reported that units have been lined up to explore the question, “How do you experience difference at Cornell University?” He said the Campus Climate Committee is also hoping to do an Assemblies retreat in the fall.

Professor Robert Harris, Africana Studies and Research Center, at the September 1999 meeting, began his report with a quote from a pamphlet entitled, “Reasons for Hope”, a publication of the American Association of Colleges and Universities:

“Even though we live in a nation where issues of race are continually in the news, few of us have learned how to talk across racial lines. Our silence, aggravated by persistent social segregation, means that college is
often the first opportunity many Americans have to live and work in a multiracial setting, and to engage in multiracial dialogue. . . I’ve learned that dialogue about racism can be a powerful catalyst for change.” (This is from the Dean of Mount Holyoke College.)

Professor Harris said that some of the incidents that occurred on the campus during the fall of last year and a few of the incidents that have taken place this year suggest that a discussion within departments across the University as a whole, about difference and diversity and how to create a wholesome learning and living environment for students, is needed.

To that end, the Campus Climate Committee developed the following mission statement:

The Committee will facilitate efforts on campus to create and to institutionalize a respectful, inclusive, diverse community where we learn, through reasoned, sustainable, and civil discourse, to make decisions through a process that is fair and inclusive, to celebrate each other’s successes and to pursue actively the challenge of breaking down barriers and promoting greater interaction across the campus community. Diversity and collegiality among students, staff, and faculty are central to maintaining the high standards of excellence that characterize Cornell. The principal task of the committee is to enable members of the Cornell community to participate personally in a campus-wide effort to affirm the value and importance of diversity.

Role:

1. Facilitate, encourage, and support dialogue across ability, age, class, family status, gender, nationality/ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, and other differences on issues of diversity.

2. Generate and organize materials and data on which to base dialogue aimed at improving diversity and the climate at Cornell.

3. Facilitate assessments of climate and encourage follow-up from such.

4. Work with related university offices and committees in order to provide guidance, support, and assistance, and to highlight successful efforts to improve climate and increased diversity on campus.
In November 1999, a resolution on Diversity and Inclusiveness was placed on the floor. Discussion ensued, but a vote was postponed until the December meeting so that additional feedback could be sought.

At the December 1999 meeting, Professor Robert Harris, Africana Studies and Research Center, reported that the Employee Assembly, the Student Assembly, and the University Assembly suggested recommendations to the original resolution and the revised resolution reflects their input. On a vote call, the Senate adopted unanimously the Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

WHEREAS, “It is the policy of Cornell University actively to support equality of educational and employment of opportunity,” and

WHEREAS, a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness is a commitment to all students and employees, and

WHEREAS, the Campus Climate Committee has prepared a statement to proudly highlight Cornell’s identity as a richly diverse and inclusive land grant university, striving for excellence in a framework of academic freedom and respect,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate approves the Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the adoption of the statement be widely publicized to all segments of the community including the Assemblies, the Board of Trustees, as well as included in University publications where appropriate.

Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds: Cornell's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness

Open Doors

"I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." This statement, made by Ezra Cornell in 1865, proclaims Cornell University’s enduring commitment to inclusion and opportunity which is rooted in the shared democratic values envisioned by its founders. We honor this legacy of diversity and inclusion and welcome all individuals, including those from groups that have been historically marginalized and previously excluded from equal access to opportunity.

Open Hearts

Cornell’s mission is to foster personal discovery and growth, nurture scholarship and creativity across a broad range of common knowledge and affirm the value to
individuals and society of the cultivation of the human mind and spirit. Our legacy is reflected in the diverse composition of our community, the breadth of our curriculum, the strength of our public service, and the depth of our commitment to freedom, equality, and reason. Each member of the Cornell community has a responsibility to honor this legacy and to support a more diverse and inclusive campus in which to work, study, teach, research, and serve.

**Open Minds**

Free expression is essential to this mission, and provocative ideas lawfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. Cornell stands for civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing or silencing others. Cornell is committed to act responsibly and forthrightly to maintain an environment that opens doors, opens hearts, and opens minds.

Dean Cooke announced at the April 2000 meeting that the Campus Climate Committee was awarded the James A. Perkins Prize for Interracial Understanding and Harmony.

In September 2000, Professor Peter Schwartz, Textiles and Apparel, reported that the Campus Climate Committee and the Faculty Subcommittee of the Campus Climate Committee met and proposed that this semester each department reserve thirty minutes at one of their regularly scheduled faculty meetings to address campus climate issues. Discussions should be centered on:

1. The extent to which faculty be involved in fostering a campus environment supportive of teaching and learning and diversity in enrollment and ideas.

2. Faculty assistance in supporting an environment that enhances teaching and learning.

3. Resources needed to do the things found to be important.

Professor Schwartz announced the upcoming University Faculty Forum on “Diversity in the Classroom: Faculty-Student Interaction” to be held on October 18. At the forum, the Cornell Interactive Theater Ensemble will present a vignette followed by discussion.

At the May 2001 meeting, Professor Kay Obendorf, Textiles and Apparel, and member of the University Faculty Subcommittee, introduced a proposal to establish a Campus Climate Committee as a Committee of the Faculty Senate.
Following discussion, Professor Obendorf moved to establish the Campus Climate Committee. On a vote call, the motion was approved 27-22.

**Mission Statement:**

The Campus Climate Committee will facilitate efforts on campus to create and to institutionalize a respectful, inclusive, diverse community where we learn, through reasoned, sustainable, and civil discourse. The committee will pursue actively the challenge of breaking down barriers and promoting greater interaction across the campus community. Diversity and collegiality among students, staff, and faculty are central to maintaining the high standards of excellence that characterize Cornell. The principal task of the Committee is to actively engage members of the Cornell community in a campus-wide effort to create a respectful, inclusive environment in which to live, learn, and work.

**Role:**

1. Encourage, facilitate, and support dialogue across ability, age, class, family status, gender, nationality/ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, political positions, and other differences on issues of diversity. Where appropriate the committee will draw on the expertise of the various academic units that have special expertise.
2. Facilitate communication among self-governance bodies and university offices and committees.
3. Facilitate and recommend actions based on assessments of climate reflecting the broad campus community.
4. Publicize efforts to improve climate and increase diversity on campus to the broader community, highlighting progress and successes.

**Structure:**

The Campus Climate Committee, which is a committee of the Faculty Senate, draws on the self-governance structure across the campus. This includes the following self-governance bodies:

- Faculty Senate
- Student Assembly
- Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
- University Assembly
- Employee Assembly
The Campus Climate Committee links to and provides advice to administrative offices. Positions involved are:

- Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development
- Dean of Faculty
- Vice President of Student & Academic Services
- Dean of Students
- Director of the Office of Assemblies
- Director of Minority Educational Affairs
- Director of the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity and Life Quality
- Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center
- Director, Student Affairs and Diversity, Campus Life
- Director of Cornell United Religious Work
- Director of Gannett Clinic (Psychological and Counseling Services)
- Director of International Students and Scholars

This list is not exclusive of other offices, organizations or groups with whom the committee may need to work. The committee should develop those links necessary to accomplish their work and to be inclusive of all aspects of the campus community.

The Campus Climate Committee will report on a regular basis (at a minimum annually) to the Faculty Senate and the respective Assemblies.

Committee members are selected through the self governance structure of the campus community combined with members from the administrative structure of the university. Each constituent governance group selects designated representative(s) on this committee by its usual processes. The committee may have a subcommittee structure that draws on persons beyond the Campus Climate Committee membership. The membership structure is as follows:

**Membership:**

1) Member selected by the University Assembly
2) President of the University Assembly or designated member
3) Member selected by the Employee Assembly
4) President of the Employee Assembly or designated member
5) Member selected by the Student Assembly
6) President of the Student Assembly or designated member
7) Member selected by the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
8) President of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly or designated member
9) Member selected by the Faculty Senate
10) Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Affirmative Action or designated member
11) Dean of Faculty
12) Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development
13) Director of the Office of Assemblies
14) Vice President of Student & Academic Services, Dean of Students or designated member
15) Vice President for Human Resources or designated member (Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Life Quality)

Members selected by the student assembly or by the graduate and professional student assembly will serve one-year renewable terms. Members selected by the Faculty Senate, the University Assembly, or the Employee Assembly will serve three-year terms, with a lapse in service required before reelection to the committee. Terms of members from each constituency should be staggered. Designated member will serve for at least a period of one semester to provide for full involvement in on-going discussions of the committee. Using the option of designated members, the various administrative offices should set up a rotation process so that various members of these offices have an opportunity to serve at various times. This rotation should occur after continuous service on the committee for three years. Each office would establish the procedure for rotation and selection of the designated member.

The committee will have co-chairs with the Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development being one co-chair; the other co-chair will be selected from the faculty according to the normal procedures of the Faculty Senate Committee on Nomination and Election. The elected co-chair should serve no longer than two years without a break in service in this role.

This committee and its accomplishments will be reviewed by the University Faculty Committee after two years, reporting to the Faculty Senate within the third year.