What is “Campus Climate” and why is it important?
Introduction

“Now is a time of transition for the College of Southern Nevada as the community participates in a series of conversations concerning how the university can become a better, more mission-centered and high-performing institution for the 21st century.

An essential step will be ensuring that institutional leadership is aware of and committed to building an inclusive, supportive campus environment where every member of the faculty, staff, and student body is valued and encouraged to reach his or her highest potential in service of the institution’s strategic goals (Williams, 2010).
Climate versus Culture: A Tethered Concept

- Research in organizational climate and culture has contributed to the understanding of important topics such as leadership, job satisfaction, organizational socialization, work-family-conflict, work place bullying, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, retention and promotion, and job performance to name but a few.

- Within the literature, there has been much confusion between the two terms and both have been used arbitrarily with individuals using terms like organizational climate and culture nearly interchangeably (Williams, 2010).
Climate versus Culture: A Tethered Concept

- To say that organizational climate and culture are two distinctive concepts is an argument for a more scholarly venue then this presentation.
- Probably the best way to think about these two concepts generally is that organizational culture and climate are highly related organizational ideas that describe how the complex social systems of the campus come together and coalesce to create a unique organizational milieu of people, interactions, politics, policies, beliefs, values, and outcomes (Williams, 2010).
Campus Climate

- We have used the term campus climate for numerous years in higher education and more broadly, organizational climate in the corporate and non-profit worlds.
- “Climate” on a college or university campus is a term that is used to discuss how individuals and groups experience membership in the campus community.
- It’s a general term that quickly summarizes the inclusivity dynamics of the organization and the degree to which various stakeholders feel included or excluded in the environment (Williams, 2010).
Campus Climate

- Because conversations of climate are inherently concerned with real and perceived realities of different groups, this idea always is nested in broader socio-historical context of difference defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and a near limitless range of social identities (Williams 2010).

- Campus climate is about moving beyond the numbers (Hurtado, 2007).

- The very presence of individuals from different backgrounds results in diversity.

- *Climate*, on the other hand, refers to the experience of individuals and groups on a campus—and the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals (Williams, 2010).
Why Climate & Culture Data Are Important

- Examining the campus climate and culture is an important part of a regular campus-based assessment, especially as postsecondary institutions enter an era of evidence-based practice, and aim to achieve enhanced levels of accountability and organizational learning, driving to ever-higher levels of performance.

- Launching a well-designed research effort creates the type of data-driven approach that can lead to new initiatives and enhanced understanding of key issues that university leadership must address toward creating a more inclusive campus environment (Williams, 2010).
Why Climate & Culture Data Are Important

- If done well, such efforts can position the campus community toward a more sophisticated understanding of various issues affecting faculty, staff, women, minorities, and others.

- Gathering these data is essential to having a robust conversation that goes beyond anecdotal diversity crises and that will position the campus to be more proactive than in the past (Williams, 2010).

- How CSN takes the data collected and engages in a meaningful discussion of change is an example of “double-loop” learning, a term commonly used among organizational theorists (Argyris & Schon, 1974).
Why Climate & Culture Data Are Important

- Double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected through modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies, and objectives. In contrast to “singleloop” learning—the process of solving problems based on an existing set of assumptions—doubleloop learning also involves becoming aware of a group’s underlying assumption set and continually inquiring as to whether it is still useful for the task at hand.

- These levels of analyses and conversation are essential to moving the institutional agenda forward.” (Williams, 2010).
Progress Report on Work Climate Improvement Initiatives

August 24, 2012
West Charleston Campus, Rm. K-134
12:30-1:30 PM
Work Climate Committee

- Became a standing committee in 2011-12
- Approximately 20 members
- Representation from across work areas, locations and employee groups
- Staggered multi-year terms
- Meets monthly during academic year
Committee Charge

Committee charge has four main points:

1. Annually assess through a survey instrument or through focus groups the expectations and perceptions of employees in the workplace.
2. Develop from assessment results findings and recommendations for administrative consideration.
3. Monitor the implementation of initiatives intended to improve CSN work climate.
4. For longitudinal analysis, 70-80% of survey questions from the previous two years should be repeated in the current year.
Climate Assessments

- **Campus Climate Survey 2010-11**
  - Exploratory survey to develop a picture of the current workplace climate according to employees
  - All CSN employees (online and paper)
  - Nov. 2010 to Jan. 2011
  - Employee perceptions of CSN’s leadership, departments, opportunities for professional development, and job satisfaction
Climate Assessments

- **Classified Subcommittee Survey 2012**
  - Follow-up survey prompted by Climate Survey findings
  - Exploratory survey to investigate further the perceptions of classified employees regarding work environment and supervisor/employee relations
  - Classified employees (online and in person)
  - Feb. 2012
  - Further input and suggestions were also collected by subcommittee members
Findings from Climate Survey 2011

Results
- Findings were reported to the Work Climate Committee, Cabinet, Faculty Senate, Administrative Faculty Assembly and Classified Council.
- Results and analysis were posted on IR website.

Highlights
- Respondents were most **positive** about: job satisfaction, diversity and departmental supervision
- Respondents were most **negative** about salary/compensation
- Overall, **faculty** tended to be more positive about the CSN climate than staff members.
- **Wage/hourly workers** were the most positive group with regards to campus climate.
- **Full-Time Academic Faculty members** were consistently less positive about climate than **Part-Time Academic Faculty**.
- **Classified Staff** were consistently the least positive (or second least positive) group with regards to campus climate.
Recommendeds – March 2011

- The committee shared with President Richards the results of the survey and other forms of input.
- The committee also made recommendations that steps should be taken to improve CSN in these four areas of concern:
  - **Consistent** policies and procedures
  - **Communication** of values
  - **Training** and access to it
  - **Customer service** [internal as well as external]
Actions Taken in 2010-2012

Consistent policies and procedures

- Human Resources
  - HR website reorganized for easier access to information and forms.
  - Faculty and staff handbooks with live links to current policies developed and posted on HR website.
  - Employee resources section of HR site for common topics and questions by new and continuing employees
  - Short video tutorials and thematic FAQ page created for common HR questions.

- Evaluations
  - New part-time faculty members must be evaluated their first semester and continuing part-time faculty members must be evaluated at a minimum every three years.
  - An online evaluation system was deployed and is now the required tool for evaluating full-time faculty and professional staff.
  - An online evaluation system for classified employees is under development.

- Faculty Senate and Curriculum
  - Faculty Senate updated its by-laws which eliminated internal inconsistencies and created two voting seats for contingent faculty.
  - Curriculum Committee is moving to a completely electronic curriculum system with electronic approvals which will allow for a yearly curriculum-to-catalog cycle rather than the current three-year cycle.
Actions Taken in 2010-2012

Communication/Communication of values

- **Administration**
  - Members of the administration are working more visible to employees every day and at Ketch-up type events for employees.
  - The President’s Monthly Chronicle, cabinet minutes and the President’s Blog communicate CSN news, provide answers to employees’ questions, and reinforce the fact that upper administration cares about certain topics.
  - More frequent updates are provided to all employees by email and CSN home page.

- **Departments**
  - Integrated communication between and within departments, and through social media and MyCSN, have improved.
  - Budget Services published annual overview of CSN budget and will post quarterly updates with current budgets and year-to-date activity on updated website in 2012.
  - Department chairs have been encouraged to increase communication with part-time faculty.

- **Campus Events**
  - CSN events and information are disseminated via ICS video screens, weekly CSN Events newsletter and the master events calendar on the website.
Actions Taken in 2010-2012

Training and access to it

- Relevant and Convenient Training
  - CAPE offered hundreds of training workshops throughout the year on all main campuses and online. These included NEATS/supervisory training, FERPA and myCSN training, leadership training, policy training, customized trainings by request.
  - CAPE developed additional online training options, relevant resources and an improved online registration and evaluation system that can record participation.
  - Diversity-related workshops, including anti-discrimination training and adaptive technology/disability awareness events, have been developed by CAPE and DRC.

- Administration Support
  - Convocations and Classified Staff In-Service Development Days were redesigned to be more relevant to workplace needs. Supervisors were specifically encouraged to arrange for their employees to attend.
  - Support for sabbaticals, travel, grant-in-aid and professional development was protected during budget cuts.

- Faculty Development
  - Annual part-time faculty conference (Adjunct Impact) was developed and offered successfully. Opportunities for training for part-time faculty have increased.
  - Professional development is considered in full-time and part-time faculty evaluations.
  - CAPE developed a Virtual Faculty Orientation website.
Actions Taken in 2010-2012

Customer Service and Relationships

- **Human Resources**
  - HR now holds regular office hours on all three main campuses.

- **Student Affairs**
  - A “mystery shopper” study was conducted in 2010, resulting in equipment upgrades, procedural changes, and new broad-based customer service training for front-line employees.
  - The MyCSN call center was created to assist Student Affairs departments and OTS in supporting students; making correct referrals using consistent information is emphasized.

- **Academic Affairs**
  - Counseling was moved to Academic Affairs and to a school-based model to allow more focused advising and support for academic programs. Faculty-driven advising is being advanced in departments.

- **Recognition**
  - Recognition awards program for faculty has been instituted; outstanding faculty achievements promoted on website and ICS screens.
  - Process for nominating colleagues for recognition opportunities has been promoted and managed by Internal Recognition Committee.
  - End-of-year Reflections of Success event and Retirees’ Luncheon created for recognition and service awards.
Actions Taken in 2010-2012

Other Areas

Campus Spaces
- At all main campuses, directional and building signage have been installed.
- Public spaces, classrooms and offices have been renovated at Cheyenne (CY) campus.
- Obsolete air conditioning and heating systems have been replaced at CY and high-tech centers.
- Task seating has been replaced across Henderson campus.

Safety and Security
- Safety and Security Committee has been formed and has had its first meeting.
- Emergency phones and towers have been installed.
- The emergency alert system has been upgraded.
- The Emergency Operations Plan has been created and disseminated.
WORKPLACE CLIMATE ASSESSMENT
2012-13
CULTURAL CHANGE

• CSN is maturing as an institution
  – Growth has made decision-making more risky
  – College is moving toward data-driven decision-making (see “Achieving the Dream” and other initiatives)

• Workplace climate can and should be measured

• Climate Committee’s two-path survey cycle
  – Biennial long-form sample survey
  – Short-form “snapshot” survey for everyone
COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF CLIMATE AND CULTURE

• Every two years, we will collect and analyze climate data through a survey of faculty, classified staff, and administration.

• The committee will use the data to identify problem areas, and recommend structural or policy changes to improve workplace climate.

• A brief 20-30 minute survey done primarily online.

• We will be persistent, to strongly encourage participation of all stakeholders.

• CSN is committed to protecting respondents and the data from real or perceived threats to privacy or job security.
Measuring Momentum:
An Annual Snapshot of Progress Toward Goals

• Coming in spring 2013 or earlier, and once a year
• Limited to 20 questions, plus demographics
• Follow-up: Evaluates interventions or policies addressing problems identified in earlier surveys
• Sensitive to current issues and concerns
• Early versions may include up questions about participating in college or campus research
MEASURING MOMENTUM:
AN ANNUAL SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

• Everyone completes the short survey
• Designed to take about 15 minutes
• Can be completed during convocation week on paper, online, via iTouch units, or through any channel that makes it easy for faculty, staff and other stakeholders to give feedback
Culture.
BUILDING COMMITMENT

• Our goal is to institutionalize the process of sharing information about our collective experience as employees, and about our individual experiences as members of the college community...

• ...And then doing something useful with that information systematically, ethically, responsibly.

• Part of building a culture is identifying and expressing values
Communication.
Inclusion.
Empowerment.
Trust.
Protection.
Scholarship.
Professionalism.
Get the word out:
Measuring Momentum
coming soon