

White Paper

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University Goals and Initiatives

Goal One: Creating a Campus Climate Conducive to excellence in teaching and learning.

A definition of campus climate developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison in their Campus Climate Initiative identifies **Climate** as: “The atmosphere or ambience of an organization as perceived by its members. ... reflected in its structures, policies, and practices; the demographics of its membership; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions.” The university further defines campus climate as, “Behaviors within a workplace or learning environment, ... that influence whether an individual feels personally safe, listened to, valued, and treated fairly and with respect.”(Campus Climate, The University of Wisconsin-Madison).

As indicated by this definition, the campus climate significantly reflects how students, faculty, and staff relate to the university and how they perform academically, in the classroom, office, and in the community. It is the university’s mission to provide a “learning environment that encourages all members of the campus community to expand their intellectual, creative and social horizons.” A campus environment that is friendly, supportive, and encouraging is essential to the personal growth and development of each student and employee. In a symbiotic relationship, each member contributes to the development of a nurturing campus climate.

While there are many indications the CSU, Stanislaus has a campus climate that encourages each member of the campus community to expand their intellectual, creative and social horizons, assessment and improvement are continuing goals. Questions, such as, “How can we significantly improve the student learning experiences, from initial contact to the completion of their degree?” “What can the university do to provide a more exciting and supportive environment for faculty and staff, who constitute the essential infrastructure, to do their work?” need to be continually addressed.

Recommendations:

To further university progress in creating a campus climate conducive to excellence in teaching and learning, the following list of recommendations are proposed:

Recommendation 1. Further develop a university that honors the contributions of all its members in meeting the mission of the university by:

- Treating all members of the university community with civility and respect;
- Recognizing and rewarding exceptional work at all levels and in all units;
- Creating a safe and open climate for sharing concerns, criticisms, ideas, and questions.

Recommendation 2. Develop and implement a Campus Climate Plan:

- Create the administrative and organizational structure needed to assess, develop, coordinate, and monitor campus climate;
- Retain the Campus Community Building Committee;
- Create and maintain a matrix of all campus activities that contribute to the campus climate;
- Develop a process for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the campus climate plan;
- Evaluate campus climate progress periodically and develop plans to address issues;
- Develop a campus climate report.
- Consider the use of campus climate surveys and other means to monitor the accomplishment of campus climate goals.

Recommendation 3. Continue to value diversity through the hiring and retention of culturally diverse employees and attracting a culturally diverse student-body.

- Provide appropriate diversity training for all employees;
- Promote the active development of a culturally diverse pool of candidates for faculty and staff positions;
- Develop guidelines and criteria that describe how departments work toward enhancing diversity and a collegial campus climate.

Recommendation 4. Provide professional development activities that assist in the understanding of diverse cultures.

- Provide workshops on understanding and appreciating differences.
- Provide activities that teach team-building skills for a culturally diverse work environment.
- Offer workshops for faculty to assist in the development of diversity awareness and sensitivity to the classroom and the relationships between faculty and students.
- Provide workshops on diverse learning acquisition skills and address how diversity in teaching and learning styles assist diverse learning skills.

Recommendations 5. Enhance Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

- Provide clear information about multiple career paths

- Expand career development training and educate both employees and supervisors about these opportunities;
- Encourage supervisors to encourage career development and advancement for employees;
- Continue to provide professional development activities and opportunities for faculty, staff, and administration.
- Make mentoring opportunities more available.

Recommendation 6. Promote a user-friendly campus in which all campus citizens, students, employees, and community members feel welcomed and appreciated.

- Promote a wide variety of activities that promote communication, student, faculty, and staff involvement, and cultural appreciation;
- Continue the President's breakfasts with faculty, staff, and students;
- Actively encourage greater student participation on campus committees;
- Develop a signage program that helps identify campus buildings and offices;
- Promote and support the development of academic and social support groups for students from diverse backgrounds;
- Create and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Recommendation 7. Promote and enhance community involvement of faculty, staff, and students.

- Continue to bring conferences and programs to the campus;
- Continue the development of community-based partnerships.
- Continue and increase the opportunities for students to internship and provide service to the community.

To more fully achieve the goal of creating a campus climate conducive to excellence in teaching and learning we need to continually assess the level of satisfaction of faculty, students, and staff with the quality and effectiveness of the campus climate. Once completed, strengths and weaknesses should be identified and targets for improvement developed. Effective practices designed to improve areas of weakness should be adopted and implemented. Seven recommendations have been suggested to assist the university in this process.

If the university cannot do all of the things suggested in light of the budget restraints, critical first steps would be to do an accurate assessment of the current campus climate to identify strengths and weaknesses and then implement Recommendation 2, Development and Implement a Campus Climate Plan to address the weaknesses.