

ANNUAL REPORT
2013-2014
CSBS CLIMATE COMMITTEE (CCC) ACTIVITIES
California State University, Northridge

OFFICERS

Chair and Executive Secretary, Sheila K. Grant

MEMBERS

Dept	Faculty	Staff
Anthropology	James Snead	Rasmita Dhruv
Geography	Mario Giraldo	Kris Tacsik
History	Jeffrey Kaja	Kelly Winkleblack-Shea
Pan African Studies	Anthony Ratcliff	Carisa Moore
Political Science	Boris Ricks	Karen Litt
Psychology	Que-Lam Huynh	Leta Chow
Psychology	Gabriela Chavira	Evelyn Osorio
Psychology	Jose Abara (Adjunct)	
Social Work	Eli Bartle	Tiffany Newton
Sociology	Moshula Capous-Desyllas	Christina Brown
Sociology	Michael Carter	
Sociology	TBD (Adjunct)	
Urban Studies	TBD	N/A
Dean's Office	N/A	Joy Bartley
CHAIR of CCC	Sheila Grant	N/A

Note:

Most members attended regularly & were active contributors to CCC Mission, although not the case for all.

MEETING DATES OF THE CSBS CLIMATE COMMITTEE (CCC):

September 20, 2013

February 21, 2014

October 18, 2013

March 21, 2014

November 15, 2013

April 18, 2014

December 20, 2013

May 16, 2014

CCC SUBCOMMITTEES AND CHARGES:

- A. **Assessment-Qualitative:** Moshoula (chair), James, Rasmita, Boris
Charge: Ongoing assessment of college climate (multi-method approach)
Note: Members are currently serving on other subcommittees until there is a need for qualitative assessment.
- B. **Assessment-Quantitative:** Que-Lam 'Q' (chair), Michael, Rasmita, Kris, Sheila
Charge: Ongoing assessment of college climate (multi-method approach)
Note: President Harrison reported in last faculty senate meeting in May 2014 that she was excited about exploring climate around sexual harassment/ assault issues after her visit to Washington, DC to speak with VP Biden. President H. mentioned a survey from Rutgers being considered for CSUN.
- C. **Community Building:** Boris and Tiffany (co-chairs)
Charge: Arrange activities as opportunities for team building, etc. and to build a sense of community in the college; locate speakers on topics related to campus climate to promote dialogue.
- D. **CSBS Climate Committee (CCC) Webpage Project:** Joy (chair)
Charge: Maintain and update CCC Webpage with active links to resources and members.
- E. **Human Relations and Mediation:**
Eli Bartle (chair), Joy, Kelly, Moshoula, Carisa, & Sheila
Charge: Increase visibility of CCC activities and work toward a more positive college climate (Oversee ombuds services, review and revise position statement for ombuds person as necessary; other tasks may include developing CCC Logo and a series of Posters and/or videos, suggests items for the website).
- F. **Privilege Subcommittee:** Gabriela (chair), Anthony, Tiffany, Joy
Charge: Explore issues of privilege among CSBS faculty and staff and develop a preliminary intervention (i.e., Privilege Spectrum Activity tailored to needs/demographics of each department).
- G. **Workload Subcommittee:** Tiffany (chair), Kelly, Jeffrey, Mario, Jose A.
(Charge: Examine workload issues in CSBS and make recommendations for change aimed at increasing workload equity, fairness, and compensation.

CCC SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORTS

- A. **Assessment-Qualitative:**
Provided the five or six themes derived from the Spring 2013 focus groups to the Quantitative Committee. Members are currently serving on other subcommittees until there is a need for qualitative assessment again.
- B. **Assessment-Quantitative:**
Dean Theodoulou approved CCC's request to survey all CSBS faculty, staff and students. The Dean also approved \$500 for an opportunity drawing to incentivize response rates

but this may be prohibited. CCC chair emailed Bettina Huber, Institutional Research, who worked with CCC chair previously in facilitating an Opportunity Drawing for the Spring 2011 Campus Climate Survey on behalf of the Faculty Senate Educational Equity Committee. CCC chair is awaiting a response from email in order to advise the Quantitative Assessment subcommittee (on whether or not they will be able to offer an incentive to respondents) on final plans to deploy a climate survey geared toward CSBS faculty staff and students. The subcommittee worked on refining the questions for the quantitative climate survey and hope to deploy sometime in the Fall 14 semester after all the survey items are approved by the general CCC.

C. Community Building:

The chair of subcommittee proposed several team-building exercises. It was difficult to schedule a common time to participate in a low ropes team-building activity. Other ideas for community building suggested included dancing outing, attending CSUN athletic events with perhaps tail-gating, a night at the Valley Performing Arts Center (will explore low cost/no cost options with VPAC for groups of 20-30 people).

D. CSBS Climate Committee (CCC) Webpage Project:

The subcommittee established an anonymous email for faculty and staff comments. The emails will be sent to the CCC chair. Existing photos or new head shots were arranged for so that each CCC member will have their photo on our webpage in order for CSBS faculty and staff to know who are their climate representatives. The subcommittee goals 2014-15 is faster update and posting of agendas and minutes, as well as inclusion of resources for faculty and staff (e.g., where to receive employee assistance). The webpage is located at <http://www.csun.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/csbs-climate-committee>.

E. Human Relations and Mediation:

1. The entire CCC, as well as this subcommittee was elated when Dean Theodoulou took one of our 2013-2014 recommendations seriously, and funded a part-time ombudsperson, Dr. Tom Spencer-Walters. The CCC invited Dr. Walters to visit our meeting and he was our guest on March 21, 2014. Some CCC members asked questions expressing their concerns. Dr. Spencer-Walters carefully answered all the queries with great care toward maintaining confidentiality. At the end of the visit, the entire CCC membership seemed to appreciate Dr. Spencer-Walters as the right person for ombudsperson and appeared happy with the decision. Dr. Spencer-Walters reports to this subcommittee and will provide periodic reports.
2. The subcommittee revised the Position Summary for the CSBS Ombudsperson to ensure that it was tailor made to CSBS and CSUN (vote for approved will be at the 10/17 meeting).
3. CFA asked the CCC if we would like to co-sponsor the Leah Hollis Talk on her book "Bully in the Ivory Tower. Dean Theodoulou and CSBS contributed toward the cost of the event. The CCC chair was invited by CFA to have dinner with Dr. Leah Hollis. Dr. Hollis was extremely impressed that CSUN and CSBS were making concrete efforts towards assessing campus/college climate and on developing, delivering, and exploring new interventions geared toward improving the climate here at the university and college level. There were both positive and negative reactions to the Hollis Talk expressed by CCC members who attended (although primarily positive).
4. The subcommittee planned and held two Open Forums on Civility (i.e., Bullying issues) scheduled to occur prior to the Leah Hollis presentation.

- a. The CCC chair invited the following entities to be co-sponsors of event: the Faculty Senate Educational Equity Committee (EEC), the Faculty Senate, the California Faculty Association (CFA), the California State University Employee's Union (CSUEU); all enthusiastically accepted
- b. The subcommittee planned to provide light refreshments but new rules prohibited this; next time we should request support for refreshments from the unions who may not have as rigid restrictions.
- c. The 1st Open Forum was held on Wednesday, March 12, 2014; there were 50 attendees/participants and the format was small group breakout sessions.
- d. The 2nd Open Forum was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2014; there were 19 attendees/ participants and it was decided to use a large group discussion format
- e. The Provost expressed that he was impressed with the Open Forums on Incivility and strongly encourages similar programming next academic year (with one per semester);
- f. The main take home message from the Open Forums was that there is (1) a need to dialogue further on this issue (many have felt silenced) and (2) a need to develop a university policy with concrete consequences for individuals that engage in bullying behavior.

F. Privilege Subcommittee:

1. Discussed pro and cons of facilitated the Privilege Spectrum Activity (changed from Privilege Spectrum Walk to be sensitive to ability differences). After initial refinement of activity questions, conducted a pilot privilege spectrum activity with the CCC membership. The pilot activity was successful and CCC member participants gave facilitators feedback in the form of comments and reactions on what worked well and of what aspect of the activity was problematic.
2. Subcommittee promised to go back and revise the Privilege Spectrum Activity incorporating much of the feedback provided. Plans to start the activities in CSBS departments in Fall 2014. Participation will be voluntary and not mandatory.

G. Workload Subcommittee:

This subcommittee focused on three issues.

Our *first* effort was directed toward reviewing the existing handbooks for chairs, faculty, and staff in our college. Once this review is completed the subcommittee plans to take this organizational information, update it, and disseminate it to all faculty staff and managers when they first join the college. Some of the items that we would like to include (or recommend) are as follows:

1. Duties for each staff member within a Department (e.g., who can help you with what)
2. Committee Membership Lists (for all department/college/university level committees)
3. Campus trainings available (i.e., DRES Awareness, CSUN Ally training, etc.)
4. List of funding opportunities (internal and external)
5. Resources [e.g., Health Services, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), etc.]
 - a. Health Services, many aimed at self-care, for Faculty/Staff/Students (available at Klotz Student Health Center):
 - First Aide
 - Acupuncture and Chiropractic care
 - Dental and Optometry clinics
 - Influenza (flu) shots

- Massage therapy
 - Peer nutrition counseling and Registered dietician
 - Pharmacy
 - Travel and immunization clinic
- b. Employee Assistance Program
- Brief Intervention and Assessment including evaluation of an acute or emergency situation with referrals and disposition as needed.
 - Brief Individual Consultation
 - One-on-one meetings with trained professionals to discuss personal challenges, obtain direction and referrals for resolution.

The *second* focus was on contact the Offices of Human Resources and Equity and Diversity to ascertain what are the required training/orientation materials for any new faculty, staff or administrators. In addition, was to explore whether these offices can recommend or have available any sensitivity or climate-based training at CSUN. Moreover, the CSUEU chapter officers will be contacted to see if they can coordinate an information campaign related to the staff contract and an employee's right to:

- Yearly performance evaluations
- Current and accurate job descriptions

The *third* emphasis was to work with the CCC quantitative subcommittee to ensure that appropriate items assessing important workload issues are included in the upcoming college climate committee.

And finally, we highlight the fact that a previous recommendation from this CCC subcommittee for professional development funds for staff was successful and made available this academic year. However, this professional development opportunity was not extended to full-time adjunct faculty as recommended.

OMBUDS SERVICES

The position of CSBS Ombudsperson was established in fall 2013 upon the recommendation of the College Climate Committee "to provide confidential and informed assistance to constituents of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences (CSBS) community, which includes students, staff, faculty, and/or administrators." The Ombudsperson receives three units of reassigned time from the dean each semester for his services. It is important to note that the position is not an organic part of the college's administrative structure, and as a result, it reports directly to the Climate Committee.

During the 2013/14 academic year, Ombuds Services received visits or calls from a total of 49 constituents of the college. Faculty, it turned out, represented the largest number of visitors/contacts: 25 (51%). Students and staff, 9 (18%) and 7 (14.3%), came in at a distant second and third, respectively. **In general, no data was collected on gender and ethnicity because doing so could have compromised confidentiality.**

Staff concerns were heavily focused in the area of staff-supervisor relations, although there were some staff-staff relation issues. Issues for both groups include open lines of communication, leadership style, favoritism, equity and fairness, professional recognition of work. Student concerns were focused in the area of student-faculty relations. Many needed advice on university policies relating to faculty grading practices, while others wanted help in the area of equity and fairness. **Please see full Ombuds Services Annual Report submitted by Dr. Tom Spencer-Walters as an attachment at the end of the CSBS Climate Committee (CCC) Annual Report (pp. 8-11).**

DEFINITE CCC PLANS FOR 2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR:

1. Replace membership vacancies, due to leave or inactivity, with new members
2. Quantitative Survey for All CSBS Faculty (FT & PT), Staff (Exempt and non-exempt), and Students (Undergraduate and Graduate) – To be deployed by late Fall 2014.
3. Privilege Spectrum Activity tailored for each CSBS Department is being revised and will be offered to departments (voluntary participation, not mandatory) in Fall 2014 semester.
4. Plan and facilitate two more Open Forums, one each semester. [invite other entities to co-sponsor (e.g., the unions, faculty senate, etc.) so that it can be a bigger event, widely advertized, and refreshments provided]
5. Identify dynamic and germane speakers on climate and bring one to campus each semester. [invite other entities to co-sponsor (e.g., the unions, faculty senate, etc.) so that it can be a bigger event, widely advertized, and refreshments provided]
6. Help bring greater visibility to CSBS Ombuds Services and Tom Spencer-Walters' availability, and the many benefits to be derived [from the CCC webpage, make a link to a separate webpage for Ombuds Services with (a) Dr. Spencer-Walters' photo and qualifications, (b) position summary for CSBS Ombudsperson, and (c) links to other important resources on campus (e.g., EAP, OED, Faculty Affairs, CFA, CSUEU).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CSBS AND DEAN STELLA THEODOULOU:

1. Don't forgot to reflect on the *Overlapping Dominant Themes/Concerns/Needs Expressed by Both Faculty and Staff Focus Groups (Spring 2013)*:
 - **Workload issues** (e.g., classes being too large for faculty or “work as assigned” for staff seen as a way to keep piling on work responsibilities without changing the job description or the **pay grade**)
 - **Monetary compensation**
 - **Clarity of faculty/staff roles**
 - **Addressing issues of privilege and oppression** related to social identities (race, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, religion, and class status)
 - **Favoritism/Lack of transparency**
 - **Independent bodies needed for faculty and staff complaints** (e.g., ombuds services): This recommendation from the 2013-2014 CCC Annual Report was addressed by the Dean's part-time funding of ombudsperson, Dr. Tom Spencer-Walters. Nevertheless, we might want to consider funding either a fulltime position or two part-time positions (funding a woman in case some faculty and staff are uncomfortable discussing certain issues with a man).

2. Discuss the aforementioned dominant themes/concerns/needs with chairs and administrative staff in the various CSBS administrative meetings and provide constructive feedback and suggestions to the CSBS Climate Committee.
3. Assist the CCC in finding creative ways to use the \$500 allotted to fund incentives for survey participation [Bettina Huber of Institutional Research indicates that: a. use of such drawings for surveys involving students is fine, b. without justification, reliance on such drawings is no longer considered acceptable for faculty and staff, and c. the documentation and justification required for the funding all opportunity drawings has increased of late. (If Pam Simon has further questions about the matter, she can contact Eleanor Jones in Academic Resources.)]
4. Support CCC's facilitation of a Privilege Spectrum Activity in each department (we plan to combine smaller departments if necessary) with a strong endorsement from Dean and all the Department Chairs.
5. Fund departmental Privilege Spectrum Activities with refreshments for each one facilitated.
6. Fund campus climate expert speakers for at least one talk per semester (and give us a dollar amount if possible).
7. Fund team-building activities for faculty and staff.
8. Fund the development and production of posters on what climate means to CSBS (e.g., *Climate Matters*) and have them prominently in departments & hallways (i.e., Reminders re: respect, fairness, and participation - ingredients of a positive climate; 8 Questions re: Climate).
9. Fund the development and production of short videos on *What Climate Means to Me* initially with CCC members, and eventually to include faculty, staff and students in CSBS.
10. Fund some inexpensive promotional giveaways that celebrates the value of positive climate in CSBS (e.g., a canvas tote with umbrella)

OMBUDS SERVICES REPORT
2013/2014
Submitted By
TOM SPENCER-WALTERS, OMBUDSPERSON
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

OVERVIEW: ABOUT THE OMBUDSPERSON:

The position of CSBS Ombudsperson was established in fall 2013 upon the recommendation of the College Climate Committee “to provide confidential and informed assistance to constituents of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences (CSBS) community, which includes students, staff, faculty, and/or administrators.” The Ombudsperson receives three units of reassigned time from the dean each semester for his services. It is important to note that the position is not an organic part of the college’s administrative structure, and as a result, it reports directly to the Climate Committee.

The Ombudsperson provides a friendly, neutral, informal, confidential, and impartial environment for students, faculty, and staff in the college, to seek appropriate information about university services, policies, and practices, express concerns about college or systemic issues of importance to them, seek advice on, and where possible, provide expeditious resolutions to challenging peer/colleague relationships, supervisor/staff relations, and faculty/student issues, among others.

AUTHORITY AND LIMITS OF THE OMBUDS OFFICE:

Through direct and sustained engagement with interested college community members, the Ombudsperson becomes a sounding board not only to assess college climate, but also to call attention to university policies and practices that may need revisiting. However, the Ombudsperson does not make policy nor can he abrogate the grievance or personnel processes of the University. In addition, this office cannot replace duly constituted university units of conflict resolution; it merely supplements them.

This report is part of the charge of the position of Ombudsperson and it summarizes the nature and scope of services rendered during the inaugural AY, 2013/2014. It is deliberately general in nature to protect the identities of visitors and the confidentiality of the information shared.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF THE POSITION:

The early part of the inaugural year was spent defining the roles and responsibilities of the Ombuds office. For this, the Climate Committee and the Dean drew extensively from the operational principles of the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice: neutrality, confidentiality, informality, and independence. Once roles and responsibilities were defined, the Ombudsperson embarked upon making this novel position known to the college through emails and informal chats. These exchanges began to generate interests that led to visits and conversations ranging from requests for information to suggestions for conflict resolution. Admittedly, there were a few skeptics who felt that the position’s jurisdiction was too limiting for the kind of changes they would like to see within the college. This, however, did not deter me from engaging them, and as I did, I was able to work them pass some of their skepticisms,

complaints, and frustrations. Providing that platform appeared to be therapeutic in a way because it gave them a sincere listener and much-needed space to air out their feelings.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VISITS AND CONTACTS:

During the 2013/14 academic year, Ombuds Services received visits or calls from a total of 49 constituents of the college (See Table 1). Faculty, it turned out, represented the largest number of visitors/contacts: 25 (51%). Students and staff, 9 (18%) and 7 (14.3%), came a distant second and third, respectively. There was a very small group of 5 (10.5%) visitors from another college who sought information about university policies and suggestions for conflict resolution. I responded positively out of collegiality and respect for these colleagues. **In general, no data was collected on gender and ethnicity because doing so could have compromised confidentiality.**

TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF INQUIRIES, VISITS, AND CONTACTS
2013/14 ACADEMIC YEAR

AY 2013-2014	College Admin	Faculty Total	Staff Total	Student Total	Unsolicited Inquiries from other Colleges	TOTAL
Fall	3	14	4	3	3	27 (55.10%)
Spring	0	11	3	6	2	22 (44.90%)
Percentage of Total	3 (6.12%)	25 (51.02%)	7 (14.29%)	9 (18.37%)	5 (10.20%)	49 (100%)

The preponderance of faculty visits/contacts was anticipated since there are many more of them in the college than staff. More importantly, it was evident through the results of the climate survey administered a few years back, that the faculty in our college would welcome an independent office that would offer a safe and confidential place to share their sundry concerns about issues in the college. Once the Ombuds service was up and running, more faculty started calling or visiting partly to test the efficacy of this office, and partly, to utilize its many opportunities.

Staff concerns were heavily focused in the area of staff-supervisor relations, although there were some staff-staff relation issues. Issues for both groups include open lines of communication,

leadership style, favoritism, equity and fairness, professional recognition of work. Student concerns were focused in the area of student-faculty relations. Many needed advice on university policies relating to faculty grading practices, while others wanted help in the area of equity and fairness.

TABLE 2: ANALYSIS BY CATEGORIES OF ISSUES:

NATURE OF CASES	COUNT	PERCENT
1. Peer & Colleague Relationships	12	37.50%
2. Faculty-Student Relations	3	9.37%
3. Supervisor-Employee Relations	10	31.25%
4. Administrative Issues	2	6.25%
5. Health and Safety	1	3.12%
6. Hostile Working Environment	3	9.37%
7. Equity & Diversity Issues	1	3.12%

The Ombuds office received visitors and telephone/email contacts representing a total of **32** distinct issues. I have collapsed these issues and concerns into **seven** broadly defined categories adapted from the International Ombuds Association Reporting Categories. It is important once again to note that since visitors’ self-report issues and concerns and since the Ombudsperson cannot conduct formal investigations of these issues and concerns (there are other resources on campus entrusted to do just that), one cannot over-emphasize the predictive values of these categories.

1. Peer and Colleague Relations: Broadly covers concerns, issues, or questions relating to relationships between staff-staff, faculty-faculty, or student-student. Some of the issues involved feelings of lack of respect, unclear communication, and misplaced priorities. Twelve (12) of the 32 issues and concerns (37.50%) brought to the office, fell into this category. The greater percentage of cases came from faculty-faculty relationships (67%) and dealt mostly with respect, unclear communication, and not listening.

2. Faculty-Student Relations: Issues and concerns in this category ranged from grading practices, teaching styles, and equity and fairness. As reported earlier, not many students used the Ombuds

service during its inaugural year, so it is not surprising that their 3 reported concerns only constituted 9.37% of the total reported issues and concerns.

3. Supervisor-Employee Relationships: Examples of supervisor-employee relations include Department Chair and office staff, Administrative Support Coordinator and Administrative Support Assistant, Administrative Support Assistant and office student assistants. This category generated a lot of activity from all of the pairs listed above. Many complaints and concerns were focused on punitive behavior, unfair or unclear assignment schedules, and lack of proper feedback, discipline, leadership effectiveness, and performance appraisals. Given these many areas of concern, it was not surprising that this category showed the second largest reported cases: 10 (31.25%)

4. Administrative Issues: This category fielded concerns, questions, and inquiries about administrative services provided by the college and university administration. The two issues (6.25%) that came up dealt with the nature and implementation of college and university policies and administrative decisions. I did not expect a lot of inquiries relating to administrative issues because there are so many opportunities to get this kind of information readily: Faculty Affairs, Human Resources, deans, department chairs, etc. I redirected the visitors to the appropriate university resource and helped them negotiate solutions to deal with administrative decisions that concern them.

5. Health and Safety: This category deals with safety and working conditions conducive to productivity. There was one issue that the Ombudsperson had to address: safety for employees after dark. The visitor and the Ombudsperson examined various ways to tackle this issue personally while identifying designated campus services designed to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and faculty.

6. Hostile Working Environment: The 3 (9.37%) inquiries and concerns dealing with a hostile working environment are deteriorating supervisory-staff relationships, insensitivity, and intimidating behavior. Again, I was able to help the visitors navigate informal solutions to these concerns, one of which involved extensive, but pleasant and useful discussions with a supervisor.

7. Equity and Diversity Issues: Issues of fairness, ethics, and diversity, help to define this category. The one issue (3.12%) I had to handle in this area was insensitive remark that was deemed derogatory. After the visitor articulated this concern, we had a constructive discussion about it and concluded with the Ombudsperson recommending services that would further help in providing more formal resolutions.

GOING FORWARD:

I plan to continue to bring greater visibility to the office and the many benefits to be derived from it. I am very grateful and humbled by the trust and candor of the many visitors and contacts I received in the first year of this position. Just the opportunity to have a safe place to examine their thoughts, articulate their concerns, and reach mutually acceptable agreements, is in itself, a first and important step in personal problem-solving.