

Executive Summary 2018 Climate Survey

This report summarizes key findings from the 2018 Annual Climate Survey administered by the School of Public Health (SPH) from April 5 to 20, 2018. The survey asked about the learning and working environment, perceptions of climate for diverse groups, and respondents' experiences with harassing or exclusionary conduct in the school.

The first SPH climate survey was completed in 2008. In 2017, a second climate survey was administered by an outside consultant. This year's survey is the third in 10 years. Despite the lower response rates for this year's survey compared to prior years, results do follow a consistent pattern.

The climate ratings remained about the same as previous years, and in fact, there is no evidence to demonstrate that it has improved in the last decade. There are a number of people who are consistently telling us that they are less than 100 percent comfortable in SPH, especially women, people of color and those from low-income backgrounds.

Twenty two percent of respondents reported having personally experienced intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (harassing behavior.) The most common behaviors reported were based on a combination of identity factors: race and ethnicity, gender, position/rank and age. Microaggressions were the most common offense reported. Not far behind are the number of people who said that they were excluded from certain activities. Many people who experienced exclusionary behavior ignored it, avoided the person, or did not report it. One respondent stated, "The silence and looking the other way is profound." Feeling excluded and feeling unsafe to say anything are symptoms of a school climate that needs immediate attention.

What happens now?

First, the Office of the Dean is sponsoring multiple and ongoing training for Department Chairs and administration leadership designed to help us move the needle towards creating a more positive climate for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Second, the school has developed policies to guide the confidential reporting of harassment, intimidation, microaggressions, and other behaviors that contribute to an unsafe climate. These reporting procedures are in place and can be utilized immediately.

Third, the climate survey will be used to help guide the design of school-wide focus groups so we can dig deeper and find out more about why the climate is the way it is, and what we can tangibly do to improve it.

There is great potential to examine over time the impact of change after the hiring of the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Director of the Center for Anti-Racism and Community Health, and while necessary, there is no guarantee that these two actions alone will sufficiently create and sustain the climate we expect from a school of public health.

We are all responsible. None of us can claim to be at our best when people feel unsafe to speak their truth and tell their story. Through individual, departmental, and school-wide approaches, we must address the underlying forces of racism, sexism, ageism, elitism and other -isms that drive our current policies and practices and begin the process of co-creating a climate of mutual respect, humility and collaboration in the School.