



President's Commission on Inclusive Excellence

Community Forum Feedback

April 28, 2017

On April 28, 2017, the President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE) hosted a community forum in the Davis Center ballroom that focused on the implementation of the *Framework for Inclusive Excellence at the University of Vermont*. The following notes were recorded at the meeting.

Approximately 22 people attended:

- 3 faculty
- A table of students
- The majority in attendance were staff

Members of the President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence in attendance were co-chairs Debra Leonard and Alan Maynard, vice-chair Loretta Flash, and commissioner Jim Vigoreaux.

Highlighted remarks delivered by co-chair Debra Leonard included:

1. The university's Inclusive Excellence framework is not 'owned' by PCIE; however, it is an important part of PCIE's work.
2. PCIE monitors but does not implement the framework.
3. PCIE observes UVM quantitatively.
4. Aspects of the PCIE website need to be enhanced.
5. The progress that PCIE is able to achieve is only as good as the (institutional) structure to move the work forward.

Highlighted remarks delivered by vice-chair Loretta Flash:

1. The audience was provided with an overview of the 4 pillars of the framework.
2. The audience was updated on the progress of the unit-level IE Inventory and Action Plan Surveys:
 - a. Analysis of data received will occur over the summer;
 - b. It will be shared with campus once completed.

Questions and Comments Made at Forum:

Q1: When will the climate survey come out?

A1: Loretta Flash informed that it will be launched in Spring 2018 and that the pre-planning is currently underway.

Questions continued:

Q1: A student asked about the definition of “cognitive accessibility”.

Q2: What level of campus sharing should be expected in regard to the findings from surveys? *Question asked by Jim Vigoreaux*

A2: Loretia Flash responded, the hope is to be transparent, including the ability to ‘showcase’ and ‘share’ campus practices. Loretia asked attendees to send her any ideas they might have.

Q3: How can staff get this work to the people who need it most in our polarized world?

A3: Loretia Flash stated, that there needs to be ‘accountability’ among the campus community regarding these institutional initiatives. Loretia differentiated between ‘not caring’ and ‘behaving inappropriately’.

Q4: How is “physical accessibility” addressed?

A4: Loretia Flash responded, explaining that it addresses whether people can fully access the spaces that we have from a ‘physical’ perspective, while also acknowledging that ‘accessibility’ is broader than just physical access.

Q5: How is diversity determined?

A5: Loretia Flash explained that it refers to being ‘fully enabled to participate’ and further explained the dynamics of the ‘power of privilege’.

Q6: There was a comment/question on the “lack of diversity” at the top tier of administration and whether that can be used to benchmark progress?

A6: Debra Leonard shared that PCIE is engaging with the university’s Institutional Research Office about appropriate metrics in that regard. Debra asked Jim Vigoreaux to also speak to this issue in relation to faculty recruitments.

Q7: How can faculty bring PCIE results into their classrooms?

A7: Alan Maynard spoke to Pillar 1 of the framework, BBJ, and the reality that “it takes the village.”

A7: Jim Vigoreaux stressed the importance that it all starts with the people we recruit/hire.

A7: Loretia Flash emphasized the importance of individual pedagogy in terms of its impact on students and shared that this issue has surfaced in every community forum PCIE has held.

Q8: When will faculty be required to get diversity training? *(Asked by a student who expressed frustration that a straight answer is never received)*

A8: Alan Maynard explained the necessity and challenge of the collective bargaining process in relation to this issue.

Q9: How are people who are already here held accountable?

A9: Alan Maynard suggested that students direct their attention to the annual faculty evaluation process in regard to this issue.

Comment: A comment was made indicating they would like PCIE to invest in the environment pillar in a more local way on campus so that the discussion is more organic and would generate more 'authentic' input, instead of having the discussion be directly with PCIE.

Response: Debra Leonard explained how institutional demographics impact this issue and make it a long-term process.

Closing remarks by vice-chair Loretia Flash:

The forum was closed by Loretia Flash who asked anyone with remaining feedback on what PCIE should be working on to stay afterward. This immediately prompted the following comments and questions from the students:

1. People who are privileged need to be educated.
2. Does collective bargaining allow students to participate?
3. How do we give feedback to broken accessibility issues on campus?
4. There is a general lack of knowledge regarding how students can engage to make their voices heard. i.e. which web sites?
5. PCIE forums were not scheduled at times convenient for students.
6. How will best practices be shared?
7. UVM needs to pay more attention to micro-aggressions. 'Sunshine' is the key.