

DATE: March 27, 2018

TO: Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Council Members

FROM: Strategic Plan Goal 4.3 Work Group: *Dr. Lequetia Ancar, Dr. Charles Cychosz, Ms Carmen Flagge, Dr. C. Liz Mendez-Shannon, Mr. Steve Moats, Dr. Keith Robinder (chair), and Dr. Jonathan Sturm*

RE: Environmental Scan Checklist

Building authentic, meaningful relationships is a strategic priority (Strategic Plan Goal 4.3)

To build meaningful relationships one must feel welcomed and safe as a valued member of our campus community. To enhance community members' feelings of connection, campus leaders should assess how spaces, programs, services, and resources create or enrich opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to build authentic and inclusive relationships. Environmental management techniques based on campus ecology provide a framework to achieve this strategic priority (Strange & Banning, 2015). Campus leaders can use these strategies to evaluate how campus spaces are intentionally designed for inclusion across multiple identities and experiences, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or ability level; and facilitate the development of relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

Introducing an interactive tool: The Environmental Scan Checklist

The Environment Scan Checklist provides campus teams with a step-by step process to scan the environment and identify how to create positive change. Departmental leaders work collaboratively to assess the physical, interpersonal, and virtual spaces and gauge how these systems and structures are (1) welcoming, inclusive, and safe; and (2) encourage the development of meaningful relationships. The process of scanning the environment has tangible benefits that can be as important as subsequent actions taken to facilitate improvement. The Environmental Scan Checklist is a short, simple, and quick way to create positive change. The process of conducting an environmental scan is beneficial, and the resulting actions contribute to the accomplishment of the university's strategic priorities listed in Goal 4.

Example Environmental Scan – The Physical Environment



This photo depicts a welcoming environment intentionally designed to provide opportunities for interaction.

Take note of the following features:

- Comfortable and inviting seating
- An interactive display engaging students in the process of completing their FAFSA
- Helpful staff, ready to respond
- A welcoming space that includes snacks and beverages
- Inclusive and motivating artwork
- Natural lighting

Photo: The reception space in the TRiO Student Support Services Program; October 30, 2017

In contrast, this photo also depicts a “gathering space” for students and employees that is clearly disinviting.

Take note of the following features:

- Boxes permanently stacked on the tables seem to indicate this is a storage room, not a community space
- Lack of artwork and decor
- Broken, stained seating
- Sign on the vending machine indicating it may be removed due to lack of sales
- Artificial lighting



Photo: Vending areas in the basement of the Student Services Building, October 30, 2017

Departments who have completed this process indicate it is beneficial

“The ABE faculty and staff who participated in the environmental scan process found the checklist document easy to use and the results valuable in determining if our facilities were welcoming to our faculty, staff, student, and visitors. We have already made changes to signage, room layouts, and website pages. Based on our experience, we would recommend that all ISU departments/organizations consider participating.”

-Dr. Steve Mickelson, ABE Department Chair

“The environmental scan checklist helped us review the health center from a different lens. We tend to focus significantly on patient comfort and privacy so it was a great exercise to help us ensure our space feels welcoming and safe.”

-Erin Baldwin, Director of Thielen Student Health Center

Sample Action Items to improve the campus environment

Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Department

Areas to focus on over the next 1-3 months:

- Update signage for locating the main office staff
- Update signage for locating the student services staff

Areas to focus on over the next 6 months:

- Add art in teaming rooms and student interaction rooms
- Review website images and social media content
- Focus on best practices in course-based project team creation and development

Areas to focus on over the next year:

- Review “Making ABE Welcoming” protocol
- Include staff in faculty Diversity and Inclusion training
- Consider creating a talking circle for underrepresented students and females; perhaps turn this into a more formal group or learning community

Thielen Student Health Center

Areas to focus on over the next 1-3 months:

- Address waiting area near allergy/travel to ensure confidentiality for patients

Areas to focus on over the next 6 months:

- Update Mission/Vision Statements
- Increase artwork diversity; showcase
- Continue to analyze waiting areas, especially 2nd floor to ensure patients are comfortable and do not feel out of place

Areas to focus on over the next year:

- Website upgrades to meet accessibility needs. For example, Closed Captioning, Language Translation
- Update holiday decorating policy to be more inclusive

Our collective efforts will create change

We all play a part in creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments on campus; spaces that enhance our capacity to develop meaningful, authentic relationships. No one area can do everything to improve the campus climate; but each of us can do something - and our collective efforts will create change. Using the Environmental Scan Checklist and developing an action plan for improvement is an easy, important, and effective strategy for success.

Strategic Goal 4.3 - Environmental Scan Checklist

Strategic Goal 4.3: *Create, expand, or invest in opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to connect and build meaningful relationships with others across the multiple intersecting identities, perspectives and developmental differences people hold.*

Purpose of conducting an environmental scan: Assess how the spaces, programs, services, and resources in your area create and/or enhance opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to connect and build meaningful, inclusive relationships; and identify areas for potential improvement.

Guiding Questions:

As you assess the physical, interpersonal, and virtual spaces in your area, consider these questions:

- What is the current status?
The physical, interpersonal, and virtual environments are intentionally designed for inclusion across multiple identities and experiences, such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or ability level, and facilitate the development of relationships among students, faculty, and staff.
- What gaps exist or barriers interfere with achieving this strategic priority?
- What resources are needed to build capacity?
- Who is responsible for creating change and making improvements?

The process of working collaboratively to become more aware of your environment and identify how to create positive change that will enhance your space can be just as important as the actions you will take toward improvement.

Physical Structures

Assess the physical spaces in your area to gauge how these structures are (1) welcoming, inclusive, and safe; and (2) encourage the development of meaningful relationships

- Wayfinding/signage

Comment: Current signage is excellent at all entrances. More signage could help students locate the university classrooms in the lower level (Room 0308 Sukup; Room 0022 Sukup). Students struggle the first week of classes finding these rooms. Improved signage could also help ABE student find the Student Services advisor offices the first time. Their office numbers do not match the number of the waiting area. (Administrative group)
More signs are needed at the front entry of the building from Bissel Road, which is where most students and visitors enter. Recommendation is at least one more sign on the left (south) side of the building. Building names (Sukup, Elings, BRL) should be better differentiated. Signs to direct students to 1320 (Advising offices), 1330 (Student services), 1340, 1350 (administrative offices), and 1306 (Davidson conference room) are needed. Larger signs are needed to direct to faculty offices and a larger directory posted in a highly visible spot. (Student services group)

- Public gathering/reception spaces are welcoming and comfortable

Comment: These areas in ABE are excellent when compared to other similar spaces on campus. Since we have a new facility, these areas were designed to be welcoming and comfortable. Examples include the waiting areas for the main office and student services. The Sukup Atrium is also very welcoming and has seating to facilitate student engagement. Other comfortable seating is located in

the lower level of Sukup Hall, in the link hallways between Sukup and Elings halls, in the ABE Student Interaction room, and in open classrooms.

(Administrative group)

We concur on the seating, but note there is no specific seating area for folks in wheelchairs and the doors from the Sukup Atrium to Sukup Hall are not wheelchair accessible. Further, the visual accessibility of the atrium is unclear.

(Student services group)

- Photographs/art/décor are inclusive and representative

Comment: We have over \$500,000 worth of art in our complex. Guests, faculty, staff, and student frequently comment positively about our art. Photos use in our display cases show that we have diversity and value diversity and inclusion.

(Administrative group)

Art is inclusion of gender, research area, and content areas of the department. Students of color are not as represented in the display case. Hanging artwork mostly represents the department and campus – the learning community room art seems very generic. (Student services group)

- Private conversation/community spaces encourage interactions

Comment: We have private offices for faculty, student services staff, and main office staff. This allows for private conversations. All of the offices have glass panels, therefore creating a safe environment. We have several community spaces for faculty, staff, graduate students, UG students, and guests. Each floor of Elings hall has a kitchen/conference room, formal conference rooms, and informal meeting rooms. We also have a designated faculty/staff meeting room with an adjacent kitchen area for faculty and staff social and formal meetings (3306 Elings Hall). This room has flexible seating and is a welcoming room with art on the walls and a library section. Students have an informal Student Interaction room in the lower level of Sukup Hall that has a microwave, refrigerator, three round tables for four individuals each, and three all-in-one computers. Across from our Student Services center, we have an ABE Learning Community room for small group interaction and engagement. This room has comfortable seating that encourages student conversations. It also has 6 all-in-one computers for student to use while waiting for an advisor appointment or while waiting for class. Our Student Interaction room and our ABE Capstone Teaming rooms could be more welcoming if art was added to the walls.

Student services group concur on the conclusions from the administrative group.

Interpersonal Relationships and Organizational Structures

Assess the human systems in your area to gauge how these processes communicate messages that are (1) welcoming, inclusive, and safe; and (2) encourage the development of meaningful relationships

- Organizational mission, vision, and values are intentionally and openly communicated

Comment: ABE renewed its mission, vision and guiding principles this past year. They are posted on our website and on the wall of our main office conference room. They are communicated each semester at the faculty retreat. A statement about inclusion should be considered. (administrative group)

Key terms seem welcoming and diversity is discussed as a key value. Key

stakeholders (faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates) are all mentioned within the mission, values, and vision. (student services group)

- Shared expectations for inclusion, teamwork, and customer service are clearly stated
Comment: Frequently discuss at faculty meetings/workshops within ABE. More focus could be placed on sharing expectations at the staff level. (administrative group)
Mission, vision, and values are supportive of team-building and focus on the value of developing relationships with peers. Engineering and technology students co-exist in the same space, despite few classes shared between the two curriculums. Department values with the family mentality – does this automatically represent inclusion? Our recommendation is that the faculty make team selection choices, rather than allowing students to form teams. In this way, they will demonstrate their support for the inclusion of all students in the learning environment. (student services group)

- Access/open door policies are in place
Comment: We ensure our ABE student have adequate access to our facilities and computer laboratories during the day and at night. We do restrict non-ABE folks from accessing our facility in the evenings and on weekends. (administrative group)

It would be helpful if department offices posted office hours outside the door. We also encourage faculty to post their office hours on their office door. Faculty are very good about making themselves available to students outside of their office hours. The ABE Student Services office operates on an appointment scheduling system – walk-in students are allowed when advisers are not in a meeting with another student or faculty. This process is maintained to support student confidentiality. (student services group)

- Conflict resolution processes are commonly understood
Comment: Although we have a well-defined UG student conflict resolution process, it is not commonly understood by our students. (administrative group)
ABE does not have a published conflict resolution process. However, faculty and staff share the academic grievance process when needed with students – the student begins the process with their instructor, then the Associate Chair for Teaching, then the Department Chair, and then the Dean of either Engineering or Agriculture and Life Sciences, if warranted. (student services group)

- Opportunities to connect across the campus and community are promoted (e.g. CELT Inclusive Classroom project, Ames Human Relations Commission, etc.)
Comment: Our faculty and staff are made aware of campus opportunities on a regular basis. Community opportunities are not well known or advertised.

- Transparency in organizational roles, responsibilities, and accountability systems exists
Comment: Policy is documented through organizational chart.

- Organizational communications reference student and staff affinity groups, and other community partners, such as the LGBTQA Pride Alliance or Black Faculty Staff Association
Comment: UGs and graduate students are aware of support groups and clubs. Faculty and staff may not be as well informed about affinity groups or other community partners. It is probably more word of mouth. (administrative group)
Students are highly involved in the department, but do not participate at the same

level in the colleges or across campus. Faculty are highly connected on campus with research and committee work. Industry connections are an important part of our department and its support of students and research. (student services group)

- Organizational traditions and gatherings enhance members' feelings of belongingness, importance, and value.

Comment: ABE has many department traditions and gatherings. These include a weekly "What's Up Wednesday" faculty and staff coffee/treat 30 minute social; ice cream social for welcoming new students; BBQ welcome for new students; ABE faculty/staff/graduate students/retiree holiday potluck; Department Breakfast for faculty/staff/graduate students/retirees each September; ASABE Student Branch breakfast for faculty and staff during dead week each semester. (administrative group)

ABE has many organizational traditions involving students, staff, and faculty. These include: learning communities, faculty and staff socials, student/faculty/staff socials, the ENGR 101 retreat; the ABE Welcome Event for students, orientation courses and foundation courses (ABE 110 and TSM 111); and capstone day. (student services group)

Virtual Spaces

Assess the electronic/digital resources in your area to gauge how these are (1)welcoming, inclusive, and safe; and (2) encourage the development of meaningful relationships

- Content communicates welcoming and inclusive messages, clearly established values/priorities

Comment: ABE maintains an up-to-date website. Faculty, staff, student, and alumni news is posted weekly. More attention could be focused on highlighting the diversity of our UG and graduate students. (administrative group)

Student services group concur with these suggestions, but note students often do not look at the website as their first point of information. (student services group)

- Website and social medial platforms utilize digital universal design to promote access

Comment: ABE utilized Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, ISSUU, and LinkedIn. We will be getting a new communication support staff soon, so hope to more frequently post on these social media sites. (administrative group)

Student services group concur with these assessments.

- Images/media are appropriately tagged and captioned

Comment: Image and media our website is captioned appropriately for the most part. Some videos could be titled better. (administrative group)

Student services group concur with these findings.

- Visual representation in images/media is intentionally inclusive

Comment: Image and media our website is captioned appropriately for the most part. Some videos could be titled better. (administrative group)

Student services group concur with these findings.

Action Plans

After completing the environmental scan(s), identify action steps you will take to address any gaps identified and enhance capacity in your area for members to develop meaningful relationships across the multiple intersecting identities, perspectives and developmental differences people hold.

Insert additional rows as needed to capture the action steps you have identified.

Areas to focus on over the next 1-3 months

| <i>Brief description of action steps identified to improve environment:</i> | <i>Individual responsible for implementation:</i> |
|---|---|
| • Update signage for locating student services staff | [REDACTED] |
| • Update signage for locating main office staff | [REDACTED] |

Areas to focus on over the next 6 months

| <i>Brief description of action steps identified to improve environment:</i> | <i>Individual responsible for implementation:</i> |
|---|---|
| • Add art in teaming rooms and student interaction rooms | [REDACTED] |
| • Review website images and social media content | [REDACTED] |

Areas to focus on over the next year

| <i>Brief description of action steps identified to improve environment:</i> | <i>Individual responsible for implementation:</i> |
|---|---|
| • Review “Making ABE Welcoming” protocol | [REDACTED] |
| • Include staff in faculty diversity/inclusion training | [REDACTED] |

Other suggestions from student services group:

- Focus on faculty on practices in diversity/inclusion, specifically on best practices in classroom team creation and development (All ABE teaching faculty)
- Think about and perhaps implement a talking circle for underrepresented students and females; if enough support perhaps turn this into a more formal group or learning community (advising group with facilitation assistance from [REDACTED])