



# GENERAL REPORT

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## Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council March Meeting Report: Feedback on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices

On March 29 and 30, USHE Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council members met virtually to share their ideas on how institutions can avoid perpetuating harm and incorporate helpful practices into the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. CSEAC member Reed Hammond volunteered to lead the discussion. The Commissioner’s office is grateful to these students for their willingness to have authentic discussions about complex topics. These students demonstrate courage and leadership by sharing their thoughts about topics that affect them directly, often in deeply personal ways.

Students provided insightful suggestions for enhancing the work of EDI on USHE campuses. One student shared that constantly carrying the mantle of EDI work as a student leader can be exhausting, and she wants the work of uplifting EDI to be a shared responsibility for every member of the campus community. One student expressed that when students’ words or actions undermine the values of EDI, institutions need to utilize restorative justice practices that prioritize helping the affected students and communities heal while also helping perpetrators of harm learn and grow. By deploying these strategies, institutions engage in the work of calling in students as members of the community rather than ostracizing them. Students also had a robust discussion regarding tokenism; students widely reaffirmed that as institutions recruit faculty, staff, and students from diverse walks of life, they should go to great lengths to be genuine in their inclusion efforts, avoid tokenizing people’s identities, and ensure all members of the campus community are valued as individuals. Additional insights and opinions are outlined below.

Positive Feedback (13)	
Category	Examples (number of unique mentions in parentheses)
<i>Student leadership and involvement (7)</i>	I feel that many student leaders at my institution are vocal, act on their EDI priorities, and use their platform to affect positive change (4)
	Affinity groups on campus help foster a sense of belonging for underrepresented students (2)

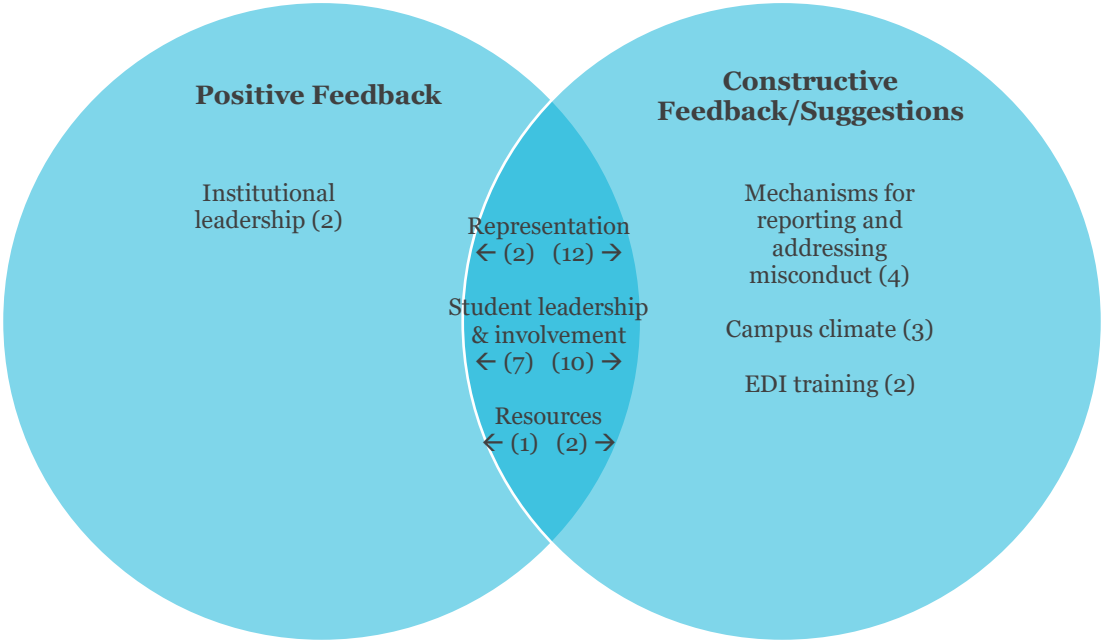
	I feel my Student Body President makes a genuine effort to listen to and include all students (1)
<i>Institutional resources (2)</i>	My department practices inclusion by offering academic advising in both English and Spanish (1)
	My institution provides culturally relevant resources and spaces that foster a sense of belonging (1)
<i>Representation on campus (2)</i>	I have at least one faculty or staff member who I can trust and who has an identity and/or lived experiences similar to my own (2)
<i>Institutional leadership (2)</i>	I feel that my institution's president does a good job of making space where students can voice their EDI thoughts and concerns directly (2)

<b>Constructive Feedback (32)</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples (number of unique mentions in parentheses)</b>
<i>Representation on campus (12)</i>	I feel my institution doesn't have enough faculty, staff, and leaders who have lived experiences and/or identities that are similar to mine (5)
	I believe faculty and staff of color are asked to take on too many extra responsibilities based on their identities and are often under-compensated and underrecognized for that extra work (4)
	I think people of color are hired too often for only EDI-related leadership positions rather than general leadership roles (1)

<i>Representation on campus (cont.)</i>	When my institution makes videos about student stories, I feel too often that students from diverse backgrounds are only portrayed as victims who overcame hardship (1)
	I would like to see institutions commit to holding more celebrations for holidays and events that have sacred meaning to students of various ethnicities, religions, and cultures (1)
<i>Student leadership and involvement (10)</i>	I feel that student affinity groups and organizations don't receive enough resources and support from the institution (4)
	I feel that many student leaders are often not equipped to talk to, understand, and serve diverse student groups appropriately and adequately, and they need more training and support on EDI values to be able to effectively lead (3)
	I feel that my institution does not involve students often enough in decision-making processes (2)
	I would like to see student affinity groups cross-collaborate on more programming and events to enhance multicultural partnerships (1)
<i>Mechanisms for reporting and addressing misconduct (4)</i>	I believe my institution needs more robust and accessible mechanisms for reporting and tracking microaggressions exacted by faculty and staff (2)
	I feel my institution attempts to have less-senior staff respond to EDI-related incidents of concern in student conduct, and those staff members are not always experienced enough to respond effectively (1)
	I feel, in some instances, that there is not adequate institutional follow-through when EDI concerns are reported (1)

<i>Campus climate (3)</i>	On my campus, I often don't feel safe to share my ideas or speak up about things I perceive are wrong (3)
<i>EDI training (2)</i>	I suggest that faculty and staff need more effective and ongoing EDI training (2)
<i>Institutional resources (1)</i>	I believe EDI should be more imbedded in academic structures (e.g., better and more equitable access to research and internship opportunities (1)

**Discussion Summary:**



**Notable quotes**

- On overworking and undervaluing diverse faculty and staff:*

“We pick faculty and staff and put more responsibility on them because they’re the only people that students identify with. For example, we have a handful of Black professors and staff on campus, and they’re always the ones that are picked over and over to be a part of ‘this’ committee or ‘this’ council just because that’s the only way those voices can be heard. But I really hope that we can start prioritizing those staff members’ and faculty members’ mental health and make sure they’re getting the resources, because they’re overworked.”

- On the importance of avoiding tokenism:*

“I think one of the big things to seek for is representation, but to ensure that representation doesn't become tokenism. If I feel that I'm selected for a position because of [my identity], that doesn't make me feel good . . . I would be so upset with someone who would pick me as a result of an identity as opposed to merits that I can bring to the table.”
- On the importance of maintaining dignity in elevating students' stories:*

“Whenever we choose students of color to be part of videos, more often than not, we ask them to share their story. And that's still very important, but it's more in a victim-type of way, and I really dislike that. As students who are underrepresented, we're still more than capable of being smart and having merit. The reality is just that we have systemic barriers that don't allow for that. Not that I don't want people to share their stories . . . but how do you balance representation and tokenism? Yes, I am a Latina, but I love research, I love science, I'm very capable in what I do, and I'm very prepared. When I'm approached to tell my story, often people say, 'Talk about your story, talk about your family and your upbringing,' and I want to do that, and I have been through hard things, but at the same time, I've been able to achieve things.”
- On inadequate faculty responses to inappropriate classroom behavior:*

“I understand that employees take the required HR training videos to learn how to go about working with a diverse group of people. Unfortunately, due to my school's faculty demographic, most professors don't talk about or mention any EDI efforts. There's been certain instances where a racist comment has been said in class, but professors don't know how to truly go about it.”
- On intentionally honoring students' cultures:*

“The resources offered on my campus are amazing. The majority of students that attend this campus are Native American. We are still on Native land where the campus is, so therefore, the campus is very inclusive in helping students still feel in touch with that. Recently, the campus built a Navajo hogan for students to feel more at home. They basically call it 'home away from home' here, which is what the staff have been showing students; regardless of their religion or where they're coming from, the support is there, and, from my point of view, it's amazing. We get to offer our point of view on many different things, and somehow, some way, the university makes it a whole lot better.”
- On the importance of restorative justice:*

“I don't think our student codes of conduct across institutions really reflect restorative justice . . . I would like to see some sort of code of ethics in our codes of conduct that say, 'We do not stand behind certain behavior, but when this does occur, there are ways for education and reintegration, a learning process.’”
- On the importance of consulting students when making decisions about issues that affect them:*

“Minority students, students who are already disadvantaged, have barriers they have to jump

through. They're very exhausting. It's a trial. These little barriers add up, and it becomes exhausting having to navigate your way through this. On top of that, it gets more exhausting when someone is trying to represent you, but they're not considering how you actually want to be represented."