

ALEC Departmental Climate Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

2:00-3:00 p.m.

AGLS 200

1. Reminder-Meetings
 - a. ALEC Climate Committee meetings are open meetings for anyone interested in improving the climate of the department. Though we do have appointed members (Julie Harlin, chair, Chanda Elbert, Theresa Murphrey, Andy Vestal, Tanya Gunnels, Reid Stavinoha, and Gary Briers—Ex Officio), all members of the department are welcome and encouraged to bring items and participate in the discussion.
2. Reminder-Charge
 - a. The ALEC Climate Committee is responsible for making any recommendation we believe may improve departmental climate to the department head. We are also responsible for developing the ALEC Departmental Climate Plan for approval by the department.
3. ALEC Climate Plan
 - a. Harlin and Elliot attended a College Climate Committee meeting on 1-12-2017. The plans for each department are very different.
 - b. It was clear that the goal of the plans is to create space for conversation to improve climate.
 - c. Plans submitted by other departments are available in Debbie's office if you wish to view them.
4. ALEC Service Project
 - a. Though we will continue to look for potential service activities, we focused more on social activities for the spring semester.
5. ALEC Social and Professional Development Activities
 - a. We received information at the January departmental meeting on a Bombers Baseball social—please let Debbie know if interested in attending.
 - b. We are planning a Picnic/Fishing/Skeet Shooting/Blue Bell Ice Cream activity for May 3rd (reading day) that will include instruction on angler education and gun safety. Vestal has a location in mind and will report back.
 - c. There was discussion concerning a tour of local agriculture in our own back yard. Andy Vestal will contact Dustin Coufal and update us on potential activities/schedule.
 - d. We discussed visiting one of the local escape rooms as a teambuilding activity. Julie Harlin will explore and report back.
6. Book Club
 - a. Hidden Figures will be led by Dr. Jen Strong this spring.
 - b. Please start reading the book and be on the lookout for calendar appointments to discuss the book.
7. ALEC Coffees
 - a. A calendar appointment has been sent for Friday's at 10:30 for the spring semester.
8. Other Discussion
 - a. "How is our Climate?" "Are your concerns and suggestions being heard?"
 - i. We had extensive discussion on our current climate.
 - ii. For some departmental members, there is no safe place to talk about issues when they arise. The perception is that you will get in trouble for talking about climate issues.
 - iii. Many believe that we still have people who are not being nice in interacting with others.

- iv. It was suggested that we do not hold each other accountable to maintaining a positive work environment.
 - v. It also appears that there are systemic issues with some departmental members.
 - vi. Many believe that there is still a strong disconnect between our aspirations as a department and what is actually happening in daily interactions, especially when it comes to interactions among faculty, graduate students, and staff.
- b. Other? What are we forgetting that is important to climate?
9. Sometimes we hear things not said. One suggestion was to end meetings with the following:
- a. This is what I heard....we still have issues that must be addressed.
 - b. This is what I think....planning activities will not change our climate. Our departmental climate is a function of our daily interactions with each other. Providing opportunities for members to interact, connect, and feel valued may help improve climate.
 - c. This is what we will do....continue to work on our own interactions. We may not be able to change the behavior of others, but we can all work to improve our daily interactions.
10. The next meeting of the ALEC Climate Committee will be Wednesday, February 22, 2017, 1:30-2:30 p.m., AGLS 200. All are invited to the meetings and input on the plan, meetings, and activities is welcome and needed.