2025-26 DEI Listening and Feedback Session Report: Faculty

Executive Summary

In accordance with Washington state requirements, community and technical colleges facilitate DEI listening and feedback sessions when formal campus climate assessments are not underway. Seventeen faculty members participated in a series of sessions held in the fall of 2025. The institutional accreditation visit in October 2025 and campus events happening around that time involving leadership and personnel issues prompted significant discussion. Four questions, two of which stemmed from the results of our most recent campus climate assessment, were used in sessions facilitated collaboratively by the Offices of DEI and Institutional Research. Two overarching themes emerged from the discussions.

1. **There are gaps in communication and transparency**. A notable portion of the feedback focused on communication issues between leadership and faculty. Key issues include information being "watered down" as it moves through various levels, a lack of transparency regarding budget cuts and reorganization, and the feeling that leadership is not physically present enough to set a collaborative tone. Respondents emphasized the need for consistent information sharing with all groups, including adjunct faculty.

2. **Efforts are needed to restore unity and a culture of belonging on campus**. Respondents noted that LCC's once-strong sense of unity has experienced fractures amid a climate of "fear, worry, and concern". While individual departments were often described as supportive and welcoming, there is a call for leadership to "reset the community button" and foster a sense of belonging across the entire institution.

Question 1: Communication

LCC's scores on the campus climate assessment were up from the previous survey administration and much higher than those of the comparison groups. This was true overall and for all categories, including student focus, supervisory relationships, and teamwork. Like other colleges, LCC scores were slightly lower for the institutional structure category, including topics like communication. What ideas or recommendations do you have for improving communication at LCC to ensure that everyone is operating with the same or similar information?

This prompt stems from the role communication and information dissemination play in equity and inclusion. Themes emerging from the faculty as a result of this prompt include:

- **Leadership can do a better job of communicating**, e.g., in more timely, inclusive, and transparent ways. Participants pointed out the importance of communication in numerous ways, making comments such as "Communication is important for employee morale."
- **More effective communication guidelines are needed**. Specifically, participants requested more guidance about how and where to share, stating that general directives such as "please share with your department" are not always helpful. Other respondents noted that the "telephone game" effect can distort information.
- **The same communication methods don't work for everyone.** Some respondents noted that there are too many emails, others that there are not enough.
- **Timing is critical for communication with faculty**. Some faculty feel they miss out when important information is shared during breaks, when they are not on contract, and that more attention should be paid to ensuring they are looped in at the appropriate time.
- **More communication, specifically about the college's financial situation, is needed**. Respondents requested greater transparency regarding the institution's budget and financial position.
- **Communication from leadership should focus on the institution**. Respondents commented that messages from leadership focusing too much on the self strike the wrong chord with some faculty.
- **The method for communicating personnel changes needs improvement**. Examples of how recent changes were announced, which resulted in negativity, were cited by respondents.
- **Communication should still happen even if the message is that we don't know yet**. Certainly not a unique issue for LCC, respondents noted that a lack of communication can lead people to fill in the gaps with misinformation.
- **Feelings are mixed regarding in-person vs. online formats**. For example, at least one respondent commented that fewer faculty participate in All Staff meetings when there is no online component. Others feel that in-person-only meetings are best.
- **Faculty would like more face time with the president**. Respondents noted that while Classified and Exempt groups have regular meetings with the president, the faculty do not.
- **Information about resource availability, such as funding for professional development, should be more equitable**. Respondents noted that this creates an equity issue, particularly for adjunct faculty, who are not compensated for attending meetings and therefore do not receive the same information about professional development (and other) opportunities as their peers.

Question 2: Service to Students

LCC employees reported high levels of agreement with statements related to teamwork and student focus on the campus climate survey, indicating that there is a strong sense of mission

and spirit of cooperation here. How can we build on our strengths to improve our service to all students during this period of unprecedented change to higher education in the United States?

This prompt, written from an organizational development perspective, was intended to encourage ideas that build on our existing promising and effective practices within the broader higher education landscape. As with the first prompt, recent campus events were heavily featured in the discussion. Themes emerging from the faculty as a result of this prompt include:

- **Recent personnel and organizational changes, including the way they were communicated, have significantly disrupted the campus**. Citing everything from poor communication from leadership to divisions on campus to a lack of unity between faculty and staff, recent staffing changes and reorganizations were noted as being detrimental to our historical strengths in teamwork and student focus.
- **Political divisions and uncertainty on campus have caused confusion in regard to academic freedom and job security**. The City's proposal to rename Maple Street to Charlie Kirk Way was cited as an example of faculty fears about taking a stand on political issues.
- **Reassigning duties from the Office of DEI to Student Programs detracts from DEI work**. Acknowledging that the external climate may have affected this, respondents are concerned that assigning significant other duties to DEI staff has reduced our ability to advance our DEI goals.
- **More student voices are needed**. Respondents noted the need to involve more students in our DEI work. One respondent suggested student storytelling campaigns. Others noted that we need more avenues (beyond ASLCC) for students to express their opinions.
- **More accessible information about resources available for students is needed**. Respondents cited a need for more centralized information about student resources on the website, in flyers, on bulletin boards, and on social media.

Question 3: Sense of Belonging

One of LCC's Key Performance Indicators is "Sense of Belonging" for employees. What specific actions would you recommend the college take to increase the Sense of Belonging for all employees?

Sense of Belonging is important for both student and employee retention. Themes emerging from the faculty as a result of this prompt include:

- **LCC is a mission-centric organization**. Respondents reported that this campus is collaborative and welcoming. Recognition for good work is helpful.
- **Professional development and social interaction opportunities are appreciated and should continue**. The Faculty and Staff of Color Conference was noted. There was a call for more campus-organized social events.

- **The leadership climate and tone need improvement**. Respondents emphasized that leadership sets the tone for the institution's mission, morale, and workplace climate. Leadership should bring energy, openness, and a willingness to try new approaches to help reset a sense of shared community and trust.
- **Visible, supportive leadership contributes to a Sense of Belonging**. Respondents highlighted the importance of leaders demonstrating support in tangible ways—showing interest in employees' work, engaging with faculty and staff, and recognizing contributions. Present and supportive leaders help foster a stronger sense of belonging and connection to the institution. Conversely, uneven attention or recognition can make individuals feel overlooked.
- **Learning names contributes to a Sense of Belonging**. Instructors learning students' names and leaders learning employees' names were cited as effective strategies for increasing Sense of Belonging.
- **Office hours would be helpful**. Leadership holding office hours would contribute to a more welcoming and collaborative environment.
- **Wayfinding and lighting need improvement**. Improving campus signage and lighting would make the campus more welcoming.
- **Access to facilities is essential**. Locked doors when the campus is open and a lack of after-hour study spaces for students were noted as detrimental to student success. Similarly, reasonable heating and cooling in all spaces are needed.
- **Multiple modalities support belonging**. Offering meetings in multiple modalities and communicating in different ways is more inclusive than limiting the channels.

Question 4: Other Comments and Suggestions

This open-ended question allowed respondents to share additional thoughts. Themes emerging from the faculty as a result of this prompt include:

- **Faculty appreciate opportunities to provide feedback**. Respondents expressed gratitude for this and other opportunities to voice their opinions.
- **How leadership responds to feedback matters**. Respondents encouraged dialogue vs. defensiveness in responding to constructive criticism, and called for accountability when feedback is provided. One respondent noted that previous attempts to provide criticism have been met with microaggressions.
- **Campus accomplishments should be equitably celebrated**. It was noted that there may be an imbalance in the extent to which leadership shares information about athletic victories compared with other types of events, activities, and accomplishments.