2012 UMass Boston Climate Study Response Report

In 2012 UMass Boston completed a campus-wide survey intended to assess the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion climate. (Read the findings report for detailed information.) Based on the responses of 2,193 students, staff and faculty the following areas of concern emerged as presenting opportunities for growth.

AREAS OF CONCERN

⇒ LGBTQ
⇒ CLASS
⇒ GENDER
⇒ RACE & ETHNICITY
⇒ DISABILITY
⇒ MISCELLANEOUS

This report summarizes the types of response initiatives UMass Boston has undertaken since the results of the 2012 Climate Study were released. Please note that ODEI acts in a variety of roles, sometimes as a project driver and in other cases in a support capacity providing financial, promotional or operational support to projects managed by other university departments. Efforts to address the inequalities highlighted by the 2012 survey were not limited to ODEI and many departments across the campus engaged in efforts to create a more inclusive climate. This document is an attempt to highlight some known efforts; however, we recognize that since no central repository for the activities exists the examples listed in this report are not exhaustive of diversity efforts by UMass Boston to improve the campus climate since 2012. Rather, the report reflects an ongoing commitment to listening, collaborating and working toward an equitable community environment. We, as a university, have begun tackling some of these important issues and acknowledge that the work must continue.

A departmental reorganization in Spring 2019 moved institutional compliance for civil rights and Title IX complaints into a separate unit under Human Resources, allowing ODEI to focus on inclusion programming moving forward. The results of the upcoming 2019 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey will allow us to track the university's progress and to plan strategically for how we will collectively address these and other areas of concern.

Ultimately, responsibility for the university's climate is both individual and collective. ODEI works to complement and further the social justice work of students, faculty and staff. We invite all members of the UMass Boston community to exercise your voice here on your campus, and to be heard. We are listening and look forward to working with you to create a more inclusive community.
Categories of Response

Using the 2012 results, UMass Boston's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI, previously known as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion or ODI) worked to both address these areas of concern as well as support others in their efforts. Collaborating with other university departments, student organizations, and administration ODEI either organized, co-sponsored or supported a number of initiatives to improve the campus climate and increase satisfaction relating to areas of concern. In addition, departments and individuals across campus engaged in efforts that responded to the concerns that were raised.

Response initiatives were separated into four categories:

**PROGRAMMING**
Programming includes trainings for employees and students, as well as ongoing and single events that promote diversity.

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES**
The campus made policy and procedural changes to ensure that all members of the university community are treated equitably.

**RESOURCES**
In order to provide information to support UMass Boston's students, faculty and staff a number of resources were developed providing vital information and community education.

**STRUCTURE**
Structural responses include both physical and digital changes to the university as well as adjustments to organizational structure.
LGBTQ

PROGRAMMING

- **Events** occurred one time or in a series and included examples such as:
  - Emerging Response: An Introduction to Transgender Identities
  - ABOVE + BEYOND - Our community responds to HIV/AIDS exhibit
  - Intentional Community Building: Blackness in Lesbian Musical Culture
  - QSC launched an Annual Drag Show
- **Trainings** were provided, such as presentations on appropriate pronoun use and other events for the UMass Boston community including one in partnership with Massachusetts Political Transgender Coalition

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- ODEI developed and implemented a procedure for cross-campus team response to incidences impacting campus climate
- Working with members of the Gender and Sexual Diversities Task Force, engaged in a process of reviewing pages on the University website and replaced gendered pronouns with gender neutral pronouns.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Gender Pronoun Guide
- Trans Resource Guide
- Inclusive Restrooms Campus Map (in progress)

STRUCTURE

- A Task Force for Gender & Sexual Diversities was established and included student, staff and faculty representation to address LGBTQ-related concerns on campus
While reviewing the 2012 Climate Study report with community stakeholders, ODEI recognized that socioeconomic class cannot be addressed without examining its intersection with other identities. As such, ODEI initiatives have focused primarily on serving identities specifically named in the university’s affirmative action plan: race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or military status. Moving forward the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will continue explore how class and other identities intersect and how UMass Boston can improve its climate for community members of all backgrounds.

Specific initiatives targeting concerns related to isolation in particular staff roles were placed on hold during the collective bargaining process.
GENDER

PROGRAMMING

- **Events** included colloquiums and panels as well as various speaker series. Examples included:
  - South Asia Colloquium Talk: Feminism & Human Rights in the Global South
  - Silent Witness Initiative
  - MA Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination Veto Referendum and Strategies for Activism
  - Social Justice and Feminist Futures: Beyond White Supremacy and Islamophobia

- **Training series** such as:
  - Title IX training for student athletes
  - Title IX training for Complex Classroom Encounters provided to various departments’ faculty and staff
  - Let's Talk about Consent & Sexual Assault training
  - Bringing in the Bystander trainings

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- UMass Boston’s Title IX procedures have been updated to reflect guidance changes and to adhere to best practices (under review)

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Title IX resources** developed and distributed throughout campus and online including the creation of the Title IX (Sexual Respect) landing page

- Sexual Assault Awareness Month is recognized each April to share resources across campus, through a collaborative programming effort with ODEI, Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, the Psychology department, University Health Services & Counseling, Student Affairs, and other units

STRUCTURE

- A Progress Task Force was established by faculty to examine wage and position gaps on campus
- A dedicated Lactation Room was created on campus and infant changing tables were installed in single-use restrooms to allow for use regardless of gender
- The division of Student Affairs restructured to include one staff person dedicated to investigating gender-based harassment complaints
RACE & ETHNICITY

PROGRAMMING

- ODEI expanded its Diversity Week to Diversity Month each October and also offered events such as Faculty of Color Welcome Receptions and dialogues about race.
- ODEI engaged in partnerships with the Institute for Asian American Studies, the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, the William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, and the Institute for New England Native American Studies as well as a number of academic and administrative departments and student organizations.
- Teach-in events were organized by faculty and students such as: Solidarity in Action: Resisting Systemic Oppression; Teach In and Wake Up, Rise Up: Resisting Systemic Oppression; Not My Normal: Resisting Systemic Oppression
- Dreams Deported: Immigrant Youth and Families Resist Deportation
- There were many individual events planned by departments across the campus including student clubs over the years that covered a variety of special topics related to race, ethnicity and undocumented student concerns.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- UMass Boston’s merit scholarship policy was amended to allow for DACA-status student eligibility
- Complaint procedures were revised and are currently under review
- Maxient, an online complaint and concern reporting and tracking system was implemented

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Access to resources for undocumented students were increased including establishing the Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix Immigrant Achievers Scholarship
- UMass Boston purchased an institutional membership to the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD), an independent community dedicated to supporting diverse academics across the career spectrum.

STRUCTURE

- A Faculty Diversity Task Force was established that examined best practices and strategies for increasing UMass Boston’s diversity among faculty to reflect its diverse student body
- A Student Immigrant Task Force was established by student advocates focused on improving access and experience for immigrant students at UMass Boston, particularly those in DACA status
- The Office of Student Multi-Cultural Affairs was established, working to enhance the campus community’s ability to be culturally and social aware
- UMass Boston’s Office of Community Partnerships partnered with the Boston Chamber of Commerce to establish an internship series aimed at increasing opportunities for students of color
- The Latino Task Force was established under the leadership of the Mauricio Gaston Institute and engages students, staff and faculty from across the campus
DISABILITY

PROGRAMMING

- The 2012 Climate Study revealed an opportunity for UMass Boston to bring mental health into a larger part of the disability discourse happening on campus. A multitude of events have been offered including film screenings, lectures, Recovery High School Day, dialogue series, workshops and more focusing on topics such as suicide prevention, substance use, intersections of mental health, race and gender
- Other disability-related events included community education about the disability rights movement, White Cane Day, and trainings on American Sign Language, DiversAbility series, accommodation requests and mindfulness

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- A Service Animal policy was instituted to guide compliance and adherence to reasonable accommodation requests
- Student Code of Conduct was updated to include Good Samaritan Clause, reflecting Massachusetts law (Appendix A)

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- An accessible restroom map has been created and is in final review stage; it will be shared in 2019 for easy identification of accessible restrooms across campus

STRUCTURE

- The University increased and improved Braille signage and wayfinding signage
- A Recovery Task Force and Collegiate Recovery Community was established to support students seeking recovery from substance use disorders and other mental health conditions
- An Access Advisory Board worked to address disability-related concerns on campus
- UMass Boston purchased a new employment application platform (PageUp) to increase accessibility
- The University improved accessibility of digital documents and course content on Blackboard
- The University improved accessibility of online forms and systems in numerous departments and in WISER
- UMass Boston increase the number of disabled parking spaces and worked closely with the construction impact committee on the placement of parking spaces with the progression of various building projects
MISCELLANEOUS

PROGRAMMING

- **Events** like Diversity Week/Month fairs, teach-Ins, film screenings and receptions have been offered
- **Trainings** on microaggressions and implicit bias for students, faculty and staff as well as inclusive hiring practices trainings for various departments

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- The university has made multiple revisions of its hiring policies and procedures in efforts to increase the diversity of UMass Boston employees at all levels
- Revised complaint procedure for protected classes and Title IX (under review)

STRUCTURE

- UMass Boston’s Interfaith Chapel restructured organizationally and physically and was renamed the Interfaith Campus Ministry

This will document will be updated as more information becomes available.