

Promoting a feeling of inclusiveness and fairness in the Department of Psychology

Inclusiveness and respect are a fundamental precept for an effective workplace. The structure within academic departments rewards individuals who contribute to all aspects of the departmental missions of research, teaching, and service. Diversity, inclusion and respect are interwoven with all three missions. Occasionally, opinions and views of individual faculty may be at odds. Disagreement amongst faculty is natural, though disagreements should be settled with civility and not through hostility or discontent. It is important to recognize and respect diverse opinions while acknowledging that consensus agreement on all issues will often be the exception rather than the rule.

Still, situations may arise in which individual faculty do not feel free to speak their mind, or may feel that their voice is not or cannot be heard. This document is intended to formalize a set of guiding principles and procedures for ensuring that all faculty feel that their views are fairly represented.

Guiding principles.

1. An intellectually thriving and healthy department has faculty that feel empowered to express themselves freely without fear of reprisal.
2. More senior faculty should be particularly sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups, such as Junior faculty and faculty from underrepresented groups, who may feel less empowered to voice their opinions freely.
3. When needed, and in particular when a need arises to discuss a sensitive topic, faculty should have multiple avenues for expression.

Proposed Action.

- Update constitution to include statement about inclusion and diversity.
- Require that faculty confirm that they have read and understand the constitution prior to the first faculty meeting of the academic year.
- Assign 3 senior faculty members to serve as faculty liaisons to the chair.

Appointment of workplace climate faculty liaisons.

In consultation with the executive committee, the chair shall appoint up to three faculty to serve as **workplace climate faculty liaisons**. Effort will be made to select faculty for liaison positions who hold the most senior rank so as to minimize any potential for reprisal against them. Faculty will be given the opportunity suggest potential liaisons or volunteer for the positions. Liaisons will be tasked with maintaining open lines of communication with all faculty, but will be particularly sensitive to meeting the needs of potentially vulnerable groups. The liaisons shall serve as a proxy for expressing faculty sentiment on all topics, but especially sensitive topics that individual faculty may feel less empowered to discuss in a group setting. Liaisons shall make themselves available to

meet individually or as part of larger groups. Liaisons shall report directly to the chair to share information anonymously. The Liaison's job is to actively listen to the faculty member's argument so s/he can communicate it to the chair. Solving disputes or communication problems is not part of the Liaison's role. Rather that is the role of the chair and executive committee (where appropriate), with input from the liaison and with consent of the faculty involved. Active listening is essential so that the Liaison can present the faculty member's idea as accurately as possible. Discussions between the chair and faculty liaisons shall be held in confidence.

In addition to the workplace climate faculty liaisons, all full professors are expected to serve as conduits for accurately representing the views of less senior faculty and potentially vulnerable individuals.

Liaisons (nominated by faculty, Spring 2018): Karen O'Brien, Jack Blanchard, and Jude Cassidy