IU Bloomington Libraries Assess the Workplace Climate of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Over the summer, Bloomington library employees spoke out about the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. Over two hundred employees, two-thirds of the total Bloomington staff, filled out a diversity climate survey, delivering rich data that the IU Bloomington Libraries assesses is currently analyzing.

The survey arose out of the Diversity Strategic Plan, a 2016 document that sets a vision for DEI in the IUB Libraries, methods to achieve that vision, and metrics to assess the state of diversity. The survey resulted from three years of preparation with leadership from Diversity Committee Co-chair Misti Shaw and other members of the Diversity Committee. That preparation included an evaluation of climate surveys at other universities, numerous meetings with stakeholders within the Libraries, and constant revisions to hone survey questions. In addition to Shaw, a subcommittee of the Diversity Committee, Libraries Administration, Director of Human Resources Jennifer Chaffin, and Assessment Librarian Andrew Asher were integral to the completion and distribution of the diversity climate survey.

The survey consisted of two parts. A structured section asked employees to rate aspects of the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Libraries. This section was intended to provide foundational data to benchmark DEI in the IUB Libraries, to determine the extent of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct in the workplace, and to know whether such incidents are reported. After defining the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion, for example, the survey asked employees to indicate whether they believe their colleagues, supervisors, and administrators support DEI. It asked whether employees know how to report discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct. Personal safety and DEI are essential for a healthy work environment, so the Diversity Committee interprets the existence of any negative DEI experiences or any discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct as a call for action and improvement.

A second part of the survey provided a free text box for employees to write about any DEI climate-related topic. Anonymity was of highest priority, so the comments in that section went initially to University Human Resources to anonymize the text. The anonymized comments were then returned to Libraries Human Resources and the Diversity Committee.5

Although the results from the survey are still being analyzed, the Diversity Committee has already presented some preliminary data from the structured section to IU Bloomington employees. Two open meetings are scheduled for December to allow for a more thorough conversation about the survey process and the resulting data. The Committee will not share specific comments from the free text, but may talk

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5 Libraries Human Resources has a responsibility to both the employee and the employer to fully investigate employee issues as required by policy or law, such as alleged discrimination or harassment issues. Comments that refer to such situations would have been shared with Libraries Human Resources staff in raw form for further investigation.
about clear themes from that section. Already, the survey results are shaping conversations within the Diversity Committee. The survey demonstrated a need for more information about how to report discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct, so a publicity campaign is currently in the works. Survey-takers indicated an interest in the topics of microaggressions and gender pronouns, so plans are developing to address those interests.

The DEI climate survey has quickly become integral to the iterative process of improving diversity, equity, and inclusion, as envisioned by the Diversity Strategic Plan. By conducting the surveys at regular intervals, with concrete actions to respond to the results of the survey and open meetings to discuss both data and the survey-taking process, the Diversity Committee has established an important framework for future assessment of the DEI climate in the workplace.