

University of San Francisco
School of Education
Response to Campus Climate Survey
July 2022

This report responds to the August 2019 Campus Climate Survey Assessment Report prepared by the Center for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (CIPE), based on data gathered in Fall 2017 from the campus-wide study entitled “University of San Francisco Assessment of Climate for Learning, Living and Working.” There have been several changes within the School of Education (SOE) since the survey was conducted, much of which responds to some of the insights and concerns shared in the survey; therefore, in this report, we will 1) provide an overview of SOE in its current context and 2) outline priorities and initiatives that have been implemented to strengthen the SOE community over the past few years.

SOE Overview

The mission of the SOE is to act collectively and leverage our resources in ways that are driven by our Jesuit mission and responsive to our constituent’s needs. We strive to have measurable impact in schools and communities, particularly for those most affected by injustice.

The School of Education houses five academic departments:

- Counseling Psychology
- International and Multicultural Education
- Leadership Studies
- Learning and Instruction
- Teacher Education

The USF School of Education at a glance:

- 19 master’s programs, 5 doctoral programs, credential and certificate programs
- “4+1” dual bachelor’s and master’s/CA teaching credential degree program
- Locations in San Francisco (Hilltop campus), North Bay, South Bay, and Sacramento
- Amongst graduate schools of education, SOE is considered a “large institution” based on its enrollment of approximately 1,200 students each semester
- Courses take place in the evenings and/or on alternating weekends to accommodate working professionals. In a 2019 SOE student survey, 82% of respondents were employed.

SOE Current Context

There have been several changes within the SOE since the data was gathered in 2017 and CIPE’s response in 2019. First, there has been a transition in SOE leadership with the appointment of a new dean (first female-/female of color-identified dean) in 2018, and a new associate dean in

2019. Under this new leadership, SOE embarked on a three-year (2018-2022) initiative to identify strategic priorities in conversation with a broad range of stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors and community members. Many of the most pressing concerns outlined in the report are addressed in the strategic priorities.

Furthermore, since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to reexamine these priorities to identify the immediate, pandemic-related needs of our SOE community, and to draw on our collective strength in order to problem-solve both immediate and ongoing concerns. In some ways, these urgencies intensified our efforts towards individual and collective well-being which correlates directly to some of the concerns identified in the report in preceding years.

SOE Strategic Priorities

The School of Education's (SOE) strategic priorities were defined collaboratively by SOE faculty, staff, and leadership through a collaborative process of exploration and imagination along four identified priorities:

- Supporting advancement and well-being of faculty, staff and students
- Strengthening the collective within and outside of the School of Education
- Amplifying our unique contributions within the field of education.
- Building institutional capacity for improved governance, communication, and financial health

The findings in the 2019 report generally reported a high level of comfort regarding the climate at SOE overall and in the classroom; 67% of employees communicating that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the workplace climate; 82% of faculty and student respondents communicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the SOE classroom climate. However, when it came to retention, 26% of student respondents, 36% of faculty respondents and 57% of staff respondents indicated that they had seriously considered leaving in the last year (2016-2017).

To address these concerns, three task forces dedicated to student, faculty, and staff concerns were created: the Student Wellness and Retention Task Force, Staff Advancement Committee and Faculty Advancement Committee.

Student Wellness and Retention Task Force

The Student Wellness and Retention Task Force was established to explore ways in which we can improve our student retention rates through a school wide assessment of current practices and policies, and ideas for new ones that would better meet the needs of students, faculty and staff in ensuring student success and retention. The goal was to design ways in which we can better understand student experiences, to respond to their needs and to decrease obstacles students will inevitably encounter during their enrollment at SOE. The work involved reframing

student support as a humanizing endeavor - helping students to be known, making sure they actualize their goals and are able to develop positive relationships with faculty and staff mentors. The Task Force will identify ways to leverage or re-design University-wide student services to attend to our students' needs.

Goals:

1. Review data on retention and student experiences
2. Review and refine advising, academic support and scholarship/aid disbursement
3. Identify students' needs vis-à-vis university-wide resources [e.g. financial aid, SDS, CAPS, Career Services Center]
4. Explore undergraduate and graduate student services models
5. Develop and present a proposal to SOE community

Staff Advancement Committee

The Staff Advancement Committee represents the professional staff community and works collaboratively with the dean's office to advance staff well-being, community building activities, professional development, and other emerging needs. This committee works to ensure that staff members have the opportunity to meet regularly to discuss pertinent issues and to hear relevant updates from the dean's office. This committee makes regular recommendations to the dean's office, for ways in which they can support staff well being and advancement in the SOE.

Faculty Advancement Committee

The Faculty Advancement Committee strives towards a coherent approach to further advancing the careers of all full-time faculty. This committee will take into consideration the collective needs of faculty in SOE, while also being attentive to the unique professional needs of individual faculty members. This committee has made significant progress in comprehensive support around tenure and promotion, faculty mentorship, and professional development. Overall, the committee's mandate is to assess current practices, develop new ones as appropriate, and sustain supportive programming that allows us to be known as a school where faculty can come, grow, contribute, and stay.

Goals:

- Create a trusting environment in which faculty can explore their professional strengths and areas for growth throughout the year
- Design systems to provide individual and collective support for faculty to advance professionally at each career stage (assistant, associate, and full)

- Create opportunities for faculty to gain access to institutional support systems in the larger USF community and the Bay Area
- Establish formal and informal systems to support faculty preparing for tenure and promotion

In addition to prioritizing student, faculty and staff wellness, we also chose to deepen our commitment to reconceptualizing the SOE as an intentional and engaged community that occupies both traditional physical, and new, and digital spaces. This included the creation of the School and Community Partnerships Task Force and the Research Center Task Force.

School and Community Partnership Task Force

This task force explores and assesses current SOE school-based partnerships, in order to imagine a more streamlined approach that will maximize our collective impact in ways that meet the needs identified by our partners. Its work has been to document existing initiatives, programs and projects in order to build stronger strategic school partnerships based on the expertise of SOE members and the needs of neighboring districts. One aspect of the work of this group has been to ensure further collaboration between different SOE programs requiring student involvement in schools, such as student teaching, fieldwork and internships. A guiding principle of this group will be to ensure close partnerships based on a model of mutual learning.

Goals

1. Document our current work/articulate a theory-of-action
2. Conduct a needs assessment
3. Catalogue expertise of SOE faculty/staff
4. Dream about an impactful intervention
5. Develop and present a proposal to SOE community

Our final priority was to strengthen and clarify our institutional systems and capacity through a comprehensive review and revision of existing structures.

The focus of these priorities, addressed through collaborative and collective dialogue, enabled us to develop a new strategic plan which advances an agenda of justice through education.

Below are highlights of outcomes from the strategic priorities as it relates to the most pertinent concerns reported in the survey findings:

- Streamlining communication, data, and student-engagement around academic advising
 - Creation of the Advising Hub (Salesforce) and Advising Week

- Creating increased opportunities for engagement such as:
 - Weekly “tea with the dean”, Town Halls, book clubs, peer mentor circles
 - Creation of affinity groups such as: First Gen gatherings and mentorship program, Black Fridays for Black-identified students, faculty and staff, LGBTQIA+
- Centralizing information through regular maintenance of SOE MyUSF and by digitizing most frequently used forms to enable direct access to relevant stakeholders
- Creation of the Center for Humanizing Education and Research (C-HER)
 - C-HER seeks to contribute to the generation, application, and diffusion of new knowledge. Its inaugural speaker series drew 1,000 participants from the Bay Area. The Freedom Dreaming mini grants supported student research projects.
- Strengthening academic support and resources
 - Creation of the Public Scholar Hub (graduate student-focused writing and methodology academic support spaces and resources)
 - Mini-grant opportunities for collaborative research support through C-HER
- Currently, over 60% of SOE students identify as BIPOC, almost 50% identify as first generation college and graduate students, and over 60% of SOE faculty and staff identify as BIPOC.
- In AY 2021, \$1.6 million of institutional aid was disbursed to SOE students; a 77% increase in institution aid from AY2018. Furthermore, there was a 51% increase in SOE students receiving institutional aid from AY2018.

Concluding

The SOE values the insights shared in the 2019 climate report as it strives to nurture a dynamic, vibrant and inclusive community conducive to instilling a sense of belonging and participation of all stakeholders. We are currently engaged in a data driven process of assessing learnings from the 2019-2022 Strategic Prioritizing Process to both determine new areas of need while also correlating the data to the needs and concerns raised by constituents in the university-wide climate survey as well as the SOE listening sessions which helped identify our priorities. SOE also recognizes that in order to have integrity in its mission of “advancing justice through education” the community itself must reflect the values of equity, justice, and joy. We feel our efforts in the last few years have helped propel us in the right direction and we strive to do better in years to come.