









Climate Case Study #12 - Addressing Faculty-Staff Misalignment

How to foster respect and inclusion in your unit when...

During a multi-day recruiting visit for a faculty candidate, you witness a faculty colleague turn to the staff member who developed the complex schedule which leadership had approved, and says, “Why is the schedule organized this way? It doesn’t make sense. Other people don’t make it so complicated.”

The Climate Case Studies are organized around RISE’s *Eight Levers to Shift Climate for Respect and Inclusion* framework. RISE uses the eight levers above to think about the ways in which more inclusive, respectful, and civil climates might be intentionally cultivated in the higher education workplace context.

LEVER	APPROACH	WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE
 ENVIRONMENT	Create physical ENVIRONMENTS that communicate respect and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review physical meeting spaces, e.g., who sits where in joint faculty/ staff meetings, etc. Try to balance them so hierarchical patterns aren’t replicated uncritically. Consider using shared physical space to publicly post thank-yous/kudos for faculty and staff alike In shared spaces, post a sign with U-M values
 EXPECTATIONS	Co-create EXPECTATIONS & norms to nurture respectful, inclusive engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up recurring processes and expectations for collaboration, timelines, feedback, and how concerns should be raised. During faculty meetings, reinforce that recruiting visits are a shared effort and that coordination between staff and faculty is essential.
 INTERACTIONS	Address the issue directly to foster future respectful INTERACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with the faculty member to discuss the impact of the comment, which affects the unit/department’s overall climate. Approach the staff to acknowledge their expertise and contributions, and to offer support.
 LANGUAGE	Demonstrate how LANGUAGE or tone can have an effect on climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin each (faculty or search committee) meeting with norm-setting language, e.g., “Remember our culture of respect.” Redirect with language that centers respect: “This schedule reflects a lot of coordination, and we appreciate your effort.” Say to the faculty: “Can you help me understand the issue?”
 MODELING	MODEL respect across roles and hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly thank the staff for organizing the successful visit: “I want to recognize the complexity of putting together this visit.” Repeat and validate expectations for all and demonstrate appreciation when concerns are constructively elevated.
 OPPORTUNITIES	Recognize this as an OPPORTUNITY to improve the process of hosting faculty visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the opportunity to remind faculty to provide timely responses to staff’s requests. Explore how technology enables easy coordination between staff and faculty. Use this scenario as a learning moment for future faculty visits and discuss tone and impact.
 ROUTINES & STRUCTURES	Create long-term ROUTINES & STRUCTURES that support equitable participation and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure faculty recruitment committee meetings such that staff leads participate in the meeting and their expertise is explained. Establish a standard operating procedure with detailed steps for communication between faculty and staff, and how concerns could be elevated when coordinating visits.
 TIME	Make TIME before and after to mitigate potential challenging dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ample time for staff to put together a visiting schedule in advance with the faculty involved in the visit, and provide specific timelines for feedback. After the visit, schedule time for staff and faculty to provide feedback, discuss areas for improvement and/or creation of a template for future visits, and identify structural barriers from other units involved.

Additional Resources:

- Young, K., Anderson, M., & Stewart, S. (2015). Hierarchical microaggressions in higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 8(1), 61–71.
- Lee, Ahlam. “Toward a Conceptual Model of Hierarchical Microaggression in Higher Education Settings: A Literature Review.” *Educational Review (Birmingham)*, vol. 74, no. 2, 2022, pp. 321–52
- Keashly, L. (2021). *Workplace Bullying, Mobbing and Harassment in Academe: Faculty Experience* (pp. 221–297). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

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