Portland State University
Campus Climate Topic Team Proposal
### Situational Analysis

**How well is PSU operating in the current environment?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Strengths</th>
<th>Internal Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Potential and room to grow as an institution</td>
<td>● Lack of funding</td>
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<td>● Engaged staff</td>
<td>● Culture of competition for scarce resources</td>
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<td>● Great faculty and adjuncts</td>
<td>● Poor internal communications</td>
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<td>● Location</td>
<td>● The <em>perceived</em> lack of transparency about decisions and issues that impact campus</td>
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<td>● Relationships with City and Community</td>
<td>● On Boarding of new faculty and staff does not fully prepare people to be full participants</td>
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<td>● Diversity</td>
<td>● Lack of campus traditions for students, staff and faculty (less PSU pride, positive attitudes)</td>
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<td>● Good at doing a lot with little resources</td>
<td>● Lack of physical space: unclean classrooms, nonfunctional technology, students studying/napping in cars</td>
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<td>● Accessibility (transportation)</td>
<td>● CPSO is not widely enough known as a community partner, that it is more than just an ‘emergency’ service.</td>
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**Key Points:**

- Need a faculty-based meeting spot (we used to have a faculty lounge/restaurant).
- Need time to heal and come together as a community after issues that arose last year.
- Need to clearly address less highlighted forms of sexual violence (intimate partner violence, date rape, closed door violence).
- Need to clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in our shared governance model.
- Inconsistent messaging from institutional leadership (messages regarding the importance of research).
- Town halls are not a successful way of drawing out faculty and continue to be used as though they are.
- Insufficient distinguished campus wide
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<tr>
<th>External Opportunities</th>
<th>External Threats</th>
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<td>● Portland and Oregon as a destination</td>
<td>● Campus resources for students and visitors when compared to our urban comparators other like institutions</td>
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<td>● Park blocks and Farmer’s market</td>
<td>● Perceived Safety concerns/ urban setting can be intimidating for folks from rural areas and others</td>
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<td>● Connections to vibrancy of Portland Metro area (internships, careers, art, etc.)</td>
<td>● Need for more focus on Family Friendly/ Work Life issues (child care, elder care, spousal relocation, etc)</td>
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<td>● Quarter system attractive to many students and also allows for co-enrollment at local community colleges</td>
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<td>● Capable resources for addressing classroom &amp; student challenges: Dean of Students, Disability Resources, WRC, SHAC &amp; many others</td>
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<td>● Office of Academic Innovation and continuing attempt to make assistance easily available, e.g., for on-line teaching.</td>
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<td>● Institution of social event--2nd Thursday, as a way of bringing faculty and other leadership together</td>
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<td>● Continuing efforts made by OAA to address campus issues: e.g., leadership development for chairs, attention to online course development</td>
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<td>● Long standing and reliable vehicle about campus matters--Currently, PSU magazine.</td>
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Initial Questions

What trends in higher education are having the most significant impact on this topic?

Overall, campus safety has been a large concern that impacted many of our conversations while creating initiatives. Nationwide, the need for student safety and education around sexual violence prevention has been critical to higher education institutions. The changing demographic of students and campuses has impacted the conversations this topic team has had in relation to campus climate. What does campus climate actually mean? How do we define it? Each institution who has defined this has had a slightly different definition, something that should be noted in the creation of these initiatives.

What are the most important considerations regarding this topic?

The most important considerations regarding this topic are the lack of information this group has felt throughout the creation of the initiatives regarding campus climate. Many conversations that have occurred within this topic team have been regarding if the group had enough voices around the table or input from all who interact with PSU to make decisions regarding campus climate since this influences and impacts every single one our students, staff, faculty, and campus partners. We believe this speaks to the diversity on PSU’s campus and how critical it is to capture the different perspectives and experiences of all constituents when making decisions regarding the direction we take at large. Specifically, when we are providing what the future of the campus climate should look and function as, we must remember that there is not one answer and the campus climate encompasses many avenues within the university. Ultimately, a few considerations regarding this topic:

- Communication: we believe it is important to utilize strong communication across departments and areas on campus to capture the various voices that make up campus climate
- Consistency: we believe it is important to have consistency across departments and areas on campus and that this may be one of the root influences on campus climate

Imperative

What major action must be accomplished over the planning horizon?

Over and over, this group has discussed the need for a large investment and support to produce and administer an annual campus climate survey or audit. This would allow us, as an institution, to collect the information that is salient in making decisions regarding what our next steps and direction should be in regards to campus climate.

Objectives

How will we measure success? What end state do we want to achieve or move toward?

As stated above, there is a strong need and desire for a campus climate survey to highlight and pinpoint what campus climate means to our institution and what we should focus on in years to
come. This taskforce would create, administer, and analyze a survey and should be the group that convenes to decide which imperatives and objectives we should focus on. Initially, focusing on communication, consistency, spirit and reputation, in addition to overall feel of the campus, should be outcomes in which they investigate, but ultimately, this group should learn from the survey findings to decide on milestones, goals, and where PSU should be focusing its energy in regards to campus climate.
Initiatives (see following pages)

What collective actions do we need to take that are transformative in nature?

Initiative #1
The creation of a recurring General Assembly where administrators, faculty (tenured, fixed-term, and adjunct), students (undergraduate, graduate, and PhD), and community members can come together to discuss issues prevalent within the University and find common solutions.

What are the resource implications?
A General Assembly will have space and time allocation requirements. In order for the assembly to be effective, it should occur on a monthly or bi-monthly basis with specific delegates to the assembly from the administration, faculty, and students. We also want to encourage as much participation as possible, so finding a consistent space that can accommodate the group would another resource that must be provided.

For the General Assembly to be functional and effective there must be a chair of the Assembly. We recommend that the assembly be co-chaired by a student delegate and faculty/administrative delegate.

Communication and advocacy will be a key for the success of the General Assembly, and shall therefore be handled by University Communications and promoted on the PSU website.

What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?
In order for the General Assembly to be effective, the University will need to consider the effectiveness of its communication methods, particularly online, to ensure knowledge and participation.

What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?
The creation of a General Assembly will allow current institutions, such as Faculty Senate and Student Senate, to be refocused on issues relevant to their assembly spaces. A re-structuring of those institutions may, therefore, be necessary to prevent repetitive work in the two spaces.

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?
The risks that the topic team foresees are a general lack of interest or perceived value in the assembly. However, we believe that if all parties from the institution fully commit to the General Assembly and it is well advertised, it will provide a coherent space for all University participants to come together and engage in cross-cutting issues and prevent spaces such as Faculty Senate and Student Senate from being co-opted.

Initiative #2
The University will conduct a comprehensive study of campus-wide communications to determine the most effective methods of engaging and informing all forms of students, administrators, and faculty members.

**What are the resource implications?**
The internal assessment will require a monetary investment from the University. The results of the study may also require a shifting of funding from current communication methods to more effective methods.

**What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?**
This initiative would work to the mission of all other topic teams by providing information on more effective communication practices. The study will give valuable insight for each topic team on how to best communicate with faculty, staff, students, and the global community.

**What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?**
As a result of the survey, the University may find certain communications solutions more effective than others. This would encourage a shifting of funding and practices to those which engage all groups, therefore stopping any practices that do not facilitate the findings of the survey.

**What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?**
There are virtually no risks in creating this initiative aside from the investment it will require to not only assessing communication systems, but then actually changing our practices to allow the University to better engage with the campus.
Initiative #3
The University will update the website to the most current version of Drupal, complete reformation of the website's format and font to be ADA-compliant, a redesign of the website to better serve current students and faculty, improvement of the intelligent search functions within the website, and reform the corresponding app to better serve the campus population.

What are the resource implications?
These reformations will require a monetary investment from the University. It will require, additionally, an assessment be performed on the site to ensure the current system is the most effective communication-systems possible. The reformation may also require the University to provide more training to faculty and staff on the usage of Drupal, an additional monetary expense.

What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?
This issue can be considered, in some ways, one of branding. In an increasingly online world, the easier our site is to access and search would serve only as an incredible gain for the University. This initiative will help the University improve global engagement by allowing us to better communicate our strengths.

What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?
In conjunction with these updates, the University should consider streamlining each college's site to be more reflective of best communication practices.

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?
As the site updates, it will require both training of relevant staff to operate the systems and potential downtime of the site itself. To mitigate the latter, we recommend these updates are performed over low-usage time periods such as early summer. The training aspect should be made a part of new staff/faculty onboarding while providing time and resources for current staff/faculty to become integrated into the new process.
Initiative #4:
The University will institute comprehensive training and communication systems for all employees in order to promote heightened understanding of campus policies and procedures, heretofore referred to as The Training and Communication Life Cycle. This new practice will focus on three key elements: onboarding of new staff and faculty, ongoing trainings for current staff and faculty with a concentrated emphasis on safety initiatives such as primary prevention of sexual assault, cultural competency, and de-escalation techniques, and promotion of opportunities for internal connections and network building.

What are the resource implications?
The University will invest in faculty and staff at all stages of employment from formalized onboarding procedures, continuous trainings for faculty and staff, and assist faculty and staff to make internal connections and facilitate network-building. This will require time and monetary commitments from the University, plus implementation coordination of these trainings. In addition, currently many departments are on-boarding in their own unique ways. This effort should include senior staff time and effort from each college to most effectively communicate this effort campus-wide.

In mitigating these costs, we recommend that the University take advantage of its assets by reaching out to experts in the University itself to provide trainings. For example, taking advantage of our faculty in Conflict Resolution, or the CARE team, to diminish risk within the classroom and encourage safety for both faculty and students.

What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?
This initiative touches both Faculty Roles and Structures and Student Learning and Academic Success in that this new process will not only give faculty the training they need to facilitate student success, but the new structure will give faculty opportunities for resume-growth, networking, and a better education of the University system from their first day on campus.

What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?
The implementation of this new system may potentially result in a more decentralized approach to our HR systems. A re-evaluation of those systems will allow us to better identify which are well functioning and can be integrated into the plan, and those which need improvement to meet the current plan.

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?
The only foreseeable risks are the difficulties of implementation and shifting from our current system to the new one. In order to make the transition as smooth as possible, we should gradually begin the cycle process. Starting with new staff onboarding and then progressing to training, the lifecycle can thereby be slowly integrated.
Initiative #5
The University will facilitate the establishment of a Campus Climate Task Force that will consist of students, staff, and faculty in equal proportion. The team will audit the campus climate, act as campus climate ambassadors, provide resource recommendations to the administration, and help to facilitate acts to improve the campus climate. The Task Force may also recommend the formation of additional sub-committees to focus on particular areas of campus.

What are the resource implications?
Time will be a necessary resource, both from faculty and administration. In addition active engagement of students and recruitment on the side of the University Communications and space accommodations for the group to meet and work would be a necessity.

What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?
There are few interdependencies because this initiative is truly representative of this specific topic team's mission to assess campus climate on a structural and institutional level. To do this we would create a body that can continuously examine campus climate and provide service in developing resolutions to issues of campus climate.

What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?
The creation of this task force does not necessarily require the stoppage of any other program but, rather, addresses a gap we see within the University system.

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?
One of the major risks is recruitment and engagement of students in this process. To mitigate this issue, the topic team recommends utilizing programs such as student government, the current ambassador program through DOSL, and even potentially creating a capstone program that can get students further engaged and facilitate service-based learning within the institution itself.
Initiative #6
PSU will fully commit to its motto Let Knowledge Serve the City by better integrating the city within University practices. This integration will include greater expansion of internship-based capstones within the metropolitan area, further promotion and investment in well-functioning internal programs such as New Leadership Oregon, and additional investment in civic partnerships with city organizations such as the Portland Art Museum and the Northwest Film Center.

What are the resource implications?
This initiative will require the creation of internship-based capstones and more opportunities for service learning. There is a monetary component for both program creation and crafting the partnership with city entities.

What are the interdependencies with other topic teams?
If PSU invests in the future of its students through further engaging with the city, that investment will end up being a boon for our global image. We can make PSU the University where you leave with practical experience and are ready to enter the workforce.

What are the trade-offs? What should we stop doing?
As to not overwhelm instructors and administrators, and students for that matter, the University should remove capstone options that have low-enrollment or low-positive reviews in order to make adequate staff and support available to support the program.

What are the major risks to implementing these initiatives, and what mitigating factors have been identified?
A great deal of organization is required in order to best craft and implement an expanded program of internships. Making sure there is adequate communication between the internship and the student may require the creation of new staff positions, such as an internship coordinator, to ameliorate issues as they arise.