

DEI Council Listening Post Summary

College of Engineering

The DEI Council held fifteen DEI Listening Posts (LPs) geared to several different groups during the Spring 2019 semester. A total of **107** people attended with group sizes ranging from 2 to 22 and participation rates ranging from 1 to 53% of the total CoE population in that group. One leader was responsible for facilitating the conversation and a second leader was responsible for taking notes. The council reviewed the notes and met to identify themes. Six cross-cutting themes appeared in multiple LPs spanning faculty, staff, and students and the DEI council identified these themes as the most critical issues we need to address in moving forward to create a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment in the College of Engineering.

- We need a more **diverse faculty and staff** population that is more closely aligned with our student population, particularly with regard to gender and underrepresented minority status.
- We need to **improve communication** throughout the college regarding policies, resources, and changes.
- The administration, faculty, and staff need to “**buy-in**” to how important it is to create and foster a diverse, equitable, inclusive environment and to make that commitment more **visible** (e.g., through seminars and physical spaces).
- Community building and a sense of belonging are critical to creating an inclusive environment and we need to do more to **foster and support different communities** throughout the college.
- We all (faculty, staff, students) need more **training** on what DEI means and how to support an inclusive environment in our college and classrooms.
- It is unclear **who to go to** if you have concerns, need help, or observe inappropriate behavior.

In addition to the cross-cutting themes identified above, each community offered additional, valuable insights. We have included a few highlights below, but we encourage you to read the first-hand comments included in the appendix as a clearer, more comprehensive picture of the concerns, as well as the positive comments, can be gained from those.

Several **students** commented that the college is welcoming and that faculty and staff are supportive. Minority students, as well as transfer students, however, reported feeling isolated (both undergraduate and graduate). Students want existing student organizations to be more visible and it needs to be clearer what their roles and target members are (i.e., undergraduates/graduates, department specific or not). Students would like more exposure and interaction with the college faculty and administration. Faculty advising was identified as being of highly variable quality and that bad advising could have a big influence on a student’s success (again at both undergraduate and graduate level). Students want to feel like they are succeeding and not being set up to fail (e.g., extreme curving on exams).

Staff identified the lack of communication about changes in personnel or other decisions in the college as one of their biggest concerns. Another significant concern raised by staff is that they do not feel respected or valued. Comments also suggest that some staff feel that age, gender, and level of education play a role in how they are treated. Staff commented that faculty have little idea or appreciation for what they do.

Faculty felt that the college lacked commitment to DEI and a stronger vision needed to be articulated. Faculty, similar to staff, identified communication and felt that there was a trend of decisions

being made behind closed doors. The new faculty teaching reduction for addition of a minor child policy was mentioned and appreciated. Committee assignments were raised and faculty felt that female and underrepresented minority faculty were taking on more and that we should look at that more closely. Faculty articulated that they wanted more training on how to talk about DEI and how to create a classroom environment that is more inclusive.

Table 1. Attendance, participation, and leaders for CoE DEI listening posts (LP) held in Spring 2019.

Date	Listening Post Group	# Attendees	# in college	% participation
4/4/19	Asst Professors – Tenure Track	10	19	53%
4/26/19	Female Staff	23	62	37%
3/13/19	Instructional Track Faculty – all ranks	5	15	33%
3/5/19	Female Faculty	5	16	31%
3/13/19	URM Grad Students	7	26	27%
4/2/19	URM – Faculty and Staff	3	32	9%
4/25/19	Open Faculty	9	110	8%
5/1/19	Open Staff	10	172	6%
2/27/19	URM Undergrad Students	11	262	4%
2/18/19	Female Grad Students	3	83	4%
4/29/19	Int. Grad and Undergrad Students	4	266	2%
4/22/19	Open Grad	4	269	1%
3/27/19	Female Undergrad Students	6	591	1%
4/18/19	Open Undergrad	2	2176	0%
3/7/19	LGBTQ – Fac, staff, students	5		