

The Open Forums (September 11 and 12, 2018) Our Key Take Away Messages, Themes, Ideas, Etc...

1. Campus police investigations: I don't know their capabilities, training or jurisdictional mandates but it is clear from the speakers we heard from they do not engender confidence. I suggest all claims of sexual misconduct be directed to New Britain Police Department. This would provide a level of impartiality that appears to be missing. It also provides for a sentinel effect that tells offenders your actions are going to be reviewed by those who have authority to prosecute.
 2. Training for sexual misconduct appears more notional than mandatory. I would like to know more about who is required to attend, how often is training updated. I would also like to know if those accused of past misconduct took the training.
 3. Clearly (at least to me) there is a distinct stratification of audiences we have heard from. Much more unrest/energy from faculty and staffers than students (other than victims). This speaks to culture; budget restraints; department leadership and lack of it. Not sure if CCSU has a skip level meeting process where employees meet with their bosses' bosses on a regular basis. While tricky to pull off properly, under the right circumstances it helps to provide for a culture of openness and opportunity to air department grievances. For example Dr. Toro could meet with employees who report to department heads. Alternatively she, or department heads could meet with the largest contingent of employees in their purview possible, to discuss current events, University initiatives, address items that result in adverse publicity.
 4. Create weekend access (not on call) to counselors. I know this speaks to budget issues, but allocating staff on a rotating schedule could be a remedy. I suspect CBA's (union contracts) would have some impact on these decisions,
 5. Union contract protection for members. True or myth? I heard both sides of this argument from speakers the last two days.
 6. I would like to hear CCSU's rebuttal/defense from allegations of victim who spoke on both days. What am I missing?
 7. I am beginning to think taking on culture changes, other than sexual misconduct may be too much for our task force to take on effectively.
1. A lot of concern about bullying being added to our charge, including the thought that the topic is too large to research with other areas, and it was recommended to be a stand alone topic.
 2. Bullying was still indicated as a significant problem worthy of investigating.

3. There is an overall feeling of distrust among some campus members, especially with the administration, and due to lack of previous case management and response.
 4. It was indicated that some of all these incidents (sexual misconduct and bullying) have been going on for so long, some of the population have lost faith that there can be real change, even from our group.
 5. A student suggested we consider focusing on men's needs and education related to these topics,
 6. It was indicated that the timeframe for sexual misconduct case action and follow up is/and has been too long.
 7. Some personal testimonies indicated that victims were not responded to, or validated in the past, and in some cases, known perpetrators were not exited from the University.
1. There IS a need to include bullying (what is it? What policies do we have, if any? What are best practices for addressing the toxic culture that seems to be pervasive at CCSU?)
 2. We need an open forum for students or focus groups with students (or student groups) to gather info specific to them
 3. Students need counselor services over the weekend (how are the reporting procedures different over the weekend to account for the fact that some offices are closed?)
 4. How do the union contracts effect the process (alignment vs conflicts)
 5. What happens next? after our report? How do I trust that my colleagues will believe our work because changes are evident?
1. Consistent procedures
 2. Consistent policies
 3. Complete follow through
 4. Single point of entry for accusations
 5. Improved education - defining bullying, harassment, assault, etc.
 6. Improved documentation

7. Improved communication between offices, victims, and those accused - specifically, what the timeframe and process is
 8. Improved education regarding what CCSU employees (students view all employees as representatives of CCSU) can/cannot say, this should lead to less misinformation being given to victims (for example, we can't say that someone will be fired over this).
1. CCSU Wellness and Counseling Need to grow because there is a strong demand for that resource not just in regards to Sexual Misconduct Care but general mental health as students.
 2. SALD, the Office for Diversity and Equity, and SGA need to come together to jumpstart last year's initiative to provide campus resources on all bathroom stalls on campus. We've began discussion to get this back up.
 3. Victims/ reporters should receive care because these assaults and acts of harassment are extremely pervasive and negatively effect student's ability to do really anything.
 4. Investigations should not be taking as long as they are. Also in cases where there is an investigating party being investigated- the party being investigated should not be doing the investigation because that is an extreme bias.
 5. In regards to that students with leadership positions or titles where they represent this institution, should not be treated with a skewed mentality of "that's not who they are" .
 6. Power imbalances are a big factor in this problem, whether it be gender based, race based, sexuality based, or whatever form it may take.
 7. Through the investigation process we need to acknowledge the people who hold these positions and whether or not they are capable of having this power. Students have come forward saying that the investigation proved to have evidence that stands with the testimony of the victim and the report says that it hasn't broke conduct, when in fact, it has.
 8. I agree that there should be a student to student response. We have to find a way to reach commuters too.
 9. I also believe that faculty should have the opportunity to come forward and discuss the problematic behavior so that we can find ways to target that.
 10. I'm not sure if cultural facilities on campus need to create their own resources but they should definitely be trained on the reporting process and be more able to handle this type of discussion. There is a lot of cross recommending to victim advocacy with no short term discussion on how to transfer a student over to them.

1. We are not going to be able to do everything everyone would like of this task force, but we can make a dent. A big dent--I feel confident in that
2. We are going to need to figure out how best to fill the gap between what is stated policy/procedure and what is actually done/followed. How to measure and quantify that gap is going to be difficult work, particularly in a climate where so much lack of trust exists.
3. We cannot just interview department and organizational heads. Those are individuals with power--we need to collect information from people who are not in power. We are doing that a bit w/these forums (tho many leaders spoke as well). The survey and anonymous forums are also important means of defining and quantifying the experiences and concerns of those w/less or little power on campus.
4. I'm not exactly sure how we might best organize and assess the information that was shared at both forums and is likely to appear in the campus culture anonymous forum, but we are going to have to figure that out.
5. We may need to re-examine our survey--are there some questions we ought to add in the wake of what we all learned from participants in these forums?

We have our work cut out for us, but we have known that all along. These forums exhausted me but I was not surprised by anything

1. We need to follow up with the individuals who left us contact information from the Open Forums (The information is now housed in the vault.). These folks will tell us stories that I think we should include in our opening to our report to set the context as to why we are in existence. We will not put names there, but we can outline that we were told about this happening and that happening. I think it will be a powerful way to open our report.
2. This campus is expecting much from us, and we need to not pull any punches in our report about some of the things we discussed with Dr. Toro today (i.e. trust issues, a non-caring perception to greet victims, cover ups, lack of communication among agencies and to victims, etc.).
3. Again, I think a good first step recommendation will be to have a representative group on campus lead a campus-wide effort to arrive at a statement of who we are, what we believe in, and where we wish to go from here.
4. I agree with you that there are some easy and quick recommendations we can make, such as opening up more counseling slots by hiring more of them and having appointments outside of normal business hours, putting definitions of bullying, mobbing, sexual misconduct, etc. on the campus climate page in plain English, etc.

5. I am not afraid. I do not care so much about my status here that I will hold back saying things that need to be said. I get the impression that many on this task force feel similarly. I was so fired up after each of those open forums, I cannot even tell you.

1. Seek ways to make the information gathering more inclusive of student voices (including the male student and faculty perspective).
2. Greater emphasis on campus faculty and administrator” bullying.
3. Seek to understand how safe students and faculty feel accessing key departments when they have concerns (e.g., Human Resources, Diversity & Equity, Ombudsperson, Victims Advocate, etc.). If safety is a factor, individuals will not access these departments.
4. Seek to better understand the “mobbing culture” and the “rumor-mill”.
5. Address policy enforcement practices and effectiveness. Is there consistency in following policy protocol?

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1. The overwhelming lack of trust within the university
2. Need to revisit the Blue Ribbon Report that was commissioned 10 years ago
3. More student engagement is needed and we need to make sure everyone feels included and heard
4. Procedures and policies need to be tightened up and consistent across the board
5. Large concerns about retaliation and on-going bullying

1. Trust is a massive issue on this campus and throughout our community.. Not something we can necessarily earn back tomorrow but it needs to be a team effort to fix over the next few years.
2. I didn't realize how much our faculty genuinely felt for victims. Not to say that they didn't but it's a much different view as a student to being on the task force so it does give me hope that students can find support within the faculty.
3. I've heard many people now talk about the coldness they feel from Pres. Toro on the issue of sexual misconduct on campus; that she sounds dismissive. This is something that needs to be addressed in one way or another. In Jeremy and my findings, how the leadership reacts to an issue sets precedent for the attitude around the issue in the community (campus climate).
4. Not something that was said but something I noticed, more than a few people in the Mid-campus meeting got agitated when you (Richard) mentioned no accusations during the open forum and a couple of them took a card. It worries me about just how many complaints there have been/there will be coming down the pike. I'm glad victims are coming forward but for how long have they been brushed under the rug?
5. Communication between departments is terrible and the transparency is seriously lacking about the investigation process and outcome of many reported incidents between victim/accused as well as the admin and the public. CCSU students and staff deserve to feel safe and I feel as though the students and staff deserve to know what's going on in order to feel safe, especially now that it's well known how poor the communication is.
6. (BONUS) Students don't feel comfortable talking to adults about issues, especially regarding sexual misconduct and bullying; those who do are students who tend to be involved. I think we need to run a focus group, just Kristina and I, and talk to day to day students and collect their views and insight on how campus has been handling issues regarding our task force and what they would like to see change.