

Alanna Kaiser

Emerging Leaders Endowment Project

Final Report

Spring 2017

**Dean Mentor:** Dr. Patreese Ingram, Assistant Dean for Multicultural Affairs

**Project Title:** Diversity and Inclusion Assessment for the College of Agricultural Sciences

**Project Overview**

The purpose of this project was to assess the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences at the Penn State University Park campus. To meet this objective, an online survey and focus groups were conducted. Both the survey and the focus groups sought to collect undergraduate and graduate student experiences and perspectives on diversity and inclusion issues in College of Agricultural Sciences classrooms, events, lab spaces, and meetings. Ultimately, the survey yielded a general picture of the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College, as it is perceived by students and their lived experiences. The focus groups solidified many of the survey findings, and served as spaces for productive discussion about areas where the College excels in promoting a respectful and inclusive environment, and as well as opportunities for improvement in promoting a more inclusive atmosphere for all students, faculty, and staff. Combined, the survey and focus group data serve to inform recommendations for the College as to how they should seek to move forward in addressing diversity and inclusion. Both the results of each data collection method, as well as the subsequent recommendations and final conclusions will be discussed herein.

**Survey**

The survey component of the diversity and inclusion assessment took place over a 3-week time period in March 2017. The anonymous, online survey was advertised by the Undergraduate Office, the Office of Research and Graduate Education, AgSci Student News, Penn State Class Facebook pages, and individual emails to every student organization president in the College of Agricultural Sciences. The survey was comprised of demographic, Likert Scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. Significant findings from each section are presented below.

*Demographics*

329 students participated in the College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion online, anonymous survey. 82% of respondents were undergraduate students and 18% were graduate students (Figure 1). 72% of respondents identified as female, 27% identified as male, and 1% identified as non-binary or “other.” The average age of respondents was 21 years old, though the maximum age of respondents was 41 years old. A breakdown of respondents by academic department is presented in Figure 2.

Roughly 25% of the respondents to the survey were non-white (identifying as African American, Caribbean/West Indian, Native American, Asian, Asian Indian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Other) and the majority (~60%) practice Christianity. 10% of survey respondents identify as members of the LGBTQ community. 15% are adult learners (over the age of 24 years old). 10% of respondents have either a physical, learning, or other type of disability.

*Diversity and Inclusion Responses*

Throughout analysis of the survey and focus group data, race and gender emerged as the two most commonly discussed identity factors related to diversity and inclusion. For this reason, survey data were cross-tabulated to compare the experiences of white vs. non-white and female vs. male students. Average values were also computed to provide a basis for comparison.

First, students were asked to describe their comfort levels on campus as a whole and then in College of Agricultural Science events, classrooms and events in particular. These results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. In general, non-white students reported feeling less comfortable than their white counterparts in College settings. Gendered division of comfort levels were less clear, as on average, female students reported feeling “comfortable” more often than males, though males felt “very comfortable” significantly more frequently than females in this survey. On average, the comfort levels that students feel in College settings are roughly comparable to how they feel on campus in general, though 4.6% more students reported feeling “very comfortable” in the College of Agricultural Sciences atmosphere than on campus as a whole.

The next section of questions dealt with student experiences facing exclusionary, intimidating, or offensive behavior or treatment. The results of these questions have been compiled, disaggregated along gender and racial binaries, and then presented in Table 3. It is worth noting that females and non-white students were confirmed to more frequently personally experience offensive behavior, and non-white students more frequently personally experience intimidating treatment. Conversely, white students and males more frequently reported personally experiencing instances of exclusionary treatment. The sources of these negative behaviors and treatment are identified in Figures 3, 4, and 5. In all cases, people experienced and witnessed negative behaviors and treatments at the hands of classmates more than any other perpetrators. The causes for these experiences are presented in Table 4. Political affiliation was cited as the most common cause of negative treatments and behaviors, followed by race and then gender. When race and ethnicity are considered concurrently or combined, the combination emerges as the most common cause of negative behavior or treatment.

Finally, survey respondents were asked to rate whether or not they agreed that the College of Agricultural Sciences is welcoming for people of different backgrounds, identities, races, religions, etc. Notable results from this section include the perception that the College is not welcoming for students of all political views, with students also identifying race/ ethnicity as an identity factor that they do not necessarily agree is always welcomed in the College of Ag. The climate for religious diversity seemed relatively inclusive across the board, though it is worth noting that the only religion to have over 1% of respondents report a disrespectful climate for was Islam. Similarly, LGBTQ identities were also identified as those that may experience a disrespectful environment in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

Overall, the majority of students found the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences to be “very accepting” and at least comparable to the University as a whole (see Figures 6 and 7).

*Survey Comments*

The final two questions on the Diversity and Inclusion survey were open-ended to provide opportunities for survey respondents to express their thoughts, perceptions, or experiences related to diversity and inclusion that did not get covered in the rest of the survey. There were over 174 comments left between the two questions, indicating that survey participants felt strongly enough about some aspect of diversity and inclusion to take the time to leave a comment. Most of the comments reinforced the data that was collected in the rest of the survey, and a few of them even echoed focus group sentiments and recommendations. A sample of the most representative or notable comments is provided below:

|  |
| --- |
| **Sample Open-Ended Comments** |
| **Positive** |
| “I would like to say that I am very proud to be a part of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State. I have never felt more welcome and a part of a family than I have in my time, here. I think that there may be issues in other parts of the University with inclusion because of protests that I have seen and clubs that are growing; however, I have seen nothing but kindness and support for students in the College of Agricultural Sciences.” |
| “I think the College of Ag Sciences is one of the friendliest colleges on campus. Because agriculture is so global, it's important to be inclusive and open to all cultures. The college of Ag does well with welcoming diverse groups, as well as encouraging students in the college to go out and gain experiences through opportunities like study abroad and embedded courses. I think it's great for students to have such positive support through the College of Ag to have an international experience. International experiences change students' perspectives on diversity and inclusion when they return to campus.” |
| **Negative** |
| “It's just overwhelming for minorities, especially African Americans in classes and labs. Most of the students there are Caucasian and they only like to interact with other Caucasians. It's uncomfortable knowing that you are either the only Black person there or you are one out of 2 in total. I know in my science classes, the African American Students tend to try to sit next to one another or by themselves because there are way more Caucasian students who are friends and what not. Even in one of my Animal Science Classes, I noticed that every guest speaker we had was Caucasian and I know it may be wrong to say this but it just made me feel as if I didn't have a chance in getting into any one of those fields because I was African American. I know it wasn't their fault but only seeing Caucasian guest speakers made me feel as though the agricultural world isn't looking for other minorities. Sorry to say that but that's just how I feel in general. Again, it's not their fault that there isn't a lot of minorities interested in Agriculture but when the students you are surrounded by have way more experience in this field than you because of their family and background, it kind of makes you seem as though you'll never fit in or if you don't belong in that field at all.” |
| “Unfortunately I feel that there sometimes a stigma of Ag students and at times some students try to live up to or take pride in the stigma. I believe that traditionally the main demographic of an Ag student is a white, conservative, Christian who resides in a small town and to a degree can be perceived as racist or close-minded. Again this is just an observation and the majority of the students who I have met in my 5 years have been great. I just believe that it wouldn't hurt to debunk the idea of Ag students being ignorant to other cultures. Agriculture impacts every person on this planet no matter race, age, sexuality etc. and the College should brings this matter to light.” |
| “It is obvious that most agriculture majors are dominated by white males. There are also a lot of conservative views openly expressed by professors and classmates. They can sometimes come across as quite aggressive in their passionate conversations. There are also some professors and classmates who make derogatory comments towards women (even some senior male professors) and minority groups. I feel some joke about the LGBT community without realizing some students in their class identify with that community. I have also felt pressure from professors and classmates about diet choices (veganism/vegetarianism) and political views. I know it is all in good humor, but it can really weigh on students within the class who may feel insecure about their identities.” |
| **Suggestions for Improvement** |
| “Training for faculty and TAs, especially on how to handle diverse students (queer and transgender students, students with learning differences, international students, etc.). There is not real animosity, but none of us receive any training on how to be truly inclusive, and I think that makes us different that many other colleges, especially since those in other colleges may already have more inclusive backgrounds. It would be great if there was more outreach to minority groups, especially racial and ethnic minorities who did not grow up on farms, to really demonstrate that agriculture has many faces!” |
| “They could promote more straight talks and women/race/religion inclusion events. I think the new Cultivating Change Club has a lot of potential to increase inclusivity of LGBT students. I know I really appreciate the safe zone poster hanging in advisor offices. I think the college has a fairly accepting climate overall, but some students and professors who have grown up in predominantly white and conservative communities could use some reminding that our campus is very diverse. I feel many students in the College of Ag have the 'special snowflake' or bleeding heart mentality when it comes to offending minorities, not realizing some of the challenges these groups face. We are all up against our own set of challenges, so let's help others get through their own.” |
| “Host more events that can bring issues to light, work with faculty to make these issues accessible to classroom conversation (Why don't we discuss race/immigration in our classes? These issues are directly related to discussions on agricultural labor, community development, environmental justice, etc.). I think that if these topics were discussed in classes, students would be interested, and it would strengthen the merit of our programs and likely be more appealing to a wider audience of "non-traditional" agriculture students.” |

**Focus Groups**

*Description and Demographics*

Two focus groups with five participants in each were conducted to expand upon the findings of the Diversity and Inclusion Survey, as well as to delve deeper into the topic of diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences through guided conversation and facilitated dialogue. Though the groups were small, participants were enthusiastic about the topics, and provided insights spanning diverse races, ethnicities, and gender identities. Further, the groups included undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of departments, as well as two international students currently studying in the College of Agricultural Sciences. It is important to note, however, that though the small group of students was relatively diverse, they are not necessarily representative of the College as a whole. Students elected to participate in the focus group discussions, and these selection biases resulted in focus group participants that are attune and invested in the topic and have been personally impacted by issues related to diversity and inclusion in the College. Focus group discussions were guided by the questions provided in Appendix B, though conversations tended to evolve organically and often concentrated on specific topics to be mentioned below.

*Focus Group Data Summary*

The following items were major points of discussion throughout the focus group sessions. Though Focus Group #1 dealt primarily with topics related to the undergraduate experience and Focus Group #2 dealt primarily with the graduate student experience, both groups touched on similar broad topics relevant to the College as a whole.

*Valuing Diversity in Higher Education*

Students discussed how and why they value diversity in a College and University setting. A few students cited diversity at Penn State as one of the reasons that they chose to come to this University, and stated that they think of a university setting as one in which there are ample opportunities to be exposed to backgrounds and experiences different than their own, and in fact, providing exposure to these different backgrounds and experiences should be one of the main functions of higher education. Diversity in a college setting provides students with chances to expand their worldview through conversation, and often can contribute to nuanced ideas and innovation that result from including people of different backgrounds in conversations and group projects. Further, students suggested that engaging with diverse perspectives also leads to a development of self and a space to identify and define their own values and beliefs. Students stated that though engaging with values, beliefs, and backgrounds different than their own may be difficult, it is a necessary part of the process of higher education.

Specifically related to agriculture, students concluded that since agriculture is such a wide-ranging field that is applicable and relevant to every person in some way, it is necessary to demonstrate why the College of Agricultural Sciences values diversity and how that diversity promotes greater opportunities for success in a global agricultural system built to serve diverse, global populations.

*Positive experiences with faculty and diversity of experiences in the classroom*

Across the board, students identified faculty as a major asset in promoting diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Specifically, students cited the diverse academic and research backgrounds of faculty members as things that have made them more aware of the broad scope of agriculture in a global context. Similarly, students shared multiple positive interpersonal experiences with professors in which they had productive conversations or sought support for issues related to diversity and inclusion. Minority students (particularly Latino and female students) shared that in many cases, faculty act as role models and have left them feeling empowered, particularly when faculty recognize and/or are able to relate to the challenges of being a minority in agriculture.

*Stereotypes prohibiting Inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences*

Stereotypes were identified as a major barrier to inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences and in agriculture in general. Students pointed out that agriculture is traditionally regarded as an “old boys club,” in which the image of agriculture is associated with older, Caucasian men. Focus group participants shared that, at times, this stereotype can be marginalizing for ethnic, racial, and gender minorities, and may even hinder their ability to succeed academically, professionally, or socially within the college. Students posited that these stereotypes are perpetuated in classroom settings by a few things, including: micro-aggressions, a lack of diversity in leadership in the college, and a lack of intentional conversation about diversity in agriculture.

Regarding the lack of diverse representation in leadership positions, students perceived a lack of people of color within the administrative offices and a lack of female educators amongst extension staff, and said that these things may contribute to the image of Ag as a primarily white, male area of study.

When asked how they would address breaking down stereotypes in the College, students suggested that there should be more efforts to promote intentional conversations about diversity in the College. A few formats for this conversation were suggested, including: a seminar series exploring diversity in agriculture (including topics like global agriculture, women in agriculture, and what it means to be a minority in agriculture), an annual event celebrating the diversity that the college does have that is marketed toward all students in the College (not just students in diversity organizations), a requirement to attend a World in Conversation event, and wide-reaching efforts to introduce diversity as something that the college values early in the student experience (possibly in the freshman seminar, AG150S or as part of graduate student orientation).

*Challenges for Inclusion*

As one student astutely pointed out, diversity does not necessarily equate to inclusion, and though the College promotes and values diversity, students concluded that there are improvements that can be made to translate valuing diversity to practicing inclusion. Students expressed that cliques often occur naturally along racial, ethnic, or political identity lines, and in order to cross these lines and promote more inclusion and integration amongst students within the college, there need to be more conversations that engage students that aren’t normally inclined to be involved with the topic of diversity. On the other hand, focus group participants also cautioned against tokenizing minorities in an effort to talk about or promote diversity on the College level. Students did note that the fact that the College of Agricultural Sciences is taking on diversity as a topic to research and improve upon is hugely important to them, and many were grateful that the focus group that they participated in got the conversation started.

**Discussion and Recommendations**

Before discussing the implications of this research and areas for future inquiry, it is important to point out the limitations of this assessment. Obviously, a distillation of race and gender into the binaries used for analysis in this study is an oversimplification of complex and multidimensional elements of identity. These characteristics were broken down in this way based largely on the limited data set that was collected, and in an effort to provide a foundational view of broad diversity issues in the College. Moving forward, it will be important to delve deeper into each of these groupings in order to understand intersectional student experiences and experiences of those who do not fit into these oversimplified, binary categories.

Further, as previously mentioned, this data (particularly the focus group participants) set is not necessarily representative of the College of Agricultural Sciences as a whole. Future work must be done to bring people into the conversation that aren’t traditionally inclined to talk about diversity, or that haven’t experienced, and thus don’t recognize, the issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences. Additionally, efforts should be made to explore faculty and staff experiences related to diversity and inclusion in the College in order to gain a more comprehensive view of the College climate.

With that being said, the information gleaned from this assessment has been hugely successful in laying the foundation with which the College can move forward on issues of diversity and inclusion. To that end, the data from the survey and focus groups conducted in this study lends itself to recommendations about what the next steps forward should be, and suggestions for programs and initiatives that the College could consider as ways to promote an even more respectful and inclusive climate for diverse students, faculty, and staff. These recommendations are presented below, and seek to address diversity and inclusion from three different angles: the undergraduate experience, the graduate experience, and the College of Agricultural Sciences as a whole.

*The Undergraduate Experience*

* Diversity may be addressed early in students’ careers by integrating it more intentionally and explicitly into the freshman seminar curriculum (AG150S). A short lesson or discussion about the stereotypes that permeate agriculture, why and how those stereotypes are harmful, and ways that they can be broken down would be hugely beneficial to get freshmen in the College of Agricultural Sciences at University Park to begin considering diversity and inclusion at the College level early in their careers.
* Students should be provided with information and resources that outline how to navigate issues of diversity and inclusion in the College early on in their Penn State Careers, potentially at New Student Orientation or during the freshman seminar. Specific information about diversity-focused organizations within the College and information about contacts within the Office of Multicultural Affairs may be beneficial for diverse students struggling or trying to navigate in their first few semesters.

*The Graduate Experience*

* In order to expose graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences to topics of diversity and inclusion on a broad scale, it would be beneficial for the College to offer an annual seminar on diversity that graduate students are required to attend. By instituting a diversity and inclusion seminar as a required component of academic exposure, graduate students may be brought together in a classroom setting to begin discussing these topics.

*The College of Agricultural Sciences as a Whole*

* The College of Agricultural Sciences should continue to support student organizations within the College that deal specifically with issues of diversity and elements of identity, including (but not limited to) groups like MANRRS and the newly founded LGBTQ organization, Students for Cultivating Change. In order to increase diversity in leadership among student organizations that represent the College of Agricultural Sciences, it is important to be intentional about including diversity groups in the advertisement pools for open positions in organizations like Ag Advocates or Ag Student Council, as well as opportunities for professional or leadership development.
* The College of Agricultural Sciences should be explicit about how and why they value diversity and inclusion, and potentially launch a campaign similar to All In, but at the College level, that provides a platform on which events, intentional conversations, and future inquiry into the issues of diversity and inclusion can be held.
* The College should continue to showcase student and faculty success in their social media and online presence in order to provide visibility to the diverse academic disciplines and lived experiences that the College has to offer.

**Conclusion**

The College of Agricultural Sciences is home to diverse populations of students, faculty, and staff with experiences, identities, and backgrounds that span academic disciplines, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, political affiliations, and socioeconomic statuses. The data collected in this assessment provides a cursory image of the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College, and seeks to inform recommendations of how to move forward to address issues of diversity and inclusion in the future. The College of Agricultural Sciences is encouraged to use this project and the momentum gained by the survey and focus groups to continue cultivating a welcoming and respectful environment for all students, faculty, and staff.

**Appendix A: Figures and Tables**

Figure 1: Respondent demographic breakdown by semester standing for the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Figure 2: Respondent breakdown by academic department for the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Table 1: Comfort levels of students on Penn State campus in general, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall, how comfortable are you with the campus climate at PSU?** | | | | | |
|  | White | Non-White | Female | Male | Average |
| Very Uncomfortable | 3.1% | 1.5% | 2.7% | 3.7% | 2.9% |
| Uncomfortable | 5.5% | 12.3% | 6.3% | 7.3% | 6.5% |
| Neutral | 14.9% | 30.8% | 19.7% | 15.9% | 18.5% |
| Comfortable | 46.3% | 38.5% | 46.6% | 37.8% | 44.7% |
| Very Comfortable | 30.2% | 16.9% | 24.7% | 34.1% | 27.5% |

Table 2: Comfort levels of students in College of Agricultural Sciences settings, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall, how comfortable are you with the climate in your College of Agricultural Sciences classes and events?** | | | | | |
|  | White | Non-White | Female | Male | Average |
| Very Uncomfortable | 3.1% | 7.7% | 4.0% | 3.7% | 3.9% |
| Uncomfortable | 3.5% | 10.8% | 5.4% | 4.9% | 5.2% |
| Neutral | 15.4% | 24.6% | 17.6% | 15.9% | 17.9% |
| Comfortable | 42.9% | 38.5% | 46.0% | 29.3% | 40.9% |
| Very Comfortable | 35.0% | 18.4% | 27.0% | 46.3% | 32.1% |

Table 3: Student experiences with exclusionary, offensive, and intimidating treatments and behaviors, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Proportion of Respondents that have Personally Experienced Negative Treatment or Behaviors in the Past Year** | | | | | |
|  | White | Non-White | Female | Male | Average |
| Exclusionary Treatment | 12.3% | 9.4% | 10.9% | 13.6% | 11.4% |
| Offensive Behavior | 22.9% | 31.7% | 28.1% | 15.0% | 24.9% |
| Intimidating Treatment | 3.6% | 9.5% | 5.0% | 5.0% | 4.98% |
| **Proportion of Respondents that have witnessed someone else experiencing negative treatment or behaviors** | | | | | |
| Exclusionary Treatment | 22.1% | 19.4% | 21.8% | 22.5% | 22.0% |
| Offensive Behavior | 21.6% | 27.4% | 23.8% | 19.2% | 22.64% |
| Intimidating Treatment | 11.0% | 8.0% | 10.8% | 11.4% | 10.81% |

Figure 3: Sources of exclusionary treatment, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Figure 4: Sources of offensive behavior, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Figure 5: Sources of intimidating treatment, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Table 4: Perceived reasons for exclusionary, offensive, and intimidating treatment experienced and witnessed in the College of Agricultural Sciences, as reported by respondents to the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assumed Reasoning Behind Negative Treatments and Behaviors** | |
| Physical disability | 0.7% |
| Learning disability | 0.7% |
| Age | 2.1% |
| Ethnicity | 7.0% |
| Gender | 7.2% |
| Language | 1.8% |
| Physical Characteristics (appearance, body size, etc.) | 5.1% |
| Political Views | 10.2% |
| Race | 8.4% |
| Religion | 2.1% |
| Sexual Orientation | 3.5% |
| Socioeconomic status | 2.5% |
| Psychological condition (e.g. depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, etc.) | 3.2% |
| Not applicable: I did not experience any negative behaviors or treatment | 65.4% |

Figure 6: Student ratings of the overall climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Figure 7: Students perceptions of the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences as compared to the University Park campus as a whole, as reported in the 2017 College of Agricultural Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Survey

**Appendix B: Survey and Focus Group Questions**

**Survey Questions:**

1. I am a full-time student in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State (Y/N)
2. What is your semester standing?
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your age?
5. What race/ethnicity do you identify with?
6. What religious or spiritual identity do you identify with the most?
7. Which term best describes your sexual orientation?
8. Are you considered an adult learner? (24 years and older)
9. Are/were you a member of the U.S. Armed Services?
10. Do you consider yourself: Physically disabled, having a learning disability, or disabled in other way (explain)
11. What department do you study in?
12. Overall, how comfortable are you with the campus climate at PSU?
13. Overall, how comfortable are you with the climate in your College of Agricultural Sciences classes and events?
14. Within the past year, have you personally experienced exclusionary treatment?
    1. Please indicate where this treatment took place (select all that apply)
15. Within the past year, have you personally experienced intimidating treatment?
    1. Please indicate where this treatment took place (select all that apply)
16. Within the past year, have you personally experienced offensive behavior?
    1. Please indicate where this treatment took place (select all that apply)
17. What do you believe was the cause of this unpleasant treatment or behavior?
18. Within the past year, have you witnessed anyone else experiencing any exclusionary treatment?
    1. Where did this conflict occur?
19. Within the past year, have you witnessed anyone else experiencing any intimidating treatment?
    1. Where did this conflict occur?
20. Within the past year, have you witnessed anyone else experiencing any offensive behavior?
    1. Where did this conflict occur?
21. What do you believe was the source of this unpleasant treatment or behavior?
22. In general, I feel that the College of Agricultural Sciences is welcoming for students based on their:

Physical disability

Learning disability

Age

Ethnicity

Gender

Language

Physical Characteristics (appearance, body size, etc.)

Political Views

Race

Religion

Sexual Orientation

Socioeconomic status

Psychological condition (e.g. depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, etc.)

1. In general, how would you rate the climate in the College of Agricultural Sciences for people who are:

African American/ Black

American Indian

Asian

Hispanic/ Latino

Middle Eastern

Pacific Islander

White

1. In general, how would you rate the climate in the College of Agricultural Sciences for people who are:

Agnostic

Atheist

Buddhist

Christian

Hindu

Jewish

Anabaptist

Muslim

Spiritual, but not religious

1. In general, how would you rate the college climate in the College of Agricultural Sciences for people who are:

Adult Learners (24 years or older)

Veterans

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender

Female

Male

International Students

Socioeconomically disadvantaged

1. How would you rate the overall climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Agricultural Sciences?
2. Do you feel that the College of Agricultural Sciences is more, less, or equally accepting to diverse students than Penn State University as a whole?
3. What steps would you suggest that the College of Agricultural Sciences take to strengthen the climate for diversity and inclusion in College classrooms and events?
4. Please share any other comments, stories, or concerns regarding diversity and inclusion at PSU and the College of Agricultural Sciences.

**Focus Group Questions**

Opening model script:

Thank you all for joining me today. As you know, you’re all here for a discussion about the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College of Ag. This focus group is part of a larger assessment that I’m doing this semester to help the College gain a clearer idea about where we’re excelling in promoting diversity in our classrooms, lab spaces, events, and other college events, and where there are opportunities for improvement. You all took the survey that was sent out a few weeks ago (thank you for that!), so this discussion is going to look to get a little bit deeper into some of the topics that that survey touched upon. Obviously there are no wrong answers to the questions I’ll be asking, and it’s really important to me to give everyone here the opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives, and I hope that we can all take part in creating a respectful environment where everyone feels comfortable doing so.

Before we get started, does anyone have any questions? Great, ok then let’s start by introducing ourselves...

Questions:

Diversity and Inclusion: Broad Strokes

* What does diversity mean to you?
* Is diversity something that you value in a college setting? Why or why not?
* When you think of “diversity and inclusion” in the College of Ag, what is your first initial reaction/ what comes to mind?

College of Ag

* Aside from your major or area of study, what do you like best about being a student in the College of Ag?
* Do you consider the College of Ag to be “diverse”?
* Do you consider the College of Ag to be “inclusive”
  + In your view, how does our college compare with the rest of the University?

Personal Questions

* How have you personally experienced the climate for diversity and inclusion in the College (either positively or negatively)?
* Can you think of an example or a story of when you’ve experienced (or witnessed someone else experiencing) a positive or negative experience related to diversity and inclusion in the college?
* When asked, “What steps would you suggest that the College of Agricultural Sciences take to strengthen the climate for diversity and inclusion in College classrooms and events? ” in the survey, one respondent replied: “There probably isn’t anything the College of Agricultural Science can do. There are just more Caucasian people who enjoy Agriculture than there are other races.” Do you agree with this sentiment? Why or why not, and how do we move forward with this?

Moving Forward

* How have you seen our College promoting, advocating for, or creating a climate of respect for people of diverse backgrounds in classroom, lab, club, or administrative spaces?
* How can the College improve the climate for diversity and inclusion?
  + What kind of actions can be taken to make progress surrounding this issue?
  + Where do you see opportunities for improvement?