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# Improving Department Climate

AdvanceVT, January 9, 2007

Objectives of today's workshop:

- Enhance awareness of the Department Climate Initiative
  - Engage faculty in sharing experiences related to department climate
  - Identify and share ideas and potential successful strategies for improving climate
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# Department Climate Committee

- Jack Finney, Chair
    - College of Science Dean's Office
  - Carla Finkielstein
    - Biological Sciences
  - Joe Merola
    - Chemistry
  - Ishwar Puri
    - Engineering Science & Mechanics
  - Eileen Van Aken
    - Industrial & Systems Engineering
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Why is department climate  
important?

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# What is Department Climate?

- Components of climate that determine the overall working environment within a department:
    - Shared values, norms, and beliefs (culture)
    - Interpersonal interactions
    - Policies and practices
    - Physical environment
  - Examples of indicators of a positive, effective climate:
    - Civility
    - Collegiality
    - Sense of community
    - Inclusiveness
    - Effective communication
    - Work–life balance
    - Professional development
    - Fair and full evaluations
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# Examples of Successful Strategies for Managing and Improving Climate

➤ **Civility**

Interactions in faculty meetings, hallways

Tolerance of differences of opinion

➤ **Collegiality**

Celebration of faculty accomplishments

Collaboration and involvement

➤ **Sense of community**

Shared goals and values

Social activities, both formal and informal

➤ **Inclusiveness**

Opinions valued and respected

Diversity promoted

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# Examples of Successful Strategies for Managing and Improving Climate

- **Effective communication**  
Information sharing, open to feedback  
Executive Committee
  - **Work–life balance**  
Scheduling meetings, teaching times, tenure clock
  - **Professional development**  
Mentoring and feedback about promotion/tenure  
Travel, equipment, lab supplies to set up success
  - **Fair and full evaluations**  
Annual written reviews, annual meeting with head/chair  
Clear expectations and assignments
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