

Climate Review Results Meeting - March 8th, 2019, 10:00am - LB-646

Attendees:

- Andrew Woodall - Dean of Students
- Lisa Ostiguy - Special Advisor to the Provost
- Manish Sharma - Chair of English Department
- Jennifer Drummond - Sexual Assault Resource Center
- The C.A.S.E. Exec sat in the audience among students and alumni. This included Meredith Marty-Dugas, Paige Keleher, Gabrielle Crowley, and Annika Horsford.

Climate Review report:

<http://www.concordia.ca/about/administration-governance/office-provost-vp-academic-affairs/climate-review/report.html>

Important Note: The climate review was an external process and the “panelists” today are unrelated to that committee. Faculty on the panel are essentially liaisons, communicating this info (all available online) to students in attendance.

Below is a rough transcription of the meeting’s proceedings. We cannot guarantee that these are the exact words used, but rather a summary to inform students and the public about what was discussed. Ostiguy, Sharma, Woodall, and Drummond all sat at the front of the room behind a table. The projector screen was down, but there was no presentation set up. Attendees were seated facing the presenters.

Student questions are in bold font with the corresponding answer below each one.

4 FINDINGS

- The meeting opened with Lisa Ostiguy and Andrew Woodall clarifying there was no official plan for the meeting
- Sharma reviewing the 4 findings of the report.
 - Real and/or perceived acts of sexual violence
 - Real/perceived instances of favouritism and conflicts of interest—
“unhealthy” environment
 - Student mistrust re: handling complaints
 - Discrimination + hostility
- The next English Department meeting (faculty) is to be held on March 15th.
- **C.A.S.E. EXEC: Why is no one here from the external review? (i.e. someone internal/privy to the process of the climate review, rather than just ConU faculty). Some of the language is vague in the recommendations and we would like clarification on how that is meant to be interpreted.**
 - OSTIGUY: The people who undertook the climate review were contracted; if there are questions about language, etc., the people here (ConU faculty) can go get clarification on your behalf.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

- These recommendations are being reviewed by the standing committee and will be implemented by them if need be.
- **C.A.S.E. EXEC: Can students have access to information about the climate review that is unfiltered by the university (as it is now). Can we meet with the people who conducted the study?**
 - OSTIGUY: Not sure, perhaps.
- Ostiguy: Many of these recommendations are already underway, and the task force had already been looking at some of these based on their results.

- **TRAINING FOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS (#2,3)**
 - Jennifer Drummond (SARC) leading standing committee—up until now, training has been done in person (all students in residence, athletes, etc.)
 - There will be two kinds of training
 - Training about policies, consent, relationships, etc.
 - Training about the administrative procedures surrounding such behaviour and its denouncement.
 - Some form of training for faculty and students will be mandatory starting in Fall 2019, in accordance with Bill-151. This training will need to happen every year.
 - To accommodate this, Concordia/the SARC is creating training videos and online platforms.
 - These videos focus on power imbalances, procedures, bystander intervention, etc.
 - They will continue to make in-person training available for those who don't want to participate in the online training.
 - These training videos will continue to evolve and student input and feedback is welcome to improve them as time goes on.
 - **STUDENT: How are you testing whether participants pass or fail the test?**
 - DRUMMOND: There will not be a pass/fail. The test is more about sharing knowledge. They are also looking into how to make sure people take it (how to make it mandatory. Unsure as of yet)
 - **STUDENT: Concerned that the questions will be somewhat obvious and patronizing, rather than nuanced and informative (similar to the undergrad plagiarism quiz - less about actual knowledge and more about common-sense clicking.)**
 - DRUMMOND: Feedback is welcome, and the training will evolve with time. We will try to make it nuanced. It's a gated learning/training system (there's an "I'm feeling overwhelmed" button—can exit or skip ahead, and all of that is tracked to make sure no one will abuse it).

- **CLARITY OF THE REPORTING PROCESS (#4)**

- Ostiguy: The standing committee is working on making the reporting procedure readily available in 1 document (centralizing the information for easy access)
- **C.A.S.E. Exec: This would be easier for us (the audience) to follow if we had a visual of the report. Can you please put it up on the project?**
 - OSTIGUY: We don't have anything with us to do that.
 - C.A.S.E.: Okay, but you have it on your website. Can't we just pull that up
 - SHARMA: (Offers and begins to set up a computer to display the website)
- **STUDENT: During the climate review, when faculty said they were familiar with the reporting process, was that tested in any way?**
 - OSTIGUY: We don't know. Probably not.
- **STUDENT: We should have more information about the operational definitions of the climate review and have access to their methodology in order for us to appropriately interpret the results.**
 - OSTIGUY: The report does mention their methods.
 - STUDENT: But operational definitions will help us interpret the results (i.e. "real or perceived," "relationship," etc.)
 - OSTIGUY: Since they're an external committee, it's hard for us to say.
 - WOODALL: They probably don't have that answer either.
 - STUDENT: They probably do, and this is why students need to be able to sit with the people who conducted the climate review.
 - ALUMNI: Yes, like what "real and perceived" means, etc.
 - C.A.S.E.: Also what is the notion of a "relationship" is in the report? So much is vague.
 - OSTIGUY: Again, it's data from an external group so it's hard to say. I'm indicating openness re: your concerns, but can't give you definitive answers in some areas.
 - WOODALL: We'll try to find out and get back to you.
- *report goes up on projector*
- **ASSIGNING A CONTACT PERSON (#5)**
 - Purpose: Sometimes, the complaint process takes way too long; this way the complainant can remain informed—the liaison can follow the person thru the whole complaint (the idea is for a dedicated staff person to "pair up" with a student).
 - Ostiguy: Instead of hiring someone from the outside, we are looking at appointing an internal resource person/liason (not a person from the SARC or the ORR)
 - **STUDENT: It may be better to appoint a third-party who the university would be accountable to.**
 - **STUDENT: Who would that person's boss be?**
 - OSTIGUY: This is all in the early stages, we don't know yet. The benefit of having someone internal is that they are already familiar with the process and know the people to talk to/refer to.
 - **STUDENT: We should have input on who you appoint for this position.**

- (No comments were made by faculty about this)
- FACULTY AWARENESS OF POLICIES (# 6)
 - All new hires should read, accept, and sign all relevant policies—with a particular emphasis on relationship guidelines, etc.—so no one can get away with saying “I didn’t know” or “I didn’t read the policies.” This will be a part of new staff orientation, and we will also look at everyone who is already here, not just new, incoming staff.
- UNBIASED SELECTION PROCESS (#7)
 - Sharma: We want to include students in that process (curriculum committee, grad committee, etc.). The more students see/are involved in how we operate, the more we can work towards rebuilding trust.
- SOCIAL GATHERINGS AND CLASS GUIDELINES (#8,9,10)
 - Ostiguy: Standing committee is actively looking into this at the moment.
 - **STUDENT: What space is going to replace these social gathering spaces for “informal” conversations?**
 - SHARMA: The French Department has allowed us to book some of their rooms (booked in advance). We can book rooms on campus and have semi-formal events there (ideally, within the university).
 - **C.A.S.E. EXEC: What happens once these guidelines are implemented? How are they enforced? There’s no clarity re: 8-10 about how surveillance will be ensured, and whether or not there will be real consequences for staff/faculty who break these guidelines. I know that it is in accordance with the law that we’re not given access to O.R.R. results, but we’re also not given access to the process. How many guidelines does one have to break for there to be some sort of consequence? There’s no follow-up system.**
 - SHARMA: We would consider their behaviour to be unacceptable. Students can come tell me if someone isn’t complying with the guidelines, I would meet with the faculty member to let them know. Failure to comply will launch a formal process through the Dean.
 - **STUDENT: There will be no classes in bars, but what about gatherings with profs after class in bars?**
 - OSTIGUY: Not sure yet. Standing committee is looking into it.
 - **STUDENT: Are there guidelines for events promoted through the university (events that aren’t university initiatives, such as SLS, Banff Residencies)?**
 - OSTIGUY: Yes, but we’re not sure what those look like yet. Those events should be included in these guidelines.
 - WOODALL: It is important for students to interject themselves into these discussions. Are there things that are fine? Should they all be banned? Students are crucial here.

- SHARMA: Any events that include faculty members MUST operate within our guidelines, and if they don't, we need to rethink our relationship to these bodies.
- FOLLOW-UP CLIMATE REVIEW (#11)
 - There will be another climate review in 2 years—will be on standing committee to look at how that info will be collected.
- IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKSHOPS (#12)
 - There was a workshop for the Eng Dept. faculty (hopefully more to come).
 - Climate review recommends that standing committee will be mandated to follow up on recommendations.
- GENERAL DISCUSSION
 - **ALUMNI: Re: “he said/she said,” if a student thinks you, Manish, are friends with someone who should be reported, what alternative complaint process will be in place?**
 - SHARMA: The women's caucus proposed an ombudsperson role—a neutral staff member who is at least partially detached from the faculty and can be approached in case someone feels uncomfortable speaking directly to the chair.
 - **STUDENT: Re: upcoming creation of guidelines, is there an approximate timeline? Will it be before the follow-up climate review 2 years from now?**
 - OSTIGUY: We don't have an answer right now. On 15 March, there will be a Dept. meeting, and we will discuss further, look at the recommendations and make a plan, then communicate thru our website—not even the whole committee read the report as of this morning, but recommendations 8,9,10 are critical so I don't see us waiting too long.
 - **C.A.S.E. EXEC: Deep concerns regarding the lack of admin/function of university reaching out to student representatives. No one has reached out except after the initial news break to ask how we are, what we need, or how we can contribute, etc. As President of CASE I have not seen that happen. This continues to worry me as we create these committees asking students to stand on them. There is no compensation, and these processes ignore our other responsibilities (education, income from external jobs, etc.). CASE, Soliloquies, Headlight, and SAGE are all unpaid. It concerns me that a standing committee gives no compensation except for maybe a mention on a co-curricular record. These committees also require a certain GPA and consider part-time vs. full-time status re: whether someone can be considered to be a representative. There is a fine line between asking for student input vs. putting weight on students.**

- WOODALL: I'm aware of the pressure that students are being put under. I don't have an answer for that. I get it. That's a conversation I'd love to have. Formal representation pieces are problematic. No one's being paid. I get it, I hear it. I don't have an answer. If the Eng Dept. can figure out a way of doing that dialoguing—there is a role for students. Students should say, “that's not enough, that's too much”—constant feedback mechanisms vs. formal representation.
 - SHARMA: Tuesday drop-in sessions seemed good. Students can come enjoy a meal on us and provide feedback; this is an informal meeting, not a formal committee. As far as formal committees, like the ADHOC committee I will be implementing on 15 March, yes, we have to work around your schedules, because you are not being paid.
- **STUDENT: To comment on formal vs. informal: if it's necessary for students to be there, otherwise it's a failed initiative with a failed result, students should be paid. Especially because attending faculty and admin are being paid. Also for the upcoming liaison person, students should have a say re: the hiring/firing of that person. I just have my doubts. I'm also concerned about the students who have to weigh the entirety of the consequences of their complaints on themselves—they still have to go to class, still have to meet with that prof during office hours. Not even going into the power dynamics of a Masters or PhD, where you have years of projects on the line. Part of the complaints have fallen on deaf ears.**
 - (No direct response was made by faculty about this point)
- **ALUMNI: What happens when the student graduates? What if the prof retaliates? Speaking from personal experience, how do you protect students/alumni from retaliation?**
 - SHARMA: The confidentiality of the process must be absolute. When someone presents a concern, it has to be private.
 - ALUMNI: That has to be an *explicit rule*. The ORR will make the complaint known to the accused immediately, as per their procedures. Concordia has NOT protected the anonymity of complainants. ConU has to prioritize that.
 - OSTIGUY: There is protection against reprisals, but I don't think that's understood. We have a processes to protect people.
 - ALUMNI: But I'm talking about the culture of ConU—it protects faculty. No written rules were followed.
 - OSTIGUY: (swift pivot onto the next point)
- **STUDENT: Why do the results from this climate review differ so much from the results of the internal task force?**
 - OSTIGUY: We'll be looking at that gap. Possibly because one concerns a department, whereas the other concerns an entire university.
 - STUDENT: Would you be willing to recommit to hiring 3rd parties to investigate the issues and differences in/between these findings?

- OSTIGUY: I'm not equipped today to respond to the differences between things. We've been following task force recommendations, and there's a lot of work to do in many areas. So, this is the start of many conversations.
- **C.A.S.E. EXEC: So far, there has been no official apology from the university. There have been small apologies by the Dept made to student representatives that weren't properly publicized. Since we now have this data, when is there going to be an apology to students and alumni for their endangerment? They should have felt safe.**
 - ALUMNI (adding): There have been real, material effects in people's personal and medical lives that have big ramifications going forward, especially re: legal ramifications. I'm not saying there have to be large amounts of reparations paid, but there have been clear effects. This should be factored into the apology and process going forward.
 - SHARMA: I will continue this process. I think every effort at reconciliation needs to be made on our part. I can't say much more, but speaking personally, I agree that there should be reparations/reconciliation— I personally believe it should happen.