

From: [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)
To: [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)
Subject: New submission from Campus Climate Proposals
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016 4:18:23 PM

First name:

William

Last name:

Hoyt

Email address:

[REDACTED]

Phone number:

[REDACTED]

Group name (if applicable):

Department of Counseling Psychology

What is your affiliation with UW-Madison? For group submissions, please respond for main contact.

- Faculty

Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate this.

Students' experience of campus climate occurs primarily outside of class. Unlike within classrooms, activities in residence halls are unstructured and can occur at any hour the day or night. For the vast majority of entering undergraduates, formative experiences of campus culture and social norms take place in the residence halls, where students often form initial relationships with fellow students and engage with developmental tasks associated with what for many is a first experience of independent living away from family. Residence Life staff, and especially House Fellows, are in many ways the frontline responders who assist students to acclimate to campus life, to develop appropriate expectations of one another, to resolve conflicts, and to foster connections.

House fellows receive training in conflict mediation, crisis response, event coordination, administration, and building cohesion among residents. The department of Counseling Psychology's Professor Stephen Quintana has been in consultation with the Residence Life staff about broadening this training to include fostering a campus culture in which diversity is acknowledged and valued. The proposed initiative involves two components:

- Recommended coursework for students wishing to become House Fellows, which would teach them skills for navigating conversations related to intersectionality of social identities, and demonstrate their interest in and commitment to diversity issues; and
- A new required course offered each Spring to train the new cohort of House Fellows in specific skills related to communications about diversity. These skills include ability to engage in difficult dialogues, student-centered motivational interviewing, as well as understanding the developmental and social tasks of college life.

How would this affect cultural change on campus?

The very painful and high-profile incidents that have heightened student and faculty concerns about campus climate in recent months have occurred outside of classes and in or around residence halls. These assaults on campus climate do not occur in a vacuum. They are outgrowths of natural human tendencies to seek out comfortable spaces, which often involve finding others who are like-minded and share similar backgrounds, identities, and experiences. While these connectinos build affiliations, they

limit opportunity to engage and grow from the diversity of social identities on campus. Worse, the segregated nature of student life may promote discomfort and in some cases, intolerance related to social difference. These tendencies are exacerbated by cultural values and practices (such as norms around alcohol consumption and "letting off steam"), and these flames are fanned by high-profile divisive rhetoric and an increasingly vicious tone in many social media venues.

The goal of creating a campus climate in which diverse views and values are respected (and indeed valued as a component of a whole-person educational experience) starts with addressing basic processes of respectful interaction, perspective-taking, and cultural empathy. Residence life staff members are trained to build community in the residence halls, and to foster an ethos of respect for others in a relatively crowded and sometimes stressful living environment. They mediate disputes over volume of music and active times versus sleeping times, and make an effort to create a culture of compassion or at least considerateness of others' needs and preferences. However, House Fellows often feel unprepared to intervene and resolve conflicts involving students with marginalized social identities, and may struggle with how to cultivate a sense of community that respects and benefits from social differences. These staff members have identified a need to incorporate additional skills for addressing divisions across social fault lines, including stereotyping, reductionistic labeling, and microaggressions based on perceived cultural identities and social locations. The proposed training activities will train incoming House Fellows in the emerging pedagogy of difficult dialogues and provide hands-on practice with building community across social differences, communicating about social identities in ways that bridge differences, foster respect, resolve conflicts, and enhance appreciation of benefits related to the diversity of student life on campus. CP will work with Residence Life to include other existing aspects of House Fellow training in the curriculum to enhance the delivery of their training materials and lessons.

For new ideas, how would you propose piloting this idea to see if it would work? If the idea is already in use at UW-Madison, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?

Professor Quintana piloted the proposed required class in Spring 2016 (a practicum in diversity skills taught under the temporary course number [REDACTED] to identify the types of "teachable moments" encountered by these [REDACTED], and to assess which skills they have and which skills they lack in effectively creating a climate around diversity of student life. The proposed expansion will grow this class to be available to (and required of) all incoming House Fellows, which we believe will include approximately 120 - 140 House Fellows each spring.

In addition, those students aspiring to be House Fellows will be encouraged to enroll in one or both courses offered in Fall semesters that provide a foundation for the work they would engage in as House Fellows: CP 650 (Theory and Practice in Interviewing) and CP 225 (Coming to Terms with Cultural Diversity: Invitation to Dialogue). These courses build awareness of the intersectionality of social identities and locations and promote specific empirically-supported intra- and interpersonal skills to facilitate self-awareness and effective communication.

What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

New resources:

Two 33% TA positions for required CP 620 (new course number to follow);

Three 33% TAs position to accommodate anticipated increased enrollment in CP 650 and 225.

Leveraging of existing resources (in-kind contributions):

Residence Life will provide a co-instructor for the Spring practicum course, along with participation of current House Fellows in many training activities.

CP will provide 12.5% time from Professor Quintana as course instructor, along with any added instructor time resulting from increased enrollment in CP 650 and 225.

If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.

Residence Life

Please use this space for any additional information about your proposal that you wish to share:

Among the initiatives discussed in the Chancellor's open letter of March 16 is a pilot roll-out of a mandatory training program for incoming students related to issues of diversity. This is an opportunity to set norms and expectations early in students' UW careers, and can have a tangible impact on campus climate. But it will not be successful if it is seen as an isolated activity divorced from the rest of students' campus experiences.

This proposal aims to extend these initial conversations regarding respect for and openness to diversity into the day-to-day interactions within the residence halls. Training for the House Fellows will infuse these elements into the community interactions within the residence halls and give students access to trained facilitators who can assist with addressing inevitable issues directly and frankly, diminishing the likelihood of escalation and increasing the potential for learning and connection for all involved.