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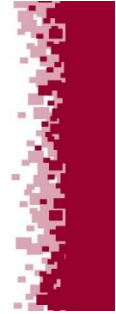


2026 Campus Climate Listening Sessions

Report

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Introduction Background

RCW 28B.10.147

[RCW 28B.10.147](#) requires that higher education institutions in Washington “conduct a campus climate assessment to understand the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the learning, working, and living environment on campus for students, faculty, and staff.” The assessment should be completed at least every five years, and results should be utilized to inform professional development. In addition, higher education institutions must “conduct annual listening and feedback sessions for diversity, equity, and inclusion for the entire campus community during periods between campus climate assessments.”

Campus Climate and Data Equity Committee

The Campus Climate and Data Equity Committee was established under the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council (DEIC) to coordinate the college’s efforts to meet the requirements outlined in RCW 28B.10.147. The committee is co-led by the Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and includes representation from both faculty and staff.

As part of the committee’s planned three-year assessment cycle, a campus climate survey was originally scheduled for 2025-26. However, due to delays in the development and release of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) survey, the committee adjusted its approach and conducted campus listening sessions during spring 2026 to gather feedback from students and employees. This alternative approach allowed the college to continue collecting campus climate feedback and remain compliant with the RCW requirements while preserving alignment with the committee’s long-term assessment strategy.

Methodology

Listening sessions were conducted via the Zoom online platform in May and June 2026. Two sessions were offered: one focused on student experiences and one focused on employee experiences. Both sessions were open to all members of their respective groups and lasted 90 minutes. Participation was voluntary.

The sessions were facilitated by an external consultant, Maureen Pettitt, Ph.D., to encourage open and candid discussion. Participants engaged in a large-group conversation, sharing their experiences, perspectives, and suggestions for improvement. No participant limit was established, and registration was available to all interested students and employees.

Overtime-eligible employees could be compensated for overtime, where applicable. Adjunct faculty were eligible to receive a one-time payment for their participation, while students were provided with a \$50 gift card.

Faculty & Staff Listening Session – May 28, 2026

This was a campus climate listening session to discuss eight recommendations from the Campus Climate and Data Equity Committee. While the participant number varied slightly through the session, an average of 35 faculty and staff were in attendance.

The eight key recommendations that formed the basis of this listening session are:

1. Adjunct Faculty Support – Enhancing resources and integration for part-time faculty
2. Leadership Development – Building leadership capacity across the institution
3. Physical Spaces – Improving campus environments for students and faculty
4. Professional Development for Faculty – Restructuring PD programming and calendar
5. Communication and Conflict Resolution – Establishing clearer protocols
6. Policies and Procedures – Improving accessibility and engagement
7. SharePoint Improvements – Enhancing information management systems
8. Events and Relationship Building – Fostering community connections

The session began with presentations covering recommendations on adjunct faculty support, leadership development, physical spaces, professional development for faculty, communication and conflict resolution, policies and procedures, SharePoint improvements, events and relationship building. *See Appendix A for the content presented.*

After each of the eight presentations, a poll was taken to assess how aware the participants were of the efforts and progress being made on each of these recommendations. For most recommendations, there was moderate awareness among participants, but there was considerable awareness about progress being made on physical spaces, faculty professional development and SharePoint improvements.

Following the presentations, participants discussed where substantial progress was being made and where improvements were needed. Overall, the discussion reflected a shared interest in improving institutional systems in ways that better support belonging, communication, and student success. Participants acknowledged areas of progress while also emphasizing the need for more coherent infrastructure, more relevant professional development, and more accessible processes.

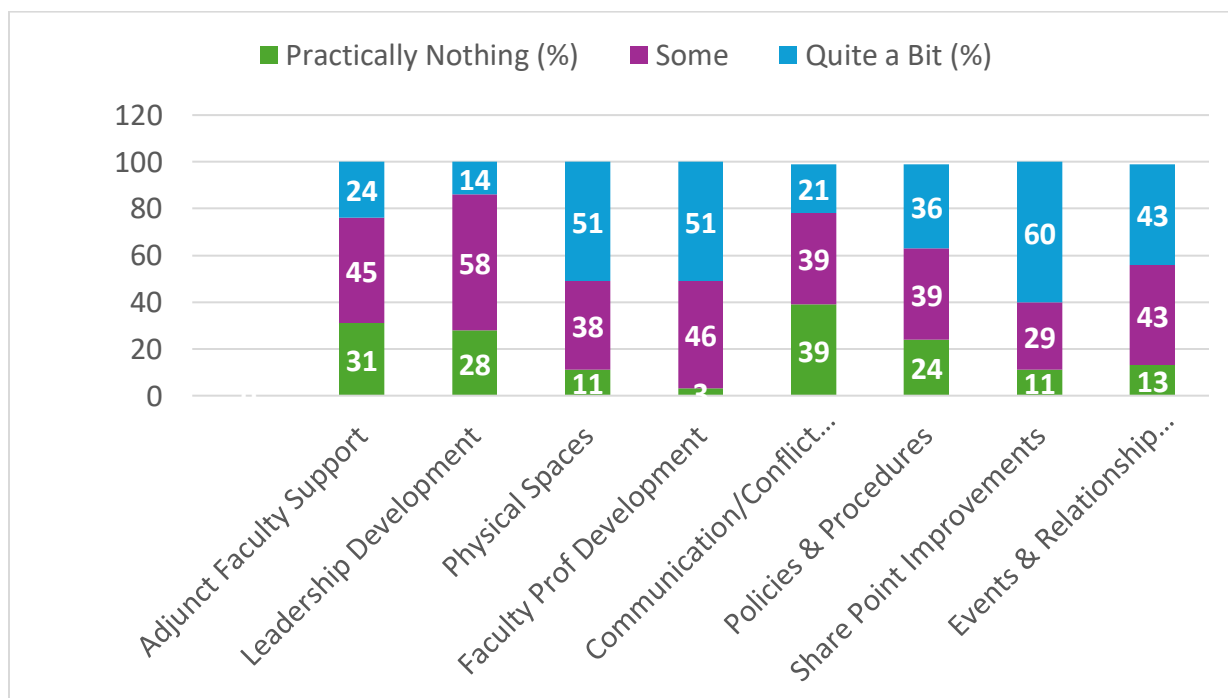
Across topics, the strongest theme was the need to move from isolated improvements to a more integrated institutional approach. Participants consistently pointed to clarity, coordination, and practical implementation as the conditions most necessary for sustained progress.

Part I: Review of Campus Climate Recommendations

The meeting focused on reviewing eight campus climate recommendations and assessing awareness of the work being done on each. Members of the DEIC presented updates on each recommendation. After each presentation, a poll was taken using the prompt, “*To what degree were you aware of the work being done on this recommendation?*” The table and the chart below show the responses to each poll by recommendation topic.

Rec. # (as presented)	Recommendation Topic	Practically Nothing (%)	Some (%)	Quite a Bit (%)
1	Adjunct Faculty Support	31	45	24
2	Leadership Development	28	58	14
3	Physical Spaces	11	38	51
4	Faculty Prof Development	3	46	51
5	Communication/Conflict Res.	39	39	21
6	Policies & Procedures	24	39	36
7	Share Point Improvements	11	29	60
8	Events & Relationship Building	13	43	43

(Not all totals equal 100% due to rounding)





Part II: Discussion on Recommendation Progress

(Note: This report reflects the summary provided by Zoom’s AI Companion as well as the consultant’s notes and perspectives.)

This part of the listening session was facilitated by the consultant. The discussion centered on perceived progress and ongoing challenges related to the DEIC recommendations. Participants were asked where they see the most progress, where they see the least progress, and what additional steps could accelerate improvement. Note that members of the President’s executive cabinet were asked to excuse themselves prior to this part of the session.

Progress on Recommendations

Participants described visible progress in classroom advocacy, student support, and institutional attention to student needs. There was also recognition of efforts to strengthen faculty community, improve student-facing spaces, and expand internal communication infrastructure. Some discussion also pointed to movement on policy updates, communication practices, and SharePoint implementation. At the same time, participants noted that progress has been uneven and that some improvements remain more aspirational than fully realized. Contributions regarding leadership development were largely missing.

Professional Development

Professional development emerged as a major area of concern. Participants described dissatisfaction with current offerings, especially required professional development days that can feel difficult to fill with meaningful and relevant content. Participants expressed a desire for professional development that is more closely aligned with specific teaching,

departmental, and functional needs. Concerns included repetitive themes, inconsistent speaker quality, and the loss of practical, pedagogy-centered learning opportunities.

There was broad support for a more balanced approach that meets institutional and legislative expectations while also protecting instructional time and respecting existing professional learning. Participants emphasized that professional development should be practical, relevant to daily work, and directly connected to classroom instruction and student support.

The discussion also highlighted the need for stronger follow-through after professional development activities. Participants suggested that new learning should be supported by clearer expectations, practical implementation structures, and some form of accountability for sharing and applying best practices.

Cross-Campus Connection

Professional development was described as one of the few consistent opportunities for faculty and staff to connect across roles. Some participants noted that these shared spaces are important for understanding how instructional and non-instructional areas intersect in support of students.

At the same time, there was concern that professional development can feel separated between staff and faculty, limiting collaboration and making it harder to build a strong sense of shared purpose. The discussion pointed to a need for more intentionally designed opportunities that strengthen cross-campus relationships and reduce silos. One participant expressed disappointment that some of the session attendees kept their cameras off and did not contribute to the discussion, thus missing an opportunity to build community.

Student Spaces and Campus Environment

The physical campus environment was identified as an important contributor to belonging and campus climate. Participants emphasized the importance of welcoming, functional, and accessible spaces where students can study, gather, and relax.

A concern was raised about the loss of seating and informal gathering spaces in Building H. While existing spaces such as the Unity Center were acknowledged as valuable, the discussion suggested that additional student-centered spaces are still needed.

Communication and Policy Engagement

Communication about policies and procedures was described as fragmented and at times overwhelming. Participants noted that the number of communication platforms in use can create confusion, reduce clarity, and make it difficult for important messages to stand out.

There was strong support for a more coordinated communication plan, including clearer expectations for when and how different communication tools and channels should be used. The discussion also pointed to the need for communication systems that are easier to navigate and better aligned with employee and student needs.

Internal Systems and Information Access

Participants discussed the need for more effective use of internal systems such as SharePoint and Teams. There was support for continuing efforts to position SharePoint as a central hub for documents, communication, and institutional information.

At the same time, participants observed that Teams has replaced email in many day-to-day contexts, reinforcing the need for a more coherent institutional communication strategy. Better alignment across systems was seen as essential for improving access to information and reducing confusion.

Policy Processes and Institutional Clarity

Participants described barriers to engagement with policy and governance processes, including legalistic language, limited time, and insufficient opportunities for broad input. These conditions can make policies feel inaccessible and reduce meaningful participation in institutional decision-making.

The discussion reinforced the need for clearer and more differentiated processes for handling conflict, conduct concerns, and complaints. Participants also emphasized the importance of reviewing policies and standard operating procedures with an equity lens and documenting them in ways that are easier to understand and apply.

Recommendations

Several recommendations for continued progress emerged from this listening session:

- Make progress being made on leadership development more transparent.
- Develop a coordinated institutional communication plan that clarifies the role of email, Teams, Navigate, text messaging, SharePoint, and other channels.
- Update communication policies to reflect current tools and practices, including mass text messaging and centralized internal communication standards.
- Continue building SharePoint as a user-friendly hub for documents, guidance, and institutional information, with training and broad promotion for employees.
- Reevaluate the structure and number of required professional development days to better balance instructional time, employee needs, and institutional expectations.

- Design professional development activities that are practical, role-relevant, responsive to both faculty and staff responsibilities, and lead to observable changes in practice.
- Improve quality control for professional development content and speakers, with stronger attention to credibility, usefulness, and applicability.
- Expand and maintain welcoming student spaces, including study, gathering, and collaboration areas across campus.
- Continue auditing campus spaces to ensure they are comfortable, accessible, safe, and supportive of belonging for students and employees.
- Create clearer, more user-friendly processes for reporting and resolving interpersonal conflicts, conduct concerns, and formal complaints.
- Review policies and standard operating procedures through an equity lens, with attention to prioritization, clarity, documentation, and approval processes.
- Build more structured opportunities for cross-campus collaboration through workshops, mentoring, onboarding supports, affinity groups, and other relationship-building efforts.
- Use existing departmental and team meetings as opportunities to gather practitioner input on policies, procedures, and student support needs.
- Develop a more intentional plan for student communications so that outreach is coordinated, timely, and easier for students to navigate.

Student Listening Session – June 2, 2026

This was a campus climate listening session with Renton Technical College (RTC) students, facilitated by an outside consultant. The session was held via Zoom. Six (6) students attended the session; however, one student did not appear to actively participate in the discussion.

The session was introduced by explaining that the purpose of the session was to gather information about students' experiences and perceptions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at RTC. Students were assured that the session was a safe space where responses would remain confidential, with only summary themes and recommendations being shared with the college.

In addition to student responses to the open-ended questions described below, three (3) closed-ended questions were asked during the session:

1. *RTC supports a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.*
2. *Your courses provide opportunities for you to learn about cultures, backgrounds, and experiences different from your own?*
3. *I feel a sense of community/belonging at Renton Technical College.*

The table below presents the student responses. Overall, students responded positively to all the questions, with all students reporting that RTC supports a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion, and that they felt a sense of belonging. The only negative response was from a student who strongly disagreed that the courses at the college provide opportunities to learn about different cultures, backgrounds or experiences.

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Supports a culture of DEI	67%	33%	0%	0%
Opportunities to learn	20%	60%	0%	20%
Sense of belonging	67%	33%	0%	0%



Student Responses to Discussion Questions

The session protocol included three discussion questions. On occasion students strayed from the topic or went back to address an earlier topic. This was encouraged by the facilitator in an effort to obtain as much information from the students as possible.

Question 1: *From your perspective, in what ways does RTC support a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion?*

Most participants agreed or strongly agreed that the college supports a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students also shared their experiences attending events at the college, including celebrations of AAPI culture and other community-building activities. One student mentioned noticing that the cafeteria is rented out to various cultural and organizational groups. Another student shared that while she receives emails about diversity events, she cannot attend them due to being located outside of Renton, though she appreciates the online flexibility RTC offers.

Question 2: *If you are comfortable sharing, in what ways have you witnessed or experienced prejudice or discrimination at RTC?*

None of the students reported any incidents.

Question 3: *What should the college do to improve the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion?*

The discussion concluded with an invitation for students to provide suggestions for improving the college's DEI efforts. Participants suggested organizing events that showcase

minority cultures through music, food, and fashion to celebrate cultural diversity. There was also emphasis on ensuring the campus feels safe and supportive for minority students, noting that some students may be hesitant to attend events due to language barriers and safety concerns. The need for translation services was highlighted as a key strategy to address these barriers. Additional ideas included offering incentives to increase veteran participation in ROTC programs and expanding support for veteran students. The group also recommended reviewing data on student achievement and participation to identify gaps in opportunities and promote equitable outcomes across student populations. Operational challenges were noted as well, particularly difficulties in tracking event attendance when language barriers limit participation or data collection.

Suggestions

Below are some suggestions based on student feedback from this listening session.

Cultural Programming

1. Quarterly Cultural Week: Implement regular cultural celebrations (quarterly) featuring different global cultures to provide consistent opportunities for cultural exchange and celebration
2. Multicultural Showcases: Organize events featuring music, food, and fashion from minority cultures to celebrate diversity and educate the campus community
3. Expand Existing Events: Continue and expand successful initiatives like Lunar New Year celebrations and AAPI events at the Unity Center

Language Access & Support Services

1. Language Interpretation Services: Add professional interpretation services at events and for campus services to reduce language barriers
2. Translation Services: Provide translation support for key communications and services to make minority students feel safe and supported
3. Enhanced Communication: Improve outreach about available support services specifically for non-English speakers

Food & Dining Diversity

1. Diverse Cafeteria Options: Add more diverse food options in campus cafeterias that represent the multicultural student population
2. Vending Machine Variety: Expand vending machine offerings to include diverse snack and meal options

Veteran Support

1. ROTC Incentives: Expand incentives and support programs for veterans to participate in ROTC programs

Accessibility & Safety

2. Disability Support: Improve accommodation and support services for students with disabilities
3. Campus Safety: Address safety concerns that prevent some minority students from attending campus events

Data-Driven Equity

1. Achievement Gap Analysis: Review data on student achievement and participation across demographic groups to identify and address opportunity gaps
2. Event Attendance Tracking: Implement better systems for tracking event attendance (such as accessible sign-in sheets and in-person feedback) to understand which students are being reached and which populations need additional outreach



Conclusion

Feedback gathered through the 2026 listening sessions was generally consistent with themes identified in previous years. Participants recognized progress in several areas, including campus spaces, communication infrastructure, student support, and efforts to strengthen belonging and inclusion. Concurrently, both employees and students identified opportunities to improve communication, accessibility, engagement, and support systems. Employees emphasized the need for more coordinated institutional processes and relevant professional development, while students highlighted the importance of cultural programming, language access, and continued efforts to create a welcoming environment for all learners. Overall, the consistency of these themes suggests that the college is moving in a positive direction, while also reinforcing the need for sustained attention and continued action to achieve meaningful long-term improvement.

Appendix

Presentation on Progress on Campus Climate Recommendations

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Presenters: Campus Climate & Data Equity Committee:

- Doris Martinez
- Lesley Hogan
- Lia Homeister

REC 1: Adjunct Faculty Support & Care

Intentionally focus efforts to provide adjunct faculty support and care. This may include reviewing processes related to:

- Adjunct faculty onboarding
- Adjunct faculty training
- Adjunct faculty professional development
- Adjunct faculty resources

REC 2: Leadership Development

Promote leadership development amongst leaders of all levels on campus. Strong, confident, and knowledgeable leadership is essential to building a solid institutional foundation. We seek leaders who can make informed decisions, lead with clarity and integrity, and foster a culture of mutual support—both in how they lead others and how they support one another as a leadership team.

REC 3: Physical Spaces

Continuously audit spaces to ensure the environment is welcoming and comfortable for students and employees. This may entail RTC investing in: Proper heating, cooling, and air ventilation of all classrooms, offices, and shared spaces.

- Staffing to ensure clean and organized spaces.
- Well-appointed furniture and culturally relevant décor.
- Equipment that meets the basic needs of classroom and/or office functions.
- Lighting in dark areas that promote safety and security.
- Hang out spaces for students to study, relax, or collaborate with others.
- Accessible spaces inside, outside, and online.

REC 4: Professional Development for Faculty

Facilitate professional development for faculty to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster a culturally responsive sense of belonging in the classroom. This may include:

- Regular trainings for faculty.
- Accountability system to ensure best practices are occurring.
- Awareness of resources to help students.

REC 5: Processes for Conflict / Complaints

Create clear, differentiated processes for handling interpersonal conflict vs. conduct vs. complaints at RTC that are easy-to-follow. This may entail investment in:

- User-friendly systems or processes where individuals may confidentially report their concerns with information securely stored.
- Training to objectively handle conflict.
- Promotion and broad communication of the processes.
- Tracking mechanism to ensure resolution.

REC 6: Policies & Procedures

Review policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) with an equity lens to clarify expectations. A commitment to the following would be necessary:

- A prioritization process to review critical policies to improve equity at RTC.
- Training on how to review policies and SOPs with an equity lens.
- Regular prompts to review policies and SOPs, particularly outdated ones.
- The creation of standardized documentation of SOPs.
- Communication of a clear path through the approval process.

REC 7: SharePoint

“Relaunch” RTC’s internal SharePoint site as a hub for communications, documents, and information. This may include:

- Training on how to navigate and use SharePoint for all employees.
- Branding of the site for a cohesive, user-friendly experience.
- Broad communication of the site and resources available.

REC 8: Events & Relationship-building

Conduct events or workshops to promote cross-collaboration and relationship-building to break down siloes and communication barriers at work. This may include things like:

- Leadership workshops
- Peer-to-peer mentoring
- Onboarding buddies/cohorts
- Affinity groups