UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AS A STRATEGIC DRIVER

“Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast.” - Peter Drucker

SETTING THE CONTEXT

In this module, you will learn why creating a workplace culture based on pride, trust, and community—will lead us to our aspirational culture where Student Affairs at UC Berkeley will be the employer of choice in the Bay Area.

3 CULTURE TIPS: Here are actions that you can do, starting today!

1. PRIDE: At your next 1:1 or conversation you have with your staff member, create connections to their job responsibilities to the overall mission of Student Affairs and the UC Berkeley campus.
2. TRUST: Practice “giftwork” to your staff by offering your help. “Giftwork” is defined as promoting interactions that help build relationships and showing care, versus being transactional in nature.
3. COMMUNITY: Explore what fun team activities spark interest in your group and what they would participate in.

HOW

SA leaders are currently working with a team of consultants from Great Place to Work. Their definition of a great workplace is founded on over 25 years of research and knowledge gained from studying millions of employees.

In order to build culture and ensure that SA and University goals are achieved each year, we need to provide our staff with a great place to work. Recently, leaders of the GO BIG initiative have been working diligently to come up with a brief, meaningful description of our culture. It is presently titled an aspirational culture statement because we still have some work to do to intentionally get there.

“Student Affairs is a great workplace where staff trust the people they work with, take pride in what they do, and feel a sense of community in support of the student experience.”
As a manager, you are pivotal in establishing, modeling, and sustaining culture in Student Affairs. Following are brief explanations of how to establish **trust**, foster **pride**, and encourage **community**.

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<th>Develop Trust</th>
<th>Foster Pride</th>
<th>Encourage Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>Promote two-way communication</td>
<td>Believe the work you and your staff do is meaningful</td>
<td>Be yourself and encourage others to do the same</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate competency</td>
<td>Feel that you and your staff are making a difference</td>
<td>Experience a sense of accomplishment and fun</td>
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<td>Maintain a clear vision</td>
<td>Take pleasure in team accomplishments</td>
<td>Engage with staff and colleagues</td>
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<td>Match actions and words</td>
<td>Believe that UCB and SA have a positive impact on the community</td>
<td>Experience a sense of community/family</td>
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<td>Treat employees with respect and fairness</td>
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The great thing about establishing culture is you don’t need anything but your own desire and motivation to lead. If there are areas where you need improvement, for example, to increase your engagement with staff and colleagues, you can purposefully set aside more time to walk around and talk to people about how things are going. You can explain your vision for the unit and how the work you and your staff do contributes to Student Affairs.

**WHY**

Peter Drucker, well-known organizational development consultant and author, wrote: “*Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast.*” In Drucker’s opinion, the best strategic plan cannot be achieved without a strong, shared culture to make it happen. In short, *culture drives strategy.* Drucker and others who have studied organizations for decades believe that a vibrant, cohesive culture is the key driver behind achieving organizational goals.
WHAT

Culture can be defined in many ways, depending on how you’re thinking about it. In its broadest sense, culture is a set of beliefs, values, and practices which a group of people share. The group can be large or small—a tribe, a country—any group that shares certain experiences and beliefs. They work together toward common goals. They have developed relationships and trust over time, which motivate them to work together toward a shared vision of success.

In Student Affairs, for example, we are focused on broadening and enhancing the student experience. In order to give students the best experience possible, we strive to enrich their lives with transformative experiences; experiences that develop students as future leaders and encourage them to follow their passions.

When considering taking a position at any company, prospective employees look for cultures that align with their experiences and beliefs and offer opportunities for growth. In short, they are looking for great places to work. In Student Affairs a smart, nimble, enthusiastic staff is essential to achieving the larger goal of enriching the student experience. Whether making sure the residence halls are clean and safe, their career aspirations are explored, or providing students with opportunities to pursue interests and develop skills, we share the goal of enhancing the student experience.