

Psychology Climate Comment Box

Comment Box Purpose

The Psychology Department's climate comment box provides a way to submit comments, questions, experiences, or suggestions regarding departmental climate, with the option of doing so anonymously. Submissions will be read on a weekly basis by members of the Climate & Equity Committee. Four members of this committee – one faculty member, one staff person, and two graduate students – will be designated as Climate Advocates (CAs), and will be responsible for reviewing submissions to ensure that they are appropriately directed to the full committee or to other bodies on campus, and/or to meet with the submitter to discuss and facilitate further action. Note that the committee is required to send reports of any Title IX offenses to the Office for Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (see <https://ophd.berkeley.edu>); these offenses include, but are not limited to, sex discrimination and sexual violence.

The comment box is intended to fulfill three primary purposes: monitoring, education, and facilitation.

Monitoring. The comment box is one mechanism by which the Climate and Equity Committee will be able to monitor departmental climate in order to devise and implement the most appropriate actions to create and maintain a positive climate for all members of the community.

Education. A subset of submissions to the comment box are expected to help generate questions and anecdotes that can be used to raise awareness about issues that affect departmental climate. For example, a staff member might submit an example of an exchange with a faculty member that could have been handled more thoughtfully. Or a faculty member might submit a question about how to handle an awkward situation in which a student was disrespectful in lab meeting. In addition to episodes that illustrate potential problems with departmental climate, we welcome positive examples: complicated situations that were handled well, or ways in which a positive environment was established. These questions and anecdotes will inform the Climate & Equity Committee's decisions about educational programming in the department. In submitting a question or comment, the submitter will have the option of indicating whether and how it can be shared.

Facilitation. When a submitter provides her or his name and indicates that this is desired, the Climate Advocates will arrange a meeting with the submitter to discuss the situation and consider further action. Submitters are advised that the comment box will be checked weekly while the university is in session, and a Climate Advocate will contact any submitter requesting contact within a week of checking the box.

Alternative Resources

The university offers several mechanisms for reporting inappropriate behavior and for helping to resolve conflicts. We encourage members of the department to first consider these alternative resources, and to reserve use of the departmental comment box for comments or questions that fit the three intended aims of the comment box. For a list of resources, and suggested avenues to resolve issues, please see the Climate & Equity section of the Psychology Department website.

For reference, the Climate and Equity (C&E) committee currently includes: Christine Mullarkey (staff), Morteza Faraji (staff), Alex Mastrangeli (staff), Ozlem Ayduk (faculty), Sheri Johnson (faculty), Bob Levenson (faculty), David Whitney (faculty), Linda Wilbrecht (faculty), Oliver John (faculty), Rudy Mendoza-Denton (faculty), Jennifer Pearlstein (grad student), Michaela Simpson (grad student), Alice Hua (grad student).