

## **Psychology Community Building and Cohesion Comment Box**

### **Comment Box Purpose**

The Psychology Department's Community Building and Cohesion 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 bi-weekly basis by members of the Community Building and Cohesion Committee. Two members of this committee – one faculty member (Matt Walker) and one staff person (Jitka Horavova) – are designated as Community Advocates (CAs), and are 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. We welcome positive and negative comments. Note that there is a separate Equity Committee that addresses suggestions regarding diversity and equity.

**Monitoring.** The comment box is one mechanism by which the Community Building and Cohesion Committee will be able to monitor departmental climate in order to plan 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 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 Community 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 bi-weekly while the university is in session, and a Community 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 Community Building and Cohesion section of the Psychology Department website resources document.