

IEAP Initiative Status Report Summer 2025



Initiative Title: Critical Learning Collectives and Campus Climate Survey Findings

Initiative: IEAT 4.2

Lead: Kaia Tollefson

Date: August 26, 2025

A. OVERVIEW: Respond briefly (about 50-75 words per answer) to each of the following questions.

1. **Purpose:** What is the problem being addressed through this initiative?

A common problem with any data-collecting endeavor is that making sense and use of data is far more difficult than collecting it. 2024-25 was CI's third year of using Critical Learning Collectives (CLCs) as a strategy for making sense and use of Campus Climate Survey (CCS) data.

Note: CLCs are typically comprised of 8-12 people who commit to regular participation (typically for two hours monthly) and the creation of a confidential, "safe-as-possible-for-risk-taking" kind of space. Survey data from CFG/CLC participants over the past several years at CI consistently support the idea that in these groups, support can be sought, risks can be taken, critical conversations can be had, trust can be grown, and thorny problems can be tackled -- all through the process of working on dilemmas of professional practice (for example, campus climate issues) with the help of structured protocols led by qualified facilitators.

As of this writing, CI has completed one 3-survey cycle of employee CCS administration and CLC response to CCS findings.

2. **Goals:** What are participants trying to achieve? (Feel free to include objectives – i.e., smaller, measurable steps along the way toward achieving larger goals.)

Goal and Objectives

- Goal: improve campus climate.
- Objectives:
 - create "safe spaces" for students, staff, faculty, and administrators to discuss campus climate survey findings—purposefully building opportunities for critical, confidential conversation and a sense of community for participants
 - collect anonymized notes on those conversations and identify emerging themes for needed improvements
 - make recommendations to campus leadership and to the campus on strategies/actions to take
 - publish recommendations and ensure transparency on campus climate improvement efforts.

3. **Metrics/Data for Evaluation:**

- a. What metrics will you use to evaluate achievement of this initiative's goals?
- b. What data will be necessary for determining impact?
- c. How and when are these data being collected?

Metrics and Data Collection

- Formation of CLCs (yes/no measure)
 - Form at least five CLCs with at least 50 participants, including students, staff, faculty, and administrators (September 2024)
- Impact on participants (qualitative feedback)
 - Qualtrics survey (May 2025)
- Recommendations for improvement (yes/no measure)
 - Collate anonymized data from CLC discussions (Spring 2025)
 - Recommend action items derived from CLC data to President Yao and Cabinet (May 2025)
- Published action items (yes/no measure)
 - Track progress through [IEAP website](#)
- Campus Climate Survey findings (quantitative and qualitative findings): See Campus Climate Survey Dashboard
 - Fall 2022: Employees – Job Satisfaction, part 1 (focus of 2022-23 CLCs)
 - Spring 2023: Employees – Job Satisfaction, part 2 (focus of 2023-24 CLCs)
 - Spring 2024: Students – National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates, by the USC Racial Equity Leadership Alliance administered to students Apr24
 - Fall 2024: Employees - Belongingness (focus of 2024-25 CLCs)

B. STATUS: Again, please respond briefly to each of the following.

1. **Progress:** Has progress been made on this initiative this semester? If so, please describe.

Six CLCs were formed in September 2024, with groups varying in size from 6 to 10 members apiece and a total of 46 faculty, staff, and administrators participating in 2024-25. The groups studied findings from the Fall 2024 administration of the third in the 3-survey cycle of employee CCS – this one focused on respondents' sense of belongingness.

We had a record number of people sign up to participate this year, 61 in total: 27 Staff (44%); 19 Faculty (31%), and 15 Admin (25%). Attrition over the course of the year took that number to 50 participants and coaches who completed their CLC year in 2024-25.

2. **Evaluation:** What have you learned thus far? How do you know what you have learned?

The CLC-CCS initiative holds value for CLC participants, evidenced in: (1) status reports posted on the IEAP website; (2) qualitative feedback from CLC participants in year-end Qualtrics surveys; and (2) stable CLC participation rates over the years.

As we look at participation rates over time, there is remarkable stability in the number of employees who complete a full year in their CLC, with proportionalities across staff, faculty, and administrators moving closer to each other in this most recent year, particularly in the uptick of faculty participants from 2022-23.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Staff	30 (60%)	23 (47%)	22 (44%)
Faculty	8 (16%)	12 (25%)	15 (30%)
Admin	12 (24%)	14 (29%)	13 (26%)
Total	50	49	50

Additionally, we have learned that there is great need for scientific rigor in the development of campus climate surveys. In Dr. Lee's review of 900 published surveys, less than 4% provide psychometric evidence. Data-informed decision-making demands sound data, making the validity of the instrument for data collection extremely important to the quality of decisions made.

On this point, CSUCI's work in developing CCS in-house for employees and students may have value to other institutions of higher education in the following ways.

- Drs. Zivot, Lee, and I met with colleagues at Sonoma State at their request in June 2025 to share our process with them. Additionally, with CCS now a required element in WSCUC accreditation, there is the possibility of CSUCI's contributions to this body of work being valuable outside of the CSU. (The CCS team discussed the possibility of this being a revenue-generating possibility. Since the survey items we used originated in freely available item banks, we decided it would not be ethical to charge other institutions for use of the surveys themselves. However, Dr. Zivot is potentially interested in creating a revenue stream for his unit through assisting other institutions in designing CCS dashboards and offering external data analysis support for quantitative results.)
- Our CCS/CLC work has also contributed to the following scholarly works:
 - Lee, H. (2025, May 1-4). *Advancing campus climate assessments: A review of current practices and recommendations for improvement* [Paper presentation]. Western Psychological Association Convention, Las Vegas, NV.
 - Zivot, M., Lee, H., & Tollefson, K. (2024, November 5-8). *Surveying employee campus climate: Assessment for change* [Paper Presentation]. [California Association for Institutional Research Conference](#), San Francisco, CA.
 - [Lee, H., Ortouste, M., Syed, A., & Mann, K. \(2024\)](#). A systematic review of campus climate assessments at institutions of higher education.. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000594>
 - [Lee, H. Lee, H., Zivot, M., & Tollefson, K.](#) (in preparation). Development and validation of campus climate assessments.

3. **Continuation:** Should this initiative continue beyond 2024-25, in your view? Why or why not?

Yes, though focus may shift. By combining our CCS efforts with our campus's CFG/CLC history and leadership capacity, we have created a unique model for engaging the campus community in making sense and use of climate survey data.

Being serious about campus climate requires investment not only in the front end of that work – the development and administration of CCS – but also on the back end, to dedicate time and resources to the CLC effort, culminating in direct opportunity for CLC participants to advise the President and his Cabinet on necessary actions for improvement.

4. **Future Needs:** If your answer to #3 was yes, are ongoing funding or other resource needs required for this initiative beyond 2023-24?

In 2022, \$87,702 was allocated for this institutionally funded initiative. In three years, we have invested \$97,320 in CLCs.

- 2022-23: \$10,047
- 2023-24: \$65,844
 - \$40K of this amount hit in 23-24 for 22-23 expenses incurred
 - In 22-23, participants were paid \$500 and coaches \$3000

- In 23-24, we eliminated participant stipends, replacing that form of institutional thanks with working lunches in the Islands Kitchen
- CLC coaches continued to receive \$3K annually; intern coaches \$1500
- 2024-25: \$21,429
 - \$18,775: CLC coaches (\$3K) and interns (\$1500)
 - \$2,654: Islands Kitchen

From 2022-24, CCS development costs, divisionally funded by BFA, totaled \$57,670.

- Consulting contracts for Dr. HyeSun Lee: \$49,100
- Cloud Research Validation Service: \$6695
- ASI Student Incentives: \$1875

Total cost of IEAT 4.2 CCS/CLC initiative 2022-25: \$154,990

Questions for consideration, going forward:

- CCS series
 - Background:
 - Initially, a four-survey cycle was envisioned for employees and for students. In Fall 2024, two employee surveys were administered at once; what was intended to be Belongingness Part 1 and Belongingness Part 2 was administered as a single survey, thus ending cycle 1 for employees as a three-survey cycle. Cycle 2 is thus poised to begin in F25.
 - For students, Belongingness Part 1 and Part 2 have been developed, with Part 1 poised for administration in F25.
 - Questions:
 - With two Student CCS developed (administrations in F25 and F26), does the university want to invest in developing a third to match the three-survey cycle for employees? Or stick with just the two already developed on Belongingness?
 - Note: From Spr23-Spr24, CI was a member in USC's Racial Equity Leadership Alliance, with a benefit being that they have surveys for faculty, staff, and students on racial equity and justice available for member use. In Spr24 with budget cutting underway, OTP discontinued this \$25K/annual membership cost.
 - If no further survey development is needed, then we have capped the total in-house survey development cost at \$57,670. If we were to continue using external instrumentation and data analyses as we did in 2018 and 2020, that cost would have been roughly replicated with each administration.
 - KT perspective: Given the many other surveying opportunities that students have over the course of their career at CI, a two-survey cycle that focuses on the single, critically important topic of belongingness suffices for now, at least while we are still digging out from the enrollment/budget crises.
- CLCs
 - Background:
 - While progress has been made on several CLC recommendations over the years, these have not been included in a true strategic planning effort. Recommendations adopted from Spring 2023 were folded into the Strategic Directions Bridge Plan (which was not a formal strategic planning effort).

- CLC Recommendations from 2022-25 need to be reviewed, assessed, and incorporated as appropriate in CI2030 strategic plan
 - F1.1 [2022-23 and 2023-24 CLC Recommendations](#)
 - F1.2 [2024-25 CLC Recommendations](#)
- Questions:
 - While Employee Cycle 2 and Student Cycle 1 of CCSs are poised for F25 administration, what should be the role of CLCs in 2025-26?
 - Members consistently report the value of CLC participation for themselves, but CLC value to the institution is in the careful study of CCS data and resulting recommendations.
 - Should 2025-26 CLCs have a different approach than continued collection of recommendations?
 - KT perspective: If Employee Cycle 2 does begin in F25 with administration of CCS 1, then CLCs should continue to study results – comparing them with CCS 1 results from F22. However, perhaps instead of spending time and energy on coming up with additional recommendations, CLCs can relate to the CI2030/IEAP planning efforts in some way, as a ready-made, broad campus engagement strategy for strategic planning. By studying CLC recommendations and progress made/not made since 2022, these groups could contribute significantly to CI2030.
 - We have pared the cost of CLCs down significantly since the first year.
 - 2024-25: \$21,429
 - With \$238,634 remaining of the initial 2022 IEAP allocation of \$650,000, does the CCS/CLC initiative warrant continued funding from this one-time pool?
 - KT perspective: Yes. This is one of few IEAP initiatives that have consistently been implemented with participation across all employee groups and divisions. Creating spaces for employees to speak safely with one another across their units and roles, with honesty and care for one another, is the best strategy I know for building community and a positive culture – at least within the CLC space. Growing this culture with intentionality in small spaces can impact the whole.