

The “Something’s Happening” Committee held another UCPEA workshop on February 17th, attended by 150 employees, with an emphasis on the role of a supervisor to promote and ensure civility and respectful work environments.

In the opening remarks, UCPEA President Kevin Fahey reminded supervisors that they “set the tone and atmosphere in the workplace” and must role-model the expected behaviors. Speakers at the event included President Hogan, Kathleen Holgerson of the Women’s Center, Dana McGee of ODE, Rachel Rubin of OACE, and Keith Hood of HR. The program was moderated by Angela Rola of the Asian-American Cultural Center, and an UCPEA Vice-President. The legal obligations of supervisors to intervene and report inappropriate behaviors, such as harassment and bullying, and to ensure that no employee suffers retaliation for reporting such behaviors, was emphasized throughout the workshop. ODE stressed that supervisors may find themselves personally liable depending upon their actions and responses.

Participants broke into groups to discuss what kind of behaviors they witness in their workplace, and what needs to change to ensure respectful and pleasant work environments. The participants’ recommendations from the UCPEA events are posted on our website at www.ucpea.org.

In addition to the workshops, UCPEA posted an informal survey on our website, asking members to share their thoughts and experiences at their own worksite. Over 20% of the membership responded to the on-line survey, with some interesting results. About 70% of the respondents were non-supervisors and about 80% of the respondents were female employees.

- ✓ 85-89% believe that their work is valued by their supervisor and co-workers, respectively;
- ✓ 81-86%% report that their supervisors and co-workers are respectful;
- ✓ 85% of respondents said they were proud to be a member of the UConn community, but only 53% said they believe the UConn really cares about its employees;
- ✓ 67% said that their supervisor sets a positive tone in the office;
- ✓ Employees were split on the question of whether their supervisor effectively deals with conflict in the workplace: 46%:Yes; 44%:No;
- ✓ 46% said that they have witnessed other employees subjected to discrimination, harassment or bullying, but 58% said they did not report the problem;
- ✓ The most commonly reported problems among respondents were: unfair treatment in work assignments and in promotions (49%), followed by discrimination for factors prohibited by law (25%); bullying (17%); harassment (14%); verbal threats (6%), and lastly physical threats (1%) – (Note: respondents could check all that applied);
- ✓ 22% are discouraged by the environment at their office and avoid interaction with their supervisor.
- ✓ 62% they would be willing to participate in more training and education “to foster a more respectful and supportive work environment here at UConn”.