

A-State Campus Climate Committee focus groups Maintaining a positive campus environment

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STAFF WRITER

The A-State Campus Climate Committee is holding campus climate focus groups this month and into November to review information from the Campus Climate Survey distributed last semester and share feedback about campus climate.

Dr. Evette Allen Moore, executive director of Multicultural Affairs & Inclusive Excellence and co-chair of the Campus Climate Committee said both the campus climate focus groups and the committee have had a big impact on the quality of campus life.

The committee focuses heavily on maintaining a positive campus environment, but to do so they are required to take an in depth look at how to determine what it is and how to improve it. "The committee defines

campus climate as behavior within a workplace or learning environment ranging from the subtle to the cumulative to the dramatic," Allen Moore said. "It determines whether an individual feels personally safe, listened to, valued, and treated fairly and with respect."

The committee was initially formed in 2017. The first co-chairs were Dr. Maurice Gipson, former Cabinet-Level Chief Diversity Officer and Dr. Lori Winn, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources.

"Currently, we meet once a month to discuss climate issues at A-State, and the membership is very represented across campus," Allen Moore said.

Allen Moore's chair focus is representing diversity and community engagement. She said the committee is run by various campus organizations and groups with diverse origins.

Some of the participants include the faculty and staff senates, the Student Government Association (SGA), a large number of multicultural organizations and multiple offices that deal with climate related issues, including Title IX. In addition, University Police, A-State Athletics, Women and Gender Studies and Red Wolf Life are also involved.

"While this number is large, it is not all of the committee," Allen Moore said. "These are just a few of the examples of all the involved people willing to help out."

Allen Moore said the committee is sure to serve the entirety of the A-State community, which means it is not limited to just on-campus students. Its services additionally reach on-line students as well as staff, faculty and administration. Though the committee reaches far and wide throughout

campus, the goals of the committee extend far beyond just maintaining campus climate.

"Although we obviously focus a lot on keeping a positive campus climate, we hope to achieve it in multiple ways," Allen Moore said. "We want to give anyone on campus an opportunity to voice their concerns and make them feel heard. We also want to help them in understanding campus resources, and we want to connect people. A sense of community makes people feel like they belong."

The impact of the committee depends heavily on who is being asked. While some might say the most important part is the community aspect, others may say it is the ability to gain a better understanding of campus climate.

The group has hosted various workshops across campus and plans to continue to do so. It provides an opportunity for anyone

to share personal experiences or make recommendations that might enhance campus climate.

Despite the helpful nature of these groups, Allen Moore emphasized that they are sure not to take over or overstep any boundaries. The committee does not necessarily take on already happening events but more often works with other established groups to fulfill recommendations and reach goals.

While the committee is aware of the many ways to track campus climate, it does rely largely on the Campus Climate Survey as its main way to determine the environment on campus. The survey, which is readministered every 3-4 years, most recently collected data last semester.

"We released the survey in the spring of 2020, but COVID-19 got in the way,"

Allen Moore said. "We weren't able to make any dif-

ferences at that time, but when we started back in the fall, we were able to be refocused with our student involved campus climate focus groups, which supplement our survey data."

The focus groups are occurring throughout October and into November, and there are RSVP options. Despite the ability to RSVP, Allen Moore emphasized that any student is invited and encouraged to join at any time. However, the meetings are held in specific sessions for certain groups of people.

"The upcoming meetings are in the Student Union Auditorium on Oct. 27 at 4:30 p.m. for on-campus students, and a virtual option on Nov. 3 at 11 a.m.," Allen Moore said. "There has been a campus-wide email sent, as well as Daily Digest announcements with links to RSVP, but anyone can show up."

A-State Food Pantry prepares "Holiday Bag Initiative" for upcoming holiday season

RACHEL RUDD
STAFF WRITER

With the holiday season approaching, it is also the start of a difficult time for those who are food insecure. Volunteer A-State and the A-State Food Pantry are working on the "Holiday Bag Initiative," a program that provides holiday foods to Red Wolves and families in need.

"We have people come to the food pantry every week, but during the holiday times, people eat certain traditional foods. We just wanted to give people some of those traditional foods that they might not have the rest of the year," Kaleb Webb, a junior political science major and co-chair of the food pantry said.

The program is a campus-wide project, involving donations from Greek organizations, registered student organizations and more. They work to fundraise or donate certain holiday foods. This year, the initiative is working with the Student Activities Board (SAB) to provide donations.

"It's part of the homecoming packet that just came out. We've given them specific items to donate. They'll get them and donate them to us. We'll take anything we can get," Webb said.

To promote the project, the food pantry utilizes social media, A-State's app, and word of mouth. The goal is to let others in the community know about the food pantry and the services it provides.

"Some people still don't know about it, so we really try to get the word out there and really try to help other people in the A-State community as well, not just the students, faculty and staff," Sarah Lynch, a senior exercise science major and co-chair of the food pantry said.

The "Holiday Bag Initiative" aims to provide anyone with the opportunity



Sarah Lynch

Photos by Rachel Rudd | Staff Writer



Kaleb Webb

to receive holiday foods and help lessen food insecurity during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

"The food insecurity levels on all campuses are pretty high and some of our students aren't able to get meals provided to them. We're just really trying to help them in that situation," Lynch said. "I know that we helped a lot of people last year and I'm really excited to see how many families we can help this year."

For people wanting to get involved, Volunteer A-State provides applications through their social media and website at the beginning of each semester. Applications are examined and then approved, with new volunteers placed on the schedule to begin working.

"They'll just fill out an application, it'll ask a few simple questions and then some other reasons about why you're passionate about helping people with food insecurity and why you want to be involved in Volunteer A-State," Webb said. The food pantry does more donation drives than just the holiday bag initiative. They also do food drives and hygiene drives to provide for those in need year-round.

"The end goal is just to be a place where any A-State student, faculty, and staff can come with absolutely no shame; to be able to combat food insecurity on campus and to make sure that every Red Wolf has something to eat," Webb said.

A-State hosts STEM and Agriculture Fair



Photos by Christiana Knapp | Staff Photographer

The STEM and Agriculture Career Fair is a networking event for Arkansas State University students and alumni to meet with industry recruiters in the field of STEM and Agriculture.

CAMPUS CRIME

JONATHAN SCHAUFLE
NEWS EDITOR

Oct. 15 | 2:05 p.m.

Officer James Mitchell was sitting stationary near the welcome sign on Aggie Road. He observed a gray passenger car heading east on Aggie Road towards Highway 49 at a high rate of speed. Mitchell clocked the vehicle with a radar gun at 37 miles per hour in a 20 miles per hour zone. Mitchell then conducted a traffic stop with the driver to explain the reason for the stop. The driver, suspect two, advised that she did not have current insurance. Mitchell

then went back to his vehicle and ran suspect two through the Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC) and discovered that she was suspended. The suspension was confirmed through dispatch and it was also discovered that suspect two had a warrant through the Jonesboro Police Department. Due to the suspension Mitchell requested for a wrecker to take possession of the vehicle. Mitchell then pulled the driver out of the vehicle and asked for consent to search the vehicle. Nothing was located during the search of the car. Jonesboro Police arrived on the scene and took suspect two into custody. Suspect

two was issued a citation for Driving on Suspended and No Proof of Liability Insurance. The vehicle was then towed.

Oct. 14 | 12:19 a.m.

An A-State Emergency Alert was sent out about an off-campus shooting. Two suspects were seen around University Loop West and Aggie Road. Suspect one was a light-skinned male wearing red shorts and no shirt, suspect two was a dark-skinned male wearing black and white pants. No one was harmed in this shooting and further information has not been released at this time.