

# Sustained Focus on Campus Climate, Spring 2026

College Council, De Anza College

June 18, 2026



**FOOTHILL-DE ANZA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# Campus Climate Initiatives

- **Inaugural survey implementation, May – June 2025**
  - 258 complete responses (145 Foothill, 226 De Anza, 67 Central Services)
  - Administered every two years
- **Focus groups held in May**
  - Classified Professionals (2 sessions), Faculty (2 sessions), Administrators (1 session)
  - 15 attendees
- **Employee Pulse Survey, May 2026**
  - 12-question survey to measure progress towards the Forbes Employer of Choice model
  - 417 responses districtwide
  - Administered every other year opposite climate survey



# Employer of Choice Model

The Forbes employer of choice model is based on 6 themes:

- Holistic Well-Being and Support
- Purpose-Driven Culture
- Empowerment and Career Growth
- Transparent and Ethical Leadership
- Recognition and Belonging
- Intentional Employee Experience



# 1. Holistic Well-Being and Support

## **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- About half of respondents feel FHDA prioritizes the well-being of employees.

## **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- Walking competition
- HR reminders of wellness benefits and access to resources
- Hybrid work options available

## **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Collectively define what well-being means to us as a district.
- Strong emphasis on workload balance and reducing chronic overextension



# Focus Group Feedback

- **Collectively define what well-being means to us as a district.**
- **Strong emphasis on workload balance and reducing chronic overextension**
  - Managers should model a positive work-life balance for employees so they feel they can take time off
  - Recognize the need for time off and picking up the workload to assist each other
  - Develop an ethic of care that is a daily practice and recognizes the whole person



- **Supportive supervisors seen as critical to well-being**
  - Authentic care
  - Support around expectations and demands, conflicting requests and deadlines, being a thought partner in outcomes
- **Need for flexible work arrangements and respect for boundaries**
  - Employees reported finding coverage for bathroom or lunch breaks
  - Cross training is important so people can take breaks and vacation and not feel the work will not be done while away.
  - Working from home is important for the work life balance.



## 2. Purpose-Driven Culture

### **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- Only one-fifth of FHDA employees were knowledgeable about the Chancellor's Vision.

### **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- District strategic plan presentations and discussions at college councils, academic and classified senates, all admin mtg, board, website updates, connection with 2026 opening day

### **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Desire for leadership to actively reinforce mission in planning and communication
- Employees want a clear connection between their day-to-day work and the district mission
- Inconsistency noted between stated values and actual practices/decisions



# Focus Group Feedback

- **Desire for leadership to actively reinforce mission in planning and communication**
  - Departments and division missions should be clear and publicized
  - Lack of clear messaging around how basic aid will affect each area and how it changes our mission
  - Lack of discussion around innovation and equity
  - Lack of direction may result in us falling behind other districts



- **Employees want a clear connection between their day-to-day work and the district mission**
  - A district mission needs collaboration and unity so it can be interpreted similarly across the district
  - Mission loses its purpose if everyone is interpreting it differently
  - Requires cohesion and everyone coalescing around a mission that ties us together.
  - Student success is clearly the mission -- there is frustration when not all employees embrace this mission
  - Hard to get past the daily tasks to achieve a broader mission/vision -- lack the opportunity to be proactive in achieving the mission
  - Pushback on initiatives results from a lack of understanding of the larger goals/mission
  - More resources are needed



- **Inconsistency noted between stated values and actual practices/decisions**

- It seems like everyone is working but in different directions
- Mission seems to change with each leadership change
- Lack of global thinking about mission achievement makes people's jobs harder when there are different processes at each college
- There is a need to understand why cohesion is necessary in a large district
- Employees get stretched thin when there is no direction or if it is always changing
- Responsibilities get added but nothing gets taken away



- **Interest in more opportunities to engage meaningfully with institutional purpose**
  - Foothill's Blueprint for Success and realignment process was noted as having a clear focus to lead with care and compassion and deconstruct the student experience but a lack of recognition of the amount of time this will take in practice
  - Sense that people are involved and try to pay attention, but the direction is unclear
  - Lack of knowledge of what is happening across the colleges and across similar departments – innovations and practices are not being shared



# 3. Empowerment and Career Growth

## **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- One third of FHDA employees feel there are opportunities for career advancement.

## **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- HR developing Leadership training for 2026-27
- Improvements to administrative evaluations with a greater focus on growing leaders

## **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Interest in cross-functional projects, skill-building, and leadership opportunities



- **Desire for more rewards for performance**
  - Education incentives and pay for additional assignments is not equitable across employee classifications
  - There are not always paths for growth in all classifications
  - Concern that employees are constantly asked to do more without additional compensation
- **Interest in cross-functional projects, skill-building, and leadership opportunities**
  - Onboarding process is desired
  - Professional development and growth isn't part of the workday -- cannot find time to fit it in
  - Working out of class is a positive way to improve skills. However, employees may need more guidance in how to meet the minimum qualifications or apply for out of class, interim, or acting positions. There is an interest in coaching to be eligible to apply.
  - Concern that out-of-class opportunities are not made public



# 4. Transparent and Ethical Leadership

## **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- Over half of respondents agree departmental leaders operate transparently.

## **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- Governance councils/committees posting agendas and notes in timely manner; agenda items reflect important topics (e.g. budget, immigration, etc.)
- Empowering governance transparency through standardized agendas and notes
- Somos Uno taskforce to address resource allocation model

## **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Trust is impacted by perceived lack of transparency and follow-through
- Desire for leadership accountability and opportunities for employee voice/input
- Communication gaps around decision-making processes are a key concern



- **Trust is impacted by perceived lack of transparency and follow-through**
  - Departments are working together but leaders are not setting the expectation that we work together so people are working in opposite directions
  - Lack of human connection with those making the decisions leads to a lack of trust
  - Interest in knowing administrators on a more personal level so there is a sense that when a decision is made, the administrator is being genuine.



- **Desire for leadership accountability and opportunities for employee voice/input**
  - Ensure the correct people are in the room when decisions are made
  - Changes in leadership have been challenging
  - Fear-based mentality where employees are afraid to acknowledge deficiencies or areas for improvement
- **Communication gaps around decision-making processes are a key concern**
  - There may be transparency, but people may not feel it because they do not see it or did not read the communication
  - Different forms of communication besides emails -- information overload leads to not paying attention
  - Those who are engaged in the process feel more informed



# 5. Recognition and Belonging

## **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- Over half of FHDA employees feel a sense of belonging, with newer employees reporting a higher rate of belonging than more seasoned employees.

## **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- Newsletters and events recognizing faculty and staff, student achievements

## **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Recognition is often inconsistent, informal, or not equitably distributed
- Strong need for more intentional community-building and connection
- Employees want to feel seen, valued, and respected across roles and identities



- **Recognition is often inconsistent, informal, or not equitably distributed**
  - Purposefully bring people together in spaces to collaborate
  - Innovation showcase was an example of collaboration
  - Employees love De Anza but would appreciate genuine acknowledgement of their work to show they are valued, important and essential, including monetary incentives



- **Strong need for more intentional community-building and connection**

- Collectively define what belonging looks like, it will be different based on our experiences, culture, background, etc.
- Belonging tied to equity, inclusion, and addressing systemic disparities
- Safe spaces to come together and feel welcome and accepted
- Places for respectful discourse
- Affinity groups help build community and collaboration but not everyone has that space available to them
- Managers can feel isolated with less people to connect with



- **Employees want to feel seen, valued, and respected across roles and identities**
  - There is a sense of belonging within one's own area, but beyond that it is lacking
  - Sense that you cannot speak up or are being watched
  - Ensure managers are trained in community building and improving belonging, as it varies from manager to manager
  - Lack of trust across the college and district fosters a lack of belonging and connection
  - If the district asks what can be improved and information is shared, the district needs to act on it -- if nothing comes from it, people feel their opinion does not matter and won't share in the future



# 6. Intentional Employee Experience

## **Climate Survey, Spring 2025:**

- About half of respondents indicate FHDA is effective in implementing equitable employee retention efforts.

## **Examples of Ongoing Improvements:**

- New technologies for recruitment and onboarding implemented

## **Focus Groups, Spring 2026:**

- Interest in identifying and scaling effective practices already working in pockets
- Desire for a more cohesive, consistent employee experience across locations and roles
- Retention linked to onboarding quality, support systems, and workplace culture



- **Interest in identifying and scaling effective practices already working in pockets**

- Hiring committees are important in ensuring employees are a good fit -- additional training should be provided on how to be on a hiring committee, what to look for in a candidate, how to evaluate for minimum qualifications and how to self-pace to give all applications equal attention
- Educational funding is a nice resource but limited to \$1,200 and staff development leave requires you to return your time x2



- **Desire for a more cohesive, consistent employee experience across locations and roles**
  - Employees that are student facing are often the lowest paid. If we value the first contact with students, we want to retain those staff and ensure they are knowledgeable to adequately assist students.
  - If an educational incentive is not available to classified professionals similar to administrators, they should be allowed to start higher on the scale
  - Internal promotions are not eligible to negotiate pay, it is set at a standard 5% rate and does not incentivize doing more work for limited additional pay



- **Communication, support, and clarity across the employee lifecycle seen as key drivers**
  - Cost of living is a factor in attraction and retention -- are there resources to offset the cost of living in the Bay Area?
  - What we say and how we say it is important
- **Retention linked to onboarding quality, support systems, and workplace culture**
  - Retention starts with quality leaders who set the morale and culture
  - Retention is grounded in well-being and belonging and needs to be intentional to reinforce and deliver on a culture of belonging
  - We need to take care of ourselves so we can continue to take care of students.



# Employee Pulse Survey, Spring 2026



<b>Responses below 70%</b>	<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</b>
I feel my voice and opinions matter.	<b>49%</b>	28%
I have had conversations about my professional progress in the past year.	<b>50%</b>	32%
I receive praise and encouragement regularly.	<b>52%</b>	26%
I feel valued and appreciated at work.	<b>58%</b>	26%
I can successfully complete my job with the resources provided.	<b>61%</b>	23%
My colleagues are focused on doing their best every day.	<b>62%</b>	13%
I have colleagues who promote my professional growth and well-being.	<b>63%</b>	16%

Neither agree nor disagree and Not sure responses not included. 417 responses.



<b>Responses Above 70%</b>	<b>Strongly Agree/Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</b>
I have opportunities to learn new things at work.	<b>73%</b>	11%
I have professional goals and know how to achieve them.	<b>75%</b>	11%
I have great colleagues at work.	<b>76%</b>	8%
I believe my work helps achieve our mission.	<b>86%</b>	2%
I am actively engaged at work.	<b>87%</b>	5%

Neither agree nor disagree and Not sure responses not included. 417 responses.



# Questions?

