CEHD Civility Survey Results

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Civility Committee
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519 CEHD faculty and staff filled out the survey, for an overall response rate of 23%. Respondents were overwhelmingly female (73%), but evenly split in age.
45% of respondents were P&A employees, while 23% were CSBU staff members. Only 11 tenure-track faculty members completed the survey, while 84 tenured faculty members participated. A significant portion of respondents preferred not to answer.
Every CEHD unit was represented in the survey responses. It was apparent in the qualitative answer section that some people felt their comments along with demographic information, would be enough to identify them and were uncomfortable with that possibility.
The next three slides show the responses to a question about how often respondents experiences specific kinds of incivility. While 81% of respondents reported experiencing some sort of incivility within the last six months, all job classes had averages of less than 2.5 for every measure of civility.

Addressed you in unprofessional or disrespectful terms, either publicly or privately - Avg 1.67

Gave you hostile looks, stares, or sneers - Avg 1.57

Dismissed your expertise in your field of work - Avg 2.13

Paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions - Avg 2.15

TF=tenured faculty, TTF=tenure-track faculty, N/A=job class unspecified, P&A IR=P&A Instructional & Research, P&A A=P&A Administrative, CS/BU=Civil Service/Bargaining Unit.
The specific types of incivility that were reported to occur most frequently were:

- paid little attention to your statements or showed little interest in your opinions (2.15)
- showed lack of consideration for your time (2.14)
- dismissed your expertise in your field of work (2.13), and
- made insulting or disrespectful remarks about someone who wasn’t present (2.03)
The specific examples of incivility that each group reported experiencing most frequently are:

- **Tenured Faculty**: Someone showed lack of consideration for their time
- **Tenure-Track Faculty**: Heard insulting remarks about someone who wasn’t present
- **Civil Service/Bargaining Unit**: Someone showed lack of consideration for their time
- **P&A Administrative**: Heard insulting remarks about someone who wasn’t present
- **P&A Instructional/Research**: Someone dismissed their expertise in their field of work

Withheld information that was important to your job - Avg 1.87

Showed lack of consideration for your time - Avg 2.14

Made jokes at your expense - Avg 1.28

Accused you of incompetence - Avg 1.29

Ignored you or failed to speak to you (e.g. gave you "the silent treatment") - Avg 1.67
Respondents were asked to identify the sources of the incivility they experienced or witnessed and could select as many answers as were appropriate. 53% of respondents identified faculty as a source of incivility. +Both tenured and tenure-track faculty tended to identify faculty as a source of incivility, and staff tended to identify staff.
How did incivility affect respondent’s work or well-being? This is the key question – the next three slides show what the real costs of incivility are to CEHD. Respondents were able to check all options that applied. 57% of respondents reported that incivility affected them in some way.

- Became reluctant to share your ideas with anyone (n=112)
- Looked for a new job (n=97)
- Tried to avoid the person (n=175)
- Became so emotional that you experienced a decline in work performance (n=97)
The costs of incivility identified by the highest percentage of respondents were:

- Vented or talked to someone about the incident (56% overall, 220 respondents)
- Tried to avoid the person (45% overall, 175 respondents)
Individuals’ experience of incivility has real costs. Consider the following results:

- 37% overall and 40% of faculty respondents became more cynical about CEHD and/or the U of MN or saw their commitment decline.
- 29% overall became more reluctant to share their ideas with anyone.
- 25% overall and 30% of CSBU respondents looked for a new job.
- 25% overall became so emotional that they experienced a decline in work performance.
Respondents were also asked to reveal how often they exhibited specific types of incivility. 63.8% of respondents report exhibiting some sort of incivility at least once in the last six months, yet the averages for all job classes in all types of incivility were less than 2.
Respondents reported exhibiting the following types of incivility most often:

- Paid little attention to someone’s statements or showed little interest in their opinions (1.55)
- Made insulting or disrespectful remarks about someone who wasn’t present (1.50)
- Showed lack of consideration for someone’s time (1.24)
- Accused someone of incompetence (1.23)

Ignored someone or failed to speak to someone (e.g. gave them "the silent treatment") - Avg 1.22

Made insulting or disrespectful remarks about someone who wasn't present - Avg 1.5

Yelled, shouted, or swore at someone or targeted them with anger outbursts - Avg 1.03

Interrupted or "spoke over" someone in a way that was dismissive - Avg 1.13
The specific examples of incivility that each group reported exhibiting most frequently are:

- **Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty**: Paid little attention to someone's statements or showed little interest in their opinions
- **Civil Service/Bargaining Unit**: Made insulting or disrespectful remarks about someone who wasn't present
- **P&A Administrative and P&A Instructional/Research**: Paid little attention to someone's statements or showed little interest in their opinions

Withheld information that was important to someone's job - Avg 1.06

Showed lack of consideration for someone's time - Avg 1.24

Made jokes at a colleague's expense - 1.18

Accused someone of incompetence - 1.23
Respondents were asked to identify their reasons for exhibiting uncivil behavior themselves, selecting all those that applied. The most frequently cited reasons were:

- I didn’t agree with the person
- I lost control of my emotions, and
- I was too busy to be tactful.
Respondents reported that they experienced a high level of **civility** from their colleagues. 98.5% of all respondents reported that they had experienced at least one specific act of civil behavior within the last six months.

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<th>Description</th>
<th>TF</th>
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<th>P&amp;A IR</th>
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<td>Showed respect for your time</td>
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<td>Demonstrated that they value your opinions</td>
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<td>Stopped what they were doing to listen to you</td>
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1=never, 3=sometimes, 5=many times
Respondents were also asked about how often they demonstrate civility. 92.7% of all respondents report that they demonstrated specific acts of civil behavior in the past six months.
Who sets the tone for civility in CEHD? 62% of respondents felt that faculty set the tone, while 58% looked to unit leadership and 52% to administrative staff. 42% of respondents reported that their
When asked to rate the level of civility within CEHD, over 77% of respondents felt that the college met or exceeded their expectations.
76% of respondents felt that their own unit met or exceeded their expectations of civility.
The survey closed with two qualitative questions:

“Please share other impressions and thoughts on civility at CEHD not covered here, including possible next steps, such as developing a formal system for reporting grievances or training.” (158 responses)

“Would you like to tell us a story that illustrates a positive or negative instance of civility from your experience?” (102 responses)

The next few slides summarize themes from these qualitative responses, including representative comments.
The power structure leads to incivility.

- I feel like a lot of the civility issues are related to the **class system** so ingrained at the U of M. The University is set up to reward brilliant and innovative faculty, but we need to stop looking the other way when serious breaches of civility, and frankly verbal abuse, are happening. I think this college works harder than most to encourage civil interaction, but I still see staff verbally abused by faculty almost weekly.

- Our unit is very contentious and there is great incivility **demonstrated by a few of the faculty toward many of the rest of the group**. I have seen faculty treat their fellow faculty members with rudeness and disrespect, publicly. I have read emails that have addressed faculty with insulting language.....This is not a trait shared by all our faculty, but unfortunately their tactics and attitudes set the tone for the entire department.

- Civility is difficult enough to achieve in a group that mutually agrees upon its desirability. But when there are those who do not care to participate in any shared understanding of what it is to be civil, and especially when some of **those who do not care are in positions of power**, civility cannot be achieved.

- **Academia is inherently hierarchical** – intervening with a challenging senior colleague seems impossible.

- I feel staff don’t **value me as a person**.
There are no consequences for incivility.

• What is most concerning and discouraging to me has been that even when patterns of incivility were documented and reported by a diverse range of personnel to college administration, nothing was done to prevent it from continuing over a period of YEARS. The perception among staff is that faculty are rarely if ever disciplined for any kind of misbehavior, least of all incivility, and certainly are not removed from situations (leadership positions, for example) where they are able to inflict it on others.

• Even when I asked for help with the hostile work environment, my requests were dismissed. No one should have to work in this type of environment and “play the game” without being given the rules.

• Many of us have come to feel that the university is a place that turns a blind eye to misconduct of faculty towards other staff and students.

• I am shocked at the lack of consequences for incivility within CEHD. I have seen several examples of incivility and/or very poor professional judgment during my time working in the CEHD.
A few people set the tone.

- Mostly – the work environment is positive. However, one strong personality can make the situation challenging.
- The incivility I’ve experienced and observed in our department has been demonstrated by a relatively small number of individuals. The effects, however, were devastating to the department – low morale, disengagement from the department community and activities, losing competent faculty and staff.
- The majority of the incidents that I have first-hand knowledge about involve the same three people.
- It only takes one bad apple...but when bad apples start rallying together, it makes for an unbearable experience.
Leadership matters.

• Leadership is key...**everything trickles down from there.**

• Because my experience in my unit is so positive, I’d like to give an idea as to why. I think it’s the director of my unit, who clearly shows that s/he values all employees in the unit and makes time for them. **When the director is so civil, it’s really hard for others to become uncivil.**

• The message that incivility will not be tolerated must, in this case, come unequivocally from the college’s leadership; and whether the leadership is willing to support this matter is critical – and yet to be determined. The question, to my mind, **how serious is the leadership’s commitment to supporting a culture of civility?**

• When people in power use language to isolate others or to humiliate them publicly or even behind the scenes, it creates **distrust of that leadership** and also causes us to wonder if similar statements are made about us when we are not around.
We need a safe way to report incivility.

- My sense is that many people who regularly experience incivility within CEHD are constrained from sharing their experiences (and therefore having them addressed) by the fact that their superiors and/or people to whom they are accountable are the ones who are dishing up the incivility.
- There has to be a system whereby supervisors are held accountable for their behavior, and the employee needs to be “safe” in reporting violations. People who can’t get along need to receive counseling.
- Retaliation is a big concern.
- This has not been an issue in CEHD for me so far, but in my last department at the U, I faced significant incivility. A point of frustration for me was that I felt HR couldn’t give me a protocol for what was being done to address the situation.
- There should be a process in place when a person has an issue or a possible grievance with one’s supervisor, especially when they are the person you are supposed to go to in such situations. It would be helpful to know there is someone designated within the college that folks can discuss with and consult, hopefully without major ramifications.
Training is needed.

- **Training in civility** could address verbal/non-verbal communication, ways to nurture our own civility, alternatives to venting, and positive approaches to power struggles.
- A formal system for reporting grievances might be a good idea, however, to be honest I wouldn’t use it. Something less direct, like a required training that staff aren’t just required to watch, but are **encouraged to talk to others about**, might be more beneficial in my opinion.
- I think more training around strategies to **talk to the person that has demonstrated incivility to a co-worker or yourself would be helpful**. I have found that the leadership in CEHD takes incivility very seriously and has acted in the best interest of the person and unit. However, telling someone directly either in the moment or shortly afterwards that their behavior was inappropriate would yield better results.
- For training, I would lean more toward **case studies** that illustrate the subtle forms of incivility as well as the aggressive bullying behaviors that occur.
We need transparency.

• In order to have civility, I feel everyone has to feel valued, from the janitor to the Dean. The environment in CEHD is secretive and closed. We talk about transparency but things happen with unclear goals and expectations.

• Information about staffing and other major structural changes should be shared with affected workers as soon as possible. Affected workers should not be kept in the dark intentionally or otherwise. This leads to rumors, whispering, distrust, loss of productivity, and an overall hostile and toxic work environment. It is understood that colleges are always undergoing change – that is reality. But that is not an excuse for allowing the perception that serious decisions are being made undercover and that crucial information about those decisions is being kept deliberately from workers who are affected.
We need the opportunity to evaluate supervisors.

- People in management and leadership positions need to receive feedback from people below them, not just above. This could help people understand how their behavior contributes to the work environment so they have time to adjust before a situation becomes a grievance.
- Supervisors should be evaluated by the people they supervise as well as by the departments they serve. It seems a person is made a supervisor and then no one checks to make sure they are actually doing their job, or doing their job within an acceptable range of behavior.
- There has been no effort whatsoever to bring about any real accountability through supervisory 360 review.
On a positive note...

• My unit has always been proactive regarding an atmosphere of mutual respect and concern for others.
• I’m fairly new in the college, and have not experienced incivility. In fact, I’ve been pleasantly surprised at the level of civility overall throughout the college. I’m enjoying being here.
• I think (hope) that as a college, we practice what we preach, but it’s tough to know for sure. The U is a big place and the CEHD community is spread out. Individually, I know my group is like a family – very supportive of one another professionally and personally. However, I don’t know as much about the other groups and departments within CEHD….whatever the reason in the end I believe that CEHD has my back and I’m proud to be a part of it.
• Overall, CEHD is a very respectful and positive environment in which to work.
• I am continually impressed by the collegiality of my department among faculty and staff of all positions. It has been a pleasure to work here. Honestly, I have bragged to my colleagues at other institutions.