

UTC

Culture Assessment Report

June 29, 2023



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Culture Assessment Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the culture assessment is to provide a baseline understanding of the UTC's current culture to inform the next steps on the path to achieving the strategic goal of intentionally creating a culture that supports UTC team members and allows them to bring their whole selves to work without judgment or bias.

Data Origin

Tandem Motion developed a customized culture model for the UTC based on the organizational psychology scientific literature, the agency's statement of cultural transformation goals, and definitions from the State of Washington's Glossary of Equity-Related Terms. The culture model informed the development of focus group questions. Tandem Motion conducted a total of six focus groups: two groups of managers and four groups of non-managerial team members—one of which consisted of members from the BIPOC Council. The themes derived from the focus group qualitative data were used to inform the development of the agency-wide survey questions to examine whether common focus group perspectives were shared across the agency. The survey was administered over a 10-day period, and results were analyzed for commonalities and differences with the focus group findings. The results from both the focus groups and survey were synthesized into this final culture assessment report.

Timeline

The following dates reflect the timeline for the development and completion of the deliverables for the culture assessment engagement. The customized UTC culture model was developed starting on April 24, 2023, and approved on May 5, 2023. Focus group questions were developed starting on May 1, 2023, and focus groups were conducted during a three-day span of May 15 – 17, 2023. Qualitative results from focus groups informed the development of an all-agency survey, which began on May 18, 2023, and was deployed during a 10-day period of June 5 – 14, 2023. The culture assessment report was developed after the conclusion of the survey on June 15, 2023, with the final report delivered on June 30, 2023.

	Start Date	End Date
Produce culture model	April 24, 2023	May 5, 2023
Conduct focus groups	May 1, 2023	May 17, 2023
Conduct survey	May 18, 2023	June 14, 2023
Produce report	June 15, 2023	June 30, 2023

Culture Assessment Findings

Executive Summary

Based upon the synthesis of insights gleaned from the focus groups and agency-wide survey, the Tandem Motion team has compiled actionable recommendations for UTC leadership to consider. The following key insights and accompanying considerations are prioritized by Quick Wins, Best Bets, and Strategic Investments.

Quick Wins: Considerations categorized as lower criticality but highly feasible.

Best Bets: Considerations categorized as highly critical and highly feasible.

Strategic Investments: Considerations categorized as highly critical but more difficult or timely to implement.

Work Environment

Insights into the current work environment are important context to inform the strengths and opportunities of the UTC's current culture. While the work environment themes fall outside of the culture model, we have included the themes due to their contribution to the culture and overall health of the agency.

KEY INSIGHTS

Most team members are satisfied with their current work-life balance, efforts to prioritize their well-being, and available learning and development opportunities.

Team members feel passionate about their work and are committed to their jobs, though a concerning number are feeling burned out and considering work elsewhere because of the workload.

CONSIDERATIONS

Quick Wins

Continue to leverage the strengths of the current culture.

Best Bets

Prioritize Tandem Motion's recommendations for improving agency culture to buffer the effects of burnout and turnover.

Strategic Investments

Prioritize workforce planning to address workload and turnover by baselining and modifying workflows to determine how the current full-time equivalents (FTEs) can best serve the agency and, if applicable, to make the business case to the legislature for increasing FTEs.

Continue to prioritize recruitment and hiring to address the workload issue.

Organizational Justice

The perceived fairness of internal organizational decision-making processes¹, decision outcomes, and the implementation of decisions. When organizational justice is strong, team members are more likely to trust the agency and its leadership, feel included, and feel psychologically safe enough to bring their whole selves to work.

KEY INSIGHT

Some team members feel they are given opportunities to provide input into the internal organizational decision-making process, but few see their input reflected in final decisions.

CONSIDERATIONS

Quick Wins	Prepare talking points when communicating decisions that explicitly highlight how team member input was incorporated or why it was unable to be incorporated.
Best Bets	Analyze the effectiveness of communications and channels to improve the perceived transparency of internal decision-making processes.
Strategic Investments	Examine how the UTC organizational structure may impede team members' involvement in decision-making. Revise structure as needed. Revisit the UTC's organizational charter and update based on changes to organizational structure.

Psychological Safety, Trust, & Support

The perception that individuals can show their true selves without fear of negative consequences such as retaliation or guilt. Perceived trust and support are precursors to psychological safety, which facilitates the ability of team members to bring their whole selves to work without fear of judgment or bias.

KEY INSIGHTS

Team members feel psychologically safe within their teams, sections, and divisions, but feel unsafe to share their honest thoughts and feedback at the agency level.

Most team members distrust, or feel unsupported by, the Leadership Team and commissioners.

CONSIDERATIONS

Quick Wins	Increase engagement opportunities for team members to interact with the Leadership Team and commissioners.
	Increase engagement opportunities for team members to interact with individuals in different teams, sections, and divisions.

¹ The use of terms such as "decision," "decision-making processes," and "policy" throughout this report refer to *internal organizational decision processes* and not legal decisions made by the UTC commissioners or directors.

Best Bets

Conduct focus groups with team members from each division to elicit specific examples of ways trust can be built with the Leadership Team and commissioners.

Strategic Investments

Conduct an internal partner analysis based on focus group data to determine the most effective internal partner engagement strategies for the Leadership Team and commissioners to deploy across divisions and other internal partner groups.

Consider 1:1 leadership coaching to adopt behaviors that promote psychological safety for team members.

Inclusion & Belonging

All team members have equal opportunities and pathways to participate and contribute to all aspects of the organization, including decision-making processes. Team members feel safe and welcome to bring their full, unique selves to work.

KEY INSIGHT

Team members overwhelmingly feel they are included and belong within their team, section, and division, while only some feel they are valued members of the agency.

Team members want to be more included in the evolution of the vision, or direction, of the agency.

CONSIDERATIONS

Quick Wins

Define what it means for team members to bring their whole selves to work and provide examples of goal behavior.

Best Bets

Conduct focus groups to understand the nuance between contributing to the commission’s missions versus contributing to the commission’s vision and evolution.

Strategic Investments

Reassess and refine the UTC’s organizational vision and values through an agency-wide participatory process.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Efforts

The act of developing and supporting systems and procedures that create equitable opportunities, ensures pathways for participation, and promotes the appreciation of individual differences for all members of the commission.

KEY INSIGHTS

Most team members feel it is important to incorporate Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Efforts (EDI) into the UTC's culture, but nearly half of participating team members feel uncomfortable or unsafe engaging in conversations around EDI topics.

Many team members are concerned about workload as a barrier to participation in EDI efforts.

CONSIDERATIONS

Quick Wins	Continue current efforts to optimize the workload of EDI-related opportunities by condensing the content or increasing the length of time provided for completion.
Best Bets	Provide a dedicated span of time for team members to participate in EDI-related learning opportunities on the job. The timing may need to be customized based on each division's unique workload and statutory deadlines.
Strategic Investments	Carefully consider concrete ways to integrate EDI into the UTC's specialized roles and responsibilities. Conduct division-level focus groups to gain more insight into the UTC's EDI efforts and workload. Using the information collected, customize the EDI engagement strategy to each division.

Culture Assessment Results

Overview

The culture assessment findings are a synthesis of the themes and data collected from focus groups and the agency-wide survey. The culture assessment results are organized in priority order by the four main categories of the culture model (see Appendix A) developed for the UTC: organizational justice, psychological safety, inclusion, and belonging. EDI-relevant findings were included as a section in addition to the categories from the model because EDI is highly relevant to the UTC's statement of cultural transformation. Findings related to trust and support are included in the "Psychological Safety" section due to the interconnectedness of these three cultural aspects. Additionally, we have included a separate "Work Environment" section to reflect the positive aspects of UTC's culture that focus group participants identified and survey participants verified.

Findings for each culture model category are further organized into four sections:

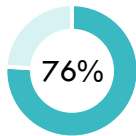
- **Strengths**—survey results with 70% of agreement or higher across participants.
- **Growth Opportunities**—survey results with above 50% and below 70% agreement across participants.
- **Pain Points**—survey results with lower than 50% agreement across participants.
- **Considerations**—suggested actions that the UTC can take to address growth opportunities and pain points.

Work Environment

Insights into the current work environment are important context to inform the strengths and opportunities of the UTC's current culture. While the work environment themes fall outside of the culture model, we have included the themes due to their contribution to the culture and overall health of the agency.

Strengths

Most participants enjoy the flexibility of hybrid work and the trust in team members that remote work options demonstrate from leadership.



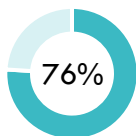
76% of participants reported satisfaction with their current work-life balance.

In the focus groups, managers and non-managerial team members expressed enjoying the flexibility of being able to work remotely with the option of going into the office. Team members feel that this flexibility allows them to have a life outside of work. The “Infants at Work” program was mentioned several times.

“I appreciate that the commission trusts us to work from home... I work harder now than when I was in the office.” - Focus Group Participant

“I enjoy the flexibility. I’m a mom of two young kids and [was] able to work and take care of home. I was part of the Infants at Work program and came back to work sooner than I would have been able to [without it]. - Focus Group Participant

Most participants appreciate the UTC's focus on developmental opportunities.



76% of participants reported having access to the learning and development opportunities they needed to perform their jobs well.

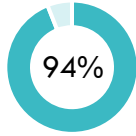
This theme was reflected in the focus groups.

“I enjoy the internal opportunities and the support from management to grow [us] upward from the agency. For example, we have a mentorship program.” - Focus Group Participant

“There is a lot of learning embedded into our culture.” - Focus Group Participant

"I have always been a fan of training and how it's been supported in this agency." - Focus Group Participant

Most participants reported being highly passionate and dedicated to the work of the agency.



94% of participants reported putting effort into their jobs because it is personally important to them.

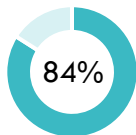


90% of participants reported putting effort into their jobs because the work is interesting.

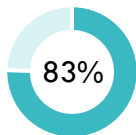
Focus group participants overwhelmingly reported feeling dedicated to the work.

"The passion everyone has; the dedication to the mission... that's what keeps individuals here, because they think their work is meaningful." - Focus Group Participant

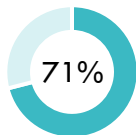
Most participants feel that efforts are made to prioritize their well-being.



84% of participants feel that efforts are made at the team level to prioritize their well-being.



83% of participants feel that efforts are made at the section level to prioritize their well-being.



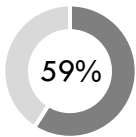
71% of participants feel that efforts are made at the division level to prioritize their well-being.

Working from home was a tangible example of how the UTC prioritizes team member well-being that focus group participants shared.

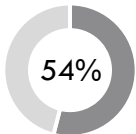
"The commission is making a big effort for [us to have] flexible work hours and work from home. This makes it possible for people to have families and have lives and bring their best selves to work." - Focus Group Participant

Growth Opportunities

Some respondents feel that efforts are made to prioritize their well-being at the agency level and that they would recommend working at the UTC based on its culture.



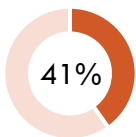
59% of participants feel that efforts are made at the agency level to prioritize their well-being.



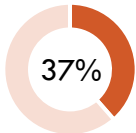
54% of participants reported that they would recommend working at the UTC based on the culture.

Pain Points

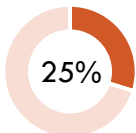
A portion of respondents cited their workload as a challenge of working at the UTC.



41% of participants reported feeling emotionally drained by their workload.



37% of participants reported feeling physically exhausted by their workload.



25% of participants responded that they often think about looking for a job at a different organization because of workload.

Focus group participants expressed frustration at the rate of turnover and the implications it has for their respective workloads.

“To say we are all overworked is an understatement.” - Focus Group Participant

“We have a lot of work and not enough resources.” - Focus Group Participant

Considerations

The dedication and passion that team members have for their work is a cultural strength unique to the UTC. However, the level of burnout and potential turnover cited by team members highlights an immediate need to address workload concerns.

Near-Term Considerations

- Continue to leverage the strengths of the current culture and prioritize Tandem Motion's recommendations for improving agency culture to increase engagement and reduce turnover.

Future Considerations

- Continue to prioritize recruitment and hiring to address the workload issue.
- Prioritize workforce planning to address workload and turnover by baselining and modifying workflows to determine how the current full-time equivalents (FTEs) can best serve the organization and, if applicable, to make the business case to the legislature for increasing FTEs.

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to the perceived fairness of organizational decision-making processes, decision outcomes, and the implementation of decisions.

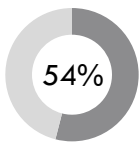
Organizational justice serves as the critical foundation of the culture model, with all other model elements stemming from it. When organizational justice is strong, team members are more likely to trust the agency and its leadership, feel included, and feel psychologically safe enough to bring their whole selves to work.

Strengths

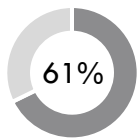
Strength areas were not identified for organizational justice. The focus group and survey findings indicate that organizational justice is an area of critical importance to prioritize improving, particularly as it forms the foundation of the culture model.

Growth Opportunities

Some respondents feel they are given opportunities to provide input into internal organizational decisions.



54% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunities to express input.

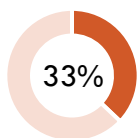


61% agreed or strongly agreed that they had opportunities to ask questions during decision-making processes.

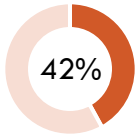
The perception of opportunities to provide input into internal organizational decisions is critical to justice, particularly the perceived fairness of decision-making processes and the degree to which UTC leaders are open to voice and input.

Pain Points

Few respondents feel that their input into internal organizational decisions is acknowledged.



33% of participants feel that their input is incorporated into internal organizational decisions.



42% of respondents feel that the reasoning behind internal organizational decisions is communicated in a way that team members understand.

This survey result echoes themes from the qualitative data collected in focus groups. The overwhelming sentiment from focus group participants was that decisions are made for them and that efforts to ask for input are performative because they do not see that their input is incorporated into final decisions. Team members across tenure groups (short, middle, and long) expressed disappointment that while they experienced opportunities to voice feedback, their suggestions did not appear to be reflected in final decisions. Participants also expressed that they would appreciate more clarity into why decisions are made, even if their feedback is not implemented.

“It would be nice for [the Leadership Team] to acknowledge our input, even if they don’t implement it, to explain why they can’t do something about it. Be forthcoming about why they won’t do it.” - Focus Group Participant

Considerations

The sentiment that team member input is unincorporated into internal organizational decisions or that the reasoning behind decisions is not communicated clearly highlights a growth opportunity for how final decisions—and the reasoning behind them—are communicated and explained.

Near-Term Considerations

- Consider preparing specific talking points when communicating decisions and changes that summarize how decisions were made and explain explicitly how team member input was incorporated into the final decision or why team member input was unable to be incorporated.

Future Considerations

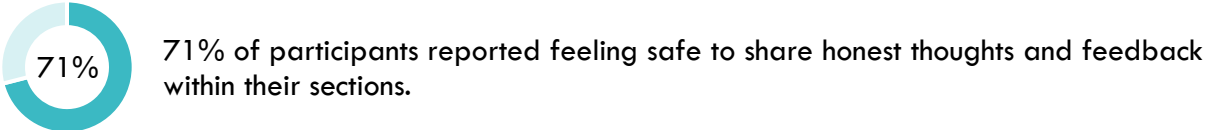
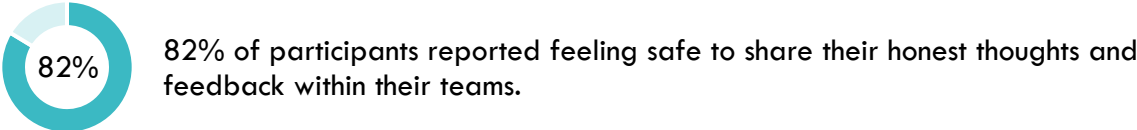
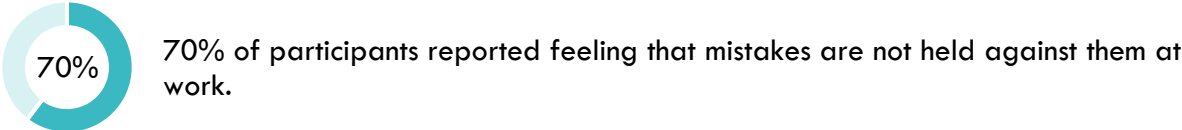
- Consider analyzing the effectiveness of communications and communication channels to improve the perceived transparency of the decision-making process at UTC.
- Examine how the UTC organizational structure may impede team members’ involvement in the decision-making process, including the discrepancy between what the Leadership Team is communicating about decisions and how UTC team members perceives these communications. The current structure may need to be revised to reflect the changing needs and composition of the agency.
- Revisit the UTC’s organizational charter and update it based on potential changes to organizational structure.

Psychological Safety, Trust, & Support

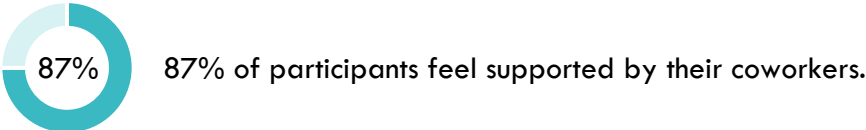
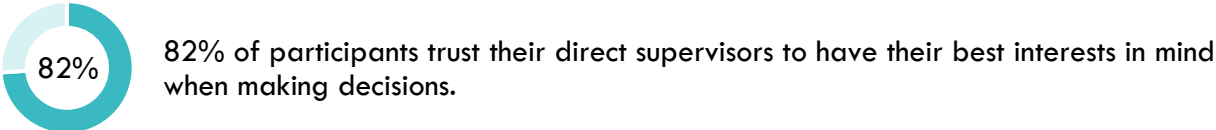
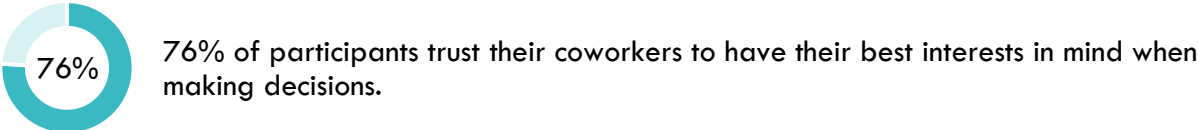
Psychological safety refers to the perception that individuals can show their true selves without fear of negative consequences such as retaliation or guilt. Perceived trust and support are precursors to psychological safety, which is a critical element of the culture model as it facilitates the ability of UTC team members to bring their whole selves to work without fear of judgment or bias.

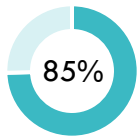
Strengths

Most respondents experience high levels of psychological safety within their teams and sections.



Most participants show high levels of trust in their coworkers and supervisors and perceive their coworkers and supervisors to be supportive of them.





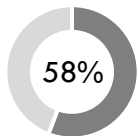
85% of participants feel supported by their direct supervisor.

These survey results echo responses from the focus groups, in which non-managerial team members and managers reported feeling very safe within their teams and in smaller groups.

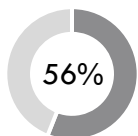
"I love my team... my group. It is because of their support that I feel comfortable making mistakes and taking risks." -Focus Group Participant

Growth Opportunities

Some respondents feel safe to be themselves at work and share thoughts and feedback at the division level.



58% of participants feel they can be their authentic selves at work.



56% reported feeling safe to share honest thoughts and feedback within their divisions.

This sentiment was also reflected in focus groups.

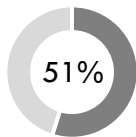
"Within my group, I can be myself. When I am around other sections and the commission, I'm more reserved. I still feel like I have to watch what I say and who I'm talking to because you never know how it will be interpreted." - Focus Group Participant

BIPOC Council focus group participants raised concerns about support at the division level. Most BIPOC Council focus group participants stated that they feel safe making mistakes and taking risks at work. However, some individuals were dissatisfied with how past issues were resolved at the division level.

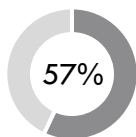
"Someone said something that off-stepped us as people of color. We addressed it with supervisory employees and felt safe to address it with them and they ended up doing a meeting with us and that person. That was a positive situation... We were not happy with how it was handled with the full group though - it was treated as more of a policy instead of 'here is a POC whose thoughts and feelings were minimized.'" - Focus Group Participant

At the division level, there appears to be a tendency to emphasize abiding by policies (e.g., “This should not happen again because the UTC has a policy against disrespectful interpersonal interactions”) instead of addressing harm that results from situations (e.g., “This should not happen again because it minimizes the thoughts and feelings of people of color”).

Some respondents feel supported by the Leadership Team and commissioners.



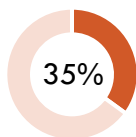
51% of participants feel supported by the Leadership Team.



57% of participants feel supported by the commissioners.

Pain Points

Few respondents feel safe sharing their thoughts and feedback at the agency-wide level.



35% of participants reported feeling safe to share their honest thoughts and feedback within the agency.*

**When comparing average responses between divisions on a 1-5 scale (1 being the lowest possible response and 5 being the highest), the Administrative Law division reported significantly higher perceptions of psychological safety at the agency level (3.83) compared with the Transportation Safety division (2.35).*

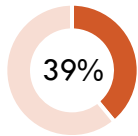
Perceptions of psychological safety decrease drastically at the agency level and when moving up the hierarchy of the UTC’s organizational structure. This parallels a similar sentiment from focus groups, that team members generally feel safe within their teams or smaller groups but unsafe outside of those groups.

“With my team, I am comfortable. Raising concerns are welcome in my team and we will take it seriously. I feel lucky to have psychological safety in my team. I can’t say the same for the bigger UTC.” - Focus Group Participant

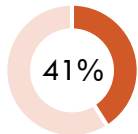
Increasing psychological safety at the agency level is important to address because psychological safety encourages honesty, authenticity, and vulnerability from team members by creating an environment in which people feel safe to speak up and be themselves. While the need to improve psychological safety applies to all divisions, it is particularly important to address for team

members in the Transportation Safety division to feel safe to speak up and be themselves in agency-wide environments.

Few respondents trust the Leadership Team and commissioners to have their best interests in mind when making decisions.



39% of participants trust the Leadership Team to have their best interests in mind when making decisions.



41% of participants trust commissioners to have their best interests in mind when making decisions.

Newer tenured team members do not seem to share the perceived distrust in leadership decision-making displayed by team members with more tenure. Newer team members expressed being open to more opportunities for interactions and trust building with the Leadership Team and commissioners, though they are aware of the strong opinions of more tenured team members.

“For commissioners, I haven’t had a lot of interaction with them. When I have met them at all hands meeting... they seemed nice and open and accepting.” - Focus Group Participant

“I feel like the commission and everyone else is open and trustworthy. I just don’t think I’ve been here long enough to know. I start off assuming that people are trustworthy.” - Focus Group Participant

Considerations

The results in this section highlight a need to increase psychological safety and perceived trust and support by addressing the relational gap between team members and individuals with whom they do not interact on a regular basis, such as the Leadership Team, commissioners, and individuals from other divisions.

Near-Term Considerations

- Increase opportunities for team members to interact on a personal level with the Leadership Team and commissioners. Prioritize facilitating these interactions with newer team members to build positive relationships early.
- Increase opportunities for team members to interact with individuals in different teams, sections, and divisions. This can be in the form of workplace collaboration or agency-wide social events.

Future Considerations

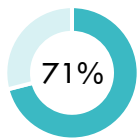
- Conduct focus groups with team members from each division to elicit specific examples of how they might receive more support from and build trust for the Leadership Team and commissioners.
- Using the information from focus groups, conduct an internal partner analysis to determine the most effective ways for the Leadership Team and commissioners to engage with different divisions and internal partner groups within the UTC. Integrate the Leadership Team and commissioners into the activities of each division according to the results of the internal partner analysis.
- Consider 1:1 coaching for the Leadership Team and commissioners to adopt specific strategies and behaviors to increase psychological safety for team members in agency-wide interactions.

Inclusion & Belonging

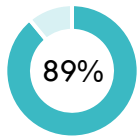
Inclusion means all team members have equal opportunities and pathways to participate and contribute to all aspects of the organization, including decision-making processes. Belonging means all team members feel safe and welcome to bring their full, unique selves to work.

Strengths

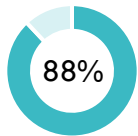
Most respondents feel they have equitable access to opportunities in the commission and have high perceptions of belonging.



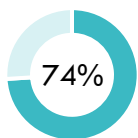
71% of participants feel they have equitable access to opportunities to contribute to the commission's mission.



89% of participants feel they are valued members of their teams.



88% of participants feel they are valued members of their sections.



74% of participants feel they are valued members of their division.

This echoes the general positive sentiment regarding inclusion and belonging from focus groups.

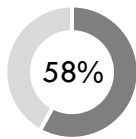
“Participation is always encouraged. Opportunities are provided for [us] to join different committees. That can be a challenge when people don’t step up to the plate, so there are certain opportunities where the same person steps up [to participate in multiple opportunities] but this is not because opportunity is not given to others.” - Focus Group Participant

In particular, participants in the BIPOC Council focus group expressed that UTC was making progress toward providing equitable access to all team members. Individuals expressed appreciation for the UTC’s emphasis on inclusivity as well as the promotion of BIPOC voices.

“I think the commission is progressing toward equity and ensuring that everyone has access. The [current] leadership is doing an incredible job reforming and structuring toward what we want to move towards.” - Focus Group Participant

Growth Opportunities

Some respondents feel they belong at the agency level.



58% of participants feel they are valued members of the agency.

In addition, some focus group participants expressed confusion over the phrase “bringing your whole self to work,” highlighting a need to clarify the definition of the term “belonging” to team members.

“I’ve been reading in so many emails and publications about ‘bringing our whole selves to work’ but we haven’t defined it. Some examples might be helpful.” - Focus Group Participant

Pain Points

Some focus group participants expressed that while they have opportunities to participate in the commission’s mission, they are lacking the opportunity to contribute to the direction of the commission and how changes are implemented. This issue is important to address because a culture of inclusion encompasses opportunities to participate in *all* aspects of the organization, which includes the organization’s direction, or vision.

“Yes, we do have opportunities to contribute and fulfill the agency’s mission [in terms of work]. Contributing organizationally to the [vision] and evolution of the organization though, absolutely not. There is not much opportunity at all to contribute ideas to the evolution of the agency.” - Focus Group Participant

Considerations

These findings highlight an opportunity to increase perceptions of belonging at the agency-wide level as well as to reassess and refine the UTC’s vision and values based on team member input.

Near-Term Considerations

- Define what it means for team members to bring their whole selves to work and provide examples of what that behavior looks like.

Future Considerations

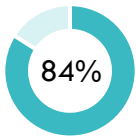
- Conduct focus groups to further understand the nuance between opportunities to contribute to the commission's mission versus opportunities to contribute to the commission's vision and direction.
- Reassess and refine the UTC's organizational vision and values through an agency-wide participatory process.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Efforts

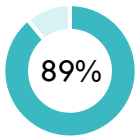
Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts describe the act of developing and supporting systems and procedures that create equitable opportunities, ensures pathways for participation, and promotes the appreciation of individual differences for all members of the commission.

Strengths

Most team members agree that incorporating EDI into the UTC's culture is an important priority and that the UTC is dedicated to advancing EDI.



84% of participants feel that it is important to incorporate EDI into the UTC's culture.*



89% of participants feel that the UTC is dedicated to incorporating EDI into its culture.

** When comparing average responses between divisions on a 1-5 scale (1 being the lowest possible response and 5 being the highest), the Administrative Law (4.75), Consumer Protection & Communications (4.56), Administrative Services (4.47), and Regulatory Services (4.37) divisions reported significantly higher perceptions of the importance of incorporating EDI into the UTC's culture compared to the Pipeline Safety division (3.30).*

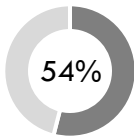
Several focus group participants also complimented recent efforts to balance the commitment to EDI efforts with the amount of material to read.

"I learned a lot and I am appreciative of the time the agency has dedicated to it." - Focus Group Participant

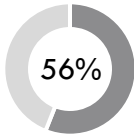
"There was a recent shift of [reducing] the hours of reading requirements. The conversations are getting easier to have. I appreciate that things are getting pulled back a bit and they're giving us time to read." - Focus Group Participant

Growth Opportunities

Some respondents feel comfortable asking questions and engaging in conversations about EDI-related topics.



54% of participants feel comfortable asking questions about EDI-related topics.



56% of respondents feel comfortable engaging in conversations about EDI topics.*

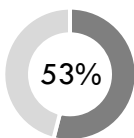
** When comparing average responses between divisions on a 1-5 scale (1 being the lowest possible response and 5 being the highest), the Administrative Law division had significantly higher perceptions of comfort engaging in conversations about EDI topics (4.25) compared to the Transportation Safety division (2.75).*

Several individuals in focus groups indicated that the EDI space does not feel safe for them to bring their whole selves to work. There is a lot of fear about the potential repercussions for what is perceived as saying the wrong thing.

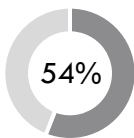
"It's in the EDI space where I don't feel comfortable being my whole self." - Focus Group Participant

"I'm proud of what we're doing in terms of EDI, but there's no change management or buy in. It's too aggressive... if you made certain comments that were different from what the majority thought was right, you would be ostracized." - Focus Group Participant

Some respondents are satisfied with the current EDI-related learning opportunities.



53% of participants indicated satisfaction with the current EDI learning opportunities.



54% of participants feel that the pacing of EDI efforts is "just right."*

**34% of participants indicated that the pacing of EDI efforts is "too fast," while 12% of participants feel that the pacing is "too slow."*

When comparing average responses between divisions on a 1-3 scale (1 being "too slow" and 3 being "too fast"), the Transportation Safety division perceived the pacing of EDI efforts to be significantly faster (2.65) than the Regulatory Services (2.11) and Administrative Law (1.92) divisions.

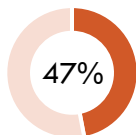
BIPOC Council focus group participants expressed that the workload is sometimes inconsistent with the EDI opportunities provided. The sentiment shared is that more people want to participate in EDI efforts (e.g., serve on the volunteer council) but are hesitant because of fears of falling behind on work and statutory deadlines. While workload may be perceived by some as an excuse to not participate in EDI learning opportunities, findings from both the survey and focus groups indicate that heavy workload is a legitimate barrier to EDI participation.

“They didn’t take anything from my plate and are just adding to my workload (hours and hours of reading). They didn’t give me time to learn. I do the minimum because I can’t give more of my unpaid time.” - Focus Group Participant

“We have been underfunded for so long that we are doing so much work and yet, part of management’s job is to create opportunity for us to engage. The workload is inconsistent with that. Some people want to [participate] but have too much workload.” - Focus Group Participant

Pain Points

Few participants see tangible improvements due to the EDI efforts.



47% of participants reported witnessing tangible improvements due to the current EDI efforts.

However, it is important to note that the BIPOC Council focus group participants overwhelmingly expressed seeing tangible improvements because of EDI efforts. Individuals in this group reported appreciating the current approach to EDI efforts and wanting more people to become engaged in this work.

“We have had a recent increase in [hiring of employees] of color... It’s good to see. Where we are moving towards is very different from where we were before.” - Focus Group Participant

“Depending on where you are at the organization, there is a different commitment to anti-racism and pro-equity. All of us are constantly talking to others to get more help on the BIPOC Committee but there doesn’t seem to be support [for us]. If we move too fast, we aren’t making sure that everyone is coming along.” - Focus Group Participant

Finally, multiple individuals from focus groups felt that the approach to EDI efforts could be improved by finding actionable ways to incorporate EDI efforts into the agency’s work as opposed to studying the topic in a silo.

“How do we incorporate this into our work instead of spending time reading books and then talking about it?” - Focus Group Participant

Considerations

These findings highlight opportunities to tailor EDI engagement strategies by division so the UTC can make more tangible progress toward its pro-equity and anti-racist goals by meeting team members where they are on their respective EDI journeys.

Near-Term Considerations

- Continue the current efforts to optimize the workload of EDI-related opportunities by condensing the content or increasing the length of time provided for completion.

Future Considerations

- Provide a dedicated span of time for team members to participate in EDI-related learning opportunities on the job. The timing may need to be customized based on each division's unique workload and statutory deadlines.
- Carefully consider concrete ways to integrate EDI into the UTC's specialized roles and responsibilities.
- Conduct division-level focus groups to gain more insight into the UTC's EDI efforts and workload. Using the information collected, customize the EDI engagement strategy to each division so that team members are met where they are on their respective EDI journeys and can make more tangible progress toward the commission's pro-equity and anti-racist goals.

Appendix A

Culture Model

Overview

Tandem Motion referenced organizational psychology literature to develop the following culture model based on the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission's (UTC's) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) definitions and the agency's strategic goal of culture transformation. The model consists of four organizational culture aspects that must build upon and reinforce each other to help UTC achieve a culture that supports team members and allows them to bring their whole selves to work, embeds equity throughout, builds trust, and promotes inclusion and belonging.

Using this culture model as a framework, Tandem Motion will develop focus group questions and a customized culture survey to assess UTC's current culture. Our recommendations for culture transformation will be framed by this model and by the agency's cultural goals which inform it.

Model



Definitions

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

Organizational justice refers to the perceived fairness of organizational decision-making processes, decision outcomes, and the implementation of decisions. The organizational decision-making processes refers to the degree to which procedures and processes are consistent, accurate, and open to team member input. Decision outcomes refers to the degree to which outcomes and access to resources are equitable. The implementation of decisions refers to the degree to which decisions are respectfully and adequately communicated before and during implementation.

Organizational justice serves as the foundation of the culture model, with all other model elements stemming from it. When organizational justice is strong, UTC team members are more likely to trust the organization and its leadership², feel included³, and feel psychologically safe⁴ enough to bring their whole selves to work.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety refers to the perception that individuals can show their true selves without fear of negative consequences such as retaliation or guilt. Team members who feel psychologically safe at work are more likely to trust the organization because they feel that the organization values and cares about them.

Psychological safety is another critical element of the culture model as it facilitates the ability of UTC team members to bring their whole selves to work without fear of judgment or bias⁵, resulting in greater inclusion and belonging.

INCLUSION

Inclusion means all team members have equal opportunities and pathways to participate and contribute to all aspects of the organization, including decision-making processes.

Inclusion is an outcome of both organizational justice and psychological safety, and it is an important precursor to belonging. When inclusion is high, UTC team members are more likely to feel a sense of belonging at work.

BELONGING

Belonging means all team members feel safe and welcome to bring their full, unique selves to work. More than tolerating and respecting differences, belonging requires that all people are welcome with membership and agency in the organization.

Belonging is achieved when the other aspects of the culture model are fulfilled, making it one of the ultimate outcomes of UTC's culture transformation work.

² DeConinck, J. B. (2010). The effect of organizational justice, perceived organizational support, and perceived supervisor support on marketing employees' level of trust. *Journal of Business Research*, 63, 1349-1355.

³ Le Huong et al. (2020). Organizational justice and climate for inclusion. *Personnel Review*, 52(2).

⁴ Macey et al. (2009). The key to an engaged workforce: An engagement culture. In *Employee engagement: Tools for analysis, practice, and competitive advantage* (pp. 43-75).

⁵ Frazer, L. M., Fainshmidt, S., & Klinger, R. L. (2017). Psychological safety: A meta-analytic review and extension. *Personnel Psychology*, 70(1), 113-165.