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Pennsylvania Department of Revenue: Workplace Environment Study

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Capstone Proposal

Pennsylvania Department of Revenue: Workplace Environment Study

Nicole Ohlinger and James Digber

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Executive Summary

The research in this study was conducted to provide the Department of Revenue with proven and documented best practices for their workplace environment study. This was accomplished by completing a focus group session with members of management to gather their perspectives about the current climate on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as promotions within the department. A survey was also administered to the Department of Revenue employees. The survey was intended to capture employee's perspectives on the current diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and their expectations for the future.

Outcomes/Results:

There are four primary recommendations for the Department of Revenue to consider moving forward.

1. It is recommended that the Department of Revenue continues to put efforts towards maintaining the integrity of their diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
2. The Department of Revenue is encouraged to continue to interact with each other and their employees to refine the expectations of what it takes to attain a diverse workforce.
3. When evaluating the contractual bargaining agreement, considerations should be made to ensure that the hiring process follows a fair, merit based and time sensitive process.
Offering competitive compensation packages to prospective hires will make the department an attractive employment option for qualified candidates.
4. When vacancies for management level positions occur within the Department of Revenue, the job postings should be made visible and accessible to all employees.

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue and Kutztown University partnered to conduct research on the efforts currently in place at the Department of Revenue that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the workplace. There was also research performed on the promotional process within the Department of Revenue, and the interest current employees have to grow within the department. The project included background research on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that have been undertaken with other departments, along with research pertaining to promotions within the workplace. To come to conclusions specifically pertaining to the Department of Revenue and their DEI and promotion efforts, Kutztown University conducted research with the department's employees. The research was gathered through a focus group and an online survey. The focus group attendees consisted of management and supervisory level employees that work within the Department of Revenue, and the focus group questioning and data collection was conducted by Kutztown University. The survey was administered to employees of the Department of Revenue through an online survey instrument.

Literature Review

The first area of this study focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the workplace. The Department of Revenue established work groups that focus on the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion within their workplace. The work groups meet regularly, involve management and staff in their efforts, and included Kutztown University to perform additional research which will broaden their knowledge and offer feedback and recommendations specific to their department. Current and past research on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in other organizations provided important information that can be utilized by the Department of Revenue in the future.

The first study focuses on results from a survey performed on accounting professionals and their perceptions on the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The survey consisted of over 3,000 current and former accounting professionals in the United States by conducting in-person interviews of accounting and human resource professionals. The focus was on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Researchers found that half of the respondents did not think there was inclusion in their workplace, and 30% of accountants left positions due to a lack of inclusivity. The journal also includes a recruitment and retention toolkit developed by the American Institution of CPA's which can be used as a reference guide for the Department of Revenue as an aid to develop a suitable plan for their agencies DEI Core teams (Anders 2021).

It is also important to understand that while promoting diversity within the workplace is a critical component of maintaining a high functioning work force, there is also a legal aspect involved. Companies must have a general understanding of the legal risks, and implications of diversity efforts so they can craft plans within the bounds of the law (Russell and Girard 2021). Organizational diversity should lead to organizational performance and affect employee turnover intentions. A department can elect to utilize a model of measuring diversity which encompasses concepts such as identity, preference, and cognitive characteristics. Using this model suggests that the impact of diversity in public organizations are dependent on the size and structure of the organization. In addition, it can be concluded that diversity leads to better decision-making which impacts a broader segment of the constituents they serve. Moreover, it is important for public entities to still pursue representative diversity because it has implications for governance and highlights the need for equity and inclusiveness (Langbein and Stazyk 2011).

The second area of research pertains to promotions and employee satisfaction within the department. The research collected was to determine if employees aspired towards promotions

within the department, and if the department is considering the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion when promoting employees.

Strategic Human Resource Management is a tool that is used to maintain a competitive advantage among other agencies. Maintaining a solid relationship between employees and the agency they work for will increase employee satisfaction and foster positive growth within the agency. Creating a positive culture within the work environment, developing a selective hiring process, ongoing training for employees, employee compensation and reward programs are steps that need to be taken to ensure employees remain at their current department. Strategic Human Resource Management also focuses on promoting from within, communication and employee involvement programs to develop an organization that employees strive to work for (Hans 2021).

A study conducted on the impact of workplace stress and its role in creating negative psychological demands on employees of public organizations can be used to consider factors that may deter employees from promotions within the Department of Revenue. Employees with higher levels of public service motivation tend to experience more pronounced negative emotions when certain occupational stress situations arise. Using a relational model of stress developed by Matteson and Ivancevich, the research focuses on investigating how workplace stress in the context of labor-management relations can lead to certain individuals responding negatively by being dissatisfied with their jobs and initiating voluntary exit plans from their public organizations. The research concludes that public service organizations need to provide training to address the emotional states of their employees. This way they can avoid job dissatisfaction and reduce the organization's turnover rate (Davis et al. 2020).

There is research which also explores the controversial question about whether state and local public employees are overcompensated compared to those in the private sector. Using data from the Current Population Survey from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics and the Employer Costs for

Employee Compensation, the researchers sift through the micro data while accounting for skill differences and employer costs to study whether compensation across sectors and over time is actually different and what factors account for those differences. The authors conclude that due to the rising costs of benefits packages that the public sector offers, cumulatively it appears workers in local and state government (3.7% higher in weekly samples and 10.5% in hourly sample) do earn more than those in the private sector (Gittleman and Pierce 2012). **Table 1.3** shows the breakdown of annual income for state agencies in Pennsylvania.

With one of the biggest issues in the workforce becoming high resignation rates and the decision between remaining understaffed or hiring just to fill positions, it is recommended that agencies look for four qualities in an applicant which will determine if they will be a good fit within the department. Reliability, job readiness, a positive attitude, and good communication skills are the four characteristics of a strong applicant (Luciano, M. M., & Watson, M. 2021).

The implementation of competition salaries are also a major factor for employee retention and promotion, but it isn't the only factor to consider. A previous study examined the influence of public sector wages compared to private sector compensation as a driver for voluntary employee turnover among state government employees. Conventional wisdom and prior research seem to suggest that turnover and turnover intentions among state government employees is caused by a variety of factors such as competitive wages, job dissatisfaction, employee burnout and procedural constraints. Using data from the National Association of State Personnel Executive's surveys, the researchers conducted analysis to determine the impact of competitive pay rates on state government employees leaving their organizations. They accounted for other determinants such as political ideology, unemployment rates, unionization, and age. The results show that private public pay equity does not drive employee turnover and that public service motivation and non-wage benefits may better explain retention rates

in the public sector. When disaggregated, the data suggests race and gender play a more significant role in the employee turnover rates (Llorens and Stazyk 2011).

The final study examined the perceptions of demographic factors affecting promotion among employees and managers of an international high-tech industry subsidiary located in Israel. The study argues that promotions indicate an appreciation for an individuals' contributions to organizational success, creates an avenue for self-fulfillment and serves as a motivational tool for employees. However, flawed promotion processes or the lack of advancement opportunities in an organization can lead to low loyalty, absenteeism, and high turnover. The research applied a survey instrument which asked respondents to rank the importance of several demographical factors (age, sex, education, organizational politics, success in projects, tenure in the organization and luck). The research concluded that workers perceived success in projects, education, and organizational politics (familiarity with organizational culture, pressure on supervisors, cooperation with colleagues and sharing similar interests with managers) as contributing to promotion opportunities (Sharabi 2008).

The research conducted on previous organizations will assist Kutztown University with the collaborative research being conducted at the Department of Revenue. The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue is a state level agency that employs over 1,500 employees. They are responsible for administering all of Pennsylvania’s tax and lottery programs. The demographic information on the Department of Revenue can be reviewed in **Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3**. Statistics were collected from the State Workforce Government Statistics for the year of 2021.

Table 1.1

<i>STATE GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE STATISTICS - Agency Complement</i>					
<i>Employment by Agency</i>					
<i>July 2021</i>					
<i>Civil Service/Non-Civil Service Filled Salaried Positions by Agency</i>					
<i>(GAWFR Table 8)</i>					
Agency	Civil Service		Non-Civil Service		Totals
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Aging	60	75.9%	19	24.1%	79
Agriculture	264	49.2%	273	50.8%	537
Banking and Securities	142	83.5%	28	16.5%	170
Civil Service Commission	9	60.0%	6	40.0%	15
Community and Economic Development	20	7.4%	251	92.6%	271
Conservation and Natural Resources	1,194	97.3%	33	2.7%	1,227
Corrections	12,135	84.0%	2,315	16.0%	14,450
Drug and Alcohol Programs	66	84.6%	12	15.4%	78
Education	378	86.9%	57	13.1%	435
Emergency Management Agency	143	86.1%	23	13.9%	166
Environmental Protection	2,125	93.5%	147	6.5%	2,272
Executive Offices	2,188	83.2%	971	16.8%	3,159
Fish and Boat Commission	273	73.0%	101	27.0%	374
Game Commission	355	54.0%	303	46.0%	658
General Services	153	19.1%	648	80.9%	801
Health	1,020	93.8%	68	6.3%	1,088
Historical and Museum Commission	82	45.3%	99	54.7%	181
Human Services	14,015	95.9%	602	4.1%	14,617
Insurance	202	72.9%	75	27.1%	277
Labor and Industry	3,617	90.3%	390	9.7%	4,007
Liquor Control Board	3,086	98.3%	52	1.7%	3,138
Military and Veterans Affairs	665	28.0%	1,714	72.0%	2,379
Milk Marketing Board	8	47.1%	9	52.9%	17
Municipal Retirement System	33	89.2%	4	10.8%	37
Parole Board	1,231	95.6%	57	4.4%	1,288
Patient Safety Authority*	0	0.0%	32	100.0%	32
Public School Employees' Retirement System	258	74.1%	90	25.9%	348
Public Utility Commission	376	81.0%	88	19.0%	464
Revenue	280	17.8%	1,296	82.2%	1,576
State	275	60.0%	183	40.0%	458
State Employees' Retirement System	154	79.8%	39	20.2%	193
State Police	246	4.0%	5,840	96.0%	6,086
Transportation	4,072	37.3%	6,851	62.7%	10,923
COMMONWEALTH TOTAL	49,125	68.4%	22,676	31.6%	71,801

Table 1.2

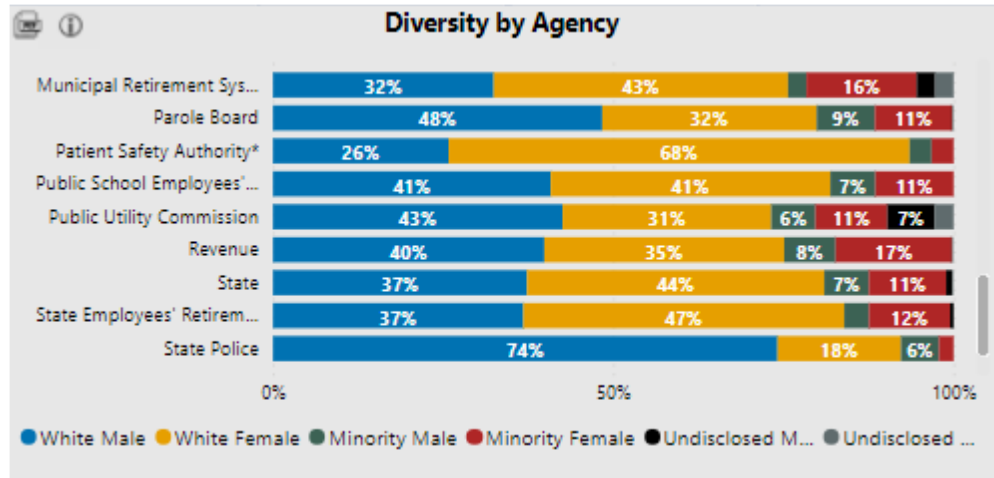


Table 1.3

STATE GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE STATISTICS - Financial
Average Salary by Agency
July 2021

Agency Comparison of Average Salary
(GAWFR Table 39)

Agency	Average Salary
Aging	\$75,507
Agriculture	\$61,997
Banking and Securities	\$74,088
Civil Service Commission	\$82,907
Community and Economic Development	\$80,085
Conservation and Natural Resources	\$59,381
Corrections	\$66,279
Drug and Alcohol Programs	\$71,417
Education	\$74,395
Emergency Management Agency	\$67,701
Environmental Protection	\$70,147
Executive Offices	\$76,561
Fish and Boat Commission	\$57,332
Game Commission	\$58,488
General Services	\$60,497
Health	\$69,775
Historical and Museum Commission	\$64,363
Human Services	\$54,844
Insurance	\$75,539
Labor and Industry	\$60,001
Liquor Control Board	\$47,172
Military and Veterans Affairs	\$50,964
Milk Marketing Board	\$70,633
Municipal Retirement System	\$66,026
Parole Board	\$67,724
Patient Safety Authority*	\$97,173
Public School Employees' Retirement System	\$84,276
Public Utility Commission	\$78,426
Revenue	\$60,670
State	\$61,672
State Employees' Retirement System	\$74,152
State Police	\$83,320
Transportation	\$52,753
COMMONWEALTH AVERAGE	\$62,206

Table 1.1 shows the number of employees that are civil service or non-civil service at the Department of Revenue, with 82.2% of employees being non-civil service. **Table 1.2** shows the diversity of employees at the Department of Revenue. Finally, **Table 1.3** shows the average salary per employee at each Pennsylvania State Agency. The Department of Revenue ranks amongst the lowest, with an average annual salary of \$60,670. This is below the Commonwealth average of \$62,206 annually.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

Develop policies and guidelines for management and supervisory positions that are accessible and attainable for all members of the department, especially underrepresented groups.

Objective 1.1: Determine what aspects of a promotion are most important, and what barriers may be preventing them from pursuing career growth within the department.

Methodology: Survey employees within the Department of Revenue.

Objective 1.2: Determine the cultural background of the members of management, which will be compared to later results after DEI is further implemented into the hiring process.

Methodology: Collect data from the Department of Revenue.

Goal 2

Promote diversity and inclusion within the Department of Revenue.

Objective 2.1: Determine what areas of DEI need to be added to the organization.

Methodology: Survey employees within the Department of Revenue.

Objective 2.2: Determine what a diverse and inclusive workforce should look like for Department of Revenue employees.

Methodology: Conduct focus groups with Department of Revenue employees.

Objective 2.3: Establish a reference guide for education, information sharing, and advocacy for the Department of Revenue's DEI goals.

Methodology: Compile a list of resources, documents and studies that can be used by the Department of Revenue.

Goal 3

Transform the recruitment process for outside applicants so that it is inclusive and sensitive to various cultures.

Objective 3.1: Determine the demographic composition of the current employees, which will be compared to later results after DEI is further implemented into the hiring process.

Methodology: Collect data from the Department of Revenue.

Objective 3.2: Attract a diverse workforce within the Department of Revenue.

Methodology: Assist in creating a targeted recruitment plan which focuses on clear job descriptions, competitive compensation packages and intentional invitations to qualified minority candidates.

Goal 4

Create a safe place for employees of the Department of Revenue to report incidents pertaining to DEI issues.

Objective 4.1: Determine what outlets would be essential for employees to feel able to voice their concerns pertaining to DEI within the Department of Revenue.

Methodology: Survey employees at the Department of Revenue.

Objective 4.2: Determine the Department of Revenues employees' level of psychological safety with regards to DEI efforts.

Methodology: Conduct regular check-ins with employees and managers.

Results

The first portion of the research consisted of a focus group with management and supervisory staff at the Department of Revenue. There were four main areas of focus, which are listed below, along with the feedback from the focus group participants.

Topic 1: Diversity and decision making.

Attendees were asked how they seek out diverse viewpoints before arriving at a conclusion, and if these viewpoints feel legitimate. They were also asked how they plan to make diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts a continuous process in their unit.

Feedback: Managers reported that they value the opinions and feedback they receive from their employees, and they actively seek out their opinions when making decisions for the department. There was a consensus that the department is in favor of diversity, equity, and

inclusion efforts. The formation of DEI work groups within the Department of Revenue has been a major step towards bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront in the department. Management members who participate in the DEI groups at the department are in favor of these groups and enjoy participating. They encourage others to join the work groups so that diversity, equity, and inclusion continues to be a focus in the department.

Topic 2: Employee growth and promotion.

Attendees were asked what qualities are important to them when promoting someone on their unit, and how often qualified personnel apply for promotions. They were also asked if there are any unwritten or unspoken factors that influence promotional decisions.

Feedback: When hiring and promoting employees, management wants to focus on who is the best candidate for the job and wants to consider many different qualities about the applicant beyond the length of tenure within the department. One of the boundaries to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within the department is the hiring process. Due to the contracted bargaining agreement between the union and the department, the hiring process may have narrow expectations for its applicants. This dealt with the issue of hiring based upon seniority, opposed to hiring to best applicant for the position. The process in which someone is promoted into a position within the department could also be reviewed. Some positions are filled without being posted, while other positions may be filled based upon political agenda opposed to qualification of the applicant. Another boundary pertaining to promotions was the uncompetitive salary range, and the length of time it takes to fill a position. Managers stressed that applicants may not be applying due to low salaries, and the long application process (6 months in some scenarios).

Topic 3: Department of Revenue hiring process and employee retention.

Attendees were asked how the hiring process encompasses the departments culture of diversity and inclusion. They were also asked how they communicate with new hires about diversity and inclusion, and the challenges they have faced to ensure employees align with the department's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Feedback: Many members of the focus group reported that they utilize mentoring, telework and face to face interactions with new hires to help them get acclimated to their new work environment. It was reported that not everyone will be on board with promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace, so some units/managers within the department may receive greater feedback from their employees than others.

Topic 4: Diversity within the Department of Revenue.

The focus group was asked about what diversity meant, their viewpoint on the departments workforce and what efforts have been taken by leadership to ensure diversity and inclusion in central to the agencies culture.

Feedback: Many attendees commented on the continuous support they receive pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. They have learned more about diversity, equity, and inclusion from the efforts undertaken by the department than they have in the past. The word 'diversity' was thought as a positive part of the department, explaining that the department has people from many different backgrounds which offers different viewpoints and experience. There was an overwhelming agreement that DEI topics need to continue to be part of the

focus in the future, and they will do whatever it takes to keep an open line of communication between them and the employees at the department.

Employee Survey

The researchers created a survey instrument that was intended to elicit employees' perceptions of the DEI initiatives of the department and factors affecting promotions. The instrument was made up of 25 questions, five of which were demographic in nature and the rest were the questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion as well as issues regarding internal promotions. Respondents were asked to select choices using a five-point Likert scale indicating levels of agreement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree).

Survey Results and Findings

A total of 287 respondents participated and responded to the survey. We received responses from 284 of the total pool which represents a 98.9% response rate. The survey results were affirmative in most ways to the DEI initiatives at the Department of Revenue. Some responses, however, revealed areas of uncertainty and neutrality on the part of employees regarding certain key questions. We believe these neutral answers should provide ample opportunities to be addressed by department leadership.

Religious/Spiritual Views

Employees had largely positive experiences in expressing their religious views (Fig. 1.0).

When asked about the respect accorded to their religious/spiritual beliefs by fellow employees, more than half had positive responses. 13.6% strongly agreed, 49.8% agree and 29.7% were neutral. Only 2.9% strongly disagreed with the statement while 7.6% disagreed (See Figure 1.1). Figure 1.2 shows the results of the same question but from the perspective of superiors and managers. 17.6% of participants said they strongly agreed while 49.8% agreed with the statement. 29.7% posted neutral responses compared to 2.9% of responses that indicated strongly disagree and disagree. Employees responded positively to the statement about the lack of religious bias and feeling welcome at the department (Figure 1.3).

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree

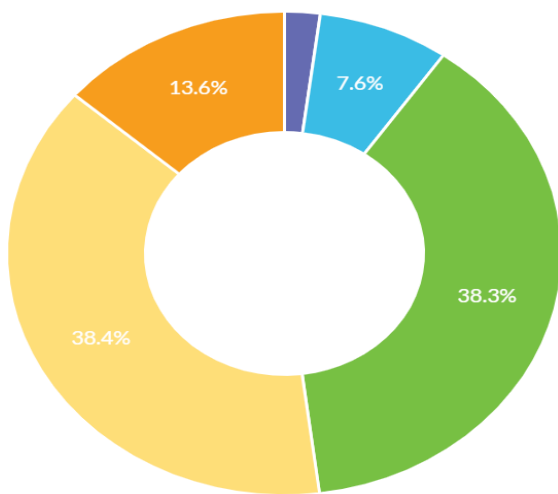


Figure 1.0

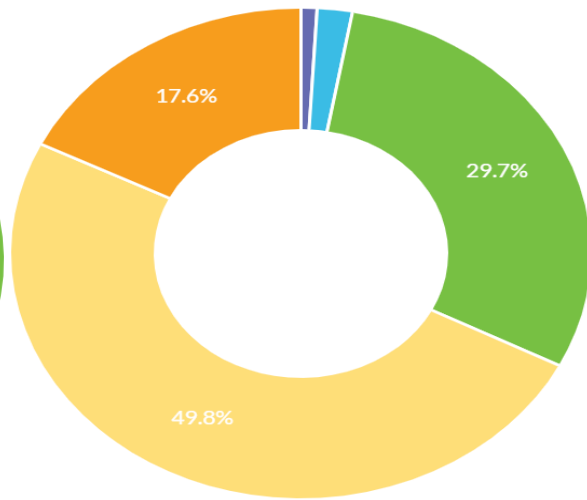


Figure 1.1

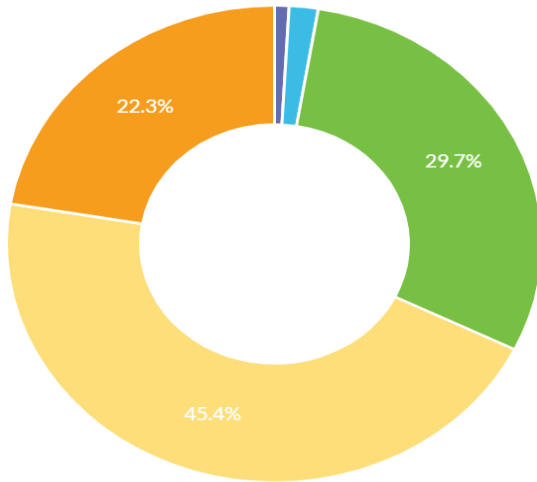


Figure 1.2

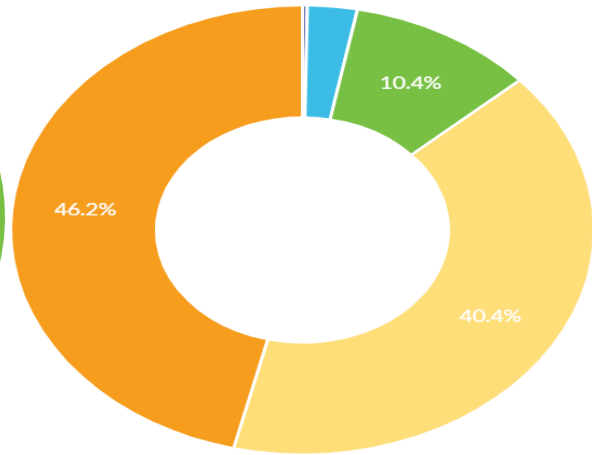


Figure 1.3

Open communication and Departmental Responsiveness

Employees felt free to share their ideas openly (Figure 1.4). 29.7% were emphatic about that statement, 46.3% gave it a positive rating, 14.9% were neutral and less and 9% expressed negative reactions. When asked about the department’s responsiveness to employee concerns, 22% strongly agreed, 41.1% agreed. However, 25.5% had mixed feelings about the statement and 9.4% did not agree (Figure 1.5).

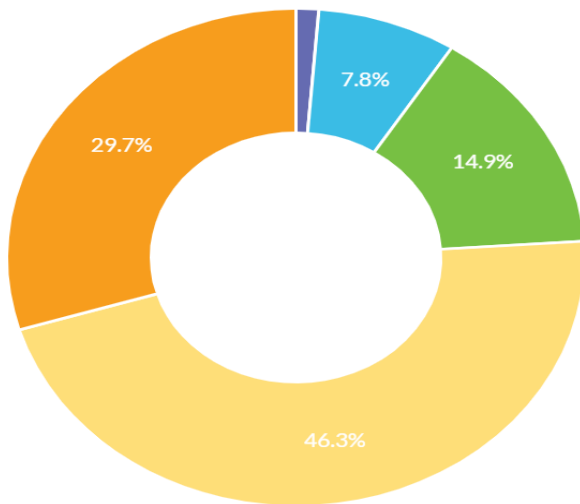


Figure 1.4

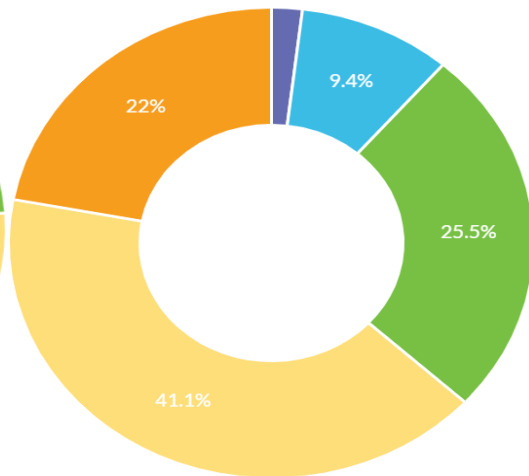


Figure 1.5

Culture and Diversity

Employees recorded largely positive sentiments about the management's values on diversity. 29.7% strongly agreed, 44.6% agreed and 19.5% were neutral on the subject (Figure 1.6).

Employees equally thought that they valued diversity with 24.3% strongly agreeing, 41.5% affirming the statement and 19.7% neutral (Figure 1.7). 27.1% of respondents strongly agreed that the department values and promotes diversity, 46.1% agree and 22.5% were undecided (Figure 1.8). As regards training on diversity, equity and inclusion, 39.9% of participants emphatically agreed that the department is providing the necessary training, 49.1% agreed with the assertion while only 7.9% were neutral (Figure 1.9).

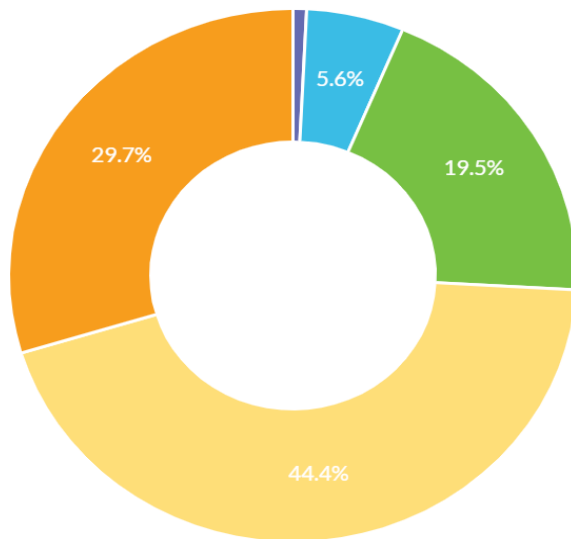


Figure 1.6

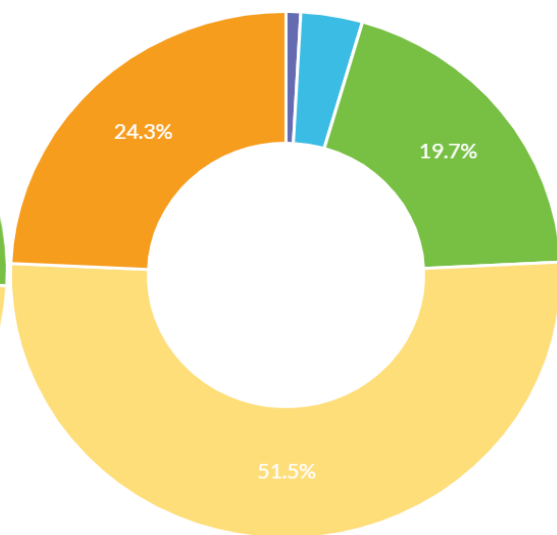


Figure 1.7

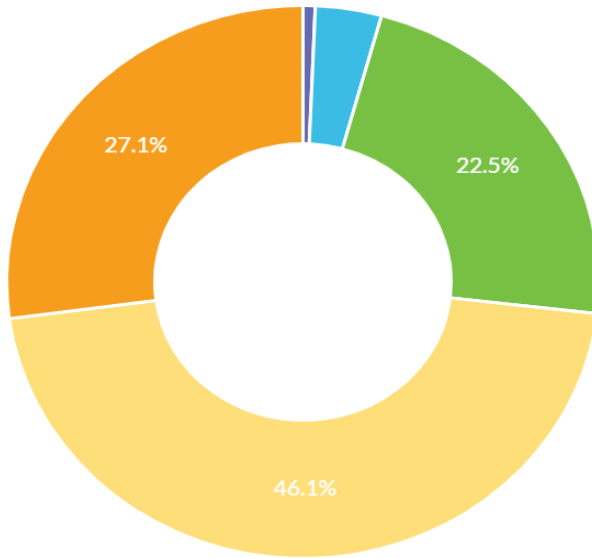


Figure 1.8

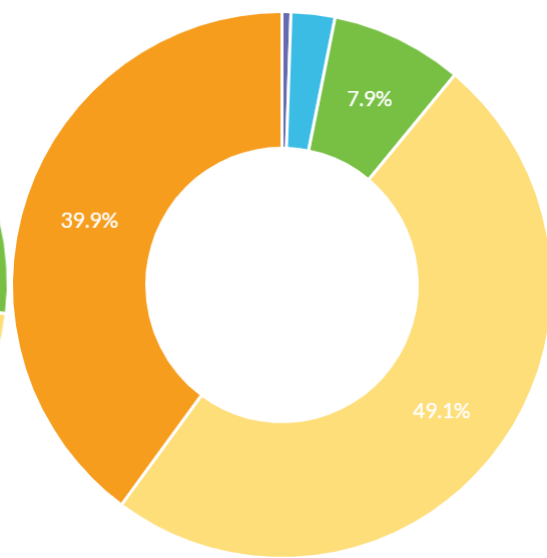


Figure 1.9

Reporting discrimination and creating a safe environment

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive about how the department would respond to reports of discrimination and bias. 48.4% strongly agreed with the assertion and 36.3% agreed with only 12% being neutral (Figure 1.10). 35.2% of respondents strongly agreed that their privacy would be maintained if they filed a report and 37.7% agreed with the statement. 20.6% were neutral in their responses about the privacy question (Figure 1.13). A large majority of respondents, 35.3% strongly agree and 52.9% agree, indicated that they knew where to file a report of discrimination (Figure 1.12). An equally large majority of participants (29.8% strongly agree, 49.6%) also reported feeling safe and welcome at the department (Figure 1.11).

Figure 1.10

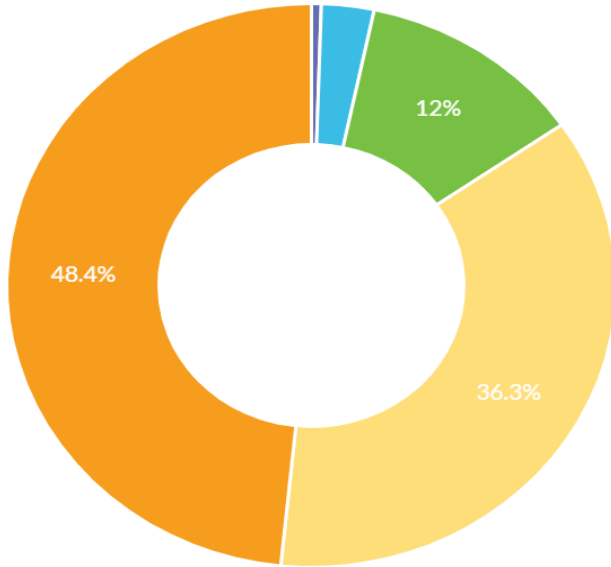


Figure 1.11

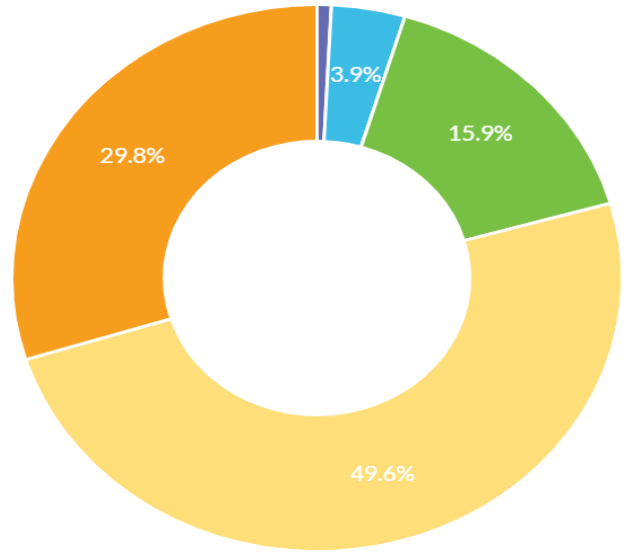


Figure 1.12

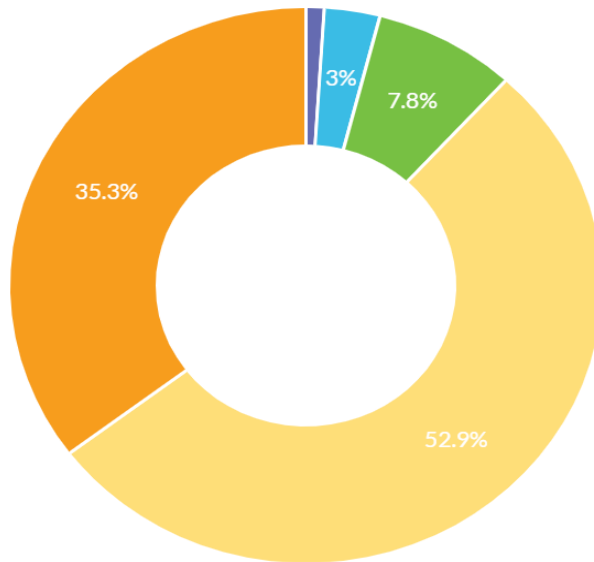
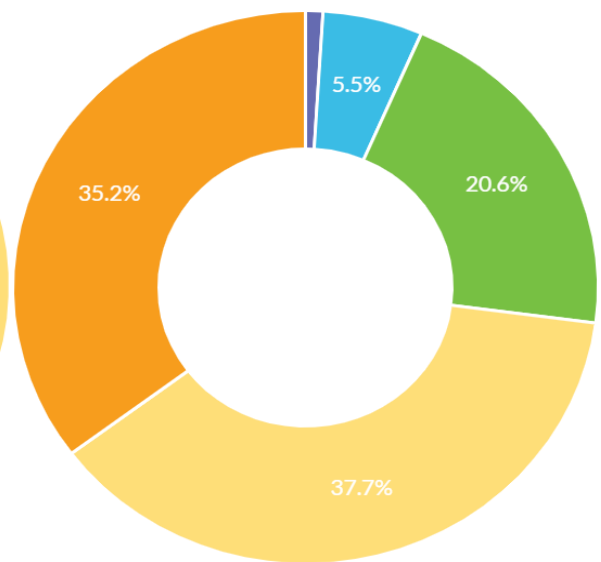


Figure 1.13



Career opportunities and promotions

A strong majority of participants reported that they felt support to pursue career advancement in the department, 32.9% strongly agreed while 37.4% agreed (Figure 1.14). About half of the respondents (14.4% strongly agree, 38.5% agree) felt positively about available career opportunities. A large minority of respondents (23.5% neutral and 19.5% disagree) do not feel

the same way about the statement (Figure 1.15). More than half of employees feel positive about the availability of career opportunities to all employees. 39.7% agreed while 20.8% strongly agreed to the assertion. However, a substantial minority (15.3% disagreed and 23.2% undecided) did not feel similarly about the statement (Figure 1.16). On the pivotal question of whether promotions have a fair hiring process, less than half of employees (17.1% strongly agree, 39.2% agree) surveyed had positive sentiments. 25.9% were neutral and 17.7% had negative views on the subject (Figure 1.17).

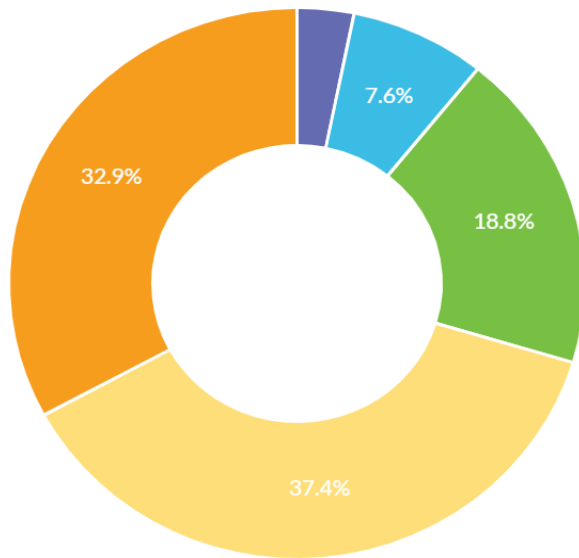


Figure 1.14

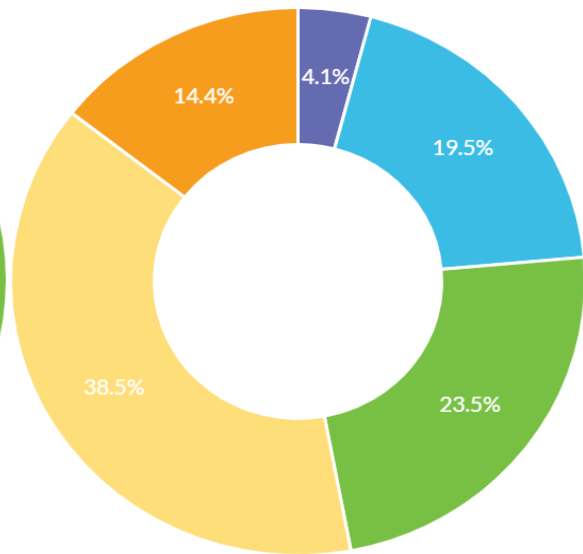


Figure 1.15

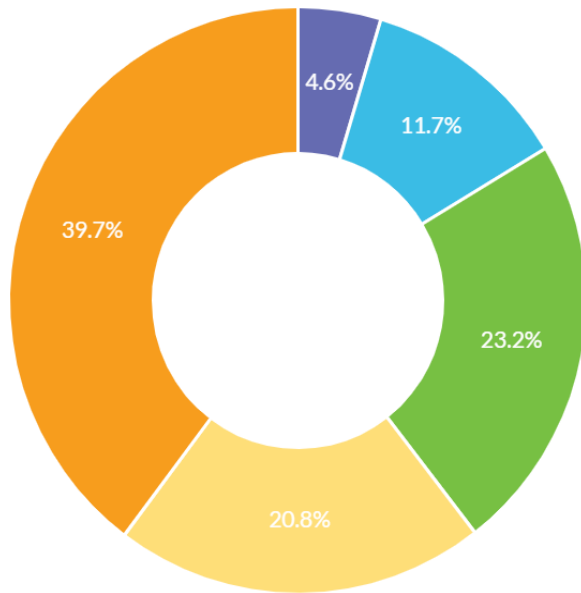


Figure 1.16

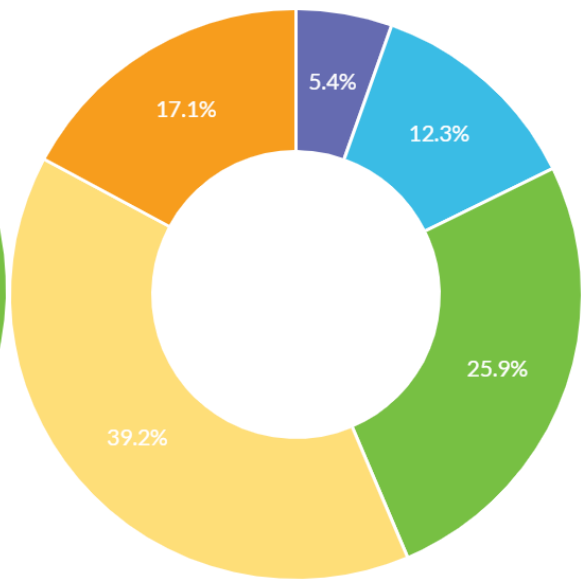


Figure 1.17

Furthermore, a considerable number of employees surveyed expressed a strong interest in a promotion in the department. 38.1% strongly agreed, while 36.5% agreed. Over 25% of respondents were either undecided or did not express interest (Figure 1.18). Finally, on the question of whether promotions are based on merit and objective performance indicators, survey respondents were largely negative. Less than half of participants (15% strongly agree, 33.7% agree) had a positive view of the statement. 32.1% were undecided and 14.4% disagreed (Figure 1.19).

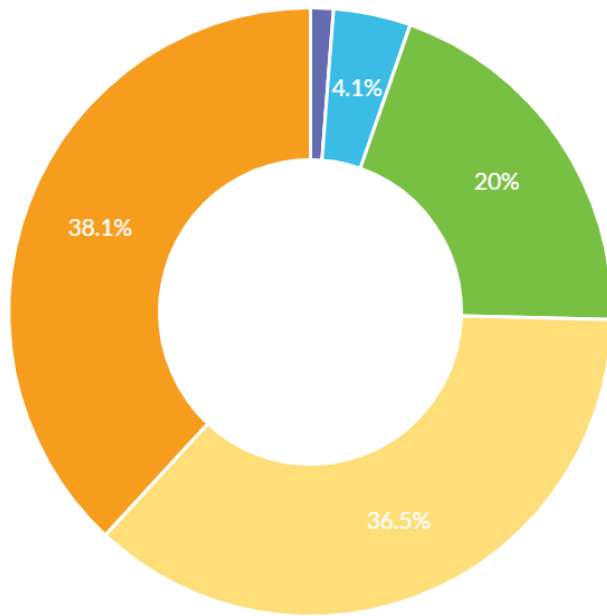


Figure 1.18

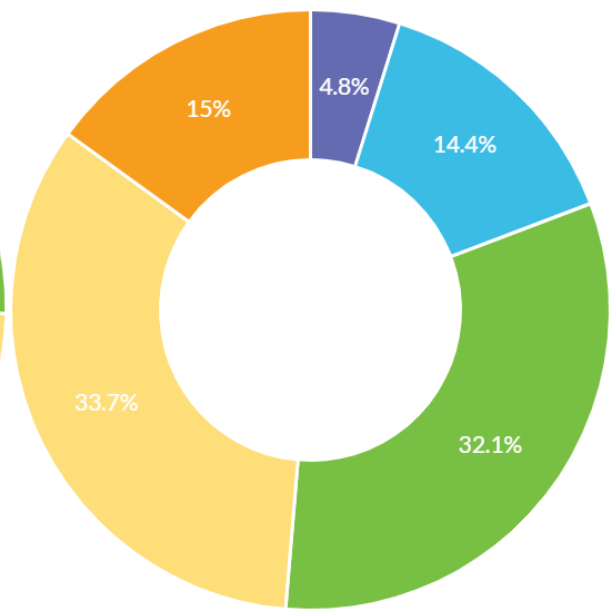


Figure 1.19

Conclusions

Based on the focus group feedback and survey results, we can deduce the following conclusions:

The DEI project in the Department of Revenue is performing creditably well and is well received by large sections of employees and management staff. The managers and supervisors value the current work on DEI in the department and appreciate the strong push to create a diverse employee base which they believe will impact the sharing of ideas and overall performance of their respective units.

While managers and supervisory staff would like to select the best qualified candidates from a diverse pool for promotions, they are constrained by the legal provisions of the Contractual Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which emphasizes awarding promotions to the most tenured employee.

Overwhelmingly, managers and supervisors engage with their employees to receive feedback on decisions under consideration and employee opinions create legitimacy when the outcomes are

revealed. To the managers, the uncompetitive compensation package offered to candidates and protracted hiring process serves as a major disincentive for prospective employees seeking to join the department's ranks. Some managers lamented the opaque hiring process in limited non-civil service jobs which are influenced by political affiliations. They consider those as hindering the push towards recruiting a more diverse workforce.

On the other hand, employees largely support the DEI efforts in the department. They felt that their religious and spiritual liberties were respected and tolerated by their fellow employees and managers. Employees valued the diverse nature of their fellow employees and confirmed that both they and their managers were receiving the requisite diversity training.

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive about how the department would respond to reports of discrimination and bias. Employees also indicated that the department was a welcoming space for them. On the question of career advancement, a strong majority agree that promotion opportunities exist, a substantial minority feels that the openings are not accessible by all employees. Respondents also revealed that while they were interested in promotions in the department, a significant group held the perception that the hiring process was not fair and was not based completely on verifiable and meritorious employee performance.

Recommendations

- I. The researchers recommended that the Department of Revenue continues to put efforts towards maintaining the integrity of their DEI initiative.
- II. The department is encouraged to continue to interact with employees and refine the expectations of what it takes to attain a diverse workforce.

- III. When evaluating the contractual bargaining agreement, considerations should be made to ensure that the hiring process follows a fair, merit-based and time sensitive process.
- IV. Offering competitive compensation packages to prospective hires will make the department an attractive employment option for qualified candidates.
- V. When vacancies for management level positions occur within the department, the job postings should be made visible and accessible to all employees.

Future Research

Due to time constraints and limited statistical resources, the researchers could not complete Goals 3 and 4 of our research (see pages 12 and 13). We recommend that future research further elaborates on the survey responses by cross-tabulating race, gender, tenure in the department vis-à-vis their responses. Other researchers could also work with the department to transform the recruitment process by creating a targeted hiring plan that focuses on bringing in qualified minority candidates.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Management Zoom Focus Group Questions

Topic 1: Diversity in DOR

Question: What does diversity and inclusion mean to you as a manager?

Question: Do you think the DOR has a diverse and inclusive workforce? Explain your viewpoint.

Topic 2: Employee promotion and growth

Question: What qualities are important to you when you promote someone in your unit?

Question: How often do qualified personnel apply for promotions when they become available?

Question: Apart from relevant qualifications and experience, are there unwritten or unspoken factors that influence promotion decisions?

Topic 3: Hiring, onboarding and retention

Question: How does the hiring process reveal the DOR's culture of diversity and inclusion?

Question: In which ways do you communicate to new hires how central diversity and inclusion in the culture of the DOR?

Question: What challenges have you faced in ensuring that current employees align with the DOR's diversity and inclusion efforts?

Topic 4: Diversity and decision-making

Question: When making decisions for your team, how often do you seek diverse viewpoints before arriving at a conclusion?

Question: In your view, do decisions made after consulting a wide group of people feel legitimate? If yes, why is that?

Question: How do you plan to make diversity and inclusion efforts a continuous process in your unit?

Appendix 2

Focus Group Feedback: Management in the DoR

DEI and Promotion

April 6, 2022 1:00-2:30PM

The focus group session consisted of members of management within the Department of Revenue. It was conducted to give insight on four different topics pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as promotions and employee growth. The topics will be described below, followed by overall positive and negative feedback provided by those in attendance.

Topic One: Discussed the topics of diversity within the Department of Revenue. The focus group was asked about what diversity meant, their viewpoint on the departments workforce and what efforts have been taken by leadership to ensure diversity and inclusion in central to the agencies culture.

Topic Two: Focused on employee growth and promotion. Attendees were asked what qualities are important to them when promoting someone on their unit, and how often qualified personnel apply for promotions. They were also asked if there are any unwritten or unspoken factors that influence promotional decisions.

Topic Three: Discussed the hiring process and employee retention. Attendees were asked how the hiring process encompasses the departments culture of diversity and inclusion. They were also asked how they communicate with new hires about diversity and inclusion, and the challenges they have faced to ensure employees align with the department's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

Topic Four: The last topic discussed diversity and decision making. Attendees were asked how they seek out diverse viewpoints before arriving at a conclusion, and if these viewpoints feel legitimate. They were also asked how they plan to make diversity, equity and inclusion efforts a continuous process in their unit.

Overall Feedback

Positive:

1. Many attendees commented on the continuous support they receive pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. They have learned more about diversity, equity, and inclusion themselves from the efforts undertaken by the department than they have in the past. The word 'diversity' was thought as a positive part of the department, explaining that the department has people from many different backgrounds which offers different viewpoints and experience.
2. The feedback showed that there is a consensus that the department is in favor of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The formation of DEI work groups has been a major step towards bringing DEI to the forefront at the department. Management members who participate in the DEI groups at the department are in favor of these groups and enjoy

participating. They encourage others to join the work groups so that diversity, equity, and inclusion continues to be a focus at the department.

3. When hiring and promoting employees, management wants to focus on who is the best candidate for the job and wants to consider many different qualities about the applicant beyond the length of tenure within the department.
4. Managers value the opinions and feedback they receive from their employees, and they actively seek out their opinions when making decisions for the department.
5. There was an overwhelming agreement that diversity, equity, and inclusion topics need to continue to be part of the focus in the future, and they will do whatever it takes to keep an open line of communication between them and the employees at the department.

Negative:

1. The biggest theme during the focus group was the boundaries to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within the department in the hiring process. Due to the contractual bargaining agreement between the union and the department, the hiring process may have narrow expectations for its applicants. This dealt with the issue of hiring based upon seniority, opposed to hiring to best applicant for the position. There is also the fact that not everyone will be on board with promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace, so some units/managers within the department may receive greater feedback from their employees than others.
2. Another boundary pertaining to promotions was the uncompetitive salary range, and the length of time it takes to fill a position. Managers stressed that applicants may not be applying due to low salaries, and the long application process (6 months in some scenarios).
3. The process in which someone is promoted into a position within the department could also be reviewed. Some positions are filled without being posted, while other positions (though in a limited sense per the participants) may be filled based on political influences as opposed to the qualifications of the applicant.

Appendix 3

EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS SURVEY QUESTIONS

Kutztown University's goal of this survey is to determine the employees' viewpoints at the Department of Revenue as it pertains to promotions within the department, diversity, equity, and inclusion. All responses to this survey are voluntary and will be anonymous.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and the deadline for the survey is April 15, 2022 at 5:00PM.

1. Do you have a disability?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer
2. Do you identify as LGBTQIA+*?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your race?
 - a. White
 - b. Black/African American
 - c. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Prefer not to answer
4. Have you ever applied for a promotion within the DoR?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer
5. Would you ever apply for a promotion within the DoR?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer

The below questions will be answered by:

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

1. I can openly express my religious/spiritual beliefs at the DoR
2. My religious/spiritual beliefs are treated with respect by my coworkers
3. My religious/spiritual beliefs are treated with respect by my superiors
4. The DoR is welcoming to employees and prospective applicants, regardless of race, religion or beliefs
5. The DoR encourages employees to share their ideas openly
6. The DoR is responsive to employee concerns
7. The DoR has management who speak and act in ways that value diversity
8. The DoR has employees who speak and act in ways that value diversity
9. The DoR promotes and values cultural differences
10. The DoR offers regular training regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
11. The DoR would take a report of discrimination/bias/harassment seriously
12. My privacy would be maintained if I were to file a report
13. I know where to file a report at the DoR
14. The DoR creates a safe and welcoming environment for everyone
15. I feel support from management to advance within my career at the DoR
16. There are many opportunities for advancement at the DoR
17. Career advancement within the DoR is available to all employees
18. Promotions within the DoR have a fair hiring process
19. I am interested in a promotion within the DoR
20. Promotions within the DoR are based upon merit and exemplary employee performance

Appendix 4

Survey Responses – Descriptive Statistics

Question number	Choice	Total Responses
1	Strongly Disagree -19 Disagree – 35 Neutral – 117 Agree – 88 Strongly Agree - 25	284 answered 3 non answered
2	Strongly Disagree – 9 Disagree – 10 Neutral -101 Agree – 127 Strongly Agree - 36	283 answered 4 non answered
3	Strongly Disagree – 9 Disagree – 9 Neutral -102 Agree – 117 Strongly Agree - 46	283 answered 4 non answered
4	Strongly Disagree – 3 Disagree – 16 Neutral -40 Agree – 117 Strongly Agree - 107	283 answered 4 non answered
5	Strongly Disagree – 13 Disagree – 40 Neutral -51 Agree – 119 Strongly Agree - 61	284 Answered 3 non answered
6	Strongly Disagree – 18 Disagree – 45 Neutral -81 Agree – 98 Strongly Agree - 42	284 Answered 3 non answered
7	Strongly Disagree – 8 Disagree – 29 Neutral -68 Agree – 116 Strongly Agree - 62	283 Answered 4 non answered

8	Strongly Disagree – 9 Disagree – 10 Neutral -101 Agree – 127 Strongly Agree - - 36	283 answered 4 non answered
9	Strongly Disagree – 7 Disagree – 19 Neutral -79 Agree – 121 Strongly Agree - 57	283 answered 4 non answered
10	Strongly Disagree – 6 Disagree – 15 Neutral -30 Agree – 140 Strongly Agree - 91	282 answered 5 non answered
11	Strongly Disagree – 6 Disagree – 16 Neutral - 46 Agree – 104 Strongly Agree - 111	283 answered 4 non answered
12	Strongly Disagree – 10 Disagree – 29 Neutral -72 Agree – 99 Strongly Agree - 74	284 answered 3 non answered
13	Strongly Disagree – 11 Disagree – 17 Neutral -21 Agree – 148 Strongly Agree - 79	284 answered 3 non answered
14	Strongly Disagree – 31 Disagree – 37 Neutral - 61 Agree – 91 Strongly Agree - 64	284 answered 3 non answered
15	Strongly Disagree – 34 Disagree – 81 Neutral - 65 Agree – 80 Strongly Agree - 24	284 answered 3 non answered

16	Strongly Disagree – 34 Disagree – 81 Neutral -65 Agree – 80 Strongly Agree - 24	284 answered 3 non answered
17	Strongly Disagree – 42 Disagree –53 Neutral -70 Agree – 72 Strongly Agree - 47	284 answered 3 non answered
18	Strongly Disagree – 46 Disagree – 52 Neutral -73 Agree – 83 Strongly Agree - 29	283 answered 4 non answered
19	Strongly Disagree – 13 Disagree – 22 Neutral -71 Agree – 97 Strongly Agree - 81	284 answered 3 non answered
20	Strongly Disagree – 40 Disagree – 60 Neutral - 89 Agree – 70 Strongly Agree - 25	284 answered 3 non answered

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