DETAIL REPORT: FOCUS GROUP & SURVEY FINDINGS

Following is a summary of the top findings and themes related to data collected from both the Focus Groups and the Staff Survey. There was significant consistency among both data collection mechanisms as it pertains to identifying problem areas. This section breaks those findings down into two parts:

- Problem areas identified in focus groups
- Problem areas identified in survey responses

Focus Group Findings

Within focus groups, a total of seven themes were identified. The top four themes made up 90% of the comments and were as follows. Percentages indicate the percentage of times the theme was identified:

1. Inconsistent HR Support, Policies & Procedures (28%).
2. Perceived Exclusion (28%).
3. Organizational Culture/Climate Not Inclusive (18%).
4. Lack of Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion (16%).

Inconsistent HR Support, Policies & Procedures

Focus groups participants regularly cited concerns with what is perceived as an inconsistent and unclear promotions process along with strong challenges existing within the Human Resources Department. The theme was identified 62 times and came up in every single group. The theme came up most prevalently among the Transgender / gender expansive and White focus groups, followed by the People of Color focus group. Some of the top sub-themes within this category are listed on the next page with examples of statements from participants.

HR SUPPORT, POLICIES, PROCEDURES	Examples of Concerns
Promotions process unclear, no standards, mystery promotions	*The hiring procedures of HRC are concerning and not transparent.*
	There is no type of promotion.
	You find favoritism. Everyone else is shriveling up and dying and leaving.
	There are temp staff issues – main issue is pay – no time off, not paid for sick days. We're forced to sacrifice and struggle to get into the organization.
	Interesting how they make hires with relevant experience, but there isn't any consideration into the person's values, their beliefs, how invested they are into the HRC cause.
	There's no formal interview process.
	In my case, doing the job was the interview.
	Raise policy is extremely inconsistent/vague.
	How are people promoted? It's vague. The company needs a "transparent process" and an equal playing field.
	For example there was someone that got promoted to manager and there is this huge discrepancy and it seems to me that the leadership has no interest, that it seems like the same organization.
	There is a lack of communication for job postings – it's "The mystery of who gets appointed."
Supervisors don't help develop their staff, prepare them for promotion	*What is the pathway to promotion? There is no clear path. There is no model of growth. There is no professional development plan.*
	Promotion to management does not come with training.
	No one talks about organization, structure, how to move up or around within the organization.
	Managers that think on hiring and firing and not making sure their employees are doing well.
	HRC management training is laughable.
	People already working at HRC are not considered for director and management positions. No equal playing field.
	As support staff we don't feel comfortable in asking

	for those [professional development] opportunities.
	I haven't been fired yet so I assume I'm doing a good job.
	HRC is bringing in outsiders for new leadership – internal candidates are not even considered for higher positions.
	I get the sense that for a director level and up when there is an opening there's a thing about bringing someone from the outside.
Economic issues	*People of color, Transgender people, lower socio-economic people face institutionalized discrimination - that plays a part in salary. Lowered salary compared to those with privilege.*
	Interns who are successful are those who came in with opportunities in their pocket (white, male, savings, education).
	Lower-tier salary is not competitive with industry standard at all considering the experience they bring, how they are treated, the work they are asked to do.
	Annual income range at HRC: $35,000 to $400,000.
	Interns/Temp employees are deeply in debt because they don't have enough compensation. Even now, employees are not making enough to deal with their debt. Employees are very passionate, but are literally trying to survive on scraps in DC. It is an amazing opportunity to work for HRC but employees also need to eat.
	Raise policy is extremely inconsistent/vague.

Perceived Exclusion

Staff feel varying degrees of and have witnessed what they perceive as unfair and unproductive exclusion from decision making at HRC. This was brought up in every single focus group and variations on the theme were mentioned no less than 62 times altogether. This was felt most strongly by remote staff, followed by trans / gender expansive staff. Men, women and Millenials also had considerable conversation on this theme. Some of the top sub-themes within this category are listed below with examples of statements from participants.

PERCEIVED EXCLUSION	Examples of Concerns
"Soft" skills / feminine traits not valued & other forms of perceived sexism	*Straight women and lesbians get sexist treatment from gay men at HRC.*
	There is visible misogyny (cutting women off, only addressing other white men).
	I see femophobia – feminine men and women are not considered as important.
	I've seen two men hire an underqualified man over an exceptional woman.
	I think it's not everyone but there have been enough comments that make it seem like, "oh you have the soft skills."
	It's like our work is not as important because we are not making money. There is a difference between respect.
	Sexism is rampant at HRC. It seems as subtle as men over run women in meetings.
	I've heard upper level male managers talk to female staffers in obscene ways questioning their competency that they don't do with young males.
	The moral of the story is that it's often overlooked if it's done by a woman. So is a man doing a female job at HRC. Admin support, scheduling, event planning, pride are more gendered female…Jobs that are considered female.
	Women's voices are not always heard in the organization or given the same importance. Men can scream louder (literally) but it doesn't mean their ideas are better.
Younger staff, lower paid staff excluded from decision-making and not valued, told to stick to their job.	*Internally there is a do your job attitude – which sends the message "I don't think you have anything of value to contribute."*
	Younger staff in particular are exploited and not rewarded financially.
	If you are not above 26 or hold a title of a manager or above than you are not as important.
	Junior staff are not encouraged to get involve with policy and implementation.
	There is a churn and burn mentality.
	The tone is patronizing.
	I heard someone tell another person of their team

	that they are just hired to do the task at hand.
	I think people are taken advantage of. They have passion and get paid $30,000 a year.
	Your opinion is not appreciated or thought about. You are supposed to just do your job.
	There is a millennial discontent. They are more activist-oriented. They want to help change from within, but the structure is not there.
Staff who voice concerns viewed as complainers; fear of speaking honestly	*A lot of folks are personally invested in diversity inclusion but their voices have been smothered or pushed away.*
	Support staff seems to be labeled as complainers.
	When seeing problems and pointing them out, they're told that's not your job.
	Not enough trust in organization to bring up issues without that information being used against someone else, no safe spaces.
	I heard someone raise a concern and their supervisor told them to stop raising concerns and to just sit there and absorb the advice of people who have been there longer. HRC has been around for a while and isn't going to change.
	Raising concerns is not your job and focus on your tasks. Concerns are to be tasked by people who are more experienced, less radical, more conservative, more mainstream.
	Currently, if you complain you are viewed as a trouble maker.
	If you disagree with HRC initiatives. You will be ignored and dismissed.
	He was seen as troublemaker for whining or complaining.
	There was a suspiciousness about participating.
	When they hear you they hear the complaints.

Organizational Culture/Climate Not Inclusive

Organizational culture was cited many times by focus group participants. It was generally characterized by a lack of respectful dialogue within the organization and how/if diversity conversations are supported. The theme was tracked 41 times and arose in every single focus group. The theme came up most prevalently among the White group, followed by Millennials,

then Transgender/gender expansive group. Some of the top sub-themes from this category are listed below with examples of statements. Note that the first item, "Not many diversity conversations happen at HRC…" could also be categorized as a "commitment to diversity and inclusion" – in the fourth item.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE/CLIMATE	Examples of Concerns
Not many diversity conversations happen at HRC / no real push for diversity.	*There's no honest discussion.* *There is no continuous effort to have any training or work done on diversity and inclusion.* *It's not often that we have discussion about racial justice or interpersonally how are you feeling as a white person at HRC.* *Senior staff and junior staff are not given opportunities for open dialogue. No serious platform for discussion.* *Not that many diversity conversations happen at HRC.* *Change isn't coming from within.* *There is not a lot of recognition for D&I.* *There are no leadership awards for D&I.* *HRC shouldn't just do D&I training once a year.* *Are HR people even given diversity training?*
Leadership culture is homogenous – gay, white, male	*There's a lack of women in leadership roles at HRC.* *Lesbian women are under-represented.* *White gay men have all the power in the top roles.* *HRC - the culture of over achievers. We value people who are smart and do their job well. We are all super stars.* *The organization is dominated by white, gay men.* *Lack of strong and diverse leaders, trust, transparency, and recognition of work.* *Most of the people in the cubes are white. The leadership is all white. It is surprising that we pretend we are going to change it and nothing happens.*

	We go to the meeting and there are 6-7 high-up people - they are all high-functioning, white, funny males. They are pinging off each other. There were no women.
	The upper management is what gives a tone. What they give is a recipe for disaster. If you go to a department meeting the only people that talk are management or above.
Leaders talk negatively about others behind their backs. (***note, while there were many quotes, most violated our confidentiality ethics and could not be included in the report)	*I've seen people get recognition awards and it gives them steam for months, but at happy hour, I hear VPs complaining about what a waste of time it is. It's so deflating.*
	Leadership needs to take it seriously. I have heard things that they think it is a joke and just for support staff.

Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

This was flagged as a close fourth in frequency and expansiveness across focus groups as a concern. It came up 36 times and was also discussed in every single group. There was also some cross-over from the previous finding of "Organizational Culture / Climate Not Inclusive" as some of the conversations about both topics were closely tied together. Although this came up in every group, it was not highlighted in specific groups more than others – it came up about the same number of times in every group. Some of the top sub-themes from this category are listed below with examples of statements.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	Examples of Concerns
Diversity only happens at the lower tiers in the organization, leadership represents gay, white men.	*We are supposed to be fighting for people who are being discriminated against and marginalized, however we at HRC are discriminating against people and marginalizing people in the workplace.*
	We have more diversity on the lower or assistant level staff but it's not filtering up.
	Senior staff and HR are not bothering to promote wellness and change - nothing is coming down from the top.
	There are "cliques" and no interaction within

	various departments.
	People of color generally work in "staff support."
	White gay men are hired in leadership.
	My friends we joke, "oh another white, gay man was hired."
	Something interesting I see are the presentations that are given to the board. We have the statistics of more diverse gender, ethnicity and it is not reflected in the other tiers. We are at the bottom of barrel, talent, culture it's not making it anywhere else.
	No diversity at the senior level.
	Even when you have a diversity director. You are talking nice but it doesn't move. She was sidelined.
There's a lack of a shared understanding of what diversity and inclusion means for HRC and how that gets operationalized. HRC hasn't invested the time it needs to identify this.	*We don't even have a basic shared vocabulary about what this work is about.*
	There is no "real push" for diversity.
	People of Color want to learn and give their perspective to HRC on various initiatives (not just Heritage Month).
	New hires are getting D&I training but existing staff is not.
	There is a lack of D&I within staff and little has changed in the last three years.
	Typical situation: We have to hire in a couple of weeks, so there is no time to find diverse candidates for field organizers/ consultants. Our go-to pool is not very diverse.
	We just hired a new staff member. There is nothing about hiring diverse candidates. S/he just wanted to know if s/he could do these things and not make it a better place. We are going through the same cycle of hiring the same person.

TRANS* STAFF

A word about concerns raised related to the experience that Transgender/gender (Trans*) expansive staff have at HRC. While some of the concerns were not voiced by all groups (and thus did not rise to the fore in aggregate data), they came up consistently and overwhelminglyl among trans* staff (and confirmed by survey responses) and was frequently noticed by non-trans staff as well. Due to the depth of concerns, we felt it significant to call attention to these issues:

- **Trans* staff are frequently tokenized** – asked to be part of a group, comment on an issue, or educate other staff because of their identity and not because it's part of their job. There's a fine balance between never being asked and feeling relied up on to be the trans* voice.

- **Trans* people don't feel safe to come out at HRC.** People work for years at HRC before coming out as trans.

- **Trans* people are frequently mis-gendered** with the wrong pronouns, after repeated corrections. Pronoun use is not emphasized enough in introductions at HRC. People "stare blankly at you when you bring this up." There needs to be a much stronger emphasis on gender pronoun usage and its importance.

- **There's only one gender neutral bathroom in the building**, every other floor "is gendered." There's been a lack of interest in addressing this problem – "the initiative for gender neutral bathrooms has gone on for 6 months."

- **Trans* staff feel heightened sense of interest/authority given to those who are more masculine.**

- **Trans* people of color are absent.**

- **No one trusts HR.** They have poorly handled gender pronouns, name changes, email changes during transition. "Extremely complicated to change emails in the event of a name change. 1-2 months for the request to finally get processed."

- **The dress code is labeled male or female only.**

REMOTE WORKING STAFF

A word about concerns raised related to the experience of remote staff. Remote or off-site staff have a unique experience not shared by those on-site. There concerns were felt consistently among members. Following is a summary of their concerns:

- **HRC forgets about Off-site people.** Having remote staff at HRC is not new and it is increasing. They should train staff on etiquette on calls. It is difficult to hear. We are not provided the needed help on technical issues.

- **Remote staff are a part of the organization but not a part of the culture**. Significant staff changes don't get communicated to remote staff; it is frustrating getting second-hand news.
- **When I'm in the office, people think I'm an intern.**

Survey Findings

Within surveys, problems areas were highlighted both in multiple choice questions and found to be consistent with responses to open-ended questions. The top themes characterizing problem areas were as follows:

1. Organizational Culture Not inclusive
2. Human Resources Department Deficits
3. Training / Education Deficits

Organizational Culture Not Inclusive

One of the most frequent concerns that rose was the sense of an organizational culture rooted in a white, masculine orientation which is judgmental of all those who don't fit that mold. Disparate treatment toward women and those with "soft skills" was frequently cited by staff – both men and women – and there is a sense that if you operate outside of that orientation, you will not be successful at HRC.   There is a general sense of feeling excluded from decision-making and a distrust or fear that if one brings up concerns, their sphere of influence becomes limited.   This is consistent with findings from the focus groups. Some of the top sub-themes from this category are listed below with examples of statements.

- **"White Men's Club"** Many staff cited an extremely judgmental working environment, particularly of women and feminine-identified individuals. Sexism and the "good old boys club" was cited 32 times in open ended answers.   Many staff cited concerns over the general lack of respect in appreciating people's diverse backgrounds. There was broad-based observations that people who are different don't fit in and are treated poorly – not included, talked down to, excluded, voices not appreciated, etc.   Up to seven staff characterized the work environment "toxic."

<u>Statistics</u>:

- A third of all staff find the environment to be exclusionary.
- More than half of multiracial and Latino people and 83% of genderqueer people feel they are not treated equally based on their identity. All races report feeling ignored. More than a third of all whites who are promoted are promoted 3 or more times, while all other races (except Asian American) are rarely promoted more than 2 times.
- 100% of trans/genderqueer people feeling bias against them.
- Seven out of 31 men who have been promoted have been on staff less than two years (some promoted two times). No women under two years have been promoted.

<u>Comments</u>:

- *There is still a great deal of sexism, racism, classism, ageism, and other biases in this organization. This is true for many organizations across the country, but when you claim to be the largest LGBT non-profit in the nation, you may want to improve how you treat your employees and how much you honor intersectional identities.*
- *By far, the organization is geared toward wealthy, white urban men.*
- *The level of misogyny at work throughout the institution is incredible and neither HR nor anyone else - is equipped to address or handle this issue.*
- *We need to work on the gay white male privileged on the staff and our board of directors.*
- *As a woman, I feel excluded every day.*
- *Extremely exclusionary, especially with regards to age, race, and gender identity.*
- *It's a lot of gay man cliques.*
- *There isn't a single African-American in Senior leadership. Neither is there a department head in the entire organization who is African-American. Most African-Americans I work with seek support and validation for the onslaught of racial tension external to the organization. The message is clear - the more one assimilates and acculturates to white gay culture, the more one is seen as a "team player."*
- *This is the most sexist organization I have ever worked for. My voice as a woman is irrelevant and my credentials are meaningless.*
- *It depends on the person and department. Some departments are respectful to diversity while others are not.*

- *If you are a young white gay male, who socializes with staff and especially senior staff, there is a greater likelihood that you will advance sooner.*
- *Ironically - I feel female straight allies are treated better than lesbians on staff specifically by gay males.*
- *I think the stereotype as the "white gay man's club" is accurate. I think there's a ton of sexism at HRC, and I think the divide between gay/bisexual and straight women doesn't do much to help that.*
- *I think HRC can be a rather sexist work environment. With only some exception, the most influential people in the building/ the ones that have the president's ear are white, gay men.*

- **Language & Humor.** Language is a specific area of concern among staff. On gender, many staff continue to mis-gender Transgender staff and genderqueer/expansive staff though they have been corrected many times. Several people cited the inappropriate use of humor that puts others down. Many wrote about leadership modeling good behavior – some in upper levels of leadership make negative comments about others, are gossipy and use inappropriate humor. There's a general lack of professionalism and respect for others around language use.

  Statistics:
  - 61% percent of all staff have witnessed disparaging remarks/behaviors in the past 12 months.
  - 100% of VPs notice disparaging behaviors, mostly related to gender (80%) and age & gender identity (60%)
  - 40% of VPs feel they are subjected frequently to insensitive/inappropriate comments.

  Comments:
  - *I have overheard some very clearly unprofessional language by at least one mid to high-level HRC official and by a senior staffer in HR trainings.*
  - *The senior management can be somewhat of a boys' club and say things that while intended to be funny, are not necessary appropriate.*
  - *I have heard staff members use the word "tranny" when this is an extremely disrespectful word.*
  - *The insulting or disparaging remarks that I have witnessed have largely come from senior staff members as well as from board members, not from support staff.*

- *There should be no place for insulting and disparaging remarks, behaviors or body language. People cloak a lot of this in humor, which makes it that much easier to 'excuse.'*
- *The way the staff treats and talks about interns is so appalling. We're working to improve the lives of LGBTQ youth, yet the way we talk about them around the office goes against that.*
- *In my department, there is a good deal of respect. I know I'm lucky though. Many of my colleagues are not respected at all by their bosses. Some are even actively put down.*

- **Tokenism.** There is a general sense that when someone is hired who has diverse characteristics, one of the primary reasons they were hired is due to those characteristics and not due to qualifications. This is rooted in an experience of limited internal promotions and people feeling under-valued for their skills and experience when they do apply. In additional, Transgender and genderqueer/expansive individuals are most likely to feel tokenized – that people come to them for answers to questions about gender identity outside of their scope of responsibility:
  - 40% of trans people always feel unfairly relied upon to be expert in their group; 57% of genderqueer people frequently feel the same.

Human Resource Department Deficits

Of all the departments within HRC, this department came up most frequently as being the most problematic or as not working. Outside of concerns about the white, male cultural orientation, HR was most frequently cited for concerns. Concerns included a sense that there is inconsistency in protocols or in following protocols governing: recruiting, hiring, compensation, promotion, training and benefits. Many think HR is under-resourced and that a permanent HR Director needs to be identified. This is consistent with findings from the focus groups.

- More than half of staff believe HR is under-resourced when it comes to D&I.
- Only one (out of 12) trans/genderqueer people agree that appropriate policies/procedures are in place or that HR has proper resources.

- **Diversity Knowledge Within HR low.** Several people raised concerns about HR's level of diversity understanding – particularly around gender identity issues. More serious concerns included offensive language/demeanor and repeated mis-gendering of trans and genderqueer individuals.
  Comments:

- *Our Human Resources department is not equipped to handle diversity.*
- *The Human Resources office needs considerable more training in diversity on very basic topics -- related to race as well as sexual harassment, for example.*

- **General unhelpfulness.** Many staff cited the concern that HR is just not functioning well and is unhelpful for staff seeking help. Questions are frequently answered by HR with, "go check the website." Many expressed frustration and lack of trust in the competence of HR. Example quotes:
  - *HR does not work - everyone knows that is the case - it's an open secret*

- **Inconsistency.** Staff reported numerous inconsistencies in their interactions with HR often not receiving the benefits or other perks they perceive as others receiving; hiring protocols followed one time and not another; one person is educated about a raise policy, another gets a different response:
  - *It is widely believed among support staff that the opportunity for an annual raise ranges from a minimum three percent raise for cost-of-living adjustments, with potential for an additional three percent merit-based raise, up to a total of six percent (6 percent). However, it was revealed to members of the support staff that this was not an official HRC policy but rather a tool to discourage employees from seeking higher compensation.*

Training / Education Deficits

Across the board, staff scored existing diversity and inclusion training offered by HRC low – in comprehensiveness, frequency, and effectiveness. This finding is paired with lack of effective management training and inconsistent orientation training. Some of the top sub-themes from this category are listed below.

- **Orientation Training Consistency.** Staff do not appear to experience consistency in their on-boarding as a staff member. Many recommended creating a standard protocol for on-boarding that is consistent across all employees.

  Statistics:
  - Only 45% of survey takers reported receiving diversity and inclusion training as part of their orientation.

Comments:

- *There is no diversity training during on-boarding!!!! This is a crime.*
- *All staff should be expected to have a baseline understanding of D & I.*
- *Mandatory D & I basic training for all staff.*

- **On-going Diversity & Inclusion Training.** Many staff have not received any diversity and inclusion training and those who have score it low on comprehensiveness and effectiveness. Many recommend that HR develop a standard diversity & inclusion training with required participation among all staff. Many staff also cited interest in keeping diversity and inclusion dialogues going in multiple ways at HRC. Note,

  Statistics:
  - 14% of staff say they have not participated in any diversity & inclusion training.
  - 80% of senior staff seek outside diversity and inclusion training.

  Comments:
  - *Development of on-going D & I training that is accessible, flexible, and non-judgmental.*

- **Management Training.** Those in supervisory positions expressed that they did not receive adequate training support for being a supervisor at HRC.

  Statistics:
  - 67% of supervisors don't think HR provides adequate training for managers.
  - 63% of supervisors don't think there are effective processes in place for hiring.

  Comments:
  - *Provide deep manager training.*