INTRODUCTION

The findings from both focus groups and surveys amount to what can be considered as symptoms of current challenges existing within HRC. Combining these findings with the historical and systems analysis reveals the potential causes fueling these challenges with opportunities for growth.

Considering organizational evolution and organizational history, we found the following broad underlying causes:

1) Dynamics revealed within focus groups and surveys are legacies of the organization's history and at times results of unsuccessful efforts to take on the challenges of being a truly diverse and inclusive organization. Some are tied to the increasing diversity and the ever-more critical need for HRC to perform well in diverse communities and contexts externally.

2) While many of the organization's core systems, policies, and procedures were adequate and appropriate for an organization of its size in the past, there are some which will require updating, others that are obsolete and/or need to be reconfigured, and still more that are unused or under-utilized.

3) There are dynamics that are related to the two ways in which HRC achieves its goals as represented by "HRC" and the "HRC Foundation."

HRC Has Significant Strengths. *Staff who work at HRC overwhelmingly believe in its work and its mission, and believe that the organization is making some attempts to improve its performance around diversity and inclusion.*

1) ***There is a high level of commitment among HRC's staff to the point that almost three-quarters would recommend the organization to a friend or colleague as a good place to work***. And only 20% of staff believe that the success of HRC's mission <u>does not</u> require that diversity and inclusion be a part of the organization's work and values.

2) ***The willingness of staff to engage in this process was exceptional***. As a team, Pipeline Consulting came to understand that the critiques, comments, context, and other data staff submitted were generally offered because the organization and its success are so important to those who work at the Human Rights Campaign. Staff offered a picture of an organization with great potential to be a model, and as suggested above, detailed throughout this report, and clearly by the desire of HRC to engage in this assessment, an organization that has a great, but achievable amount of work to be done to be that model of forward-leaning diversity and inclusion.

3) ***The hiring of Pipeline Consulting was raised many times in all areas of data collection as a positive sign that the Human Rights Campaign was looking to continue movement to improve diversity and inclusion.*** The Pipeline Team did not process this as being particular or specific to Pipeline, but instead as staff feeling some degree of relief – even if cautiously

– about the organization's being willing to create an opportunity for self-examination and perhaps the beginnings of a roadmap forward.

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 elements as it pertains to identification of problem areas and suggestions for potential solutions. This section breaks those findings down into four parts:
*   Problem areas identified in focus groups
*   Problem areas identified in survey responses
*   Potential solutions identified in focus groups
*   Potential solutions identified in survey responses

PROBLEM AREAS IDENTIFIED BY FOCUS GROUPS

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

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
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.* *My manager explicitly told another person of my 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.
"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 woman 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.*
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.

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 people of color focus group. Some of the top sub-themes within this category are listed below 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.

Organizational Culture / Climate Not Inclusive. Organizational culture was cited many times by focus group participations 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 Millenials, 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, men	*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 agreement 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 "Un-Inclusive Organizational Culture / Climate" as some of the conversations about both topics where 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 three and a half years I've been here.* *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 strongly among trans* staff (which is confirmed by survey responses) and 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 misgendered** 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. 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**. Hayden's promotion to Chief of Staff was never communicated to remote staff; it is frustrating getting second-hand news
- **When I'm in the office, people think I'm an intern.**

PROBLEMS AREAS IDENTIFIED IN SURVEY

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**

1. **Organizational Culture Not Inclusive. O**ne 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.

a. "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."

Statistics:

- 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.

Comments:

- *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 clicks.*

- *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.*

b. 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 – 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 (5/17) 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 in the elevator 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 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 ever actively put down.*

c. 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.

2. **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.

a. 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. Only one out of twelve trans/genderqueer people feel HR has appropriate policies in place.

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.*

b. 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*

c. 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 difference 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.*

3. **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 with examples of statements.

   a. 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.
      - *There is no diversity training during on-boarding!!!! This is a crime.*

   b. 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,

- 14% of staff say they have not participated in any diversity & inclusion training.

c. Management Training. Those in supervisory positions expressed that they did not receive adequate training support for being a supervisor at HRC.
- 67% of supervisors don't think HR provides adequate training for managers.

DISCUSSION: IDENTITY SHAPES PERCEPTION

While the above data is important on its face, it is even more important when considering the lenses through which staff views their experiences at HRC. As shown below, racial identity is the primary or secondary filter through which People of Color are processing their experiences at HRC.

For People of Transgender Experience, it is gender and gender identity, and for women, gender is the primary lens through which their experiences are being shaped at HRC.

It should be noted that this is not at all particular to HRC.

When asked "With regard to diversity and inclusion, my experiences at HRC have been mostly shaped by" most people identify that their experiences are shaped most by their marginalized identity characteristics:

❈ 90% of African-Americans cite race, then age, sexual orientation and educational background

❈ 87% of Asian-Americans cite race, then age and gender (63%).

❈ Whites cite gender and sexual orientation (64-65%)

❈ Latinos cite race and age (60%), then educational background (40%).

❈ For people of multi-racial experience, educational background is first (80%), followed by age and race (60%)

❈ 100% of people of Transgender experience cite gender and gender identification

❈ People who identify as GenderQueer cite gender identification (72%), followed by age, gender, and economic status (57%)

❈ Men cited sexual orientation first (63%), then age (62%), and then race (54%)

❈ Women cited gender (68%), sexual orientation (53%), and age (43%)

And if an environment is seen at not welcoming, not equitable, and/or not "safe" along any of those lines, then an organization is not doing all it can to provide a workplace that is as productive as it could or should be. Further, it will often experience higher levels of attrition, narratives will be formed around the likelihood

of success for women, People of Color, People of Transgender Experience, or other identity markers.

For instance, when asked the following "My advancement and/or salary increases have been limited because of my (racial or ethnic) group," the only group that answered "Always" were Whites (10.42%). Whites also answered "Frequently" or "Occasionally" 30% of the time. While Asians did so 25% of the time; African-Americans, Latinos/as, and those who were Multi-racial all said 20% of the time. It's clear that there is a perception that advancement is to some degree related to identity.

Further, while all People of Color categories stated that their experiences related to advancement, inclusion or exclusion were tied to race at levels ranging from 56% for Latinos/as to 88% for Asians, only 14% of Whites felt that their racial identity was a factor.

DISCUSSION: LEADERSHIP SCHISM

Finally, interviews with members of the leadership pointed to a disconnected, fractured leadership tier that expressed significant distrust among peers with decision-making power being held in few hands. This dynamic arose a number of times in interviews but perhaps most significantly, in focus groups as well pointing to a perception of this beyond the leadership team itself.

This issue arose primarily when participants were queried about their confidence in leadership's ability to vision and champion change with respect to diversity and inclusion:

40% of survey respondents agreed with the statement "The board of directors and executive leadership are ready to make our work on diversity and inclusion a top priority for the organization." While 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed, with 29% having no opinion.

In the absence of any feedback specifically on staff perception of the leadership team in interviews and the focus groups, this three-way division in survey responses could be viewed as 'neutral.' However, a recurring theme in all three data collection vehicles were questions of confidence about the cohesiveness of the leadership team, its interest and capacity to move the organization forward on diversity and inclusion, and therefore its ability to lead in this area.

That said, staff appeared to very much want the leadership team to come to a point where it could lead, and do so with confidence and competence.

SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED BY FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group participants were cautiously optimistic about the future of HRC and had many suggested solutions for the organization to improve with respect to its performance on diversity and inclusion. The White People group, Remote staff group, Millenials and Transgender/gender expansive groups were most likely to provided suggested solutions. Among the solutions, a total of 14 different themes

were identified with three areas being mentioned most frequently. The top three themes made up 64% of all suggested solutions and are as follows. Percentages indicate the percentage of times the theme was identified:
1. HR Suggestions (36%).
2. Training & Education Suggestions (17%).
3. Culture Change Suggestions (12%)

HR.   Suggestions for improvement to the HR Department were by far the most frequent comments and directly connect to one of the most frequently cited problem areas – HR support, policies and procedures. There were no less than 28 suggestions and comments arose in every single group. White people had the most number of suggestions, followed by people of color. While fewer in sum, most other groups made a comparable number of suggestions. Suggestions for improving HR include:
   • Support more diversity at the leadership level.
   • Provide clear staff development opportunities.
   • Harness the energy and drive of younger staff.
   • Send staff to conferences and trainings.
   • Find ways to better integrate new staff - perhaps a mentoring program.
   • Provide managers with the tools and training to develop their staff.

Training and Education.   Staff had numerous suggestions related to HRC's training and education efforts. Suggestions came up 13 times and most frequently among the White People and Transgender / Gender expansive groups. Suggestions for training and education came up in five of the ten focus groups. Some of the top suggestions are listed below with examples of statements.
   • All staff should be expected to have a baseline understanding of D & I.
   • Mandatory D & I basic training for all staff.
   • Development of on-going D & I training that is accessible, flexible, and non-judgmental.
   • Provide deep manager training.
   • Train staff on conference call etiquette.

Culture Change.   Several suggestions were identified as related to enhancing an organizational culture that supported diversity and inclusion. There were nine suggestions grouped under this theme and arose in six out of ten focus groups. The suggestions came up slightly more frequently among the People of Color group. Some of the top suggestions are listed below with examples of statements.
   • Provide more transparency in decisions to reach organizational goals.
   • Ask people for their opinions.
   • Give people an opportunity to identify as people of color.

SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED BY SURVEY RESPONSES

Positive suggestions for change generated through the open-ended questions on the survey were a close mirror to those suggestions generated in focus groups. The top three areas for suggestions made up 90% of all suggestions and their frequency and priority also mirrored that of focus groups. Those three top themes were:
1. HR Suggestions (36%).
2. Training & Education Suggestions (21%).

3. Culture Change Suggestions (13%)

HR. Suggestions for improvement to the HR Department were the most frequent comments and directly connect to one of the most frequently cited problem areas – HR support, policies and procedures. Of the 139 suggestions for change, 50 comments were directed toward HR suggestions. Suggestions for improving HR include:
- Create greater diversity on staff and board – especially in upper levels.
- Re-organize the Human Resources Department.
- Host staff activities to build relationships and trust, and reduce the silo-effect.
- Restructure the on-boarding process – include required diversity & inclusion training and organizational basics.
- Offer effective management training.

Training and Education. Staff had numerous suggestions related to HRC's training and education efforts. Individual suggestions appeared up 29 times in open-ended comments. Some of the top suggestions were:
- Required diversity and inclusion training for all staff, regardless of level.
- Host mixed group dialogues on diversity and inclusion issues.
- Have more opportunity for intersectional analysis.

Culture Change. Several suggestions were identified as related to enhancing an organizational culture that supported diversity and inclusion. There were 18 suggestions grouped under this theme. Suggestions include:
- Include more people in the decision-making, especially those who will be most effected.
- Hold all staff accountable for bad behavior, bad language – including upper tier staff.
- Demonstrate genuine appreciation for staff accomplishments and work.
- Ask ERGs for specific suggestions and recommendations.