



Building a Culture of Belonging

We're united for a Harborview where we all feel like we belong and are accepted as valuable and important members of our Harborview community. No matter our differences, most of us want the same things. We want to be able to provide for our families, have security through the hard times, and be the best we can be in every patient interaction.

Whether we are white, Black, or brown, we all deserve to be treated the same at work. Some of us who are people of color are treated differently, supervised more closely, given less opportunity than others or made to feel like we don't belong. What this hides from us is how much we have in common and that these differences are used as a way to divide us against each other. When we all feel like we can bring our full selves into our workplace we will also provide the best quality patient care.

Over the past two years it has been our experience that the UW's commitment

to safety and belonging for everyone is surface-level. To truly change the systems of oppression at Harborview that make some of us feel like we don't belong we need decision-making power as workers and union members. Administration and HR already exercise power at Harborview. Culture change must be directed by us as workers.

We need a workplace that respects and values all of us. When some of us are treated differently based on the color of our skin, our gender, our sexual orientation, or other identities we hold, it impacts us, our patients, and perpetuates systemic discrimination. This is all of our struggle and in order for us to win on issues like safe staffing or higher wages, we have to stand together across the differences that are usually used to divide us against each other. It is time for all of us to take an active role to ensure we address systemic oppressions that exist both within and outside of Harborview.

Our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council Proposal Includes:

- Outside facilitation to bring experiences from other organizations and counteract the power imbalance between administration and workers
- Dedicated monthly time to ensure that the work it takes to build a new culture at Harborview is prioritized
- A decision-making structure that privileges union members in order to counteract the power imbalance between administration and workers and to prioritize the voices of impacted workers
- Access to Harborview resources (like IT support) to facilitate the council's work.

What is Belonging?

"Belonging means more than just being seen. Belonging entails having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures. Belonging means having the right to contribute to, and make demands on, society and political institutions. Belonging is more than just feeling included. In a legitimate democracy, belonging means that your well-being is considered and your ability to design and give meaning to its structures and institutions is realized."

-john powell

"We have committed ourselves to continue this committee to assist those of us that have experienced racism and micro aggressions. We know this happens at Harborview and we need a safe place to go to and get support. Our coworkers should not get in trouble or be reprimanded for their race or color of their skin. UW is a large institution and they need to take this seriously and join us in a collaborative way to make sure people are treated fairly."

Olga Ramirez, RN, 3E, Executive Board Member, Bargaining Team



Respect Us, Protect Us, Pay Us

“We serve a diverse population and it’s so disheartening to hear that we’re being harassed and intimidated in the workforce. We see work done for our patients, but we know racism impacts us too. Employees need a safe place to address discrimination and racism. We acknowledge Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is not an overnight or even couple-year thing. This has to be collaboration on all parts and we hope UW acknowledges staff have an opportunity to make these changes. This is about working together, all of us to get through this and actually prevent harassment and discrimination in workplace. We need a voice in how EDI happens and not just have UW tell us what to do.”

Melanie Arciaga, RN, 5E, Executive Board Member, Bargaining Team



Safe Staffing and Break Relief

When we are united across our differences, we can hold management accountable. For years UW administrators have told those of us on 4West our work is different than acute care floors and therefore we don’t deserve the same access to breaks. After many actions, and jumping through all of UW’s hoops, administration agreed to break relief nurses on 4West. UW is failing to honor our contractual agreement and implement break RNs. We’re united on 4West and across the hospital to hold management accountable to the agreements made to ensure breaks on 4West. UW Administration needs to implement the Break Relief Nurses and respect all of our contributions to patient care.



“As 4 West’s representative on the Bargaining Team I’ve been learning the history of why we still have poor staffing and no break relief nurses on 4West. In 2015, when we won break relief nurses on all the Acute Care units, the bargaining team and all of us believed we were part of that. But UW said we were not Acute Care even though that is the work that we do! In 2019 we again fought for break relief nurses, we won a process, and we did everything that was asked to prove that we need them. Somehow we still do not have break nurses! I was recently at a workshop about social justice and diversity and we talked about how sometimes a dynamic is not recognized until someone names it. On my floor we are mostly minorities and we talked at the workshop about how as part of white supremacy culture minorities are asked and expected to work harder. This is what’s happening on my floor! Are you asking us as minorities to work harder because that has been our norm? Do we not get the same rights? We are proud of the work we do and we are really dedicated. We need equal treatment and staffing for breaks so we can continue to serve our mission population.”

- Angela Nguyen, RN, 4W, Delegate, Bargaining Team



The Harborview Board of Trustees Heard Our Priorities and Saw Our Unity

We united to tell the Board that we’re committed to a better, safer Harborview. So many of us turned out to show support for our bargaining team that their Zoom meeting couldn’t include all of us! Now it is up to the UW Administration to make the investments in staffing and recruitment and retention. It’s time for UW to respect us, protect us, and pay us.



“I love working at Harborview because of its mission, I love that at its core it aims to provide health care for the people, regardless of their ability to pay. I love the beautiful, diverse, and endlessly interesting patients I get to work with. What I find exciting about this moment, about this opportunity we have in negotiating our new contract, is that we can make real strides towards providing equitable and inclusive care if we keep our mission population in mind. We are committed to our mission; but our commitment has its limits, and it should not be used against us when it comes to thinking about retention. We are calling you to support our demands, so we can work together in common cause to fulfill the mission I know we all care so much about.”

- Lucas MacDonald, APP, Family Medicine Clinic, Bargaining Team

Respect Us, Protect Us, Pay Us

(excerpted from comments at the Board of Trustees meeting, May 27, 2021)