

Executive Summary

College campuses are complex social systems. They are defined by the relationships between faculty, staff, students, and alumni; bureaucratic procedures embodied by institutional policies; structural frameworks; institutional missions, visions, and core values; institutional history and traditions; and larger social contexts (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, Alma, & Allen, 1998).

Institutional missions suggest that higher education values multicultural awareness and understanding within an environment of mutual respect and cooperation. Academic communities expend a great deal of effort fostering a climate to nurture their missions with the understanding that climate has a profound effect on the academic community's ability to excel in teaching, research, and scholarship. Institutional strategic plans advocate creating welcoming and inclusive climates that are grounded in respect, nurtured by dialogue, and evidenced by a pattern of civil interaction.

The climate on college campuses not only affects the creation of knowledge, but also affects members of the academic community who, in turn, contribute to the creation of the campus climate. Several national education association reports and higher education researchers advocate creating a more inclusive, welcoming climate on college campuses (Boyer, 1990; AAC&U, 1995; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Ingle, 2005; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Because of the inherent complexity of the topic of diversity, it is crucial to examine the multiple dimensions of diversity in higher education. The conceptual model used as the foundation for this assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith (1999) and modified by Rankin (2002).

The University of Wisconsin System (UWS) has a long history of supporting diversity initiatives¹ as evidenced by the System's support and commitment to this climate assessment project. In 2005, a taskforce committee of the UWS Inclusivity Initiative was formed to search for consulting firms that conduct climate assessments in higher education. Rankin & Associates

¹ For more information on UW diversity initiatives see <http://www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/diversity.htm>

(R&A) was identified as leader in conducting multiple identity studies in higher education. In 2006, R&A presented a proposal to the UWS provosts and various constituent groups, which resulted in the formation by UWS administrators of the *Climate Study Working Group (CSWG)*² and subsequent contract with R&A to facilitate a system-wide climate assessment.

Fact-finding groups were held in September 2007 to discuss with University of Wisconsin System students, staff, and faculty their perceptions of the System climate. Informed by these fact-finding groups and informed by previous R&A work, the CSWG developed the final survey instrument template that was administered to the five participating institutions in spring 2008.

UW-Barron County was one of thirteen UW College campuses that participated in the initial climate project in 2007-2008. The UWC Diversity Leadership Committee, appointed by Chancellor David Wilson, reviewed the CSWG template and revised the survey instrument to better fit the context of the UW Colleges. The final survey contained 91 questions, including open-ended questions for respondents to provide commentary. Each of the campuses will receive a campus-specific report. In addition, an aggregate report inclusive of all of the UW Colleges will also be developed.

This report provides an overview of the findings of the UW-Barron County campus-specific assessment. All members of the UW-Barron County campus community (e.g., students, faculty, academic staff, and classified staff) were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was designed for respondents to provide information about their personal experiences with regard to climate issues, their perceptions of the campus climate, student and employee satisfaction, and respondents' perceptions of institutional actions, including administrative policies and academic initiatives regarding climate issues and concerns on campus.

² The CSWG included 2 representatives from each of the five participating institutions. The provost from each institution was requested to appoint the two representatives.

A summary of the findings, presented in bullet form below, suggests that while the UW-Barron County has several challenges with regard to diversity issues, these challenges parallel those identified in higher education institutions across the country³.

Sample Demographics

116 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 18% response rate⁴
- 82 undergraduate students (71%), 8 faculty members (7%), 12 academic staff members (10%), and 6 classified staff members (5%)
- 6 People of Color (5%)⁵; 108 White respondents (93%)
- 8 people (7%) who identified as having a physical disability
- 2 people (2%) who identified as having a learning disability
- 5 people (4%) who identified as having a psychological condition
- 5 people (4%) who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; 1 person (1%) who was questioning their sexuality
- 72 women (62%); 43 men (37%); 1 transgender⁶
- 39 people (34%) who identified their spiritual affiliation as other than Christian (including those with no affiliation)

³ Rankin, S. and Reason, R. (forthcoming). *Transformational Tapestry Model: A comprehensive approach for assessing and improving campus climates for underrepresented and underserved populations*. New York: Stylus Publications.

⁴ Caution is suggested in generalizing results for constituent groups with significantly lower response rates. Despite this limitation, the results provided here reflect participants' beliefs and concerns with regard to the campus climate.

⁵ While recognizing the vastly different experiences of people of various racial identities (e.g., Chicano(a) versus African-American or Latino(a) versus Asian-American), and those experiences within these identity categories (e.g., Hmong versus Chinese), Rankin and Associates found it necessary to collapse some of these categories to conduct the analyses due to the small numbers of respondents in the individual categories.

⁶ "Transgender" refers to identity that does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender, but combines or moves between these (Oxford English Dictionary 2003). OED Online. March 2004. Oxford UP Press. Feb. 17, 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319380>>.

Quantitative Findings

Personal Experiences with Campus Climate⁷

- **A percentage of respondents had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus on campus (hereafter referred to as harassment)⁸. Gender was most often cited as the reason given for the perceived harassment. People of Color perceived such harassment more often than White people. Perceived harassment largely went unreported to campus employees/officials.**
 - 18% of respondents (n = 21) believed⁹ they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus.
 - The perceived conduct was most often based on the respondents' gender.
 - Compared with 18% (n = 19) of White people, 33% (n = 2) of People of Color believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of Respondents of Color who reported that they believed they had experienced this conduct, none of the respondents stated it was because of their race.
 - Compared with 12% (n = 5) of men, 22% (n = 16) of women believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of the women who believed they had experienced this conduct, 63% (n = 10) stated it was because of their gender.
 - 29% (n = 6) of those who believed they had experienced this conduct made complaints to UW-Barron County officials, while 19% (n = 4) did not know who to go to, and 14% (n = 3) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation.
- **A small percentage of respondents believed they had been sexually harassed.**
 - 5% (n = 6) of respondents believed they had been touched in a sexual manner that made them feel uncomfortable or fearful while at UW-Barron County.
 - None of the respondents believed they had been sexually assaulted during their time at UW-Barron County.

⁷ Listings in the narrative are those responses with the greatest percentages. For a complete listing of the results, the reader is directed to the tables in the narrative and Appendix A.

⁸ Under the United States Code Title 18 Subsection 1514(c)1, harassment is defined as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose" (<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>). In higher education institutions, legal issues discussions define harassment as any conduct that has unreasonably interfered with one's ability to work or learn on campus. The questions used in this survey to uncover participants' personal and observed experiences with harassment were designed using these definitions.

⁹ The modifier "believe(d)" is used throughout the report to indicate the respondent's perceived experiences. This modifier is not meant in any way to diminish those experiences.

Satisfaction with UW-Barron County

- **85% (n = 29) of UW-Barron County employees were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their jobs at UW-Barron County. 88% (n = 30) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Barron County.**
 - Employee groups held similar opinions about their satisfaction with their jobs and the way their careers have progressed.
 - Respondents who were People of Color were split equally as dissatisfied as they were satisfied with their jobs at UW-Barron County.
 - Women were less satisfied with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Barron County than were other groups.

- **83% (n = 67) of students were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their education at UW-Barron County, while 64% (n = 51) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their academic careers have progressed at UW-Barron County.**
 - A slightly lower percentage of sexual minorities¹⁰ and men were satisfied with their educations and with the way their academic careers have progressed at UW-Barron County than were other students.
 - Higher percentages of women students, heterosexual students, and Students of Color were satisfied with the way their academic careers have progressed than were men students, sexual minority students and White students.

- **43% (n = 50) of all respondents have seriously considered leaving UW-Barron County.**
 - Among employees, 54% of men and 38% of women thought of leaving UW-Barron County.
 - 100% of Employees of Color, in comparison with 41% of White employees, have seriously considered leaving UW-Barron County.
 - Additionally, 100% of sexual minority employees, compared to 41% of heterosexual respondents, have seriously thought of leaving the UW-Barron County.
 - Among students, 44% of women and 43% of men considered leaving the UW-Barron County.
 - 25% of Students of Color and 45% of White students thought of leaving UW-Barron County, as did 40% of LGB students and 45% of heterosexual students.

Perceptions of Campus Climate

- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate at UW-Barron County (86%, n = 100), in their departments or work units (85%, n = 95), and in their classes (85%, n = 87). The figures in the narrative demonstrate some slight disparities based on race.**

¹⁰ This report uses the terms “LGB” and “sexual minorities” to denote individuals who self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and those who wrote in “other” terms, such as “pan-sexual,” “homoflexible,” “fluid,” etc.

- Compared with 85% of White people, 100% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall campus climate at UW-Barron County.
 - Compared with 85% of White people, 83% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their departments or work units.
 - Compared with 81% of White people, 100% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- **Slightly more than one-third (34%, n = 39) of all respondents indicated that they were aware of or had believed they had perceived harassment on campus. The perceived harassment was most often based on status¹¹ (e.g., part-time status, faculty, staff, student).**
 - 34% (n = 39) of the participants believed they had observed or personally been made aware of conduct on campus that created an offensive, hostile, or intimidating working or learning environment.
 - Most of the observed harassment was based on status (e.g., part-time status, faculty, staff, student).
 - Compared with 34% (n = 36) of White respondents, 33% (n = 2) of Respondents of Color believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
 - Compared with 33% (n = 24) of women, 35% (n = 15) of men believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
 - Compared with 19% (n = 15) of students, 100% (n = 6) of classified staff, 63% (n = 5) of academic staff, and 60% (n = 12) of faculty believed they had observed such conduct.
 - Only 18% (n = 7) these incidences were reported to an employee or official.
 - **With regard to campus accessibility for people with mobility and visual impairment, administrative offices (96%, n = 97), academic buildings (86%, n = 99), and the Learning Support Center (83%, n = 95) were considered the most accessible (rated “very accessible” or “accessible”) areas of campus.**
 - 5% (n = 5) ranked information in alternative formats as “very inaccessible.”
 - **Some employee respondents believed they had observed discriminatory employment practices, and indicated that these practices were most often based on advanced experience level of the job candidate, educational level, and race.**
 - 6% (n = 2) of employee respondents believed they had had observed discriminatory hiring.

¹¹ University status was defined in the questionnaire as “Within the institution, the status one holds by virtue of their position/status within the institution (e.g., staff, full-time faculty, part-time faculty, administrator).”

- 6% (n = 2) believed they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions at UW-Barron County (up to and including dismissal).
- 21% (n = 7) believed they had observed discriminatory promotion practices.

Institutional Actions

- More than half of the respondents “strongly agreed”/“agreed” that the campus dean, other deans, academic staff, faculty/IAS, club advisors, student club presidents or leaders, and the Student Government Association provided visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 43% (n = 45) of all respondents believed the Chancellor’s Office has visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 32% (n = 34) of all respondents believed the Provost’s Office has visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 52% (n = 55) of all respondents believed that diversity initiatives are relevant to their work.
- 59% (n = 62) felt welcome at campus diversity events.
- 46% (n = 15) of employee respondents thought providing tenure clock options with more flexibility for promotion/tenure for faculty/staff with families would positively affect the climate.
- 64% (n = 21) thought it would be a good idea to train mentors and leaders within departments to model positive climate behavior.
- 55% (n = 18) thought offering diversity training/programs as community outreach would positively affect the climate.
- More than half of all employees thought the following initiatives would positively affect the climate on campus: providing on-campus child care services (61%, n = 20), providing gender neutral/family friendly facilities (72%, n = 23), providing, improving, and promoting access to quality services for those individuals who experience sexual abuse (74%, n = 23), providing mentors for minority faculty/students/staff new to campus (72%, n = 23), providing a clear protocol for responding to hate/hostile incidents at the campus level (78%, n = 25) and departmental level (72%, n = 23).

Qualitative Findings

Respondents had the opportunity to answer several open-ended questions throughout the survey. Representatives from the UW Colleges requested that R&A include the responses from all of the UW Colleges’ respondents in a qualitative analysis in the aggregate report of the UW Colleges.