

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 (R&A) was identified as leader in conducting multiple identity studies in higher education. In

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

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 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-Fox Valley 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 finding of the UW-Fox Valley campus-specific assessment. All members of the UW-Fox Valley 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.

A summary of the findings, presented in bullet form below, suggests that while UW-Fox Valley has several challenges with regard to diversity issues, these challenges are found in many other higher education institutions across the country.³

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.

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

Sample Demographics

328 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 19% response rate⁴
- 244 undergraduate students (74%), 4 graduate students (1%), 38 faculty (12%), 24 academic staff (7%), and 12 classified staff (4%)
- 32 People of Color (10%)⁵; 292 White (89%) respondents
- 12 people (4%) who identified as having a physical disability
- 8 people (2%) who identified as having a learning disability
- 17 people (5%) who identified as having a psychological condition
- 18 people (5%) who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; 3 (1%) who were questioning their sexuality
- 202 women (62%); 124 men (38%); 1 transgender⁶
- 204 people (62%) who identified their spiritual affiliation as Christian

Quantitative Findings

*Personal Experiences with Campus Climate*⁷

- **A small percentage of respondents believed they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus (hereafter referred to as harassment).⁸ Status⁹ was most often cited as the reason given for the perceived harassment. People of Color and sexual minorities¹⁰ perceived such harassment more often than White people, and many of them felt it was due to their race or sexual orientation. Perceived harassment largely went unreported.**

Publications.

⁴ Caution in generalizing results for constituent groups with significantly lower response rates. Despite this limitation, the results provided here reflect participant's 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 UW Press. Feb. 17, 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319380>>.

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 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)."

¹⁰ Sexual minorities are defined, for the purposes of this report, as people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

- 13% of respondents (n = 42) believed¹¹ that 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' status (36%, n = 15), gender (33%, n = 11), age (26%, n = 10), and educational level (24%).
 - Compared with 13% of White people (n = 38), 13% of People of Color (n = 4) believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of Respondents of Color who reported experiencing this conduct, 25% (n = 1) stated it was because of their race.
 - Compared with 11% of men (n = 13), 14% of women (n = 29) believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of the women who believed they had experienced this conduct, 45% (n = 13) stated it was because of their gender.
 - Compared with 11% of heterosexual respondents (n = 34), 17% of sexual minority respondents (n = 3) believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of sexual minority respondents who believed they had experienced this conduct, 33% (n = 1) stated it was because of their sexual orientation.
 - Compared with 13% of all respondents, 33% of respondents with physical disabilities (n = 4) and 29% of respondents with psychological conditions (n = 5) believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of those that believed they had experienced harassment, 50% of respondents with physical disabilities (n = 2) said the perceived harassment was based on their disability.
 - 12% of participants (n = 5) made complaints to UW-Fox officials, while 10% (n = 4) did not know who to go to, and 12% (n = 5) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation.
- **A small percentage of respondents believed that they had been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted.**
 - 2% (n = 8) believed that they had been touched in a sexual manner that made them feel uncomfortable or fearful while at UW-Fox Valley.
 - 2 respondents believed that they had been sexually assaulted during their time at UW-Fox Valley.

¹¹ 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-Fox Valley

- **78% of UW-Fox Valley employees (n = 57) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their jobs at UW-Fox Valley. 63% (n = 45) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Fox Valley.**
 - Classified staff were most satisfied with their jobs (100% versus 73% of faculty and 74% of academic staff).
 - Employees of Color were least satisfied with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Fox Valley.

- **80% percent of students (n = 197) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their education at UW-Fox Valley, while 62% (n = 153) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their academic careers have progressed at UW-Fox Valley.**
 - A slightly lower percentage of Students of Color and men were satisfied with their education at UW-Fox Valley than were other students.
 - Higher percentages of women students and sexual minority students were satisfied with the way their academic careers have progressed than were other students.

- **43% of all respondents (n = 139) have seriously considered leaving UW-Fox Valley.**
 - Among employees, 67% of men and 52% of women considered leaving UW-Fox Valley.
 - 20% of Employees of Color, in comparison with 60% of White employees, have seriously considered leaving UW-Fox Valley.
 - Among students, 35% of women and 45% of men considered leaving the University.
 - 20% of Students of Color and 41% of White students considered leaving UW-Fox Valley, as did 56% of LGB students.
 -

Perceptions of Campus Climate

- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate at UW-Fox Valley (90%, n = 296), in their departments or work units (83%, n = 270), and in their classes (84%, n = 246). The figures in the narrative demonstrate some disparities based on race.**
 - 91% of White people and 91% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall campus climate.
 - 84% of White people and 81% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their departments or work units.
 - 84% of White people and 87% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.

- **14% of all respondents (n = 47) indicated that they were aware of or believe that they had observed harassment on campus. The perceived harassment was most often based on sexual orientation.**

- Most of the perceived harassment was based on sexual orientation (30%, n = 14), gender (23%, n = 11), religion/spiritual status (23%, n = 11), or ethnicity (17%, n = 8).
- Scant differences existed between the responses based on gender, race, or sexual orientation.
- Higher percentages of faculty (34%, n = 38) and classified staff members (25%, n = 12) perceived offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct than did students (12%, n = 247) or academic staff (9%, n = 23).
- These incidences were not reported to an employer or official.
- **Some employee respondents believed that they had observed discriminatory employment practices.**
 - 11% of employee respondents (n = 8) believed that they had observed discriminatory hiring.
 - 5% (n = 4) believed that they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.
 - 14% (n = 10) believed that they had observed discriminatory promotion practices.
- **With regard to campus accessibility for people with mobility and visual impairment, administrative offices, academic buildings, Web site, other information systems, classrooms, Student Services center, Student Union, Library, and restrooms were considered the most accessible (rated “very accessible” or “accessible”) areas of campus.**
 - 10% (n = 32) ranked the Theater as “very inaccessible.”
 - 14% (n = 45) ranked the Parking/Bus Stop as “very inaccessible.”

Institutional Actions

- Respondents “strongly agreed”/“agreed” that Campus Dean/CEO (65%), Faculty/IAS (classroom instructors) (62%), and Academic Staff (65%) provided visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 45% of all respondents (n = 136) believed the Chancellor’s Office has visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 36% of all respondents (n = 110) believed the Provost’s Office has visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community.
- 50% of all respondents (n = 152) believed that diversity initiatives are relevant to their work
- 63% (192) felt welcome at campus diversity events.
- 40% of employee respondents (n = 28) thought providing tenure clock options with more flexibility for promotion/tenure for faculty/staff with families would positively affect the climate.
- 56% thought (n = 40) it would be a good idea to train mentors and leaders within departments to model positive climate behavior.

- 47% (n = 32) thought offering diversity training/programs as community outreach would positively affect the climate.
- Less than half of all employees thought providing recognition and rewards for including diversity in course objectives throughout the curriculum and rewarding research efforts that evaluate outcomes of diversity training would positively affect the climate.
- 75% of employees (n = 52) felt providing on-campus child care services would positively affect the climate.
- More than half of all employees thought the following initiatives would also positively affect the climate on campus: improving, and promoting access to quality services for those individuals who experience sexual abuse (63%, n = 43), providing mentors for minority faculty/students/staff new to campus (68%, n = 46), providing a clear protocol for responding to hate/hostile incidents at the campus level (70%, 47) and departmental level (66%, n = 43).
- Approximately one-third thought reallocating resources to support inclusive climate changes on campus (31%, n = 20) and requiring the Affirmative Action Office to provide diversity and equity training to every search and screen committee (32%, n = 21) would positively affect the climate.

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.