

## 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 initiatives<sup>1</sup> as evidenced by the System's support and commitment to this climate assessment project. In 2005, a taskforce committee of the UW System Inclusivity Initiative was formed to search for consulting firms that conduct climate assessments in higher education. Rankin &

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

Associates (R&A) was identified as a leader in conducting multiple identity studies in higher education. In 2006, R&A presented a proposal to the UW System provosts and various constituent groups, which resulted in the formation by UW System administrators of the *Climate Study Working Group (CSWG)*<sup>2</sup> 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.

The UW Colleges was one of five UW System institutions 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 received a campus-specific report as well as a copy of this aggregate report inclusive of all of the UW Colleges results.

This report provides an overview of the findings of the UW Colleges assessment. All members of the 13 campus communities (i.e., students, faculty, academic staff, and classified staff), the UW Colleges Online Program, and the UW Colleges Central Office in Madison were invited to participate in the survey. A summary of the findings suggests that while the UW Colleges face several challenges with regard to climate issues, these challenges parallel those identified in higher education institutions across the country.<sup>3</sup> The quantitative and qualitative findings uncovered several areas where respondents felt that the UW Colleges were succeeding with

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

regard to climate issues and respondents also identified three major challenges that revolve around an overarching theme of power and privilege.

Following are summaries of the demographic characteristics of respondents and quantitative data. Readers are encouraged to review the full report for more specific details.

### Sample Demographics

2,870 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 24% response rate<sup>4</sup>
- 2,101 (98%) undergraduate students, 36 (2%) graduate students, 335 (12%) faculty, 206 (7%) academic staff, and 133 (5%) classified staff
- 252 (9%) People of Color;<sup>5</sup> 2,549 (89%) White respondents
- 100 (3%) people who identified as having a physical disability
- 65 (2%) people who identified as having a learning disability
- 97 (3%) people who identified as having a psychological condition
- 162 (6%) people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer; 25 (1%) who were questioning their sexuality, and 2611 (91%) people who identified as heterosexual
- 1,875 (65%) women; 972 (34%) men; 9 (> 1%) transgender<sup>6</sup>
- 1,731 (58%) respondents were affiliated with a Christian denomination, while 826 (29%) identified as having no spiritual affiliation

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> "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 University Press. Feb. 17, 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319380>>.

## Quantitative Findings

### Personal Experiences with Campus Climate<sup>7</sup>

- **A percentage of respondents believed<sup>8</sup> they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus (hereafter referred to as harassment)<sup>9</sup> within the past two years. Status<sup>10</sup> was most often cited as the reason given for the perceived harassment. People of Color and sexual minorities<sup>11</sup> believed they experienced such harassment more often than White and heterosexual people, respectively and many of them felt it was due to their race or sexual orientation. Perceived harassment largely went unreported.**
  - 14% (n = 394) of respondents believed they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus.
  - Respondents stated that the conduct was most often based on the respondents' status (31%, n = 120), gender (30%, n = 117), and age (28%, n = 110).
  - Compared with 13% (n = 341) of White people, 16% (n = 40) of People of Color believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of Respondents of Color who reported experiencing this conduct, 30% (n = 12) stated it was because of their race.
  - Compared with 13% (n = 122) of men, 15% (n = 271) of women believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of the women who experienced this conduct, 36% (n = 98) stated it was because of their gender.
  - Compared with 13% (n = 343) of heterosexual respondents, 19% (n = 30) of sexual minority respondents believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of sexual minority respondents who experienced this conduct, 57% (n = 17) stated it was because of their sexual orientation.

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<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> University status was defined in the questionnaire as "Within the institution, the status one holds by virtue of their status/position within the institution (e.g., staff, full-time faculty, part-time faculty, administrator)."

<sup>11</sup> 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. Respondents who identified as "questioning" (n = 1) were also included in analyses including LGB respondents.

- Compared with 14% of all respondents, 23% (n = 23) of respondents with physical disabilities, 15% (n = 10) of respondents with learning disabilities, and 33% (n = 32) of respondents with psychological conditions believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of those that experienced harassment, 35% (n = 8) of respondents with physical disabilities, 20% (n = 2) of respondents with learning disabilities, and 34% (n = 11) of respondents with psychological conditions said the harassment was based on their disability.
  - 37% (n = 49) of classified staff, 23% (n = 77) of faculty, and 21% (n = 44) of academic staff believed they had experienced harassment.
  - 55% (n = 27) of classified staff who experienced harassment said the conduct was based on their status.
  - 22% (n = 85) of participants made complaints to campus officials, while 13% (n = 51) did not know whom to go to; 14% (n = 54) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation, and 11% (n = 41) did not report it for fear their complaint would not be taken seriously.
- **A small percentage of respondents believed they had been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted.**
    - 3% (n = 80) believed they had been touched in a sexual manner that made them feel uncomfortable or fearful while enrolled or employed at the UW Colleges.
    - 19 respondents (1%) believed they had been sexually assaulted while enrolled or employed at the UW Colleges.
    - Most of the respondents who believed they had been sexually assaulted were students (16 people), female (12 people), heterosexual (17 people), and White (17 people).
    - The alleged perpetrators of the sexual assault were most often friends (26%, n = 5) and students (16%, n = 3).
    - 5 respondents (26%) reported the sexual assault to an employer or official.

### Satisfaction with the UW Colleges

- **83% (n = 563) of the UW Colleges employees were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their jobs at the UW Colleges. 68% (n = 454) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their careers have progressed at the UW Colleges.**
  - Classified staff members were less satisfied with their jobs than were other employees.
  - Classified staff members were less satisfied with the way their careers have progressed than were other employees.
- **83% (n = 1755) of students were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their education at their campuses, while 68% (n = 1437) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their academic careers have progressed.**
  - A lower percentage of sexual minorities were satisfied with their educations and with the way their academic careers have progressed than were other students.

- Higher percentages of women students, White students, and heterosexual students were satisfied with the way their education and the way their academic careers have progressed than were men students, Students of Color, and sexual minority students.
- **40% of all respondents (n = 1,143) have seriously considered leaving their colleges.**
  - Among employees, 61% (n = 156) of men and 61% (n = 251) of women considered leaving the UW Colleges.
  - 55% (n = 23) of Employees of Color and 62% (n = 374) of White employees have seriously considered leaving.
  - 73% (n = 24) of sexual minority employees, compared to 61% (n = 372) of heterosexual respondents, have seriously considered leaving the institution.
  - Among students, 33% (n = 466) of women and 35% (n = 245) of men considered leaving the UW Colleges.
  - 30% (n = 30) of Students of Color and 34% (n = 640) of White students considered leaving, as did 37% (n = 46) of LGB students and 34% (n = 639) of heterosexual students.

#### Perceptions of Campus Climate

- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate at their campuses (87%, n = 2490), in their departments or work units (83%, n = 2339), and in their classes (86%, n = 2159). The figures in the narrative demonstrate some disparities based on race.**
  - Compared with 88% of White people, 84% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall campus climate.
  - Compared with 83% of White people, 81% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their departments or work units.
  - Compared with 86% of White people, 83% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- **Some respondents indicated that they were aware of or believed they had observed harassment on campus within the past two years. The perceived harassment was most often based on sexual orientation. People of Color and sexual minorities were more aware of perceived harassment.**
  - 18% of the participants (n = 516) believed they had observed or personally been made aware of conduct on campus that created an offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating working or learning environment.
  - Most of the observed harassment was based on sexual orientation (23%, n = 121), gender (22%, n = 114), status (21%, n = 106), ethnicity (20%, n = 103), and age (20%, n = 102).
  - Compared with 18% (n = 446) of White respondents, 20% (n = 50) of Respondents of Color believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.

- Compared with 18% (n = 450) of heterosexuals, 29% (n = 46) of sexual minorities believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
  - Compared with 41% (n = 54) of classified staff, 35% (n = 71) of faculty and 35% (n = 116) of academic staff believed they had observed such conduct.
  - These incidents were reported to an employer or official only 12% of the time.
  - 12% (n = 62) of participants made complaints to campus officials, while 10% (n = 49) did not know whom to go to, 8% (n = 41) did not report it for fear their complaint would not be taken seriously, and 8% (n = 40) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation.
- **Some employee respondents believed they had observed discriminatory employment practices.**
    - 16% of employee respondents (n = 110) believed they had observed discriminatory hiring, which was most often based on gender (23%, n = 25).
    - 11% (n = 77) believed they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions (up to and including dismissal), which was most often based on gender (18%, n = 14).
    - 16% (n = 108) believed they had observed discriminatory promotion practices, which was most often based on status (28%, n = 30).

### Institutional Actions

- 51% (n = 1349) of all respondents thought that diversity initiatives are relevant to their work.
- 61% (n = 1617) felt welcome at campus diversity events.
- 43% (n = 273) of employee respondents thought providing tenure clock options with more flexibility for promotion/tenure for faculty/staff with families would positively affect the climate.
- 59% (n = 385) thought it would be a good idea to train mentors and leaders within departments to model positive climate behavior.
- 57% (n = 364) thought offering diversity training/programs as community outreach would positively affect the climate.
- 62% (n = 393) of employees 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 (67%, n = 418), providing mentors for minority faculty/students/staff new to campus (66%, n = 421), and providing a clear protocol for responding to hate/hostile incidents at the campus level (76%, n = 479) and departmental level (71%, n = 441).