

Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary Spring 2011

Survey Background and Methods

In December 2009, the University of Delaware administered a campus climate survey to determine how faculty, staff, and students perceived the campus working and learning environment. The survey was part of the initiatives sponsored by the Diversity Action Council (DAC), which was convened in spring 2009 to implement the Diversity Task Force recommendations. The survey was developed with assistance from DAC, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and the Office for Institutional Research, and received input from a variety of campus groups. The survey was designed to analyze how welcoming and equitable the campus is viewed, to assess behaviors respondents have experienced, and to solicit suggestions for improving the campus climate.

Several demographic questions were included in the survey to assist in determining whether certain groups perceive being treated equitably, and special care was given to maintain confidentiality. Climate was defined in the beginning of the survey as “a measure, real or perceived, of current attitudes, behaviors, and standards held by faculty, staff, and students. It also concerns access for, inclusion of, and level of response for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential. This is the general atmosphere on campus, in the classroom or work environment, and it is realized through policies, procedures, and programming, as well as through both subtle and overt attitudes and values.”

In the fall of 2010, the Diversity and Equity Commission (DEC) was charged by President Harker to study the Campus Climate Survey and to make recommendations to address the concerns. DEC is comprised of representatives of students, staff, and faculty and a number of constituent-group caucuses. DEC met five times in order to review, study, debate, and ultimately write recommendations to address the concerns of the University community regarding diversity and equity issues. The recommendations were presented to Dr. Harker in April 2011, and the report is available on the Path to Prominence and DEC websites.

Response Rates

The survey received 2,124 employee responses and 3,609 student responses, representing an employee response rate of 52% and a student response rate of 17%. Of the student respondents, 97% are full-time students, 74% are undergraduates and 22% are graduate students. For the employee respondents, 27% are faculty and 73% are non-faculty.

Student Demographics

Most of the students who responded to the survey self-identify as White (63%); with 6% of students self-identifying as Hispanic, 5% as African American, 4% as Asian, 2% as Native American, 1% as Middle Eastern, and 4% as Multi-Racial/Ethnic. Five percent self-identified as “Other”.

Two-thirds of the student respondents are female, and less than 1% responded as transgender or “other”. Eighty-nine percent of students identify themselves as heterosexual. A total of 22% of student respondents are first generation college students, and approximately 16% identify themselves as disabled. Student respondents are primarily Christian (63%), followed by Atheist/Agnostic (14%), “Other” (10%), and Jewish (8%).

Staff (non-faculty) Demographics

Non-Faculty employees (hereafter referred to as “staff”) were asked to classify themselves based on the EEO-6 categories, and there were a total of 1,501 non-faculty employee responses to the survey (66% of all staff in 2009). The largest group of respondents are professionals (48%), followed by secretarial/clerical (25%), executive (15%), technical (6%), service (5%), and skilled crafts (2%).

Most of the staff respondents are White (83%), followed by 5% African American, 5% Multi-Racial/Ethnic, 2% Asian, 2% “other”, 2% Hispanic, and 0.5% Native American. Two-thirds of the staff respondents are female, 92% identify themselves as heterosexual, and a majority of staff identify themselves as Christian (75%), followed by Atheist/Agnostic (11%) and “Other” (7%). Fifty-five percent of staff respondents care for dependents, 6% are Veterans, and 10% identify themselves as disabled.

Faculty Demographics

The total number of faculty respondents was 578, which represents 50% of the total faculty population in 2009. Thirty-nine percent of the faculty respondents are full/named professors, followed by associate professors (27%), assistant professors (24%) and instructors (11%). More male (54%) than female (46%) faculty responded, and 6% are active or Veteran military. Seventy-six percent are White, 6% are African American, followed by 5% Asian, Latino, and Multi-racial/ethnic. Two percent identified as “Other” and 1% as Middle Eastern.

Almost half of faculty respondents identified their religious affiliation as Christian (49%), followed by Atheist/Agnostic (22%). Ten percent identified as “Other”, 6% Jewish, 5% Unitarian/Universalist, 3% Spiritualist, and 1% as Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim. Ninety-one percent of faculty respondents are heterosexual. Sixty-one percent indicate that they care for dependents, and 14% are disabled.

Overall Climate and Experiences¹

A majority of the student respondents are comfortable with the overall climate at UD and three quarters of students are comfortable with the climate in their classes. Nine out of 10 students report experiencing behavior meant to include, assist, support and/or respect them. Most student respondents find the University to be friendly, concerned about people like them, cooperative, improving, welcoming, respectful, equitable to people of all groups, physically accessible, and supportive of people with family responsibilities. Most students feel valued by faculty and students in the classroom and feel that faculty and staff/administrators are genuinely concerned with their welfare.

Seven out of 10 staff feel comfortable or very comfortable with the climate at UD, and in their departments/units. Overall, a majority of staff respondents feel valued, respected and mentored. Eight out of ten staff have experienced positive behaviors in the workplace, with three quarters indicating that it occurs somewhat often, often, or very often.

More than half of faculty respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable with the climate at UD and in their departments, while less than one quarter indicate that they are not.

¹ Respondents were asked to identify their gender and race/ethnicity specifically in the survey. In order to assess the influence of variables such as gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, binary labels were used and responses were recoded to signify “white/non-white” and “heterosexual/LGBT”.

Most of the faculty respondents indicate that they generally feel respected, mentored, welcomed, and equitable. Within the past two years, eight out of 10 faculty report experiencing behavior meant to include, assist, support and/or respect them.

Students

Areas of Strength

- The vast majority of the student respondents did not think that sexual harassment or sexual assault is a problem at UD.
- Seven out of 10 student respondents think that UD administers and promotes programs that effectively address issues of sexual violence, and approximately the same number do not think that racial discrimination is a problem at UD.
- The majority of female and male students feel comfortable or very comfortable with the overall climate at UD.
- Slightly more female students than male students responded that in the past two years they have experienced behaviors meant to include, assist, support, and/or show respect that helped them work and learn at UD.
- The majority of white students, students of color, heterosexual and LGBT students feel comfortable or very comfortable with the overall climate at UD.

Areas of Concern

- Two out of 10 students report experiencing exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct that has interfered with their ability to learn at UD, with most reporting that it occurs only rarely or sometimes. More than half of the negative conduct occurred in class or in a residence hall, by another student or faculty member.
- Almost one third of female students report negative behavior occurring somewhat often, often or very often, compared to less than two out of 10 male students.
- Most students indicate that they do not know where to get help if they or someone they know was discriminated against because of race and over half do not understand the formal procedures to address complaints of racial discrimination.
- More students of color than white students and more LGBT students than heterosexual students feel that sexual harassment is a problem at UD.
- A majority of students feel that faculty members pre-judge their abilities based on their identity/background. More male than female students feel that other people at UD have tried to impose their religious and political beliefs on them.

Staff

Areas of Strength

- Most staff respondents indicate that they know where to go for help with sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- More than half indicate that they have confidence that UD administers the formal procedures to adjudicate complaints of sexual harassment and sexual assault fairly.
- Three quarters of staff respondents agree or strongly agree that they have access to health benefits, sufficient workspace and equipment and supplies to perform their jobs.
- There are no significant differences between male or female staff in the frequency of experiencing either negative or positive behavior in the workplace.

Areas of Concern

- One out of 10 staff respondents report feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable at UD, and slightly more feel that way in their departments/units. Female staff are less comfortable with the overall institutional and their department/unit climate than male staff.
- One quarter of the staff of color agree or strongly agree that racial discrimination is a problem at UD, compared to one out of 10 of the white staff respondents.
- Within the past two years, almost one third of LGBT staff report experiencing exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct that has interfered with their ability to work and learn at UD.
- More than two thirds of white staff respondents indicate that their colleagues solicit their opinions about the colleagues' work, slightly greater than reported by staff of color. Less than half of the staff of color respondents believe that decision makers/colleagues support their career advancement, while more than half of white staff believe so.

Faculty

Areas of Strength

- Many of the faculty respondents do not think that sexual harassment is a problem at UD, and one-third of faculty do not think that sexual assault is a problem.
- Very few faculty members believe that religious or political views have been imposed on them. There are no differences by sexual orientation in how faculty feel the climate is in their individual departments.
- There are no statistically significant differences for faculty by sexual orientation when looking at the perception and understanding of issues around sexual harassment, sexual assault or racial discrimination on campus.
- More female than male faculty indicate that their teaching is supported by the institution. Significantly more female faculty responded that they include materials from diverse backgrounds than male faculty in their courses.

Areas of Concern

- One third of heterosexual faculty respondents are uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with the climate at UD versus more than half of LGBT respondents, while 7 out of 10 heterosexual faculty indicate that the climate is comfortable or very comfortable compared to less than half of LGBT faculty.
- About three quarters of faculty of color report being ignored or excluded, compared to about half of white faculty.
- Slightly more than one quarter of all faculty indicate they are reluctant to bring up issues for fear that it will affect evaluation or tenure decisions and almost four out of 10 think there are many unwritten rules/expectations concerning how one is expected to interact with others.
- Twice as many heterosexual faculty feel their research/professional interests are valued by their colleagues as compared to LGBT faculty.