

Report to the President
Findings and Recommendations Based on the 2009 Campus Climate
Survey

Submitted by the
Diversity & Equity Commission
University of Delaware
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“The University of Delaware will foster a robust educational environment in which all people are welcome and feel welcome—one that supports critical thinking, free inquiry, and respect for diverse views and values. As a community, we will embrace diversity as an integral and vital part of everyday life and a cornerstone value of our University.”

- Path to Prominence™, Strategic Plan for the University of Delaware, May 2008

I. Introduction

In the fall of 2009, a Campus Climate Survey was administered to University of Delaware faculty, staff and students. The intention of the Survey was to gather information to inform and improve UD’s commitment to an educational community that is intellectually, culturally, and socially inclusive, enriched by the contributions and full participation of people from diverse backgrounds. A total of 578 faculty members, 1,546 staff members and 3,609 students responded to the survey. The Survey, largely distributed online, generated a faculty response rate of 50%, a staff response rate of 52% and a student response rate of 17%. Respondents were able to decline answering any question at any time.

In the fall of 2010, the Diversity and Equity Commission (DEC) was charged by the President to study the Campus Climate Survey and make appropriate recommendations to address the concerns revealed by the Climate Survey. The Diversity and Equity Commission is comprised of representatives of students, faculty and staff and a number of constituent-group caucuses.

The 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. These recommendations are intentionally written broadly, in order to provide senior leadership the flexibility to task the projects to the appropriate University units and align the recommendations within budgetary constraints.

II. Highlights from the Campus Climate Survey

The Campus Climate Survey revealed a number of positive sentiments felt by the University community. While the remainder of this report focuses on the areas in which the University can improve, it is worthwhile to note the aspects of the climate that were shown to reflect the University's commitment to an open, welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Overall, a majority of the total respondents (students, faculty and staff) expressed that they were comfortable with the climate at UD, with nearly three-quarters (74.5%) indicating that they are comfortable or very comfortable with the current climate on campus.¹ Breaking down these figures into constituent groups, 66% of faculty and 71% of staff felt comfortable or very comfortable in their department/unit² and over 75% of all student respondents indicated that they were comfortable or very comfortable with the climate in their classes.³

Respondents also overwhelmingly expressed that they experienced positive treatment by other members of the University community. Specifically, 87% of all respondents stated that they experienced behavior meant to include, assist, support, and show respect, and more than 80% indicated that they experienced positive behavior somewhat often or very often. As evidenced from separating the respondents into their respective constituent groups, the positive sentiments were expressed across the board:

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Experienced behavior meant to include, assist, support and/or respect them	90%	80%	84%
Such behavior occurs often or very often	58%	56%	75%

The respondents' high expectations for an inclusive atmosphere at the University were largely satisfied once on campus. Before coming to the University, 87% of the total respondents indicated that they expected the campus climate to be welcoming for all people and groups. Only about 3% did not expect the campus to be welcoming, and 11% indicated their neutrality to the statement. Since coming to campus, 70% of the total respondents have found the climate to be welcoming for all people and groups, as compared to 12% who indicated that the climate has not been welcoming. Separated into each constituent group, the results were as follows:

¹ Fewer than 7% of all respondents indicate that they are uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with the climate, and 18.8% of the responses indicated neutrality to the statement.

² Approximately 19% of all faculty and 13% of all staff reported feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable in their respective department or unit.

³ Five percent of students reported feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with the climate at UD.

- Students: Before coming to campus, 88% of the students expected the campus to be welcoming; 2% of students expected the campus to be unwelcoming; 10% of students were neutral. Since coming to campus, 71% of the students have found the climate to be welcoming, 18% are neutral, and 11% of students have indicated that the climate has not been welcoming.
- Faculty: 79% of faculty members expected the campus climate to be welcoming prior to coming to campus; 4% did not expect it to be welcoming; and 16% were neutral. Since coming to campus, 60% find the campus climate to be welcoming, 22% remain neutral, and 18% do not find the campus to be welcoming.
- Staff: 88% of staff members expected the campus climate to be welcoming prior to coming to campus, 2% expected it to be unwelcoming and 10% responded neutrally. Since coming to campus, 72% of staff have found the campus climate to be welcoming for all people and groups while 16% remain neutral, and 12% find the climate to be unwelcoming for all people and groups.

Overall, positive trends surfaced across the student, faculty and staff responses. 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.⁴ Most students feel valued by faculty and students in the classroom and feel that faculty and staff and/or administrators are genuinely concerned with their welfare.⁵ Seventy-one percent of staff respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable with the climate at UD and in their department or unit. Overall, a majority of staff respondents feel valued, respected and mentored. More than half of faculty respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable with the climate at UD and in their departments.⁶ Fifty percent of the faculty felt a strong sense of belonging and community at UD⁷ and most of the faculty respondents indicate that they generally feel respected, mentored, welcomed, and equitable.

III. Areas for Improvement and Recommendations

Despite the positive highlights revealed by the Campus Climate Survey, closer analysis of the respondents uncovered a number of areas for improvement. Once the data isolated the responses of people of color and LGBT individuals, perceptions of broad inequities surfaced. The recommendations are broken down into the three constituent groups assessed by the Climate Survey –

⁴ The mean for the students' responses was 3.81, with 3 indicating neutrality and 4 indicating agreement.

⁵ Two percent of student respondents expected the campus to be unwelcoming, but only 11% have actually found it to be unwelcoming.

⁶ Fewer than 20% of faculty respondents indicated that they are not comfortable with the climate at the University (13.4%) or in their department (19%).

⁷ Almost a third of faculty expressed neutrality to the statement and 19% disagree.

students, faculty and staff. Please note that many of the recommendations outlined below are likely to affect multiple constituent groups.

A. Students

Recommendation 1: President's Call to Action

The Campus Climate Survey revealed that 87% of students expected the UD campus to be welcoming, while only 71% found the campus climate to actually be welcoming of all people and groups. White students more frequently expected and found the campus climate to be welcoming for all people and groups than students of color. More heterosexual students expected and found the campus climate to be welcoming for all people and groups than LGBT students. Twenty percent of students reported experiencing exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct that interfered with their ability to learn at UD. More than half of the negative conduct occurred either in class (34%) or in a residence hall (29%) by another student or faculty member.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, ***we recommend the President publicly announce a call to action for all students to create and cultivate a more inclusive campus.*** An initial call to action could occur as part of the President's remarks at New Student Orientation in the summer, followed by additional remarks at convocation ceremonies in the fall. In order to continue this message throughout the academic year, an optional conference on multicultural and diversity issues could be held annually. Each year, the conference could study a particular theme identified as contributing to the greater campus dialogue and ultimately promoting a more welcoming University climate. The conference could be an interdepartmental and interoffice initiative with participation by student groups, faculty and staff. The breadth of this recommendation attempts to provide a top-level emphasis on the importance of diversity issues from senior administration.

Recommendation 2: Assessment of Policies and Procedures Addressing Discrimination

The majority of student respondents indicated that they are unaware of where to get help if they or someone they know is discriminated against because of race (54%) and over half (58%) do not understand the University's formal procedures for addressing complaints of racial discrimination.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, ***we recommend aligning policies and procedures with best practices identified by other higher education institutions in order to increase the visibility and transparency of the University's existing policies and procedures.*** Once the University's policies and procedures are modified as necessary to comport with identified best practices, a campaign to raise awareness of reporting mechanisms available to students, staff and faculty for claims of bias, threats, profiling, hostile environment and racial/gender/sexual orientation harassment could be initiated.

Recommendation 3: Additional Question on Course Evaluations

Slightly less than two-thirds of students (64%) felt that faculty members pre-judge their abilities based on the student's identity and/or background. White students indicated more frequently that they felt valued and appreciated by faculty, staff and students (27.7%), while students of color more frequently felt that faculty pre-judge their abilities based on their identity and/or background (16.8%).

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, **we recommend adding a question to the faculty evaluation form asking whether a student feels that their abilities were pre-judged based on their identity and/or background and, if so, how such alleged prejudice manifested.** Department Chairs could be tasked with identifying patterns or trends either within their department or with a particular faculty member. The information gleaned from the responses to this additional question could be used to identify departments or individuals on campus who could benefit from additional diversity-related training.

B. Faculty

Recommendation 4: Recruitment of Faculty from Underrepresented Groups

The Campus Climate Survey indicated that 40% of faculty of color believe racial discrimination is a problem at UD, and that 43% of faculty of color felt uncomfortable or very uncomfortable with the climate in their department. Seventy-four percent of faculty of color expected the campus climate to be welcoming prior to coming to UD; but since arriving on campus, only 48% find it is a welcoming environment. The Survey does not provide the specific underlying reasons that may explain why their perception about the campus climate changed, but approximately 74% of faculty of color report being ignored or excluded.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, *we recommend increased emphasis on actively and effectively recruiting underrepresented faculty members.* This initiative could be furthered in a number of ways including:

- Development of a visiting faculty scholars program focused on attracting senior and junior faculty with an affirmative focus on members of underrepresented groups. This program could seek to engage groups of faculty in seminars in our areas of academic strength that also enrich the intellectual climate on issues of diversity. This program could also perform a secondary function of identifying pools of candidates who might be recruited to the faculty and introducing such individuals to the University community. Also, implementing a strong visiting faculty program that supports faculty of color could demonstrate UD's commitment to diversity and entice other faculty candidates of color to join the University community.

- Utilization of faculty who work within diverse, national networks to generate potential prospects for faculty appointments, including the identification of promising graduate students. This can include establishing departmental relationships with organizations and programs in national associations that promote greater inclusion of graduate students from underrepresented groups.
- Deans and Department Chairs should be held accountable for promoting diversity among the faculty ranks in their respective units.

The second phase of this recommendation focuses on the retention of female faculty, faculty of color and LGBT faculty. Suggestions posited in the Diversity Task Force Report presented in February 2009 (and reproduced here) are supported by the Diversity and Equity Commission.

- Review and enhance the existing mentoring program for faculty at both the Assistant and Associate rank to include providing the necessary staff support.
- Collect information that provides data on the retention of faculty, noting specifically the retention of underrepresented groups and international faculty.
- Institute centralized exit interviews for all departing faculty and staff, including specific questions designed to tap the experiences of women, people of color and LGBT scholars.

The Diversity and Equity Commission acknowledges that some of the steps outlined above have been ventured by certain departments; however, a University-wide outreach focused on the recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups is necessary to effectively move the University closer to being a leader in diversity in higher education.

Recommendation 5: Create a Structure that Encourages and Promotes Diversity in Scholarship among Faculty

Thirty-three percent of faculty respondents indicated that their research is not well supported by the institution, and 34% of faculty believed they have to work harder than other faculty members in order to achieve the same recognition and rewards. Almost 50% of faculty respondents do not believe that they are rewarded for including diversity issues in their courses.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, *we recommend creating awareness among Department Chairs about the need to support and encourage research endeavors that may have more appeal to underrepresented groups.* Even if such research endeavors are outside the realm of mainstream research areas that appeal to the majority of the faculty in a given department, the commitment to support all academic research can be emphasized. The strength of this recommendation largely relies on the ability for this message to be reiterated from the President to the Deans to the Chairs to the faculty.

Deans and Department Chairs could be tasked with establishing evaluation guidelines that ensure that faculty are supported and rewarded for including diversity issues in their courses. To address the perceived bias and inequity felt by many faculty members, we recommend that Deans and Chairs reevaluate the performance evaluation measures in order to ensure that the measures are objective, transparent and free of unintentional bias.

Further, in order to ensure that faculty members remain sensitive to these issues when promoted to supervisory positions, *we recommend implementing a managerial training program discussed in further detail below (Recommendation 6).*

C. Staff

Recommendation 6: Implement Manager Training Program and Increase Networking Opportunities for Staff

Eighty-eight percent of the responding staff expected the campus climate to be welcoming for all people and groups before coming to UD; but since arriving on campus, 72% find it to actually be welcoming—a notable decline of 16%. Significantly more white staff (60%) than staff of color (45%) indicated that they felt a sense of belonging and community at UD.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, *we recommend developing a training program for all managers (including faculty) to improve their effectiveness as supervisors.* Currently, the majority of units and departments do not require any managerial training when an individual takes on a supervisory position. The managerial training program could include topics such as how to interpret University policies and procedures, developing a culture of inclusiveness within one's unit, and recruiting and retaining a diverse and effective workforce.

At both the manager and non-manager levels, increased mentoring and networking opportunities could be provided to foster a greater sense of camaraderie among units. Also, to support additional networking, staff members should be encouraged to become active caucus members.

Recommendation 7: Designate Confidential Intermediaries within Caucuses

Within the past two years, 30.1% of LGBT staff reported experiencing exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct that has interfered with their ability to work and learn at UD. About 8% of staff respondents reported feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable at UD and 13% revealed feeling that way in their department/unit. Female staff respondents indicate that they are reluctant to take personal/family leave for fear that it may affect their career. More than two-thirds of white staff respondents indicated that their colleagues solicit their opinions about the colleagues' work, compared to 63.5% of staff of color, and 73% of white staff believed their professional interests are valued by their colleagues, compared to 65.8% of staff of color. Less than half (43.8%) of staff of

color respondents believed that decision makers/colleagues support their career advancement, while 57.4% of white staff believed so. More white staff indicated that their colleagues pay attention to what they have to say and that they have colleagues who give them career advice, compared to staff of color; 50% of the staff felt ignored/excluded or judged unfairly.

In order to address the behaviors behind these statistics, *we recommend selecting individuals from the caucuses to act as intermediaries for their constituent group.* This intermediary would act as an intake point for claims or concerns. Faculty and staff would have representatives defined as confidential sources to communicate their experiences relative to exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct on the University's campus. Training for the representatives about University policies and procedures would be developed. The intermediaries could provide a semi-annual report to the Office of Equity and Inclusion summarizing the claims brought by the confidential sources. The Office of Equity and Inclusion could then compile a confidential report for the President or a Vice President of the President's choice that summarizes activity, reports general trends, identifies systemic problems and suggests systemic change when appropriate without disclosing confidential communications and information.

Recommendation 8: Provide the Option for 360° Evaluations

In order to further address the sense of exclusion reported by a large proportion of staff members, *we recommend providing the option for units and departments to utilize "360° evaluations" for their employees.* Such an evaluation would provide not only the traditional evaluative data of managers reporting on staff, but also provide staff the opportunity to evaluate their managers. The evaluations could include questions about whether a given unit or department possesses a welcoming and inclusive working environment. The staff members' evaluations of the managers would be provided to the managers' supervisors for analysis. Trends within department and managers needing additional training would be identified through these more comprehensive evaluations.

IV. Conclusion

DEC sincerely appreciates the President's willingness to both review the recommendations and also to engage in this worthwhile dialogue. We applaud the University for its commitment in promoting diversity as one of the guiding principles in its Path to Prominence. It is evident that the commitment to diversity is rooted in the University's desire to prepare its graduates to succeed in an increasingly diversified global working environment.

Encouraging and supporting a diverse University community continues to be an important initiative for the University. Our Path to Prominence beseeches us all to recognize, "[d]iversity is an increasingly important dimension of educational quality as our students prepare for success as leaders in the global community" and asserts that —incoming University of Delaware classes [must] become increasingly diverse – ethnically, culturally, regionally, internationally, and intellectually." These DEC recommendations

are provided with the intention of contributing to the University's journey on the Path to Prominence.

Appointing both the Diversity Task Force and the DEC demonstrate the Administration's desire to stay engaged in diversity and equity issues affecting the campus. By conducting the Campus Climate Survey, the University's Administration is demonstrating that the assessment of the present campus climate, as experienced by students, faculty and staff, is critical to ensuring that the campus climate is supportive of all groups. The Survey has revealed positive aspects that the University should be proud of, as well as identified areas that need some improvement. The recommendations respectfully offered in this report aim to continue the forward momentum created by the Administration's actions and, ultimately, to help the University of Delaware become a reputed leader as an inclusive campus.