



PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY UPDATE

In January 2014, the *President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion* (PCDI) initiated a campus climate survey to gather information about the perceptions of students, faculty, and staff in a variety of areas. These areas included, but were not limited to, perceptions of belonging, inclusion, experiences of respect on campus and the surrounding community, and awareness of on-campus resources.

The survey was completed by 326 staff, 180 faculty, and 592 students (24 faculty and staff choose not to respond to the job status question). The majority of faculty and staff respondents recognized Murray State University as being friendly, socially inclusive, respectful, non-racist, non-homophobic, non-sexist, and socially integrative using a five point Likert scale-style question (3 was designated as neutral). Overall, students felt that Murray State University is a place where they can succeed (88%).

The members of the PCDI continue to assess the results of the Campus Climate Survey and will use it to influence decision-making related to important cultural topics that impact the institution. For a copy of the executive summary or the Survey Monkey survey summary documents, please visit the PCDI website at:

<http://www.murraystate.edu/HeaderMenu/Administration/PresidentsOffice/PresidentsCommissions/PresidentsCommissionDiversityInclusion.aspx>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The *President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion* (PCDI) promotes various efforts aimed at strengthening and promoting diversity at Murray State University. The primary role of the PCDI is to make recommendations to the President relative to planning, developing, improving, and evaluating the overall diversity efforts at Murray State University. In the fall of 2013, the PCDI was advised by the executive director of the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity and Access that the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education suggested the University should give consideration to undertaking a campus climate survey. A PCDI committee was convened to organize efforts related to the survey. This committee was made up of faculty and staff from social work, continuing education and regional outreach, humanities and fine arts, and science, engineering and technology. The committee initially began the development of a new survey instrument, but later determined it would be more efficient and effective to adopt and revise a previous survey administered on the campus in 2005.

Survey Background Methodology

The survey was designed to analyze how welcoming and equitable the campus is viewed and to assess experiences and behaviors experienced by the campus community. The original survey was conducted by pen and paper and was completed by 452 faculty and staff and 412 students. The PCDI committee decided to conduct the 2014 survey using Survey Monkey hoping the opportunity to complete it electronically would increase participation rates.

The survey examined diversity from a broad perspective, including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, employment category, and religion/faith. The terms harassment, cultural diversity, physical assault and sexual assault were operationalized to ensure respondents were working from the same definition. In addition to collecting feedback on the campus and community environment, respondents were also encouraged to share their personal experiences and suggestions in several open ended questions.

All respondents received a personalized email from then President Tim Miller inviting them to participate in the survey. In this email, Dr. Miller stressed the importance of gathering their feedback. Respondents were ensured their participation would remain confidential and advised that entering their name for an incentive would not jeopardize their confidentiality. Twenty gifts from the University Store were randomly awarded to faculty, staff and students who participated.

Approval from the MSU Institutional Review Board was not required to conduct this survey.

Response Rates

The current survey was completed by 530 faculty and staff. The following table provide a breakdown of employment categories by respondent (comparable employment classifications were not used between survey implementations):

Employment Classification	2005	2014
Full-time Faculty	170	0
Tenured Faculty		79
Tenure Track Faculty		56
Instructor		44
Adjunct Faculty	4	1
Non-exempt (hourly) Staff	121	145
Exempt Staff	107	181
Prefer Not to Answer	26	20
No Response	21	4
Missing	3	0
Total	452	530

Faculty and Staff Demographics

Most of the respondents to the faculty staff survey identified as White/Caucasian (87.5%). Christianity represented the largest religious faith (76.3%) as it did in 2005 (73.2%). Females outnumbered males at 62.3%. Years of employment ranged from zero to five reported by 30.1% of respondents, closely followed by employees reporting five to ten years at 29.7%. Over 97% of respondents were full-time employees. The largest age group represented was 50-59 (29.5%).

The following table provides more detail on gender from 2005 to 2014.

Gender	2005	Response Percent	2014	Response Percent
Male	177	39.2	186	35.2
Female	242	53.5	329	62.3
Transgender	0	0	1	0.02
Other	0	0	1	0.02
Prefer Not to Answer	22	4.9	11	2.1
No Response	8	1.8	0	0
Skipped	0	0	2	0
Missing	3	0.7	3	0
Total	452		533	

Sexual orientation was not asked in 2005. In the current survey, 90.8% of respondents self-identified as heterosexual (474); 1.9% bisexual (10); 1% gay (5); .08% lesbian (4); .08% other (4); and, 4.5% preferred not to answer (25).

Overall Climate and Experiences for Faculty and Staff

Current survey respondents indicated a high level of importance to experiencing a sense of belonging or community (47.6%), while only 38.7% responded similarly experiencing high levels of belonging in 2005. Approximately 4% reported having no sense of belonging to the MSU community.

Twenty-five percent of respondents to the 2014 survey indicated satisfaction with their experience as an MSU employee while 2.9% indicated they were not at all satisfied. In comparison, 2005 respondents indicated 57.7% satisfaction with their employment experience and 3.5% indicated dissatisfaction. The 2014 survey expanded on the original question by asking if dissatisfaction was related to campus climate (14%), other factors (28.4%), or both (57.6%).

The next series of questions sought to ascertain respondents' perception of the general climate for diversity on campus. Overall, there was an increase in the general climate for diversity from 2005 (59.1 indicated friendly) to 2014 (86.3%). The majority of faculty and staff respondents in 2014 recognized Murray State University as being friendly, socially inclusive, respectful, non-racist, non-homophobic, non-sexist, and socially integrative using a Likert scale-style question. When conducting between group comparisons (men, women, black, exempt staff, faculty, etc.), there were only minor differences between groups. Most employed by MSU indicated satisfaction and content with nearly everything except evaluations. Respondents categorized MSU's climate as improving (11%) and worsening (4.9%). When asked if diversity should be a priority at the university 14.3% stated it should be of highest priority; 46.6% stated it should be a high priority; and, 3.1% said it should be of lowest priority. Several comments in the open ended responses spoke to this theme. In response to the questions related to various aspects of the campus climate the majority of responses rated the university very good or good. These questions focused on perceived respect for racial integration, commitment to the success of various racial and ethnic groups, race relations in the classroom, etc.

Areas of Strength

The majority of employees reported being very satisfied or satisfied with freedom of expression at MSU, among coworkers and with their supervisor. Almost 500 respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied that their work positively influences the department, college/unit and the university. In response to the series of questions related to inappropriate references to one's personal life, sexual orientation or religious affiliation, the bulk of respondents reported they never witnessed these incidents. When asked how comfortable coworkers are with individuals of racial/ethnic backgrounds different from their own, 50.6% reported their colleagues felt very comfortable. Over 50% of respondents find MSU to be welcoming to students from other countries.

In general, almost half or more employees reported feeling very safe from harassment (47.4%), physical assault (55.8%) and sexual assault (56.5%). Overall, employees reported agreement that MSU is a place of employment and education for minorities, women and internationals and would recommend the university to prospective students and staff.

Areas of Concern

In response to the questions about support, guidance and mentoring received from colleagues or coworkers 7.6% indicated not at all and 15.5% indicated the second lowest level of support. Likewise, 17 % reported they received no encouragement from colleagues inside their department regarding job advancement. 23.1% indicated no support outside the department. Two hundred and seventy-three (56.8%) respondents saw a need for a formal mentoring program for faculty and staff. Thirty-one percent of employees responded on the lowest level to the questions about the merit review process fostering improvements in job performance. Twenty-three percent reported unfairness in job assignments or assignments.

Overall Climate and Experiences for Students

The Survey Instrument

The 2005 student survey was modified to add an additional fourteen questions. Approximately one-third of the new questions dealt with treatment of students in local restaurants, city/county businesses, and city/county churches.

Response Rates and Demographics

The current survey was completed by 592 students compared to 412 students in 2005. Of the 575 respondents on the 2014 Survey, 88.4% were full-time compared to 97.3% in 2005. Part-time respondents increased from 1.2% in 2005 to 11.6% in 2014. Although more options were given in Racial/Ethnic Background, White/Caucasian students continued to lead at the rate of 86.3% (509 students) while 88.6% (365 students) responded to White, Non-Hispanic in 2005. Black/African American student participation increased, 8.6% (51 students), compared to 6.3% (26 students) who identified as Black, Non-Hispanic in the previous administration. Options for the 2014 survey included Asian American, Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, White/Caucasian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, Other, and Prefer Not to Answer.

Additional demographics of respondents are presented in the following tables. In summary, seniors represented the most respondents (26.2%). Business and public administration represented the majority of respondents (19.7%), closely followed by health sciences and human services (18.7). The majority of respondents were in the 18-29 age range (83.5%). Females represented 72.8% of respondents and heterosexuals led at 84.2%. A little more than 12% of respondents indicated experiencing a disability. Christianity was identified as the most common religion/faith of respondents.

Class Standing	2005	2014
Freshman	43.3	19.9
Sophomore	26.2	16.0
Junior	18.4	21.1
Senior	9.5	26.2
Graduate	1.2	16.7

College Major	2005	2014
Business and Public Administration	18.0	19.7
Education	13.8	12.6
Health Sciences and Human Services	16.5	18.7
Humanities and Fine Arts	19.9	17.0
Science, Engineering and Technology	16.0	16.8
Agriculture	9.2	12.2
Nursing	-	5.4
Prefer not to answer	-	3.1

Age	%
18-29	83.5
30-39	7.1
40-49	4.4
50-59	3.9
60+	0.7
Prefer not to answer	0.3

Gender	2005	2014
Male	23.8	25.8
Female	75.4	72.8
Transgender		0.9
Other		0.2
Prefer not to answer		0.3

Sexual Orientation	2005	2014
Bisexual	1.2	6.3
Gay	*1.5	2.4
Heterosexual	95.6	84.2
Lesbian	*	1.4
Other	-	2.2
Prefer not to answer	3.6	

*Gay/Lesbian were combined in the 2005 survey.

Ability/Disability	2005	2014
Yes	8.3	12.9
No	90.8	87.1

Religious Faith	2005	2014
Buddhism		1.0
Hinduism		0.5
Islam		1.2
Judaism	0.2	0.3
Christianity	88.8	72.3
Confucianism		0.5
Muslim	.05	-
Atheist and/or Antitheist		8.7
Other	4.9	10.2
Prefer not to answer		5.3
None	3.9	-
No response	1.5	-

Interesting comparisons were noted with demographics of the 2005 survey (%):

- There were more freshman respondents in 2005 (43.3%)
- Age was *not* asked on the 2005 survey.
- The question asked “what is your sex?” The term “gender” was not used in 2005.
- Those identifying as having a disability increased from 8.3% in 2005 (34 students) to 12.9% (76 students) in 2014.
- U.S. Citizenship status on the 2005 survey—96.1% responded as U.S. citizens.

Other demographics changed somewhat. There was a decrease (31.1% to 28.5%) in first generation respondents. New on the 2014 survey, 413 students (70.5%) responded that they would NOT be the first in their family to graduate from a college or university. Life setting of respondents increased in three of four areas (rural—22.6% to 26.1%, small town or small city—39.6% to 42.3%, suburb of a city of 50000+—13.6% to 14.5%); while respondents from a city of 50000+ decreased (20.6% to 17.1%). Although the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhood of respondents decreased, it is considered a plus (all or nearly same as student—47.8% to 45.5%, mostly same as student—29.4% to 28.8%). Areas where students live are slowly becoming more diverse.

Overall Climate and Experience for Students

Respondents were mostly positive of Murray State University in general. Eighty-eight percent of current students felt that Murray State offered them the opportunity to succeed. Ninety-two

percent responded similarly in 2005. Students indicated that diversity is good for MSU(86% of current students, 92% of 2005 respondents).

Overall, current results indicated slight decreases in many aspects of the survey. This trend may be attributed to the fact that the majority of respondents on the current survey were seniors, while freshmen were the majority of respondents in 2005. For example, 90% of 2005 students felt that they had received adequate guidance from MSU faculty; only 75% of 2014 students felt the same. However, 17.9% of the 2014 students responded with a “3”--neutral. Another relevant example involved the sensitivity of the current academic advisor. In 2005, 81.6% compared to 67.4% in 2014 (with 20.4% neutral) considered their advisor to be sensitive. This trend was evident throughout the survey.

Areas of Strength

When asked to rate MSU on the respect by faculty and staff for students of different racial and ethnic groups, over 85% in 2014 (91% in 2005) responded positively. MSU students, in both survey administrations, felt free to voice their opinion in the classroom or at other public settings at MSU. MSU students also indicated that they had been fairly treated by faculty (88%-2014, 96%-2005) and staff (88%-2014, 96%-2005).

Areas of Concern

A primary area of concern indicated by the students was if students felt they experienced fair treatment by the Murray community (93% in 2005, 78% in 2014 with 15% neutral). Despite this decrease, current students felt fairly treated in restaurants (86%) and businesses (84% in the city, 82% in the county). These were new questions on the 2014 survey. A second set of questions added in 2014 involved city and county churches. Students indicated fair treatment in churches in the city (73%) and fairly treated in churches in the County 72%. A second area of concern regarded the lack of students' familiarity with offices of services and programs for on-campus support (e.g., Women's Center, Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Access, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Institute for International Studies, Counseling & Testing, Student Affairs, Services for Students with Physical and Learning Disabilities). A question related to support for LBGTQ students was added to the 2014 Survey.

Next Steps

Institutions of higher education seek to create an environment characterized by equal access for all students, faculty, and staff regardless of their differences, where individuals are not just tolerated but are indeed valued. Creating and maintaining an environment that respects individual needs, abilities, and potential is one of the most critical endeavors that universities and colleges undertake. A welcoming and inclusive climate is based on respect and nurtured by open dialogue.

What do the results of this study suggest? At minimum, they add additional data to the current knowledge base and provide more information on the experiences and perceptions for faculty, staff and students on the campus and the greater Murray-Calloway County community. It may be

inferred that various efforts to improve the campus climate in general have seen some positive results and that directed efforts towards improving the climate for various sub-populations may be resulting a positive effect on the campus culture.