

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 climates that 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; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Ingle, 2005; Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

The University of Wisconsin System 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 UW System 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 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*

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

Group (CSWG)² and subsequent contract with R&A to facilitate a System-wide climate assessment.

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).

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 work of R&A, the CSWG developed the final survey instrument template that would be administered to the five participating institutions in spring 2008.

UW-Parkside was one of the four UW System institutions participating in the climate project in fall 2009. A Diversity Leadership Committee (DLC) was created at UW-Parkside to assist in coordinating the survey effort on campus. The DLC reviewed the survey template and revised the instrument to better match the campus context at UW-Parkside. The final survey contained 91 questions, including open-ended questions for respondents to provide commentary. This report provides an overview of the findings of the UW-Parkside campus-specific assessment, including the results of the campus-wide survey and a thematic analysis of comments provided by survey respondents.

All members of the 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, and student and employee satisfaction, and respondents' perceptions of institutional actions, including administrative policies and academic initiatives

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.

regarding climate issues and concerns on campus. A summary of the findings, presented in bullet form below, suggests that while the UW-Parkside has several challenges with regard to diversity issues, these challenges are found in higher education institutions across the country.

Sample Demographics

1,652 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 28 percent response rate
- 1,211 undergraduate students (73%); 64 graduate students (4%); 131 faculty (8%); 100 academic staff (6%); and 107 classified staff (6%)
- 425 People of Color³ (26%); 1,185 White respondents (72%)
- 36 people who identified as having a physical disability (2%)
- 55 people who identified as having a learning disability (3%)
- 65 people who identified as having a psychological condition (4%)
- 121 people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (7%); 19 who were questioning their sexuality (1%); 1,462 people who identified as heterosexual (89%)
- 1,022 women (62%); 611 men (37%); 4 transgender⁴ (0.2%)
- 958 people (59%) were affiliated with a Christian denomination, 387 people (24%) identified as having no spiritual affiliation, 233 people (14%) identified their spiritual affiliation as other than Christian

³ 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.

⁴ “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>>.

Quantitative Findings

Personal Experiences with Campus Climate⁵

- **Some of respondents believed⁶ 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)⁷ within the past two years. Gender was most often cited as the reason given for the perceived harassment. People of Color and sexual minorities⁸ perceived such harassment more often than White people and heterosexual respondents, and many of them felt it was due to their race or sexual orientation. Perceived harassment largely went unreported.**
 - 18% (n = 303) 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.
 - The percentage of respondents experiencing harassment at UW-Parkside is lower than the percentage of respondents who experienced harassment in studies of other institutions.⁹
 - The perceived conduct was most often based on the respondents' gender (29%, n = 87), age (28%, n = 86), university status¹⁰ (26%, n = 80), race (23%, n = 69), and ethnicity (20%, n = 61).
 - Compared with 17% (n = 196) of White people, 22% (n = 94) of People of Color believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of Respondents of Color who reported experiencing this conduct, 42% (n = 39) stated it was because of their race.
 - Compared with 19% (n = 115) of men, 18% (n = 182) of women respondents believed they had personally experienced such conduct.

⁵ 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 B.

⁶ The modifier "believe(d)" is used throughout the report to indicate the respondents' perceived experiences. This modifier is not meant in any way to diminish those experiences.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Sexual minorities are defined, for the purposes of this report, as people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

⁹ Rankin's (2003) national assessment of climate for underrepresented groups where 25% (n = 3767) of respondents indicated personally experiencing harassment based mostly on their race (31%), their gender (55%), or their ethnicity (16%).

¹⁰ 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)."

- Of the women who believed they had experienced this conduct, 34% (n = 62) stated it was because of their gender.
 - Compared with 17% (n = 254) of heterosexual respondents, 26% (n = 31) of sexual minority respondents believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of sexual minority respondents who believed they had experienced this conduct, 61% (n = 19) stated it was because of their sexual orientation.
 - 13% (n = 40) of participants made complaints to UW-Parkside officials, while 22% (n = 65) did not know whom to go to, 21% (n = 62) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation, and 15% (n = 45) did not report it for fear their complaints would not be taken seriously.
- **A small percentage of respondents believed they had been sexually harassed or sexually assaulted.**
 - 4% (n = 70) believed that they had been touched in a sexual manner that made them feel uncomfortable or fearful while at UW-Parkside.
 - 21 respondents (1%) believed that they had been sexually assaulted during their time at UW-Parkside. Of these, 4 (19%) respondents believed they had been assaulted off-campus and 13 (62%) respondents believed they had been assaulted on campus.
 - Women, bisexual persons, and people who had psychological conditions were more likely than other groups to believe that they had been sexually assaulted.
 - Most of the respondents who believed that they had been sexually assaulted were UW-Parkside students (16 people), female (19 people), heterosexual (17 people), and White (16 people).
 - The alleged perpetrators of the perceived sexual assault were most often students (38%, n = 8), and friends (19%, n = 4).

Satisfaction with UW-Parkside

- **75% (n = 255) of UW-Parkside employees were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their jobs at UW-Parkside. 64% (n = 212) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Parkside.**
 - Faculty and academic staff members were slightly more satisfied with their jobs than were classified staff.
 - Classified staff members were much less satisfied than faculty and academic staff members with the way their careers had progressed at UW-Parkside.
 - Women, White employees, and heterosexual employees were least satisfied with the way their careers have progressed at UW-Parkside.
- **80% (n = 1,011) of students were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their education at UW-Parkside, while 67% (n = 845) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their academic careers have progressed at UW-Parkside.**
 - A slightly lower percentage of men students were satisfied with their educations at UW-Parkside than were other students.

- Higher percentages of women students, Students of Color, and heterosexual students were satisfied with the way their academic careers have progressed than were men students, White students, and sexual minority students.
- **50% (n = 813) of all respondents have considered leaving UW-Parkside.**
 - Among employees, 62% of men and 61% of women thought about leaving UW-Parkside.
 - 61% of Employees of Color and 61% of White employees have seriously considered leaving UW-Parkside. Additionally, 67% of sexual minority employees, compared to 61% of heterosexual respondents, have seriously thought about leaving the institution.
 - Among students, 45% of women and 48% of men considered leaving the University.
 - 50% of Students of Color and 44% of White students thought about leaving UW-Parkside, as did 48% of LGB students and 46% of heterosexual students.

Perceptions of Campus Climate

- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate at UW-Parkside (79%, n = 1,292), in their departments or work units (79%, n = 1,286), and in their classes (81%, n = 1,152). The figures in the narrative show some disparities based on race.**
 - Compared with 81% of White people, 75% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall campus climate.
 - Compared with 80% of White people, 77% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their departments or work units.
 - Compared with 83% of White people, 76% of People of Color were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in classes.
- **Slightly more than one-quarter of all 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.**
 - 26% (n = 420) of the participants believed that 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 (36%, n = 151), race (34%, n = 143), ethnicity (28%, n = 119), gender (23%, n = 95), age (20%, n = 85), and gender identity (20%, n = 84).
 - Compared with 25% (n = 289) of White respondents, 29% (n = 121) of Respondents of Color believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
 - Compared with 24% (n = 351) of heterosexuals, 41% (n = 49) of sexual minorities believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.

- Compared with 22% (n = 281) of students and 30% (n = 32) of classified staff, 44% (n = 58) of faculty and 38% (n = 38) of academic staff believed they had observed such conduct.
- These incidences were reported to an employee or official only 8% (n = 35) of the time.
- **With regard to campus accessibility for people with mobility and visual impairment, respondents considered UW-Parkside academic programs (68%, n = 1,095), facilities (64%, n = 1,024), on-line resources (68%, n = 1,090), and terrain (59%, n = 954) “very accessible”/”accessible.”**
- **Some employee respondents believed that they had observed discriminatory employment practices and indicated that they were most often based on race and gender.**
 - 34% (n = 114) of employee respondents believed that they had observed discriminatory hiring.
 - 19% (n = 65) believed that they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions at UW-Parkside (up to and including dismissal).
 - 27% (n = 91) believed that they had observed discriminatory promotion practices.

Institutional Actions

- Less than half of the respondents (45%, n = 699) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the Chancellor’s office provided visible leadership that fosters inclusion of diverse members of the campus community while 9% (n = 141) “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed.”¹¹
- 50% (n = 160) of employee respondents thought providing tenure clock options with more flexibility for promotion/tenure for faculty/staff with families would positively affect the climate.
- 70% (n = 219) thought it would be a good idea to train mentors and leaders within departments to model positive climate behavior.
- 60% (n = 187) thought offering diversity training/programs as community outreach would positively affect the climate.
- About half of all employees thought providing recognition and rewards for including diversity in course objectives throughout the curriculum (53%, n = 167) and rewarding research efforts that evaluate outcomes of diversity training would positively affect the climate (47%, n = 146).
- 77% (n = 238) of employees felt providing on-campus child care services would positively affect the climate.

¹¹ It is important to note that Chancellor Ford had only been on campus for a few months at the time of the survey. It is not clear whether the respondents were offering their opinions about the prior chancellor, the interim acting chancellor, the state of transition of the chancellor’s office, or Chancellor Ford when they responded to this question.

- 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 (77%, n = 240), providing mentors for minority faculty/students/staff new to campus (69%, n = 214), and providing a clear protocol for responding to hate/hostile incidents at the campus level (81%, n = 251) and departmental level (77%, n = 238).

Qualitative Findings

Out of the 1,652 surveys received at UW-Parkside, 1406 different people responded to one or more of the open-end questions. No respondents commented on all open-ended questions. Respondents included undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty, academic staff, and classified staff.

A large number of respondents offered suggestions for how to improve the climate at UW-Parkside. Others thought improving the parking situation would improve the campus climate. Several individuals thought the climate at UWP was very welcoming and needed no improvement. Still others thought UWP went too far in trying to be inclusive and was committing reverse discrimination against White people. Common suggestions to improve the climate included: holding the administration accountable for actively fostering diversity and inclusion; instituting mandatory seminars/workshops for all employees and students; creating open lines of communication across the university and ensuring transparency in decision-making; making UWP more user-friendly for adult and non-traditional students; and increasing the number of faculty and administrators from underrepresented populations.

One of the open-ended items queried, “Are your experiences on campus different than those you experience in the community surrounding campus? If so, how are these experiences different?” While a number of respondents said they had similar experiences on and off campus, the majority of those who responded to this question described the differences between their experiences at UWP and in Racine/Kenosha. Respondents seemed to agree that UWP was more “progressive,” “liberal,” and “diverse” than the surrounding community and that Kenosha was “more Christian” than the campus. Some respondents (mostly individuals who lived in the surrounding area) said they felt more comfortable and “more respected” in the surrounding area. Most respondents who commented said they felt “safer” and “more comfortable” on campus.

One of the open-ended items allowed respondents to elaborate on any of their survey responses, further describe their experiences, or offer additional thoughts about climate issues. Respondents

offered a wide range of comments. Several individuals applauded UWP for promoting diversity and inclusion and gave examples of the positive steps they have seen. A number of other respondents were concerned that “overemphasizing diversity” was a form of “reverse discrimination” which often distracted the university from the work of educating students. Quite a few people mentioned parking on campus, suggesting that since Parkside is primarily a commuter campus; the university ought to make available more affordable, safe, and appropriately located parking lots/decks. A number of respondents were concerned about the “level of student” being admitted at UWP and thought the situation contributed to a sense of low morale on campus. Respondents also mentioned issues of institutional classism in which faculty, academic staff, and classified staff experienced various difficulties and tensions based on their position at the university.

The questionnaire also asked, “Are you proud to be a member of the UW-Parkside community? Why or why not?” The vast majority of respondents answered, “yes.” They were very proud to be a part of the UW-Parkside community. The various reasons they gave for being proud included: the diversity of the university; the social and academic opportunities available at UWP; positive work environments; supportive educators; small classes; close-knit and friendly community; comparably low tuition; and their abilities to succeed in postsecondary endeavors. Fewer people were not proud to be a part of the community. Those respondents felt UWP “was a bottom of the barrel school” with a poor academic reputation; felt they did not “belong” on campus; experienced harassment or tension in the workplace; and distrusted the administration. Still other respondents answered “yes and no,” “sort of,” or “not really,” pointing to most of the issues raised by the respondents who had decidedly more positive or more negative views.

Question 89 asked respondents, “Do you believe the campus climate for diversity has improved since you came to UW-Parkside? Why or why not?” Many respondents indicated they had been at UW-Parkside only a short time and, therefore, they were not aware of any improvement in the campus climate. The majority of individuals who responded to this question seemed to believe that the climate for diversity had improved in their time at UWP. Such individuals cited the implementation of the LGBTQ Resource Center, the Freshman Year Experience program, and programming from the OMSA office. Some of the respondents were concerned that UWP emphasized diversity to the detriment of academic standards.

Question 90 asked respondents to “describe the ways in which you would go about seeking assistance/support if you encounter any conduct that has interfered with your ability to work/live/learn at UW-Parkside.” Employee respondents offered suggestions from “seeking external advice,” to talking to “my immediate supervisor,” disability services, “the dean,” department chair,” “human resources,” and “to the chancellor”. Several respondents indicated that they did not know of any protocol for seeking help. Students would seek assistance from

trusted RAs, professors, OMSA personnel, and student affairs personnel. Respondents were divided as to their beliefs about whether their claims would be taken seriously and/or adequately resolved. Some people indicated they had great relationships with their supervisors or professors and were sure these individuals could help them. Others had heard of negative situations with particular offices or individuals and would be reluctant to seek help.

The survey queried respondents whether they had experienced harassment or discrimination within the last two years based on their parents' immigrant status. The vast majority of respondents who answered this question said they had not experienced harassment based on their parents' immigration status. Most of the people who did elaborate about a type of harassment or discrimination they experienced likely misread the question as their comments indicated the behavior was not based on their parents' immigration status.

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey instrument and the project process. Some applauded the University's participation in the assessment and wanted to make certain that the results were made public and used to better UW-Parkside. Several respondents insisted that UW-Parkside leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result of the survey.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Two strengths/successes emerged from the quantitative data analysis. These findings should be noted and credited. First, more than half of employees were highly satisfied or satisfied with their jobs at UW-Parkside (75%, n = 255) and how their careers have progressed (64%, n = 212). Additionally, high percentages of students were highly satisfied and satisfied with their education at UW-Parkside (80%, n = 1,011). Second, 79% (n = 1,292) of employees and students reported that they were very comfortable and comfortable with the climate at UW Parkside, and 79% (n = 1,286) with their department or work unit. Eighty-one percent (n = 1,152) of faculty and students were very comfortable and comfortable with the classroom climate. These quantitative results were also supported by various voices offered in response to the open-ended questions. These voices echoed positive experiences with the UW-Parkside's campus climate. However, disparities existed where respondents from underrepresented groups typically reported less satisfaction and comfort with the overall campus climate, their department/work unit climate, and their classroom climate at UW-Parkside than the majority counterpart respondents. These underrepresented groups include People of Color, women, LGBTQ people, people with a disability, and classified staff.

Three challenges were also revealed in the assessment. The first challenge relates to *racial tension*. Respondents of Color (22%, n = 94) were more likely to report that they personally

experiencing exclusionary (e.g., shunned, ignored), intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct (harassing behavior) that has interfered with their ability to work or learn at UW-Parkside when compared to their White counterparts (17%, n = 196). Forty-two percent (n = 39) of Respondents of Color said the harassment was based on their race, while thirteen percent (n = 26) of White respondents indicated the basis as race. People of Color were also more likely to indicate racial profiling as the form of experienced harassment when compared with their White counterparts.

Respondents' observations of others being harassed also contributed to their perceptions of campus climate. Of those who observed harassment, 34% (n = 143) believed it was based on race, which was the second most common basis for harassment. People of Color were also more likely than White people to observe offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct. People of Color were less comfortable than White respondents with the overall climate for diversity at UW-Parkside, the climate in their departments/work units, and the climate in their classes, with the largest difference in the classroom. Disparities also existed between Employees of Color and White employees when they were asked to rank the degree to which they agreed with certain statements. Employees of Color were more likely than White employees to feel that colleagues expect them to represent "the point of view" of their identity, and that they have to work harder than their colleagues do in order to be perceived as legitimate. Respondents of Color were least likely to think their workplace climate was welcoming based on race when compared with other demographic groups. Employees of Color were also more likely than White employees to believe they had observed discriminatory hiring practices, discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal, and discriminatory practices related to promotion.

The experiences shared by LGBQ respondents and women call attention to the second and third challenge at UW Parkside: *homophobia and heterosexism, and gender inequity*. LGBQ respondents were more likely than heterosexual respondents to believe that they had experienced harassment. Of those who believed they had experienced this type of conduct, 61% (n = 19) of LGBQ respondents versus two percent (n = 5) of heterosexual respondents indicated that this conduct was based on sexual orientation. A much higher percentage of LGBQ respondents believed they had observed offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct than did heterosexual respondents (41% compared with 24%). The most common basis for observed harassment was sexual orientation (36%, n = 151). LGBQ students were less comfortable with the classroom climate, while heterosexual respondents were less satisfied with the work climate. Both LGBQ and heterosexual respondents held similar opinions regarding the overall climate at UW-Parkside, but LGBQ respondents were less likely to feel "very comfortable" when compared to heterosexual respondents. LGBQ employee respondents were less likely than heterosexual respondents to believe the workplace climate was welcoming based on sexual

orientation. Finally, 67% of LGBTQ employees, compared to 61% of heterosexual employees, have seriously thought of leaving the institution.

Gender inequity was also reported as a challenge by UW-Parkside respondents. According to all respondents who experienced harassment, the conduct was most often based on gender. Although women and men experienced harassment at similar rates, women (34%, n = 62) were more likely than men (19%, n = 22) to indicate the basis of that conduct as gender. Women were slightly more likely than men to believe they had observed discriminatory hiring practices, discriminatory employment-related disciplinary up to and including dismissal, and discriminatory promotion/tenure practices. Of those respondents who believed that they had observed discriminatory hiring, 21% (n = 24) said it was based on gender, making gender the third most cited basis for discrimination. Of those individuals who believed that they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions, 34% (n = 22) said it was based on gender, making gender the primary basis for discrimination. Of those individuals who observed discriminatory practices related to promotion, 34%, (n = 31) indicated the basis was gender, once again making gender the primary basis for discrimination.

The final challenge relates to *differential treatment related to University position* at UW-Parkside. For those who reported they experienced harassment, university status was the third most common basis. Of those respondents who believed that they had observed discriminatory hiring, discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions, and discriminatory practices related to promotion, UW-Parkside status was indicated as one of the top five bases for discrimination.

Classified staff shared differential treatment from that of their academic staff counterparts. For example, a greater percentage of classified staff respondents (32%, n = 34) believed they had been harassed than did academic staff respondents (27%, n = 27), and were much more likely to indicate the basis of that conduct was university status. Classified staff members were less satisfied with their jobs and much less satisfied with the way their careers have progressed when compared with academic staff and faculty. Classified staff were slightly more likely academic staff and faculty to observe harassment, discriminatory hiring, discriminatory disciplinary actions, and discriminatory practices related to promotion.