

Executive Summary

Introduction

Seattle University affirms that diversity and inclusion are crucial to the intellectual and psychosocial vitality of the campus community. It is through freedom of exchange over different ideas and viewpoints in supportive environments that individuals develop the critical thinking and citizenship skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Diversity and inclusion engender academic, spiritual, and personal engagement where teaching, working, learning, and living take place in pluralistic communities of mutual respect.

As set forth in the university's mission statement, Seattle University is “dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.”¹

The university’s Statement on Diversity indicates that, “The University has determined that emphasizing diversity as a matter of institutional policy is an integral component of educational excellence. Students learn better in a diverse educational environment, and they are better prepared to become active participants in our pluralistic, democratic society once they leave such a setting. Jesuit schools have traditionally fostered inclusion and openness toward experiences and ideas that are diverse. Achieving and engaging diversity among students, faculty and staff is a cornerstone of that tradition and Seattle University's institutional policy.”

Achieving and engaging diversity has provided the focus for the university’s Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. The task force, appointed in September 2013, was charged with assessing the current state of equity and inclusion on campus and recommending further steps for the university to move forward with enhancing our core value of diversity.

In order to better understand the campus climate, the task force and university leaders recognized the need for a comprehensive tool that would provide campus climate metrics for students, faculty, and staff.

¹ <https://www.seattleu.edu/about/mission/>

To that end, the university appointed the Climate Study Working Group (CSWG) in 2014. The CSWG was comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Ultimately, Seattle University contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting (R&A) to conduct a campus-wide study entitled, “Seattle University Assessment for Learning, Living, and Working.” Data gathering focused on the experiences and perceptions of various constituent groups. Based on the findings, the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence will develop recommendations to share with the university community.

Project Design and Campus Involvement

The CSWG collaborated with R&A to develop the survey instrument. Together, the CSWG and R&A formulated questions for the campus-wide survey. The Seattle University survey contained 102 items (21 qualitative and 81 quantitative) and was available via a secure online portal from January 20, 2015, through February 10, 2015. Confidential paper surveys were distributed to those individuals who did not have access to an Internet-connected computer or who preferred a paper survey.

Seattle University Participants

Seattle University community members completed 2,634 surveys for an overall response rate of 29%. Only surveys that were at least 50% completed were included in the final data set for analyses.² Response rates by constituent group varied: 24% ($n = 1,081$) for Undergraduate Students, 18% ($n = 362$) for Graduate Students, 36% ($n = 285$) for Law Students, 49% ($n = 566$) for Staff/Administrators, and 46% ($n = 340$) for Faculty. Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. The percentages offered in Table 1 are based on the numbers of respondents in the sample (n) for the specific demographic characteristic.³

²One hundred eleven respondents were removed because they did not complete at least 50% of the survey. Of the 111 respondents who did not complete 50% of the survey, 52 (46.8%) were undergraduate students, 30 (27.0%) were graduate or law students, 17 (15.3%) were faculty, and 12 were staff/administrators (10.8%).

³The total n for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

Table 1. Seattle University Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	% of Sample
Position Status	Undergraduate Student	1,081	41.0
	Graduate Student	362	13.7
	Law Student	285	10.8
	Faculty	340	12.9
	Staff/Administrator	566	21.5
Gender Identity	Man	863	32.9
	Woman	1,713	65.3
	Transgender	6	0.2
	Genderqueer	31	1.2
	Other/Not Listed	12	0.5
Racial Identity	Person of Color	579	22.0
	White	1,666	63.2
	Multiracial – POC/White	320	12.1
Sexual Identity	LGBQ	406	15.4
	Heterosexual	2,103	79.8
	Asexual/Other	84	3.2
Citizenship Status	U.S. Citizen	2,334	88.6
	Non-U.S. Citizen	226	8.6
	Undocumented Resident	5	0.2
	Multiple Citizenships	53	2.0
Disability Status	Single Disability	552	21.0
	No Disability	1,683	63.9
	Multiple Disabilities	227	8.6
Military Status	Military Service	98	3.7
	No Military Service	2,504	95.1
Religious/Spiritual Affiliation	Catholic	549	20.8
	Christian (Not Catholic)	554	21.0
	Other Faith-Based Affiliation	214	8.1
	No Affiliation	1,065	40.4
	Multiple Affiliations	178	6.8
	Other	34	1.3

Note: The total *n* for each selected demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

Key Findings – Areas of Strength

1. High levels of comfort with the climate at Seattle University

Climate is defined as the “current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential.”⁴ The level of comfort experienced by faculty, staff, and students is one indicator of campus climate.

- 76% ($n = 2,006$) of the survey respondents were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate at Seattle University.
 - Graduate Student respondents (29%) were significantly more comfortable (“comfortable” or “very comfortable”) with the overall climate at Seattle University than were Staff/Administrator respondents (26%), Faculty respondents (26%), Law Student respondents (24%), and Undergraduate Student respondents (24%).
- 78% ($n = 701$) of Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their departments/work units.

2. Faculty and Staff/Administrator Respondents – Positive attitudes about workplace climate

Campus climate⁵ is constituted in part by perceptions of work, sense of balance between work and home life, and opportunities for personal and professional development throughout the span of one’s career. Workplace climate is one indicator of campus climate.

- 77% ($n = 681$) of Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” taking leave that they were entitled to without fear that it may affect their job/careers.
- 82% percent ($n = 701$) of Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents found Seattle University supportive of flexible work schedules.

⁴Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 264

⁵Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart, 2006

- The majority of Staff/Administrator respondents indicated that they had supervisors (71%, $n = 381$) and colleagues/coworkers (78%, $n = 418$) at Seattle University who give them career advice or guidance when they need it.
- 69% of Staff/Administrator respondents ($n = 375$) each indicated that their supervisors and Seattle University provide them with resources to pursue professional development opportunities.

3. Faculty Respondents – Positive attitudes about faculty work

- Faculty respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the tenure standards/promotion standards/reappointment standards are reasonable (71%, $n = 223$).
- 72% ($n = 226$) of Faculty respondents felt that their service contributions are important to tenure/promotion/reappointment.
- 69% ($n = 207$) of Faculty respondents felt that their diversity-related research/teaching/service contributions have been/will be valued for promotion or tenure.

4. Student Respondents – Positive attitudes about academic experiences

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.⁶ Research also supports the pedagogical value of a diverse student body and faculty for improving learning outcomes.⁷ Attitudes toward academic pursuits are one indicator of campus climate.

- 86% ($n = 1,479$) of Student respondents reported that their academic experience has had a positive influence on their intellectual growth and interest in ideas.
- 84% ($n = 1,437$) of Student respondents were satisfied with the extent of their intellectual development since enrolling at Seattle University.
- 80% ($n = 1,372$) of Student respondents were satisfied with their academic experience since enrolling at Seattle University.

⁶Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005

⁷Hale, 2004; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harper & Quaye, 2004

5. Student Respondents – *Academic Success and Intent to Persist*

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on two scales, “Academic Success” and “Intent to Persist,” derived from Question 11 on the survey. No statistical significance was established for the *Intent to Persist* factor owing to the skewed nature of these responses. Analyses using these scales revealed:

- Undergraduate Student respondents with No Disability had greater Academic Success than both Undergraduate Student respondents with a Single Disability and Undergraduate Student respondents with Multiple Disabilities. Undergraduate Student respondents with a Single Disability had more Academic Success than Undergraduate Student respondents with Multiple Disabilities.
- Graduate/Law Student respondents with No Disability had greater Academic Success than both Graduate/Law Student respondents with a Single Disability and Graduate/Law Student respondents with Multiple Disabilities.
- White Undergraduate Student respondents and Multiracial Undergraduate Student respondents experienced greater academic success than did Undergraduate Student Respondents of Color. No significant differences existed for Graduate/Law Student respondents.
- For Undergraduate Students and Graduate/Law Students, no significant differences were noted in the mean responses of Not First-Generation/Low-Income Student respondents and First-Generation/Low-Income Student respondents.

Key Findings – Opportunities for Improvement

1. Members of several constituent groups were differentially affected by exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.⁸ Research also underscores the relationship between workplace discrimination and subsequent productivity.⁹ The survey requested information on experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

- 28% ($n = 728$) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.¹⁰
 - 27% ($n = 198$) of these respondents indicated that the conduct was based on their gender/gender identity; 23% ($n = 165$) noted that the conduct was based on their age, 21% ($n = 152$) felt that it was based on their ethnicity, and 20% ($n = 146$) felt that it was based on their position status.
 - In most instances the source of the conduct was within cohort (e.g., student on student, faculty, on faculty).
- Differences emerged based on various demographic characteristics, including gender identity, age, and ethnicity. For example:
 - A higher percentage of Transgender/Genderqueer/Other respondents (58%, $n = 28$) than Women respondents (30%, $n = 513$) and Men respondents (22%, $n = 185$) indicated that they experienced exclusionary conduct.
 - Higher percentages of respondents ages 35 through 48 years and ages 49 through 67 years indicated that they had experienced exclusionary conduct than did other respondents.

⁸Aguirre & Messineo, 1997; Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001

⁹Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008; Waldo, 1999

¹⁰The literature on microaggressions is clear that this type of conduct has a negative influence on people who experience the conduct, even if they feel at the time that it had no impact (Sue, 2010; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009).

- Graduate Students were significantly less likely than other respondents to indicate that they experienced exclusionary conduct.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

2. Several constituent groups indicated that they were less comfortable with the overall campus climate, workplace climate, and classroom climate.

Prior research on campus climate has focused on the experiences of faculty, staff, and students associated with historically underserved social/community/affinity groups (e.g., women, people of color, people with disabilities, first-generation students, veterans).¹¹

Several groups indicated that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, workplace, and classroom.

- Differences by gender identity:
 - 76% ($n = 1,303$) of Women respondents, 78% ($n = 675$) of Men respondents, and 43% ($n = 19$) of Transgender/Genderqueer/Other respondents were “very comfortable”/“comfortable” with the overall climate at Seattle University.
- Differences by racial identity:
 - Faculty and Student Respondents of Color (73%, $n = 358$) were significantly less comfortable (“very comfortable”/“comfortable”) with the climate in their classes than were Multiracial respondents (78%, $n = 206$) and White Faculty and Student respondents (85%, $n = 1,058$).
- Differences by sexual identity:
 - LGBQ respondents (67%, $n = 242$) and Asexual/Other respondents (71%, $n = 51$) were less likely to be “very comfortable”/“comfortable” with the overall climate than were Heterosexual respondents (79%, $n = 1,351$).

¹¹Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Norris, 1992; Rankin, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008

- Difference by student status:
Law Student respondents were significantly less comfortable (measured using “very comfortable” response) with the classroom climate than were Undergraduate Student respondents, Graduate Student respondents, and Faculty respondents.
 - o 21% ($n = 61$) of Law Student respondents were “very comfortable” with the classroom climate, compared to 28% ($n = 303$) of Undergraduate Student respondents and 34% each of Graduate Student respondents ($n = 122$) and Faculty respondents ($n = 111$) who were “very comfortable” with the classroom climate.
- Difference by income status
Low-Income Student respondents (76%, $n = 365$) were significantly less comfortable (“very comfortable”/“comfortable”) with the climate in their classes than were Not Low-Income Student respondents (83%, $n = 966$).
- Difference by ability status
Faculty and Student respondents with Multiple Disabilities (66%, $n = 126$) were significantly less comfortable (“very comfortable”/“comfortable”) with the climate in their classes than were Faculty and Student respondents with a Single Disability (79%, $n = 375$) and those with No Disability (86%, $n = 1,064$).
- Difference by citizenship status
U.S. Citizen Faculty and Student respondents (83%, $n = 1,466$) were significantly more likely to feel “very comfortable”/“comfortable” with the climate in their classes than were Non-U.S. Citizen Faculty and Student respondents (75%, $n = 153$).
- Difference by generational status
First-Generation Student respondents (74%, $n = 152$) were significantly less comfortable than were Not First-Generation Student respondents (82%, $n = 1,240$) with the climate in their classes.

3. Faculty and Staff/Administrator Respondents – Challenges with workplace climate

- 67% ($n = 14$) of Administrator – Academic respondents, 59% ($n = 51$) of Administrator – Staff respondents, 57% ($n = 138$) of Exempt Professional Staff respondents, 56% ($n = 112$) of Non-Exempt Staff respondents, 49% ($n = 156$) of Faculty respondents, and 32% ($n = 11$) of Vendor respondents noted that they had seriously considered leaving Seattle University in the past year.
 - 58% ($n = 279$) of those Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of inadequate salary.
- Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents indicated having observed unjust hiring practices (19%, $n = 169$), unfair or unjust disciplinary actions (12%, $n = 108$), or unfair or unjust promotion/tenure/reclassification (28%, $n = 245$).
- 14% ($n = 19$) of Women Faculty respondents and 4% ($n = 5$) of Men Faculty respondents felt that faculty members in their departments who use family accommodation (FMLA) policies are disadvantaged in promotion or tenure.
- 81% ($n = 161$) of Men Staff/Administrator respondents and 66% ($n = 224$) of Women Staff/Administrator respondents found Seattle University supportive of taking leave.
- 35% ($n = 118$) of Faculty respondents and 31% ($n = 173$) of Staff/Administrator respondents were reluctant to bring up issues that concerned them for fear that it would affect their performance evaluations or tenure/merit/promotion decisions.

Faculty and Staff/Administrator respondents were provided the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences with work-life issues.

4. Faculty Respondents – Challenges with faculty work

- While 71% of faculty felt that tenure standards/promotion standards/reappointment standards are reasonable, only 44% ($n = 135$) of Faculty respondents felt that tenure standards/promotion standards/reappointment standards are applied equally to all faculty.
- 50% ($n = 158$) of Faculty respondents felt that they performed more work to help students beyond that of their colleagues with similar performance expectations.

- A significantly higher percentage of Faculty Respondents of Color (66%, $n = 35$) than White Faculty respondents (45%, $n = 103$) felt that they performed more work to help students beyond that of their colleagues with similar performance expectations.

Faculty respondents were provided the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences regarding faculty work.

5. A small but meaningful percentage of respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact.

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a significant issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the Seattle University survey requested information regarding sexual assault.

- 3% ($n = 75$) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact while at Seattle University.
- These respondents rarely reported to anyone at Seattle University that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted sexual contact.

Conclusion

Seattle University campus climate findings¹² are consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country, based on the work of R&A Consulting.¹³ For example, 70% to 80% of all respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “comfortable” or “very comfortable.” A similar percentage (76%) of all Seattle University respondents reported that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate at Seattle University. Likewise, 20%

¹²Additional findings disaggregated by position and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

¹³Rankin & Associates Consulting, 2015. Comparisons are based on 150 total institutions including 23 liberal arts colleges, 11 of which are religious-affiliated campuses.

to 25% in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At Seattle University, a slightly higher percentage of respondents (28%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. The results also paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.¹⁴ It is important to note that the majority respondents offered that they were unaware of services available to them when they experienced conduct that interfered with their ability to work or learn.

Seattle University's climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity and inclusion, and addresses Seattle University's mission and the goals. While the findings may guide decision-making in regard to policies and practices at Seattle University, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus's environment must be taken into consideration when considering additional action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the Seattle University community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and also to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. Seattle University, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime position to continue to actualize its commitment to an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

¹⁴Guiffreda, Gouveia, Wall, & Seward, 2008; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harper & Quaye, 2004; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Sears, 2002; Settles et al., 2006; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Yosso et al., 2009

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