GW Climate Survey
Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Spring of 2022, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs announced the formation of the GW Diversity Program Review Team (DPRT) comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The DPRT was tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to inform the development of a sustainable diversity action plan. Phase III of the DPRT's efforts involved launching a campus-wide diversity climate survey with the primary purpose of providing information about the current university climate to the team through direct community participation.

Overall, the results of the survey indicate several areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion; decreasing undermining experiences and negative treatment; and promoting a university culture that is positively impactful and encourages community-building for individual sense of belonging. There are also specific strengths and areas of improvement for each of the following primary role groups: undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty.

OVERALL FINDINGS

Areas of Strength

- A majority of respondents had found a community at GW where they felt they belonged.
  - Friends were the leading contributor to a sense of belonging for all types of students. Identity-based student groups were particularly impactful for minoritized students along the lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. For graduate students, personal interactions with faculty were almost equally as important as friends for belonging.
  - In their departments/units, faculty and staff feel trusted, respected, and given the opportunity to participate in decision-making to a high degree. At least three-quarters of faculty and staff agreed with the following at the department level: trusted to make decisions within the scope of their work, respected by their colleagues, respected by their supervisor, trusted generally, and encouraged to share their ideas.
- Findings suggest there is a culture of mutual support among GW community members.
  - Faculty and staff directly support students in various ways in and outside of the classroom. Most faculty feel equipped to offer support to students when they need an accommodation and to work with Disability Support Services to support a student. Most also feel equipped to refer students to campus resources for academic or emotional/mental health support. Almost half of faculty and staff indicated that at least once in the last five years they had assisted a student who had experienced negative treatment due to their identity.
  - The majority of respondents feel equipped to provide and receive support from others through advocating for themselves in times of need, navigating conflict, supporting someone in crisis, and contacting someone else for help in a personal crisis. For students, this type of mutual support was highly positively correlated with perceptions of access to opportunities, program qualities, and aspects of connection and involvement.
- Students, faculty, and staff are personally invested in the diversity of the GW community.

- Almost every respondent agreed they were comfortable having colleagues or classmates from diverse backgrounds and more than three-quarters believed that increasing diversity of the university community is an important goal for GW.
  - Having positive beliefs about the university's emphasis on having a diverse community was related to the university climate having a positive impact on their experience, finding community and belonging, capacity to provide and receive support, adequate opportunities for and knowledge of DEI programming, and perceptions of knowledge of, comfort with, and ability to report incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment on campus. Those with positive diversity emphasis beliefs were also less likely to experience and observe negative treatment and less likely to want to leave GW.
- GW community members highlight exemplary diversity, equity, and inclusion programming on campus in their written comments.
  - At the school level, community members commended the work of specific offices, and individual staff and faculty for being inclusive in both everyday behaviors and structural factors like hiring/admissions, classroom discussions, and personal interactions such as meetings or office hours.
  - Offices and resources that were specifically mentioned as excelling in diversity, equity, and inclusion include: the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement (ODECE), the Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC), identity-based student groups, and other student life groups.
  - In terms of specific programming, GW community members appreciate community-wide events like the Diversity Summit, specific workshops that encourage concrete behavior change such as unconscious bias training, enlightening discussions, and expert guest speakers through different branded and co-sponsored series, and incorporation of DEI content into course curriculum and classroom discussions.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Half of respondents have experienced negative treatment. Community members who have minoritized identities experience it disproportionally more, specifically targeted toward their identity, via different behaviors, in different locations, and from different people.
  - Over half of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and respondents of other sexual orientations (LGBQA+) experienced at least one form of identity-based negative treatment. Almost a third of Black respondents (the highest proportion of any race/ethnicity group) indicated they had experienced negative treatment specifically due to their race/ethnicity. Transgender and non-binary (TNB) respondents were also more likely than both men and women to experience identity-based negative treatment.
  - Behaviors which disproportionately impacted some minoritized race/ethnicity groups and gender identities included glances or looks, being ignored, being singled out, being denied access or services, threats, publications, verbal and written comments, social media, offensive pictures/images, vandalism/graffiti, property damage/destruction, and vehicle pursuit/chase.
  - Location of negative treatment was most related to an individual's primary role and differences by gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation likely emerged based on demographic differences in those populations.

- Latin@/x/Hispanic respondents were more likely than other race/ethnicity groups to experience negative treatment from students, while Black faculty disproportionately experienced negative treatment from faculty and staff members. Respondents who identified as Arab or Middle Eastern / American Indian / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander or another racial/ethnic identity (AME/AI/NHPI/+) were the most likely race/ethnicity group to experience negative treatment from administration and other sources. TNB and women respondents experienced negative treatment from faculty and students more often than men did. LGBQA+ respondents were more likely to experience negative treatment from students than heterosexual/straight respondents.

- Financial and economic issues were a concern for most students, faculty, and staff, and this was worse for minoritized individuals.
  - Less than a quarter of faculty and staff believe that decisions about promotion, pay, and raises are transparent and equitable, while almost half indicated financial/economic concerns had negatively impacted their experience at GW. LGBQA+ employees were more likely to indicate that these concerns had negatively impacted their experience. Equity and transparency of pay-related decision-making also differed by gender and race/ethnicity.
  - Three-quarters of students indicated they had experienced difficulty affording attendance at GW including specific financial difficulties with tuition, housing, books/course materials, and food. White and Asian students were most likely to report not having experienced financial hardship while attending GW. Black and Latin@/x/Hispanic student respondents were most likely to report taking out loans to fund their cost of attendance at GW. Non-underrepresented minority (URM) students were more likely to report receiving a family contribution to fund their costs compared to URM students. There were additional statistically significant differences in the types of sources of financial support used for attendance based on gender and sexual orientation.

- Respondents had relatively low agreement on the adequacy of the university's emphasis on diversity.
  - Only around half of respondents believe GW places sufficient emphasis on having diverse students, staff, faculty, and administration. Less than half agree that GW has a long-standing commitment to diversity.
  - These levels of agreement are even lower for minoritized community members, specifically Black, TNB, and LGBQA+ faculty.

- GW community members have concrete suggestions for improvement of the climate in their written comments.
  - The most common suggestion for climate improvement was improving the diversity of the student body, staff, and faculty with an emphasis on race/ethnicity and maximizing inclusion (not just hiring/admission).
  - Individuals also emphasized the importance of support from leadership and structural practices to incentivize diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus (e.g., tenure/promotion criteria, performance management goals for staff). Many community members suggested increased and/or mandatory training as another structural change.
  - Opportunities for the community to provide ongoing feedback especially for those who regularly feel their ideas are dismissed (e.g., part-time employees, adjunct faculty) were

requested in addition to equitable access to resources and benefits across students, faculty, and staff.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT FINDINGS

Areas of Strength

- Undergraduate students are comfortable with and committed to increasing diversity at GW.
  - Almost all respondents agreed that they feel comfortable having colleagues from diverse backgrounds and over four-fifths of undergraduate students agreed that increasing diversity is an important goal for GW.
- Undergraduate students are overwhelmingly committed to staying at GW, with only eight percent of respondents indicating either plans to leave or serious considerations of leaving.
  - There were, however, statistically significant differences by both gender and sexual orientation such that around a fifth of transgender and non-binary (TNB) respondents and around a tenth of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and respondents of other sexual orientation identities (LGBQA+) were either seriously considering leaving GW or planning to leave.
  - Among all undergraduate student respondents, the top three reasons would be to attend a more affordable institution, attend an institution with a stronger academic reputation, and pursue social connections that are a better fit.
- Undergraduate students feel connected to the university, including agreeing that they feel encouraged to be involved and connected to university life.
  - These factors were correlated with being less likely to consider leaving GW and more likely to feel they have found a community where they feel like they belong.
- Undergraduate students feel supported at the program level and the university level to express their political opinions.
  - Over half of undergraduate respondents felt supported to voice their political views at the university, in their programs, and in the classroom.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Financial hardship and access to resources were points of concern for many undergraduate students.
  - Almost four-fifths experienced some form of financial hardship while attending GW, and less than half of respondents agreed that they had access to financial aid resources/information or financial support/funding within their program.
  - Relatedly, less than half agreed that they have access to health care that meets their needs. This access was even lower for those from marginalized groups, including individuals of two or more races/ethnicities, transgender and non-binary (TNB), and LGBQA+ respondents.
- Over half of respondents indicated experiencing some form of identity-based negative treatment at least once in the last five years. The sources of these experiences were overwhelmingly other students.

- o Around two-thirds of individuals of two or more races/ethnicities indicated these experiences.
  - o Almost three-quarters of TNB and around two-thirds of LGBQA+ undergraduate students indicated experiencing at least one form of identity-based negative treatment in the last five years.
  - o Around three-quarters of individuals with a disability indicated identity-based negative treatment.
- Undergraduate students had low perceptions of the university's DEI climate, with less than half of respondents agreeing that GW is committed to increasing diversity of its members.
  - o Individuals who indicated they were seriously considering or planning to leave GW were most likely to indicate that finding a more inclusive educational environment was their reason for leaving. This item had the largest correlation with intentions to leave GW ($r = 0.32$) and differed from the broader population's hypothetical reasons for leaving.
- Undergraduate students generally felt uninformed about where and how to report instances of bias, harassment, discrimination or other negative treatment.
  - o Further, those who had indicated experiencing negative treatment were less likely to agree that they are informed about and comfortable with reporting incidents of bias and harassment to the university.

GRADUATE STUDENT FINDINGS

Areas of Strength

- Graduate students have positive perceptions of the climate, specifically within their programs.
  - o Within programs, around three-quarters agreed that they feel supported by their faculty. Further, friend(s) and interactions with faculty were the most cited contributions to feelings of belonging.
  - o These program-level perceptions were highly correlated with a sense of community and belonging as well as an overall positive impact of the climate on their experience.
- Graduate students are comfortable with and committed to increasing diversity at GW.
  - o Almost all respondents agreed that they feel comfortable having colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and over four-fifths of graduate students agree that increasing diversity is an important goal for GW.
- Graduate students are overwhelmingly committed to staying at GW, with only six percent of respondents indicating either plans to leave or serious considerations of leaving.
  - o There were, however, statistically significant differences by both gender and sexual orientation such that 14% of transgender and non-binary (TNB) and 8% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and respondents of other sexual orientation identities (LGBQA+) were either seriously considering leaving GW or planning to leave.
  - o If graduate students were to leave GW, their top three reasons would be attending a more affordable institution, attending an institution with a stronger academic reputation, and discontinuing studies to pursue other opportunities.
- Graduate students feel supported to engage in critical thinking and ask questions in their classes.

- o Classroom support overall was highly related to positive climate perceptions, feelings of belonging, and intentions to stay at GW.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Graduate students had lower university perceptions than department-level perceptions, feeling less connected to the university overall.
  - o Less than half of respondents agreed that they feel encouraged to be involved in the university and less than a third agreed that they feel connected to university life.
  - o These university-level perceptions were strong predictors of the impact of the climate on experiences as well as belonging.
- Financial hardship and access to resources were points of concern for many graduate students.
  - o Three-quarters experienced some form of financial hardship while attending GW, and less than half of respondents agreed that they had access to financial aid resources/information or financial support/funding within their program.
  - o Relatedly, less than half agreed that they have access to health care that meets their needs. This access was even lower for those from marginalized groups, including individuals of two or more races/ethnicities, TNB, and LGBQA+ respondents.
- Around a third of respondents indicated identity-based negative treatment.
  - o Individuals of two or more races/ethnicities and those who identified as Arab or Middle Eastern, American Indian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or another racial/ethnic identity (AME/AI/NHPI/+) had the highest percentage of graduate students indicating having these experiences.
  - o Almost two-thirds of TNB graduate students indicated experiencing at least one form of identity-based negative treatment in the last five years.
- Graduate students expressed discomfort about expressing their political opinions on campus and in the classroom.
  - o Slightly over half of respondents agreed that they feel supported to bring up politically related topics in the classroom or support to express their political affiliation/views in their program or on campus.
  - o These concerns were also raised in qualitative responses, specifically with those leaning politically right expressing concern about not feeling accepted on campus.

STAFF FINDINGS

Areas of Strength

- In their departments/units, staff feel respected, trusted, and encouraged to share ideas and participate in decision-making to a high degree.
  - o Three-quarters or more of staff agreed with the following at the department level: respected by their supervisor, respected by colleagues, trusted generally, encouraged to share ideas, trusted to make decisions within the scope of their work, being part of a team, and empowered to take initiative. Overall perceptions of experiences at the department/unit level were very positive.

- o Department/unit level perceptions are highly positively correlated with perceived equitable access to benefits and professional development and finding a community at GW where they feel they belong. They are moderately positively correlated with the impact of the overall university climate on their experience. Those with positive department perceptions are also less likely to have experienced financial/economic concerns and less likely to leave GW.
- There is high agreement among staff in their capacity to provide and receive support from others.
  - o The majority of staff agree they are equipped to provide and receive support from others through the following behaviors: supporting someone when they are in crisis, advocating for themselves in times of need, navigating conflict, and contacting someone for help when they are personally in crisis.
  - o Perceptions of mutual support were highly positively correlated with perceptions about knowledge of, comfort with, and experience of reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment. They were moderately positively correlated with the following: finding a community where they feel they belong; perceived equitable access to benefits and professional development; department and university climate perceptions; positive beliefs about the university's emphasis on having a diverse community; and knowledge of and opportunities to attend diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.
- Staff are personally invested in the diversity of the GW community.
  - o Almost every staff respondent agreed they were comfortable having colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and more than three-quarters of staff believed that increasing diversity of the university community is an important goal for GW.
  - o Having positive beliefs about the university's emphasis on having a diverse community was related to the university climate having a positive impact on their experience, finding community and belonging, perceiving equitable access to benefits and professional development, and positive perceptions of specific aspects of climate at the department and university levels. Those with positive diversity emphasis beliefs were also less likely to want to leave GW.
- Staff highlight exemplary diversity, equity, and inclusion programming on campus in their written comments.
  - o Of those who provided examples of units on campus which effectively advance DEI, about half cited their academic school or department. Staff commend schools for organizing events with engaging speakers and providing regular communication and resource sharing.
  - o A quarter of staff specifically highlighted the efforts of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement for its university-level efforts, workshops, and events within the schools.
  - o In terms of specific programming, staff appreciate specific workshops and trainings which directly tie into their work on topics such as unconscious bias or workplace harassment, open spaces for reflection on major events which affect particular communities, and campus-wide scholarly events like the Diversity Summit.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The majority of staff have not experienced negative treatment in the last five years, but staff who have minoritized identities experience it disproportionally more, specifically targeted toward their identity.
  - A third of staff identifying as Arab or Middle Eastern / American Indian / Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander or another racial/ethnic identity (AME/AI/NHPI/+; the highest proportion of any race/ethnicity group) indicated they had experienced negative treatment specifically due to their race/ethnicity.
  - Transgender and non-binary (TNB) staff are also more likely than both men and women to experience identity-based negative treatment.
  - Behaviors which disproportionately impacted some minoritized race/ethnicity groups and gender identities included glances or looks, social media, offensive pictures/images, and publications on campus.
- Financial and economic issues were a concern for most staff.
  - Only about one in five staff members agree that decisions about promotion, pay, and raises are equitable or transparent. These concerns are even more prominent for staff who have been at GW for more than 15 years.
  - Half indicated that financial/economic concerns had negatively impacted their personal experiences at GW.
  - Overall, these concerns were highly positively correlated with experiencing negative treatment and moderately positively correlated with wanting to leave GW.
  - About a third of staff were seriously considering or already planning to leave GW. The most common reason they would leave GW would be to increase salary/benefits.
- Staff had relatively low agreement on the adequacy of the university's emphasis on diversity.
  - Only around half of staff believe GW places sufficient emphasis on having diverse students and staff and even fewer agree there is sufficient emphasis for faculty and administration. Less than half of staff agree that GW has a long-standing commitment to diversity.
  - These levels of agreement are even lower for minoritized respondents, specifically staff who are: Black; TNB; women; or, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and staff identifying with another sexual (LGBQA+).
- Staff have concrete suggestions for improvement of the climate in their written comments.
  - Over half of staff who provided suggestions reference improvements to DEI-specific aspects of university climate, including leadership support for DEI, offering and incentivizing DEI training and programming, increasing diversity at all levels, and improving inclusion on campus.
  - Staff also emphasized the importance of increasing salary and benefits, providing more mechanisms to provide feedback and be heard (e.g., surveys and evaluations), and making changes to HR policies (e.g., filling vacancies and telework/flexible schedules) in their qualitative responses.

FACULTY FINDINGS

Areas of Strength

- In their departments/units, faculty feel trusted, respected, and given the opportunity to participate in decision-making to a high degree.
    - o Three-quarters or more of faculty agreed with the following at the department level: trusted to make decisions within the scope of their work, respected by colleagues, trusted generally, respected by their supervisor, and given the opportunity to serve on committees. Overall perceptions of experiences at the department/unit level were very positive.
    - o Department/unit level perceptions are highly positively correlated with finding a community at GW where they feel they belong and moderately positively correlated with the impact of the overall university climate on their experience. Those with positive department perceptions are also less likely to have experienced financial/economic concerns and less likely to leave GW.
- Most faculty directly support students in and outside of the classroom through diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.
    - o Most faculty agree that they actively change their pedagogy to 1) include diversity, equity, and inclusion content related to their field and 2) be more inclusive and address the needs of a diverse student body. These and other inclusive classroom practices were moderately positively correlated with perceived capacity to provide and receive support, capacity to assist students specifically, and beliefs about the knowledge of, comfort with, and ability to report incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment on campus.
    - o Faculty feel most equipped to offer support to students when they need an accommodation and to work with Disability Support Services to support a student. Most also feel equipped to refer students to campus resources for academic or emotional/mental health support.
    - o Two-thirds of faculty indicated in the past five years they had assisted a student who had experienced negative treatment due to their identity, and a third had counseled a student who had reported experiencing sexual misconduct. Part-time and non-tenure track faculty did so to a lesser extent.
- Faculty are personally invested in the diversity of the GW community.
    - o Almost every faculty respondent agreed they were comfortable having colleagues from diverse backgrounds, and more than three-quarters of faculty believed that increasing diversity of the university community is an important goal for GW.
    - o Having positive beliefs about the university's emphasis on having a diverse community was related to the university climate having a positive impact on their experience, finding community and belonging, perceiving equitable access to benefits and professional development, and positive perceptions of specific aspects of climate at the department and university levels. Those with positive diversity emphasis beliefs were also less likely to want to leave GW.
- Faculty highlight exemplary diversity, equity, and inclusion programming on campus in their written comments.

- At the school level, faculty commend the communications, tools, workshops, and programs that are provided related to DEI initiatives and how to incorporate these values into areas like admission/hiring, curriculum, and program assessment.
- A quarter of faculty specifically highlighted the efforts of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement for its university-level efforts in Title IX and bias training.
- In terms of specific programming, faculty appreciate specific workshops on concrete ways to build an inclusive classroom, enlightening discussions from experts on topics like critical race theory, and campus-wide scholarly events like the Diversity Summit.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There were significant differences in faculty experiences based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and job status.
    - The majority of faculty have experienced negative treatment. However, faculty who have minoritized identities experience it disproportionally more, specifically targeted toward their identity, via different behaviors, in different locations, and from different people.
        - Half of Black faculty (the highest proportion of any race/ethnicity group) indicated they had experienced negative treatment specifically due to their race/ethnicity. Transgender and non-binary (TNB) faculty are also more likely than both men and women to experience negative treatment.
        - Behaviors which disproportionately impacted some minoritized race/ethnicity groups and gender identities included glances or looks, being ignored, and being denied access or services.
        - Latin@/x/Hispanic faculty experienced negative treatment in a staff or other meeting more than any other race/ethnicity group. TNB faculty experienced negative treatment in a classroom, at a GW sponsored event, and at off campus services more frequently than men or women. Similarly, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual, and faculty of other sexual orientation identities (LGBQA+) experienced negative treatment in a classroom, staff member's office, and at a GW sponsored event more frequently than heterosexual respondents.
        - Latin@/x/Hispanic faculty were more likely than other race/ethnicity groups to experience negative treatment from other faculty, while Black faculty disproportionately experienced negative treatment from staff members. Alternatively, TNB faculty experienced negative treatment from students and non-GW people more often than men or women did.
    - Part-time and non-tenure track faculty perceive less opportunities for advancement and participation in decision-making at GW, but they generally perceive the impact of the university climate on their experience more positively than full-time and tenured or tenure-track faculty. Proximity or centrality of the university to a faculty member's work identity through job status may result in different climate perceptions.
- Financial and economic issues were a concern for most faculty.
    - Only about one in five faculty members agree that decisions about promotion, pay, and raises are equitable.
    - These concerns are even more prominent for minoritized faculty members.

- o Overall, these concerns were moderately positively correlated with experiencing negative treatment and wanting to leave GW. Relatedly, the top reason faculty indicated they would leave GW would be to increase salary/benefits.
- Faculty had relatively low agreement on the adequacy of the university's emphasis on diversity.
  - o Only around half of faculty believe GW places sufficient emphasis on having diverse students, staff, faculty, and administration. Less than half of faculty agree that GW has a long-standing commitment to diversity.
  - o These levels of agreement are even lower for minoritized faculty members, specifically Black and Latin@/x/Hispanic, TNB, and LGBQA+ faculty.
- Faculty have concrete suggestions for improvement of the climate in their written comments.
  - o Almost two-thirds of faculty who provided suggestions reference improvements to DEI-specific aspects of university climate, including improving diversity, access to DEI training and programming, and leadership support for DEI.
  - o Faculty also emphasized the importance of equitable access to resources and increasing salary and benefits, especially for adjunct faculty members, in their qualitative responses.