



Campus Climate Survey

Executive Summary

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Project Background

In FY 2013-2014, the Campus Climate Commission proposed a climate assessment plan with a four-year implementation timeline. The implementation timeline included the following components:

- Year Zero: Develop the assessment tool and administration plan; communicate with the university about the climate assessment plan, upcoming assessment, and how results will be used to enhance climate at ECU.
- Year One: Administer the assessment; analyze results; develop target areas for improvement; and communicate results and target areas to the community.
- Year Two: Implement solutions; address target areas and strategically align priorities and programming; gather input from the campus community; and communicate to the university about strategies.
- Year Three: Follow-up with previous efforts to ensure that action plans continue to align and address priorities; gather input from the campus community; and communicate to the university about the progress of strategies.

Finally, the timeline begins again with the administration of a second Campus Climate Survey in 2018.

Survey Instrument

The 2015 Campus Climate Survey was designed based on a thorough review of best practices among higher education institutions around the country, as well as within the University of North Carolina system. The survey's dimensions were chosen as relevant and important to the establishment of a baseline for ECU's campus climate assessment and included:

- Engagement, Safety, Inclusion, Working Environment, Communication, Governance and Leadership, and Wellness and Work/Life Balance

Each survey also included a demographic section, as well as a variety of opportunities for participants to provide additional comments. Surveys were administered to all ECU faculty, staff, and students and were customized for each of the three participant groups. The 2015 Campus Climate Survey was administered from October 6, 2015 through November 6, 2015.

Methodology and Limitations

Surveys were administered using Qualtrics survey software and all responses were completely anonymous. Participants were permitted to skip any question(s) that made them feel uncomfortable and could withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. Participants received an invitation email containing a personalized link to the survey, as well as up to eight email reminders over the course of the distribution period.

Limitations associated with the project methodology included:

- All respondents self-selected to participate, potentially leading to self-selection bias. Increased marketing of the 2015 Campus Climate Survey to the entire campus community aimed at mitigating this limitation.
- Not all university members use or have access to computers on a consistent basis. In turn, some individuals may have had limited ability to participate in the computer-based online survey. In order to mitigate this limitation, university computer labs were made available to faculty and staff members throughout the survey administration period and supervisors encouraged employees to participate in the survey during working hours.
- The use of an online survey may have also prevented some individuals with certain disabilities from participating. Information directing potential participants to ECU's Disability Support Services was included in the survey in order to help mitigate this limitation and provide support for individuals who may have required assistance in completing the survey.
- The student sample included all current students, regardless of status (e.g., Distance Education). The inclusion of all students may have both reduced the overall response rate and decreased the representativeness of results. However, due to the intentional inclusivity of the survey, no measures were taken to mitigate this limitation.

Response Rates

An overall response rate of 24.0 percent was obtained from the 2015 Campus Climate Survey. This overall response rate included a faculty response rate of 32.0 percent (645 participants), a staff response rate of 33.0 percent (1,350 participants), and a student response rate of 8.0 percent (1,950 participants).

Key Findings

The following summary of results contains key findings from the 2015 Campus Climate Survey for faculty, staff, and student participants. The overall report of results aims to provide a detailed description of findings for each participant group; whereas, the following summary seeks to provide an integrated presentation of key findings across all three participant groups. In turn, this summary may be used to develop a general depiction of the current campus climate at East Carolina University and act as an aid when developing specific strategies to address issues regarding the current climate.

Engagement

In the first section of the survey, participants were asked a series of questions regarding their engagement at the university. Overall, participants' responses revealed high levels of engagement.

- Large portions of participants from all three participant groups indicated agreement with statements pertaining to ECU's mission statement.
- The statement, "I believe in ECU's mission," received the largest portion of participants who indicated that they *strongly agreed*; whereas, smaller portions of participants indicated agreement with the statements, "I am proud to share ECU's mission with others" and "I feel personally responsible for supporting ECU's mission across all of my roles at the university."
 - In turn, participants demonstrated higher levels of belief in the university's mission than they did feelings of responsibility to support the university's mission and share it with others.
- All participant groups indicated feelings of pride and engagement related to their role at the university; however, faculty and staff participants indicated more engagement with their role at the university than did student participants.
- Female faculty members demonstrated a higher level of engagement than male faculty members. Specifically, female faculty members indicated higher levels of agreement with statements suggesting that they believe in ECU's mission, understand how their work contributes to the mission, and look forward to each day at the university.
- Junior faculty members (tenure < 5 years) also demonstrated slightly higher levels of engagement than senior faculty members (tenure > 5 years), indicating that they get a sense of accomplishment from their work and are proud to be a member of the ECU community.

Safety

Participants were then asked a series of questions about perceptions and experiences of safety at ECU.

- Large portions of faculty, staff, and student participants indicated that they feel safe walking alone on the ECU campus during the day; however, a significantly smaller portion of participants from all three participant groups indicated similar feelings of safety after dark.
 - Faculty: 51.2% *strongly agree* (day); 7.8% *strongly agree* (night)
 - Staff: 42.5% *strongly agree* (day); 6.4% *strongly agree* (night)
 - Students: 49.1% *strongly agree* (day); 7.3% *strongly agree* (night)
- Additionally, in comparison to female faculty and staff participants, larger portions of male participants indicated that they feel safe on campus during the day and after dark; however, much smaller portions of both male and female participants indicated feeling safe after dark.

Next, although a large portion of participants indicated that they *agreed* that ECU makes every effort to ensure a safe campus and would respond effectively to a safety incident, a smaller portion *strongly agreed* with the statements – indicating overall feelings of safety, but leaving room for improvement.

- The most frequently experienced safety incident across all three participant groups was harassment (not including sexual harassment).
- Student participants experienced more physical violence, sexual violence, and sexual harassment than faculty and staff participants.
- Female faculty participants reported experiencing more harassment than male faculty participants.
- Male staff participants reported experiencing more physical violence than female staff participants.

Moreover, with few exceptions, all safety incidents were more likely to be unreported than to be reported.

Interestingly, for all groups, when asked about actual reporting behaviors, harassment was the most frequently reported incident type and when asked about familiarity with reporting methods there was no difference between harassment and any other incident type. Yet, in comparison to all other incident types, the smallest portion of participants indicated that they would report future harassment incidents and the largest portion of participants indicated that such reporting behavior would be dependent upon other factors.

Finally, staff members were the most trained group of participants in regard to safety policies, procedures, and prevention methods.

Inclusion

Next, participants responded to a series of questions regarding inclusion at ECU.

- All three participant groups reported that they *frequently* interact with faculty, staff, and students with a race/ethnicity, religious background, or social/economic background that is different from their own.
- In comparison, the largest portion of participants indicated that they *never* interact with faculty, staff, and students with a gender identity that is different from their own.

Despite frequent interaction, participants indicated that they are most likely to hear negative, inappropriate, or stereotypical statements made in reference to race/ethnicity. Furthermore, they are more likely to hear students make such statements, as well as negative statements pertaining to all other demographic categories in general.

- Participants' responses indicated that in comparison to students, faculty and staff members are more likely to hear other faculty and staff members make negative comments pertaining to inclusion. In fact, student participants rarely reported hearing such comments from faculty and staff members.
- In comparison to female faculty participants, a larger portion of male faculty participants reported hearing students make negative statements pertaining to sexual orientation; however, female participants reported more experience with acts of bias or discrimination.
- In comparison to White participants, a larger portion of participants from all other race/ethnicity groups indicated hearing faculty and staff members make negative statements pertaining to immigration background, race/ethnicity, and social/economic background. Such participants also reported more experience with acts of bias or discrimination.

Over 70.0 percent of all participants had no experience with acts of bias or discrimination. However, bias or discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity was the most frequently experienced form of such acts. Furthermore, the largest portion of participants indicated that they *might* have experienced an act of bias or discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity.

- Across all demographic categories, similar portion of participants indicated that they *might* have experienced an act of bias or discrimination, as those who said they had experienced an act.
- All acts of bias or discrimination were more likely to be unreported than to be reported.

Lastly, participants feel welcome at ECU and believe there are faculty, staff, and students from different cultures and backgrounds at ECU. However, some participants *disagreed* that ECU provides an environment that allows free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

Working Environment

Participants also answered questions pertaining to their working environment. The working environment section was presented to all faculty and staff members, as well as student participants who indicated that they are currently employed at ECU.

Participants were first asked to rate a variety of aspects of their working environment using a scale that consisted of 1 to 5 stars.

- All participants awarded high ratings to aspects related to their working relationships with co-workers, collaboration among their work groups, and the overall quality of faculty and staff members at ECU.
- However, participants provided the lowest number of 5-star ratings and the highest number of 1-star ratings for mentoring at ECU.
 - Although the majority of participants indicated low ratings for mentoring, junior staff participants (tenure < 5 years) provided more favorable ratings of mentoring than senior staff participants (tenure > 5 years).

The largest portion of participants in all participant groups *strongly agreed* with the statements, “I enjoy my job”, “My unit adheres to policies that support fair hiring, promotion, tenure, and workplace practices”, and “There are opportunities for professional development at ECU.”

- Female faculty participants indicated higher levels of job enjoyment than male participants and were less likely to indicate that they *often* think about leaving their job.

The largest portion of faculty participants *strongly disagreed* with the statement, “I am paid fairly for my work.”

- Furthermore, in comparison to junior faculty participants, a larger portion of senior faculty participants disagreed that they are paid fairly and rewarded for performing well.

The largest portion of staff participants *strongly disagreed* with the statements, “Criteria for attaining promotion are clear”, “I believe that the promotion process is reasonable”, and “I am rewarded and/or recognized for performing well.”

- In contrast, students demonstrated higher levels of neutrality than disagreement with several statements such as, “I hope to be a permanent employee of ECU in the near future”, which was given a neutral response by nearly half of student participants.

Communication

Next, participants were asked a series of questions regarding communication, pertaining to both positive communication between participants and the individuals to which they report, and open, two-way communication between university entities. Similar to the working environment section, the communication section was presented to all faculty and staff members, as well as student participants who indicated that they are currently employed at ECU.

- In general, there were larger portions of participants who indicated that they *agreed* with the various statements than *strongly agreed* – indicating that there may be overall room for improvement in the manner in which faculty, staff, and students communicate.
- Additionally, when faculty and staff participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement, “I am reluctant to bring up issues that concern me for fear that it will negatively affect my career”, approximately half of participants did not indicate that they *disagreed* with the statement – suggesting a reluctance to communicate about certain issues.

Lastly, participants indicated that they experience more frequent open, two-way communication between close university entities, such as within departments/schools, than they do between more distant entities, such as between colleges/divisions, or throughout the entire university.

- In comparison to staff participants, faculty participants indicated that they experienced less frequent open, two-way communication across all university entities.
- In comparison to junior faculty and staff participants, senior participants also indicated higher levels of disagreement regarding clear and positive communication throughout the university.

Governance and Leadership

Faculty and staff participants, as well as ECU-employed student participants, were also asked questions pertaining to governance and leadership. Specifically, participants were asked about the governance and leadership of their immediate supervisor, as well as senior leadership at the university.

- Participants indicated high levels of agreement with statements pertaining to their supervisor. Specifically, participants feel that their supervisor has a genuine interest in their career development and well-being, is available when needed, creates a positive work environment, and clearly communicates professional expectations.
- In contrast, faculty and staff participants indicated lower levels of agreement with statements pertaining to senior leadership at the university. Specifically, participants *agreed* that senior leadership clearly communicates institutional priorities; however, the majority of participants indicated a neutral response to statements suggesting that senior leadership encourages transparency in decision-making, effectively allocates institutional resources, and effectively represents the university.

Wellness and Work/Life Balance

Finally, all participants were asked a series of questions pertaining to wellness and work/life balance.

- In comparison to faculty and staff, a larger portion of student participants indicated that they *strongly agreed* that there are sufficient health resources available on campus.
- However, all three participant groups indicated higher levels of agreement regarding the availability of physical health resources on campus, than mental health resources.
 - Student participants also indicated that they were more familiar with physical health services, which were used by approximately 50.0 percent of participants, than mental health services, which were used by approximately 15.0 percent of participants
- Additionally, nearly half of faculty and staff participants felt neutral about the availability of all health resources on campus

Nevertheless, all participant groups indicated agreement that ECU promotes health and wellness on campus and provides sufficient facility space for physical fitness on campus.

Additionally, with the exception of fear of job loss, which faculty and staff participants indicated caused them a high amount of stress in the past year, all participant groups indicated higher levels of stress caused by personal aspects in the past year than professional aspects.

- Faculty participants experienced high amounts of stress caused by the timing of departmental meetings and functions, personal health, and adult caregiver responsibilities, but lower amounts of stress caused by securing funding for research and departmental politics.
- Staff participants experienced high amounts of stress caused by adult caregiver responsibilities and childcare, but lower amounts of stress caused by the review/promotion process and departmental politics.
- Student participants experienced high amounts of stress caused by making friends, finding things to do socially, and involvement in a school-sponsored organization or activity, but lower amounts of stress caused by class work load and academic performance.

Finally, faculty and staff participants indicated that they *often* forgo personal activities for professional responsibilities, but forgo professional responsibilities for personal activities less often.

Next Steps

The administration of the 2015 Campus Climate Survey and subsequent Report of Results helps to partially satisfy the goals established in Year One of the four-year implementation plan defined by the Campus Climate Commission. Remaining goals include developing target areas for improvement and communicating results and target areas to the community.

The implementation plan also recommends the use of focus groups to gather input from the campus community and aid in the development of strategic priorities.

Upon completion of all Year One tasks, the implementation plan will transition into Year Two and Year Three phases. Specifically, during Year Two, the plan focuses on implementing solutions and developing an overall strategy, which details how each target area is being addressed and how priorities and programming can be best aligned to positively impact campus climate. Finally, in Year Three, attention will be focused on following-up with previous efforts to ensure that the action plans continue to align and address the priorities.

At the end of the aforementioned cycle, the implementation plan begins again with a second administration of the Campus Climate Survey. It is recommended that this effort also reiterate how past results are being used to improve the climate and should incorporate any new data that can be derived from surveys conducted over the course of the previous three-year period.