Students’ Experiences and Campus Climate

Student Affairs Research and Assessment
Andrea Dowhower, Ph.D.
Community and Civility

Over half of PSU students strongly perceive PSU to be a community where:

- freedom of expression is protected (64%)
- the well-being of each individual is important (57%)
- civility is affirmed (53%)
- service to others is encouraged (52%)
- diversity is celebrated (52%)
Sense of Belonging

Percent strongly believe that they are treated with respect: 73.8%
Percent strongly believe that they feel connected: 55.6%
Percent strongly believe that they are an accepted member: 69.2%
Attitudes and Perceptions: Women

Percent who Perceive these to be Serious Problems on Campus

- Stalking: 2002 - 12.3, 2004 - 17.3
- Sexual Assault: 2002 - 51.3, 2004 - 71.1
Men’s Perceptions

Percent who Perceive these as Serious Problems on Campus

- Stalking: 7.4% (2003) vs. 27.7% (2005)
- Relationship Violence: 11.5% (2003) vs. 33.7% (2005)
- Sexual Assault: 25.7% (2003) vs. 56.5% (2005)
Attitudes and Perceptions: LGBT

- 47% personally know a LGBT student at Penn State
- Two-thirds are personally supportive of LGBT students
- The majority are comfortable knowing their roommate or their instructor was LGBT
- From 2000 to 2002, students were more likely to perceive the campus to be supportive of LGBT students
Attitudes and Perceptions: Religion and Spirituality

- There has been an increase in students who perceive PSU and the student climate to be supportive of religious and spiritual groups (2003 to 2004)

- Three quarters believe it is important for the university to provide space for religious services, to have a spiritual center, and to present social and cultural programs
Experiences: First-Year Students

- Within the first weeks of fall semester, students of color were less satisfied, less likely to feel a sense of belonging, or to find the PSU community welcoming than were white students.

- At the end of their first year, students of color were less likely to report Satisfaction with the First-Year Experience and Adjustment to College Life than were white students.
Experiences: Race/Ethnicity

Students of color are significantly less satisfied with:

- their formal academic experience
- the organized extracurricular experiences
- their ‘sense of belonging’
- their opportunities to meet with faculty

than are white students.
Harassment and Discrimination

Percent who were Harassed or Discriminated Against

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand-Alone</td>
<td>16.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>characteristic</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial/ethnic background</td>
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<td>Religious affiliation</td>
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<td>Sexual orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status as a veteran</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Harassment and Discrimination

Percent who Brought the Harassment and/or Discrimination to the Attention of a Campus Office or Faculty/Staff Member

- Overall: 14.6%
- UP: 9.3%
- Commonwealth: 30.5%
- Stand-Alone: 19.1%
In Students’ Words: Backlash

“I do not feel that [multicultural] understanding needs to be preached to us by Penn State. I could care less about one’s lifestyle, background, or culture, preferring instead to focus on the individual’s merit as a person.”

“I am a white male. Who cares what I have to say? I was all for diversity before I came to PSU, but quite frankly, I am sick of hearing about it.”
Diversity Learning

- 67% fully support the importance of learning how to interact and work with others from different lifestyles, backgrounds, or cultures
- Almost half indicate their classes helped them interact with others who were different from themselves
- 65% are at least somewhat more knowledgeable about other religions since coming to college
Diversity Learning

Most commonly students attributed diversity learning to:

- having instructors who demonstrated respect for multicultural perspectives
- to informal socialization with others from different backgrounds