

# SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCIES IN FACULTY AND STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPUS CLIMATE AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE, SPRING 2011:

## A PRELIMINARY STUDY

By the Faculty Senate Educational Equity Committee (FSEEC)

April 19, 2012 at Faculty Senate Meeting

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### Executive Summary

The executive summary below presents an overview of principal conclusions and recommendations from above study conducted in Spring 2011. Conclusions and recommendations are outlined in greater detail in the full Campus Climate Report.

#### A. Principal Findings and Conclusions

##### Perceptions of Campus Climate

1. Perceptions of comfort decline as we move from campus-wide to college/division to department/work unit. However, trend reverses at class level for faculty who experience highest levels of comfort in their classes.
2. Assistant professors, compared to all faculty counterparts, report experiencing significantly LESS comfort at campus, college, & department levels [*note*: similar high levels of comfort for all faculty at the class level].
3. For *all* respondents at department/work unit level, people of color were marginally LESS comfortable than counterparts. Although *faculty* of color & counterparts had similar perceptions of comfort at campus-wide, & class levels, faculty of color reported *less* comfort at the college & department levels.
4. Encouraging that no gender or sexual minority-majority differences in perceptions of comfort at any level.
5. Respondents from Colleges of S&BS and AM&C reported significantly LESS comfort at college level, compared to counterparts in College of Education. Respondents from all other colleges rated comfort somewhere between these extremes (i.e., H&HD, S&M, E&CS, B&E, and Humanities).
6. Respondents in Information Technology reported significantly LESS comfort at division level, compared to counterparts in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. Respondents from Library and Administration & Finance rated their comfort with climate between these two extremes.
7. Respondents rated campus climate *least respectful* for persons with obesity, lecturers, clerical/admin staff, transgender/queer persons, non-native English speakers, & physically or emotionally challenged individuals.
8. Compared to Caucasian/whites, respondents rated climate *less respectful* for the other four groups [Latino(a) / Hispanics, African American/Black people, with the lowest ratings of respect for Middle Eastern persons and American Indians]. Moreover, in general, respondents from each racial/ethnic minority background perceived their group as *significantly less respected* than all other racial/ethnic groups on campus.
9. Respondents of color, compared to counterparts, viewed campus climate as *less respectful and more racist and sexist*; women, compared to men, viewed the campus climate as *more sexist*; LGBQQ respondents, in comparison to counterparts, viewed campus as *more homophobic*.
10. People of color *less* likely to believe CSUN addresses discrimination associated with race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, international status, learning difference, non-native English speakers, religion & socioeconomic status; LGBQQ individuals, compared to counterparts, *less* likely to believe CSUN takes actions designed to prevent discrimination related to gender expression, gender identity & sexual orientation; Assistant professors, compared to faculty counterparts, *less* likely to believe CSUN addresses discrimination associated with age, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, & sexual orientation.
11. Respondents of color, compared to counterparts, reported significantly *less* agreement that *classroom/workplace climate was welcoming for historically under-represented/marginalized students and employees*. Moreover, assistant and associate professors, compared to full professor & lecturer counterparts, reported significantly *less* agreement.
12. There were no gender, racial/ethnic minority-majority, or faculty status differences among all respondents with all groups similarly agreeing that “course content at CSUN includes materials, perspectives, and/or

experiences of people from historically underrepresented/marginalized groups” and that “CSUN values my involvement in diversity initiatives on campus.”

### **Personal Experiences with Harassment**

13. Within past year, 26% of respondents had ***personally experienced*** exclusionary (e.g., shunned, ignored), intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct (harassing behavior) that has interfered with their ability to work or learn on campus (hereafter referred to as harassment).
  - a. *Harassment based most often on* their CSUN status, age, race/ethnicity, gender, and educational level.
  - b. Significantly more people of color, compared to counterparts, reported personally experiencing harassment. Among these people of color, 27% reported that harassment due to race/ethnicity.
  - c. Among women respondents, substantially more reported harassment due to gender.
  - d. Among LGBQQ individuals, significantly more reported harassment due to sexual orientation.
  - e. *Form of harassment* most often experienced was intimidation/bullying, deliberately ignored or excluded, & derogatory remarks. *Source of this harassment* most often cited was faculty member, administrator, staff member, student, supervisor/manager, & academic department chair/program director.
  - f. Great deal of *emotional distress* was reported in reaction to harassing behavior interfering with work.
14. Within past year, 37% of respondents had ***observed or personally been aware*** of harassing behavior. Respondents suggested
  - a. *Harassment based most often on* the person’s or group’s CSUN status, age, political views, gender, & sexual orientation.
  - b. *Form of harassment* most often cited: deliberately ignored or excluded, intimidation/bullying, derogatory remarks, & racial/ethnic profiling.
  - c. *Source of the observed harassment* most often cited: faculty member, student, staff member, administrator, academic department chair/program director, & supervisor/manager.
  - d. Great deal of *emotional distress* was reported in reaction to harassing behavior interfering with work.
15. Within the past year, 22 percent of respondents had ***observed discriminatory hiring practices*** (e.g., hiring supervisor bias, search committee bias, limited recruiting pool) at CSUN.
  - a. Significantly more people of color, compared to counterparts, reported observing these practices.
  - b. Practices based most often on race/ethnicity, CSUN status, age, & gender.
16. Within the past year, 17 percent of respondents had ***observed discriminatory behavior or employment practices related to retention (termination), tenure, and promotion (RTP) for faculty or employment practices for staff and administrators*** at CSUN.
  - a. Significantly more people of color, compared to counterparts, reported observing these behaviors/practices.
  - b. Behavior/practices based most often on CSUN status, race/ethnicity, age, & gender.

### **Summary: Contradictions in Experiences and Perceptions of Campus Climate**

The campus climate survey has revealed many positive aspects of the California State University, Northridge campus such as perceptions of comfort, respect, and welcome by most respondents. Therefore, perceptions of campus climate are primarily positive at CSUN.

Although there is much agreement and shared perceptions of campus climate by faculty, staff, and administrators at CSUN, there were some disparate realities discovered along racial/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, faculty status, and college/division lines that cause some concern. Not all respondents perceive their group as being as comfortable, respected, or welcome as other groups on campus.

Moreover, since a campus is no more than a microcosm of society at large, the survey also discovered that some respondents have either personally experienced or observed some hostile conduct that caused emotional distress and, as a result, has compromised their ability to work successfully at CSUN.

These differing phenomenological realities alert us to the fact that CSUN must continue to focus efforts on creating and sustaining a campus climate that is welcoming and inclusive, with special attention given to probationary assistant professors, as well as employees from historically underrepresented/marginalized groups.

## Strategies (Four of Twelve) that Might Improve the Climate at CSUN

Respondents rated twelve strategies that might improve the campus climate at CSUN for faculty and staff. There was overwhelming support (greater than 50% of the respondents) for all 12 strategies with top as follows:

1. *“Providing a clear and fair process for addressing concerns in order to resolve conflicts.”*
2. *“Providing tenure clock options with more flexibility in regards to promotion/tenure for faculty/staff (e.g., families with health & other extenuating circumstances).”*
3. *“Providing diversity and equity training to search and tenure committees.”*  
**Note: EEC Already Does this in the Recruitment Workshop each Fall Semester.**
4. *“Increasing funding to support campus climate change efforts.”*

### Future Directions

Results of Campus Climate Survey will be presented to all stakeholders (e.g., Interim President/Provost, President’s Cabinet, Provost’s Council, Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, & entire Faculty Senate) by end of 2011-2012 academic years. Executive Summary & full Campus Climate Report (with all tables & figures) will be placed on Faculty Senate EEC’s webpage by July 2012.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Faculty Senate Educational Equity Committee (EEC) will charge Campus Climate Assessment Subcommittee & new Intervention Subcommittee to consider Campus Climate results and to continue survey efforts, as well as to design various campus-wide programming to address some of the disparities revealed and to increase the sense of welcome and respect for people from all groups on campus. EEC as a whole will address strategic policy recommendations, deduced from campus climate survey results, and submit them for consideration, first to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and subsequently to the Faculty Senate at large.

#### Strategic Improvement Efforts

**Recommendation 1:** Increase funding to support EEC’s campus climate efforts (e.g., provide minimum 12 units of release time per AY (6 units for quantitative work, 3 units for qualitative analysis, & 3 units for interventions).

**Recommendation 2:** Other colleges to **pursue similar efforts to CSBS** such as **forming a taskforce** (with **representatives from departments in college** and supported by release time to leaders of effort) to develop a comprehensive plan comprised of four phases: current campus climate (per EEC Campus Climate Survey Report), college climate assessment, college transformational interventions, and resulting transformed college climate.

#### Campus Climate Assessment Efforts

**Recommendation 3:** Include CSUN students, as 3<sup>rd</sup> crucial constituent group, in next iteration campus climate survey.

**Recommendation 4:** Conduct Campus Climate Survey Part II (Accessibility & Sexual Harassment Issues plus few repeat general climate questions) in AY 2012-2012.

**Recommendation 5:** Conduct Campus Climate Surveys, Part I and Part II, on alternate academic years in a three-year cycle (with modifications based upon results of previous surveys, drop some questions and add others as needed).

#### Interventions Strategies

**Recommendation 6:** Present Campus Climate findings at EEC Retention Workshop each Spring: to increase awareness of influence of CC on retention for junior & senior faculty, chairs, & deans (scheduled 4/23/12)

**Recommendation 7:** Continue EEC Recruitment Workshop each Fall (Held in Conjunction with Faculty Affairs and Equity & Diversity).

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#### **Campus Climate Assessment Project Members:**

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