

**Campus Climate Survey: Spring, 2008**  
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## **Background**

During May, 2007, the documents generated by the consultants' report of March, 2003, on the Campus Climate improvement project begun in the Spring of 2002 were used as the basis for generating the first version of an online Campus Climate Survey. As part of the March, 2003, process, several working groups were constituted covering...

- Respect, trust, and fairness
- Institutional communication and information sharing
- Management
- Language issues
- Academic culture
- Respect of differences and diversity
- Community building

Each of these groups followed different procedures for generating reports ranging from academic reviews of specific issues to focus groups and constituent surveys. Consequently, a wide range of material was generated.

Starting with the original reports, a content analysis identified a series of themes that summarized the major ideas that emerged from the various reports including...

- Respect, trust, and fairness
- Institutional communication and information sharing
- Management style
- Language, specifically access to both ASL and English
- Academic culture

The analysis and recommendations of some of the groups was subsumed under the headings of other groups for the development of the categories described above. For example, more than one group dealt with tolerance or with respect for diversity.

The goal of the content analysis of the previous working group reports was to produce a core set of reliable statements that reflected fundamental understandings of the institutional climate. It was assumed during the development process that the ultimate survey would be shortened through the elimination of unstable or uninformative items.

It was intended that the "permanent" annual survey would consist of set of Likert scaled items of a general nature and a small set of topic specific items reflecting a concern or focus for that year or the results of an intervention the previous year. The third component of the final survey was to be a small number of open-ended questions determined by circumstances at the time of the annual survey. For example, an issue of concern at the time of the original item development was the campus-wide understanding of concepts such as culture, diversity, and cultural identity.

For each of the five thematic areas, roughly eight statements were written. These statements were then re-formatted as Likert scale statements. Copies of these statements were circulated to two of the working groups during the summer of 2007: Diversity and Healing. Through a roughly two month period, the items were reviewed and modified between the Institutional Research staff and the campus working groups, resulting in five major revisions.

During the fourth week of August, 2007, the final 40 item version of the survey was pilot tested with the 25 members of the two working groups as a way of checking the ease of

responding to the survey and as a final check of the meaning of the statements. This pilot test version also included three open-ended questions that had been suggested in the process of developing the survey.

From August 30, 2007 through Sept. 7, 2007, as a pilot project, the survey was distributed through the Blackboard content control system to Gallaudet faculty, professional staff, and staff. Individuals who did not have regular computer access were informed that they could obtain paper copies of the survey.

210 individuals attempted to access the survey out of 1100 possible participants. Of these, 191 completed a major part or all of the survey. Of the 191 completed surveys, 184 completed and submitted responses to more than 10 of the items. The following is based on the 184 completed and submitted surveys.

84 faculty members submitted completed surveys; 70 individuals who identified themselves as professional staff completed surveys; and 30 staff members completed surveys. Incomplete surveys were submitted by roughly 2 members of each sub-group.

### **Modifications to the Pilot Study**

As a result of the low response rate, two additional versions of the climate survey were developed in order to improve response rates: an ASL video version delivered online and a Spanish online version.

In preparing the ASL video version, a member of the Department of ASL and Deaf Studies prepared a signed version of the questions with the cooperation of the campus television unit. A video copy of the items was sent to the Gallaudet Interpreting Service who assigned the clips to a senior interpreter who then rendered a written English version of the video. The Institutional Research unit then compared the English translation with the original English questions and determined that the ASL version did not represent a significant deviation from the original intent of the English version. However, both the Gallaudet Interpreting Service and the original signer of the ASL version felt that 8 of the items had various performance problems. Subsequently these were re-taped. The final version of the ASL video version were placed inside the Blackboard content control system both as a security measure to ensure that only members of the Gallaudet community could access the material, but also as a way to control the delivery of the content an item at a time.

In preparing the Spanish version, the Clerc Center's Spanish translator rendered a Spanish version of the original English questions. This version was then sent to a private, off-campus professional translating firm. The private firm returned an English version of the survey. The Institutional Research unit then compared the English translation with the original English questions and determined that the Spanish version prepared by the Clerc Center did represent a significant deviation from the original intent of the English version on three of the questions. Subsequently, three of the questions were re-translated and three others were "cleaned up."

The contact list for the survey comprised 1203 individuals who were identified as employees of the University. Students were not included because their perspective is sampled through the NSSE surveys for Freshmen and Seniors.

The ASL online version was delivered via the Blackboard Academic Content system for security reasons and as the most readily available system for providing video content. 205 members of the community attempted to access the survey while only 183 actually completed the

survey. At this point, it is not known why 10% of those who accessed the system failed to complete the survey; however, this is a researchable issue since we know who attempted the system and can query them later as to any problems they had.

The Spanish version was accessed by only 3 individuals and those results are not included in any of the following analysis. Additional work needs to be done to determine why the response rate was so low and whether it is necessary to continue the Spanish version in the future.

191 Individuals completed the English online version.

## Results

The effort to develop different versions and to improve ease of accessibility were worthwhile in that the response rate more than doubled from the pilot project. The participants in the Summer, 2007, pilot represented 15.3% of the total community while the Spring, 2008, administration represents 31.2% of the University community.

Participants	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	184	375
Administrator	n/a	18
Faculty	84	158
Professional Staff	70	164
Staff	30	35

A 6 point Likert-like scale was used. The possible responses and their computational values are presented below.

Response	Computational value
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1
Not applicable	Missing value

### Distribution of subscales

Based on the Summer, 2007, pilot project a series of simple additive subscales were computed. Each subscale is the average of the responses to questions in the scale. The specific contents of each subscale are provided in Appendix 1.

Mean substitution for missing data was used for missing values because it would not alter the overall average of the subscale and at the same time prevent the elimination of a respondent from inclusion in the final result because of a single missing value in the individual's subscale. The subscale score was computed as the sum of all responses divided by the number of possible responses in the subscale. This yielded a subscale average that reflects the original individual

answers. In other words, a score of 4.5 to 5 on a subscale indicates strong agreement while a score of 0 to .5 would indicate strong disagreement.

### **Respect and Trust**

	Respect & Trust	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	3.03 (0.85)	3.03 (0.80)
Administrator		3.26 (0.66)
Faculty	3.10 (0.82)	3.05 (0.83)
Professional Staff	2.92 (0.81)	2.97 (0.78)
Staff	3.13 (0.91)	3.19 (0.80)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007 pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal on the subject of respect and trust.

### **Information Sharing**

	Information Sharing	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	3.11 (0.76)	3.11 (0.72)
Administrator		3.27 (0.75)
Faculty	3.11 (0.75)	3.09 (0.74)
Professional Staff	3.07 (0.75)	3.07 (0.70)
Staff	3.23 (0.83)	3.26 (0.69)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007, pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal on the subject of information sharing through the University.

### **Management Style**

	Management Style	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	2.83 (0.79)	2.89 (0.75)
Administrator		3.14 (0.74)
Faculty	2.83 (0.75)	2.83 (0.77)
Professional Staff	2.80 (0.72)	2.87 (0.72)
Staff	2.87 (0.83)	3.18 (0.74)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007, pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal on the subject of management style. However, staff show a marked improvement in their perception of management style, that is, a statistically significant difference. Given that there is only a slight increase in participation in this group, this may in fact represent a real trend.

### **Bilingualism**

	Bilingualism	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	2.86 (0.81)	2.82 (0.82)
Administrator		3.11 (0.78)
Faculty	2.75 (0.84)	2.73 (0.85)
Professional Staff	2.88 (0.80)	2.85 (0.78)
Staff	3.15 (0.70)	2.96 (.80)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007, pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal to somewhat negative on the subject of bilingualism. The decline in staff perceptions does not represent a statistically significant decline.

### **Academic Culture**

	Academic	

	Culture	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	3.29 (0.69)	3.26 (0.67)
Administrator		3.25 (.59)
Faculty	3.28 (0.73)	3.28 (0.72)
Professional Staff	3.29 (0.58)	3.24 (0.63)
Staff	3.34 (0.80)	3.26 (.64)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007, pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal to somewhat positive about academic culture.

### **Freedom of Expression**

	Freedom of Expression	
Participant	Fall, 2007	Spring, 2008
Total	2.48 (0.82)	2.82 (0.88)
Administrator		3.00 (0.85)
Faculty	2.53 (0.87)	2.80 (0.89)
Professional Staff	2.32 (0.90)	2.76 (0.86)
Staff	2.63 (0.85)	3.08 (0.87)

The results of the Spring, 2008, administration do not differ from the results of the Summer, 2007, pilot project. Most members of the University community remain non-committal to somewhat negative on the subject of freedom of expression.

### **Open-ended questions**

Because of time constraints, the open-ended questions were not included in this report.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

There are five possible explanations for the general lack of differences between the Summer, 2007 administration of the survey and the Spring, 2008 administration.

- The factors that were developed are simply too stable to indicate differences.
- The issues addressed in the survey – based on previous climate concern studies – are no longer important to the University community.
- The real differences are in the open-ended responses.
- No effective interventions have taken place at the University.
- Interventions have taken place, but they did not address the same concerns as those measured in the survey.

Each of these explanations needs to be addressed in turn.

**Stability of the factors.** Institutional Research will re-analyze the factors using the larger data set from the second administration to see if the same set of factors can be recovered. If a different set of factors is found in the Spring, 2008 data set, factors will be re-computed for the Summer, 2007 data set and the results compared. In addition, behavior of individual items within factors will be examined for differences between the two administrations. This will be completed by May 15, 2008.

**Irrelevance of the issues.** This report will be sent along to the current President's Diversity Team for consideration of the content of the factors. The charge will be twofold. First, they will be asked to comment on current relevance of the factors. Second, they will be asked to suggest one or more new topics for inclusion in future surveys. This needs to be completed before August 15, 2008 in order to plan for new initiatives or for measurement revisions.

**Open ended responses.** Institutional Research will compile and analyze the open-ended responses for the Spring, 2008 administration and compare them to the Summer, 2007 to see if any new concerns have emerged in the meantime. This will be completed by July 1, 2008.

**Ineffective interventions.** The President's Management Team needs to review the various interventions that have taken place since last summer and address the question: Were any of the interventions evaluated or even simply tracked in a way to judge their effectiveness? This needs to be completed before August 15, 2008 in order to plan for new initiatives or for measurement revisions.

**Off message measurement.** The President's Communication Team needs to review the various interventions and address the question: What was the focus or content of the intervention or interventions and was any of the content addressed by the Climate Survey? This needs to be completed before August 15, 2008 in order to plan for new initiatives or for measurement revisions.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Specific Content of the Subscales**

The survey items are presented below according to their original conceptual factors with their final positions in the survey listed to the left of each item. Statements that were eventually eliminated from the analysis are marked by an asterisk:

#### **Respect & Trust**

The university actively demonstrates multiculturalism and social justice in its day-to-day operations and interpersonal interactions among all community members throughout the university community.

There are ongoing programs focusing on diversity and respect for multiple perspectives.

Evaluation practices reward individual effort.

There is a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives.

Mutual respect is encouraged and practiced among my peers (students, staff, faculty, administration).

Mutual respect is encouraged and practiced between and among groups (students, staff, faculty, administration).

Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.

There is equality of opportunity in promotion and hiring.

#### **Institutional Communication & Information Sharing**

The University Administration communicates with the campus community on frequent basis and in timely manner.

The University Administration uses a variety of means to communicate with the campus community.

It is clear that unit managers are accountable to their supervisors.

The reasons for institutional changes such as unit closings or budget decisions are communicated to all concerned on frequent basis and in timely manner.

The University is proactive in creating and applying solutions to problems/barriers with input from the community.

There is coordination across units in the resolution of problems.

Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.

There are specific processes for resolving conflicts between units and individuals.

University administrators are accessible and receptive to input.

#### **Management Style**

There are clear and available statements and policies defining ethical behavior for all members of the campus community.

There is regular communication and demonstration of expected ethical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.

There are regular programs to inform and support ethical behavior at all levels of the university.

Unit managers, whether academic units or non-academic units, are responsive to their subordinates' input.

Unit success is defined on the basis of institutional criteria rather than the personalities of those involved.

The organizational structure of the university is efficient.

Decision making at all levels is inclusive and transparent.

Policies used in budget making for the University are transparent.

There is a "customer friendly" attitude in services for students.

#### **Bilingualism**

The concept of bilingualism is clearly articulated at Gallaudet.

There are adequate programs in place that may be utilized as a means of strengthening my articulation of either English or ASL.

There are appropriate and adequate means of evaluating English proficiency within my unit.

There are appropriate and adequate means of evaluating ASL proficiency within my unit.

## **Academic Culture**

Students are taught and encouraged to observe standards of academic integrity.

Faculty model appropriate standards of academic integrity.

Students are held to consistent but reasonable standards of academic performance.

Rules of civil behavior are modeled and enforced in the dorms.

Academic departments are working together to establish consistent standards for academic performance.

Individual faculty sets clear standards for academic performance, and challenges students to meet them.

Existing policies regarding grades and participation in extracurricular activities are enforced.

## **Free Expression**

There is a sense of security and freedom to express diverse perspectives.

The university actively demonstrates multiculturalism and social justice in its day-to-day operations and interpersonal interactions among all community members throughout the university community.

There is regular communication and demonstration of expected ethical behavior and attitudes by influential University leaders.

The reasons for institutional changes such as unit closings or budget decisions are communicated to all concerned on frequent basis and in timely manner.

Mutual respect is *encouraged* and practiced between and among groups (students, staff, faculty, administration).

Information flows upward and is recognized at higher levels of the administration.

Decision making at all levels is inclusive and transparent.

University administrators are accessible and receptive to input

Transparent and informed communication is practiced consistently throughout the university community.

**Campus Climate Survey.  
Spring 2008 Administration  
Open-Ended Responses**

As part of the annual campus climate survey, three open-ended questions were included. The following presents a summary of those responses.

**Please share a time when your cultural identity/ identities... was celebrated on this campus.**

This question had the fewest responses.

The most frequent response was Black History Month and Women's History Month followed by deafness related events such as Deaf Way and the Enrichment Day on Bilingualism. Several "one time" events were mentioned including National Coming Out Day, Women's Leadership Institute, Hispanic Awareness at MSSD, Holocaust Conference, UnityFest, International and Multicultural Students Celebration.

The most frequent consistent response was a comment on the failure to celebrate a particular group.

**Please share a time when your cultural identity/ identities... was disrespected, disregarded or oppressed on this campus.**

A frequent comment was the disrespect of hearing individuals by the deaf; the disrespect of the deaf by hearing persons, and the failure to address the concerns of hard of hearing individuals.

There were only two consistently repeated comments. Several individuals commented on the failure of the University or individual faculty members to recognize and make adjustments for the religious obligations of Jewish students. Several individuals remarked on the treatment of Asian Pacific students.

Other groups that felt oppressed or disrespected included...

"Strong" deaf

Hard of hearing

Subordinates by superiors

Ageism

Sexual harassment (including male / female and gay / straight)

Participants in the 2006 protest

Residents of the District of Columbia

New or nursing mothers

**When the term "diversity" is used at Gallaudet, what does it mean to you?**

There were five general responses to the question. The first defined diversity at Gallaudet as a Black vs. White issue. The second type of response implied that the issue only represented a Deaf vs. Hearing divide. The third type of response offered a broader or more inclusive definition with a more positive tone. The fourth response includes various "other" responses that don't fit into the previous categories. The fifth response implied that diversity was an issue that was being covered up by the University.

47 respondents (20.3%) described diversity at Gallaudet as an issue of Black vs. White.

22 respondents (9.5%) described diversity at Gallaudet as a Deaf vs. Hearing issue. 140 respondents (60.3%) offered a more inclusive definition of diversity. 19 respondents (8.2%) offered other definitions. 4 respondents (1.7%) mentioned some kind of conspiracy or cover up.

**Black versus White**

"At Gallaudet, it seems to be used primarily in context of race, specifically meaning oppressed racial minorities. "

"To me it means that we're obsessing about trivialities. I'm old enough to remember lynchings and race riots, to remember when advocacy of equal rights for all was a dangerous business. Consequently, the sort of issues that swirl around "diversity" strike me as a distraction at best, childish whining at worst."

"It means that we should respect black individuals, not other people of color."

**Deaf versus Hearing**

"Mostly ethnic diversity; not linguistic diversity."

"my impression of what it means is that people want more racial diversity – it doesn't have anything to do with deaf or hearing. "

"Hearing/Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing. That is the diversity that divides us the most."

**Inclusive definition of diversity**

"To me personally it means recognizing how the many differences in people on campus contribute to the richness of our environment. This includes hearing status, sexual orientation, place of origin, gender, age, and many other ways people are different."

"Diversity means accepting the unique way of life that each person decides to be a part of. We need to respect the culture, identity, and languages of all peoples."

“to me diversity means a respect for and the valuating of the differences among people and variety of ideas and opinions that they can share. It also means recognizing the similarities and common ground that exist even in the face of surface and obvious differences. I believe people at Gallaudet generally do practice this type of diversity but when they talk specifically about diversity it is always very self-centered.”

“The term diversity not only refers to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and religion, but also in communication and language here at Gallaudet. We are a diverse community with regard to language and communication and that diversity should be celebrated rather than viewed as a "this camp vs. that camp" mentality.”

#### **Other type of responses**

“It means nothing to me. I think it's worthless if they focus only on race. I am a white woman, but I am also a lesbian. I feel ignored in this process.”

“It means two very important groups you're forgetting--the Old vs the Young. And the group that has been choking Gallaudet to death all along has always been the former. Maybe a bit less adherence to "tradition" and the wise input of those with "seniority," and a bit more adherence to the views of those who wish to work here for the next thirty years (and therefore have a real stake in whether or not the university collapses)?”