

THE *Current*

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Campus Climate Survey Results Presented to UC Regents

The results are in, and the vast majority of UC Santa Barbara students, faculty and staff — 84 percent — feel “comfortable” or “very comfortable” being part of the campus community. In addition, an almost same number — 81 percent — are “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate for diversity at UCSB.

These figures are among the findings of the Campus Climate Survey, the results of which were presented to the UC Board of Regents today at their meeting at UC San Francisco’s Mission Bay campus.

The survey, conducted by Rankin & Associates Consulting between October 2012 and February 2013, was designed to collect and assess a wide range of data on issues of inclusion, work-life balance and general attitudes regarding the living, learning and working environments at the University of California. All students, faculty and staff at the 10 UC campuses, as well as the Office of the President, five medical centers, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources were invited to participate.

At UCSB, the survey was administered online from Jan. 3 through Feb. 7, 2013. It contained 118 questions, several of which were open-ended to allow respondents to provide commentary. Nearly 8,200 members of the campus community completed the survey for an overall response rate of 30 percent — the second highest among UC campuses with undergraduate populations.

“Thank you to all of our students, faculty, and staff who participated in this important survey,” said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “We care deeply about the wellbeing of our entire campus community, and we value the perspectives and insights you have shared with us.

“Over the coming months, we look forward to an in-depth study of our campus’s data so that we can continue conversations and develop actions to foster an even more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive climate for each and every member of our diverse campus community. Your feedback and ideas help us to work together to continuously improve our campus, and we appreciate your participation in this important collaborative endeavor.”

María Herrera-Sobek, associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and academic policy, described the survey as invaluable in its overall view of how the campus community feels as a whole regarding their experiences at UCSB.

Among more specific findings, the survey showed that with regard to the classroom climate, more than three-quarters of undergraduate students and an even greater number of graduate students were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.

Addressing attitudes related to work/life issues, three-quarters of faculty, staff, graduate students and postdoctoral students felt UCSB values a diverse faculty and staff. More than half indicated that colleagues, coworkers and/or supervisors offer career advice or guidance when asked for it. Also, a majority found UCSB supportive of flexible work schedules and of taking leave when necessary.

When asked about positive attitudes regarding their academic experiences, a significant majority of both undergraduate and graduate students expressed satisfaction; nearly all said they intend to graduate from UCSB; and most felt many of their courses have been intellectually stimulating. In addition, most respondents found that courses offered at UCSB include sufficient materials, perspectives and/or experiences of people based on a variety of personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, race and sexual orientation.

Among faculty, staff and postdoctoral students, just over half of the respondents thought providing back-up family care positively affects the campus climate at UCSB. The majority also indicated that increasing student diversity has a positive affect on the campus climate, as do diversity training, mentorship and career

development opportunities.

The survey also identified areas to strengthen with regard to campus climate. Some members of the campus community indicated they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive and/ or hostile conduct, including a small number that cited unwanted sexual contact. For a small number of those respondents, the conduct interfered with their ability to work or learn on campus.

“This study is the approach used to reach large numbers of people at one point in time,” said Beth Schneider, professor of sociology and a member of the Campus Climate Survey ad hoc committee. “In every climate study, the majority of survey participants approve their campus climate. What is found — and these are, indeed, consistent across studies and across the U.S. — is that the groups that are disadvantaged in society are the groups that report the highest levels of dissatisfaction with the climate on campuses. That is, women report higher rates of dissatisfaction compared to men; people of color report higher rates compared to whites; black students report higher rates compared to Asian Americans, and so on.

“For the UCSB campus, when it comes to students, there are no surprises,” Schneider continued. “On a campus that is close to being a Hispanic Serving Institution, black students are a relatively small population sector. This is of course true at most but not all UC campuses.”

Creating an environment in which every student and every faculty and staff member feels welcome has always been a primary goal of the university, noted Anna Everett, professor and of film and media studies and a member of the Campus Climate Survey committee. Everett served as acting associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and academic policy during the period of time the survey was administered.

She cited a number of initiatives already in place that are designed to make the campus more inclusionary for everyone. Among them are the Diversity Forum newsletter published twice yearly, which educates and informs the campus on issues related to diversity and policies; family-friendly policies for faculty; workshops for department chairs and other key personnel regarding best practices during recruitment season; and the Dream Scholars Mentorship Initiative.

Debbie Fleming, senior associate dean for student life, highlighted other programs designed to improve the safety of our campus community and improve the overall campus climate. “We are adding counseling and advocacy resources to programs

such as Campus Advocacy Resources and Education (CARE), and we're implementing a bystander intervention training program that gives participants the skills to intervene in situations that are out of the view of the police or other authorities and where they feel safe and comfortable doing so," Fleming said.

Reports for all UC campuses and facilities, as well as the UC system as a whole, can be found at <http://campusclimate.ucop.edu>.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.