



## Spring 2015 Washington State University Vancouver Faculty/Staff Campus Climate Survey Results

Prepared by

Elias Cohen, Office of Academic Affairs

Helen Gregory, Office of Student Affairs

Kandy Robertson, Department of English and Chair of the WSU Vancouver Diversity Council

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### Summary

The Faculty/Staff Campus WSU Vancouver campus climate survey was administered during spring 2015 term to give employees a forum for conveying attitudes concerning campus diversity and to create a tool for the WSUV diversity council to examine if employees of different personal backgrounds experience employment on campus differently. Analysis of survey responses revealed:

-Employees generally expressed satisfaction with working at WSUV. Furthermore, perceptions of campus support for employees as well as the perceived working environment were not shown to be significantly different between demographic groups.

-Many employees do not view the campus as diverse and view recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from diverse communities as an area of weakness.

-Analysis of differences between population groups revealed that employees of color, women, and LGBT employees were more likely to rate highly the importance of diversity support issues than were their colleagues. Faculty also tended to emphasize support for diversity issues to a greater extent than did staff members.

-When asked about specific incidents, 29% of respondents identified as having been treated differently based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability status, or gender. 13% had experienced discriminatory acts. 26% witnessed acts of discrimination against others. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with current procedures for reporting such incidents.

-Respondent comments indicated a wide range of attitudes concerning diversity efforts on campus with some employees advocating for improvements to training or dialogue to increase awareness and improve recruitment and retention. Other employees expressed the view that too much attention is devoted to these issues.

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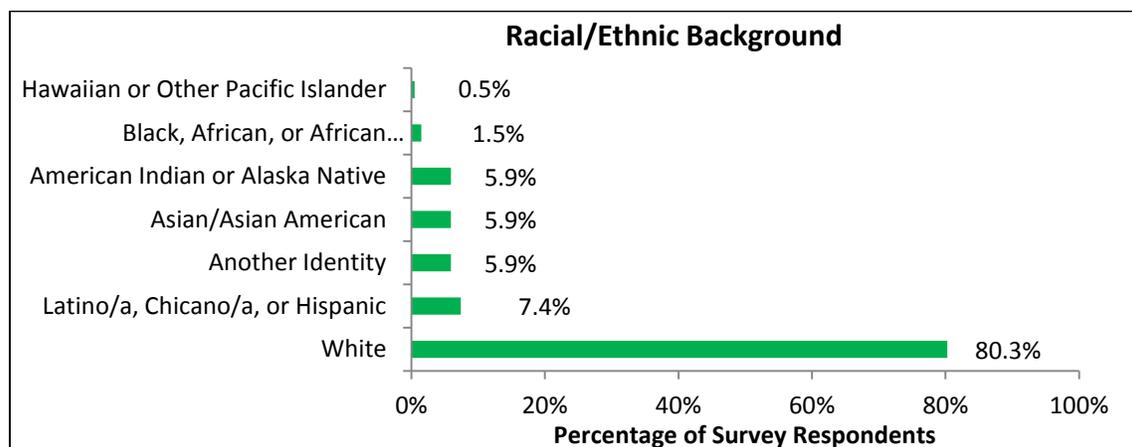
## Introduction

The Faculty/Staff Campus Climate Survey was administered over the 2015 spring term as part of an effort to understand employee attitudes pertaining to campus diversity. 234 Employees participated, comprising roughly 53% of total full and part-time employees (not including student employees).

Survey items were organized around 3 themes: (1) occupational experience, (2) perceptions of the campus environment, and (3) campus diversity attitudes. For each theme, participants were asked to respond numerically to statements using a five-point Likert scale as well as to provide elaborated feedback via short comment sections. A final survey section allowed for the tabulation of specific incidents of bias or discrimination. Numerical summaries and respondent comment summaries are intermixed in the report.

## Respondent Profile

The following figures represent the most comprehensive demographic information available for WSU Vancouver employees, as there are no publicly available employee statistics. However, it should be noted that while participation in the survey was strong, the numbers here have wide margins of error due to the potential impact on a small population number of just a handful of people choosing to participate or not. 23% of respondents who chose to identify their racial/ethnic background, selected groups of color. Each individual was asked to select as many identity groups as appropriate and the results were as follows.

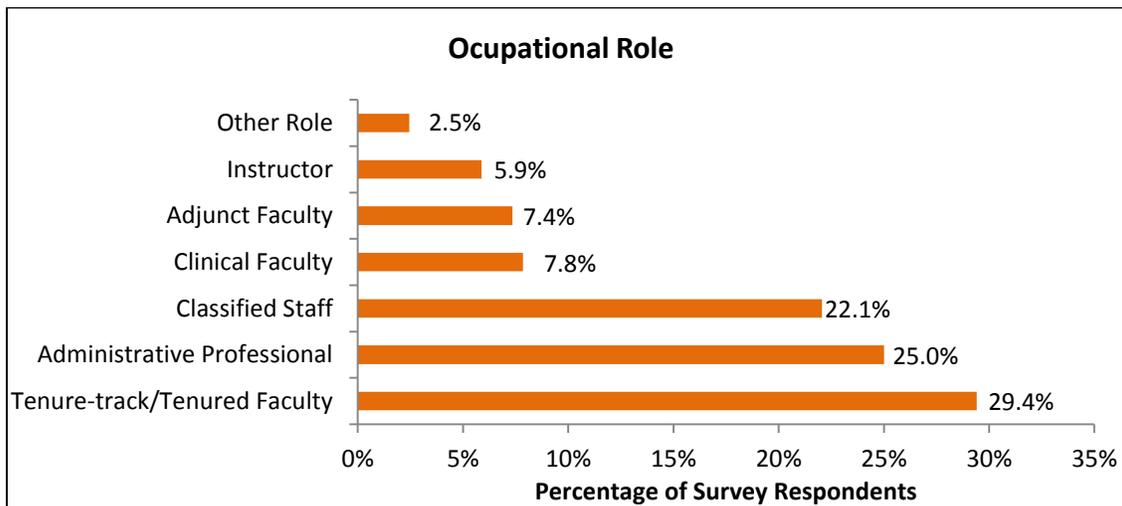


Gender	
Female	60.2%
Male	36.6%
Transgender	0.9%
Genderqueer	0.9%

Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	92.5%
Gay	1.5%
Lesbian	2.5%
Bisexual	2.5%
Another Identity	1.0%

Age	
21-30	6.5%
31-40	22.1%
41-50	26.3%
Over 50	45.2%

Disability Status	
Disabled	10.9%
Not Disabled	89.1%



### Occupational experience

To examine whether groups of employees had different experiences while working at WSUV, six *occupational experience* statements were included in the survey. These statements were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating Very Dissatisfied and 5 indicating Very Satisfied. Table 1 presents campus averages for those statements as well as group comparisons examining whether responses were different as determined by respondent race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or campus role. In general, statements related to occupational experience received strong satisfaction ratings (averaging 4.0 out of 5.0) across population groups suggesting a generally favorable view of employment at WSUV as well as relationships with fellow employees and students. No differences were found based on demographic group. Comparisons between faculty and staff revealed a small but significantly stronger view of employment by staff members and slightly lower view of relationships with students.

**Table 1 | Occupational experience statement averages and group differences.**

	Campus Average	Differences based on population group			
		Race/Ethnicity (Minority)	Gender (Female)	Sexual Orientation (LGBT)	Campus Role (Staff)
Your employment at WSU Vancouver	3.90				↑.32
The support of your department and college at WSU Vancouver	3.83				
Your personal and professional relationships with faculty and staff	4.02				
Your relationship with students at WSU Vancouver	4.27				↓.29
I keep some personal characteristics private because I am concerned their disclosure would affect my job.	3.03				
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to WSU Vancouver.	2.55				

**Table 1.** Numerical summary data for questions related to *occupational experience*. Columns 2-5 show the results of comparisons by group type. Where a number is presented, it represents a statistically significant difference between groups. The arrow indicates the direction of mean difference in favor of the group listed in parenthesis (e.g. staff rated employment .32 higher than faculty). Where group comparisons did not produce significant differences the table is left blank.

### *Occupational Experience Comments*

When asked to provide further thoughts concerning the experience of working at WSU Vancouver, many respondents indicated that campus is welcoming and collaborative, with understanding and supportive colleagues who value diversity. However, some staff and faculty indicated perceived resistance to diversity efforts and that a culture of unfair treatment creates problems retaining diverse faculty.

Three occupational obstacles were identified by multiple respondents: There is not enough engagement between employees, creating isolation; not many opportunities for growth or promotion within WSU Vancouver; and the campus is not as employee friendly as it was in the past. In some cases, respondents tied these themes directly to campus diversity climate but in many cases they were voiced as independent concerns.

Multiple respondents pointed to indications of inequity between employee types, especially affecting staff, adjuncts, and graduate students.

A number of respondents stated that it is not safe to admit to any religious affiliation, and that they are selective about sharing political views. In particular, respondents felt that a general employee bias exists against religious individuals or conservative viewpoints. In contrast, some respondents voiced the perception of student bias against secularism, which serves as an obstacle to class discussions of science and social science.

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## Perceptions of the campus environment

Campus perception statements were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating Strongly Disagree and 5 indicating Strongly Agree. Statements rating WSUV's *commitment* to diversity received agreement on average ("WSU Vancouver values diversity", mean = 3.9). However, ratings concerning the *embodied* diversity of the campus were lower ("Faculty and staff on this campus are diverse", mean = 3.1). The statement "Vancouver retains faculty and staff from diverse communities" received an average rating of 3.2, suggesting that the campus community believes retention of diverse employees is an area in which WSUV lacks strength.

As visible in Table 2, a notable statistical difference between campus communities lies between faculty and staff perceptions of campus environment. Across the majority of questions, staff consistently rated campus diversity higher than did faculty. This included both statements assessing WSUV's commitment to diversity and the embodied diversity on campus.

Another difference was found between the ratings of heterosexual and LGBT respondents, with LGBT respondents rating several aspects of campus diversity lower. Comparisons along race and gender did not reach statistical significance.

**Table 2 | Perception of the campus environment statement averages and group differences.**

	Campus Average	Differences based on population group			
		Race/Ethnic (Minority)	Gender (Female)	Sexual Orientation (LGBT)	Campus Role (Staff)
WSU Vancouver values diversity.	3.88				↑.33
WSU Vancouver respects perspectives of people like me.	3.51				
Faculty and staff on this campus are diverse.	3.12			↓.66	↑.54
Members of different groups at WSU Vancouver have good working relationships.	3.55				↑.5
WSU Vancouver recruits faculty and staff from diverse communities.	3.46			↓.65	↑.42
WSU Vancouver retains faculty and staff from diverse communities.	3.19			↓.8	↑.51
My program leader or university administrator is committed to promoting diversity on our campus.	3.84				↑.55
WSU Vancouver fosters open communication and discussion on diversity related issues and concerns.	3.82			↓1.09	
WSU Vancouver publicizes policies and procedures on diversity related issues and concerns.	3.82			↓.82	

**Table 2.** Numerical summary data for questions related to *Perceptions of the campus environment*. Columns 2-5 show the results of comparisons by group type. Where a number is presented, it represents a statistically significant difference between groups. The arrow indicates the direction of mean difference in favor of the group listed in parenthesis (e.g. staff rated “WSU Vancouver values diversity” .33 higher than faculty). Where group comparisons did not produce significant differences the table is left blank.

### *Campus Environment Comments*

Comments about the campus diversity environment ranged widely from appreciation of WSU Vancouver’s focus on diversity, to calls for richer diversity action, to concerns that attention to diversity issues are distracting.

Many stated that having a diversity policy in place is not enough; public dialogue and cultural training is needed to take diversity beyond policy.

Some respondents expressed that they have “no voice”, they are not comfortable expressing their opinions, and they are fearful of openly holding opinions different from the status quo.

Several respondents voiced the opinion that a broader concept of diversity should be advanced to acknowledge the differences present on campus rather than focusing on specific types of diversity. For instance, some perceived that there is wide support for differences in sexual orientation and gender and strong representation along both dimensions but support of people with disabilities is lacking as is acknowledgement of differences in socio-economic status.

Finally, in addressing the perceived lack of racial and ethnic diversity on campus, some respondents took the view that the campus population mirrors the surrounding community and thus demographic changes are largely out of the control of the university.

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### **Campus Diversity Attitudes**

The survey section devoted to diversity attitudes contained the greatest number of response differences by group. Three demographic dimensions, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, corresponded with attitudinal differences (see Table 3). In each case, individuals identifying with a historically disadvantaged group (racial/ethnic minorities, women, LGBT individuals) were more likely to identify a greater need to increase diverse campus representation as well as to increase retention efforts. It is notable that these increases were not confined to the demographic dimension that differentiated an individual. For instance, individuals identifying with a racial/ethnic minority group were more likely to agree with a need to increase gender and sexual identity diversity in addition to racial/ethnic diversity.

Consistent with the previous section, occupational role coincided with differences in diversity attitudes. Staff members rated the importance of increasing diversity lower than did faculty and were more likely to see the university as focusing too much attention on diversity.

A final notable finding is the universally high rating of culture between individuals of different backgrounds (“I feel at ease with people of backgrounds different from my own.” Mean = 4.4)

**Table 3 | Diversity attitude statement averages and group differences.**

	Campus Average	Differences based on population group			
		Race/Ethnic (Minority)	Gender (Female)	Sexual Orientation (LGBT)	Campus Role (Staff)
The university should recruit and retain more faculty and staff of color.	3.78	↑.45	↑.39	↑.87	↓.47
The university should recruit and retain more students of color.	3.93	↑.36	↑.48	↑.63	↓.46
The university should increase gender diversity of faculty and staff.	3.45	↑.40	↑.44	↑.85	
The university should increase representation of diverse sexual identities of faculty and staff.	3.41	↑.51	↑.37	↑.81	↓.36
The university should increase support for faculty and staff with disabilities.	3.94	↑.45	↑.28	↑.50	
The university focuses too much attention on diversity-related issues.	2.65		↓.45	↓.8	↑.39
I feel at ease with people of backgrounds different from my own.	4.37				
I am afraid to disagree with members of other groups for fear of being called prejudiced.	2.60				↑.32
In the event that I witness or experience an act of discrimination, I know where to report the incident to campus authorities.	3.67				↑.34

**Table 3.** Numerical summary data for questions related to *Campus Diversity Attitudes*. Columns 2-5 show the results of comparisons by group type. Where a number is presented, it represents a statistically significant difference between groups. The arrow indicates the direction of mean difference in favor of the group listed in parenthesis (e.g. staff rated “The university should recruit and retain more faculty and staff of color” .47 lower than faculty). Where group comparisons did not produce significant differences the table is left blank.

### *Diversity Recruitment and Retention Comments*

The most common comment voiced with regard to recruitment and retention was that diversity concerns should take a back seat to considerations of merit. Still, other respondents voiced the opinion that that recruitment/retention of diverse faculty/staff is not effective enough, and hiring practices need improvement. Finally, some respondents identified a need to diversify campus leadership.

### **Incidents of bias**

With the goal of gathering data on specific incidents of bias, survey participants were asked to identify whether or not they had (1) been treated differently, (2) experienced discriminatory acts, or (3)

witnessed discrimination against others (see below for exact numbers). The following table lists the percentage of respondents who identified such incidents according to source of bias. 29% of respondents identified as having been treated differently based on one or more of the listed factors. 13% had experienced discriminatory acts. 26% witnessed acts of discrimination against others.

**Table 4 | Incidents of bias**

	Race/ Ethnicity	Sexual Orientation	Religion	Age	Disability Status	Gender*
I have been treated differently because of my:	9.4%	2.6%	7.3%	14.1%	2.1%	10.0%
I have been threatened or experienced discriminatory acts because of my:	4.3%	1.3%	3.4%	5.1%	1.3%	4.5%
I have witnessed an act or acts of discrimination against others based upon:	12.4%	8.1%	7.3%	7.7%	9.0%	12.0%

**Table 4.** Percentage of respondents identifying incidents of bias or discrimination. \*Gender response boxes were absent from the survey for the first 10% of respondents. The percentages above have been adjusted to reflect the percentage of respondents for whom that category was available.

*Incidence of bias and discrimination comments*

Respondent comments related to incidence of bias or discrimination largely confirm the quantitative results. For the category most selected as the source of bias, age, respondents detailed incidents related to both extremes of the spectrum. While some felt bias against older individuals, others felt a lack of respect for the abilities young professionals.

Importantly, a survey question asking for detail on the outcome of efforts to report bias or discrimination revealed widespread dissatisfaction with current procedures. A majority of staff and faculty who responded that they had reported incidents of discrimination were unhappy with the outcome. Several more stated they did not report discrimination either because they were acts of micro-aggression or due to fear of retribution. A few staff and faculty stated they did not know how to report discrimination.

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