

## Executive Summary

College campuses are complex social systems. They are defined by the relationships between faculty, staff, students, and alumni; bureaucratic procedures embodied by institutional policies; structural frameworks; institutional missions, visions, and core values; institutional history and traditions; and larger social contexts (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, Alma, & Allen, 1998).

Institutional missions suggest that higher education values multicultural awareness and understanding within an environment of mutual respect and cooperation. Academic communities expend a great deal of effort fostering climates that nurture their missions with the understanding that climate has a profound effect on the academic community's ability to excel in teaching, research, and scholarship. Institutional strategic plans advocate creating welcoming and inclusive climates that are grounded in respect, nurtured by dialogue, and evidenced by a pattern of civil interaction.

The climate on college campuses not only affects the creation of knowledge, but also affects members of the academic community who, in turn, contribute to the creation of the campus climate. Several national education association reports and higher education researchers advocate creating a more inclusive, welcoming climate on college campuses (AAC&U, 1995; Boyer, 1990; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Ingle, 2005; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005).

Kutztown University has a long history of supporting diversity initiatives<sup>1</sup> as evidenced by the community's support and commitment to this climate assessment project. In spring

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Kutztown University initiatives see  
<http://www.kutztown.edu/about/mission.shtml>  
<http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/social-equity/index.asp>

2010 Rankin & Associates (R&A), an identified leader in conducting multiple identity studies in higher education, presented a proposal to members of the President's Cabinet and to the Institutional Climate Task Force. Kutztown University subsequently contracted with R&A to facilitate a campus-wide climate assessment.

Because of the inherent complexity of the topic of diversity, it is crucial to examine the multiple dimensions of diversity in higher education. The conceptual model used as the foundation for this assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith (1999) and modified by Rankin (2002).

Focus groups were held in October 2010 to discuss with Kutztown University students, staff, and faculty their perceptions of the college climate. Informed by these focus groups and by previous R&A work, the Institutional Climate Task Force<sup>2</sup> developed the final survey that was administered in March and April 2011. The final survey contained 96 questions, including open-ended questions for respondents to provide commentary. This report provides an overview of the findings of the Kutztown University campus-specific assessment, including the results of the campus-wide survey and a thematic analysis of comments provided by survey respondents.

All members of the campus community were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was designed for respondents to provide information about their personal experiences with regard to climate issues, their perceptions of the campus climate, student and employee satisfaction, and respondents' perceptions of institutional actions, including administrative policies and academic initiatives regarding climate issues and concerns on campus. A bulleted list of the quantitative results, a review of the qualitative findings, and a summary of the successes and challenges uncovered in the analyses are

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<sup>2</sup> The Kutztown University Institutional Climate Task Force was made up of staff members, faculty members, and students representing various constituent groups from across the university.

provided. While Kutztown University has several challenges with regard to diversity issues, these challenges are found in higher education institutions across the country.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rankin, S. and Reason, R. (forthcoming). *Transformational Tapestry Model: A comprehensive approach for assessing and improving campus climates for underrepresented and underserved populations*. New York: Stylus Publications.

## Sample Demographics

3,565 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 33% response rate overall
- By group where population data was available presented below.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Men	29%
Women	35%
African American/Black	25%
Asian	32%
European American/White	32%
Latino(a)/Hispanic	31%
Undergraduate Student	31%
Graduate Student	31%
Tenured Faculty	47%
Tenure Track Faculty	54%
Temporary Faculty (Adjunct)	27%
AFSCME	33%
Coaches	21%
Management	24%
OPEIU Nurses	8%
SCUPA State Univ. Administrator	60%
US Citizen	32%
International	63%

Note: A full list of participants is provided in Appendix B. Many racial categories and those respondents who identified as transgender were <1% of the sample

- 2,712 (76%) undergraduate students, 296 (8%) graduate students, 89 (3%) tenure-track faculty, 119 (3%) tenured faculty, 25 (1%) temporary faculty, 99 (3%) AFSCME staff, and 195 (5%) management/administrators
- 650 (18%) People of Color;<sup>4</sup> 2,915 (82%) White respondents
- People who identified as having the following disabilities (n = 589); physical disability (n = 90, 3%), learning disability (n = 91, 3%), emotional/psychological disorder (n = 122, 3%), ADHD (n = 210, 6%), and medical/health condition (n = 55, 2%)
- 2,774 (78%) heterosexual people, 512 people identified as asexual (14%), 187 people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (5%); 19 (<1%) who were questioning their sexuality
- 2,214 (62%) women; 1,309 (37%) men; 15 (<1%) transgender<sup>5</sup>
- 55% of respondents were affiliated with a Christian denomination

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<sup>4</sup> While recognizing the vastly different experiences of people of various racial identities (e.g., Chicano(a) versus African-American or Latino(a) versus Asian-American), and those experiences within these identity categories (e.g., Hmong versus Chinese), Rankin and Associates found it necessary to collapse some of these categories to conduct the analyses due to the small numbers of respondents in the individual categories.

<sup>5</sup> “Transgender” refers to identity that does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender, but combines or moves between these (Oxford English Dictionary 2003). OED Online. March 2004. Oxford UW Press. Feb. 17, 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319380>>.

## Quantitative Findings

### *Personal Experiences with Campus Climate*<sup>6</sup>

- **Some of respondents believed<sup>7</sup> they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus (hereafter referred to as harassment)<sup>8</sup> within the past year. Gender and race were most often cited as the reasons for harassment. People of Color and sexual minorities<sup>9</sup> perceived such harassment more often than White people and heterosexual respondents, and many of them felt it was due to their race or sexual orientation. Perceived harassment largely went unreported.**
  - 16% of respondents (n = 573) believed they had personally experienced offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn on campus. The percentage of respondents experiencing harassment at Kutztown University is lower than the percentage of respondents who experienced harassment in studies of other institutions.<sup>10</sup>
  - The perceived conduct was most often based on the respondents' position at Kutztown, (26%, n = 151), age (21%, n = 122), gender (21%, n = 121), educational level (19%, n = 107), and physical characteristics (16%, n = 107).
  - Compared with 15% (n = 413) of White people, 21% (n = 107) of People of Color believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of Respondents of Color who reported experiencing this conduct, 31% (n = 33) stated it was because of their race.
  - Compared with 14% (n = 180) of men, 17% (n = 377) of women believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of the women who believed they had experienced this conduct, 26% (n = 98) stated it was because of their gender.

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<sup>6</sup> Listings in the narrative are those responses with the greatest percentages. For a complete listing of the results, the reader is directed to the tables in the narrative and Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> The modifier "believe(d)" is used throughout the report to indicate the respondents' perceived experiences. This modifier is not meant in any way to diminish those experiences.

<sup>8</sup> Under the United States Code Title 18 Subsection 1514(c)1, harassment is defined as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose" (<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>). In higher education institutions, legal issues discussions define harassment as any conduct that has unreasonably interfered with one's ability to work or learn on campus. The questions used in this survey to uncover participants' personal and observed experiences with harassment were designed using these definitions.

<sup>9</sup> Sexual minorities are defined, for the purposes of this report, as people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or questioning.

<sup>10</sup> Rankin's (2003) national assessment of climate for underrepresented groups where 25% (n = 3,767) of respondents indicated personally experiencing harassment based mostly on their race (31%), their gender (55%), or their ethnicity (16%).

- Compared with 15% (n = 428) of heterosexual respondents, 32% (n = 68) of sexual minority respondents believed they had personally experienced such conduct.
  - Of sexual minority respondents who believed they had experienced this conduct, 43% (n = 29) stated it was because of their sexual orientation.
  - 12% (n = 66) of participants made complaints to campus officials, 17% (n = 98) did not know whom to go to, 14% (n = 80) did not report the incident for fear of retaliation, and 17% (n = 99) did not report it for fear their complaints would not be taken seriously.
- **Sexual Assault**
    - 2% (n = 84) of respondents had been the victim of sexual assault at KU.
    - 45% of the assaults occurred off-campus (n = 38) while 56% occurred on-campus (n = 47).
    - Most of the offenders were students (57%, n = 48).
    - 77% (n = 65) did not report the sexual assault.

*Satisfaction with Kutztown University*

- **68% (n = 358) of employees were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their jobs at Kutztown University.**
  - **57% (n = 302) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the way their careers have progressed at Kutztown University.**
- **Faculty and Staff Satisfaction at KU**
    - 77% (n = 414) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their access to health benefits.
    - 72% (n = 383) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with the size and quality of their work space as compared to their colleagues work space.
    - Less than half of employee respondents were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their compensation as compared to that of KU peers with similar levels of experience (45%, n = 240).
    - 39% (n = 208) of all employee respondents were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their access to research support as compared to their colleagues access.
    - 44% (n = 248) were “highly satisfied” or “satisfied” with their access to professional development opportunities.
    - Temporary faculty (25%, n = 6) were the most dissatisfied with their jobs at KU.
- **57% (n = 1,659) of all student respondents said they experienced financial hardship at KU.**
    - Of those students, 81% (n = 1,338) had difficulty affording books, 74% (n = 1,222) had difficulty affording tuition, and 52% (n = 867) had difficulty affording housing.

- **18% (n = 626) of all respondents have considered leaving Kutztown University because of the campus climate.**
  - Similar rates of all demographic employee groups considered leaving the institution. However, higher rates of faculty and staff considered leaving the institution than did students.

### Perceptions of Campus Climate

- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate at Kutztown University (76%, n = 2,706), in their departments or work units (74%, n = 2,633), and in their classes (82%, n = 2,654). The figures in the narrative show some disparities based on race.**
  - When analyzing the data race, there are no differences between People of Color and White People with regard to the overall campus climate, the climate in their departments or work units, and with the climate in their classes.
  - LGBQ respondents were less comfortable with the overall climate, climate in their department/work unit, and climate in the classroom than were their heterosexual counterparts
- **Twenty-five percent of all respondents indicated that they had observed harassment on campus within the past year. The perceived harassment was most often based on sexual orientation. Sexual minorities were the demographic most aware of perceived harassment.**
  - 25% of the participants (n = 894) had observed or personally been made aware of conduct on campus that created an offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating working or learning environment.
  - Most of the observed harassment was based on sexual orientation (24%, n = 214), gender (20%, n = 175), ethnicity (17%, n = 156), race (17%, n = 155), and physical characteristics (16%, n = 141).
  - Compared with 25% (n = 687) of White respondents, 27% (n = 136) of Respondents of Color believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
  - Compared with 25% (n = 689) of heterosexuals, 43% (n = 93) of sexual minorities believed they had observed or personally been made aware of such conduct.
  - Only 4% of the respondents (n = 35) sought support from a campus resource.

- **Some employee respondents believed that they had observed unfair or unjust employment practices and indicated that they were most often based on position, race, ethnicity, and gender.**
  - 24% (n = 166) of employee respondents believed that they had observed discriminatory hiring.
  - 21% (n = 114) believed that they had observed discriminatory employment-related disciplinary actions at Kutztown University (up to and including dismissal).
  - 33% (n = 177) believed that they had observed discriminatory promotion practices.

#### Faculty/Staff Work-Life Attitudes and Experiences

- The majority of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that they were comfortable asking questions about performance expectations (74%, n = 398).
- Over 57% of employees thought that KU understands the value of a diverse faculty (n = 303) and diverse staff (n = 297).
- Sixty-three percent (n = 339) felt that supervisors/managers consistently communicate/interpret/implement KU policies.
- The majority of employees felt that can trust their colleagues (52%, n = 276)
- More than half of all employees believed that they were provided:
  - Career advice or guidance when they need it (68%, n = 365);
  - The equipment and supplies they needed to adequately perform their work (70%, n = 373); and
  - Support from decision makers/colleagues for their career advancement (58%, n = 308).

#### Students' Attitudes and Experiences

- More than half of all student and faculty respondents felt that the classroom climate was welcoming for students based on all selected demographic characteristics.
- The majority of students felt student groups enhanced the climate for students.
  - Sports/intramural clubs (64%, n = 2,192), service organizations (61%, n = 2,092), and academic/professional organizations (62%, n = 2,132) were thought to enhance KU's climate the most.
- The majority of students felt valued by faculty (73%, n = 2,168) and other students (60%, n = 1,771) in the classroom, and that employees (60%, n = 1,781) and administrators (47%, n = 1,385) were genuinely concerned with their welfare.

*Recommendations Offered by Participants to Improve the Climate*

- More than half of all students and faculty felt the curriculum included materials, perspectives, and/or experiences of people based on 15 of 18 provided demographic characteristics with the exceptions including: immigrant status, marital/partner status, parental status, and veteran/military status.
- The majority of employees indicated that the following would influence KU climate:
  - Providing clear and fair processes to resolve conflicts would positively affect the climate (84%, n = 431)
  - Providing mentorship for new faculty (74%, n = 380) and staff (78%, n = 397)
- The majority of students felt the following would positively affect the climate:
  - Providing a person to address student complaints of classroom inequality (70%, n = 2,010);
  - Providing diversity training for all students (56%, n = 1,617), staff (67%, n = 1,937), and faculty (67%, n = 1,932);
  - Increasing the diversity of the faculty and staff (51%, n = 1,470), and student body (51%, n = 1,468);
  - Increasing opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue among students (63%, n = 1,805), and between faculty, staff, and students (63%, n = 1,829);
  - Incorporating issues of diversity and cross-cultural competence more effectively into the curriculum (61%, n = 1,754); and
  - Providing more effective faculty mentorship of students (73%, n = 2,094).

### **Qualitative Findings**

Out of the 3,565 surveys received at Kutztown University, 3,251 respondents contributed remarks to one or more of the open-ended questions. No respondents commented on all open-ended questions. Respondents included undergraduate students, as well as faculty, staff, and management/administrators. The open-ended questions asked whether their campus experiences differed from experiences in the surrounding community, and for additional comments on respondents' personal experiences and thoughts.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The complete survey is available in Appendix C.

One open-ended item queried, “Are your experiences on campus different than those you experience in the community surrounding campus? If so, how are these experiences different?” One thousand five hundred one individuals (42%) answered the question. Most respondents said they had similar experiences on and off campus. The majority of those who responded to this question and who described differences between their experiences at Kutztown University and in the surrounding community provided comments such as: the townspeople are more intolerant of difference; there is more responsibility off campus; there were more students on campus than off, etc. Most of the respondents agreed that there was more diversity in Kutztown University. The general sentiment from this question was that there was little difference between the campus and the town.

Another of the open-ended items allowed respondents to elaborate on any of their survey responses, further describe their experiences, or offer additional thoughts about climate issues. Five hundred seventy-nine respondents (16%) offered a wide range of comments. Many respondents praised their experiences at KU. A number of other respondents also mentioned their satisfaction with the diversity at the University. Many students mentioned specific faculty members and how they influence experiences on campus. Some individuals suggested KU ought to improve the parking situation on campus.

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey instrument and the project process. Some participants noted that the survey instrument was too long. Others mentioned that they did not like some of the way the questions were worded or the response choices. Some provided compliments on the appropriateness and necessity of the survey and expressed their hopes that many positive changes will come of the results.

## **Summary of Successes and Challenges**

As colleges and universities continue to more accurately reflect the diverse makeup of society, institutions have focused on the importance of creating a campus environment that includes, welcomes, and accepts people of difference and also responds to issues of diversity (Rankin & Reason, 2008; Smith, 2009; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy & Hart, 2008). Although colleges and institutions attempt to foster welcoming and inclusive environments, they are not immune to negative societal attitudes and discriminatory behaviors. As a microcosm of the larger social environment, some college and university campuses reflect the pervasive prejudices of society (Smith, 2009). The literature suggests that the campus climate may be experienced as “racist” for students and employees of color (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2005), “chilly” for women (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Hall & Sandler, 1984), and “hostile” for LGBTQ people (Eliason, 1996; Malaney, Williams, & Gellar, 1997; Rankin, 2003; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010).

The data reveal several strengths and successes at Kutztown University. There were also a number of challenges identified that reflect the trends cited in the literature above. That said, while the challenges uncovered in this assessment parallel those existing in our culture, Kutztown has chosen to identify these challenges by naming them, which in and of itself is laudable, and by calling attention to them providing an important first step toward institutional change.

### **The Strengths and Successes**

A number of strengths and successes emerged from data. These findings should be credited. First, the majority of employee respondents were highly satisfied or satisfied with their jobs at Kutztown University (68%, n = 358) and how their careers have progressed (57%, n = 302). Most employee respondents reported positive work-place attitudes and experiences. For example, the majority of employees were comfortable asking questions about performance expectations; thought the University understands the

value of a diverse faculty and diverse staff; felt that supervisors/managers consistently communicate/interpret/implement KU policies; and, thought the University provided career advice or guidance when they need it, the equipment and supplies to adequately perform their work, and support from decision makers/colleagues for their career advancement. Second, most students and faculty felt the classroom climate was welcoming based on a variety of selected demographics. The majority of students felt valued by faculty and other students in the classroom, and that employees and administrators were genuinely concerned with their welfare. Most faculty members thought their research interests were valued by their colleagues.

Other strengths and successes that emphasize positive perceptions of climate should be noted. Seventy-six percent ( $n = 2,706$ ) of respondents reported that they were very comfortable and/or comfortable with the climate at Kutztown University, and 74% ( $n = 2,633$ ) with their department or work unit. Eighty two percent ( $n = 2,654$ ) of faculty and students were very comfortable and/or comfortable with the classroom climate. These quantitative findings were also supported by voices of Kutztown University community members offered in response to the open-ended questions. These voices echoed positive experiences with Kutztown University's campus climate. However, disparities existed where respondents from underrepresented groups typically reported less satisfaction and comfort at Kutztown University than the majority counterpart respondents. These underrepresented groups include women, People of Color, and LGBTQ people. Tenure-track faculty, temporary faculty, and tenured faculty also described less positive experiences and perceptions than other employee groups.

For most responses demographic categories did not greatly differ from each other. That is, comparing majority and minority groups, most responses were similar across categories. There were, of course, some differences noted in the report; however for many questions the responses were congruent. From the qualitative comments, participants suggested that the experiences on campus were better or no different than their experience in the town.

## **The Challenges**

People who experienced offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct differed based on identity status. Those who were in the minority were more likely to report experiencing harassment based on their minority status. People of Color experienced harassment more than did White people. When it came to basis of harassment, People of Color were about six times more likely to experience racial harassment than White people. Women were about three times more likely to experience gender harassment than men. Staff were more likely to experience harassment based on their position than students or faculty. LGBTQ respondents were about twenty times more likely to experience harassment based on their sexual orientation than heterosexual respondents.

Approximately two percent (n = 84) of respondents experienced sexual assault while at Kutztown University. The majority of these incidences occurred on campus (56%). Perhaps the most alarming concern is that most of the assaults went unreported to law enforcement or University officials. Seventy-seven percent of those who were victims of sexual assault did not report it. Most of those who did report it noted that they were satisfied by the way the University handled the incident. This demonstrates that there are systems in place, but people are reluctant to report being a victim of sexual assault.

Eighteen percent of respondents considered leaving the University. While that figure is not alarming, the percentage of faculty members who have considered leaving is large. When analyzed by position, 42% of tenured faculty members, 37% of tenure-track faculty members, and 31% of temporary faculty members have considered leaving the University.

When examining participant responses regarding faculty research, teaching, and service responsibilities, tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty differed on almost every question. The way they responded were disproportionate based on the question. In other

words, tenured faculty view their responsibilities or standards and processes from promotion differently than do tenure-track faculty members.

### **Next Steps**

Given that there is already is some structure in place to address diversity issues on campus, how effective have the campus's efforts been in positively shaping and directing campus climate? The current study's findings add additional empirical data to the current knowledge base and provide more information on the experiences and perceptions for several sub-populations in the KU campus community.

It is the intention of the Institutional Climate Task Force that the results from this project be used to identify specific strategies for supporting positive initiatives and addressing the challenges facing the KU campus community. The recommended next steps include the Institutional Climate Task Force and other campus constituent groups using the results of the internal assessment to help to lay the groundwork for future initiatives.