

Questions and Answers University of Wisconsin System Climate Study

Q: Why is a campus Climate Study a valuable tool in building welcoming campus communities?

A: The goal of the study is to identify potential areas that may need to be addressed so that the UW System can be a national leader in creating a welcoming environment for faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds.

The UW System's *Growth Agenda for Wisconsin* recognizes that higher education has a significant role in providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st-century global economy. To ensure this success, UW students must have the skills, knowledge, abilities, and habits of mind that include multicultural competence and the ability to work and live side-by-side with people who represent diverse cultures and perspectives.

The UW System also recognizes that student successes lie in a learning environment that meets his or her unique and diverse needs. To recruit and retain students and talented faculty, campuses must demonstrate and model inclusive excellence.

Beyond 2008, the Climate Study will help the UW System develop a set of strategic directions that will move its institutions closer to enhanced educational quality, equity, and diversity.

Q: What does the Climate Study involve?

A: Unique from the Equity Scorecard and other diversity studies throughout the UW System, the Climate Study will survey all students, staff, and faculty on seventeen campuses. The survey will measure the climate of diversity and inclusiveness at each campus with regard to multiple identity groups (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, veteran status, etc.). Seventeen campuses will participate in the first year of the pilot program including UW-La Crosse, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Stevens Point, and the thirteen freshman-sophomore UW-Colleges.

In the September 2007, focus groups were formed from all the UW campuses and a wide variety of system-wide constituencies (e.g. M/D Coordinators, members of the Inclusively Initiative for LGBTQ people, members of the Women's Studies Consortium, individuals with disabilities, faculty and student representatives, etc.). Discussions with focus groups informed the development of a survey tool. At the same time, a Climate Study Working Group was established to aid the national consultant leading the project in being sensitive to the unique needs of the UW System.

In December 2007, on each of the participating pilot campuses, Diversity Leadership Committees were formed to aid in the surveying process.

The surveys will be administered online and/ or in paper form in the spring 2008 semester with final reports in the fall 2008 and action plans to follow.

Q: Who will administer the Climate Study?

A: *Rankin & Associates was chosen to lead the project* because of their nationally recognized reputation for conducting multiple identity climate surveys in higher education. They have conducted Climate Study Assessments at over sixty institutions of higher education. All phases of the project will also be conducted in collaboration with the Climate Study Working Group, a system-wide group set up to guarantee that the contractor will best understand the mission, goals, and objectives of the UW System and participating institutions. All faculty, staff and students will be surveyed at each of the seventeen campuses.

Q: What is the initial cost?

A: The UW System estimates the cost to be \$147,000 for the first seventeen campuses.

Q: How will the survey results be utilized to enhance each campus climate?

A: Survey results will be reported in meetings for all members of the campus community. The conclusions of the Climate Survey will aid each institution in developing tailored action plans for inclusion and diversity that will *assist in focusing their efforts to make their campus inclusive and welcoming for all.*

For further details about the Climate Study pilot project, please visit our website at <http://www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/climate/>

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