

The University of North Carolina Asheville
Campus Climate Survey: 2010

Summary of Results
October 4, 2010
Developed and Approved by the
Diversity Action Council

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Introduction

In February 2010, the Diversity Action Council, with input from the University Planning Council, asked the UNC Asheville community to participate in a survey designed to gain insight into the perceptions of our campus climate. In an ongoing effort to improve the quality of our educational programs and services, the university routinely evaluates students, faculty, staff, and academic departments and programs. In this spirit, the Diversity Action Council thought it was important to assess the campus climate in light of the definition of diversity we agreed upon as follows:

At UNC Asheville, diversity means creating and supporting an inclusive and sustainable community, one in which people of all backgrounds interact respectfully and in which each member is valued. To reach this goal requires that we enhance the range of human diversity on campus, including but not limited to dimensions such as race and ethnicity, age, religion, disability, socio-economic status, gender expression, gender and sexual identity, national origin, culture and ideological beliefs.

We created a survey with questions designed to assist our understanding of the campus climate surrounding the dimensions of human diversity as defined above. In addition, in order to learn more about how perceptions of the organizational climate have changed over time and to develop data to define the university's work on campus sustainability, we posed again questions that have been asked previously in the 2000 and 2007 on *Perceptions of Administrative Office Survey*.

Below we describe areas of focus and immediate actions steps in response to the Climate Survey results. Following these two sections are three appendices with summaries of the survey data. Among those surveyed were 3523 students (full and part time), 482 staff and 325 faculty (full and part time). The student response rate was 20.6% (724), staff response rate was 36.7% (177), and faculty response rate was 41.9% (132 respondents).

We thank all who participated in this survey which has given us insight into the climate for teaching and learning on campus among all groups at UNC Asheville. We encourage departments and individuals to use this report as a tool to foster community building and to develop action plans to address our ongoing goal of inclusive academic excellence for all.

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Areas of Focus

The survey results have enhanced our understanding of the campus climate through the data and personal experiences shared by campus community members. The Climate Survey suggests several salient points regarding our campus environment:

1. UNC Asheville's underrepresented faculty, staff and student perceive the campus climate as substantively less welcoming than do others who responded to the survey.
2. Many respondents articulated the view that the University needs to recruit and retain more faculty, staff and students from underrepresented groups.
3. Transfer and non-traditional students have significant educational and programming needs that are not sufficiently addressed.
4. Members of the campus community who are conservative, Christian, or who belong to minority religious groups often perceive an unwelcoming environment.
5. There is a substantial disparity between reports from underrepresented groups and the majority culture regarding interest in diversity issues, with a large percentage—between approximately 40% to 60%—of majority-culture respondents stating that they are not interested in issues that are of importance to underrepresented faculty, staff and students. This is an important facet of the overall University climate as perceived by underrepresented members of our campus community

We are proposing immediate action steps in response to the survey results and our conclusions, followed by three appendices summarizing the survey results.

Immediate Action Steps

Below are just a few immediate steps that will be taken to respond initially to these powerful survey results, as well as those campus leaders who will be responsible for implementing them. Further actions will be planned as the year progresses and, indeed, most significant and effective responses will be generated directly by departments, units and programs.

Hiring Diverse Faculty –

Leaders: Provost, Deans, Department Chairs and Program Directors

Planning intentionally to increase the likelihood of developing more diverse candidate pools and hiring diverse faculty beginning fall 2010 semester and continuing over the long term through a committee charged to work directly with departments and faculty search committees

After careful thought and many hours of deliberation, the Diversity Action Council has decided to put intense focus in the next few years on increasing the diversity of faculty hiring. In general, faculty stay with the university over their entire careers and enhancing the diversity in this employee category is likely to have many long-term benefits to the campus climate, thereby increasing the willingness of diverse students to enroll and persist to graduation. All other work on diversity related matters will be enhanced significantly with a greater critical mass of diverse faculty.

Community Building --

Leaders: Vice Chancellors, Deans and Directors throughout the university

Providing formal and informal opportunities throughout 2010-2011 for departments, programs and units to discuss Climate Survey 2010 results, as well as other applicable reports from student

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focus groups (e.g., Jewish students [March 2010] and African American students [April 2010]). Important aspects of inclusion for each of us to bear in mind are:

- *Silencing of any small (i.e., minority) group on campus is the antithesis of what a liberal arts education entails. We will not achieve our diversity and inclusion goals and learning outcomes as long as any student (individual or group) feels marginalized or unwelcome.*
- *Asking one student or employee who possesses attributes of a minority group on campus to represent views of the entire group or culture is often perceived as disrespectful and is therefore counterproductive to our goal of engaging in authentic dialogue.*

Transfer Students –

Leaders: Provost, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Assistant Provost of Academic Administration (OneStop), Director, Intercultural Center

Increasing direct and timely faculty advising of entering transfer students and quality advising as they persist to graduation; requesting the Latin Honors and Academic Policy Committee (APC) to formally discuss modifications to the minimum number of credits required at UNC Asheville for University Honors; convening inter-group dialogues to promote greater understanding and respect among students, faculty and staff

Domestic Partner Benefits –

Leaders: Diversity Action Council in collaboration with Alliance

Researching the issue of domestic partner benefits, in collaboration with LGBTQ faculty and staff, to determine if UNC Asheville can award benefits to domestic partners within the constraints of state employment regulations

Professional Development –

Leaders: Vice Chancellors and Human Resources

Investing in professional development of staff, administrators and faculty in diversity dialogues, training programs and conferences

More actions will be announced as we discuss and determine them in concert with members of our community.

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APPENDIX 1
Survey Summary

Written Comments

The responses to the question “In what ways can we at UNC Asheville enhance our climate for diversity?” were numerous and varied but some themes emerged:

Non-traditional and transfer students

Non-traditional and transfer students generally observed that they have difficulty finding ways to connect with their peers. As one new transfer student commented, “I have been welcomed by the staff tremendously. On this point, I am very pleased. As far as the students, I don’t get the feeling that I am accepted. I don’t dress in all black, hiking shoes, or clothes that come from thrift stores, and for this I am looked down upon by the majority of the student body. I expected to expand my horizons by meeting new people of all different varieties, but unfortunately I do not feel that they would like to get to know me like I would to them.” Non-traditional students noted difficulty fitting in at the university, the need for more night classes that would accommodate work schedules and noted that there should be events or programs that address their group. Transfer students frequently noted the need for better transfer evaluation processes and better advising.

Ideological Beliefs

With regard to culture and ideological beliefs, there is among students particularly a sense that the university is overwhelmingly liberal or left-leaning. Many respondents noted that there was little or no conservative presence on campus, and that conservative students commonly felt uncomfortable at UNC Asheville. One commenter wrote, “I feel that the campus is especially liberal and many professors do not hide their liberalism, which is fine but there is no conservative voice on this campus.”

Race and Ethnicity

On the subject of ethnicity and race, respondents commented frequently on the need to recruit more faculty, staff and students of color, particularly African Americans, Hispanics, and Latinos. As one respondent put it, “All white classes are unacceptable but have been the norm at UNC Asheville for some time. When will it no longer be tolerated?” Faculty and staff respondents noted the need for more recruitment of minorities into mid- and senior-rank staff and administrative positions. Several respondents cited a need to recruit more international students to our campus. Several students, faculty and staff noted the need for more targeted scholarships to attract minority students.

Gender, Gender Expression and Sexual Identity

On the topics of gender, gender expression and sexual identity, many respondents noted the need to address the issue of domestic partner benefits and equity in the area of benefits generally. Regarding this inequity, one commenter made note of the disparity between what we say we want to be as a university vis-à-vis our reality: “The fact that there are no health benefits for domestic partners makes UNC Asheville an unwelcoming climate for LGBTQ employees. There is hypocrisy in saying that we support diversity regarding sexual orientation while at the same time not affording LGBTQ employees access to equal benefits.” Some student respondents noted that training was needed for faculty and staff in order to create more supportive environments for GLBTQ and underrepresented students.

Religion

On the subject of religion, many responses from both students and staff noted an unsupportive environment for conservative Christians. Some students noted the need for organizations to support a wider array of religious groups. A theme emerged where students told of feeling singled out for their religious beliefs, expressed discomfort showing their religion openly, and reported having decided to cover up their beliefs to avoid dealing with the unsupportive climate. One respondent writes, “UNC Asheville says it is a diverse and multicultural campus, yet born-again Christians are made to feel out of place and insignificant in science classrooms and are not generally welcomed to express their opinions.”

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Curriculum ~ Humanities Program

Several students commented that the Humanities Program should be more diverse, devoting more time and attention to non-European and non-USA nations and cultures in the curriculum and co-curricular programs. As one student asked, “. . . Why do we spend so much of our Humanities time in Europe? . . . What about social movements in South America? What was going on in the rest of the world?”

Professional Development

Several students, faculty and staff suggested the need for more diversity training across campus, including professional development workshops, mentoring programs, effective communication and conflict management opportunities. Several comments focused on increasing opportunities for Safe Zone training. Many comments also centered on the idea of creating collaborations with the City and the local community around the topic of diversity. Many respondents suggested holding more frequent diversity-focused or diversity-related events, including lectures, presentations, conferences, and performances.

Responses to the question, “In what areas does the organizational climate at UNC Asheville most need to improve?” were many and varied; however, some themes emerged:

Several faculty respondents cited the need for more transparency and improved communication. There were several comments about the increasing size of the University administration and a sense of distance between the administration and the faculty. Faculty comments noted a need to create a safe environment for junior and part-time colleagues.

Many staff commented on elitism among faculty in their attitudes toward staff members. We noted a perception that staff members seem to feel expendable, and that there is no pathway for staff advancement at UNC Asheville. Based on our reading of the comments, there seems to be a lack of trust between faculty, staff and administration, although recent progress was recognized. For example one person wrote, “I believe the problems are deep-rooted (going back a couple of decades), and hope that administration will continue to work together to develop a greater degree of trust as we all work toward the common goal of providing students with a safe, productive learning environment.”

Several staff members commented that disagreement or counterviews are strongly discouraged, and may result in punishment of some kind from their staff supervisors or others in authority.

Several students commented that there was a lack of connection between students and student-athletes that needed to be addressed. There was a range of views about the importance of athletics at the University, with some students arguing that it is not emphasized enough to create a positive atmosphere on campus, while others contended that it was over-emphasized at the expense of the educational mission.

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APPENDIX 2
Organizational Climate

Organizational Climate Ratings over Time

Below are summaries of organizational climate ratings over time. For the 2000 and 2007 *Perceptions of Administrative Office Survey*, responses were not broken down by underrepresented status. These surveys also did not include students.

When viewed over time, for the years 2000, 2007 and 2010, faculty responding Agree or Strongly Agree to the prompt, **I believe that my department/office is open to change** was 82.9%, 87% and 90.1%, respectively. For the same prompt, staff responses were 85.6%, 88.5% and 84.1%.

Prompt #1:	2000	2007	2010
Faculty	82.9%	87%	91.1%
Staff	85.6%	88.5%	84.1%

For the same years, in response to the prompt, **UNC Asheville is the right place for me to be employed**, faculty response was 89.7%, 91.4% and 86%, respectively. For the same prompt, staff response was 91.1%, 91.2%, and 89.3%.

Prompt #2:	2000	2007	2010
Faculty	89.7%	91.4%	86%
Staff	91.1%	91.2%	89.3%

For these years, in response to the prompt, **I generally feel things are changing for the better**, faculty responding Agree or Strongly Agree were 76.9%, 61% and 40% respectively; staff response to the same prompt over time was 71.1%, 63.7%, and 64.8%.

Prompt #3:	2000	2007	2010
Faculty	76.9%	61%	40%
Staff	71.1%	63.7%	64.8%

For these years, in response to the prompt, **UNCA supports a diverse multicultural environment**, faculty response was 69.3%, 65.4%, and 70.5%; staff response to this prompt was 80.9%, 72.66%, and 79.8%.

Prompt #4:	2000	2007	2010
Faculty	69.3%	65.4%	70.5%
Staff	80.9%	72.6%	79.8%

For the year 2010, 71.3% of faculty report **attending or participating in campus events on a regular basis**, while 67.6% of staff report doing so.

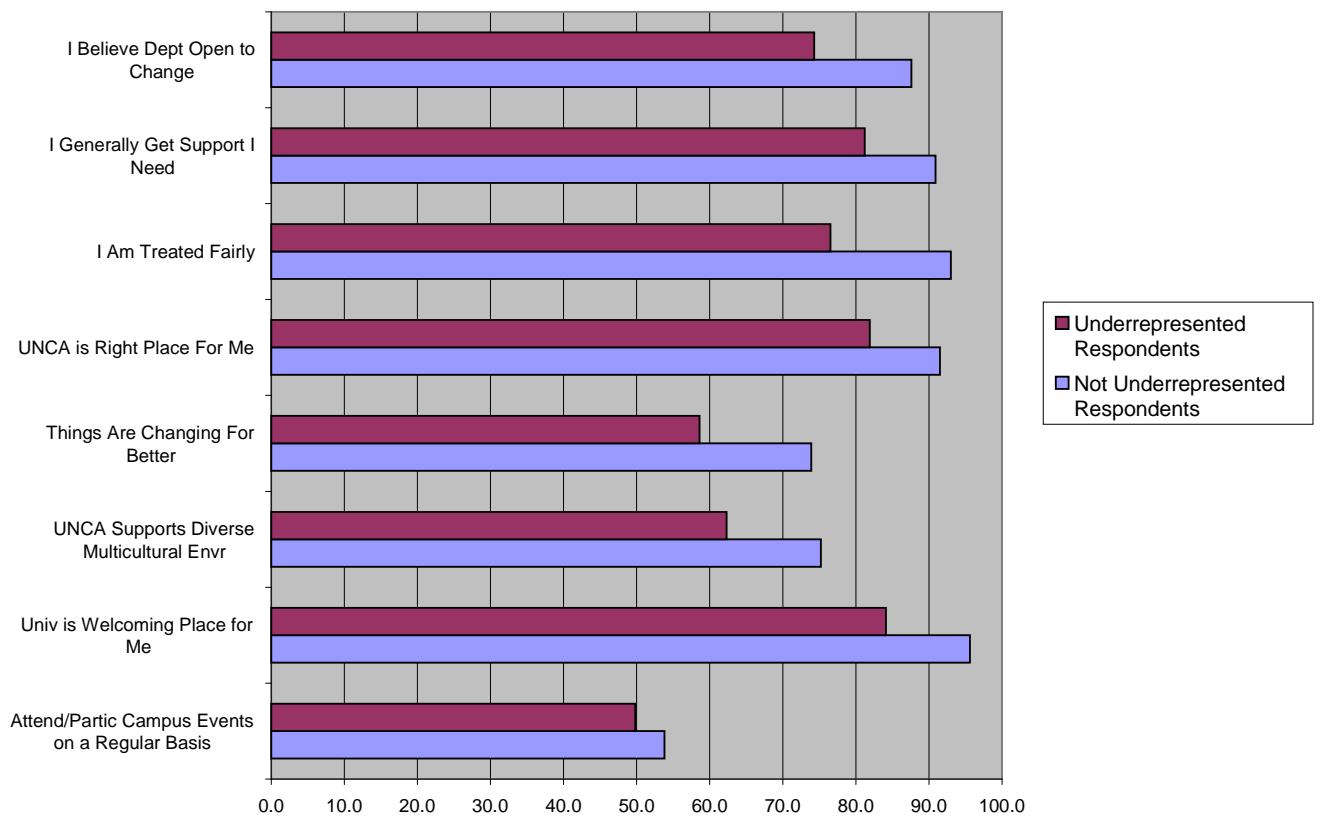
Prompt #5:	2010
Faculty	71.3%
Staff	67.6%

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Below are the percentages of faculty, staff and student responses to the question, *do you consider yourself a member of an underrepresented group at UNC Asheville?*

	YES	NO	DID NOT ANSWER
Faculty	27.3%	58.3%	14.4%
Staff	31.1%	58.8%	10.2%
Students	26.1%	63.7%	10.2%

Figure 1: Organizational Climate Perceptions
 Percent of all Respondents who *Agree* or *Strongly Agree*
 by Underrepresented Status



As can be seen in Figure 1, in regard to all prompts, faculty, staff and students identifying themselves as underrepresented reported responses of Agree or Strongly Agree at lower levels than peers who did not identify as underrepresented.

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When the responses from *Figure 1: Organizational Climate Perceptions* above were broken out by the respondents' member status as underrepresented:

Table 1

Responses of respondents who identify as a member of an underrepresented group (N = 280)			
% agree or strongly agree	Faculty	Staff	Students
Departments are open to change	94.3%	79.6%	69%
I am treated fairly	68.6%	70.9%	79.7%
Things are changing for the better	37.1%	55.6%	63.6%
UNC Asheville supports a diverse multicultural environment	60%	64.8%	62%
The university is a welcoming place for me	80%	83.6%	85%

Among those identifying themselves as underrepresented, there are substantial differences between the faculty/staff/student group responses for the prompts: *Departments are open to change* and *Things are changing for the better*.

Prompt questions asked for the first time in 2010 with summary responses follow:

When asked has UNC Asheville provided you with the mentoring you need to feel comfortable and succeed, faculty and staff responded as follows:

	Yes	No
Faculty	52.2%	26.4%
Staff	43.1%	35.1%
Students	57.6%	21.4%

When asked whether the mentoring received was formal or informal, faculty and staff responded as follows:

	Formal	Informal	Both Types
Faculty	20.5%	84.8%	16.7%
Staff	15.3%	77.4%	14.1%
Students	42.4%	76.8%	27.1%

When asked whether they had served on a search committee in the past five years,

65.6% of faculty said yes and 54.5% of staff said yes.

When asked whether they had received training on best practices in conducting searches,

31.3% of faculty said yes and 41.7% of staff said yes.

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APPENDIX THREE
Summary of tables

For the prompt, *Have You Felt Excluded or Marginalized Due to the Following* (Table 2), of those identifying as a member of an underrepresented group:

- Faculty felt excluded more often due to Sexual Identity, Gender, and Class Background.
- Staff felt excluded more often due to Age, Religion, Class Background, and Ideological Beliefs.
- Students felt excluded more often due to Age, Religion, and Cultural Background.

Table 2

Respondents who identify as a member of an underrepresented group (N = 280)			
% who felt excluded due to:	Faculty	Staff	Students
Age	13.9%	21.8%	31.2%
Class Background	22.2%	16.4%	19%
Cultural Background	13.9%	10.9%	21.2%
Disability	2.8%	3.6%	5.4%
Ethnicity	13.9%	9.1%	16.4%
Race	5.6%	14.5%	12.2%
Gender Expression	16.7%	1.8%	11.1%
Sexual Identity	30.6%	12.7%	12.7%
Gender	22.2%	5.5%	9.5%
National Origin	5.5%	1.8%	6.9%
Religion	11.1%	20%	24.9%
Ideological Beliefs	19.4%	16.4%	20.1%

When all respondents were asked, *How often have you seen or heard insensitive or disparaging comments, behaviors, or gestures toward others based on the following attributes* (Table 3), the responses for Frequently, Very Frequently, or Daily were:

Table 3

All Respondents (n = 1033)			
% responding Frequently, Very Frequently, or Daily	Faculty	Staff	Students
Age	14.4%	15.4%	16.5%
Class Background	14.3%	10.9%	14.8%
Cultural Background	11.2%	13.6%	14.9%
Disability	4.8%	7.2%	9.6%
Ethnicity	9.5%	9.5%	12.9%
Race	15%	13.8%	13.7%
Gender Expression	16%	13.7%	20.1%
Sexual Identity	17.6%	16.2%	20.4%
Gender	16.8%	11.9%	16.1%
National Origin	6.4%	5.3%	9.0%
Religion	19.1%	17.7%	29.2%
Ideological Beliefs	29.4%	28.3%	32%

For all three groups - Faculty, Staff, and Students - the three attributes for which disparaging remarks, behaviors, and gestures were observed most often were in the categories of Ideological Beliefs, Religion, and Sexual Identity.

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When all respondents were asked, *How often have you personally been harassed or discriminated against based on the following attributes* (Table 4), those responding Frequently, Very Frequently, or Daily were:

Table 4

All Respondents (N – 1033)			
% responding Frequently, Very Frequently, or Daily	Faculty	Staff	Students
Age	4.1%	2.9%	5.8%
Class Background	2.4%	2.9%	5.0%
Cultural Background	0.8%	3.5%	3.3%
Disability	0.8%	3.5%	3.4%
Ethnicity	0.6%	2.0%	1.6%
Race	2.4%	1.2%	2.8%
Gender Expression	4.1%	1.2%	3.3%
Sexual Identity	5.8%	2.4%	3.2%
Gender	8.1%	4.1%	5.2%
National Origin	1.6%	0.6%	1.6%
Religion	3.3%	4.7%	6.5%
Ideological Beliefs	7.5%	5.3%	7.3%

With regard to personal experiences of harassment or discrimination, the three attributes reported as experienced more often are:

- Faculty – Gender, Ideological Beliefs, and Sexual Identity
- Staff – Ideological Beliefs, Religion, and Gender
- Students – Ideological Beliefs, Religion, and Age.

When all respondents were asked *How interested are you in issues affecting the following groups* (Table 5), those responding Little or No Interest in were:

Table 5

All Respondents (N = 1033)			
% responding Little or No Interest in:	Faculty	Staff	Students
Age	59.3%	49.4%	67.4%
Class Background	38.4%	51.5%	54.2%
Cultural Background	36.4%	42.4%	44.5%
Disability	47.4%	52.3%	59.6%
Ethnicity	42%	42.4%	52%
Race	40%	41.7%	53.1%
Gender Expression	54.2%	54.3%	54.8%
Sexual Identity	50.8%	53%	52.6%
Gender	41.6%	49.1%	51%
National Origin	50.5%	55.3%	53.2%
Religion	47.4%	45.4%	49.7%
Ideological Beliefs	44%	39%	44.8%

- Faculty express the least interest in issues related to Age, Gender Expression, and Sexual Identity.
- Staff express the least interest in issues related to National Origin, Gender Expression, and Sexual Identity.
- Students express the least interest in issues related to Age, Disability, and Gender Expression.