

## **UW-Whitewater Comments Analysis**

Out of the 3,239 surveys received from the UW-Whitewater climate assessment, many respondents contributed remarks to the open-ended questions throughout the survey. No respondents answered all open-ended questions. As the first several items were follow-up questions that allowed respondents to provide more detail about their answers to a previous question, the comments provided for those several items were included in the body of the UW-Whitewater full report. This section of the report summarizes the comments<sup>1</sup> submitted for the last five survey questions, and provides examples of those remarks echoed by several respondents.

### **Suggestions to Improve the Climate**

A large number of respondents offered suggestions for how to improve the climate at UW-Whitewater. While some respondents indicated that UW-Whitewater provided a very welcoming environment, other respondents noted ways to improve specific aspects of the climate. Topics addressed by several respondents included improving accessibility issues for disabled persons; creating methods for recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, students, and Administrators of Color; becoming a more “LGBTQ aware campus” and eliminating the use of derogatory terms such as “gay” and “fag;” addressing institutional classism that negatively affects staff members, in particular; creating deliberate methods in which campus community members can routinely interact in meaningful ways; and encouraging the administration to take leadership roles in issues of diversity and inclusion. Some respondents were concerned that Christian and conservative viewpoints received much scorn, particularly during the 2008 presidential election cycle. Specific, and representative, comments included:

- Active recruitment and retention strategies implemented to diversify the faculty, staff and administrators. Actually implementing a faculty diversity plan.
- Diversity initiatives and trainings need to be more lively, engaging, challenging, and enjoyable.

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<sup>1</sup> This report provides respondents’ verbatim comments.

- Better accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Encourage professors to refrain from comments that students do not experience "real life" when many are non-traditional students. Do not send campus mail addressed to "To the Parents of". Encourage acceptance of religion/spirituality associated with "the right" as well as "the left".
- Address the topic of the popular saying "that's gay" in reference to people meaning something is stupid or dumb.
- I love UWW. There is nothing to be changed or improved. Perfect as it is.
- For faculty, reduced teaching load will free-up time not only to do other things, but to address these issues as well.
- Place more emphasis on diversity when hiring administration, specifically those who are making strategic decisions. Another area to improve on is having a better mix of male/female in the supervisor/administrative area. This is a very "older white male" dominated campus when it comes to decision making and who holds the "power" to influence what the climate is on campus.
- Look at pay equity. There seems to be a discrepancy as to how quickly and easy some areas of campus are able to get re-titled and pay increases while other areas have more difficulty. The current system does not reward longevity on this campus. Frequently newer staff members are hired at equal or higher pay than someone that has been here for a while and doing equal job responsibilities.
- More opportunities for people to get to know and learn about each other.
- More diversity events and education include LGBT, disabilities, and English as a second language.
- I wish it were easier for students with mental health issues to contact professors and receive necessary accommodations. I would like for there to be some sort of standard procedure for students to follow, perhaps having an intermediary notify teachers, and for there to be a required minimum response from instructors. Ideally it would be the same for campus employees.
- Provide greater opportunities for lower income individuals to attend UWW and accommodations for individuals with families.
- More in-depth information for new faculty and staff at the beginning of the year. The orientation meetings are scheduled so closely together that I never had the opportunity to get to really know what is offered on campus.
- Increase outreach to successfully recruit and retain students and faculty of color.
- Get those "anti-choice Soldiers" or whatever they are off this campus.
- More advertisement of events that foster the talking of diversity and how to include.
- Get some decent leaders and focus on our mission and not on diversity, diversity and diversity.
- Treat all people with respect. I don't feel that administration respects the classified staff people as people. I feel like I am viewed as an office machine.
- Hire more black administrators.
- I suggest that smoking on campus be confined to designated areas, away from normal pedestrian traffic, OR that smoking be banned all together on campus.

- Chancellor's Award for Across Campus Collaboration - more than one dept from different Colleges; Chancellor's Award for Community Engagement.
- There should be a stronger push to unite organizations on campus and use the Multicultural Student Council as a way to bring together ALL organizations.
- Stop the Hate for conservative Christians. Maybe consider hiring a conservative faculty member? Nearly all my classes are pro-Marx, pro-Obama, pep rallies, while conservatives are categorized as less intelligent, and unenlightened.
- I think The New Student Seminar should be mandatory, and they should include a curriculum that introduces students to many of these concepts and teach them to learn how to enjoy seeing different customs of life.
- Providing more services to multicultural students to help them feel like they are a part of the Whitewater community.
- I feel that the groups that are most targeted on campus are Latino/Hispanic and the LGBTQ groups because of the current political climate. Informed discussion about these issues would be helpful.
- The administration needs to set the "tone" for the campus. Leading by example is a start, but that suggests that change will come as a result of observation by the campus rather than compliance with expectations. Some will never observe the appropriate behavior because they don't see that their behavior is wrong. Taking immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs should send a clear message that the offending behavior will not be tolerated.
- Maybe set up groups to help international students practice with their English.
- In some classes I felt I needed a T-shirt that said, "I'm white, I'm male, I'm wrong." There is plenty of tolerance for groups except for people that have a conservative view point. During the last year, I could tell which instructors voted for President Obama due to their comments in class.

### **Campus Experiences versus Community Experiences**

One of the open-ended items queried, "Are your experiences on campus different than those you experience in the community surrounding campus? If so, how are these experiences different?" Some respondents had similar experiences on and off campus, and most individuals acknowledged that both UW System overall and UW-Whitewater in particular were primarily "White and middle class." The majority of respondents, however, felt the campus was more diverse, more accepting of difference, and cohesive. Others respondents' comments indicated they felt more comfortable voicing their conservative viewpoints in the community, rather than on campus.

- No, they are the same. This surrounding community is primarily white but is changing towards more diversity (Latino/Latina). Community businesses are owned by community members who are mostly white.

- It seems that everywhere people are very friendly and easy to get along with both within the college and the city.
- I think the campus is more sensitive to diversity issues than the surrounding community.
- Oh yeah! I am respected more in my community and church activities.
- My experiences on campus have been positive; however off campus I have had the feeling of being watched, waiting too long for service when no one else is around.
- On campus it's more likely I'll meet someone of a different race or someone with a disability.
- No, I think because Whitewater is a smaller community the climate in and around campus is pretty much the same.
- I feel the community does not really like or appreciate college students. They lump us all together with the drunk unruly college students who disrupt the community.
- While the community does have a political climate, it does not seem to be as politically driven as that on campus. I feel more free to express my views within the community than on campus.
- I have seen more community events which seem to be attempting to include the campus and would like to see more campus events including the community.
- The City of Whitewater's citizens seem at times to be somewhat wary of the University and its impact on Whitewater.
- I will just say that the relationship between the town and the campus is pathetic. Please take this into consideration before you continue growing this campus. I really wish I had more time to write on this question. You guys should conduct a major survey of both the students and the townspeople on these matters.

### **Perceptions of Current Classroom Climate versus Co-Curricular Climate**

Respondents were asked to “describe the climate in the classroom compared to the co-curricular climate.” In response, a number of people reported that the climate in their classrooms and co-curricular activities was welcoming. Some people said the climates were less welcoming, yet they had similar experiences with diversity/inclusiveness in and out of the classroom. Several individuals commented that their co-curricular activities were less structured than their classroom activities, and for some people this meant that the classroom climate was more respectful of difference. Comments included:

- The classroom climate is more structured and everyone is careful what they say in regards to diversity and disabilities. Outside of class people are not as careful and say potentially offensive things all the time.
- The climate in the classroom is much more respectful.
- I think the climate in the classroom is generally pretty even-keeled and inclusive.

- I am very comfortable with the classroom climate, besides the foreign students that lack good English speaking abilities.
- The classroom and co-curricular climates are comparable as some controversial views or beliefs pervade both environments.
- It's more diverse because when you sign up for a class you may or may not know who is going to be in it. In a club you can see who is in it and if they are like you or not.
- In the classroom with certain professors, the climate is pretty cold and uninviting.
- The climate in the classroom varies A LOT from teacher to teacher and department to department.
- I feel they are pretty much the same, whether in the classroom, at the gym, or attending a sporting event there is always diversity.
- I don't see much difference. I think there are some people in both that lack respect for other people who are different. The majority of people who I deal with just don't care if there are differences. Differences are just not a big issue and that is how it should be.
- The classroom is a more neutral or welcoming environment for diversity than the out-of-class environment.
- I don't know what a co-curricular climate means.

### **Respondents' UW-Whitewater Community Involvement**

When asked to “Please describe how you are involved with the UW-Whitewater community (e.g., organizations, social organizations),” respondents listed a variety of committees, groups, teams, and organizations with which they were involved. Other respondents indicated that they attended special functions (e.g., athletic competitions, theatre/dance performances, special events). Some people lamented that they were not able to be as involved as they would like due to their academic, work, and/or familial obligations. A few students said they “just wanted to concentrate on school” and “get out of here.” Likewise, a few employees suggested they preferred not to be involved with the UW-Whitewater community.

- On a number of committees, Adviser to student orgs, participate in many University activities.
- Intramural sports, worked for Project Assist/Center for Students with Disabilities, various academic honor societies.
- Volunteer for various events (Make a Difference), Optimist Club
- I am a commuting faculty. My involvement with the community is limited to perhaps bringing in local professionals as speakers, but that's about it.
- As a Freshman I continue to explore new ways to be involved most recently I joined the LIT team, and have attended various meetings for other organizations.
- Committees - ad nauseam.

- I am not involved with and orgs or committees. I am concentrating on finishing school.
- I'm involved in both religious organizations and major related organizations....
- I haven't gotten involved in a lot quite yet, but i have been volunteering @ Jitters coffee house in the lobby of my dorm. I've met quite a few people through it.
- I'm a new student trying to get involved in student orgs, though the meetings tend to conflict with my schedule more often than I would like.

### **Additional Thoughts on Campus Climate**

One 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. Several respondents challenged the UW-Whitewater administration to actively set a tone for the University that values diversity and difference by supporting programs and initiatives to do the same. Comments also indicated that respondents want to see action and follow-up as a result of this survey and other climate-related issues on campus.

Several other topics emerged as a result of this question, as well. Quite a few respondents commented on the length of the survey. Others felt, once again, that conservative and Christian viewpoints were silenced on campus. Respondents commented on institutional classism (specifically, lack of respect and mistreatment of staff members); accessibility issues for disabled community members; the lack of racial diversity on campus; concerns regarding how students and faculty who were non-native English speakers inhibit students' learning abilities; and specific interests of returning, non-traditional students. Of note, throughout all of the open-ended questions, many respondents took issue with the prevalent and derogatory use of terms such as "gay," "fag," and "bitch," and asked that the University take some initiative to keep people from using those terms.

- The strongest influence regarding the creation of a positive climate is the consistent leadership behavior of the administration in setting a tone that can be emulated.
- A lot of the faculty/staff on campus are white, Christian, heterosexual and from middle to upper class. I've seen too many times when staff say and do things that lead me to believe they have very little understanding about diversity or what it means to be the "other." Let's A.) Hire more people of diverse backgrounds and B.) Educate the people we currently have.

- I believe that the Chancellor is committed to diversity. However, I don't have confidence that all of the senior administrators share that commitment.
- Of greatest concern, is the apparent lack of concern for the employee. There is no strong opposition to anything that is done negatively to the UW System. We are not adequately represented at the local level, as long as that continues, we will have unhappy, nearly non-productive employees. When individuals are not rewarded for quality work, what is the incentive to perform? When others can do nothing and receive the same, why try harder to improve?
- The campus puts too much emphasis on SUPERFICIAL diversity. For example, take any University brochure and most of the students included in the photos are from a minority group. This is NOT bad in itself, but based on university publications one would assume this is an 80% African-American and Hispanic campus!
- I have talked to other staff on campus who have noted that they have felt guilty about taking family leave while seeking tenure.
- I consider myself to be a pretty accepting person but I find that if I hold a view that is not totally in line with the campus "PC" view I had better keep it to myself.
- I would like to be able to walk down my hallway or do homework in the computer lab without all these African Americans being loud and rude on cell phones in the computer lab and out by pool table
- Requiring administration to follow the same procedures with all hires and treatment of all employees - train supervisors before allowing them to be supervisors - review position descriptions - supervisors of supervisors of supervisors - do we need all of them?
- Perception I think at times is that some people have their job because of their race/gender/sexual orientation because we are trying to be more diverse. Some individuals appear not to be working to their potential.
- I would generally agree that the campus has a positive climate and I have been fortunate to have associates who have been agreeable with the positive objectives as well.
- Faculty are dismissive of non-teaching academic staff and classified staff. More interaction between staff, across levels of seniority, departments, and backgrounds are needed. A new campus master plan is needed; changes to the buildings/landscaping seem arbitrary. Better communication between decision makers and the people it affects need to be set in place. Instituting GREY color schemes and treeless landscapes may make sense to some; but it eventually hampers the work environment and makes individuals feel like they are working for a soulless organization that gives no credence to individuality. Campus updates are non-existent. The current this week announcements have squelched the sharing of opportunities and programs across campus.
- Our campus used to be more collaborative and treated staff/faculty with respect. Now, it is not uncommon to hear supervisors cuss with or at employees and employees are not reprimanded for this same behavior
- The biggest thing that I have seen is the "that so gay" response and numerous negative comments made about women.

- I think our campus works to support diversity. We can improve in many areas, we do well in others but in general I think we are working at it. The job is never done nor is it easy. I think bringing these issues up and reminding people to work at it are ways to improve.
- Be more friendly to those with lower socio-economic status: including trying to keep costs low: be effective and productive and offer lower cost options: especially food, items to buy at the UC, etc. (Ex. umbrellas).

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey and process itself. Some applauded the University's participation in the study and wanted to make certain that the results of the survey were made public and used to better UW-Whitewater. Several respondents insisted that UW-Whitewater leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result.

- Having a well-designed climate survey like this current one generates positive impact on diversity and diversity-related initiatives; Keeping the communications transparent about the results of this survey would be a good step; Visible and tangible actions based on the findings from this survey would also be helpful.
- I feel many of my responses I rated really "good/welcoming" because of my privileged status in society such as ethnicity, physical ability, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- These survey questions were so general and climate is so contextual that the data coming from this survey is really going to be more than worthless. Shame on you and don't you dare delete this record!
- I found this survey to be slightly biased. There were no questions regarding if we thought the campus was TOO friendly/accepting/accommodating of certain groups.
- Too many questions regarding the feelings of other individuals. I can't speak on their behalf about how respected they feel.
- I feel as if this climate survey was well developed. I hope the information provided will help make UWW an even more diversified University.
- I feel that the majority of the survey covered many backgrounds and criteria that I do not know about. Specifically, I am fully able to answer questions that I have either experienced or personally know of another's experience. However, many of the questions did not pertain to me, such as the disability questions, or questions about services that I don't use (Chancellor's Office, Student Gov't).
- Thank you for making this survey available - it leads me to believe that there might be some positive changes to an already pretty positive campus.