Overview of Campus Climate at Rutgers University – Newark

Introduction

Universities are becoming increasingly more diverse, and the concept of campus climate has gained a considerable amount of attention in higher education research, literature, and practice (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008). Inclusive campus climates have been linked to student success and persistence (Munoz & Murphy, 2014), and many institutions have begun to internally assess the climate of their campus to understand how different groups of people are impacted and interact with their surrounding environment (Hurtado, Carter, and Kardia, 1998). Campus climate is defined as the current opinions, perceptions, beliefs or patterns of behavior that characterize an institution (Peterson & Spencer, 1990). These beliefs held by students are influenced by the objective climate (what can be observed directly), perceived climate (how institutional patterns and behaviors are viewed), and the psychological or felt climate (how individuals feel about their institution) (Peterson & Spencer, 1990). One’s perception of campus climate is linked to the many identities that one holds in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and a multitude of additional characteristics (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008). Since campus climate is ephemeral, malleable, and encompasses a broad set of people and identity characteristics, it must be assessed thoroughly and consistently in order to bring about positive change (Peterson & Spencer, 1990).

Analysis

The experiences of undergraduate students at Rutgers University are examined with a focus on race and ethnicity, gender, disability status, religion, and sexual orientation. Data was collected from the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey which was administered
in the spring of 2016 to Rutgers-New Brunswick, Rutgers-Newark, Rutgers-Camden, and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences undergraduate students.

The following SERU questions were examined in which students were asked to state their level of agreement on a 6-point scale:

**Overall Perceptions of Campus Climate**

The following questions were used to measure student perceptions of their overall experience at Rutgers-Newark.

- Overall, I feel comfortable with the climate for diversity and inclusiveness at Rutgers University
- Rutgers University is a safe and secure campus
- Rutgers University is a welcoming campus

**Perceptions of Campus Climate Based on Identity Characteristics**

The following questions were used to measure student perceptions of their experience at Rutgers-Newark based on various aspects of their personal identities.

- Students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus
- Students of my gender are respected on this campus
- Students with a physical, psychological, or learning disability like mine are respected on this campus
- Students of my religious beliefs are respected on this campus
- Students of my sexual orientation are respected on this campus

The following report has been prepared to review the campus climate of Rutgers-Newark across a broad array of student identity characteristics. It is our hope this information will
provide information regarding how various aspects of campus life can be further improved. As campus climate is based on the current perceptions of students, it must be consistently monitored to accurately represent the campus community. The SERU survey is a rich and comprehensive resource that is administered and analyzed each academic year by the Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning. This survey can be used to continually study campus climate and use its results to further develop an inclusive environment at Rutgers University.
RUTGERS NEWARK
I Feel Comfortable with the Overall Climate for Diversity and Inclusiveness

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

African American (n=234)
Asian (n=282)
Hispanic (n=346)
International Other (n=64)
White (n=259)

RUTGERS NEWARK
I Feel Comfortable with the Overall Climate of Diversity and Inclusiveness

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Male (n=403)
Female (n=714)
Other (n=19)
RUTGERS NEWARK
I Feel Comfortable with the Overall Climate for Diversity and Inclusiveness

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Heterosexual (n=1,012)
Gay or Lesbian (n=26)
Bisexual (n=35)
Other (n=60)

RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers Is a Safe and Secure Campus

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

African American (n=233)
Asian (n=282)
Hispanic (n=345)
International Other (n=56)
White (n=259)
RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers is a Safe and Secure Campus

Male (n=403)
Female (n=712)
Other (n=19)

RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers is a Safe and Secure Campus

Did Not Report Disability (n=1,002)
Reported Disability (n=125)
RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers is a Safe and Secure Campus

No Religion Indicated (n=315)
Christian (n=466)
Hindu (n=93)
Jewish (n=15)
Muslim (n=124)
Other (n=125)

RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers is a Safe and Secure Campus

Heterosexual (n=1,011)
Gay or Lesbian (n=26)
Bisexual (n=35)
Other (n=59)
RUTGERS NEWARK
Rutgers is a Welcoming Campus

Male (n=403) Female (n=714) Other (n=19)
Rutgers is a Welcoming Campus

Did Not Report Disability (n=1,003)

Reported Disability (n=126)

Rutgers is a Welcoming Campus

No Religion Indicated (n=316)

Christian (n=468)

Hindu (n=92)

Jewish (n=15)

Muslim (n=124)

Other (n=125)
**RUTGERS NEWARK**

**Rutgers is a Welcoming Campus**

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Somewhat agree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

- **Heterosexual** (n=1,013)
- **Gay or Lesbian** (n=26)
- **Bisexual** (n=35)
- **Other** (n=60)

**RUTGERS NEWARK**

**Students of My Race/Ethnicity are Respected on Campus**

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Somewhat agree**
- **Somewhat disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

- **African American** (n=235)
- **Asian** (n=284)
- **Hispanic** (n=349)
- **International** (n=64)
- **Other** (n=56)
- **White** (n=260)
**RUTGERS NEWARK**
My Gender is Respected on This Campus

- **Male (n=402)**
  - Strongly agree: 90%
  - Agree: 80%
  - Somewhat agree: 70%
  - Somewhat disagree: 60%
  - Disagree: 50%
  - Strongly disagree: 40%

- **Female (n=715)**
  - Strongly agree: 90%
  - Agree: 80%
  - Somewhat agree: 70%
  - Somewhat disagree: 60%
  - Disagree: 50%
  - Strongly disagree: 40%

- **Other (n=19)**
  - Strongly agree: 90%
  - Agree: 80%
  - Somewhat agree: 70%
  - Somewhat disagree: 60%
  - Disagree: 50%
  - Strongly disagree: 40%

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**RUTGERS NEWARK**
 Students with a Disability Like Mine are Respected on This Campus

- **Reported Disability (n=102)**
  - Strongly agree: 90%
  - Agree: 80%
  - Somewhat agree: 70%
  - Somewhat disagree: 60%
  - Disagree: 50%
  - Strongly disagree: 40%
RUTGERS NEWARK
My Religious Beliefs are Respected on This Campus

RUTGERS NEWARK
Students of My Sexual Orientation are Respected on This Campus