

Appendix A

Comments Analysis

UW-Oshkosh Comments Analysis

Out of the 3,175 surveys received from the UW-Oshkosh climate assessment, 2,157 different 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-Oshkosh full report. This section of the report summarizes the comments submitted for the last five survey questions.

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?” Of the 1,121 respondents that provided commentary, some individuals said there was little difference between the community and the campus. Most of the respondents said that the surrounding community was more accepting of people regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity than were people on campus. Most of the remarks indicated that the campus climate was more diverse and more accepting of difference. In addition, students, people of color, and sexual minority respondents felt more comfortable on campus than off campus.

Leadership Regarding Campus Climate

A second open-ended question asked, “When considering the current campus climate, from where do you see leadership coming?” One thousand three hundred seventy-three (1,373) individuals responded to this question. A number of respondents believed students and student organizations (e.g., OSA, Greek life) were largely responsible for creating the leadership around campus climate issues. Some respondents said they saw leadership emanating from various University offices, including the Chancellor’s office, deans’ offices, Residence Life, etc. Several respondents pointed directly to the Counseling Center as a leader in the movement to create a positive campus climate. Some respondents were not aware of which offices were in charge of diversity and others wished the upper administration would be more proactive and vocal concerning diversity/inclusion/climate issues.

Perceptions of Current Classroom Climate

About half of the 1,289 respondents who described their perceptions of the classroom climate said that the climate was welcoming for all, including non-traditionally aged students, veterans, and others. Many respondents noted the make-up of the classroom was almost always all White, which reflected the UW-Oshkosh student body. Some respondents indicated they were not able to judge the classroom climate since they were members of majority populations. A number of non-majority respondents, including students of color and queer students, said they were often the sole “different” student in the classroom and encountered awkward and sometimes discriminatory behavior from classmates and faculty.

Perceptions of Current Campus Climate

Of the 1,240 individuals who commented on the current campus climate, a number of respondents felt UW-Oshkosh was a safe and welcoming place. Others suggested the climate was good, but could be improved. Still others provided descriptions of discrimination, harassment, or subtle unwelcoming overtones they experienced or witnessed. Several respondents said the climate was most welcoming for those individuals in the majority (e.g., White heterosexuals) and least welcoming for sexual and racial minorities.

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. Five hundred one (501) people contributed comments. Among them, individuals’ responses were divided as to whether diversity was a positive or negative aspect of the campus. Some thought UW-Oshkosh put too much emphasis on diversity, while others thought the University could do more in that respect. Several people commented about the lack of diversity on campus. Some respondents noted that the campus could do more to be truly accessible to people with disabilities. Additionally, some respondents indicated that the campus has few resources for and campus community members are intolerant of gay and lesbian individuals. Others said they were tired of having the gay agenda forced on them. Some respondents of color, classified staff respondents,

and women students gave specific examples of discrimination or harassment they experienced on campus.

Suggestions to Improve the Climate

Seven hundred eighty-seven (787) respondents offered suggestions for how to improve the climate at UW-Oshkosh. A number of respondents praised UW-Oshkosh's efforts with regard to diversity and asked for continued attention to and leadership on the issues. Some respondents wanted to see more people from underrepresented populations in the faculty and administrative ranks. Likewise, a few respondents asked that the University divert dollars away from diversity initiatives and allocate resources only to educating students. Several respondents described the tension or animosity between faculty and classified staff and asked for efforts to resolve the tensions. Many people asked that UW-Oshkosh continue to communicate with all constituents, employees, and students about the myriad of aspects of University life and UW-Oshkosh's diversity initiatives.

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey instrument and the project. 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-Oshkosh. Others had suggestions for wording certain survey items. Several respondents insisted that UW-Oshkosh leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result of this study.