

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PHASES I - V
MU CAMPUS CLIMATE STUDY

- Phase I consisted of participation in the Rankin National Climate Studies for Underrepresented Groups (URG) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals.
- 19.2% of the entire sample of URG participants reported being the victim of harassment on campus;
- 30.7% of African Americans, 32.4% of Hispanics/Latino/as, 23.6% of Asian/Asian Americans, 38.9% of Middle Easterners, 33.3% of Native American Indians, 22.5% of women, 37.5% of LGB individuals, 25% of transgender, and 44.0% of people with disabilities in the sample reported experiences of harassment on campus;
- 36.3% of the entire sample of URG participants reported having witnessed harassment of other individuals on campus;
- 54% of African Americans, 40.0% of Hispanics/Latino/as, 46.0% of Asian/Asian Americans, 62.5% of Middle Easterners, 46.4% of Native American Indians, 39.4% of women, 60.3% of LGB individuals, 14% of transgender, and 49.3% of people with disabilities in the sample reported observing harassment on campus;
- There were significant differences between majority and minority group members regarding perceptions of campus climate for minority group members, in which minority group members perceived the environment to be less positive than majority group members in all cases;
- There was extensive agreement among participants from different groups that visible racial-ethnic groups, non-native English speakers, and LGBT individuals were the least accepted groups on campus;
- Individuals who reported being the victim of, or having witnessed, harassment on campus tended to report lower levels of psychological well-being (e.g., greater degree of depressive symptoms and greater fears for personal safety);
- 21% of the LGBT survey participants indicated that they had been harassed due to their sexual orientation/gender identity;
- Derogatory remarks were the most common forms of LGBT harassment (85%), but other types of harassment included verbal threats (40%), graffiti (38%), and pressure to conceal one's sexual orientation/gender identity (36%), and
- Participants who reported being victims of LGBT harassment had significantly higher fears for physical safety, expectations that LGBT individuals would be harassed on

campus, needs to conceal one's sexual orientation/gender identity, and negative perceptions of campus responsiveness to harassment and discrimination.

- There were a total of 15,356 participants in the national study (20% of whom came from MU alone). The distributions of students, staff/administrators, and faculty were virtually identical for the national and MU samples. The gender distribution of the two samples was virtually identical. The racial/ethnic background of the participants in the two samples was also very similar, with the MU sample comprising slightly larger percentages of African American/Black and white participants and slightly smaller percentages of Asian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Chicano/Latino/Hispanic participants. A comparison of the sexual orientation identities of the participants in the two samples reveals that the MU sample had a slightly larger percentage of heterosexuals and fewer lesbian, gay, bisexual and uncertain participants than the national sample. Overall, the two samples are quite comparable.
- One-quarter of the survey respondents in the national sample, versus 19.2 percent of the MU sample, reported experiences of harassment, which was defined as conduct that unreasonably interfered with their ability to work or learn on campus. Approximately 30 percent of people of color versus 22 percent of whites reported harassment in the national sample, whereas 29.3 percent of people of color and 16.9 percent of whites in the MU sample reported harassment. Thus, the lower overall percentage of participants reporting harassment in the MU sample versus national sample can be partially explained by a substantially lower percentage of whites in the MU sample reporting harassment, whereas people of color in the MU sample reported harassment at approximately the same rate as people of color in the national sample.
- A higher percentage of people of color in the MU sample (59%) reported experiences of harassment based on race or ethnicity than people of color in the national sample (31%).
- A higher percentage of women in the MU sample (72%) reported gender-based harassment than women in the national sample (60%), whereas relatively equivalent percentages of transgender individuals in both samples (50% and 56%, respectively) reported gender-based harassment.
- Similar percentages of LGB/uncertain participants reported harassment based on sexual orientation in the MU (60%) and national (55%) samples.
- In both the national and MU samples, students were the main source of harassment for all groups (students, faculty, staff/administrators), but when the source of harassment is examined by position, the greatest percentage of harassment comes from within groups. For example, staff members report that they most often experience harassment from other staff. The result is similar for faculty, students and administrators.
- Forty-two percent of respondents in the national sample reported having observed harassment on their campuses, only slightly higher than the 37 percent of participants in the MU sample who reported observing harassment.

- Although roughly the same percentage of people of color and whites in the national sample reported observing harassment on their campuses (43% and 41%, respectively), there was a higher percentage of people of color than whites in the MU sample who reported observing harassment (49% versus 35%, respectively).
- Similar percentages of women and men reported observing harassment on campus in both the national (44% and 38%) and MU samples (39% and 34%).
- Substantially higher percentages of LGB/uncertain versus heterosexual participants reported observing harassment on campus in both the national (61% versus 42%, respectively) and MU samples (57% versus 37%, respectively).
- A cross-tabulation of race/ethnicity (whites versus people of color) with perceptions of the campus climate as racist (non-racist, neutral, racist) revealed similar patterns in both the national sample and MU sample, in that the percentage of people of color who believed that campus to be racist was virtually twice the percentage of whites with the same perceptions, yet people of color were evenly split between perceptions of the campus as non-racist, neutral, and racist and the largest percentage of whites believing the campus to be non-racist.
- A cross-tabulation of gender (men versus women) with perceptions of the campus climate as sexist (non-sexist, neutral, sexist) revealed similar patterns in both the national and MU samples, in that slight higher percentages of women than men perceived the campus as sexist, but the largest percentages of both men and women perceived the campus to be non-sexist.
- A cross-tabulation of sexual identity (LGB/uncertain versus heterosexual) with perceptions of the campus climate as homophobic (non-homophobic, neutral, homophobic) revealed similar patterns in both the national sample and MU sample, in that heterosexuals were relatively evenly split among the three climate perception categories but LGB/uncertain individuals were 2 to 4 times more likely to perceive the climate as homophobic versus neutral or non-homophobic.
- Similar percentages of respondents in both samples (national and MU) believed that the college/university thoroughly addresses racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and religious harassment. However, there was a substantial difference in the percentages of participants in the MU sample versus the national sample who believed that the college/university thoroughly addresses issues related to disabilities, in which the MU sample agreed by a margin of 2 to 1 versus a much smaller margin of agreement in the national sample. Note that supplemental analyses conducted by the MU Campus Climate Research Team also indicated that people with disabilities viewed the campus acceptance of people with disabilities as considerably less than people without disabilities viewed campus acceptance of people with disabilities, which suggests that the discrepancy in the data noted above is likely to have been influenced primarily by the overwhelmingly greater numbers of people without disabilities in the MU sample.

- A cross-tabulation of race/ethnicity (people of color versus whites) with perceptions of whether the college/university thoroughly addresses racism resulted in similar patterns of results for both the national and MU samples, in which the largest percentages of both groups agreed or strongly agreed that the university thoroughly addressed racism, but with substantially larger percentages of people of color than whites who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- A cross-tabulation of sexual identity (LGB/uncertain versus heterosexual) with perceptions of whether the college/university thoroughly addresses heterosexism/homophobia revealed a substantial discrepancy between the MU sample and the national sample. A substantially higher percentage of LGB/uncertain participants in the MU sample than the national sample disagreed or strongly disagreed that the college/university thoroughly addresses heterosexism/homophobia. This finding may be the result of the lack of inclusion of sexual orientation in the nondiscrimination policy in the University of Missouri System at the time of the survey, which was a hotly contested issue for many years until the policy was changed in 2003.
- A cross-tabulation of gender (women versus men) with perceptions of whether the college/university thoroughly addresses sexism resulted in similar patterns of results for both the national and MU samples, in which the largest percentages of both groups agreed or strongly agreed that the university thoroughly addressed sexism, but with substantially larger percentages of women than men who disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Phase II data indicate that respondents overall tended to rate the quality of the services provided by their units on average as above “adequate” and below “extremely well” with respect to the issues addressed in the survey questionnaire. Among Phase II participants, average ratings for the “*effectiveness of diversity trainings*,” “*staff knowledge*,” and “*availability of appropriate resources*” tended to be lower than ratings on other items.
- Phase II respondents rated the quality of services rendered by their units lower on average for non-native English speakers, non-Christian individuals, persons with disabilities, and LGB students.
- Many Phase II participants reported that they had received no training at MU to address the needs of underrepresented groups, and many others reported training that appears to have taken place outside the context of their current employment at MU.
- The vast majority of student service units evaluated in Phase III received average ratings from all six underrepresented group participants that were above a rating of “adequate” and below a rating of “extremely well,” with only a few exceptions.
- Average ratings that were below “adequate” were obtained for a small number of student service units in Phase III with respect to LGBT and/or non-Christian religious minorities.

- There were 224 Phase IV participants (16.5%) who reported being victimized by sexual harassment by a person affiliated with MU, which was primarily reported by women (n = 194) of European American descent (n = 199) and heterosexual orientation (n = 199).
- The primary forms of sexual harassment reported in Phase IV were “unwanted contacts” (n = 97) and “uncomfortable sexual speech/jokes” (n = 134), and were committed most often by work supervisors (n = 41), faculty/TAs (n = 60), peers (n = 80), and coworkers (n = 63).
- Participants in Phase IV reported that they most often discussed the harassment with nobody (n = 54), family (n = 59), friends (n = 124), and significant others (71).
- The majority of Phase IV respondents who provided a rating of the effectiveness of the responses received from university officials regarding sexual harassment did not perceive them to be effective.
- Experiences of sexual harassment were associated with higher rates of depressive symptoms and fears for personal safety.
- There were 33 Phase IV participants (2.4%) who reported being victims of hate crimes on campus at MU, which were primarily based on the victim’s gender (n = 8), race/ethnicity (n = 9), sexual orientation (n = 5), religion (n = 5) and other (n = 5).
- The types of hate crimes reported by Phase IV participants included threats of violence (n = 7), threatening or harassing phone calls (n = 5), vandalism (n = 5), and other (n = 15).
- Participants in Phase IV indicated that they primarily discussed the hate crimes with nobody (n = 6), family (n = 9), friends (n = 16), and significant others (n = 10).
- The majority of Phase IV respondents who provided a rating of the effectiveness of the responses received from university officials regarding hate crime victimization did not perceive them to be effective.
- Experiences of hate crime victimization were associated with higher rates of fears for personal safety.
- There were 142 Phase IV participants (10.5%) who reported being victims of hate incidents on campus at MU, which were primarily based on the victim’s gender (n = 42), race/ethnicity (n = 57), sexual orientation (n = 37), religion (n = 52) and other (n = 10).
- The types of hate incidents reported by Phase IV participants included offensive jokes or remarks (n = 122), offensive editorials, cartoons or news stories (n = 120), and public displays of objects, signs or symbols (n = 51).

- Participants in Phase IV indicated that they primarily discussed the hate incidents with nobody (n = 26), faculty/TA (n = 21), family (n = 63), friends (n = 97), and significant others (n = 55).
- The majority of Phase IV respondents who provided a rating of the effectiveness of the responses received from university officials regarding hate incident victimization did not perceive them to be effective.
- Experiences of hate incident victimization were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms.
- There were 95 Phase IV participants (7.0%) who reported witnessing hate crimes and 340 Phase IV participants (25.1%) who reported witnessing hate incidents on campus at MU.

Phase V of the MU Campus Climate Study involved focus groups and interviews held with members of the MU community. The goal was to provide a qualitative analysis of the four earlier phases of data collection and to generate recommendations for specific improvements in the campus climate via changes in the social, cultural, academic and physical environment as well as targeted changes in policies designed to promote diversity.

Phase V of the MU Campus Climate Study was not designed to objectively evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the campus climate for diversity at MU—that was the purpose of the four earlier phases of data collection (from which a number of specific strengths and weaknesses emerged and were highlighted in prior reports). Instead, this phase of data collection was intended to generate specific, concrete recommendations for action strategies designed to improve the climate for diversity at MU. Readers are cautioned to avoid thinking about this report as a reflection of the overall quality of the campus climate for diversity at MU, and to instead consider this document as a source of recommendations designed to address specific problem areas that are likely to be present on any number of campuses across the country.

There were a total of 60 participants in Phase V of the MU Campus Climate Study. The sample included 21 students, 23 staff, and 16 faculty with diverse backgrounds.

Participants were asked to review summary findings of the four earlier phases of data collection and respond to four focus questions. The four focus questions were as follows:

- (1) On the basis of the findings of the MU Campus Climate Study, what are your immediate reactions?**
- (2) How do these findings make you personally feel as a member of the MU community?**
- (3) What environmental changes might be beneficial for MU to address the needs of underrepresented groups?**
- (4) What policy recommendations should we make to the university administration on the basis of these findings?**

There were a number of critical areas of improvement identified by participants, including

- Increasing non-minority members' work to improve climate.
- Establishing mandatory and/or voluntary training programs for sensitivity to diversity.
- Improving the process of handling complaints about harassment and discrimination.
- Increasing accountability for reinforcing cultural sensitivity.
- Enacting policy to enforce "truth in advertising" about diversity during recruitment.
- Adding "Diversity" as a fifth value received mixed reactions among participants.
- Promoting diversity is a central responsibility of individuals in key leadership positions.
- Respecting all forms of diversity was acknowledged to be complex and difficult.

In addition to these focal areas, there were a host of issues raised that were relevant specifically to faculty, staff and students. Some of the major points were as follows:

1. Many respondents expressed the belief that the academic climate at MU was the primary responsibility of professors, instructors and TAs. At the same time, a number of minority faculty felt that their work was much more difficult as a result of resistance from students and a lack of shared responsibility from their non-minority colleagues and administrators.
2. Some participants believed that minority faculty experience added pressures and heavier burdens. Minority faculty experience added pressure to contribute extra service out of a sense of commitment to improving the campus with respect to diversity, which are often not recognized or acknowledged by non-minority faculty or administrators.
3. All types of staff were perceived to have glaring inequities in the power and hierarchy structure, in which women and people of color occupy the bottom rungs and are perceived as being passed over for promotion.
4. There were a variety of issues addressed which would improve the campus climate at MU with respect to students. Minority students were interested in seeing the campus climate for diversity improve so that their own experiences as minority students would improve. On the other hand, many participants felt there was a need for specific efforts designed to promote a greater awareness and sensitivity to diversity among students at MU.

Finally, there were a variety of issues raised that were relevant specifically to the target groups. Some of the major points were as follows:

1. A number of participants from a variety of backgrounds expressed the belief that efforts to promote different ethnic studies programs to departmental status were important to the improvement of the campus climate for diversity at MU.
2. There were a significant number of participants who perceived the university community as equating "diversity" with Black-White race relations, and expressed concern over the lack of attention to other racial-ethnic minority groups on campus.

3. There was considerable discussion among participants from a variety of backgrounds about the perceived rift between the MU administration and African American faculty, staff and students.
4. A number of participants believed that some stress has been relieved for LGBTQ people on campus after sexual orientation was included in the nondiscrimination policy. However, many continue to express concern that there is still a substantial amount of work to do to improve the campus climate for LGBTQ individuals. Domestic partner benefits were a major source of concern among LGBTQ individuals and their allies.
5. Major themes in focus group discussions regarding people with disabilities included (a) ongoing problems on campus in some buildings related to accessibility, (b) problems with accessible parking (c) perceptions of lengthy delays in responding to complaints about accessibility issues on campus, (c) perceptions that many people on campus think of disabilities only in terms of physical disabilities, and (d) harassment and discrimination against people with disabilities most often occurs in more subtle and hidden ways than when other underrepresented groups are targeted.
6. Overarching themes related to the campus climate for non-native English speakers included (a) experiences of marginalization and rejection from the larger MU community, (b) perceptions that the MU community as a whole tended to be uninformed and unconcerned with a global perspective in education, and (c) the perception that International graduate students were vulnerable to exploitation from faculty.
7. A number of themes emerged about the climate for non-Christian religious minorities. Overall the perception was that Christianity is “an unseen, invisible, ever-present force on campus” that results in the marginalization of members of other groups. A number of participants complained that consideration is rarely given to non-Christians who would like to observe religious holidays.
8. A number of major themes emerged from discussions about the campus climate for women at MU, including (a) concerns about a variety of forms of exploitation of women on campus, (b) inequities in hiring, promotion and pay across all levels of employment at MU, and (c) concerns about the need to increase efforts to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Nearly 100 specific recommendations were offered by participants that reflected a variety of concrete, specific proposals and a number of broad, overarching ideas about strategies to improve the climate for diversity at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In realistic terms, the responses to these recommendations can be swift for some and gradual for others. With little exception, participants in Phase V viewed *action* as the critical determinant of change.