

Appendix A Comments Analysis

Out of the 1,901 surveys received from the UW-Stevens Point climate assessment, several 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 previous questions, the comments provided for those several items were included in the body of the UW-Stevens Point full report. This section of the report summarizes the comments submitted for the last six survey questions, and provides examples of those remarks echoed by several respondents.

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 respondents that provided commentary, quite a number of individuals said their experiences were similar on- and off-campus. Most of the respondents who had different experiences on- and off-campus said that the surrounding community was more accepting of people regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity than were people on campus. In addition, students, people of color, and sexual minority respondents felt more comfortable on-campus than off-campus.

Students’ Perceptions of Climate Differences between UW-Stevens Point and their Hometowns

Students were asked, “How does the UW-Stevens Point campus differ in diversity climate from the one in which you were raised?” While some students indicated there were few differences in diversity between their hometowns and the UW-Stevens Point campus, most said that differences existed. Of those student respondents, those from urban areas said the climate was more diverse in their hometowns. Students from more rural Wisconsin towns said more diversity and tolerance for difference was evident at UW-Stevens Point.

Thoughts on Campus Climate

One of the open-ended items allowed respondents to elaborate on any of their survey responses, to further describe their experiences, or to offer additional thoughts about climate issues. Among them, individuals' responses were divided as to whether diversity was a positive or negative aspect of the campus. Some thought UW-Stevens Point 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 were intolerant of gay and lesbian individuals. Some respondents of color, classified staff respondents, and women students gave specific examples of discrimination or harassment they experienced on campus.

Feeling Excluded on Campus

Thirty-one percent of all faculty and staff have felt excluded on the UW-Stevens Point campus. Of those respondents, several chose to elaborate on their experiences. A number of classified staff members, as well as academic staff members, felt excluded by actions and attitudes of the leadership and faculty. Others felt excluded based on their status as limited term employees, parents, or sexual minorities. Both women and men felt excluded based on their gender.

UW-Stevens Point's Diversity Successes and Challenges

Respondents were also queried, "How has UW-Stevens Point been successful in past and current diversity efforts? What are some current challenges?" Some respondents said they were unaware of or uninterested in diversity efforts and, therefore, could not provide any commentary. Other respondents identified a few specific areas where they have seen successes in terms of diversity at UW-Stevens Point, including recruiting students of color (specifically, African American students and Chinese nationals) and some faculty of color, and making some efforts to promote diversity.

Identified challenges included: retaining students and faculty of color, widening the pool of students and employees of color to include Native Americans and international students from countries other than China; implementing diversity-related initiatives and identifying accountable parties; facing and dealing with discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, and campus status; and encouraging people to care about diversity.

Suggestions to Improve the Climate

A number of respondents praised UW-Stevens Point'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-Stevens Point continue to communicate with all constituents, employees, and students about the myriad of aspects of University life and UW-Stevens Point's diversity initiatives.

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-Stevens Point. Others had suggestions for wording certain survey items. Several respondents insisted that UW-Stevens Point leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result.