

Methodology and Description of the Sample

Conceptual Framework

For the purposes of this project, diversity is defined as the “variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning which generally flow from the influence of different cultural, ethnic, and religious heritages, from the differences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and other socially constructed characteristics.”¹ Because of the inherent complexity of the topic of diversity, it is crucial to examine the multiple dimensions of diversity in higher education. The conceptual model used as the foundation for this assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith (1999) and modified by Rankin (2002).²

Design of the Study

Focus Groups. Following the design of the model, initial focus groups representing the various constituent groups on campus were convened in November 2002. The focus groups were conducted to identify challenges confronting the NDSU community. The information gathered from the focus groups was used to advise the construction of the survey instrument. The participant groups were recommended by the consultant and revised by the Diversity Council. The final focus groups consisted of the participants listed in Table 1. Members of the Diversity Council solicited volunteers to participate in the focus groups. The focus group protocol was developed by the consultant and approved by the Diversity Council. Graduate students enrolled in Dr. Ann Burnett’s Communication 708 class conducted the focus groups. The consultant traveled to NDSU and conducted a one-day workshop on the conduct of focus groups/interviews, as well as to discuss the overall project. Each focus group was approximately one hour in length. A copy of the focus group protocol is provided in Table 2.

¹ Rankin & Associates, 2001, adapted from AAC&U, 1995.

² See Appendix A for a more detailed description of the Transformational Tapestry© model.

The Diversity Council, to allow constituent groups the opportunity to respond to the findings of the internal assessment and provide suggested revisions and/or further clarifications, reviewed a draft of the final report.

Table 1
North Dakota State University
Focus Group Master Schedule
Focus Groups Conducted between November 1 and November 15
Group
African American Students
Students with Disabilities
Hispanic/Latino(a) Students
White Male Students
International Students
Asian-American Students
Graduate Students
Non-traditional Students
American Indian/Native American Students
LGBT Students
White Female Students
Middle Eastern Students
African American Faculty
African Faculty
Asian-American Faculty
Hispanic/Latino(a) Faculty
Faculty/Administrators/Staff with Disabilities
White Male Faculty
White Male Administrators
International Faculty
LGBT Faculty/Administrators/Staff
Staff of Color
Native American Faculty
White Male Staff
White Female Staff
White Female Faculty
White Female Administrators
Middle Eastern Faculty

Table 2
Climate Assessment
Facilitator's Guide for Initial Focus Groups

Introduction:

Thank you for your willingness to meet with me today to share your feelings about the climate at North Dakota State University for _____. *(fill in group you are addressing)* The focus groups are the initial steps in providing a picture of the climate at NDSU and will inform the questions utilized in a survey tool that will be distributed to faculty, staff, administrators, and students at NDSU during the Spring semester. All of the information collected during this session is confidential.

Climate is considered as current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential.

Questions:

Question 1: What, in your judgment, is the climate at NDSU for _____? *(fill in the group you are addressing)*?

Question 2: What do you feel is the greatest challenge facing you at NDSU as a member of the _____ *(fill in the group you are addressing) community?*

Question 3: What grade would you give to the campus as it relates to addressing the needs and concerns of the _____ *(fill in the group you are addressing) community?*

Question 4: What suggestions do you have for improving the climate for you as a member of the _____ *(fill in the group you are addressing) community?*

Survey Instrument. The survey questions were constructed through the work of Rankin, 2003. The Diversity Council and the various constituent groups reviewed the drafts of the survey. The final survey contained fifty-three questions and an additional space for respondents to provide commentary (Appendix B). The survey was designed to have respondents provide information about their personal campus experiences, their perception of the campus climate, and their perceptions of institutional actions including administrative policies and academic initiatives regarding diversity issues and concerns on campus. The survey was modified into a web-based format. All surveys were input into a secure site database and tabulated for appropriate analysis.

Sampling Procedure. The project proposal, including the survey instrument, was reviewed and approved on March 17, 2003 by the NDSU Office of Sponsored Programs Administration, Institutional Review Board. The proposal indicated that any analysis of the data would insure participant anonymity. The final web based survey was distributed to the campus community in March-April, 2003. Each survey included information describing the purpose of the study, explaining the survey instrument, and assuring the respondents of anonymity.

The sampling procedure included the entire population of students, faculty, staff, and administrators at NDSU. The sample and population figures, as well as the chi-square analyses are presented in Table 3. Several significant points include:

- The sample had a significantly larger percentage of females, and a smaller percentage of males, than did the population,
- The sample had a significantly lower percentage of students and a significantly higher percentage of faculty, staff, and administration than did the population,
- The sample had a significantly larger proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Chicano/Latino/Hispanic, and a smaller proportion of White/Caucasian than did the population,
- The sample had a significantly higher percentage of International individuals than the population.

Table 3
NDSU Demographics of Population and Sample

Characteristic	Subgroup	Population		Sample	
		%	(n)	%	(n)
Gender ^a	Male	55.9%	7037	47.9%	770
	Female	44.1%	5560	50.7%	815
Race/Ethnicity ^b	African American	1.2%	142	2.5% ¹	40
	African			1.7%	27
	Asian/Pacific Islander	1.9%	228	5.7 %	92
	Middle Easterner			.9%	14
	American Indian	1.0 %	116	2.5%	41
	Alaskan/Hawaiian Native			.2%	3
	Chicano/Latino/Hispanic	.6%	67	1.6%	26
	White/Caucasian	95.3%	11355	82.1%	1334
	Other			5.4%	88
Citizenship ^c	US Citizen	97.4%	11789	91.7%	1414
	Immigrant	1.8%	213	2.0%	31
	International	.9%	104	5.8%	89
	Refugee			.5%	8
Position ^d	Student	82.7%	10416	53.1%	854
	Faculty	6.1%	770	15.0%	242
	Staff	10.6%	1335	26.6%	432
	Administrator	.6%	76	4.4%	71

¹ Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents were instructed to indicate all categories that apply.

^a $\chi^2(1, N = 14182) = 30.17, p = .0001$

^b $\chi^2(4, N = 13468) = 248.53, p = .0001$

^c $\chi^2(2, N = 13640) = 239.40, p = .0001$

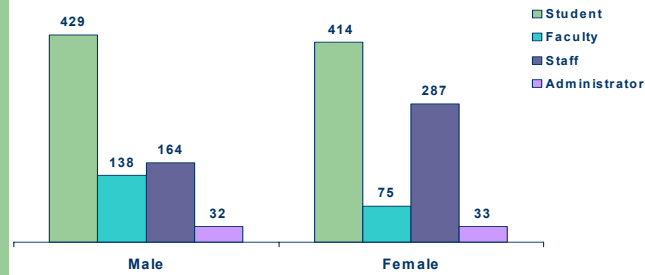
^d $\chi^2(3, N = 14196) = 824.25, p = .0001$

Description of the Sample³

The majority of the sample was women (50%) (Figure 1), heterosexual (88%) (Figure 2), and between 22 and 32 years old (28%) (Figure 3). Figure 4 depicts the student population by age. Fifty-three percent of the survey respondents were students (the majority of whom were upper-class persons), while approximately 27 percent were staff, 15 percent were faculty and four percent were administrators (Figure 5). Ninety percent of the respondents were full-time employees or students.

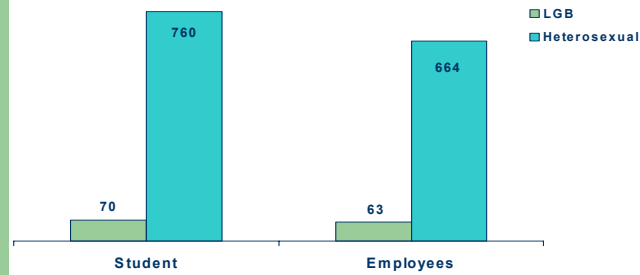
³ All frequency tables are provided in Appendix C. For any notation regarding tables in the narrative, the reader is directed to these tables.

Figure 1
Survey Respondents by:
Gender & Position^{1,2} (n)



¹Number of transgender respondents (n=15) too small to report
²Undergraduate and graduate students combined

Figure 2
Survey Respondents by:
Sexual Orientation & Position^{1,2} (n)



¹Faculty, staff, & administrators combined=employees
²Undergraduate and graduate students combined

Figure 3
Survey Respondents by:
Age

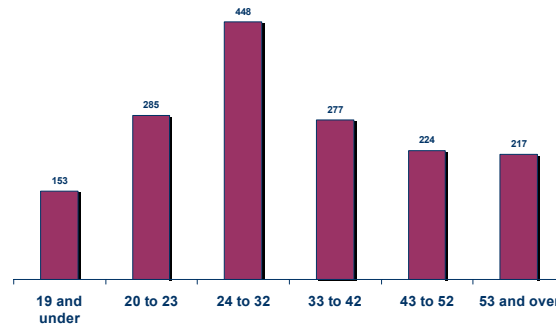
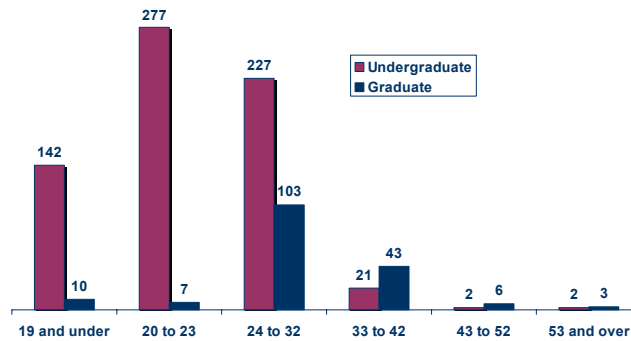
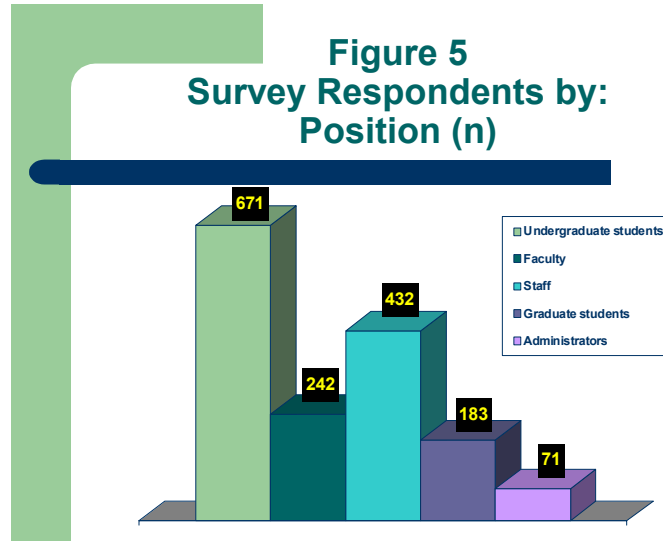
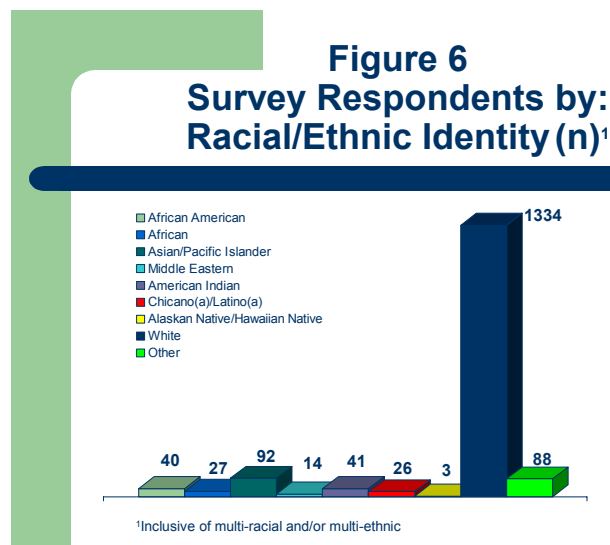


Figure 4
Student Respondents
by Age





Eighty-two percent of the respondents (n = 1334) were Caucasian/White and 6 percent (n = 92) were Asian/Pacific Islanders. Two percent (n = 27) were African, 3 percent were African American (n = 40), and 3 percent were American Indian (n = 41). Two percent of the respondents reported their ethnic/racial identity as Chicano/Latino (n = 26). One percent was Middle Eastern (n = 14) (Figure 6).



Respondents were given the opportunity to mark multiple boxes in regards to their racial identity, allowing for participants to identify as bi-racial or multi-racial. Given this opportunity, the majority of respondents chose white (n = 1318) as part of their identity

and 307 respondents chose “color” as part of their identity (Figure 7)⁴. Given the small number of respondents in each racial/ethnic category, many of the analyses and discussion will use the collapsed category of people of color and white people.⁵

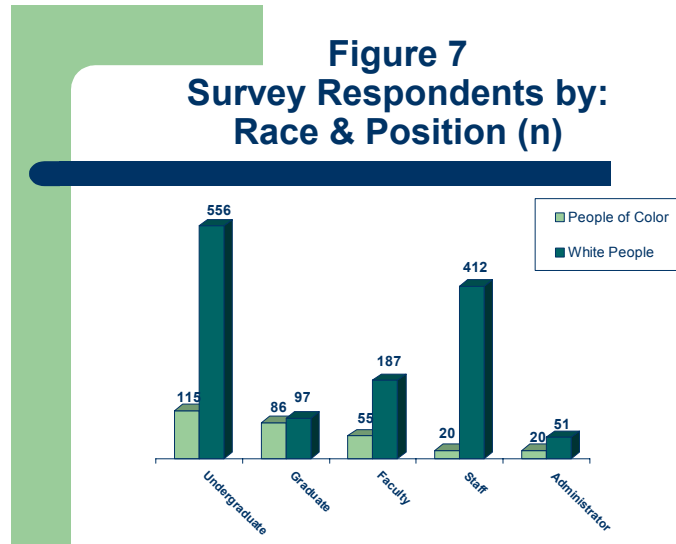


Figure 8 indicates that most of the respondents identified as Christian (75%), while 11 percent reported no spiritual affiliation. Four percent were Baha’I. More than two percent were Hindu, while just less than two percent were Muslim. One percent were Buddhist and less than one percent were Jewish. Figure 9 provides a review of the data by position, collapsing the categories of non-Christian spiritual affiliations.

⁴ Total number of people of color (276) and white people (in Figure

⁵ While the authors recognize the vastly different experiences of people of various racial identities (e.g., Chicano(a) versus African-American or Latino(a) versus Asian-American), and those experiences within these identity categories (e.g. Hmong versus Chinese), it was necessary to collapse these identities into people of color and white for many of the analyses due to the small numbers in the individual categories.

Figure 8
Survey Respondents by
Spiritual Affiliation

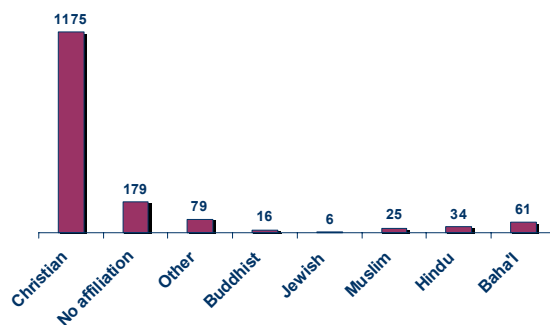
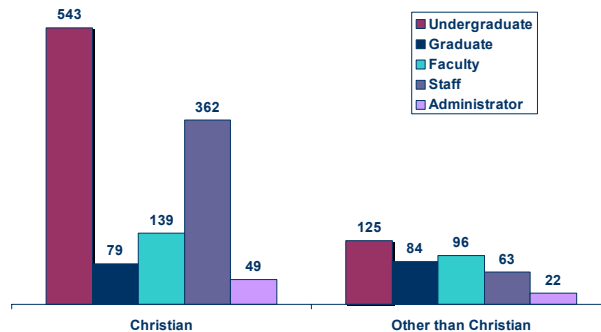
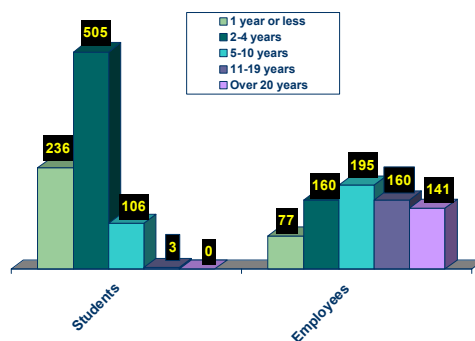


Figure 9
Spiritual Affiliation by Position



The majority of student respondents (62%) have been affiliated with the University for less than five years, while most employees report having been affiliated with NDSU for more than five years (Figure 10).

Figure 10
Time at NDSU by Position



Eight percent of respondents reported having a disability that substantially effects major life activities such as seeing, hearing, learning, or walking (Figure 11).

Figure 11
Respondents with Disabilities (n)

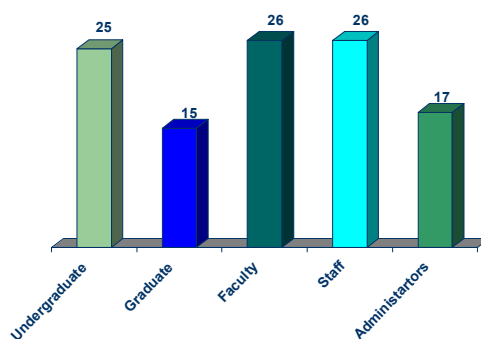
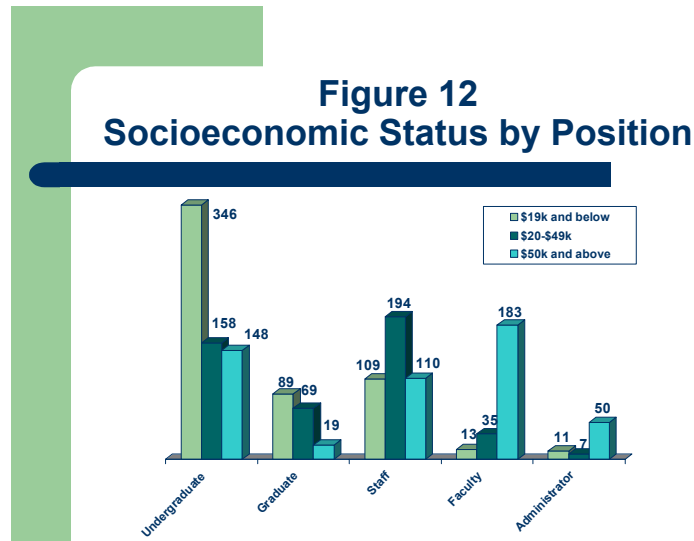


Table 4 indicates that 89 percent of people who completed the survey were U.S.-born citizens.

Table 4 Citizenship status	%	(n)
U.S. citizen—born in the United States	88.9	1371
U.S. citizen—naturalized	2.8	43
International (F-1, J-1, or H1-B, or other visa)	5.8	89
Permanent resident (immigrant)	2.0	31
Permanent resident (refugee)	0.5	8

Eighteen percent of survey respondents have an annual income of less than \$10,000 while 27 percent earn \$60,000 or more (Figure 12).



Of the students completing the survey, 46 percent live off-campus independently, 37 percent live in the residence halls, and 9 percent live off-campus with family (Table 5).

Table 5
Undergraduate Student
Residence

	%	(n)
Residence hall	37.3	249
Off campus –independent	45.9	306
Off campus – with family	9.1	61
On campus - apartment	2.7	18
Fraternity/Sorority	4.5	30

Note: undergraduate student responses only

Table 6 presents types of student organizations and the percentages of the student respondents who participate in these organizations. Twenty-three percent are involved with honor societies and 21 percent participate in groups with a Department/Academic focus. Nineteen percent of the students are involved in organizations with religious or spiritual foci. Seventeen percent participate in recreation/competitive groups.

Table 6
Student Organization Involvement

	%	(n)
Performing and Visual Arts	12.2	82
Communications	7.5	50
Council/Advisory Groups	7.0	47
Department/Academic Focus	20.6	138
Greek Life	10.4	70
Student Government/Service Areas	12.8	86
Intercollegiate Athletics	5.7	38
Honorary Societies	23.4	157
Language & Culture	6.4	43
Recreation/Competitive	17.4	117
Political & Social Concerns	8.8	59
Religious & Spiritual	18.6	125
Other	8.5	57

Note: Undergraduate student respondents only