

Executive Summary

*Higher Education Research
Institute (HERI) Survey
Administration Results*

Prepared by the HERI Working Group





Overview

In order to help us better understand and improve our campus climate, the University of Richmond decided in July 2020 to engage the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in administering three campus climate surveys. HERI is a UCLA-based research institute, home to the nation's largest and oldest empirical study of higher education, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) longitudinal study of the college student experience. HERI provides climate survey data to participating schools and uses the empirical data to inform ongoing efforts to improve higher education experiences. Administering the Faculty Survey, Diverse Learning Environments Survey for students, and the Staff Climate Survey simultaneously provides a snapshot of campus climate at one point in time, and enables us to identify themes, issues, and patterns across the three surveys. In addition, for each survey, HERI provides comparison data from other participating higher education institutions.

Instruments, Samples, and Response Rates

Following is a summary of administration, sample and response rates, and comparison group information for each survey:

2020-2021 HERI Surveys	Faculty Survey	Staff Climate Survey	Diverse Learning Environments (Students)
UR Administration Dates	Oct. 5-Nov. 2, 2020	Feb. 1-April 30, 2021	Feb. 1-April 30, 2021
UR Response Rate	42% (259 of 618 invited)	58% (730 of 1,252 invited)	22% (915 of 4,115 invited)
UR Population Invited	All faculty as of 10/5/2020 including all schools, all ranks	All paid staff as of 1/25/2021 defined as: Full-time & Part-time, permanent employees and Full-time & Part-time, temporary/contract employees	All active students on 1/25/2021 including full-time, part-time, undergraduate, graduate, all 5 schools
Comparison Group	Private/Nonsectarian 4yr Colleges-very high selectivity: Carleton College Claremont McKenna College Grinnell College Swarthmore College Vassar College	All private 4yr Colleges: Cedar Crest College Holy Family U. Hope College Pacific Lutheran University Saint Joseph's U. Saint Peter's U. Union College U. of Redlands U. of the Sciences	Nonsectarian 4yr Colleges: Bay Path U. Berry College Cedar Crest College U. of Redlands

Each survey included over fifty survey items focused on the campus climate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Although the surveys are comparable, and many items are similar across the surveys, there are also substantial differences in wording, categories, and emphasis that present challenges for comparison across the three surveys.¹

¹ The surveys did not use the same questions or categories consistently. The surveys did not use the same ethnic and racial categories as our IPEDS data. The surveys did not use the same numeric scales for all questions.

The schools provided by HERI as comparison groups, with the exception of those used in the faculty survey, do not reflect our commonly used peer institutions. Comparison groups were pre-established by HERI but selected by UR based on data obtained about UR from IPEDS and HERI's procedure for classifying institutions (institution type and control). Two important things to note are: 1) most participating schools did not administer all three HERI surveys and 2) HERI does not allow the option to create a custom group by selecting specific institutions. While comparisons can highlight areas needing attention, the data may be most helpful in providing a foundation for benchmarking climate issues at UR as we consider future actions and outcomes of our ongoing DEIB work. The HERI data, alongside other institutional empirical data sources, reveal trends that may inform a broad set of questions we seek to answer related to representation, belonging, and capability, among others.

Our Approach to Interpreting the Survey Data

As expected, the three HERI surveys, overall, provide a great deal of data, rich in depth, breadth, and potential insight. As an institution, we will examine the data and lean into this potential over time, as various members of our campus community evaluate the data from their unit perspectives, and as the HERI data are shared alongside other institutional data sources. The initial step toward this examination was taken in fall 2021 by a working group charged to review and discuss the survey data and make recommendations on the key findings and themes to share with campus leaders, as well as the campus community. Members of the HERI Working Group are Amy Howard, Andrea Simpson, Carl Sorensen, Dara Gocheski, Deborah White, Glyn Hughes, LaRee Sugg, Linda Boland, Melanie Jenkins, Theran Fisher, and Tina Cade.

Following the guiding rationale for administering the HERI surveys to faculty, staff, and students during the same academic year, the working group decided to read primarily across the surveys to identify major cross-cutting themes relating to the campus climate. Quite intentionally, the group also viewed campus climate through the lens of our [institutional goals](#) of representation, belonging, and capability. This lens informed the identification of themes across the surveys as well as items of interest within the individual surveys, highlights of which are summarized in the following two sections.

Examples of Cross-Cutting Themes

Below are cross-cutting themes identified by the working group, along with highlighted details and unique outcomes from the individual surveys.

Across a wide range of survey items, the responses of people from under-represented and historically marginalized groups consistently differed from their counterparts and peers on issues related to representation, belonging, and capability.

- Compared to white people and men, people of color, women, and genderqueer/gender non-binary people generally
 - witnessed or experienced more discrimination/bias
 - were less satisfied with the diversity of the campus and with UR's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) efforts
 - participated more in DEIB activities
 - rated themselves more highly in understanding DEI issues
- Men faculty reported being more satisfied with the campus atmosphere for most aspects of identity (religious, sexual orientation, gender expression, and immigration status) compared to women. Men were also less satisfied than women with the atmosphere for political differences.

Racial tension and discrimination, in particular, were acknowledged across the surveys, and was especially pronounced among students. Major highlights include

- People of color, women, and genderqueer/gender non-binary people were more likely to experience discrimination/bias and racial tension than whites and men.
- Students reported having witnessed discrimination more so than faculty and staff.
- Asian, Black, and multiracial staff reported witnessing more discrimination than staff of other races/ethnicity groups.
- Asian faculty and staff reported the highest levels of stress related to discrimination and exclusion compared to counterparts from other race/ethnicity groups.

Genderqueer/gender non-binary staff and students were more likely to have witnessed or experienced discrimination than staff and students who identify as men or women. Specific highlights from the surveys include

- Genderqueer/gender non-binary staff were more likely to have
 - reported stress from discrimination
 - heard insensitive or disparaging remarks about race/ethnicity from members of our community
- Genderqueer/gender non-binary students were more likely to have heard verbal comments and experienced exclusion than students that identify as men or women.

Satisfaction with administrative response to crises varied by issue and across constituencies/surveys.

- Across all surveys, respondents were generally satisfied with the administrative response to campus emergencies, but were much less satisfied with responses to crises on sexual assault, bias, and discrimination.
- Students expressed the most overall dissatisfaction with administrative responses to crises, whereas staff and faculty were generally more satisfied.

Highlights from DLE, Staff Climate, and Faculty Surveys

Below are selected highlights from the HERI surveys. The highlighted results are not a comprehensive overview of each survey but rather a selection of some of the results available that are pertinent to our institutional goals of representation, belonging, and capability.

DIVERSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SURVEY (STUDENTS)

Academic Validation in the Classroom

Students reported strong rates of academic validation, which include feeling that their contributions were valued; that faculty provided helpful feedback; that faculty encouraged questioning and participating in discussions; and that faculty were able to determine students' level of understanding of the course material.

Co-curricular Diversity Activities

Students reported strong rates of involvement with institutional programs and courses focused on diversity issues including sexual orientation, privilege, and gender identity.

Identity Salience

Students reported thinking about their race/ethnicity very often or often (54.7%) and socioeconomic class very often or often (54.0%) during the school year. LGBTQ+ students reported less satisfaction with the campus atmosphere for differences in sexual orientation, experiences of discrimination, and interaction with someone with a different orientation than their own.

STAFF CLIMATE SURVEY

Staff Discrimination and Exclusion

Staff reported the greatest frequency of experience with discrimination or exclusion at UR based on their political beliefs, followed by their race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, ability status, and citizenship status.

Supervisors

Staff reported high levels of agreement that their supervisor cared about their well-being, supported professional development, provided helpful feedback and was an advocate. About one fifth of respondents felt their supervisors set unrealistic expectations for their job.

Campus Climate

Just over half of staff reported their concerns were considered when making policy. Staff also reported not feeling respected by faculty.

Institutional Priorities and Professional Development

Staff reported UR's highest institutional priority as increasing or maintaining institutional prestige followed by improving and maintaining the physical appearance of campus. In contrast, staff reported UR's investment in the professional development of staff as the lowest institutional priority, with only a third of responders indicating it is a high/highest priority for UR.

Benefits

Staff reported a high level of satisfaction with benefits, including sick and vacation leave, as well as retirement benefits.

FACULTY SURVEY

Workplace Satisfaction

Faculty reported a high level of satisfaction with their departmental leadership, but less satisfaction with their teaching load compared to peers in the faculty survey comparison group.

Satisfaction with compensation and benefits

Faculty reported relatively high levels of satisfaction with compensation but less so compared to peers in the areas of salary, retirement benefits, opportunities for scholarly pursuits, and leave policies. Additionally, faculty reported lower levels of satisfaction around relative equity of salary and job benefits, flexibility in relation to family matters or emergencies and overall job satisfaction.

Campus Climate

More than half of faculty respondents reported that the faculty are typically at odds with the campus administration. However, more than half of faculty respondents also reported that administrators consider faculty concerns when making policy and that faculty were sufficiently involved in campus decision-making.

Where to Find HERI Results for Further Review

Members of the campus community can access the detailed summaries of UR's results provided by HERI for all three surveys at ifx.richmond.edu/surveys/heri.html.

Next Steps for Interpreting the Data and Identifying Actionable Areas

Our University's senior leaders will continue to mine this information, along with other data points, to address questions, gaps, and drive action toward our intersecting goals of representation, capability, and belonging. If you have questions about the HERI survey or this summary please contact Glyn Hughes, Director Institutional Equity and Inclusion (ghughes@richmond.edu), who will direct inquiries to the appropriate parties.

This analysis will contribute to the institution's work to advance our DEIB commitments.