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Campus Climate Survey of Full-Time Faculty

at the University of La Verne

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## Executive Summary

The present campus climate survey was conducted to assess the perceptions of faculty at the University of La Verne regarding support of faculty by the administration, faculty support of one another, diversity issues, and diversity issues in classrooms.

With collaboration from the Mosaic Cultural Institute, the survey was designed to:

- become an important component of the James Irvine Foundation Interim Report.
- guide recommendations for future programs and services relevant to diversity issues.
- create the climate for dialogue about perceptions on campus and draw attention to the needs of students and Faculty.
- contribute to a culture of assessment of Faculty perceptions.

Of the University's 189 full-time faculty, 78 (41.3% return rate) completed the 31-item questionnaire designed by the research team. Following the first four demographic questions, 24 items were asked of the faculty using a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). For each of these 24 items, there was also an importance question (i.e., "How important is this issue to you?"), which was also based on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (*Not Very*) to 4 (*Very Important*). The last three items on the survey asked faculty to agree or disagree to statements regarding diversity overall and the usefulness and value of the survey.

Findings indicate that most faculty agreed or strongly agreed the University's efforts to promote all kinds of diversity, including diversity related to race/ethnicity, sex, abilities, and religion. Also, all of these diversity issues were valued as important or very important by the faculty surveyed. However, less than half of faculty agreed or

strongly agreed that the University has clear procedures for dealing with diversity issues. The University needs to establish a task force to develop clearer procedures and policies when dealing with diversity issues. This group should not only develop these procedures and policies, but also relate these to the University community through various channels in order to better inform all members, such as via e-mail, discussion groups, memos, etc.

In addition to perceptions of diversity promotion and their importance, findings indicate that the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the administration supports faculty professional development, attempts to understand the needs of faculty and respects the faculty. However, the majority of faculty did not perceive that the administration shared issues and concerns openly with the faculty. Faculty perceive a lack of communication between administration and faculty. The administration needs to be mindful to update all faculty members about changes and rising issues in the University community, using multiple channels of communication.

Finally, most faculty members agreed or strongly agreed to diversity being important to the University. Also, the majority of faculty thought that the survey was a valuable use of their time. However, 41% of faculty believed that the results from surveys like the one they were taking would not result in any real change. An additional 17.9% indicated they did not know if any changes would result. This illustrates that research regarding perceptions are not commonly perceived as effecting any visible or memorable changes for the University community. The administration must make certain that results from any institutional research should produce tangible outcomes for the University community and its members. They must also be vigilant in establishing a

culture of research in order to track changes for continual assessment and improvement.

## Method

### *Participants*

Seventy-eight faculty members at the University of La Verne were included in this purposive sample (38 females, 39 males, 1 declined to state). The sample consisted of 6.4% Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islanders, 5.1 Hispanic/Latinos, 2.6% Europeans, 64.1% Caucasian/Whites, 11.5% other or mixed ethnicities, and 10.3% declined to state. The faculty also varied on tenure status, such that 12.8% were not tenured, but were not on a tenure track, 34.6% were not tenured, but on a tenure track and 50% of the sample were tenured. Two point six percent declined to state their faculty status.

### *Instrument*

A survey to assess various domains of campus climate was designed by the researcher. The survey consisted of 24 questions pertaining to perceptions of University-wide efforts toward supporting faculty, communication between and among faculty and administration, and promotion of various types of diversity. Also, participants were asked their perceptions pertaining to diversity and student experiences in their own classrooms. Participants rated each question using a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). In addition, participants rated the importance of each of the 24 questions using a Likert-type scale, ranging from “Not Very” to “Very Important”. The option of “Don’t Know” was also included for both types of perception and importance questions.

### *Procedure*

Participants were given a cover letter and the questionnaire either at a Faculty Assembly meeting or through e-mail. Participants took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete the packets. Of the 189 full-time faculty surveyed, 78 returned completed packets to the Provost's office or sent packets through the campus mail to the researcher, yielding a 41.3% return rate.

### Results

Questions on the campus climate survey could be grouped into one of four main categories: how administration treats faculty (#1, 2, 5, and 7), how faculty treat faculty (#6 and 8), University efforts to promote diversity (#3, 4, 11, 12, 13, and 14), and diversity in the classroom (#19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24). Firstly, frequencies for questions regarding the University's efforts to promote diversity are presented in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. It appears most faculty agreed or strongly agreed the University's efforts to promote all kinds of diversity (85.9%), as well as diversity related to race/ethnicity (79.5%), sex (69.3%), abilities (53.8%), and religion (53.9%). However, only 46.2% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the University has clear procedures for dealing with diversity issues, while 41.1% strongly disagreed or disagreed to this statement.

Figure 1 . Perception of University to Promote Diversity of All Kinds

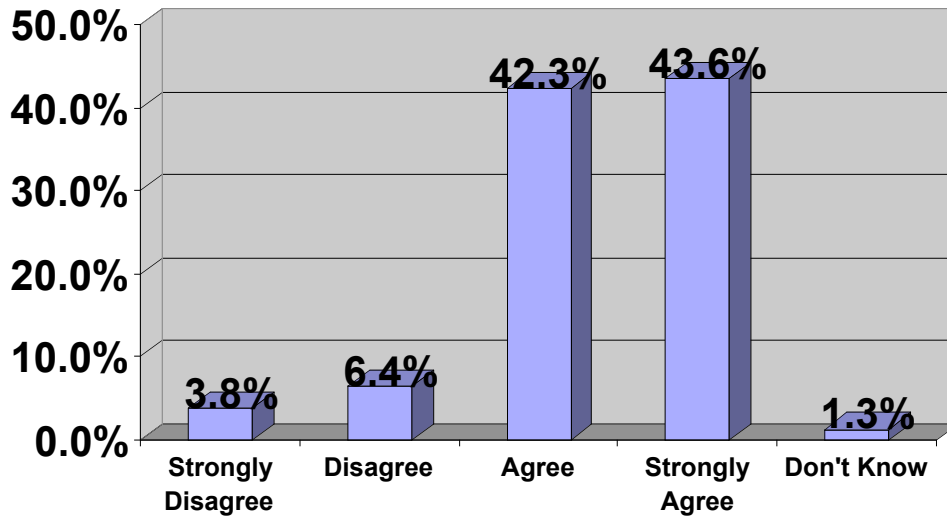


Figure 2 . Perception of University to Have Clear Procedures for Dealing with Diversity Issue

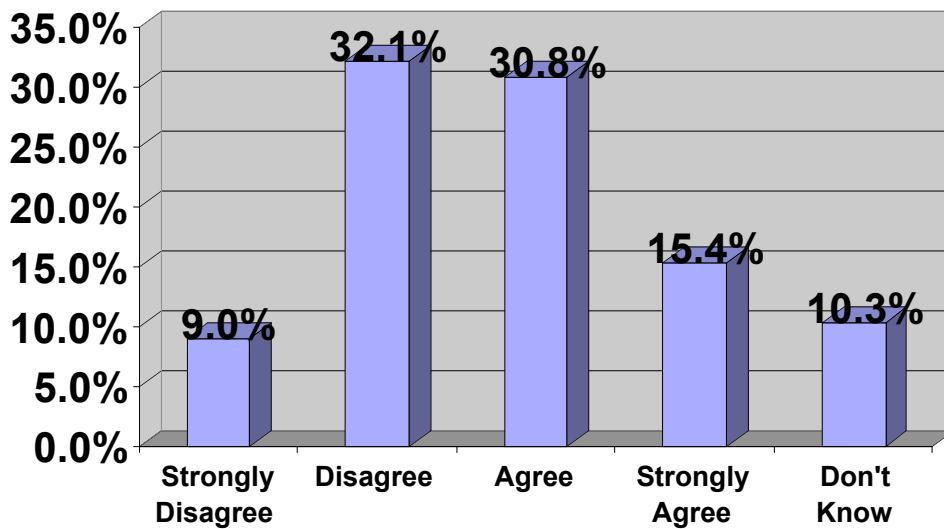


Figure 3. Perception of University Efforts to Emphasize Racial/Ethnic Diversity

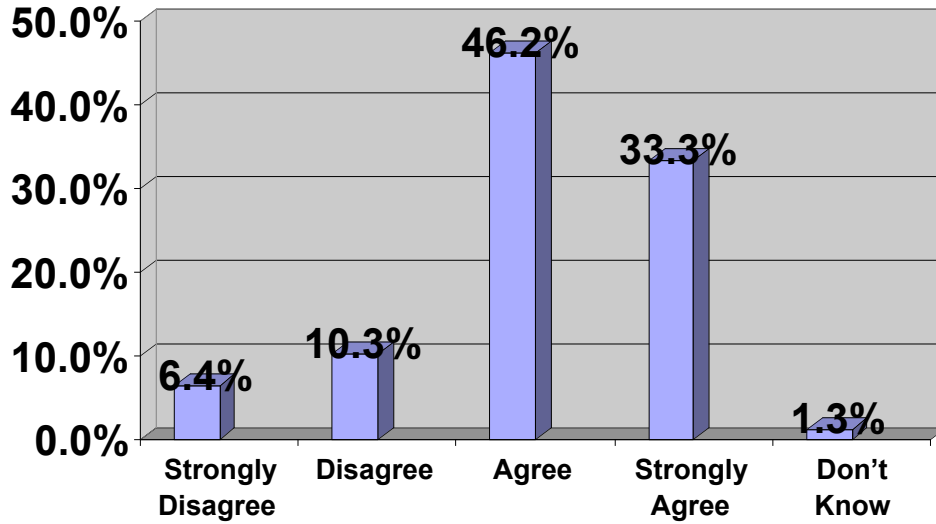


Figure 4. Perception of University Efforts to Emphasize Sexual Diversity

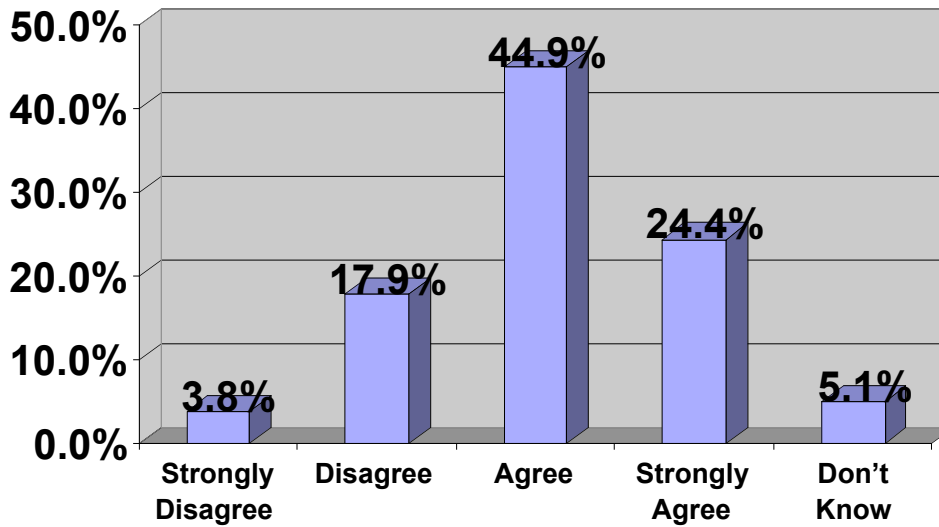


Figure 5. Perception of University Efforts to Emphasize Abilities Diversity

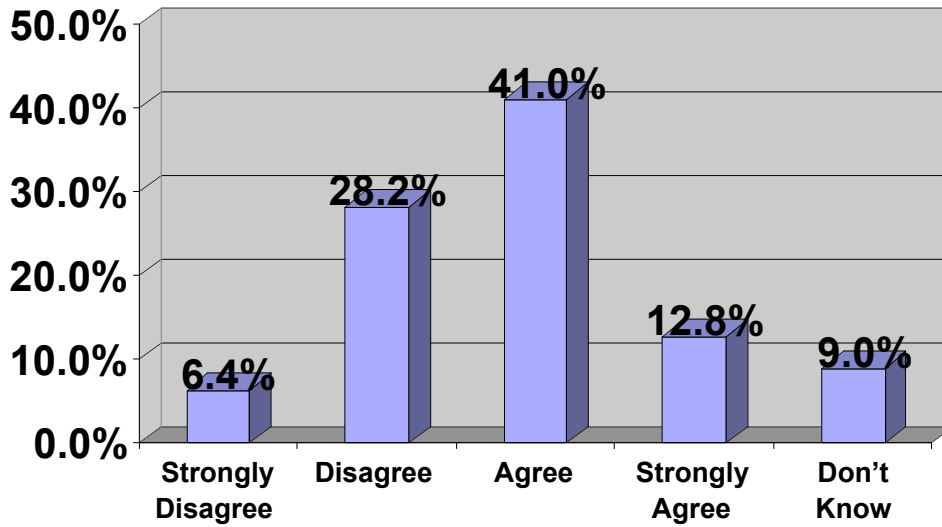
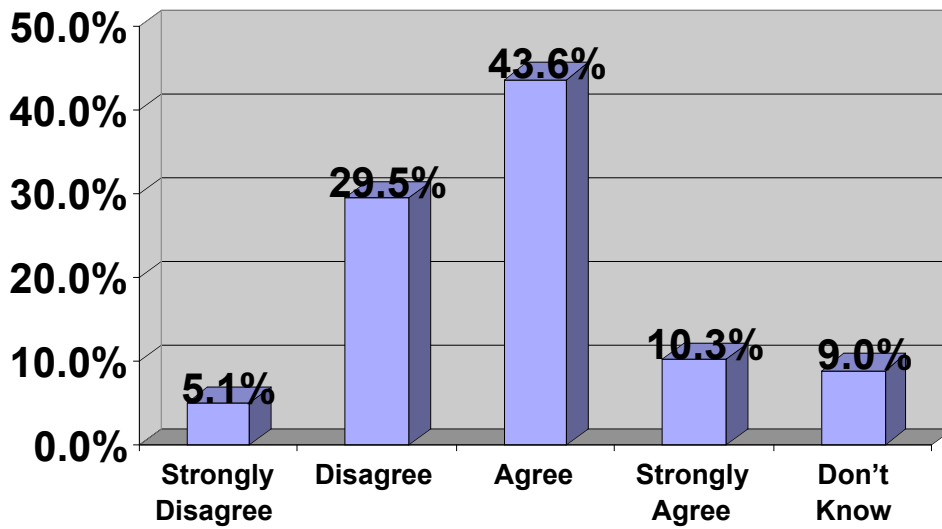


Figure 6. Perception of University Efforts to Emphasize Religious Diversity





For each diversity related question in the survey, participants also rated how important the issue was to them. In Table 1, the percentages of faculty who perceived that these diversity issues were important are presented. Results show that the majority of participants believed these areas of diversity are important to them. None of these questions had lower than 62.8% of participants indicate they were important or very important.

Table 1

*Perceived Importance of University's Efforts to Promote Diversity*

Question	NV/S	Important	Very	DK/M
All Kinds of Diversity	11.6%	30.8%	47.4%	10.3%
Procedures for Diversity Issues	18.0%	38.5%	32.1%	11.6%
Racial/Ethnic Diversity	10.3%	35.9%	41.0%	12.8%
Sexual Diversity	25.6%	39.7%	24.4%	10.3%
Abilities Diversity	17.9%	38.5%	29.5%	14.1%
Religious Diversity	24.3%	37.2%	25.6%	12.9%

Note. NV/S =Not Very Important or Somewhat, Very = Very Important, DK/M = Don't Know or Missing.

To capture overall perceptions of the promotion of diversity at the University, the 6 questions regarding promotion of diversity were totaled. Possible scores ranged from 6 to 24, with higher scores indicating more agreement that the University is promoting diversity. In this study, participants rated efforts by the University to promote diversity high ( $M = 18.23$ ,  $SD = 4.11$ ). An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if perceptions differed among faculty status. No differences in perceptions ratings were

found,  $F(2, 68) = .93, p > .05$ . Those who were tenured ( $M = 18.78, SD = 3.58$ ) did not differ from those not tenured, but on a tenure track ( $M = 17.40, SD = 5.02$ ), nor did they differ from those who were not on a tenure track at all ( $M = 18.89, SD = 3.58$ ) on their perceptions.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if males and females differed in their perceptions of the diversity promotion on campus. There were no significant differences between genders,  $t(70) = -1.41, p > .05$ . Males ( $M = 17.56, SD = 4.50$ ) perceived the efforts similarly to females ( $M = 18.92, SD = 3.69$ ) in the sample.

In addition to perceptions of diversity promotion and their importance, questions regarding how the administration treats faculty were analyzed. In Table 2, the percentages of faculty who perceived how much support the administration offers them are presented. It appears the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the administration supports faculty development (76.9%), attempts to understand the needs of faculty (52.6%) and respects the faculty (72.8%). However, the majority of faculty did not perceive that the administration shared issues and concerns openly with the faculty (56.4%).

Table 2

*Perceptions of Administration's Support of Faculty*

Question	SD/D	A	SA	DK/M
Support of Faculty Development	19.3%	47.4%	29.5%	3.9%
Understand the Needs	44.9%	30.8%	21.8%	2.6%
Respect by Administration	32.1%	35.9%	26.9%	5.2%
Issues Shared Openly	56.4%	21.8%	16.7%	5.2%

Note. SD/D = Strongly Disagree and Disagree (combined), A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, and DK/M = Don't Know or Missing (combined).

For each of the questions related to administration's support of faculty, participants also rated how important the issue was to them. In Table 3, the percentages of faculty who perceived that these issues were important are presented. Results show that the majority of participants believed these issues of administrative support to faculty are important. None of these questions had lower than 85.9% of participants indicate they were important or very important.

Table 3

*Perceived Importance of Administration's Support of Faculty*

Question	NV/S	Important	Very	DK/M
Support of Faculty Development	3.8%	21.8%	64.1%	10.3%
Understand the Needs	0%	19.2%	70.5%	10.3%
Respect by Administration	2.6%	12.8%	75.6%	9.0%
Issues Shared Openly	2.6%	14.1%	73.1%	10.3%

Note. NV/S = Not Very Important or Somewhat, Very = Very Important, DK/M = Don't Know or Missing.

Questions regarding how the faculty perceive their treatment of one another were analyzed. In Table 4, the percentages of faculty who perceived how faculty treat each other are presented. It appears the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the faculty treat each other with respect (75.7%) and that issues are shared openly among faculty (70.5%).

Table 4

*Perceptions of Faculty Treatment of One Another*

Question	SD/D	A	SA	DK/M
Respect by Other Faculty	21.8%	51.3%	24.4%	2.6%
Issues Shared Openly	25.6%	41.0%	29.5%	3.9%

Note. SD/D = Strongly Disagree and Disagree (combined), A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, and DK/M = Don't Know or Missing (combined).

For both of the questions related to faculty's treatment of one another, participants also rated how important the issue was to them. In Table 5, the percentages of faculty who perceived that these issues were important are presented. Results show that the majority of participants believed these issues are important. None of these questions had lower than 88.5% of participants indicate they were important or very important.

Table 5

*Perceived Importance of Faculty Treatment of One Another*

Question	NV/S	Important	Very	DK/M
Respect by Other Faculty	0%	19.2%	71.8%	9.0%
Issues Shared Openly	0%	30.8%	57.7%	11.5%

Note. NV/S = Not Very Important or Somewhat, Very = Very Important, DK/M = Don't Know or Missing.

Questions regarding how the faculty perceive the diversity and students' experiences in the classroom were analyzed. In Table 6, the percentages of faculty

perceptions of their classrooms are presented. It appears the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that students feel comfortable raising diversity issues (78.2%), that minority students feel comfortable raising diversity issues (70.5%), and that diversity of students adds to the quality of the class (94.8%). Participants also agreed or strongly agreed that students from all backgrounds feel included in their classes (88.4%), students feel fairly treated (89.8%), and that students understand the relevancy of studying about diversity (74.4%).

Table 6

*Perceptions of Classroom Diversity Issues*

<u>Question</u>	<u>SD/D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>DK/M</u>
Raising Diversity Issues	7.7%	39.7%	38.5%	14.1%
Minorities Raising Issues	12.8%	35.9%	34.6%	16.7%
Diversity Adds Quality	2.6%	26.9%	67.9%	2.6%
Students Feel Included	3.8%	44.9%	43.5%	7.7%
Students Feel Fairly Treated	2.6%	38.5%	51.3%	7.7%
Students Understand Diversity	12.8%	46.2%	28.2%	12.8%

Note. SD/D = Strongly Disagree and Disagree (combined), A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree, and DK/M = Don't Know or Missing (combined).

For these questions related to faculty's perception of their students, participants also rated how important the issue was to them. In Table 7, the percentages of faculty who perceived that these issues were important are presented. Results show that the

majority of participants believed these issues are important. None of these questions had lower than 80.8% of participants indicate they were important or very important.

Table 7

*Perceived Importance of Classroom Diversity Issues*

<u>Question</u>	<u>NV/S</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>DK/M</u>
Raising Diversity Issues	2.6%	28.2%	56.4%	12.8%
Minorities Raising Issues	4.9%	25.6%	59.0%	11.5%
Diversity Adds Quality	4.9%	23.1%	61.5%	11.5%
Students Feel Included	0%	23.1%	65.4%	11.5%
Students Feel Fairly Treated	0%	16.7%	71.8%	11.5%
Students Understand Diversity	3.9%	30.8%	50.0%	15.4%

Note. NV/S =Not Very Important or Somewhat, Very = Very Important, DK/M = Don't Know or Missing.

Finally, general questions were asked of the participants regarding their feelings about the importance of diversity and the usefulness of the questionnaire. Most faculty agreed or strongly agreed to diversity being important to the University (94.9%). Also, the majority of faculty thought that the survey was a valuable use of their time (65.4%). However, 41% of faculty believed that the results from surveys like the one they were taking would not result in any real change, and 17.9% indicated they did not know.

### Discussion

Results of the survey indicate that most faculty agreed or strongly agreed the University's efforts to promote all kinds of diversity, including diversity related to

race/ethnicity, sex, abilities, and religion. Also, all of these diversity issues were valued as important or very important by the faculty surveyed. However, less than half of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the University has clear procedures for dealing with diversity issues.

In addition to perceptions of diversity promotion and their importance, results also indicate that the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the administration supports faculty professional development, attempts to understand the needs of faculty and respects the faculty. However, the majority of faculty surveyed did not perceive that the administration shared issues and concerns openly with them.

For questionnaire items regarding faculty's support of one another and experiences in the classroom, the majority of participants surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the faculty treat each other with respect and that issues are shared openly among faculty. Also, the majority of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that students feel comfortable raising diversity issues, that minority students feel comfortable raising diversity issues, and that diversity of students adds to the quality of the class. Participants also agreed or strongly agreed that students from all backgrounds feel included in their classes, students feel fairly treated, and that students understand the relevancy of studying about diversity.

Lastly, most faculty members agreed or strongly agreed to diversity being important to the University. Also, the majority of faculty thought that the survey was a valuable use of their time. However, 41% of faculty believed that the results from surveys like the one they were taking would not result in any real change. An additional 17.9% indicated they did not know if any changes would result.

### *Limitations*

One of the limitations to this survey was that not all faculty returned the questionnaires, leading to a low response rate and limited generalizability to all faculty members' perceptions of campus climate. Also, there were some questionnaires that were incorrectly completed, resulting in missing data. Additionally, there should be multiple measures of campus climate besides survey data, such as behavioral data concerning attendance to diversity events or campus safety data about racial or sexual assault incidents on campus, all of which contribute to the atmosphere and climate of the University. Perhaps focus groups and observations of students, faculty and administration interactions could also be included in a study of campus climate.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the data from this survey, the research team recommends that the University establish a task force to develop clearer procedures and policies when dealing with diversity issues. This task force group should not only develop these procedures and policies, but also relate these to the University community through various channels in order to better inform all members, such as via e-mail, discussion groups, memos, etc. If there are procedures that exist for dealing with diversity issues, then data indicate that the faculty perceive these are not clearly communicated to them.

Another perception is that, despite whatever efforts the administration provides for public forums on various issues pertinent to the University, the faculty perceive a lack of communication between administration and faculty. The administration needs to be mindful to update all faculty members about changes and rising issues in the University community, using multiple channels of communication.



Finally, the data from questions regarding the usefulness of surveys such as these illustrates that research regarding perceptions are not commonly perceived as effecting any visible or memorable changes for the University community. The administration must make certain that results from any institutional research should produce tangible outcomes for the University community and its members. They must also be vigilant in establishing a culture of research in order to track changes for continual assessment and improvement.