University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Campus Climate Survey
2015

Executive Summary

Background

Campus climate surveys are common throughout higher education as a mechanism to learn about the work-life environment on a campus for faculty, staff, and students. UNLV conducted its first climate survey in 2010, limited to faculty and staff. The second survey was conducted in February of 2015, through the Full Participation Committee created by then president Neal Smatresk. This committee had representation from academic faculty, administrative faculty, and classified staff, the Faculty Senate, and the Provost’s Office.

The survey was sent to 2,941 people, of whom 1,052 responded. This is a response rate of 35.8 percent, which is an improvement over the 33.1 percent of 2010. Completion rates also improved to 94 percent. The survey is divided into seven sections, with both fixed response and open ended questions. Mean scores on questions ranged from 2.95 out of 4.0 to 1.96 out of 4.0.

Section One – Personal and Professional Satisfaction

The first question asked if faculty and staff believed their unit serves its mission well, and more than three-quarters agreed. Sixty-six percent reported being happy working at UNLV, up from 58 percent in 2010.

Section Two – Fairness

Sixty-five percent reported being treated fairly at UNLV, and 53 percent believe that job performance matters more than personal loyalties in their unit. Fifty-nine percent agreed that they would recommend employment at UNLV to members of an underrepresented group, and 68 percent would recommend enrollment at UNLV to members of an underrepresented group.

Section Three – Evaluation

In 2010, 43 percent reported having well defined written evaluation standards. In 2015, that number had risen to 57 percent. Only 48 percent agreed that annual evaluation is conducted fairly, though this is an increase from 35 percent in 2010. Thirty eight percent agreed that workload assignments are made fairly among faculty and staff, down from 55 percent in 2015.

Section Four – Commitment to Open and Public Discussion

In 2010, 62 percent agreed that there was sufficient opportunity for discussion on issues affecting the campus. This number fell to 45 percent in 2015, though it remains high for discussion within their units. Only 39 percent agreed that speaking up would not negatively impact their employment conditions, though this is an improvement from 27 percent in 2010.

Section Five – Promotion and Tenure (Academic Faculty only)

Overall, 52 percent agreed that their unit has required written promotion and tenure standards, up from 42 percent in 2010. Sixty five percent agreed that their unit actively supports junior faculty toward tenure, up from 42 percent in 2010.
Section Six – Administrative Faculty Issues

Administrative Faculty were asked to rank the major issues they faced at UNLV. The four most frequently mentioned responses were (in order): (1) lack of respect, (2) pay and benefits, (3) management issues within their unit, and (4) lack of opportunity for professional development and advancement.

Section Seven – Classified Staff Issues

Classified Staff were asked to rank the major issues they faced at UNLV. The four most frequently mentioned responses were (in order): (1) pay and benefits, (2) lack of respect, (3) workload, and (4) management issues within their unit.

Variation Among Groups

The demographics permitted the comparison of responses among a number of groups. Only two groups had mean responses on more than two questions that were different from their comparison group. These were all black respondents and tenured women respondents. These two groups were also significantly different from others in the 2010 climate survey, and significantly different from others in the 2013 presidential evaluation survey.

Tenured women reported statistically significantly lower scores than tenured men on 10 of the 22 questions put to them. When compared to 2010, some of the responses that were different are no longer so, but this is because the men are less satisfied than previously, not that the women’s scores have risen.

Women report they are treated fairly less often, less valued by their administration, less likely to recommend employment at UNLV to others, less likely to see evaluation and workload assignments as fairly done, less likely to believe their input matters, and less likely to believe that promotion and tenure evaluation are based on written standards.

Black, non-Hispanic, respondents reported statistically significantly lower scores than white respondents on 5 of the 27 questions put to them. They are less likely to believe that people like themselves are treated fairly, less likely to recommend either employment or enrollment at UNLV to others, and less likely to believe that different employee groups at UNLV are treated equally.

Tenured and tenure-track black respondents were significantly more negative than black respondents generally, but there are only seven of them in the sample, limiting the validity of any analysis.

The sample is also biased upward in that it has approximately 16 percent who chose not to provide their demographics (roughly four times what is “normal” in these surveys elsewhere). Respondents who chose not to provide demographics are statistically significantly more negative than those who did on 25 of 27 questions. Without knowing the distribution of such respondents it is impossible to state how they would have affected the results if they had responded fully.

Conclusions

The results of the 2015 campus climate survey show clear improvement across a number of areas compared to the 2010 survey, but also a continued feeling of alienation by some groups (especially women and blacks), and relatively low scores in some areas (evaluation, respect, communication). These survey results will be used to further investigate that disaffection in particular, and they will also be incorporated into the upcoming Strategic Diversity Project in general.