



Wisdom to make a difference.

Office of Institutional Research

2011 Campus Climate Survey

INTRODUCTION

Supporting diversity in our community, curriculum, and daily work is a top priority for Keene State College, which has been formalized through the college's 2011-2016 planning process. The college has committed itself to "attract, support, and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body," and to "promote knowledge of, interaction with, and respect for all cultures and perspectives." To understand where KSC stands on promoting diversity, and to inform the development of a new diversity strategic plan, the college conducted a campus climate survey in fall 2011. This report summarizes the results of that survey.

METHODS

This study used a locally developed, anonymous, online survey instrument that was created by a widely representative group of faculty, staff, administrators, and a student. This survey examines diversity from a broad perspective, including social constructs such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity, age, disability status, military veteran status, religion/beliefs, plus employment category (for employees) and the following constructs for students: residence, family income, and first-generation college student status. The instrument contains three main sections: Supportive Environment, Engaging Diversity, and Institutional Goals. Then the survey invites respondents briefly to tell the story of their own experiences or those they had witnessed. Finally, respondents are asked to provide demographic information. All students ($N = 5846$) and employees ($N = 883$) of the college received an email message from President Helen Giles-Gee, inviting them to participate in the survey, with follow-up messages from various campus leaders. Usable responses were received from 1405 students and 411 employees, for response rates of 28% and 47%, respectively. The instrument and research design used in this study received approval from KSC's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB).

OVERVIEW

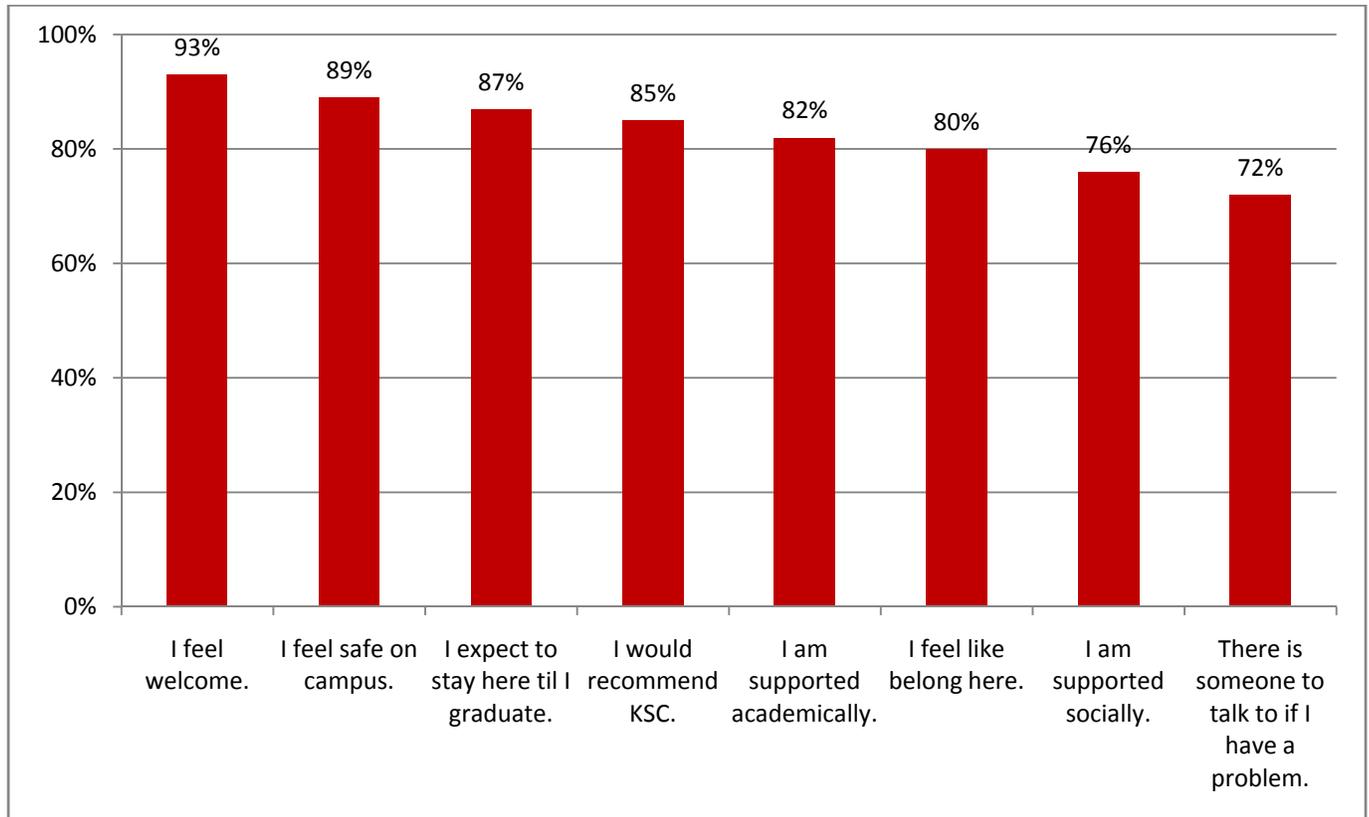
The survey responses paint two pictures of the campus climate at Keene State College. Considering overall responses, the results offer much to celebrate. Taking a more detailed view, the survey identifies some areas for improvement in the campus climate, and it provides evidence to guide the college in providing a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all members of the college community. That is, while most students and employees responded positively to most questions, the survey revealed that there are also some cross-cutting issues that make the campus climate less positive than it could be, and there is evidence of some groups of students and employees for whom the campus climate is not as positive as for their peers. Both of these views of the campus climate – the largely positive findings from the overview and the opportunities for improvement identified from more detailed analysis – are accurate pictures of Keene State College, and neither view invalidates the other.

Overview for Students:

Supportive Environment

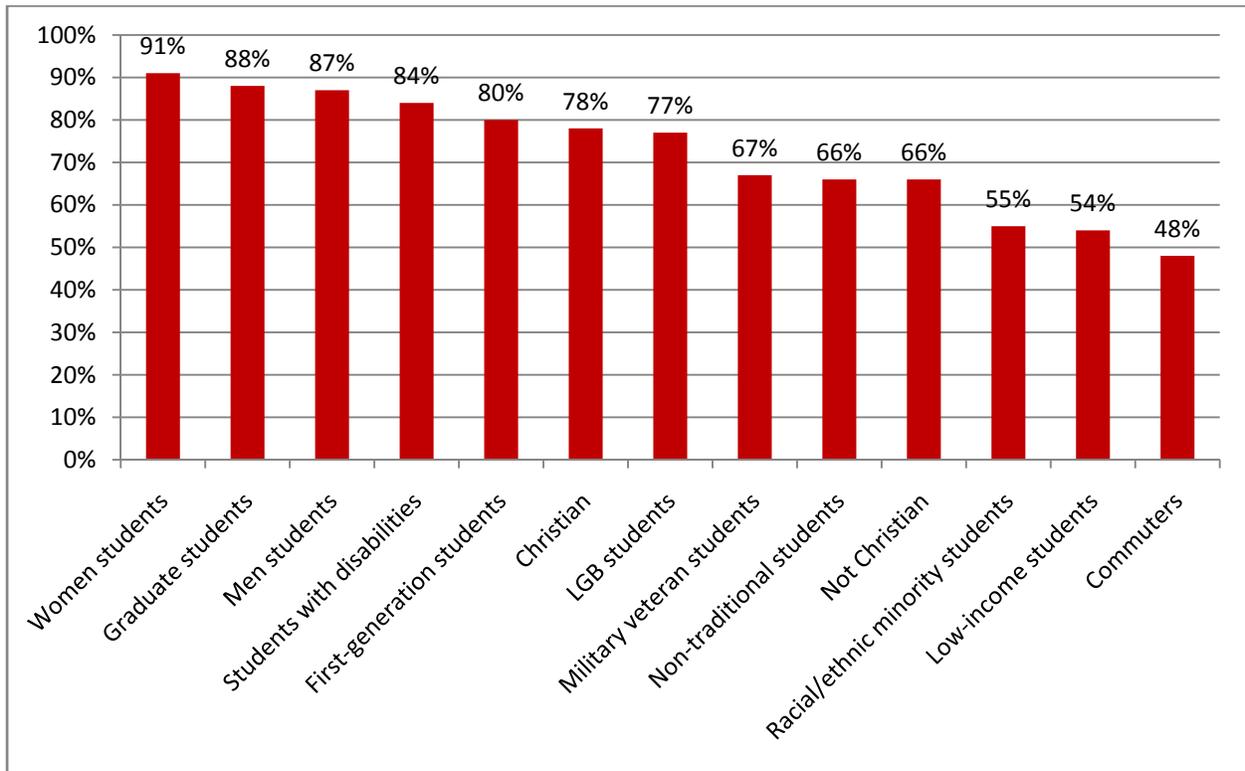
The survey begins with a set of statements describing a supportive environment (e.g., “I feel welcome at Keene State College,” and “I feel physically safe on campus”) and invites respondents to agree or disagree with each statement, using a 5-point Likert-type scale (*Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). A large majority of students (more than 70%) agreed or strongly agreed with all the questions in the Supportive Environment section of the survey. They reported feeling welcome and safe. Most said they expect to continue at the college until they complete their academic program, and most said they would recommend the college to friends or siblings as a good place to go to school. A majority of students reported feeling supported academically and socially; most agreed that they feel like they belong here, and most also said that if they have a concern they know a faculty or staff member to go to.

Percentage of Students Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Supportive Environment Statement



Next, the survey invites respondents to agree or disagree that KSC provides a supportive environment for a students who are ... [women, graduate students, the first in their family to attend college, etc.]. The following graph displays the percentage of students in each of those demographic groups who agreed or strongly agreed that KSC provides a supportive environment for that group.

Percentage of Students in Each Demographic Group Who Agree or Strongly Agree that KSC Provides a Supportive Environment for That Group



As this table shows, 75% or more of women, graduate students, men, students with disabilities, first-generation students, Christians, and LGB students agreed or strongly agreed that KSC provides a supportive environment for those groups. The groups least likely to agree that KSC provides a supportive environment for them (fewer than 60% agreement) were racial/ethnic minority students, low-income students (defined as Pell grant recipients), and commuters.

There were a great many comments corresponding to the positive findings in this section of the survey, including these examples:

“I believe Keene State gives all students the support they need to strive at this school, as long as they are willing to look for and reach out for the help they may need.”

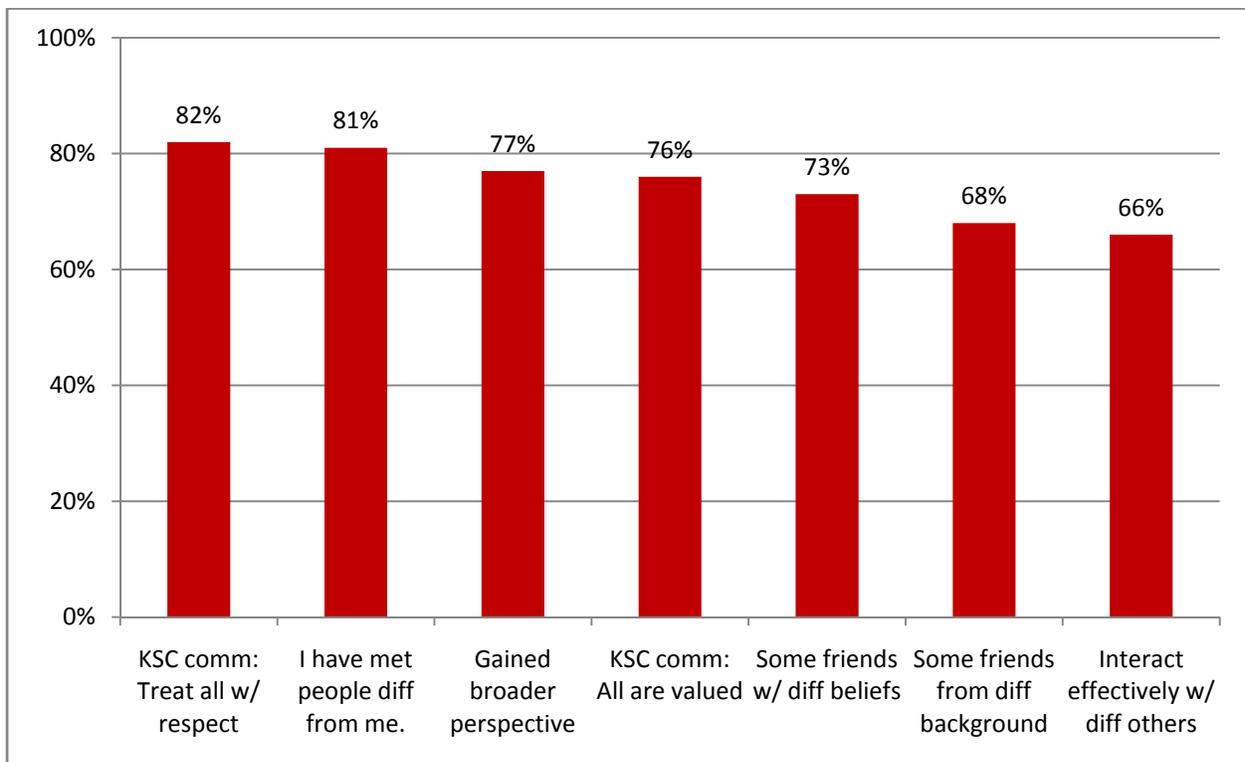
“The campus is open and welcoming and clean.”

“I Love Keene State College!!!!”

Engaging Diversity

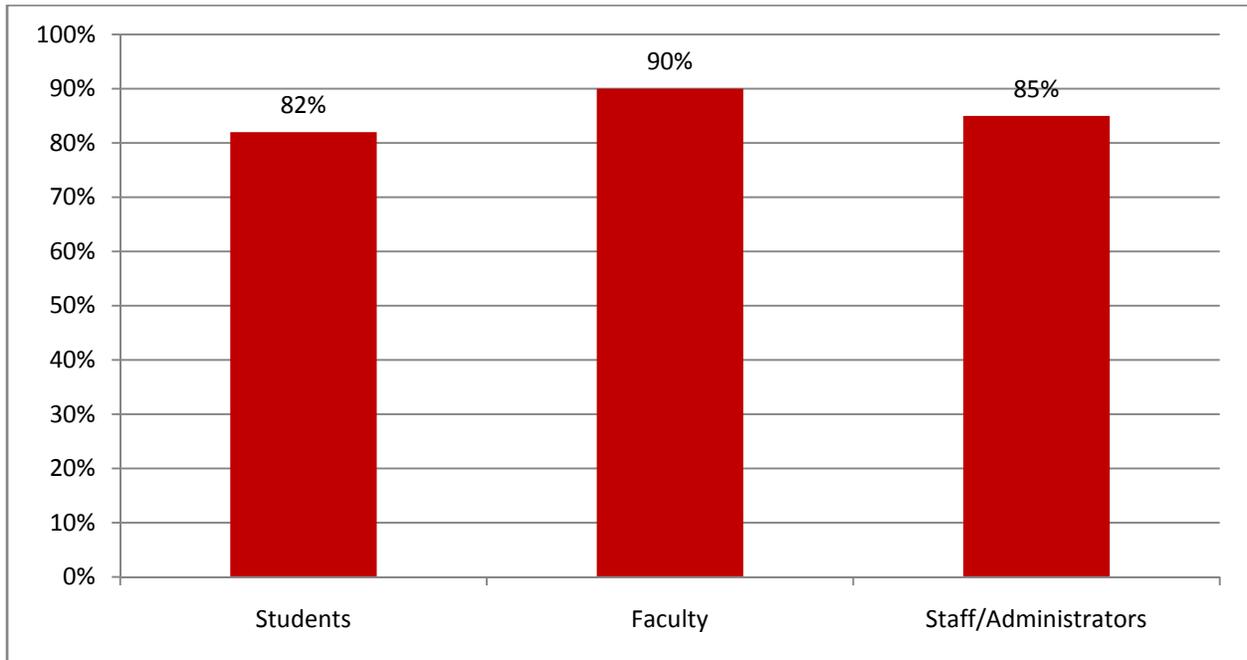
In the Engaging Diversity section, the survey invites respondents to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their interactions with people who are different from themselves or with ideas that are new to them. A large majority of student respondents (two-thirds or more) agreed or strongly agreed with all the items in this section of the survey. Overall, students agreed that they had gotten to know people at KSC who are very different from themselves, that they had made friends at KSC who are from a very different background or of very different beliefs, that their experiences at KSC have helped them to interact more effectively with people different from themselves and to gain a broader perspective. Based on overall student responses it is clear that KSC has clearly communicated that all members of the college community are valued and are to be treated with respect.

Percentage of Students Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Engaging Diversity Statement



This section of the survey also asks students to agree or disagree with this statement: In general I am treated respectfully by [students/faculty/staff and administrators]. Overall, students agreed that they are treated respectfully by all three groups.

In general, I am treated respectfully by ...
(Percentage of students who Agree or Strongly Agree)



These are examples of student comments related to these findings:

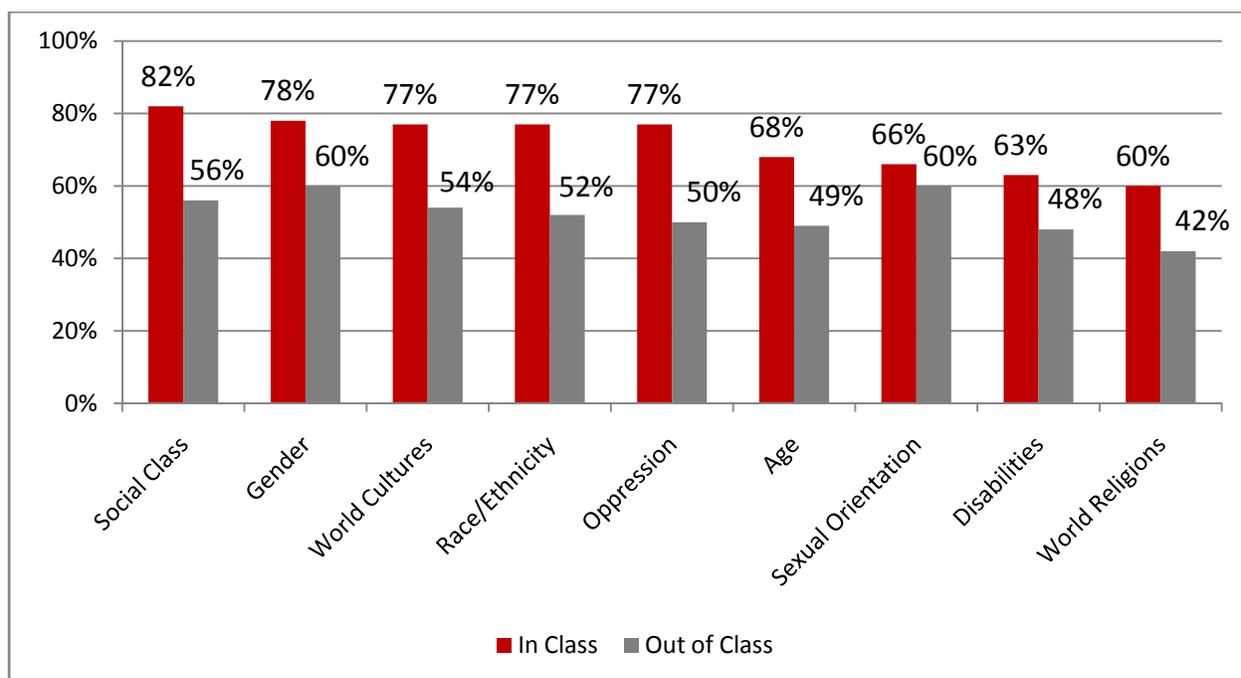
“Keep educating people about how to embrace diversity.”

“Diversity exists in many different forms at Keene State College. Most times I feel that diversity is not noticed visually through skin color or cultural types of dress but through forums, art projects and other modes of communication.”

“I am very involved on campus, thus am exposed to many diverse people and events. I feel as though the students who are not involved, are not exposed to anymore than their friends and class mates.”

Finally, the Engaging Diversity section of the survey asks students to agree or disagree that they have been exposed to various diversity issues in class and in out-of-class programs and settings provided by the college. The following graph displays the percentage of senior students who reported that they have been exposed to each of these issues both in- and out-of-class. Senior respondents were chosen for this analysis because the curriculum operates in a cumulative fashion over the course of a student’s enrollment, and many of the student respondents would not yet have had an opportunity to take courses that address these issues. Most seniors agreed that they had been exposed to diversity issues both in class and outside class. The large majority of students (75% or more) reported that they have been exposed to issues of social class, gender, world cultures, race/ethnicity, and oppression in their academic courses. Outside of class, students were most likely (50% or more) to report learning about gender, sexual orientation, social class, world cultures, race/ethnicity, and oppression. Both in- and out-of-class, KSC students are least likely to learn about world religions. As this graph illustrates, students are more likely to learn about diversity issues in class than out of class, but most students are exposed to diversity topics in both settings.

Percentage of Senior Students Who Agree or Strongly Agree that They Have Engaged Diversity Issues In Class and In Out-Of-Class Programs Provided by KSC



These are sample comments that relate to these findings:

“Being an English/Psychology double major who has taken classes in Women/Gender Studies, I feel as though ALL my classes are relevant to social issues such as those in section 20. It’s very rewarding to learn/expose myself to such topics.”

“I currently have taken multiple courses offered here at KSC to help me understand culture.”

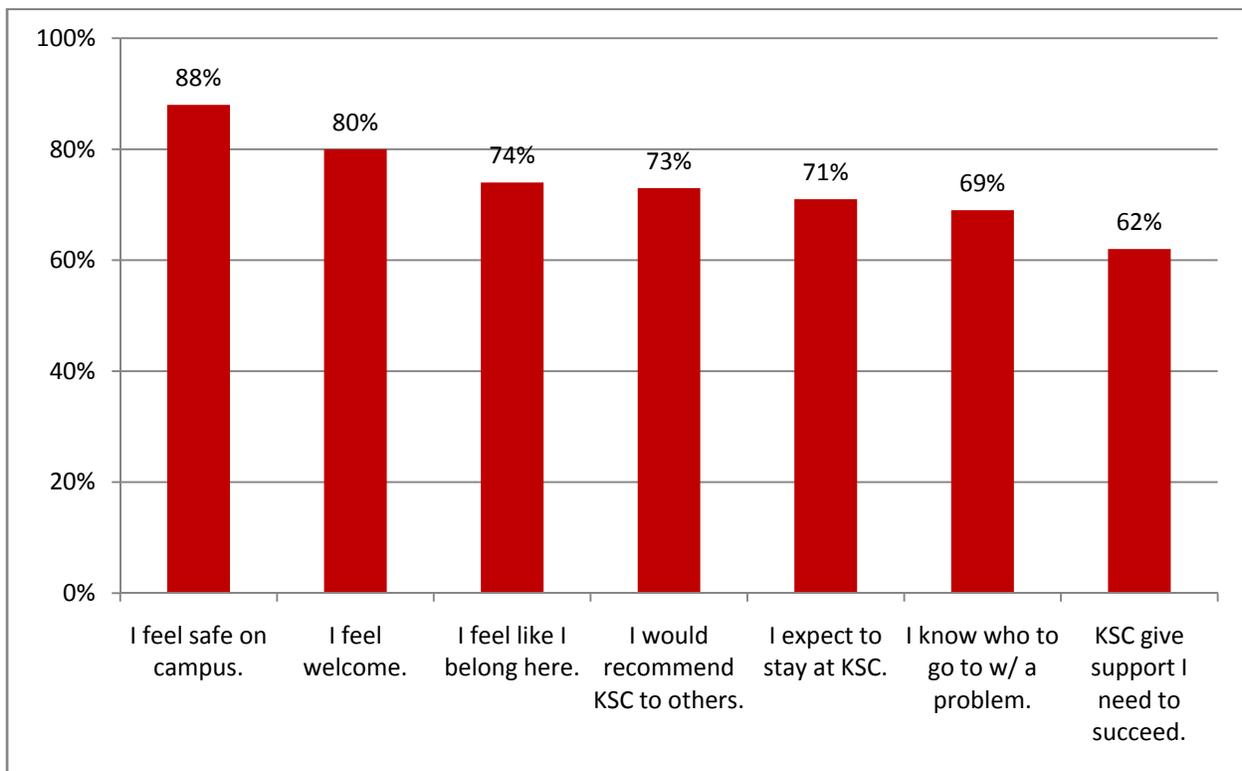
“The Inter-Faith Voices club really helped me out with discovering different religious ideas, and [they] are very welcoming.”

Overview for Employees:

Supportive Environment

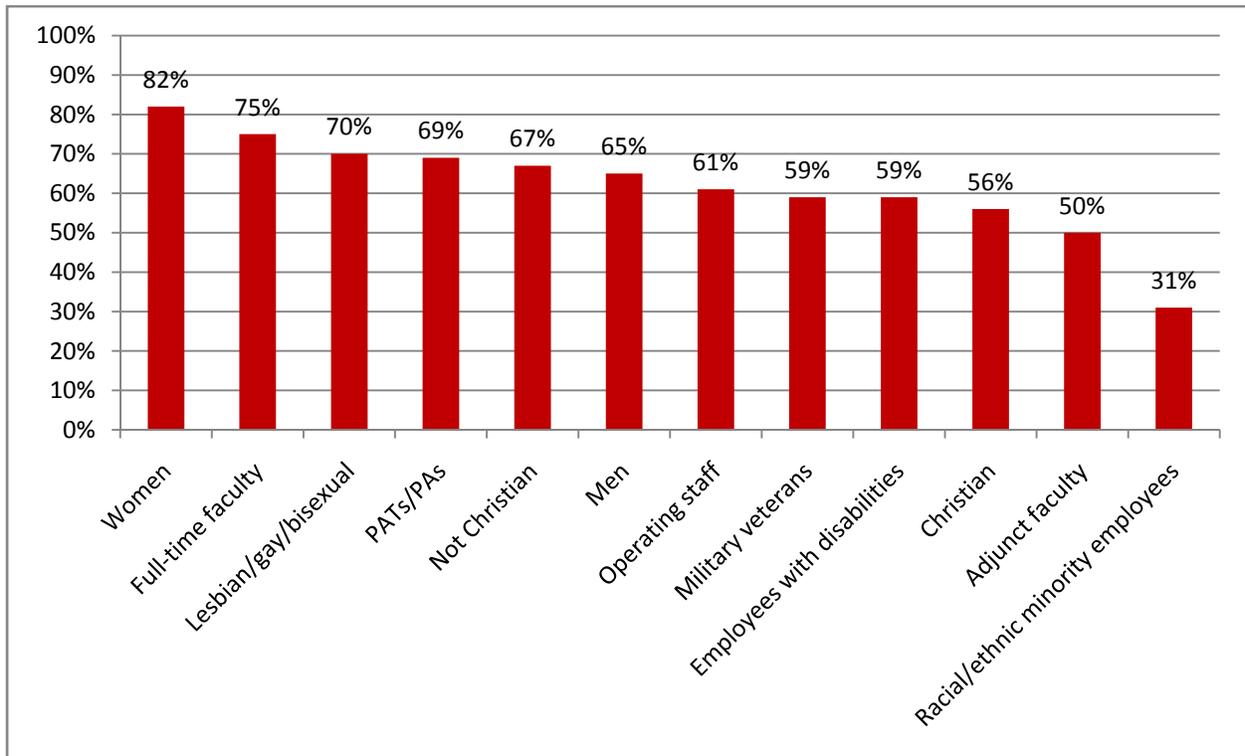
Overall employees agreed with questions in the Supportive Environment section of the survey, though their responses (in this section and throughout the survey) were somewhat less positive than those of students. Among employees, most agreed that they feel physically safe on campus, feel welcome at KSC, and that they feel like they belong here. A majority of employee respondents would recommend KSC to friends or colleagues as a good place to work, and a majority expects to continue working at KSC for at least three more years. Most agreed that they would know who to go to, to begin to resolve a problem; and the majority indicated that the college gives them the support they need to succeed in their work.

Percentage of Employees Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Supportive Environment Statement



Next, the survey invites respondents to agree or disagree that KSC provides a supportive environment for a employees who are ... [women, from racial/ethnic minorities, in the respondent's employment category, etc.]. The following graph displays the percentage of employees in each of those demographic groups who agreed or strongly agreed that KSC provides a supportive environment for that group.

Percentage of Employees in Each Demographic Group Who Agree or Strongly Agree That KSC Provides a Supportive Environment for That Group



As this graph shows, the employees most likely to agree that KSC provides a supportive environment for their group (75% or more agreement) were women and full-time faculty. The groups least likely to agree (less than 60% agreement) were employees with disabilities, those who are Christian, adjunct faculty, and racial/ethnic minority employees.

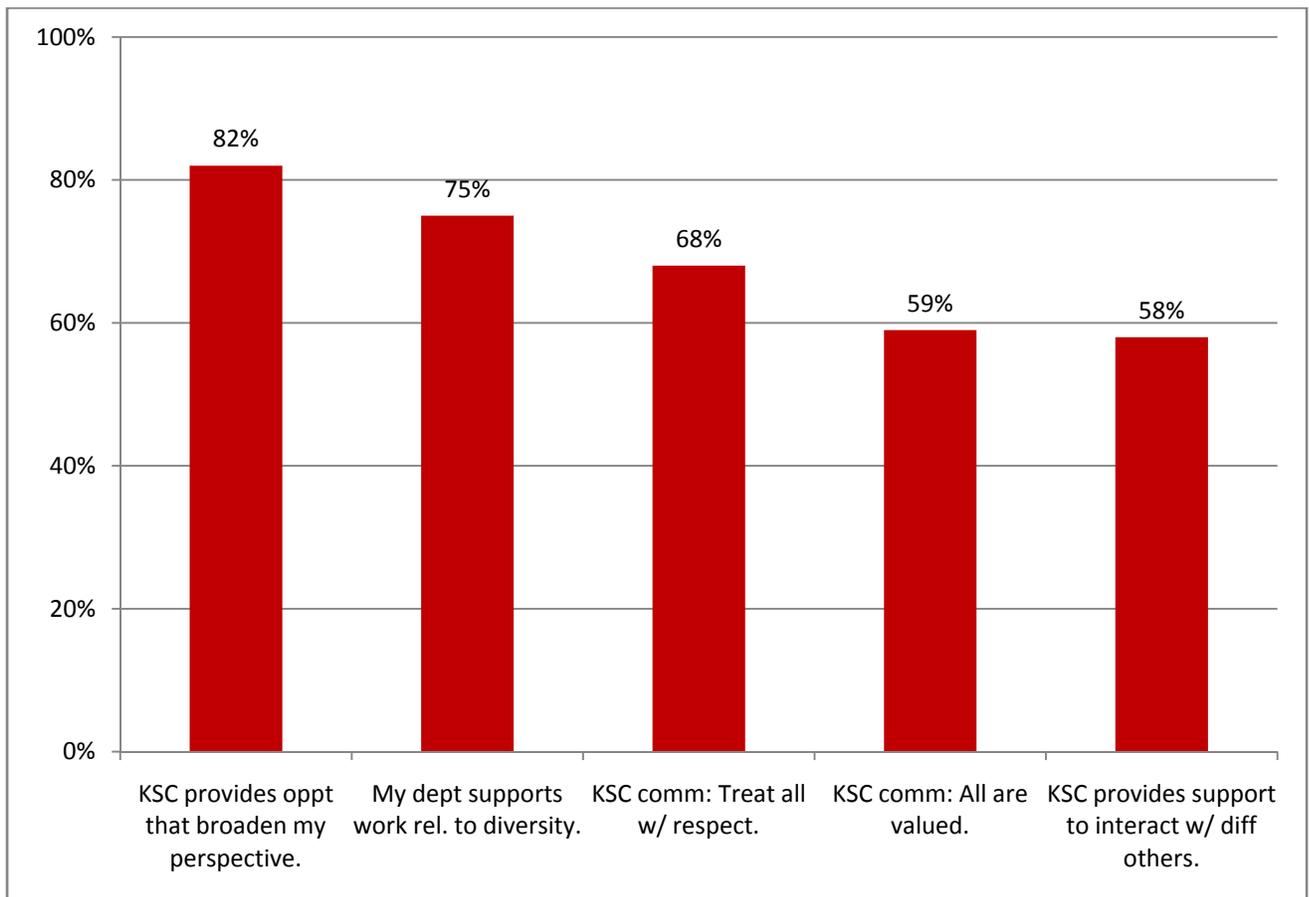
One employee commented:

“Yes I feel that KSC will support just about anything or anybody.”

Engaging Diversity

In the Engaging Diversity section of the survey, employees overall were most likely to agree that “KSC provides speakers, performances, exhibits, professional development opportunities, and other experiences that broaden my perspective,” that “my department supports and values work related to diversity,” and that KSC communicates the importance of treating all members of the college community with respect. By smaller majorities employees also agreed that KSC communicates that all members of the college community are valued and that “KSC provides the support I need to interact successfully in my work with all members of the college community, including those who are very different from me.”

Percentage of Employees Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Engaging Diversity Statement

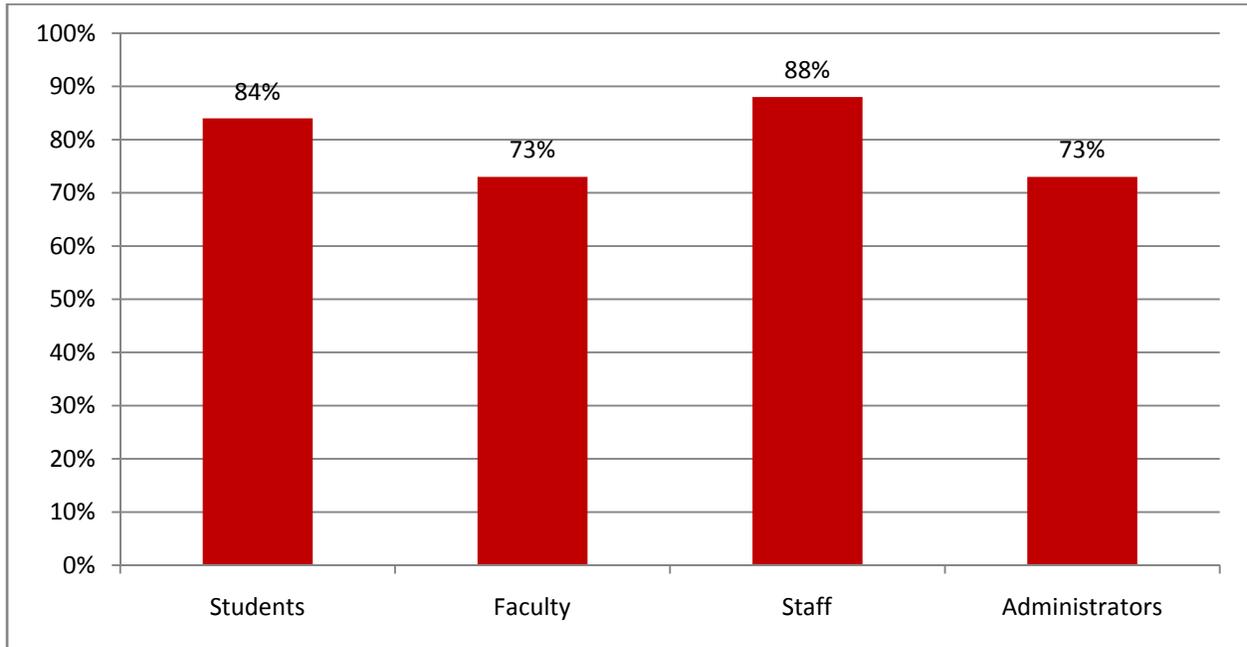


One employee wrote,

“The college offers more opportunity for enrichment than I can attend.”

This section of the survey also asks employees to agree or disagree with this statement: In general I am treated respectfully by ... [students/faculty/staff/administrators]. The following graph displays the percentage of employees who agreed or strongly agreed in each case.

In general I am treated respectfully by ...
(% of employees who Agree or Strongly Agree)

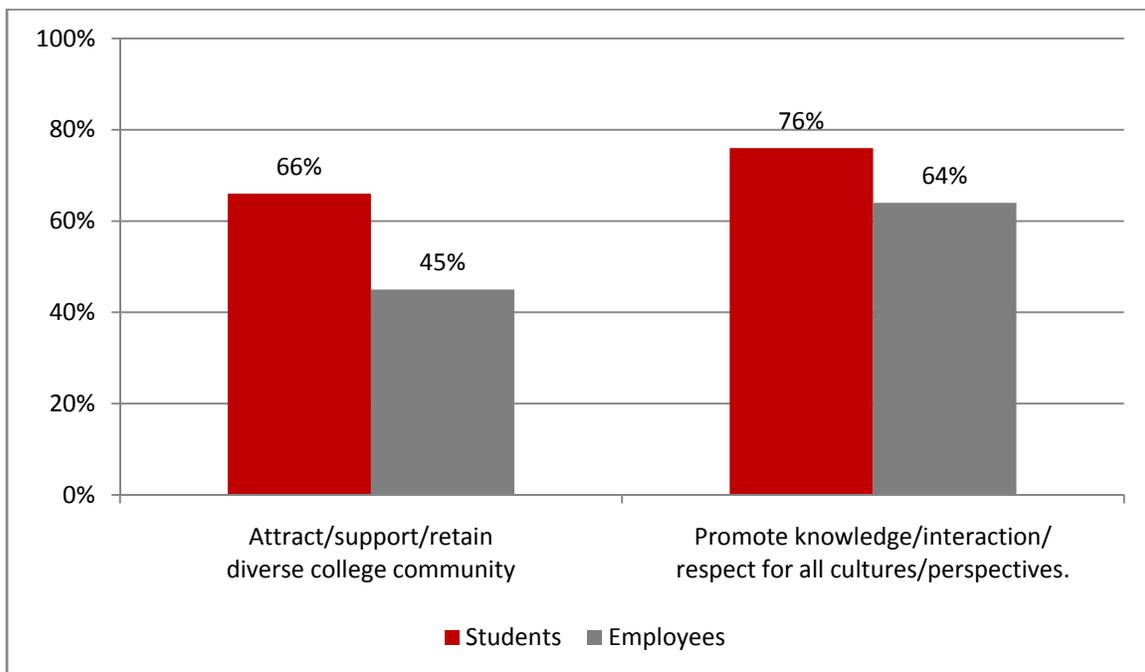


As this graph shows, employees were most likely to agree that they are treated respectfully by staff (88%) and by students (84%). They were somewhat less likely to agree that they are treated respectfully by faculty or administrators (73% each).

Institutional Goals:

The survey asks respondents to assess how well KSC is doing in meeting two of the college's strategic goals related to diversity, using a 5-point Likert-type scale (*Very Poorly* to *Very Well*). A majority of students and employees reported that KSC is succeeding in promoting knowledge of, interaction with, and respect for all cultures and perspectives. While fewer respondents reported that KSC succeeds in attracting, supporting, and retaining a diverse college community, both students and employees commented that this goal is hindered by the college's location in a region where the population is largely white.

Percentage of Respondents Who Report that KSC Is Succeeding on Strategic Diversity Goals
(% Responding Well or Very Well)



These are student comments from this section of the survey that correspond with these findings:

“In my last four years of being a student I have seen significant growth in the college towards diversity.”

“Particularly about the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body - this has made huge strides since when I came in 4 years ago. However, I believe we have a long way to go.”

“It is hard to promote diversity and interaction and multiculturalism when there is not a lot of it on campus to begin with. It's not necessarily the campus' fault. New Hampshire is just not the most culturally diverse place in and of itself.”

An employee commented:

“I feel that KSC as a whole promotes knowledge of, interaction with, and respect for all cultures and perspectives.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

The overview above provides a relatively positive view of the campus climate at Keene State College. From that level of analysis, one can see that most students and most employees have a positive view of the college. Most feel welcome, safe, and supported here, and most find opportunities to engage diversity within the campus community. From the overview, readers can begin to identify a few areas where the college has an opportunity to improve the campus climate. For example, the responses about the college's strategic goals suggest a need to enhance the demographic diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body. The findings in the Engaging Diversity section indicate that the college currently does a better job of exposing students to social class and gender issues than to issues of disabilities and world religions. And even at this level of analysis one can see that some groups – for example, students and employees of color, low-income students, and commuter students – do not feel as well supported as other members of the community.

In order to understand why these findings might be so, and to identify other areas where the campus climate might be improved, it is necessary to take a more detailed view of the data. By comparing responses of different groups (by gender, race/ethnicity, etc.), and by analyzing the open comments, it is possible both to discern cross-cutting issues that affect the campus climate and also to identify specific concerns for some groups of students and employees.

Cross-Cutting Issues:

Widespread Economic Stress

The recent budget crisis has strained the college community in many ways, affecting both students and employees. This economic stress exacerbates existing fissures along lines of income and social class. These comments are typical of many on this topic:

“In this time of economic uncertainty – I can recognize the signs of socio-economic tensions that are being played out on our campus as well as the world at large. It strains the fabric of our highest shared values about the worth of every human being.”

“I don't know if I feel I belong here b/c I am an adjunct and feel disrespected by the below poverty wage I am paid and that I was not told that my credits would be cut until I received my contract.”
[Adjunct Faculty Member]

“I am a low income student. In-fact I am an independent student who is paying for my college education. I am also the first in my family to attend college. The price is high and I did not get the aid I wish I could have. The price for everything around is a lot also. I often find myself just hanging out in my room because I can't afford anything.” [Pell grant recipient]

Disrespectful Student Culture

Students widely agreed that the college has communicated its position clearly that all members of the community are to be treated with respect. Nevertheless, there were numerous comments that portrayed a student culture in which some students feel privileged to shout racist, homophobic, and sexist slurs, to mock students with disabilities, and to “moo” at overweight women students. Some comments associated this behavior with drinking, but others indicated that it is simply part of the normal fabric of student life at Keene State College. One student commented,

“I work in a popular on campus building, and my employee status makes me more borderline invisible to a good percentage of students who pass through. The number of conversations I have heard openly talking about racist, sexist, homophobic, and in general discriminatory topics would amaze you.”

Another student wrote,

I frequently hear language that, to put it lightly, does not reflect the respect and integrity that KSC hopes to instill in their students. Issues surrounding the common use of the words “n****,” “c**t,” gay, “f*g” and other derogatory words should be discussed more openly because, without creating awareness of this growing problem, our generation will continue to disregard the impact of certain words.

There were reports of students from racial minority groups and gay students who have left the college and others who are considering leaving because of the harassment they have received here. One student wrote:

“I saw a kid being treated wrong for being gay, therefore he left this school to go somewhere else.”

These displays of disrespect and rude behavior were most commonly reported about issues of identity such as race or gender, but they also were also reported occur more generally. For example, one respondent wrote,

“A girl fell off her bike riding it to the Carle entrance and face planted and the smokers at the bench just laughed and looked at her. No one cared to help her up so I went over there and helped her. But no one else was considerate/cared enough to help her.”

The reports of disrespectful behavior also extended to the way some students treat faculty members, and particularly the way they treat female faculty members and adjuncts. There were several comments similar to this one, from an adjunct faculty member:

“I have had a student get inches away from my face and yell at me about a bad grade. I believe she felt she could do this because I am an adjunct faculty member, and not tenured. She told me she would ‘report me to the dean’ because she had earned a poor grade.”

Academic/Administrative Class System

Many employees commented on the class or caste system that privileges full-time faculty and upper-level administrators and treats staff (particularly operating staff) and adjunct faculty as second-class citizens. Like the current budget crisis, this hierarchical valuing and devaluing of employees exacerbates existing rifts in the fabric of the community along lines of income and social class. These comments are typical of a great many on this issue:

“We remain mostly incapable of offering true expressions of respect and value to the diverse range of humans that are trapped in our highly stratified employee categorization system. The highly privileged faculty are ignorant as to just how privileged they are. Faculty and administration embody the hoarding of wealth represented by the 1% in our larger society while the staff, adjuncts, etc., fall in the 99%.”

“I am an OS employee who works with most of the faculty some time. There is definitely an arrogant, superior attitude from some of them which feels designed to keep me ‘in my place’ and show that my value is less than theirs.”

“The greatest tensions exist along socioeconomic fault lines where it is difficult to escape the underlying attitudes of entitlement and privilege that reinforce the rampant inequities in ‘our community.’”

Need for Professional Development

There are indications throughout the survey comments that some employees could benefit from professional development opportunities. In the Engaging Diversity section of the survey, fewer than 60% of employees agreed that the college provides the information and support they need to interact effectively with all members of the college community, including those who are very different from themselves. Some respondents also reported that employees had behaved in ways that did not reflect appropriate professional behavior, including a few cases in which employees revealed another’s confidential medical or disability information publicly or made decisions that might be discriminatory based on an employee’s medical condition. There were also numerous comments that described supervisors who shouted at or berated subordinates publicly or failed to treat employees fairly or to intervene appropriately to support employees who had been mistreated by others. One employee commented,

“... I have observed instances where superiors have not treated subordinates in a respectful way and as a result KSC has lost some good employees.”

There is little indication in the survey responses of employees behaving malevolently. Rather, one gets a sense of employees – and particularly supervisors – who are working under stress or who simply may not know how to accomplish their roles appropriately, and of some employees who may not understand that information about a person’s medical condition or disability is confidential.

Dysfunctional Conversation about Religion and Politics

Religious and political beliefs were a source of difficulty for both students and employees. Some conservative Christians and those with more political views reported feeling unable to express their views on campus, for fear of ridicule. This is just one of many comments on this issue:

“As a Christian I am extremely wary of making that fact known and fear a lack of acceptance and ridicule from students and faculty alike.”

There was a general sense in the comments that the KSC community has not yet learned to speak and to listen about religious and political issues and that students and employees feel silenced about some of the issues that matter the most to them. These findings correspond with the results of the survey question concerning where students engage various diversity issues. Of all the diversity issues listed, students were least likely to say that they had learned about world religions, either in class or outside class in programs and settings provided by the college.

Further on the topic of religion, some who are of other faiths than Christianity expressed a desire for their holidays to be recognized in the college’s calendar, as Christian holidays are honored. One employee wrote,

“Our current ‘benefits’ as PATs do not take into account non-Christian people.... [Honoring Christian holidays such as Christmas] is a way for the college to tell me that my beliefs are less important, as I already have to take vacation days for all of the holidays I DO celebrate.”

Areas of Concern for Student Groups

Many women students feel unsafe.

Unlike the responses to the Likert-type questions, the open comments suggest a sense of physical threat for many women students. The most widely reported causes for fearfulness related to walking in dark areas of the campus at night or being aware of a widely publicized sexual assault from the previous year. However, reports included a few instances of actual or threatened physical harm. Women nominated specific areas in need of additional lighting, as the following examples show:

“There have been times where I feel nervous or unsafe when walking around campus. When crossing the bridge by Carle or walking past the tennis courts at night.”

“There are several places on campus that have poor lighting and make many students feel unsafe, i.e. the path past Pondsides 2 to the athletic fields and the bridge that leads to Walmart.”

While dark areas of campus make some women students feel physically unsafe, the student culture that allows shouted sexist slurs to occur makes some women students feel psychologically unsafe. This comment is one of many on this topic:

“I have seen male students publicly calling women “sl*ts”, “b**ches,” and “wh**es” in my time at Keene State. I have seen it happen with no women around, and I have seen it when the males are calling out to a specific female – to her person.”

Many LGBT students feel welcome at the college but also report abuse.

Both LGBT and straight students perceive Keene State as a campus that is welcoming to LGBT students, and some LGBT students chose to enroll here because the college provides a supportive environment for them. One student wrote,

“As a student who is homosexual, the fact that Keene tries hard to have a friendly environment towards different groups of people really makes me happy, and makes me want to continue my education here.”

That this would be so even in the face of the homophobic slurs described above is a testament to how poorly LGBT students are treated elsewhere. This comment is typical:

“A few of my friends are gay, and even though KSC is a much safer and accepting place than high school must have been for them, I’ve still seen them mistreated and discriminated against dozens of times.”

A few responses indicated that LGBT students had left the college or were considering leaving because of the disrespectful student culture.

Students from racial/ethnic minority groups report being treated disrespectfully.

A bare majority of students from racial/ethnic minority groups (55%) reported the KSC provides a supportive environment for students like them, and they were significantly less likely than their white classmates to indicate that KSC is meeting its diversity goals. Students of color were less likely than their white peers to agree that KSC clearly communicates the importance of treating all members of the college

community with respect (71% vs. 84%), and they were less likely than white students to say that they are treated respectfully by other students (73% vs. 83%), by faculty (80% vs. 92%), and by staff and administrators (80% vs. 86%). These students reported being disrespected by shouted racist slurs and by racist graffiti. As one example among many, a student wrote,

“been called n***** by a few students a few times! I heard someone refer to a black student as ‘the little colored kid.’ Been referred to as ‘the black kid’ ... a lot more.”

Another student reported,

“My best friend and basically little sister is black. She has felt unsafe on this campus since starting as a freshman and has been touched/grabbed by guys twice while walking at night. She’s scared to walk alone and I feel that it may be due to the color of her skin. I recommended Keene State to her and I regret it.”

Some non-traditional students report that the college is not organized to serve them well.

Non-traditional students were significantly less likely than their traditional-age peers to feel welcome at KSC (89% vs. 94%), to feel like they belong here (67% vs. 81%), and to report receiving the support they need to thrive socially (47% vs. 77%). Older students indicated that Keene State’s administrative and social culture is organized around traditional-age undergraduate students who live on or near campus and who do not have full-time jobs or families to tend to. This college culture does not take into account the realities of their lives, they say. Many of the comments from these students centered on the dearth of evening courses, the difficulty of finding parking at the times that they can arrive on campus, or problems getting financial aid that they need, but comments also included classroom issues and student organizations. One older student wrote,

“I am an older student who needs financial aid to attend school. I was authorized to do work study and every job I have applied for I was either turned down or not even given an interview except for two very brief ones. I stood in line at a job fair, and the person taking applications was interviewing each person as they handed in their application. When it was my turn the person just took my application and said "if something comes up I will call" and proceeded to interview the person behind me before I left. I was not given any opportunity to ask questions or anything. I talked to some students who work for the college and they told me they and others do not like working with older adults. Guess what? That is so wrong on many levels, I need work to make it thru college and not to mess up my outside aid and it needs to be work study.”

Another reported,

“... for us older students we need a support group, I cannot find anyone willing to study with me. all of the traditional students have no problem with study groups... I feel disadvantaged.”

Some non-traditional students reported a need for adequate locker space. Others mentioned difficulties in accomplishing group projects when being on campus at odd hours is impossible for them. A few mentioned that student organizations had not been welcoming to them.

Many commuter students do not feel welcome.

Only 41% of commuters as a whole agreed that KSC provides a supportive environment for commuter students. It is a truism on college campuses that parking is a source of complaint for students, so it is no surprise that students who live off-campus wrote many comments about their difficulties with parking. But

some commuter students also indicated a need for storage space and others reported that they simply don't feel that the college supports them well. These comments are typical of a great many others:

"A friend of mine (a commuter) told me today that he doesn't feel like he's part of the student body. He feels like he doesn't belong."

"As a commuter student I feel alienated and I wish there was a program for other commuter students to get to know each other."

"Long-distance commuters should get guaranteed parking spots near campus – they already travel quite some time to even get to campus, and they shouldn't have to tag 10 minutes onto their travel time to account for the walk from an off-campus parking lot."

"The campus does not have nearly enough parking to be supportive to commuter students. It is very difficult to find parking on campus."

"There is absolutely no locker space which is frustrating. The student center lockers are much too small."

"There is no space for me as a commuter to put my art supplies."

As a commuter student I feel alienated and I wish there was a program for other commuter students to get to know each other."

Students with disabilities sometimes have difficulties getting faculty to make needed accommodations.

Several students with disabilities praised the services they receive from the Office of Disability Services. Overall, they were as likely as their classmates without disabilities to say that they receive the support they need to succeed academically. One wrote,

"The disabilities services are exceptional and the professors and staff at KSC are the best. I do not believe I would have succeeded so well at another institution."

However, several students with disabilities reported that they have difficulty in getting faculty to make the required accommodations. This comment is an example of several comments on this topic:

"I have an IEP that allows me the ability for extended time. I have had professors who have been extremely frustrated with allowing me to receive this extra time. Their impatience made me feel inadequate and stressed out in test taking environments."

In addition, several students with disabilities reported that faculty members had disclosed confidential information about their disability to students or other faculty members (as mentioned above under "Need for Professional Development"). This comment is an example:

"I have a documented disability and I was giving the paper stating that ... to my teacher one day after class... and he said 'ok'.... The very next day he announces to the class that I had this [disability] and I felt awful; no one in the class wanted to do any project with me, I assume because they knew I had a disability."

Areas of Concern for Employee Groups

The level of pain among adjunct faculty is high.

Adjunct faculty were significantly less likely than respondents in all other employment categories to feel welcome at KSC (68% vs. 82%), less likely to expect to continue working here for at least three years (52% vs. 73%), less likely to recommend KSC to friends or colleagues as a good place to work (58% vs. 76%), and less likely to say that KSC provides a supportive environment for persons in their own employment category (50% vs. 66%). Adjunct faculty were also less likely than all other employee groups to agree that KSC provides the support they need to interact successfully in their work with people different from themselves (43% vs. 61%), less likely to agree that KSC clearly communicates that all members of the college community are valued (36% vs. 63%), less likely to agree that KSC clearly communicates that all members of the community are to be treated with respect (50% vs. 71%), and less likely to say that they are generally treated respectfully by administrators (63% vs. 75%). These are a few comments from the great many that were by or about adjunct faculty:

“Adjunct faculty are ‘out of sight, out of mind.’”

“KSC claims to be welcoming, but it refuses to give job security, benefits, or a living wage to many of its faculty. How is exploiting adjunct labor a ‘welcoming’ environment, especially in the present economic climate, where adjuncts work in perpetual fear that an under-enrolled class will get cancelled, thereby bumping them from full-time to part-time status?”

“As an adjunct, I continually find myself searching out information for myself, instead of having information provided for me. I am not regularly reviewed by anyone on my department. I am not included in faculty meetings, so I don't have a good idea of what goes on my department.”

“I was accosted (‘Can I help you?’ meaning, you're not one of US: who are you and who let you in ?) when I showed up for a faculty workshop, for which I had registered.... More than once, I might add. I am not invited to faculty meetings, nor do I receive any memos or abbreviated minutes.”

Some operating staff and complementary employees report that they are treated as though they do not count.

The academic and administrative class system described above weighs heavily on operating staff and complementary employees, who perceive themselves to be at the bottom of the hierarchy among full-time employees. These comments are typical:

“Some faculty and staff treat OS staff as if they are of lesser value to the college.”

“I often get the impression that KSC staff are looked upon as second class citizens.”

“Disrespect happens in all areas on campus. Faculty-to-faculty is bad enough but faculty-to-staff is horrible as staff have NO protection or resources to complain so that behavior stops. They do not even recognize they do it, which is the worst.”

Employees from racial/ethnic minority groups are less likely than white employees to feel welcome or respected.

Only 31% of employees from racial or ethnic minority groups agreed that KSC provides a supportive environment for employees like them, and only 39% agreed that KSC clearly communicates that all members of the college community are to be treated with respect. Overall employees of color were less likely than white employees to report that they feel welcome at KSC (62% vs. 87%), to say they feel like they belong here

(23% vs. 79%), to feel physically safe on campus (62% vs. 91%), to indicate that KSC provides the support they need to be successful in their work (46% vs. 68%), or to say they would recommend KSC to friends and colleagues as a good place to work (39% vs. 79%). Employees of color were significantly less likely than white employees to agree that they are generally treated respectfully by students (62% vs. 88%) and staff (54% vs. 92%). While this difference in survey responses was striking, there were very few comments to provide illustrations. These are two that do:

“Faculty of color being told that they were ‘only’ here for diversity.”

“I have observed racism in meetings toward my colleagues of color (white colleagues frequently interrupting them when they speak, not listening to what they have to say, repeating what they have already said and taking credit for their ideas).”

Some women employees report that they are not taken seriously.

While some women employees – like women students – also reported feeling physically unsafe on campus, a greater number of comments from women employees concerned the fact that they are not taken seriously, both by students and by other employees. Several of the comments mentioned that both gender and age were involved, that is, the women believed they were not taken seriously because they were both female and young, even though they were fully qualified for their positions. These comments provide examples:

“I have had numerous experiences related to my age and gender. As a younger female administrator I have often experienced ageism and sexism related to my knowledge and abilities. There is certainly still some of the "old boy's club" mentality in certain pockets on campus and it's very difficult to break through...or get the respect that you deserve as someone who might actually be more of an expert than the dominant older males. I fight that fight often and also fight for a seat at the table sometimes.”

“As a new tenure-track faculty..., a couple students directly confronted me about my credibility/authority to teach. Although I did not feel unsafe when that happened, it showed a lack of respect for me, perhaps because I was ‘new,’ or b/c I am a ‘young adult female.’ I was surprised by these confrontations b/c I had taught college students for ... years prior to teaching here. I have heard about similar incidents happening to other new (young, female) faculty. I suspect that some Keene State College students are not used to seeing and respecting young female doctoral-holding professors.”

“Feeling invisible at times. What I have said have not been taken in a serious manner, but when someone else says the same thing, it is seen as a good idea or credited to another person.”

SUMMARY

The Campus Climate Survey was conducted in order to assess how well the college promotes diversity and to inform the development of a new diversity strategic plan. The results accomplish both of these purposes. Overall, the survey found, members of the Keene State College community feel welcome, safe, and supported. Most students get to know people different from themselves, learn about diversity issues, and have their perspectives broadened while they are here. Most employees report that their department supports and values work related to diversity. A majority of both students and employees agree that the college's message comes through loud and clear that all members of the college community are valued and all are to be treated with respect. Students and employees agree that the college does well in teaching about diversity but less well in creating a (racially) diverse college community. At a more detailed level of analysis, this survey revealed what would be true at any college: that even within a campus climate which most view as positive there are some students and employees who do not feel safe or welcome or supported, and there are many who are not treated with respect on a daily basis. Each of these detailed findings offers an opportunity for members of the Keene State community to take personal steps to improve the campus climate. The challenge for Keene State College in responding to this survey is to hold both these pictures in focus at once, to celebrate what is working well and to hear the voices of those whose experiences do not reflect the highest shared values of the community.