Every three years Keene State College conducts a Campus Climate Survey of students and employees to assess where the College stands on ensuring that all members of the community feel welcome, supported, and safe. This report summarizes the results of the fall 2014 survey, focusing on findings related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students and employees and on differences in responses between LGBT survey participants and their peers who identify as straight.

This study used a locally developed, anonymous, online survey instrument that was created in 2011 by a widely representative group of faculty, staff, administrators, and a student. The instrument was then updated for 2014, omitting two lengthy sections and adding a few questions to another section. The result was a shorter survey in 2014 for both students and employees. 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 student instrument contains three main sections: Supportive Environment, Learning about Diversity, and Tell Your Story. The employee survey is similar to the one for students but omits the section on Learning about Diversity.

In October 2014, all students (N = 4763) and employees (N = 977) of the College received an email message from President Anne Huot, inviting them to participate in the survey, with follow-up messages from various campus leaders. Student respondents were offered the opportunity to enter a drawing for a $100 KSC Bookstore gift card as an incentive for participation. Usable responses were received from 1139 students and 487 employees, for response rates of 24% and 50%, 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).

There were 97 student respondents and 41 employee respondents who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. Of these, there were three students and no employees who identified as transgender. Because the number of transgender students was too small to analyze separately, their responses were coded together with those of LGB students. This choice led to limitations in interpretation of the data, since gender identity and sexual orientation are separate, though related, issues. Nevertheless, given the number of transgender respondents, this was the only available analytical option that allowed their responses to be included at all. Throughout this report, responses from LGBT participants are compared to responses from participants who specifically identified as heterosexual/straight and who did not identify as transgender.
including those who left the transgender item blank. For simplicity, the comparison group is referred to here as “straight.” Readers should be aware that the relatively small number of employees who identified as LGB on the survey makes it less likely that comparisons between their responses and those of their straight colleagues will rise to the level of statistical significance. In considering the employee responses, therefore, readers should be more concerned with overall trends in the data and less with specific data points.

**Supportive Environment**

The first section of the survey asked respondents to indicate how well supported they feel at Keene State College. The following table shows responses to items in this section, comparing responses for LGBT participants in each respondent pool (students and employees) with their straight peers. As this table shows, there were several statistically significant differences in the responses. Straight students were more likely to say that they feel welcome and valued than LGBT students. Importantly, the two statistically significant differences in the responses of employees occurred because LGB employees were more likely than straight employees to strongly agree that they feel welcome and that they would recommend KSC as a good place to work (54% of LGB employees strongly agree that they feel welcome at KSC vs. 38% of straight employees, and 44% of LGB employees strongly agree that they would recommend KSC to others, compared to 28% of straight employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>LGB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome at Keene State College (Agree + Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>94%*</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome at Keene State College (Strongly Agree only)</td>
<td></td>
<td>54%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I belong here.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel physically safe on campus.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC provides the assistance I need to succeed [academically / in my work].</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC provides the support I need to thrive socially.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have a concern or a problem, there is a faculty or staff member that I can talk to.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have a concern or a problem, I know who to talk to, to begin to resolve the issue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC clearly communicates that all members of the College community are valued.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%*</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSC clearly communicates the importance of treating all members of the College community with respect.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I would recommend KSC to friends … as a good place to [go to college / work]. (Agree + Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I would recommend KSC to friends … as a good place to [go to college / work]. (Strongly Agree only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *p < .05*
This section of the survey also asked respondents about their interactions with various groups, using the phrase “In general I am treated respectfully by … [students, faculty, staff, administrators, members of the greater Keene community].” The following graphs show the responses of LGBT and straight respondents. There were no statistically significant differences in the pattern of these responses between the two groups.

**STUDENTS: In general I am treated respectfully by …**

(%who agree or strongly agree comparing responses from LGBT and straight students)

![Graph showing responses of LGBT and straight students](image1)

**EMPLOYEES: In general I am treated respectfully by …**

(%who agree or strongly agree, comparing responses from LGB and straight employees)

![Graph showing responses of LGB and straight employees](image2)
LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY

The second section of the student survey asked respondents about where they learn about different diversity topics. The following graphs show the percentage of ALL students who agreed that they had engaged various diversity topics, comparing responses in 2011 to those in 2014. The first graph shows the percentage of students who engaged each issue in class and the second shows the percentage who engaged those same issues in out-of-class programs and settings provided by the College. As these graphs demonstrate, the shape of the curriculum with regard to diversity has not changed in the past three years. On the other hand, there has been an increase in learning about diversity through out-of-class experiences, and students are now about as likely to learn about sexual orientation outside of class (63%) as in (65%).

Percentage of Students who Report They Have Engaged Each Diversity Topic in Class

![Bar chart showing percentage of students who report they have engaged each diversity topic in class, comparing 2011 and 2014.](chart.png)
The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment provides evidence to support student success, institutional effectiveness, and diversity, and helps to shape the campus conversation around important issues.

**Percentage of Students who Report They Have Engaged Each Diversity Topic Out of Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Cultures</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppression</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Religions</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TELL YOUR STORY**

This next section of the survey offered respondents the opportunity to tell their own story in open comments in response to two questions. The first asked about positive experiences:

_We want to document the ways that students/employees feel particularly supported, so that we can expand on this good work. In the past three years ... have you personally had an experience at KSC or in the greater Keene community in which you felt particularly welcomed and supported? (Y/N)_

_If yes, please tell as much or as little of that story here as you feel comfortable sharing. We would especially welcome learning which offices or people helped you feel welcome and supported at KSC._
LGBT students were about as likely as their straight classmates to answer yes to this question (62% vs. 61%). On the other hand, LGB employees were significantly more likely than their straight colleagues to say that they had felt particularly welcome (71% vs. 52%). The following comments illustrate the responses that relate to LGBT status.

**Students**

I felt very welcomed and safe during orientation upon finding out that KSC offers a club as well as many safe spaces for the LGBTQ community.

A friend of mine invited me to join KSC Pride and although I was skeptical at first it’s a very welcoming, not to mention educational, extracurricular environment.

I never had a LGBTQ+ club in my high school, so joining one here has made me feel less alone.

I was really struggling with my sexual orientation during my freshman year, and the lovely people in KSC Pride helped me figure everything out.

I felt especially welcomed during orientation when I found the KSC Pride. They were welcoming and supportive of me as a transgendered person which was a relief as I was unsure how I would be received here. I have also had a lot of support from two of my teachers who have been open to discussions and have shown support by using the right pronouns and my preferred name.

Taking Visual Rhetoric with Jamie Landau taught me that there is at least one person on this campus who is fighting for LGBT rights.

Joining Pride made me feel accepted.

The KSC Pride club is very welcoming, and it is nice knowing what offices and buildings are “Safe Zones.”

**Employees**

As a gay man, I have had several people make a point of talking about marriage equality issues in a supportive and positive manner. My interactions with HR have been great. Specifically, the Aliquant form kept making me refer to my husband as my ‘same-sex partner’; HR shared my concerns with Aliquant, and it was great last year (after the Supreme Court ruling) to see that my relationship was now simply ‘married.’

As soon as my husband and I started working at KSC, we could tell things were different here, especially compared to our previous college, which we felt many times discriminated against us as an ‘out’ gay couple. Our colleagues … have been extraordinarily welcoming and supportive, as has the President of the college, and many staff members. We feel that we aren’t primarily identified as gay people here, but by our teaching and our actions.
The second question in this section of the survey asked about negative experiences:

*We also want to document the ways that students/employees feel unwelcome or unfairly treated or disrespected or unsafe because of some aspect of their identity, so that we can help to build a campus that is welcoming to all. In the past three years ... have you personally had an experience at KSC or in the greater Keene community in which you felt unwelcome or unfairly treated or disrespected or unsafe, which you believe was related to some aspect of your identity (such as age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status, just to name a few)? (Y/N)*

*If yes, please tell as much or as little of that story here as you feel comfortable sharing. In particular please tell us the location where this occurred.*

While the first part of the question asked only about personal experiences, the “tell your story” portion also allowed for respondents to describe incidents that did not occur to them personally but which they had witnessed.

LGBT students were significantly more likely than their straight classmates to say that they had had a negative experience such as this (42% vs. 21%). Similarly, LGB employees were significantly more likely than their straight colleagues to have had such a negative experience in the past three years (38% vs. 21%). The following comments describe some of these experiences. Several student comments have been omitted here because they contain details that might identify the respondent.

**Students**

Can we create more gender-neutral bathrooms? I can only think of 6 on campus – 3 in Joslin House and 3 in Blake House. It can make life difficult for out trans and gender-queer students.

I am a girl and have short hair and have been yelled at while walking with some of my other female friends (gay slurs).

I have had a situation where I, as well as others, were not invited to a gathering because of our sexual orientation. The men said that they did not want to have a social with “a bunch of lesbians.”

I once went to a social event at a friend’s house, and some people began yelling “f*****ts” at a group of freshmen over a megaphone. While a vast majority of Keene students and staff describe themselves as “not homophobic,” their words, actions, and often times intense ignorance tell a completely different story.

I know of an incident in which a professor purposefully referred to a transgender woman by her male name (which she no longer goes by) almost as if to shut her up because of a heated discussion in class. I don’t believe this was ever reported, but I know that this student idolized this professor and probably didn’t know where to take the information.

Just walking on campus and hearing homophobic slurs or jokes makes me feel incredibly unsafe.
As my friend and I were walking back to her dorm…, someone in a truck drove by and yelled something homophobic at us…. My friend and I were really shaken up. A few days later, I was with that same friend … when someone smoking on one of the benches outside Butler yelled something homophobic at us…. My friends and I are all a part of the LGBTQ community, so these comments have greatly affected us. This has happened multiple times on campus.

Men try to “make me straight” and attempt to make sexual advances on me.

My partner … received notes taped to her door stating that “d*kes don’t belong in our showers,” calling her a bitch, and telling her she belonged in hell. She also was confronted by a group of girls in the bathroom. I felt highly uncomfortable as a visitor of the campus when I was staying with her.

My gay best friend sometimes gets treated more like a novelty than a person.

Purposeful mis-gendering of an openly transgender student.

There have been a few occasions where I have been treated unfairly by other students based on my gender identity. I have never felt unsafe or have been physically threatened but I have been made to feel unwelcome and disrespected.

Employees

[I was] mocked in class by a student due to [my] perceived sexual orientation. Also, in recommending a more gay-friendly campus, I was shot down by an obviously homophobic woman in a staff meeting, who apparently had no idea we were an inclusive community.

Yesterday, Dan Savage was on campus for a talk. He is a very famous writer and a well-known activist for the LGBT population and one of the founders of It Gets Better, an organization to help LGBT youth with issues of depression, bullying and suicide. This event was poorly advertised – it was not even on the Events Calendar on the KSC website. I could not even find it when I did a search on the KSC website. … I identify as LGBT and feel marginalized by this…. It says to me that these “gay” events don’t really matter so we don’t need to advertise. As a staff, I am not concerned for myself, but for the students. What kind of message does this send? That we don’t value you as an LGBT person so we won’t promote “your” events.

**FINAL COMMENTS**

At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to provide any final comments they wished. The following comments referred to LGBT issues:

Students

I think the college should take a firmer stance against slurs towards members of the LGBT community, and any form of discrimination in general. …the slurs being what I see the most.
Please require more safe space training for faculty and students – especially those going into health care and education. The lack of knowledge here about the LGBTQ community and gender issues is alarming if these students are going to be our teachers, counselors, and nurses one day.

Employee

For nearly two years, I have made repeated, passionate, and factually-based attempts at getting the college to pass (or even just consider) a preferred name change policy for (transgender) students. However, I have received little to no support form administrators.... In addition, I have not been alone in this request. Countless student executive board members in KSC Pride and staff and faculty members of the Safe Space Subcommittee have similarly advocated publicly for this policy for more than a year now, but again, there has been no movement from the college … even while student after student is “outed” by the college’s records that do not recognize preferred names. I understand that making such an institution-wide policy change is not easy, will take time, and requires a lot of critical thought before implementation. That said, I am ashamed to work at Keene State College because administrators do not even seem to be taking this idea seriously by understanding its necessity and exploring its possibility.