

Bemidji State University Campus Climate Survey 2023 Summary

Introduction:

In April 2023, Bemidji State University conducted a comprehensive Campus Climate Survey, facilitated by HEDS Campus Climate Survey. This survey engaged students, faculty, staff, and administrators, evaluating their perceptions of the campus climate, the university's support for diversity and inclusion, and experiences with harassment and discrimination.

Purpose of the Campus Climate Survey:

The primary goal was to gain insights into the campus community's point of view and establish a baseline for understanding our campus identity. The survey aimed to identify areas of improvement to enhance the overall campus experience and contribute to the betterment of the campus community and greater Bemidji.

Summation:

A Campus Climate Workgroup was formed to review the data provided by HEDS and the following are the key findings. The reason there are only two, is that the other tabs in the data are that they fall under the umbrella of these key findings.

Key Findings:

Belongingness/Trust (Tab 5):

The survey indicates mixed sentiments regarding the sense of belonging on and off campus. Notably, 68% of undergraduate students express general satisfaction with the overall campus climate, while faculty and staff report satisfaction levels of 59% and 43%, respectively. Meanwhile, 46% of staff, 31% of faculty and a combination of graduate students and undergraduate at a 41% report dissatisfaction that community members experience a sense of belonging or community at Bemidji State University. When asked "What one change would you make in order to enhance the sense of community at Bemidji State University?", many said intentional, welcoming campus-wide events, more community building and expanding DEI messaging to the campus community. Bemidji State University's dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion is essential to achieving our holistic goals toward overall student success. We host a variety of events in multiple modalities to capture everyone's interest. The campus climate survey uncovered that events are not being well advertised to the campus community.

Despite these mixed feelings, students are fostering meaningful relationships across campus. Most of the students (230 out of 372, 61%) that took this survey reported that this has been a home away from home, they have found their group and have been met with positive experiences. Faculty and staff exhibit higher levels of interaction with individuals from diverse backgrounds, with over 60% connecting with people from various backgrounds.

Campus Environment (Tab 8):

While Bemidji State University has intensified efforts to build stronger and sustainable diversity, equity and inclusive community, students express concerns about discrimination and harassment on campus. Discrimination and harassment experiences on campus include deliberate ignorance (53%), derogatory remarks (68%), and intimidation/bullying (42%). These incidents are prevalent in classrooms (41%), residential halls (38%), dining halls (38%), and social media (21%).

A significant portion of students are unaware of the reporting processes, with 50% indicating unfamiliarity. We have been working to close the gap of unreported incidents. Twenty-two percent of the people who took the survey reported that they'd experienced discrimination or harassment; 8% indicated they were unsure whether they had. Both undergraduate and graduate students make up 61% of that 8% and faculty and staff make up 36%. Aside from being unsure, our students reported concern of the reporting process. Sharing the process is untimely, inefficient and inconsequential. While our faculty and staff reported concerns of retaliation, resistance, and not halting resources being used towards important cases.

The importance of embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of Bemidji State University's corner values. This survey emphasizes the collective responsibility to address bias in various forms.

Considerations:

It is crucial to acknowledge the cultural and environmental context in which the survey was conducted. The report highlights potential limitations in accurately collecting campus data such as our student population. The survey offers comprehensive insights beyond the captured findings above.

Recommendations:

The Campus Climate Survey Committee has compiled a list of ideas to enhance the survey and proposed initiatives to improve the overall campus climate. These recommendations aim to contribute to a more inclusive and supportive campus community.

- Build smaller surveys to gather an accurate narrative towards specific topics
 - Retention/Burnout
 - How are we doing in this considering our current environment?
 - Microaggressions
 - What is being experienced and where? I.e. in person, social media etc.
 - Training modalities
 - Where are our faculty/staff receiving their training?
 - Ask more specific questions
- Improve overall reporting experience
 - Provide infographics/module of the reporting process and procedure
 - Improve communication during reporting and simplify reporting procedures
 - One pager of reportable events
- Building a strong campus community
 - More social campus wide events
 - Intentional faculty/staff and student events
 - Improve marketing strategies for events