

Ithaca College
Student Campus Climate Survey
April 13, 2005

General

- The Campus Climate survey was conducted in the spring of 2004 to determine students' general experiences at Ithaca College, attitudes and beliefs about diversity and multiculturalism, and experiences regarding diversity at Ithaca College.
- The survey was funded by an Ithaca College New Initiatives grant as one-time effort.
- All Ithaca College students were sent a survey via the web. 5,872 surveys were sent and 2,876 were returned, resulting in a 49.0% response rate. Administrative data and survey data were combined to determine the personal and academic descriptors of students responding to the survey.
- The survey evaluated students' opinions in 5 major categories regarding their perceptions and observations of diversity at Ithaca College.

Summary of Category Results

- *General thoughts about IC environment, including comfort levels in certain situations.* 92% of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with Ithaca College. The majority of the respondents expressed a high degree of comfort in all scenarios presented the survey. Statistically significant differences were evident in comfort levels for different racial/ethnic groups.
- *Evaluation of IC's diversity efforts.* 53% of respondents gave IC an "A" grade in efforts to create a safe learning environment that accepts a diverse student body. White students were somewhat more likely to give an "A" or "B" grade than non-white students.
- *Personal experiences and observations with diversity at IC.* 31% of respondents felt they had been discriminated against, even subtly, treated unfairly, or harassed on the IC campus.
- *Student opinions and perceptions regarding diversity at IC.* Respondents felt that racial/ethnic separation (83%) and racial/ethnic conflict or tension (44%) are present on campus. Interracial tension was evident in the classroom (25%) and in the residence halls (23%).

Overall Findings

- Survey findings have the potential of leading the college toward curricular advances and stronger programs that will better attract a diverse faculty, student and staff body at Ithaca College, in addition to ensuring that we are educating all students to become global citizens that appreciate and understand the important of diversity in our world community.
- The findings of the survey demonstrate there are opportunities to enhance diversity at Ithaca College. Positive efforts in this direction have the potential for leading the institution toward greater revenue generation and student retention.

Recommendations from Survey Committee

- The Campus Climate Survey Committee recommends the College commission a campus climate study to include faculty and staff in order to provide comparative data with current student information. Faculty and staff surveys would also complement the student survey and provide significant information that would be of importance to our upcoming accreditation.
- The gap of perceptions and experiences between white male students and other students needs to be addressed.
- Further work needs to be done to create a warmer campus climate for women, ALANA, disabled, lower socioeconomic standing, and LGBT students.

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Facts and Figures

Responses

2,876 out of 5,872 surveys were received (overall response rate of 49.0%). Data collected from the survey and administrative data were combined to determine personal and academic descriptors of students including gender, race, citizenship, location of residence, religion, disability status, income, major(s), and school(s) of study.

Overall findings indicate that the student body is predominately female, white, Christian, US citizens, with household incomes greater than \$75,000. Most survey respondents were female, non-resident aliens, with household incomes less than \$75,000, and who lived on campus.

General Thoughts about IC Environment

- 92 % of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with Ithaca College.
- 92% agreed that IC provides an environment for the open expression of ideas.
- 91% agreed that the atmosphere at IC “makes me feel I belong”.
- 88% agreed that the quality of academic programs is excellent.
- 88% would recommend IC to others.
- 38% agreed that IC should have a requirement of a common intellectual experience that focuses on issues of diversity.

Comfort Level of Students

- The majority of the respondents expressed a high degree of comfort in all scenarios presenting the survey (ex. walking on campus, living in residence halls, interactions with faculty and safety officers, etc).
- There were statistically significant differences in comfort levels for different racial/ethnic groups. Walking both on and off campus at night was significantly more uncomfortable for non-whites than for whites.

Evaluation of IC's Diversity Efforts

- In grading efforts to create a safe learning environment that accepts a diverse student body, 53% of respondents gave IC an “A” grade. White students were somewhat more likely to give an “A” or “B” grade than non-white students.
- 95% of African American, 86% of Hispanic/Latino, 74% of Asian-American, and 59% of white student felt that diversity *should be* a priority.
- 24% of African American, 37% of Hispanic/Latino, 26% of Asian-American, and 41% of white student felt that diversity *actually is* a priority.
- 9% of the students felt IC's effort to improve relations between people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds was just right.
- 39% felt IC was doing too much in this regard. Of this 39%, 80% were white.
- 33% felt IC was doing too little. Of this 33%, 57% were non-white females.

Students' Personal Experiences and Observations

- The vast majority of students have a high comfort level with most minority groups but lower comfort levels with having friends of a different class, sexual preference, or disability.
- 31% of respondents felt that had been discriminated against, even subtly, treated unfairly, or harassed on the IC campus.
- Of those who felt discriminated against or harassed, the largest proportion (15%) felt their gender was the cause. Most of these were women.

- Political conservatives, African-Americans, Jews, students of lower socioeconomic background, and gay students were more likely than other students to state that they had been discriminated.
- Gay students were nearly twice as likely as heterosexual students to receive harassing verbal comments (45% v. 24%).
- 20% of African-Americans said they are often excluded from social events due to their ethnicity, almost all ethnic/racial minority respondents said they often find themselves in situations where they are the only member of their ethnic group, and white students are least likely to refrain from saying what they are thinking regarding racial issues (15% v. 35-43%).
- 55% of whites, 21% of African-Americans, 15% of Hispanics/Latinos, and only 7% of Asian-Americans said they seldom spend time with other ethnic groups.
- 60% of African-Americans, 35% of Hispanics/Latinos, and only 28% of Asian-Americans often spend time with members of their own race/ethnicity.

Students' Opinions and Perceptions

- The respondents were given five concepts and asked to indicate the extent to which each is present at IC. Somewhat present on campus were racial/ethnic separation (83%) and racial/ethnic conflict or tension (44%). Interracial tension was evident in the classroom (25%) and in the residence halls (23%).
- 10% believe that there is at least some faculty disrespect for students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Responding to statements about race/ethnic diversity on campus, two-thirds of students feel the college curriculum adequately covers the contributions and issues facing ethnic minority groups, although white students are more likely to hold this view.
- African-American students are more likely than white students to agree that others hold expectations about their academic performance due to their ethnicity/race. One half of Asian-Americans and one-third of Hispanics/Latinos agree.
- While only 11% feel that faculty use bad ethnic examples in their lectures, African-Americans are two to three times more likely to feel that way than are white students. One-third of the respondents of the ethnic minority groups say that they minimize characteristics of their ethnic culture and identity to fit in. One-fourth of the respondents, mostly from lower income households, say that they minimize characteristics of their socio-economic class background and identity to fit in.
- 80% of the respondents feel that the student body should broadly represent the diversity of backgrounds evident in the larger American society, and that the real value of a college education lies in being introduced to different values. Similarly, while the majority of students agree that IC should offer more courses on international and multi-ethnic experiences and perspectives, non-white females are much more likely to agree than are white males.
- 87% percent of women respondents and 74% of men respondents agree that women are still discriminated against in society.
- White respondents were more likely (59%) to agree that affirmative action discriminates unfairly against white people than were non-white respondents.
- White males were the most likely (37%) and non-white females (14%) were the least likely to agree that immigrants should try to conform to U.S. culture and that minorities have the same opportunities as do white people in the U.S., although only one of four total respondents agree with either statement.
- 20% of respondents think society bends over backwards to accommodate the disabled and 6% of respondents think that gays are treated the same as heterosexuals. 11% felt that, while racism has been a problem in the past, it is no longer a problem today; white males are most likely to agree.

- 15% of the respondents indicated that they considered leaving Ithaca College due to their feelings regarding the campus climate in relation to diversity and multiculturalism. Importantly, each demographic group responded similarly, showing no correlation between the desire to leave and a student's race, sexual preference, gender, or socioeconomic status, and regardless of whether the student has been a victim of discrimination.

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