WELCOME!

Our Climate Surveys are one of the ways we periodically take the temperature of our campus community and people’s experiences with the university. This most recent survey paints a nuanced picture of individuals’ sense of belonging and highlights some challenges. Broadly speaking, survey respondents from underrepresented identities (across race, gender, orientation, religion, ability, and many others) are most likely to report low or negative feelings of belonging. This alone is sobering, as it indicates that we have more work to do to build a truly inclusive campus community.

However, we also know that many members of our community did not participate in this survey—members who represent some of the greatest diversity on our campus, and who have historically experienced some of the greatest challenges to belonging and inclusion. In the context of our findings, this lower response is, in itself, important data for us to reflect on as we continue to work to engage and build an inclusive campus for ALL members of our community.

Emmanuel Adero, Deputy Chief Officer for Equity and Inclusion

SURVEY QUESTIONS

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU...

Feel like you belong?
Have a good support network?
Have mentors or role models?
Feel like you can openly share your point of view?

KEY FINDINGS

Undergraduate Students
- Undergraduates who are Black, gender-questioning, or have 2+ disabilities report lower levels of belonging than other racial, gender, and dis/ability groups
- Non-normative groups across all demographics are less likely to have support networks and mentorship
- Black and veteran undergrads are less likely to feel that they can openly share their opinions

Graduate Students
- Latinx grad students report lower rates of belonging than other racial groups, and were also less likely to feel comfortable openly sharing their point of view than all other demographics
- While trans grad students report high levels of mentorship, rates were lower among nonbinary/questioning students—who also reported less robust support networks than other identity groups
- Master’s students report lower levels of mentorship than PhD students

Staff
- Executive/administrative/managerial staff show high rates of belonging in contrast with all other work classifications, and also report very high support network levels
- Black, Latinx, and multiracial staff reported lower mentorship levels compared to white and Asian groups
- Latinx, Black, nonbinary, and gender-questioning staff were less likely to report feeling they can openly share their opinions

Faculty
- Faculty with disabilities were more likely to report feeling no sense of belonging than any other group and, along with Black faculty, also report comparatively lower levels of support networks
- Black faculty members reported very low levels of mentorship compared to all other groups
- Nonbinary faculty, Latinx faculty, and faculty with disabilities were less likely to report feeling they can openly share their opinions
QUESTIONS FOR SELF REFLECTION

- What is your initial response to this data? Which emotions do you notice? (Note: you may find this Feelings Inventory list helpful!)

Some common reactions to this type of information may include...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of marginalized or minoritized groups most directly impacted might feel...</th>
<th>Those not directly impacted, but who strive towards allyship might feel...</th>
<th>Those who have not yet had an opportunity (or obligation) to consider these topics might feel...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affirmed to see their experiences reflected</td>
<td>Surprised to learn that many community members do not feel a strong sense of belonging</td>
<td>Disengaged -- “what does this have to do with me anyway?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated that this experience is not already common knowledge</td>
<td>Sadness that things are “worse than you realized”</td>
<td>Confused, impatient, or even irritated by others’ strong reactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cautious/skeptical about the potential for change</td>
<td>A sense of urgency to act immediately and fix every problem</td>
<td>Embarrassed by a lack of knowledge or awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilant to see how others will respond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that there is no right or wrong way to feel—all emotional responses are helpful information!

- What feels familiar about these findings and/or the emotions that accompany them? Are you reminded of past experiences you’ve had at UMass or elsewhere?
- What questions do you still have after considering this data? What else would you like to know or understand more deeply?

IMPORTANT IDEAS:

INTERSECTIONALITY

A term used to describe the intersecting and interdependent nature of all structural, systemic identity-based oppressions.

The theory’s roots lie in Black feminist activism, and the term intersectionality was first coined by Black legal scholar Dr. Kimberle Williams Crenshaw in 1989 to highlight the inextricable combination of sexism and racism experienced by Black women.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

- Does this data feel accurate to your experience in your role, unit, or department? Why or why not?
- If the issues identified in this data set were effectively addressed and transformed, how would we know? What would be the evidence? How would your group or team look, feel, and function if everyone experienced a deep sense of belonging?
- How will this knowledge inform both future and ongoing actions and initiatives? How will our individual and collective choices move us closer to the future we are imagining into?
As social creatures, all people have an innate desire to feel a sense of belonging. When it comes to our relationships with other individuals, groups, and the wider community, human brains thrive on connection, acceptance, and support.

The 2021 Campus Climate Survey focused on examining institution-wide efforts to create an increasingly inclusive environment for everyone. In a large, diverse community like UMass, belonging is best understood as an outcome that can be achieved through collective work toward a common goal.

Simply put, a sense of belonging is what happens when the work of inclusion is done thoughtfully and consistently.

**IMPORTANT IDEAS:**

**BELONGING**

**INCLUSION**

Belonging is NOT the same as “fitting in”!

It’s important to distinguish between assimilation and true inclusion.

Assimilation expects those who are outside the norm to adjust themselves to the existing dominant culture. Minoritized individuals and groups may feel pressure to conform, hide parts of their identity and experience, or pretend to be something they are not to gain acceptance and support.

On the other hand, inclusion asks...

- Whose voices are often left out? What unique gifts might they offer?
- How must our culture shift or expand so that every community member feels invited and safe to show up as their whole, authentic self?
- Which actions will we take to move our community closer to this goal?

**TAKE ACTION:**

**REPORTING OPTIONS**

When our sense of belonging is threatened, it can often be challenging to discern between an incident of mistreatment, an expression of outright bias, or a hurtful misunderstanding.

What will always be clear, however, is how the situation makes us feel – and its very real impact on whether or not we feel accepted, supported, and valued.

One way to take action when you experience or observe this type of occurrence is to submit a bias incident report. Reports not only allow UMass to offer resources and support to those directly involved, but also help to identify community-wide patterns and growth areas.

Use these links to learn more about sharing an incident of bias or discrimination with the Office of Equity and Inclusion, or check out this page for information on other reporting options.