April 27, 2022

Dear Campus Community,

In the fall 2021 semester, the Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment conducted a campus-wide survey to assess perceptions and experiences of inclusion, respect and belonging within the university community. With 41.6 percent of faculty, staff, and students responding, we have a wealth of data to inform and create strategic initiatives that further our goals of becoming a community of choice rooted in equity and inclusion.

While the results of the survey will be available in their entirety next fall, as the data are analyzed over the next several months, we will also periodically share findings related to relevant themes such as racial climate and inclusion. Today, we begin by presenting preliminary results on the theme of “Belonging.” We focus on individuals’ own sense of how much they feel they belong at UMass, as well as other related experiences — having a support network, feeling connected to the campus, and being able to openly share one’s point of view.

In examining the survey results, we found about 90 percent of our campus community experiences a sense of belonging to either “some” or a “great” extent. There are, however, substantial differences in experiencing a sense of belonging among social identity populations. In particular, when we disaggregate the data, we see among our Black and African American undergraduate populations, 26 percent feel a sense of belonging to “no” extent. Similarly, solemn results are found when we dive into our populations for students, faculty, and staff who identify as transgender, disabled/person with disability, and Latina/o/x. These data suggest what we know to be true: individually, collectively, and institutionally we still have significant work to do.

For more detailed information on these findings, please visit the Campus Climate Survey Results on the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) website.

Following the campus-wide climate survey in 2016, we used the findings to create programs and initiatives to better support our students, staff, and faculty. Such initiatives include the creation of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI), support for the Building Bridges program, successful efforts to improve the hiring of staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds, recruitment of the most diverse student body to date, and the awarding of many campus climate...
improvement grants. We are confident that our new data will result in more positive changes moving forward.

Once the full report of the 2021 Campus Climate Survey is released in fall 2022, we will engage the UMass community in the findings and implications of the results. We will also begin "Climate Conversations." Co-led by OEI administrators and leaders from your school, college, or unit, we will use survey results to work with your colleagues and develop an action plan for improving the campus climate in your area.

We are also pleased to announce a series of events in early fall 2022 based on the theme of “Belonging.” Featuring a series of workshops, speakers and celebrations, we will collectively affirm our UMass values of dignity, respect, inclusion and equity for all. More information on these events will be forthcoming.

We thank all of you who participated in the 2021 Campus Climate Survey, and call upon the entire university to come together and engage in the vital, collective work ahead of us, as we create a community where each one of us experiences a strong sense of belonging.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy
Vice Chancellor Nefertiti A. Walker

University of Massachusetts Amherst