



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

Assessment • Planning • Interventions

The University of Kansas  
Medical Center, Wichita, and  
Salina Campuses

Campus Climate  
Research Study  
Executive Summary

June 2017



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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The University of Kansas (KU) affirms that diversity and inclusion are crucial to the intellectual vitality of the campus communities. It is through freedom of exchange over different ideas and viewpoints in supportive environments that individuals develop the critical thinking and citizenship skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Diversity and inclusion engender academic engagement where teaching, working, learning, and living take place in pluralistic communities of mutual respect.

The University of Kansas is dedicated to fostering caring communities that provide leadership for constructive participation in a diverse and multicultural world. As noted in the University of Kansas' mission statement, "The university is committed to excellence. It fosters a multicultural environment in which the dignity and rights of the individual are respected. Intellectual diversity, integrity, and disciplined inquiry in the search for knowledge are of paramount importance."<sup>1</sup> To better understand the campus climate, the senior administration at KU recognized the need for a comprehensive tool that would provide campus climate metrics for its students, faculty, and staff.

To that end, members of KU formed the Campus Climate Steering Committee (CCSC) in November 2015. The CCSC was composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Ultimately, KU contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting (R&A) to conduct a campus-wide study entitled, "University of Kansas: Climate Study for Learning, Working, & Living." Data were gathered via reviews of relevant University of Kansas literature, focus groups, and a campus-wide survey centered on the experiences and perceptions of various constituent groups. Based on the findings of this study, campus units will have the opportunity to develop two to three action items by spring 2018 to improve KU's learning, working, and living environment.

### **Project Design and Campus Involvement**

The CCSC collaborated with R&A to develop the survey instrument. In the first phase, R&A conducted 23 focus groups comprised of 212 participants (63 students, 130 faculty, staff, or administrators, and 19 participants who did not identify their position status). In the second

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.ku.edu/about/mission/>

phase, the CCSC and R&A used data from the focus groups to co-construct questions for the campus-wide survey. The final survey instrument was completed on August 8, 2016. KU's survey contained 112 items (30 qualitative and 82 quantitative) and was available via a secure online portal from September 13 to October 14, 2016. Confidential paper surveys were distributed to those individuals who did not have access to an internet-connected computer or who preferred a paper survey.

The conceptual model used as the foundation for KU's assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith et al. (1997) and modified by Rankin (2003). A power and privilege perspective informs the model, one grounded in critical theory, which establishes that power differentials, both earned and unearned, are central to all human interactions (Brookfield, 2005). Unearned power and privilege are associated with membership in dominant social groups (Johnson, 2005) and influence systems of differentiation that reproduce unequal outcomes. The CCSC implemented participatory and community-based processes to generate survey questions as a means to capture the various dimensions of power and privilege that shape the campus experience. In this way, KU's assessment was the result of a comprehensive process to identify the strengths and challenges of campus climate, with a specific focus on the distribution of power and privilege among differing social groups. This report provides an overview of the results of the campus-wide survey.

## **The University of Kansas – Medical Center, Wichita, and Salina Campuses' (KUMC)**

### **Participants**

KUMC's community members completed 1,621 surveys for an overall response rate of 24%. Only surveys that were at least 50% completed were included in the final data set for analyses:<sup>2</sup> Forty-six percent ( $n = 751$ ) of the sample were Undergraduate Students or Graduate/Professional Student/Post-Doctoral Scholar/Fellow/Resident respondents, 17% ( $n = 268$ ) were Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents, and 37% ( $n = 602$ ) were Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank. Table 1 provides a summary of

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<sup>2</sup>Twenty-six (26) surveys were removed because they did not complete at least 50% of the survey, and 5 duplicate submissions were removed. Surveys were also removed from the data file if the respondent did not provide consent.

selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. The percentages offered in Table 1 are based on the numbers of respondents in the sample (*n*) for each demographic characteristic.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. KUMC Sample Demographics**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>% of Sample</b>
Position status	Undergraduate Student	144	8.9
	Graduate/Professional Student	567	35.0
	Post-Doctoral Scholar/Fellow/Resident	40	2.5
	Tenure-Track Faculty	115	7.1
	Non-Tenure-Track Faculty/Academic Staff	137	8.5
	Research Scientist/Engineer	27	1.7
	Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank	16	1.0
	Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank	22	1.4
	Staff	553	34.1
Gender identity	Woman	1,074	66.3
	Man	516	31.8
	Genderqueer	< 5	---
	Non-Binary	< 5	---
	Transgender	0	0.0
	Other/Not Reported	27	1.7
Racial/ethnic identity	Alaska Native/American Indian/Native	9	0.6
	Asian/Asian American	109	6.7
	Black/African American	72	4.4
	Hispanic/Latin@/Chican@	45	2.8
	Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian/Native		
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	25	1.5
	Multiracial	87	5.4
	White/European American	1,234	76.1
	Missing/Unknown/Other	40	2.5
Sexual identity	Heterosexual	1,460	90.1
	LGBQ	104	6.4
	Missing/Unknown/Other	57	3.5
Citizenship status	A Visa Holder (such as F-1, J-1, H1-B, and U)	27	1.7
	Currently Under a Withholding of Removal Status	ND*	ND
	DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival)	ND	ND
	DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability)	ND	ND
	Other Legally Documented Status	ND	ND
	Permanent Resident	70	4.3
	Refugee Status	ND	ND

<sup>3</sup>The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

		ND	ND
	Undocumented Resident		
	U.S. Citizen, Birth	1,397	86.2
	U.S. Citizen, Naturalized	100	6.2
Disability status	Single Disability	81	5.0
	No Disability	1,490	92.0
	Multiple Disabilities	40	2.5
	Missing/Unknown/Other	9	0.6
Religious/Spiritual affiliation	Christian	946	58.4
	Additional Religious/Spiritual Affiliation	99	6.1
	No Affiliation	466	28.7
	Multiple Affiliation	69	4.3
	Missing/Unknown/Other	41	2.5

Note: The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

\*ND: No Data Available

## Key Findings – Areas of Strength

### 1. High levels of comfort with the climate at KUMC

Climate is defined as the “current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential.”<sup>4</sup> The level of comfort experienced by faculty, staff, and students is one indicator of campus climate.

- 81% ( $n = 1,310$ ) of the survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at KU.
- 82% ( $n = 743$ ) of Employee (including Post-Doctoral Scholar/Fellow/Resident) respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their departments/work units.
- 87% ( $n = 865$ ) of Student and Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- 82% ( $n = 421$ ) of Men respondents and 81% ( $n = 873$ ) of Women respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the overall climate on campus.

### 2. Faculty Respondents – Positive attitudes about faculty work

- 85% ( $n = 98$ ) of Tenure and Tenure-Track/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the criteria for tenure were clear.
- 90% ( $n = 103$ ) of Tenure and Tenure-Track/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that research was valued by KU.
- 85% ( $n = 116$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track/Academic Staff Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that research was valued by KU.
- 81% ( $n = 107$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track/Academic Staff Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that teaching was valued by KU.

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<sup>4</sup>Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 264

- 85% ( $n = 226$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by faculty in their department/program.

### **3. Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank**

#### **Respondents –Positive attitudes about staff work**

- 79% ( $n = 471$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their supervisors provided adequate support for them to manage work-life balance.
- 74% ( $n = 443$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they were able to complete their assigned duties during scheduled hours.
- 79% ( $n = 466$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they are given a reasonable time frame to complete assigned responsibilities.
- 83% ( $n = 492$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they believed that vacation and personal time benefits were competitive.
- 76% ( $n = 449$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they believed that there were clear expectations of their responsibilities.
- 85% ( $n = 510$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by coworkers in their department.

### **4. Student Respondents – Positive attitudes about academic experiences**

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.<sup>5</sup> Research also supports the pedagogical value of a diverse student body and faculty for improving learning outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Attitudes toward academic pursuits are one indicator of campus climate.

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<sup>5</sup>Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005

<sup>6</sup>Hale, 2004; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harper & Quaye, 2004

- **Students Respondents’ Perceptions of Campus Climate**
  - 78% ( $n = 583$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by KU faculty.
  - 78% ( $n = 583$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” by KU staff.
  - 82% ( $n = 609$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by KU faculty in the classroom.
  - 83% ( $n = 616$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by other students in the classroom.
  - 80% ( $n = 589$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt that their opinions were considered as valid as other students’ opinions.
  
- **Student Respondents *Perceived Academic Success***

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the scale, *Perceived Academic Success*, derived from Question 13 on the survey. Analyses using these scales revealed:

  - A significant difference existed in the overall test for means for Students by Graduate Student disability status on *Perceived Academic Success*.
    - Multiple Disabilities Graduate Student respondents had less *Perceived Academic Success* than their No Disability Graduate Student respondent peers.

## **Key Findings – Opportunities for Improvement**

### **1. Members of several constituent groups indicated that they experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.**

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Research also underscores the relationship between workplace discrimination and

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<sup>7</sup>Aguirre & Messineo, 1997; Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001

subsequent productivity.<sup>8</sup> The survey requested information on experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

- 14% ( $n = 220$ ) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.<sup>9</sup>
  - 32% ( $n = 70$ ) noted that the conduct was based on their position status, 19% ( $n = 41$ ) felt that it was based on their age, and 18% ( $n = 229$ ) felt that it was based on their educational credentials.
- Differences emerged based on gender identity, position status, age, and ethnicity/racial identity:
  - By position status, Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents (42%,  $n = 92$ ), Graduate/Professional Student/Post-Doctoral Scholar/Fellow/Resident respondents (31%,  $n = 69$ ), Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents (21%,  $n = 46$ ), and Undergraduate Student respondents (6%,  $n = 13$ ) were each proportionately likely to believe that they had experienced this conduct.
    - Of those respondents who noted that they had experienced this conduct, all respondent groups significantly differed from one another with 54% ( $n = 38$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents, 31% ( $n = 22$ ) of Graduate/Professional Student/Post-Doctoral Scholar/Fellow/Resident respondents, 13% ( $n = 9$ ) Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents, and less than 5 Undergraduate Student respondents thinking that the conduct was based on their position status.
  - By age, a greater percentage of respondents between 55 and 64 years old (24%,  $n = 47$ ) and respondents between 22 and 24 years old (6%,  $n = 18$ ) noted they had experienced exclusionary conduct.

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<sup>8</sup>Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008; Waldo, 1999

<sup>9</sup>The literature on microaggressions is clear that this type of conduct has a negative influence on people who experience the conduct, even if they feel at the time that it had no impact (Sue, 2010; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009).

- Of those respondents who indicated they believed they had experienced this conduct, no significant differences occurred.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct at KUMC. 95 respondents contributed comments regarding their personal experiences. Two themes emerged from their narratives: (1) reporting process and the lack of accountability and (2) the behavior and maltreatment from colleagues and supervisors.

**2. Several constituent groups indicated that they were less comfortable with the overall campus climate, workplace climate, and classroom climate.**

Prior research on campus climate has focused on the experiences of faculty, staff, and students associated with historically underserved social/community/affinity groups (e.g., women, People of Color, people with disabilities, first-generation students, veterans).<sup>10</sup>

Several groups at KU indicated that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, workplace, and classroom.

- By gender identity: Men respondents were significantly more likely to be “very comfortable” than Women respondents with the overall climate at KU and the climate in their classes.
- By racial identity: A greater percentage of White respondents and Multiracial respondents were more comfortable with the overall climate at KU than People of Color respondents.
- By sexual identity: A greater percentage of Heterosexual respondents were more comfortable with the overall climate at KU than LGBTQ respondents.
- By income status: Not-Low-Income Student Respondents were significantly more likely to be “comfortable” with the overall climate than were Low-Income Student respondents.
- By disability status: Respondents with No Disability were significantly more likely to be “comfortable” with the overall climate than were Respondents with a disability.

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<sup>10</sup>Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Norris, 1992; Rankin, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008

### **3. Employee Respondents – Challenges with work-life issues**

- 55% ( $n = 148$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents and 49% ( $n = 294$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents had seriously considered leaving KU in the past year.
  - 57% ( $n = 250$ ) of those Employee respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of a low salary/pay rate.
  - 41% ( $n = 179$ ) of those Employee respondents who seriously considered leaving indicated that they did so because of limited opportunities for advancement.

### **4. Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank Respondents – Challenges with faculty work**

- 26% ( $n = 68$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for tenure-track faculty positions were competitive.
  - 26% ( $n = 68$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for non-tenure-track faculty were competitive.
  - 20% ( $n = 52$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for academic staff professors were competitive.
- 18% ( $n = 48$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that KU provided adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance (e.g., child care, wellness services, elder care, housing location assistance, transportation).
- 58% ( $n = 150$ ) of Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by KU senior administrators.

## **5. Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank**

### **Respondents – Challenges with faculty work**

- 14% ( $n = 83$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that child care benefits were competitive.
- 28% ( $n = 164$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that staff salaries were competitive.
- 28% ( $n = 165$ ) of Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that there were clear procedures on how they could advance at KU.

141 Staff/Research Scientist/Engineer/Senior Administrator without Faculty Rank respondents contributed comments regarding their workplace climate related experiences. Six themes emerged from these comments: (1) the complexity of job security, (2) concerns with salary, (3) the ability to participate in professional development, (4) the overall lack of advancement opportunities or preparation, (5) opportunities for flexible work schedules, and (6) the use/inability of use of leave.

46 Faculty/Senior Administrator with Faculty Rank respondents elaborated on their experiences regarding workplace climate. Four themes emerged from their comments: (1) concerns regarding overall salary and lack of raise in recent years, (2) lack of time and funding for professional development opportunities, (3) various problems concerning child care issues, and (4) the overall workplace environment.

**6. A small, but meaningful, percentage of respondents experienced unwanted sexual conduct.**

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a substantial issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the KU survey requested information regarding sexual misconduct.

- 5% of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual conduct while at KU.
  - i. < 1% ( $n = 7$ ) of respondents experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting) while a member of the KU community.
  - ii. 1% ( $n = 14$ ) of respondents experienced stalking (e.g., physical following, on social media, texting, phone calls) while a member of the KU community.
  - iii. 3% ( $n = 52$ ) of respondents experienced unwanted sexual interaction (e.g., cat-calling, repeated sexual advances, sexual harassment) while a member of the KU community.
  - iv. 1% ( $n = 17$ ) of respondents experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent) while a member of the KU community.
- Undergraduate Student respondents and Women respondents more often reported unwanted sexual experiences than their majority counterparts.
- The majority of respondents did not report the unwanted sexual experience.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted sexual experiences. Two themes emerged from respondents: (1) One rationale cited for not reporting these incidents was that respondents were fearful of the consequences for the perpetrator or themselves. (2) The second rationale was because respondents felt as if it was their fault.

## Conclusion

KUMC’s climate findings<sup>11</sup> were consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country, based on the work of R&A Consulting.<sup>12</sup> For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” A similar percentage (81%) of KU respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at KU. Likewise, 20% to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. However, at KUMC a smaller percentage of respondents (14%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. The results also paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.<sup>13</sup>

KUMC’s climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity and inclusion, and addresses the overall mission and goals of these campuses. While the findings may guide decision-making in regard to policies and practices at these campuses, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus’ environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating additional action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide each campus community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. KUMC, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, are in a prime position to actualize their commitment to promote an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

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<sup>11</sup>Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

<sup>12</sup>[Rankin & Associates Consulting, 2015](#)

<sup>13</sup>Guiffrida, Gouveia, Wall, & Seward, 2008; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harper & Quaye, 2004; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Sears, 2002; Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart, 2006; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Yosso et al., 2009

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