The Ohio State University
Campus Climate Study

Office of Student Life
Center for the Study of Student Life

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June 2012
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) examines experiences during a student’s college experience that lead to a student developing leadership qualities. The belief among higher education researchers such as A. Astin and H. S. Astin is that experiences in higher education have a major role in shaping students to develop as civically engaged leaders.

The MSL survey is administered every two years. Ohio State has been participating since 2010, along with over 100 colleges and institutions around the country. In 2012, Ohio State had a 22.3% response rate. This study uses MSL data to report on campus climate at Ohio State.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, 73.5% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they feel they belong on this campus.
- Analysis revealed a statistically significant difference (p<.01) in a sense of belonging between first generation college students (59.3%) and non-first generation college students (75.9%).
- There were no statistically significant differences in students feeling they belong on Ohio State’s campus by racial identity, sexual orientation, or parental income.
- More LGBQ students (42.9%) reported that they had encountered discrimination while attending Ohio State than did heterosexual students (24.0%).
- Over 90% of all students held discussions with students whose personal values differed from their own; there were no statistically significant differences by racial identity, gender, sexual orientation, or parental income level.
- Fewer first generation college students (54.1%) held frequent discussions with students whose personal values differed from their own than non-first generation college students (63.8%).
- Nearly 70% of students reported that they have worked with others to make the campus or community a better place, with 52.0% of all students reporting they had done this frequently.
- More LGBQ students (55.4%) responded that they had frequently taken action to address a social or environmental problem than heterosexual students (31.8%).
- There were no statistically significant differences in students having taken action in the community to address a social or environmental problem in regards to their racial identity or first or non-first generation college status.
INTRODUCTION

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) is an online survey that was conducted at Ohio State in February 2012 to measure the environmental factors of the college experiences that contribute to student leadership development and, in turn, to the preparation of civically engaged citizens. The survey was administered to a random sample of 5,000 undergraduate students on The Ohio State University Columbus campus, including 1,000 students who had taken a leadership course. The response rate was 22.3%, with 1,097 students completing the survey.

This study examines topics related to Ohio State’s campus climate using data from the MSL survey, including students’: feelings of belonging at Ohio State, discussions outside the classroom about sensitive topics, and engagement with social change behaviors.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Students were able to select any number of races/ethnicities on the survey with which they identified. Any students who selected more than one race or who selected the category multiracial were considered multiracial; approximately 7% of students were classified as being multiracial.

A non-first generation college student was defined as having at least one parent who had “some college,” a “college degree,” or a “higher/professional degree.” This definition is consistent with the National Center for Education Statistics as well as the United States Department of Education.
**FINDINGS**

This study examines campus climate by exploring students’ feelings of belonging, experiences with discrimination, discussions with peers, and engagement with social change behaviors at Ohio State. Data were analyzed for significant differences in experiences by gender, racial identity, sexual orientation, parental income, and first or non-first generation college student status.

In the charts that follow, one asterisk (*) indicates a difference significant at p<.05, two (**) indicate a difference significant at p<.01. The ranges of dollar amounts represent students’ estimates of the combined annual income of their parents.

**BELONGING CLIMATE AND NON-Discriminatory CLIMATE**

The Belonging Climate and Non-Discriminatory Climate scales combine to make the *Your College Climate* section of the MSL survey. The *Your College Climate* items explore students’ sense of belonging and experiences with discrimination at Ohio State.

**Belonging Climate**

The Belonging Climate items ask students’ about feeling accepted and a sense of belonging at Ohio State. The following section examines the item “I feel I belong on this campus.”
Belonging Climate (continued)

Non-Discriminatory Climate

The Non-Discriminatory Climate items ask students about experiences with discrimination and prejudice. Later, students are asked about their social change behaviors. This section of the report examines three items from both areas of the survey: “I have observed discriminatory words, behaviors, or gestures directed at people like me”; “I have encountered discrimination while attending this institution”; and “I have worked with others to make the campus or community a better place”. At Ohio State, “making campus a better place” could include activities such as participation in Martin Luther King Day volunteer events, involvement in service-oriented student organizations, or being a Community Ambassador through the office of Off-Campus and Commuter Student Engagement.

![Graphs showing percentage of students' responses to questions about belonging, observed discriminatory behavior, encountered discrimination, and working to make the campus better.](image-url)
Non-Discriminatory Climate (continued)

- I have observed discriminatory words/behaviors/gestures directed at people like me
- I have encountered discrimination while attending this institution
- I have worked with others to make the campus or community a better place

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**Male**
- 30.5%
- 50.5%
- 53.2%

**Female**
- 27.3%
- 29.4%
- 23.6%

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**White**
- 26.4%
- 65.9%
- 47.4%

**Black**
- 22.9%
- 47.7%
- 10.5%

**Asian**
- 42.5%
- 38.8%
- 10.5%

**Latino**
- 10.5%
- 10.5%
- 23.9%

**Multiracial**
- 16.4%
- 43.3%
- 43.3%
Non-Discriminatory Climate (continued)

- I have observed discriminatory words/behaviors/gestures directed at people like me
- I have encountered discrimination while attending this institution
- I have worked with others to make the campus or community a better place

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Non-Discriminatory</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
<th>Worked Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$24,999</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$74,999</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-$149,999</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000+</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Charts:**

- Heterosexual
  - Non-discriminatory: 27.8%
  - Discrimination: 51.3%
  - Worked Together: 62.5%
- LGBQ
  - Non-discriminatory: 24.0%
  - Discrimination: 42.9%
  - Worked Together: 62.5%

- Non-first generation student
  - Non-discriminatory: 30.0%
  - Discrimination: 53.3%
  - Worked Together: 62.5%
- First generation student
  - Non-discriminatory: 25.8%
  - Discrimination: 20.7%
  - Worked Together: 46.0%

- Heterosexual
  - Non-discriminatory: 30.0%
  - Discrimination: 53.3%
  - Worked Together: 62.5%
- LGBQ
  - Non-discriminatory: 24.0%
  - Discrimination: 42.9%
  - Worked Together: 62.5%

- Non-first generation student
  - Non-discriminatory: 27.8%
  - Discrimination: 62.5%
  - Worked Together: 47.1%
- First generation student
  - Non-discriminatory: 24.1%
  - Discrimination: 51.3%
  - Worked Together: 47.1%

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**Socio-Cultural Discussions**

Part of the survey focused on how frequently students had discussions with their peers outside of the classroom about sensitive issues such as multiculturalism, diversity, and other major social issues. The survey also asked whether students had held discussions with peers who were very different than they were in regards to religion, politics, or personal values.

### I held discussions with students whose personal values were very different from my own

- **Never**
- **Sometimes**
- **Often/Very Often**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often/Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### I held discussions with students whose personal values were very different from my own

- **White**
- **Black**
- **Asian**
- **Latino**
- **Multiracial**

### I held discussions with students whose personal values were very different from my own

- **Heterosexual**
- **LGBQ**

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SOCIO-CULTURAL DISCUSSIONS (CONTINUED)

I held discussions with students whose personal values were very different from my own

- $0--$24,999: 53.7%
- $25,000--$74,999: 61.9%
- $75,000--$149,999: 62.1%
- $150,000+: 65.6%

I held discussions with students whose personal values were very different from my own**

- Non-first generation student: 63.8%
- First generation student: 54.1%

SOCIAL CHANGE BEHAVIORS

The survey measured the frequency of participation in social change behaviors such as community service and other actions meant to improve the community using the MSL Social Change Behaviors Scale. Students indicated the frequency of how often they were engaged in social change actions in their campus community or in a larger community. The Non-Discriminatory Climate section (above) includes information about how students worked with others “to make the campus or community a better place.” This section of the report examines at reactions students gave to the statement, “I have taken action in the community to address a social or environmental problem.”

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- Never: 33.0%
- Once: 49.2%
- Sometimes/Often: 17.8%

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- Male: 32.2%
- Female: 34.0%
SOCIAL CHANGE BEHAVIORS (CONTINUED)

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Latino
- Multiracial

Sometimes/Often:
- 31.1%
- 50.0%
- 43.8%
- 26.3%
- 32.8%

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- Heterosexual
- LGBQ

Sometimes/Often:
- 31.8%
- 55.4%

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- $0--$24,999
- $25,000--$74,999
- $75,000--$149,999
- $150,000+

Sometimes/Often:
- 35.4%
- 31.1%
- 34.1%
- 38.2%

I have taken action in the community to try to address a social or environmental problem

- Non-first generation student
- First generation student

Sometimes/Often:
- 34.7%
- 25.9%