In the Spring of 2002, Gavilan Community College participated in the Campus Diversity Climate Survey project funded by the California Community College State Chancellor’s Office Funds for Student Success. The full report is available at http://www.gavilan.edu/research/cc02.pdf, the Gavilan College Library, or the Gavilan Research Office. The survey consisted of two parts: an objective survey and a focus group interview. Highlights of the results include:

- There is a general perception of respect and equality of opportunity
- Almost all report a positive self-assessment of their success
- Female respondents have the most positive view of the college
- College personnel are important influences on the campus climate
- Improvements are needed in:
  - Involvement of men and older students in campus activities
  - Signage and lighting
  - Scholarship information
  - College response to hate crimes

Statements with the five highest and lowest agreements and importances are shown on the next page.
### Table 1. 5 highest and lowest agreements and importances

Agreement: 1=strongly disagree 2=somewhat disagree 3=somewhat agree 4=strongly agree
Importance: 1=not at all important 2=somewhat unimportant 3=somewhat important 4=very important

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Median</td>
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The following statements were selected to be contrasted by relevant demographic groups to see if attitudes differed by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, household size, or income:

➤ “My instructors encourage women to participate in class as much as men” (Statement 10)

♦ Females and males were equally likely to agree with this statement\(^1\) and feel that it is important\(^2\).

\(^1\) \(G^2 (3) = 1.735, p = 0.626\)

\(^2\) \(G^2 (3) = 5.062, p = 0.167\)

➤ “I feel safe on campus, day and night” (Statement 14)

♦ Females and males were equally likely to agree with this statement\(^3\) but women were significantly more likely to rate this statement as more important\(^4\) especially women over 20 years old\(^5\).

\(^3\) \(G^2 (3) = 4.787, p = 0.188\)

\(^4\) \(G^2 (3) = 12.522, p = 0.006\)

\(^5\) classification and regression tree

➤ “I would feel comfortable in class with someone whom I knew was gay, lesbian, or bisexual” (Statement 34)

♦ Females were more likely than males to agree with the statement\(^6\). Males of the lowest and highest incomes were least likely to agree with this statement\(^7\).

\(^6\) \(G^2 (3) = 11.654, p = 0.009\)

\(^7\) classification and regression tree

➤ “All students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation have an equal chance of reaching their goals at my college” (Statement 48)

♦ Females were significantly more likely to agree more strongly with this statement\(^8\) especially women earning $40,000 or more per year\(^9\). Women were also significantly more likely to rate this statement as more important\(^10\).

\(^8\) \(G^2 (3) = 11.088, p = 0.011\)

\(^9\) classification and regression tree

\(^10\) \(G^2 (3) = 16.855, p = 0.001\)

In general, it appears women had the most positive view of the campus climate.
Four of the statements appeared especially relevant to the Associated Student Body as determined by the ASB counselor (statements 26, 36, 41, and 49). The statement “I am involved in organized student activities at my college” received the next to lowest rank in agreements and was considered least important of all the statements. The other statements also received importance rankings that were low and only one of the statements had an agreement that was above the median (“People with diverse backgrounds have an active voice in student government”). These findings are unfortunate as satisfied involvement in groups and activities can enhance feelings of belonging and are related to enhanced academic performance according to Student Involvement Theory. To help address these concerns, agreements and importances were related to demographic variables consisting of gender, ethnicity, age, income, and day/evening status.

- **“People with diverse backgrounds have an active voice in student government” (Statement 26)**
  - Men were less likely to feel this statement was important especially men with annual incomes less than $40,000.

- **“I am involved in organized student activities at my college” (Statement 36)**
  - Evening students were significantly less likely to agree with this statement than students enrolled in the day or both day and evening or to feel that this statement was important. Older students were less likely to feel that this statement was important as were younger students with the highest incomes.

- **“I am satisfied with ethnic/cultural events sponsored by the campus” (Statement 41)**
  - Males were least likely to agree with this statement and males of any income were less likely to feel that was important. Those with the highest income were also less likely to feel that statement 41 was important as were evening students. No difference by ethnicity occurred for this statement.

- **“Most students feel a sense of belonging here” (Statement 49)**
  - No differences by demographics

In general, it appears that evening students, men, and older students could benefit the most from outreach efforts. Presumably, evening and older students are more likely to have employment and family responsibilities that act against a willingness and ability to be more involved in the college. Perhaps more late afternoon or evening student government meetings or weekend family oriented activities would help overcome these barriers. It is unknown why men who responded to the survey would feel less involved and feel less of a need to be involved but it could relate to socialization issues that might be overcome with more targeted recruitment and the presence of positive male role models.

1. \( G^2(3) = 9.782, p = 0.021 \), classification and regression tree
2. \( G^2(6) = 15.479, p = 0.017 \)
3. \( G^2(6) = 14.583, p = 0.024 \)
4. Spearman’s rho = -0.195, \( p = 0.045 \)
5. classification and regression tree
6. \( G^2(3) = 15.326, p = 0.002 \)
7. \( G^2(3) = 19.159, p < 0.0005 \)
8. \( G^2(6) = 13.250, p = 0.039 \)
9. \( G^2(6) = 15.770, p = 0.015 \)
In addition to item by item examination, a factor analysis examined the entire pattern of responses to help identify overall themes. Each of these themes is called a factor and consists of sets of statements that related to each other. Each factor was tested for differences in factor scores by ethnicity, gender, age, household size, and income as follows:

- **Agreement Factors**
  - **Inclusiveness and Belonging** (Statements 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53)
    - No differences by demographics. The lack of differences by demographics for the Inclusiveness and Belonging factor is positive as it suggests a broad equality of connection to the campus community, although we have seen some differences by gender when examining statements in more detail.
  - **Instructional Quality and Relevance** (Statements 15, 18, 19, 21, 22)
    - Those of the highest incomes and smaller household sizes had higher agreements with instructional quality.
  - **College Image** (Statements 38, 40, 44, 47)
    - Women had significantly higher means on College Image than men indicating that female respondents had a more positive view of the campus environment than did men. This was especially true for women over age 30 while men of the highest income group had the lowest college image scores.

- **Importance Factors**
  - **Support, Class Offering Adequacy, and Facilities** (Statements 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 39, 42, 43, 44)
    - Respondents who were over 25 years old with annual incomes below $40,000 and households of 4 or fewer people felt this factor was more important while men from the largest households felt this factor was less important.
  - **Instructional Quality** (Statements 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 51)
    - Women aged 25 years and over with the highest incomes felt this factor was the more important while men of the lowest income felt this factor was less important.
  - **Student Service Quality** (Statements 1, 2, 17, 25)
    - No differences by demographics. The same lack of demographic differences for the Student Service Quality factor is also positive and could be interpreted as equality of treatment of all students.

1. classification and regression tree
2. ANOVA F(1,182) = 4.111, p = 0.044
3. classification and regression trees
Focus Group
The focus group interview consisted of a set of questions responded to by a group of student respondents. Similar to the objective questions, respondents took a broad and inclusive view of the issues of diversity and campus climate. College personnel are cited as contributors to both a positive and negative campus climate, which reinforces the importance of staff interactions with students. Facilities issues such as parking, lighting, and signage appeared important with respect to how the college responded to growth. Some pointed out that while Latinos are a minority in the United States, Latino students have a plurality at Gavilan College. Those of other U.S. minority groups such as Asians and African-Americans may feel left out if efforts of inclusiveness are focused too exclusively on the Latino culture. Also, it appears that the college response to a recent hate crime incident against a homosexual instructor may have resulted in a loss of confidence in campus safety for students. There appeared to be much agreement that women and disabled students receive support and respect. Finally, despite some concerns, all the students indicated they would recommend Gavilan.

Recommendations

Climate Strengths
Almost all students reported a positive self-assessment of their own success. Women and disabled students are perceived as having opportunity and access. Older women in particular cited the most positive views of the college. Also, there appeared to be no differences in perceptions of equal treatment and opportunity by ethnicity. College personnel appeared important determinants of the campus climate.

Climate Weaknesses
It appears that evening students, men, and older students could benefit the most from outreach efforts as they seemed to feel the least attached to the campus community. Improved signage appeared important to implement to aid campus navigation. Scholarship information appeared as another area in need of improvement. Also indicated is a review of the campus response to hate crimes to increase student confidence in their safety. Policy revisions have begun and should continue to be evaluated.

Survey Improvement
Future surveys would benefit from having translations readily available in several locally common languages such as Spanish and Chinese. A larger sampling effort is also needed to capture sufficient numbers of the least represented demographic groups.