



By the Numbers

Focus on the Facts

Office of Institutional
Research
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Calculating Climate: The EqS Institutional Receptivity Perspective

Institutional receptivity refers to goals and measures of institutional support that have been found to be influential in the creation of affirming campus environments for historically underrepresented students. Institutional receptivity allows underrepresented students to feel comfortable during their academic experiences at University of Wisconsin—La Crosse.

The measures of institutional receptivity are less quantitative than other measures used for previous perspectives. While some data are available which bears on the question of climate, including the demographic make up of the faculty and the results from the NSSE, other measures are more qualitative: voices or viewpoints from students of color and the integration of diversity issues into the university's strategic planning process.

The Equity Scorecard (EqS) team at UW-L began exploring the institutional receptivity perspective by examining diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators, campus climate and the viewpoints of students of color. This led to further exploration by reviewing data available from the Spring 2003, 2004 and 2006 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement to capture student experiences that are too difficult to quantify through the use of central data systems. By reviewing the data, the sources

of data used for the institutional receptivity were:

- The racial & ethnic diversity of full time faculty, staff, and administrators who were employed at UW-L during Fall 2005. Data for these analyses are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) in which Southeast Asians are not disaggregated from other Asian Americans,
- The campus climate as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), in which student's respond to questions regarding faculty receptivity, and the university's perceived support for value of diversity initiatives.
- The tabulation and summation of students of color voices and thoughts about UW-L was collected at the beginning of the Equity Scorecard Project process on February 21, 2006;

Findings

When comparing UW-L with our 24 performance peer institutions, equity indicators (UW-L share/Total Share) indicate that African American and Hispanic employees were underrepresented or underutilized within the UW-L workforce while Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander employees at UW-L were equitably represented within the workforce for Fall 2005. These inequities for African

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The EqS Evidence Team Needs YOU!

Input and reaction to the data collected and presented as part of the Equity Scorecard is necessary to the success of the project. The EqS team has now completed all four preliminary perspective reports and is working to combine the finds from them all into a cohesive final report. Your insights and reactions will help the team create an actionable report with the perspective to effect real change for all students at UW-L. Please send your comments, thoughts, and feedback to any of the team members; if you choose to remain anonymous, comments can be sent via campus mail to the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity or the Campus Climate Center.

Editor's Note

This issue is one of a series of issues on the Equity Scorecard Pilot project. You can find earlier issues discussing the pilot project within UW System, describing the Equity Scorecard framework and perspectives,

and detailing the results of the first three preliminary reports on the Access, Retention, and Excellence perspectives on the Provost's website (<http://www.uwlax.edu/Provost/universitydata/numbers.htm>).

The EqS team is wrapping up work on a final report to be shared with campus in early Fall 2007.

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For more information on the Equity Scorecard at UW-L, please visit:

<http://www.uwlax.edu/campusclimate/htm/EquityScorecard.html>

For more information on the development of the Equity Scorecard process, please visit the Center for Urban Education at USC:

<http://www.usc.edu/CUE>

Calculating Climate: EqS Institutional Receptivity (cont.)

American employees persisted in every major employee category except for part-time instructional positions. There weren't any Hispanic non-instructional executives and professionals or clerical support, though Hispanic employees were equitably represented within the full-time faculty and part time instructional academic staff categories.

In comparing UW-L with our peer institutions, the EqS Team found that undergraduate student-to-full-time faculty ratios for African American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian were below equity. The limited number of faculty of color multiplies the responsibilities for those faculty beyond academic scholarship and teaching by adding extended service expectations for advising and mentoring students of color and serving on diversity related committees.

In exploring student responses to several NSSE items that the team felt may be related to student perceptions of the receptivity of the campus climate, the EqS Team uncovered some results that challenged the practical experience and wisdom of many student services personnel on campus. It is impossible to explain this contradiction by simply examining existing data sources, however, which led to the Team to interpret equity measures from NSSE with some caution. That said, it appears as though Hispanic and Native American NSSE respondents felt that the UW-L curriculum as a whole did not provide diverse perspectives, but that respondents of color did not rate the climate at UW-L differently than majority students.

The EqS Team heard the voices of the UW-L students of color in an open forum on February 21, 2006 in which there were viewpoints of hope and concerns about the overall university's diversity efforts and how would Equity Scorecard Project insure accountability. Students participating in the February open forum expressed frustration at what they saw as a lack of commitment to diversity initiatives by campus leaders and the subsequent lack of action taken to address concerns related to diversity awareness and acceptance on campus. This frustration, however, was also tinged with hope that the EqS process would shed new light and lead to measurable results.

Summary

The data related to the Institutional Receptivity perspective is elusive and difficult to interpret. It is clear, however, that UW-L faculty and staff of color are not only unrepresentative of our student body, but also out of line with the personnel at our peer institutions. Equally clear is that students are waiting for definitive action on behalf of our campus leaders to address the relative lack of diversity and representativeness at UW-L.

- African American and Hispanic/Latino(a) individuals are underrepresented among employees at UW-L, especially among administration, faculty, skilled crafts/service/maintenance, and clerical and secretarial staff.
- Hispanic/Latino(a) and Native American students do not perceive the curriculum to provide diverse perspectives at the same rate as other groups of students.
- Students of color rate relationships with other students, faculty, and administration at levels equal to white students.
- Students of color report that UW-L provides the support they need to succeed academically at the same rate as white students.
- Students of color are as likely as white students to report that, if they could start over, they would still choose to attend UW-L.
- Students participating in open forums related to the EqS project expressed frustration over the lack of past action on diversity issues, but also hope that the EqS would engage the broader campus in working to bring diversity initiatives to center stage.

- Roger Haro & Al Thompson, authors for the Institutional Receptivity perspective