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DECADE

Free Response Analysis

DECADE Climate Survey: Free Response Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents a qualitative analysis of the free response data from the DECADE campus climate survey administered by the University of California, Irvine Graduate Division in Fall 2010. 537 or 40% of the 1330 UCI faculty and graduate students who completed the survey submitted responses to the final question, which asked, "What do you think we should know about diversity at UCI?" The responses were divided by major themes, and then coded for sub-categories within these themes. While the sample of free responses was generally representative of the survey sample as a whole in its mix of gender, discipline and status, there were significant differences in the comments that respondents submitted. Together, these responses create a rich data set regarding faculty and graduate students' (1) understandings of diversity, (2) attitudes toward existing and potential diversity-related policies, and (3) assessments of campus climate.

An analysis of this data reveals that understandings varied along each of these dimensions. Perhaps one of the largest areas of disagreement is the definition of diversity itself. There are those who contend that campus demographics should reflect the wider population and

those who argue that diversity of knowledge and experience is not captured by race, ethnicity or gender and therefore cannot be achieved through numbers alone. Other areas of contention were expressed with regards to diversity-related policies. Some, predominately females in non-STEM fields, took the opportunity to focus on admissions, assessment, hiring and promotion, expressing differing opinions on whether these should focus on or disregard race and gender. Finally, regarding climate, many students contended that the campus is doing well, whereas many faculty reported specific instances of discrimination, insensitivity, or structural bias.

In addition to differences on key dimensions, there were differences based on gender, discipline and status. Students were much more likely to tell us that they thought UCI was doing fine with regards to diversity, that our campus was on the right track, and that admissions should be based on merit not on enhancing diversity. Faculty, on the other hand, were more likely to advocate giving greater attention to diversity, provide anecdotes about issues of insensitivity, and offer suggestions for changing our campus climate.

Likewise, significant differences existed when responses were analyzed by discipline. Respondents in the STEM fields more likely to tell us that the campus was doing fine and that race and gender were irrelevant whereas those in the non-STEM fields were more likely to take the opportunity to relay specific incidents of insensitivity and offer suggestions.

Few general themes differed according to gender, though males were more likely to criticize the survey and females were more likely to share an anecdote or offer a suggestion. Underrepresented minorities had few differences from non-URMs in the types of responses they chose to provide. Overall the percent of URM students and faculty responding that race is irrelevant was lower than the percent of non-URM students and faculty; the percent of URMs responding that diversity needs more attention was also higher than the percent of non-URMs;

and URMs were less likely to contest the federal definition of diversity and to say the campus climate is fine.

These findings have a number of important implications. First, campus attitudes very much reflect perspectives that are part of national debates about gender, racial, and ethnic inclusion. Second, when faculty and students talk about diversity, they may mean different things and therefore may misunderstand each other. Third, a number of faculty and students seemingly assume that a focus on diversity may reduce excellence, an attitude that makes it difficult to pursue campus commitments to equity. Fourth, there appears to be some anxiety about the potential for preferential treatment of women and minority students and faculty, despite the fact that numerically, these groups are underrepresented in many departments and programs. Fifth, experiences of campus climate differ and may depend on faculty and students' own background and the program or school in which they teach or are enrolled.

BACKGROUND

In October 2010, the University of California, Irvine Graduate Division in collaboration with the UCI ADVANCE program received a three year Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a proposal entitled, "Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience" (DECADE). The DECADE project is designed to address the drop off in female and underrepresented minority group enrollment that arises between undergraduate and doctoral study. One possible explanation for this drop-off is faculty attitudes, given that admissions and student supervision occur largely at the departmental level. To address this drop-off, the project extends to graduate education the equity advisor model implemented at UCI at the faculty level and also builds on our campus's experience with the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate

program, which addressed diversity through graduate preparation programming. DECADE pursues five goals:

1. Improve campus climate by changing faculty attitudes regarding diversity
2. Increase the admission of women and minority students into doctoral programs
3. Increase retention and career development opportunities for female and minority students
4. Serve as an effective model to improve campus climate and assist highly qualified minorities and women to earn doctoral degrees in underrepresented fields
5. Disseminate our model and findings to other campuses and thus serve as a national model for enhancing diversity at the graduate level

In fall 2010, a survey was administered in order to provide baseline data regarding campus climate and to inform DECADE programming. The survey was sent to all faculty (n = 1,056) and graduate students (n = 4,875) via the UCI Electronic Educational Environment (EEE) system. Response rates were 24.9% and 21.7% respectively, which were consistent with previous graduate student surveys administered by the Graduate Division. Descriptive analyses of mean responses and independent sample t-tests were conducted using a .05 significance level to measure the difference between male/female, underrepresented minority (URM)/non-URM, and faculty/student responses. Key survey findings were that male respondents, non-URM respondents, and graduate students had a less positive attitude towards diversity and were less likely to report observing instances of inappropriate behaviors related to ethnicity and gender than were female respondents, URM respondents, and UCI faculty. Quantitative survey results have been presented to key institutional actors in the UCI faculty and administration, school deans via individual meetings, and members of the UCI student diversity advisory council.

The present report supplements these quantitative analyses by providing a qualitative analysis of the free response data. Five hundred thirty-seven free responses, ranging in length from a short phrase to some 700 words, were submitted. The demographics of the free responses are similar to those of the whole survey with a slightly higher percentage of Latinos (13%) and slightly fewer Asians (14%) providing free responses than in the quantitative portion of the survey resulting in slightly higher percentage of URM participants in the free response data. Similar to the survey as a whole, 80% of the free response data was provided by graduate students and 52% of respondents were female Responses were coded for diversity-related themes. Coded data were then sorted for a more fine-grained content analysis. Additionally, demographic information associated with responses was used to identify the prevalence of particular attitudes within sectors of the UCI faculty and graduate student populations. Please note that in the quoted excerpts that appear below, respondents' original spelling and grammar have been retained.

FINDINGS

A. Understandings of Diversity

Sharp disagreements regarding the meaning of diversity were apparent within the free responses. Twenty percent (114) of the provided free responses addressed the definition of diversity. Some respondents saw diversity as a matter of numeric representativeness, and therefore assessed whether the ethnic, racial, and gendered make-up of UCI faculty and graduate students reflected that of the surrounding population. Others contested the survey's definition of diversity – which, given that the FIPSE grant is from the Department of Education, was the federal definition of underrepresented groups. The survey instrument instructed participants, "While there are many categories of Diversity, for the purposes of this survey Diversity is

referring to GENDER and ETHNICITY/RACE only" (emphasis original) and gave respondents the following categories in which to define their gender: male, female; and their ethnicity: African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American/Pacific Islander, Other. Respondents who contested this definition linked diversity to *disadvantage* rather than to mere numbers, and suggested that other historically disadvantaged groups, such as gays or the elderly, should also be included in efforts to advance diversity. Among those who focused on additional forms of diversity were respondents who argued that the only disadvantage that truly matters is *socioeconomic status* and that class alone should therefore be the sole characteristic used to qualify an individual for special assistance, such as diversity fellowships. Finally, some argued that attention to race and ethnicity is itself racist, as racial categories reify differences, thus homogenizing groups and perpetuating stereotypes.

Demographic Representativeness: The notion that diversity is achieved when the composition of graduate students and faculty reflect that of the surrounding population was common among respondents, though there was disagreement about whether or not such representative diversity had been achieved, and about to which surrounding population graduate students and faculty should be compared. For example, one graduate student compared UCI to both the United States and to Orange County, and found the university unrepresentative of each:

> This university presents unique challenges due to its uncommon mix of Asian, Middle Eastern, Latino/Latina, African-American, and Caucasian students. This grouping of individuals is in no way demonstrative of the actual proportions of these groups outside the university, which creates a distorted perception of the composition of American society. In particular, the dearth of Latino/Latina and African-American students is

> startling, especially due to the abundance of Hispanic people living in Orange County and the surrounding areas.

In contrast, another graduate student left the community of comparison unspecified, responding simply, “I feel the university is reflective of the surrounding community.” Yet another student concluded that “the university … could do a better job of reflecting the population of California.”

A number of respondents noted that it was difficult to generalize about diversity at UCI, given that the composition of the faculty, graduate, and undergraduate populations differ. For example, one graduate student wrote, “In my department at least, a good level of diversity has been achieved at the level of faculty, though it seems the graduate body lacks diversity.” Likewise, other respondents noted differences in the diversity of departments and schools.

Among respondents who defined diversity according to representativeness, it was common to suggest that Latinos and African Americans are underrepresented and that Asians and Asian Americans are overrepresented. One faculty member wrote, “We come out high in ‘diversity’ because of our high proportion of Asian students, but that really masks a surprising LACK of diversity when it comes to Latino and Black students, staff and faculty,” while a graduate student respondent commented, “There is a dearth of black students, faculty, and staff at all levels, whether African-American, African or other black. This unfortunately reflects the exclusion of black people from life in Orange County.” Disturbingly, some of the responses commenting on the overrepresentation of Asians and Asian Americans expressed sentiments that were or bordered on being anti-Asian, particularly among graduate students. Examples of such responses include the following:

> UCI is thought of as an "Asian school" that "doesn't have a real college feel" because the "focus" is on research labs, white coats, and insanely demanding course loads. Qualified

students are not applying because they feel like they will not fit in with the culture at the University. (Graduate student)

While generally seems that the white race is the favourite one, here it is the asian race to look like "the best one." (Graduate student)

We have a very high asian population in the student body. I'm saying this purely as an observation, it does not reflect how I feel about race/ethnicity. (Graduate student)

Fewer Chinese, Thanks. (Graduate student)

Less Asians - extremely biased towards asians. Graduate level - no white people. (Graduate student)

It was brought to my attention that UCI is known as University of Chinese Immigrants. It is true that this campus is heavily dominated by Asian students. (Don't get me wrong, I love Asian people) (Graduate student)

Labs … tend to be thought of as "Asian" or "non-Asian" labs, with students clumping into one or the other. (Graduate student)

UC Irvine has a reputation, at least around southern California, for being a mostly Asian University. As a Caucasian, and perhaps more sheltered TA, I have a hard time pronouncing some of the foreign names. It would be useful if there were more

> TA/teaching workshops with how to deal with non-native speakers. Just because they pass the English-speaking exam doesn't mean they can write it. How can we appropriately grade such students? (Graduate student)

Comments such as these, though expressed by a minority of respondents, indicate some level of discomfort with the number of Asian American and Asian students on campus. This discomfort focuses on perceived cultural differences, language and writing issues, and favoritism.

Gender representativeness was also the focus of some comments, though some noted progress in this area. One faculty member remarked, “In some departments, there are actually more women than men,” but other students and faculty noted that women in their departments and programs, or in leadership positions on the campus, were underrepresented.

Disadvantage: Alongside notions of diversity as representativeness were responses that emphasized disadvantage by arguing that, in addition to race, ethnicity, and gender, other characteristics that provoke discrimination should also be a focus of diversity efforts. Socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and being transgendered were the most commonly suggested additional characteristics, followed by religion, while disability, age, and family status were mentioned less frequently. A few responses contended that Asian Americans are themselves a diverse group, one that should be considered disadvantaged, if not numerically underrepresented. At the same time, in contrast to those who viewed disadvantage as multidimensional, numerous respondents, primarily males in the STEM fields, argued that being from an economically impoverished background is in fact the only meaningful source of disadvantage, and therefore the only reasonable basis for providing special consideration or additional assistance.

Despite the fact that, for the purposes of the survey, diversity was defined in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, some respondents complained that the term “diversity” is intrinsically unclear. For example, one graduate student complained, “I think 'diversity' is a vague, euphemistic term that makes it difficult to answer the questions above. Are we talking about quotas? Affirmative action? Simply trying to make sure we hire people who aren't white males?” Others stressed that they found it difficult to fit themselves into the categories specified in the survey. One student wrote, “White is not an ethnicity,” while another commented, “My immediate family has members with ancestors on three different continents. I was born abroad and was raised bilingual. In many ways, I do not identify with American culture. However, I am white. Somehow my ‘diversity’ therefore does not count.” Other students noted that asking individuals to identify themselves in terms of race and ethnicity failed to allow for biracial individuals (who had to check the box, “other”) and left out such categories as Arab. A faculty member complained that the survey was vacuous: “Yes, we all support ‘diversity’ and yes, we all want a ‘excellent’ university, but what does that claim mean, other than a general patting ourselves on the back for believing the proper things that we are supposed to believe?”

A primary additional source of disadvantage noted by respondents was social class, which many saw as a more fundamental dimension of diversity than race, ethnicity, or gender. For example, one faculty member wrote, “It's important to think about diversity in terms of the economic background of our students as well as their ethnic/racial background.” A number of respondents stressed that socioeconomic diversity is a particular challenge for the University, given recent increases in tuition. A graduate student commented, “We are running the risk of becoming a university that students can attend ONLY if they can afford it,” while a faculty member stated, “We are not all from the privileged upper classes even though graduate training requires that we pretend this and aspire to these values.” Some contended that focusing diversity

efforts on race and ethnicity *rather than* class (which is not, in fact, University policy)[1] simply recruits minority students who are from advantaged backgrounds. One graduate student wrote, "An African-American kid whose parents are doctors is not less privileged than a white kid whose parents are factory workers, or an African-American kid whose parents work in a grocery store. It's ridiculous that say, Obama's kids would receive preferential treatment because of their ethnicity." Such respondents considered socioeconomic disadvantage to trump other sources of historical inequity and therefore to be the only or primary appropriate focus of diversity efforts.

Likewise, some argued that sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental sources of disadvantage that should be addressed through efforts to increase diversity and to improve campus climate. This argument was particularly prevalent among non-STEM females who responded to the survey. A graduate student wrote, "Leaving sexual orientation and gender identity completely off of this survey shows precisely what's wrong with the question of diversity at the graduate school. Diversity is not limited to race or 'gender' (which you seem to equate with biological sex in this survey)." Comments about the importance of attending to sexual orientation and gender identity did not suggest that these characteristics somehow trumped other forms of disadvantage, but rather that they should be considered along with these. Respondents, such as the student quoted above, also stressed that gender cannot be divided binarily into "male" and "female," but rather includes more complex identities. Furthermore, these respondents noted problems with homophobia and insensitivity to gender identity. One faculty member wrote, "Your survey PAYS NO ATTENTION to LGBT diversity and questions of sexual orientation. Some of the worst issues around diversity I have seen involve gay and lesbian students and faculty" (emphasis original).

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[1] Diversity fellowships at the University of California, Irvine are open to students who have experienced economic disadvantage, regardless of these students' race, ethnicity, or gender.

Other forms of disadvantage highlighted by respondents included religion, disability, age, and family status, all of which are legally protected categories.[2] Not surprisingly, given recent Jewish/Muslim tensions on campus,[3] Muslim students were singled out as a religious group deserving diversity consideration. Several respondents criticized the UCI administration, through such comments as "The Muslim student union at UCI has been unfairly targeted for its opinions, not for its actions" (faculty member) and "The campus' administration should stop targeting Muslim students and should give them the same opportunities it gives to other groups" (graduate student). One self-identified Muslim student wrote, "Ever since I came to the US, I have found out overwhelmingly many misconceptions about Islam and Muslims that I want to clarify," while a self-identified Jewish student wrote, "Before coming to school here, I heard that UCI was not a friendly environment for Jewish students. While I have not yet felt discriminated against for being Jewish, I think it's important to know that this is the impression of our school in the public eye." One faculty member, in contrast, expressed frustration over the treatment of atheists: "As a scientist and atheist i find the atmosphere of coddling superstitious belief-holders, i.e., those of faith, at uci to be corrosive to leading evidence-based discussions and training." Disability, age, and barriers associated with pursuing an education while also raising children were also mentioned as worthy foci of diversity efforts. Lastly, some respondents debated whether or not Asian Americans should be considered a disadvantaged category and therefore one that enhances diversity. One faculty member recommended "remember[ing] that diversity needs to include not just blacks/Latinos(Latinas)/native Americans but also Asians."

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[2] The University of California, Irvine's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity "offers the UCI community a safe and confidential place to discuss issues, concerns, and conflict regarding sexual harassment or discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or status as a covered veteran" (See http://www.oeod.uci.edu/ourcom.html, accessed August 8, 2011).

[3] See Jennifer Medina, "Charges Against Muslim Students Prompt Debate over Free Speech," *New York Times*, 9 Feb 2011, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/10/education/10irvine.html?pagewanted=all, accessed August 8, 2011).

Difference: In addition to representativeness and disadvantage, many respondents, primarily males in non-STEM fields, defined diversity as difference, that is, as bringing together individuals and groups of multiple backgrounds and experience, regardless of whether these are associated with disadvantage. Again, there was sharp disagreement among respondents about what sorts of difference matter and about whether race, ethnicity, and gender are important sources of difference. Numerous respondents argued that differences of belief and culture are important and yet are not necessarily associated with race, ethnicity or gender, particularly given that these categories may gloss over differentiation within groups. The recruitment of international students was highlighted, particularly by female respondents, as a significant source of cultural diversity, though problems associated with such recruitment, such as inadequate English language skills, were also noted. Finally, some respondents critiqued the use of racial, ethnic, and gender categories altogether, arguing that these promote stereotypes. In essence, these respondents, who were primarily male, contended, attention to race is racist.

Respondents who defined the most meaningful diversity in terms of culture, background, experience, or language tended to also reject the idea that racial, ethnic, and gender diversity would necessarily produce a diversity of ideas. One graduate student critiqued what he characterized as the survey's "implicit … assumption that an individual of a given gender, race, or ethnicity has a background of experiences and ways of thinking that are perfectly correlated to their gender, race, or ethnicity." Likewise, another graduate student asked, "One may see a course or department full of differently colored and gendered people, but when they all come from Orange County or they're all from upper middle class backgrounds, how diverse are they really?" Such respondents advocated a holistic approach to diversity, as one student admonished, "Stop considering races, genders, and ethnicities and start consider the 'WHOLE

PERSON' and watch UCI thrive." A few respondents argued that the kind of diversity that matters for the University varies according to field. One faculty member commented, "In physics, diversity plays a much smaller role than it would in the social sciences or humanities…. Thus, in the sciences, diversity in approach (theoretical, experimental, computational) is much more important than gender or skin color." A few also argued that UC Irvine lacks a diversity of political viewpoints (a contention belied by our survey results.) One such respondent commented, "Sometimes a white christian male adds diversity."

Respondents who focused on diversity-as-difference also tended to highlight the degree to which racial and ethnic categories homogenize, particularly through the terms "people of color," "white," and "Asian." One student commented, "One thing that I notice from this survey is there seems to be two categories that individuals are put in: white and non-white. I think, especially in the graduate school level, a person's racial identity is clearly more specific than that," while another insisted, "'people of color' are not a unified entity." Multiple respondents critiqued the idea that "white" could be a single category. A student remarked, "Hilarious how this survey on diversity groups whites as a different group to all others," while a faculty member noted, "During my upbringing signs of diversity was Itaians, irish, CatholicsJews. People tend to forget that." One student argued that some individuals may fall between the cracks of racial and ethnic categories: "There is a significant body of students at UCI from backgrounds such as Iranian, Arab, or South Asian, who do not identify as 'White/Caucasian' (nor are we viewed or treated as 'white' by others) but also do not identify as 'Asian American.' Our ethnicity is not even recognized in the options for this survey and should be acknowledged in diversity programming." Likewise, some respondents noted that "Asian American is a heterogeneous category and diverse groups within it shouldn't be lumped [together]."

International students were highlighted as bringing a diversity of experience to the campus, but also as posing particular challenges. One student stated simply, "Diversity should include people who come from different countries" while another stated, "About 20-30% of our class are international students which makes a curriculum more engaging with multiple points of view." Respondents who were attentive to international diversity, who, as noted above, were primarily female, also highlighted the need for the University to support such students. Their suggestions included an improved international center, funding to allow more departments to recruit international students, support from peers, and resources to address communication issues.[4]

Some respondents argued that attention to race and ethnicity imposes presumed differences on individuals and therefore is, in and of itself, racist. One student, for example, stated, "It is very surprising to me that the UC (and this survey) … promote the idea that people are fundamentally different based on the color of their skin. I associate this position more with racism than with equal opportunity" while another argued, "Anyone who facilitates this idea of diversity is in a way perpetuating a sort of race distinction and therefore racism, while simultaneously being a pawn for certain political agendas." Likewise, a faculty member complained, "'White' is not an ethnicity. It is an offensive racial (racist) category. Shame on you. I am not 'white.' I am mainly European ancestry. My skin is not white and I have never been white. 'Faculty of color' and 'white faculty' are offensive racial(racist) categories. Shame on you. We must stop mixing obsolete racial categories, gender categories, and other categories together as if they were instances of some generic category ('diversity.')" The notion that racial categories are obsolete was echoed by a graduate student who wrote, "Ones choices and effort

[4] As of Fall 2011, many of these resources are being provided through the new Graduate InterConnect program. See http://www.grad.uci.edu/center/.

determine success, not some whisper from forefathers past." A self-identified Latina graduate student suggested further that efforts to recruit underrepresented students could be condescending:

> I'm a bit hesistant to encourage active recruitment of "graduate students of color" because, as a graduate student of color (a Latina), it can be borderline offensive and condescending to be labeled the "graduate student of color" as if for a checklist. While I think making UCI diverse is important, remember that we are scholars first and foremost and want to be seen as scholars, not *minority* scholars. It is a situation that has to be handled with respect and care.

Those who saw racial and ethnic categories as perpetuating stereotypes tended also to argue that "people are people" and "we are all human," as two students stated. Some argued that highlighting ethnic and racial difference promotes cliquishness. One student commented, "I think there is a diverse community at UCI but there is a lot of people keeping themselves in their own clique which somehow reduces the potential sharing amongst diverse groups," while another wrote, "As a white student, I notice all the all-Asian club, all-Asian sorority, all black club, all latino club, etc. That aspect is actually a little frustrating." Language differences were seen as a particular impediment, leading one student to adopt the contradictory stance that "to truly have a diverse environment, all individuals should be able to effective communicate in English." Diversity-as-difference, in sum, was seen as both enriching and divisive.

B. Policies

Differences in understandings of diversity are also reflected in faculty and student attitudes toward actual and potential diversity-related policies. A common perspective among both faculty and students was that diversity efforts should in no way impede excellence. This

perspective presumes that for the campus to become more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, standards for admission, hiring, merit, and promotion must be lowered. Some go so far as to argue that a focus on diversity constitutes preferential treatment resulting in reverse discrimination. Such views suggest that diversity should not be a focus of campus policy, and that in fact, devoting energy and funds to diversification may detract from more important issues and therefore harm the campus. At the same time, numerous faculty and students see diversity as an important goal in recruitment, admissions, and hiring, and argue that diversity enhances scholarly exchange and enriches the campus.

Excellence: Numerous faculty and students expressed great anxiety that diversity efforts would compromise academic excellence. This anxiety potentially disparages underrepresented students, as indicated by one faculty member's comment that "we need quality, not mercy." Faculty and students who were worried about excellence reasoned that merit should be the sole or primary criteria used in admissions and hiring decisions, and that attention to other criteria, such as diversity or disadvantage, would lower standards. A lack of diversity, such respondents concluded, was an unfortunate but necessary price to pay for overall excellence. One graduate student explained, "I believe we need to admit or hire based mostly on merit or high potential of success regardless of race or gender to maintain high standards. This may result in disproportionate demographics but is a suitable approach to maintain high standards as long as minorities are treated equally."

A faculty member who viewed adequate funding as a more pressing issue than diversity commented, "Personally I do not think along ethnic/color/gender lines when considering faculties, excellence, and advancement." Others saw race, ethnicity, and gender as irrelevant to assessing qualifications: "While an individual's culture might contribute to that individual's

intellectual context … ethnicity has absolutely nothing to do with an indevidual's academic qualifications" (graduate student). Likewise, another student wrote, "Graduate work in chemistry, math, and physics is too rigorous to not have the absolute smartest and most experienced scientists; gender and race do NOT contribute to either." Such responses saw "diversity" as a goal that competed with, rather than supported, excellence.

Among those who saw diversity as potentially undermining excellence were faculty and students who advocated race-blind admissions and hiring. One female graduate student commented that she resented being used as a statistic: "i am offended that my company likes that i am a female engineer and disabled vet…. i hate to think that i have been hired because companies need to hire women." One self-identified underrepresented student advised the campus to "take a blind eye and recruit the best applicants possible." Some also stated an opposition to quotas, arguing that "setting a set percentage of people who are accepted or hired that are of this or that race is ludicrous" (student) and that there should be "an even playing field when it comes to opportunities in the research environment and also in the classroom" (student). Such individuals particularly opposed forcing diversity or "following political correctness." As one student stated, "Hiring or admitting on the basis of race, gender, or ethnicity should be illegal." Some feared that diversity would be mandated. A faculty member characterized diversity as "a GREAT goal, but don't be too heavy handed," while a student concluded "Diversity should be encouraged, but not forced." A few suggested that racism and sexism were systemic problems that could not be addressed successfully by the university alone. A graduate student commented, "Race, Gender, the accrual of poverty over generations for CA residents and citizens, are systemic problems (not interpersonal problems between colleagues in our departments), which impact perceptions of diversity and need to be addressed systematically,"

while a faculty member noted that “the entire effort to improve diversity should be focused on equity issues beginning at birth and extending through high school.”

Reverse Discrimination/Preferential treatment: Closely associated with the concern that attention to diversity potentially undermines excellence was the attitude that diversity efforts constitute reverse discrimination. Eighty-three percent of the responses in this category were from non-URM respondents. Interestingly, there were distinct discipline-by-gender differences in this view as it was STEM male respondents and non-STEM female respondents who predominately expressed this concern. This view places inequities squarely in the past, and suggests that current generations should neither pay the price for nor benefit because of historical wrong doing. As one graduate student wrote, “I realize that racial and gender predjudices have been real, even pervasive, problems in the recent history of the United States; however, based on my own (admittedly and obviously limited, but not insignificant) experiences, I do not believe that the same is true today. I tend to believe that diversity issues - more a remnant of the 50s and 60s than a significant issue in 2010 – have been a burden heaped onto my generation (I’m 26).” A self-identified white straight male student complained about being blamed for discrimination and expressed a longing to feel proud of his heritage:

> What I do sometimes feel awkward about is, indirectly, feeling like the bad guy in this diversity story. I hear about the prevailing narrative about how the white, straight, male establishment has disenfranchised others for so long, and now it feels to me that our "ethnic" identity or our European heritage(s) aren't allowed the same self-conscious pride and affiliation that other student unions or groups (African-American, Chicano, Asian, etc.) usually and rightly have…. But I'd like the opportunity to take pride in mine.

The view that inequities are in the past suggests that efforts to include the underrepresented exclude majority students and faculty on the basis of their race, ethnicity, or gender, and therefore are racist. One graduate student wrote, "I think UCI has gone overboard with the diversity issue, almost to the point where I would say there is reverse discrimination occurring," while a faculty member complained that diversity is "Way too emphasized. Really, it gets tiresome and has little to do with intellectual achievement. I also think there is some reverse discrimination. That said, women are still paid less." Diversity programs, some suggested, limited rather than expanded opportunities. A student wrote, "As a poor white American, I feel like I am discriminated against in comparison to females or those of a different race/ethnicity. There are not as many opportunities for me to receive funding or awards," while another worried, "'Promoting diversity' should not involve discriminating against the majority. The above survey questions seem to suggest that is the goal of your program but I hope that is not the case." Some respondents were even more blunt: "Reverse racism IS racism" (graduate student, emph original) and "stop abusing the white man" (graduate student). Likewise, though less bluntly, a faculty member contended that in his school, "gender discrimination against males has steadily increased."

Closely linked to the notion that diversity initiatives discriminate against majority faculty and students is the argument that minorities and women are receiving preferential treatment. One student wrote, "Students should not be selected and treated with preferential treatment based on race/ethnicity." Likewise, a faculty member who worried that faculty were experiencing "frustration with the system" suggested, "It serves better the diversity program when equal opportunity is given to ALL, and not only to diversity faculty."

Given concerns that promoting diversity compromises excellence and constitutes reverse discrimination, it is not surprising that a number of students and faculty responded that diversity

efforts were either unimportant or a low priority. Mirroring the respondents concerned about reverse-discrimination, those expressing this view tended to be STEM females and non-STEM males. A graduate student wrote, “Stop making such a big deal about diversity,” another urged, “stop spending so much time and effort on diversity,” and a third recommended, “Foster more understanding but don’t spend too much of our tuition money on it.” A faculty member agreed, stating, “The university is overly concerned about promoting diversity. I'm all for it, but the restrictions on hiring practices further complicate an almost impossible beauracracy. Minorities and women are as qualified and productive as anyone else, except that, CLEARLY, women faculty members and graduate students in my experience take more time off due to child bearing/rearing activities than their male counterparts” (emphasis original). This comment evinces some resentment toward female faculty and graduate students who take parental leaves, thus indicating that negative attitudes toward women may persist.

Diversity is an important institutional goal: In sharp contrast to those who argued that the University overemphasizes diversity, other respondents urged the campus to do more. Larger percentages of these responses came from females, non-STEM and URM respondents. Such students and faculty argued that currently, the campus is not sufficiently diverse, and advocated taking action to recruit and retain a more diverse graduate student and faculty population. One faculty member, who declined to state his race or his school affiliation, noted that the problem is so severe that “the lack of diversity in my school makes it nearly impossible to answer your status/identity questions and remain anonymous.” Students and faculty who advocated giving greater attention to diversity identified recruiting more diverse applicant pools, adhering to existing campus policies, and exerting greater leadership around this issue as important goals. One faculty member complained,

> At the faculty level, colleagues know enough to express support for diversity, then to impose methodological tests that exclude many excellent candidates for jobs who are, disproportionately, people from underrepresented backgrounds. We then fail to support junior faculty, and fail to hold high standards at the same time. To combat this, UCI has surveys and meetings: terrible surveys and terrible meetings. Having spent the time to take this survey, I'm far more pessimistic than I was when the day started.

Respondents cited the need for role models and opportunities to interact with those who share their own experiences. A graduate student wrote, “As an Asian American, I find it a bit disheartening that my department does not have a faculty member who can speak to my experiences or who can truly understand what it means to be Asian American and what challenges or barriers we still face in academe.” Another student complained, “As a student of color, I feel very marginalized and without much of a support system, socially and in terms of mentorship.” Without greater numbers of minority students, a third student noted, those who are successfully recruited are “held up as the Token diversity student in their home department.”

Primary justifications offered for prioritizing diversity included enriching the campus, exposing others to multiple perspectives, broadening views, and preparing students to work within diverse communities following graduation. One faculty member stated that diversity is “healthy.” Another faculty member agreed, saying “women and people of color do not think the same as white men. They do not value the same accomplishments or have the same teaching styles. This does not make them less important to the lives of our students or make their research less valid. In fact, the knowledge and influence is necessary to the university's validity.” Such comments suggested that efforts to diversify the campus contribute to excellence by broadening the range of questions posed and issues considered in both research and analysis.

C. Climate

Survey respondents also disagreed sharply about the current campus climate. In general the percent of students' responses that stated that we were doing fine (11.2%) was significantly higher than the percent of faculty responses doing so (2.4%). Those who argued that the campus is doing fine in terms of ethnic and gender diversity were about evenly split between those who saw diversity as a current strength of the campus and those who worried that attention would needlessly be devoted to what they considered to be a relatively unimportant goal. In contrast to those who thought that the campus is doing fine, a large number of respondents described concrete experiences of insensitivity, discrimination, or institutional neglect. Gender was a key focus of many such comments. Finally, respondents who were concerned about the current quality of campus climate offered numerous suggestions for improvement. These included strategies to promote meaningful interactions between individuals whose backgrounds differed, renewed recruitment efforts, increased funding, more study of the issue, and public relations work.

"We're doing fine": Respondents who expressed satisfaction with current campus climate were divided between those who saw diversity as a current strength of the campus and those who argued that because current levels of diversity are fine, nothing needs to be done. Examples of the former attitude include:

terrific (graduate student)

UCI seems to embrace diversity. (graduate student)

> You should know that diversity is much worse elsewhere! This is my sixth teaching appt., and the only one in which I have NOT experienced anything untoward regarding my gender, etc. (Faculty)

> I think UCI is on the right track in addressing these issues proactively. It is an innovative, forward-looking, youthful campus, and a great place to work. (Faculty)

> One of UCI's greatest strengths is its diversity. (graduate student)

> This campus is incredibly diverse and inclusive. (graduate student)

Such comments express pride in the campus's achievements in recruiting students and faculty from diverse backgrounds, and also reflect positive experiences of the campus climate. In contrast, some expressed satisfaction with the status quo in order to suggest that the campus should not devote attention to diversity. Examples of such comments included:

> It's not an issue. (Graduate student)

> I don't think there is a problem. (Graduate student)

> The campus student body and faculty is very diverse, composed of a wide variety of ethnicities and races with relatively little tension between them. No effort is necessary to increase diversity on campus. (Graduate student)

> UCI is already very diverse at least in my school/department. Please focus more on standards and quality and achievement vs diversity. (Graduate student)

> Its good enough. However, academic excellence and competence should be the first priority. (Graduate student)

While they were satisfied with current climate and levels of diversity, these respondents also did not consider the issue important or even saw diversity and excellence as at odds. Thus, important differences exist even among those who express satisfaction with current practices and demographics.

Instances of Insensitivity: In contrast to those who were satisfied with the campus climate, many faculty and graduate students used the free response question to describe inappropriate comments or behavior, discrimination, or institutional problems that they had either witnessed or experienced personally. 74% of these responses came from females, 70% from non-STEM disciplines and one-third from URM respondents. Twice the percentage of faculty chose to share an incidence of insensitivity compared to the percentage of grad students sharing. One graduate student wrote that in her department, “I have witnessed the new cohorts inappropriately make sexual references as common dialogue,” while another student in a different school commented, “As a woman of color, i have had undergraduate students making fun of my ethnic clothes and my accent. this happened in the initial few weeks of my joining UCI and coming to a new country.” Another student cited an instance of such behavior: “the culture in my department is that we don't have any official sexism, and no one sexually harasses women in the department, so obviously there's no problem. This despite the professor who said at a department event

‘Behind every Nobel Prize there's a hard-working wife’, to laughter from everyone.” On the other hand, one male student complained, “I see it both ways too: inappropriate behavior towards men and women.”

In addition to gender insensitivity, homophobic statements were the focus of some responses. A graduate student commented, “I cannot count how many times I have overheard disparaging and degrading remarks about queer identities, in addition to flippant ‘joke’ comments like ‘I can't believe how gay you are!’” One faculty member felt that such remarks prevented individuals from openly expressing their identity: “it is common that in traditionally male-dominated schools … the employees that do not belong the to overwhelming majority of heterosexual married family-oriented individuals, may not be comfortable to be themselves on the workplace. this is more applicable to non-tenured employees, who may fear reprisal.” Respondents emphasized that disparaging remarks may come from many sectors of the campus: colleagues, students, faculty, employees, supervisors, or patients. A student urged all to remember that “racism is not okay, in the classroom or faculty meetings or at presentations or anywhere else.”

In addition to explicitly disparaging remarks, survey respondents noted that implicit biases were expressed more subtly, and sometimes took the form of critiquing individuals’ scholarship. A faculty member complained about “the creation of exclusive social environments that are gender-associated or intimidating; or the disparagement not of a scholar but of the scholar's entire field.” This view was echoed by a student who commented, “I also feel that many people in my department do not respect my qualitative research methods.” Several respondents stated that female students of color had left their department due to feeling unsupported. Respondents who were concerned about implicit or indirect sexism and racism urged the campus to combat such problems as well. One faculty member wrote, “You only

address slurs/expressions of prejudice, what about the elitist networks, the social networks that influence our recruiting of both grad students and faculty?" while another commented, "Much of what goes on is in the daily normal practices of who communicates with whom, whose educational pedigree is respected more, who is connected, who fits in, etc. etc." Another faculty member felt that different levels of scrutiny were applied to majority and minority candidates: "If there is a qualified minority candidate, he/she is subject to greater scrutiny than white male candidates, who are given every benefit of the doubt."

Gendered divisions of service responsibilities and concerns about balancing family and career were also the focus of some responses. One faculty member recommended against encouraging women and minorities to take on service roles that were not prestigious, while another noted that women were expected to perform a disproportionate share of administrative work. Female students expressed some concern about combining childbearing with graduate study. One wrote, "I feel that female graduate students that are expecting or have children face unfair challenges with regard to appointments, TAships, and other positions due to the stigma that these grads have less time or perhaps will not be able to be fully committed to the position." Likewise another noted, "There is also fear in terms of not looking "serious" if you get pregnant before passing quals." Several respondents felt that women and members of underrepresented minority groups have to work harder to achieve the same positions as their male and non-URM counterparts. One student expressed great distress over her perception that becoming a professor would make it difficult to have a family:

> Most of the female faculty in my department do not have children at all! As a female graduate student, witnessing brilliant accomplished women professors having to choose between their career and a family life is discouraging, to say the least, and appalling, to

be frank. This difficult choice that I may have to make in the near future makes me consider not becoming a professor, even though it is my dream.

Although, as noted above, some respondents focused on gender issues, a few remarked that the campus's progress in achieving gender equity stood in marked contrast to continued underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities. A graduate student remarked, "it seems that UCI is at least 90% focused on gender and sexual harrassment issues, and I'm not sure if the other 10% is focused on diversity," while a faculty member commented, "Race is more of an issue than gender on this campus. Open disrespect for administrators of color by faculty colleagues." Likewise, a graduate student noted that in her school, gender balance had been achieved in numerous departments, but that "Racial homogeneity among faculty in most departments is far more pronounced."

Suggested Interventions: Respondents who were concerned about the climate on campus offered numerous suggestions for improvement. Predominant among these was the sense that achieving demographic representativeness was insufficient if it was not coupled with opportunities for meaningful interactions across groups. 35% of such responses came from underrepresented students and faculty. One graduate student commented, "To really have positive diversity, you have to have interaction between everyone - the fact that we certain percentages of this group or that group on campus doesn't mean we truly celebrate diversity." Respondents had numerous ideas about how such interaction could occur, including having a yearly event focused on diversity, hosting dialogues and conversations, incorporating discussions about diversity into most or all courses, expanding the existing Cross Cultural Center, having forums to correct stereotypes about underrepresented groups, sponsoring sensitivity training, and better educating faculty advisors regarding the needs of students from underrepresented backgrounds. Such

practices, respondents suggested, could promote inclusion and encourage the UCI community to "have a deep knowledge of minority points of view and strive to understand different points of view and end all kinds of oppression," in the words of one graduate student. Several respondents commented on the importance of developing campus-wide initiatives rather than specialized programs that, they felt, would marginalize underrepresented students. Improved support services for minority students were particularly emphasized.

Several respondents argued that such positive interactions would be encouraged if the campus did more to enforce existing policies, instead of merely paying what they characterized as "lip service" to diversity. One faculty member commented, "My impression is that most faculty and departments simply ignore the 'diversity activity' component of review profile w/out consequence - this seems the norm. Those who do work to 'create a culture of inclusion' and document that effort are not recognized or awarded for doing so, while APM210 suggests they should be." Another agreed, saying,

> In faculty AP reviews, diversity should be a *required* element of the review/tenure process that must be addressed as a component of either research, service and/or teaching by every candidate in order to advance through the promotion process. This would force everyone to be accountable on some level. As it stands now, it is entirely optional and CAP has no mandate to consider working towards a more diverse campus as a requirement for advancement and promotion. I think changing this would be a huge step have a strong impact on campus culture.

Likewise, another faculty member suggested that diversity should be a criteria used to determine which departments on campus are "highly regarded." Another faculty member complained, "In my opinion there is a fundamental disconnect between UCI administration and UCI academics. The lack of diversity is the effect not the cause."

Increased funding for diversity initiatives was cited as another means to improve recruitment and promote an inclusive culture. A faculty member commented, “We cannot achieve diversity goals if we continue to do everything on the cheap. This is probably a systemwide problem and will get worse if the chronic underfunding of the university continues.” Respondents argued that the current budget crisis poses particular challenges to recruiting underrepresented faculty and students, especially in the case of low-income candidates. Another faculty member remarked, “Department efforts to recruit and retain both graduate students and faculty who would bring diversity to campus are SEVERELY hampered by our inability to field competitive offers for salary/financial support,” while a student worried, “With continued cuts to departments across UC Irvine, the university will only slide further behind in terms of diversity and its programs and prestige will suffer as a result.”

Respondents also suggested that improved recruitment efforts would diversify graduate student populations. Strategies mentioned included conducting outreach to students of color, building relationships to such students, making current outreach activities more visible, and actively encouraging admissions committees to admit more diverse cohorts. A student noted, “By bringing forth these problems to admissions committees they may become more aware of the issue and reevaluate admissions.” Some respondents bemoaned what they described as limited pipelines in their fields. One student commented that her discipline “is a particularly NOT diverse field (if you attend professional meetings) and just because our department is not diverse doesn't mean we aren't as diverse as possible given the students who focus on this field.” Respondents also noted that having a more diverse faculty would make the campus more attractive to underrepresented students who are offered admission.

Not surprisingly, given that this survey was distributed to faculty and graduate students, some respondents, primarily non-STEM males, recommended conducting research to further

investigate diversity issues. One graduate student wanted to know “whether there are barriers related to stereotypes and perceptions for minorities seeking leadership positions.” Another student suggested that data could influence local actions: “We really need to emphasize data and studies that show that in a Diverse academic community it has been shown that people learn from each other and are happier with their environment. University of Michigan Law School on affirmative action provided this data.” A graduate student who noted that in his department, women seem to fail qualifying exams more frequently than do men, suggested, “The cause is not clear to me, but it needs to be investigated further and remedied.” Another student suggested conducting interviews or focus groups to understand why climate problems that are evident to underrepresented students are not perceived by majority faculty and students. A small number of more skeptical respondents wanted more evidence to understand whether there are diversity-related problems at UCI.

A few respondents suggested that better publicity was key to recruitment, particularly to overcome what one graduate student described as the “prohibitive quality” of the Irvine environment. This student remarked, “If a person of color is offered a position at UCLA, or UCSD as well as UCI, they will almost always bypass UCI because our campus is so sterile. Little changes could make a huge difference, such as a more accessible/ hoppin' diversity center. Another student commented, “UCI has very diverse student populations, more education to public is important.”

In sum, though assessments of the current climate differ among respondents, the large number who reported on instances of insensitivity or bias and who offered potential strategies to improve the campus are indicative of a strong commitment to access and inclusion. At the same time, anxiety about reverse discrimination and preferential treatment, despite evidence that

women and minority groups are underrepresented in many fields, demonstrate that there is some resistance to diversity initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The free responses to the Fall 2010 Campus-wide Climate Survey reveal that there is a wide range of faculty and graduate student opinions about the meaning of diversity, the importance of policies designed to promote diversity at the doctoral level, and the inclusiveness of the existing campus climate. While this analysis primarily used qualitative methods to identify the key themes and points of disagreement, it also produced some evidence that these differences vary according to respondents' status (faculty or student), field of study (STEM or non-STEM), and, to a lesser extent, gender and being from an underrepresented or majority group. If a new survey were to focus on the issues identified in the qualitative analysis, it would be possible to learn more about the demographics of those who hold particular views and who have had particular experiences.

Analyzing the climate survey's free responses makes it possible to identify several key issues that might structure future campus discussions of diversity. First, debates over the meaning of diversity suggest that it matters whether the goal of diversity efforts is to achieve proportional representation, correct past disadvantage, or create an environment in which individuals are exposed to a range of viewpoints and experiences. Such goals are not mutually exclusive, but they may have differing implications for diversity initiatives. Second, respondents' attitudes toward diversity-related policies indicate disagreement about the likely effect of diversity initiatives. Some see such initiatives as undermining excellence or as intrinsically unfair, even as reverse racism, whereas others see diversification as enhancing excellence and as promoting equity. Discussing the assumptions that underlie these differing

perspectives, combined with presentations about experiences both on our campus and elsewhere could overcome the impasse between such viewpoints. Third, the free responses suggest that respondents may inhabit different social worlds. Some experience the university as diverse and tolerant, while others denounce insensitivity and implicit bias that they have witnessed or personally experienced. Implementing some of the many suggested interventions, such as dialogues, conversations, and improved social support, could bring these worlds into closer alignment, thus enhancing inclusion while still recognizing difference.