

How Chilly is Valpo? A Campus Climate Survey

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Institutions of higher education in the U.S. have a history of racial and sexual discrimination. The consequences for unfriendly campus climates are serious; Gurin found that students of color who experience “cool” climates are more likely to demonstrate depressed graduation rates and decreased satisfaction with university experiences (Gurin et. al. 2004). The aim of this study was to holistically assess Valparaiso University’s campus climate based on the University of Toledo’s campus climate survey. These researchers focused on comparing the results of students who self-identified as minorities – specifically Black, Latino, Asian, international, and LGBTQ students – with the results of students who did not identify as minorities. Surveys were administered via e-mail to the Valparaiso University community with an anticipated response rate of 200. Leaders of multicultural student organizations and VU professors were contacted individually to encourage students to participate. This is the first time that a campus climate survey has been completed at Valparaiso University, and this is also one of the first surveys of its kind to address multiple levels of diversity. The results offered unique insights into the experiences of all students, which were useful in addressing the current campus climate on both micro- and macro-levels.

Information about the Authors:

Nicole Hudson and Erica Wickstrom are junior social work majors who are concerned about issues of social justice, especially in regards to diversity. Campus climate surveys are an effective tool for assessing the social and cultural atmosphere of a campus. These researchers hope that this survey will provide new and meaningful insights into the campus climate of Valparaiso University.

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