BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Respect on Campus:

**Results from the Workplace Climate Survey**

This is the third and final report that resulted from the Workplace Climate Survey that was administered to all employees in the spring of 2013. The first report covered satisfaction with the work climate, organizational commitment, and respondents' demographics. The second report covered the topics of communication and work life. This report will cover items related to the concepts of fair and equal treatment, harassment, and discrimination. The report is divided into the following sections:

- Treating people fairly and equally
- Valuing everyone
- Providing an environment of respect, free of harassment and discrimination
- Handling grievances
- Group differences based on role, gender, minority status, age, and sexual orientation
- Analysis of comments

Treating people fairly and equally

Respondents were asked if they had received fair and equal treatment during their employment at Boise State University. This item was also asked on the 2005 survey, so comparisons between 2005 and 2013 could be made. Although the percentage who agreed they have received fair and equal treatment dropped from 79% in 2005 to 77% in 2013, the difference was not statistically significant. As shown by Figure 1 below, professional staff were most likely and faculty were least likely to agree that they had received fair and equal treatment.

Figure 1. Percentage who agreed that they have received fair and equal treatment at Boise State
Results based on survey year and role
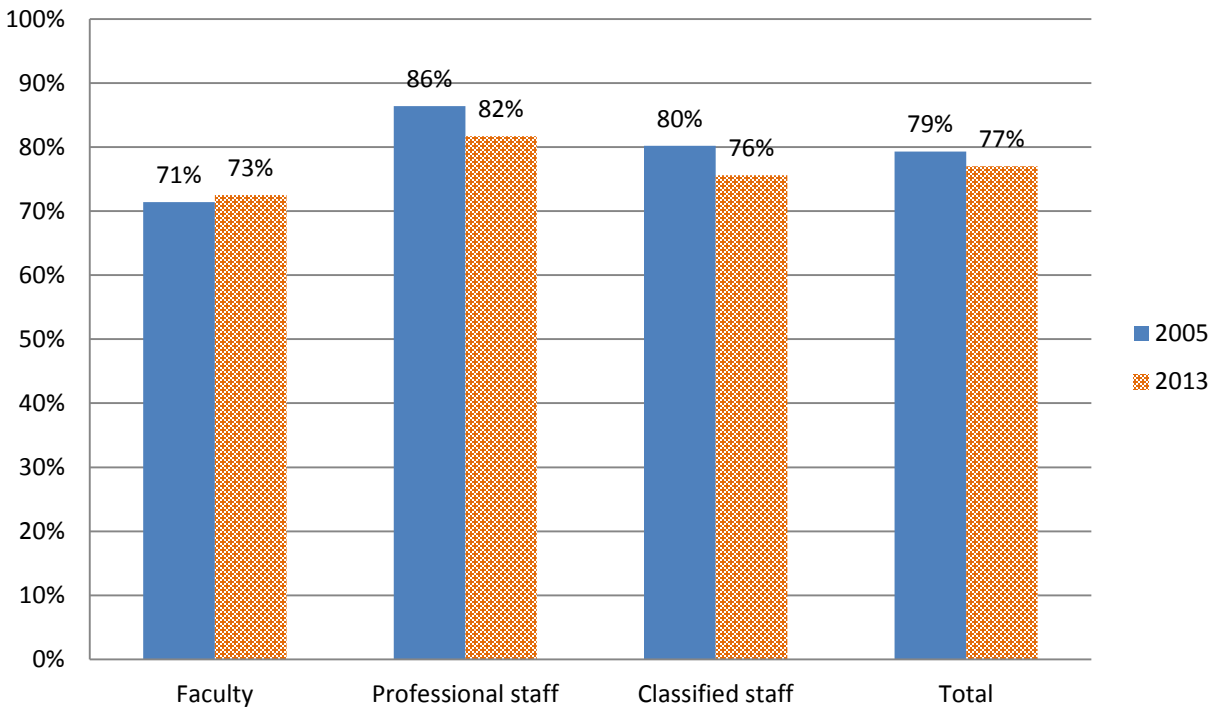
There are a number of ways that individuals may perceive lack of equal treatment. One way is the consistent application of policies. As shown by Table 1 below, only 46% of faculty members agreed with the statement that policies are applied consistently and fairly compared to 55% of professional staff and 52% of classified staff.

Table 1. Employee role by responses to the item "Policies are applied consistently and fairly"

			Policies are applied consistently and fairly					Total
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
My role is	Faculty or dean	Count	36	63	102	137	36	374
		%	9.6%	16.8%	27.3%	36.6%	9.6%	100.0%
	Professional staff	Count	36	80	113	210	70	509
		%	7.1%	15.7%	22.2%	41.3%	13.8%	100.0%
	Classified staff	Count	31	79	101	144	82	437
		%	7.1%	18.1%	23.1%	33.0%	18.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	103	222	316	491	188	1320
		%	7.8%	16.8%	23.9%	37.2%	14.2%	100.0%

Another way that individuals may perceive lack of equal treatment is by favoritism and/or rewarding people differently for the same accomplishments. As shown in Table 2, it was rare to never perceive favoritism or unequal recognition in the workplace. Slightly less than half were sometimes or often aware of favoritism,

and slightly less than 60% were sometimes or often aware of people being recognized differently for the same accomplishments.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents seeing favoritism or unequal recognition in the workplace

|	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often
I am aware of favoritism in the workplace	10.4%	22.2%	18.0%	27.0%	22.4%
People are recognized differently for the same accomplishments	3.9%	17.5%	18.9%	37.5%	22.2%

Valuing Everyone

The topic of "valuing" includes three items that ask about administrators' commitment to promoting a climate that values everyone. These items were also included in the 2005 climate survey, so comparisons are available. As shown by Table 3, the most positive responses were at the department level and the least positive were at the university level.

Table 3. Percentage agreement on administrators' commitment to a climate that values everyone at the university, college/division, and department levels

Campus administrators/supervisors are genuinely committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone….	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
At the university level	8.5%	15.7%	26.5%	38.0%	11.3%
At the college/division level	6.4%	11.3%	25.5%	41.5%	15.3%
At the department/unit level	7.8%	11.2%	16.2%	41.4%	23.4%

These three items were also included in the 2005 campus climate survey so comparisons between the two administrations are available. Figure 2 displays the mean comparisons for each of the three items. Note that very similar results were found for 2005 and 2013 at the department and college or division levels. However, agreement at the university level slipped significantly compared to 2005. Further analysis indicated that faculty ratings dropped more between 2005 and 2013 than did the ratings of professional and classified staff.

Figure 2. Mean comparisons by survey year on commitment to providing a campus climate that values everyone (5-point scale)

	University level	College/division level	Department/unit level
2005	3.72	3.52	3.65
2013	3.28	3.48	3.61
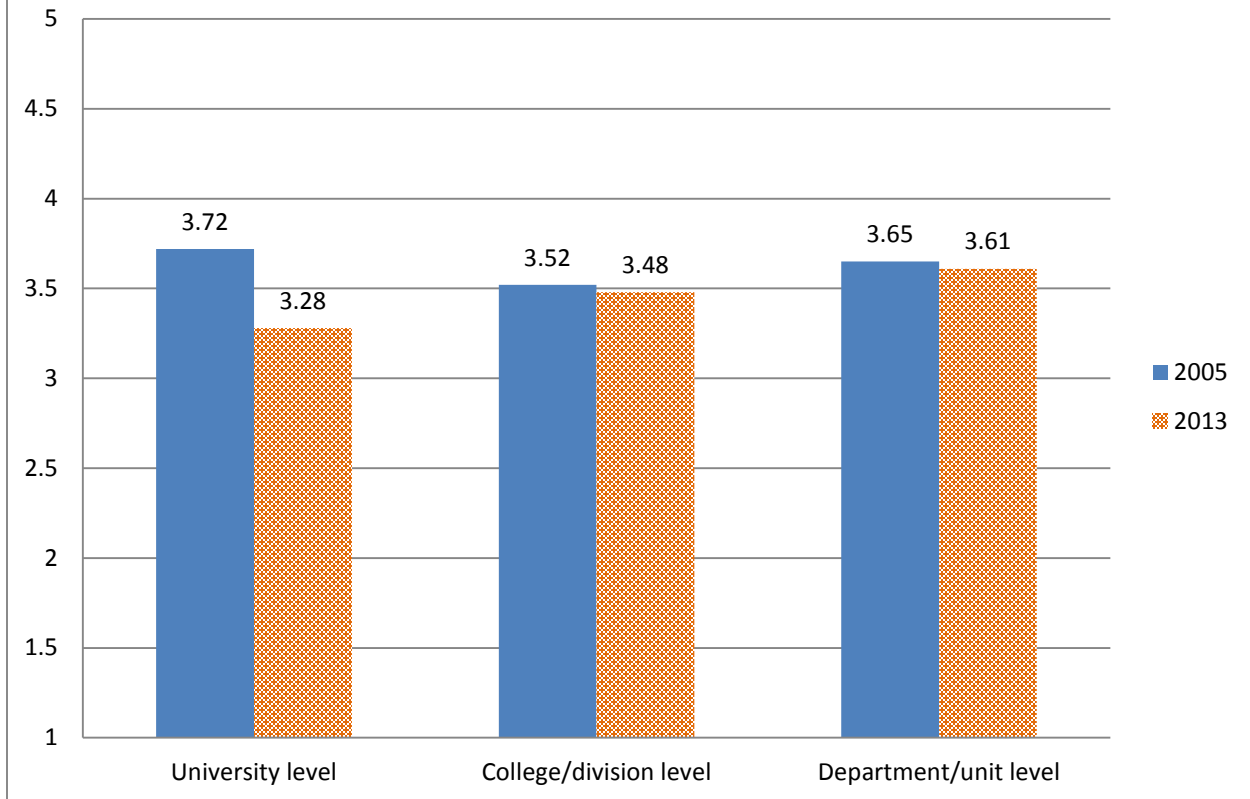
An item that was new on the 2013 survey asked respondents about whether they thought the contributions of faculty, professional and classified staff were valued equally. As shown by Table 4, overall about 40% disagreed, 20% were neutral, and 40% agreed that faculty and staff were valued equally. However, the response by role indicated that faculty members were most likely to agree with the statement, professional staff fell in the middle, and classified staff were least likely to agree. The difference between faculty and classified staff was significant.

Table 4. Responses to "The contributions of professional staff, faculty and classified staff are valued equally" by role

The contributions of professional staff, faculty and classified staff are valued equally:		My role is			Total
		Faculty or dean	Professional staff	Classified staff	
Strongly Disagree	Count	39	66	77	182
	% within role	10.4%	12.9%	17.5%	13.7%
Disagree	Count	102	153	124	379
	% within role	27.1%	29.9%	28.2%	28.6%
Neutral	Count	80	96	91	267
	% within role	21.3%	18.8%	20.7%	20.1%
Agree	Count	109	149	98	356
	% within role	29.0%	29.2%	22.3%	26.8%
Strongly Agree	Count	46	47	50	143
	% within role	12.2%	9.2%	11.4%	10.8%
Total	Count	376	511	440	1327
	% within role	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Providing an environment of respect, free of harassment and discrimination

Respondents were asked if their experiences at Boise State had been free of harassment and discrimination. Compared to 2005, more employees reported that their experiences have been free of harassment and intimidation (71% vs. 77%). A further look at where the shifts might have occurred shows that….

- classified staff members were more likely to report in 2013 that their experiences are free of harassment and intimidation (66% in 2005 vs. 75% in 2013). Non-significant differences were found for faculty and professional staff.
- both males and females were more likely to report a harassment-free environment in 2013 compared to 2005.
- white non-Hispanics were significantly more likely to report a harassment-free environment in 2013 compared to 2005 (81% vs. 74%). The difference was not statistically significant for minority group members (78% in 2013 vs. 73% in 2005).
- heterosexuals were more likely to agree that their experiences at Boise State had been free of harassment and intimidation in 2013 compared to 2005. No significant differences were found for LGBQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Questioning) employees even though the change was large and in positive direction (62% in 2005 vs. 75% in 2013). The lack of statistical significance is probably due to the low number of employees who identify as LGBQ.
- Based on age, individuals in the 50-59 age range were more likely to report in 2013 that their experiences had been free of harassment and intimidation compared to 2005. No other differences by age group were found.

Additional items were employed to explore issues of respect that didn't necessarily rise to the level of being described as harassment or discrimination. As shown by Table 5, about 50% agreed that they were comfortable offering dissenting opinions, and about 30% disagreed. Almost 80% felt that they were treated with respect by faculty members. Almost 90% felt that they were treated with respect by staff members and students.

Table 5. Percent agreeing with items related to respect

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable offering dissenting opinions without fear of repercussions	9.6%	21.2%	18.5%	38.7%	11.9%
Most faculty with whom I interact treat me with respect	1.2%	4.7%	15.2%	54.3%	24.7%
Most staff with whom I interact treat me with respect	0.7%	4.6%	8.1%	56.2%	30.3%
Most students with whom I interact treat me with respect	0.7%	2.1%	10.5%	62.1%	24.6%

Handling grievances

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the handling of grievances at the university, college or division, and department levels.   As shown by Table 6, the largest group of respondents was neutral on the handling of grievances at the university and college or division levels. Slightly less than half agreed that grievances were handled fairly, and 13% disagreed. At the department level, about 55% agreed that grievances were handled fairly and slightly less than 20% disagreed.   In addition, about 30% of the respondents selected "NA" at the university and college/division levels and 20% at the department level, indicating that a significant group of respondents didn't feel that they could knowledgably answer this set of questions.

Table 6. Items related to the handling of grievances

Grievances are handled fairly:	Not applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
At the university level	29.7%	3.9% (5.5%)	5.7% (8.1%)	27.7% (39.4%)	24.3% (34.6%)	8.7% (12.4%)
At the college/division level	29.3%	3.5% (5.0%)	5.5% (7.8%)	26.7% (37.8%)	25.7% (36.3%)	9.3% (13.2%)
At the department/unit level	21.8%	6.4% (8.1%)	7.7% (9.9%)	21.7% (27.8%)	29.1% (37.2%)	13.3% (17.0%)

Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage who selected that response when "NA" is removed from the calculations.

In addition, the survey included an item that asked what action the individual would first take in the event that they had a grievance. Almost half (49%) thought that they would start with their department head, 17% would start with HR, and 11% would start with a co-worker.

Group differences based on combined scores

Do different groups respond differently to the items related to respect, valuing, harassment, and discrimination? In order to address this question, a total "respect" score was calculated for each respondent. The score was calculated by applying a weight to each item based on how much that item contributed to the overall concept of respect, valuing, harassment, and discrimination (see Table 7 for details). The weight for the item was then multiplied by the response given by the respondent to that item. For example, the item "I am comfortable offering dissenting opinions without fear of repercussions" had a weight of .746. A person who responded that they strongly agreed (a 5 on the scale where strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, neutral=3, agree=4, and strongly agree=5) would have a score on that item of .746*5 or 3.37, while a person who strongly disagreed (a 1 on the scale) would have a score of .746*1 or .746. The scores on each item were then summed to obtain a total respect score. The respect score was then standardized to have a mean of 10 and standard deviation of 2. Higher scores indicated a more positive perception of respect on campus.

 The items which were weighted most heavily included:

- I am comfortable offering dissenting opinions without fear of repercussions
- Policies are applied consistently and fairly
- Campus administrators at the department level are genuinely committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone
- Grievances are handled fairly at the department level
- The contributions of professional staff, faculty and classified staff are valued equally

This finding indicates that the main building blocks of a respectful campus include feeling free to offer dissenting opinions, applying policies consistently and fairly, valuing equally the contributions of faculty and staff, and especially addressing the climate at the department level.

Table 7. Item weights used to calculate overall respect score

	Weight
I am comfortable offering dissenting opinions without fear of repercussions	.746
Policies are applied consistently and fairly	.738
Campus administrators/supervisors at the department level are genuinely committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone	.708
Grievances are handled fairly-At the department/unit level	.693
The contributions of professional staff, faculty and classified staff are valued equally	.676
I am aware of favoritism in the workplace	-.650
Campus administrators/supervisors at the college/division level are genuinely committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone	.649
Grievances are handled fairly-At the college/division level	.647
During my employment at Boise State University, I have received fair and equal treatment.	.605
Grievances are handled fairly-At the university level	.584
Campus administrators/supervisors at the university level are genuinely committed to promoting a campus climate that values everyone	.547
Most staff with whom I interact treat me with respect	.546
My experiences at Boise State University have been free of harassment and intimidation	.511
Most faculty with whom I interact treat me with respect	.501
People are recognized differently for the same accomplishments	-.415
Most students with whom I interact treat me with respect	.355

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood, missing values replaced by mean
a. 1 factors extracted (forced). 4 iterations required.

Generally speaking, respect on campus was viewed similarly no matter the group. No differences in respect scores were found based on role (faculty, professional, or classified staff), gender, minority status, or sexual orientation when those who preferred not to report their status were excluded from the analysis. The only difference found was based on age where those who were under 30 had higher respect scores compared to all of the other groups.

Comments related to harassment, intimidation, or the handling of grievances

Following a series of questions related to harassment and grievances, survey respondents were told "If you have any comments about harassment, intimidation, or the handling of grievances, please make them here." The verbatim comments were then coded by a team of three individuals to determine the theme of the comment as well as whether the tone of the comment was positive, negative, or neutral. As shown by Table 8, the comments were coded into seven categories.

Table 8. Coding of the comments related to harassment, intimidation, or the handling of grievances (N=206 comments)

Code:	Description:	Number of comments and tone:
Grievance	Comment discusses action that could or would be taken in the event of a grievance. May appear to be in reference to the prior item where respondents were asked what they would likely do first in the event of a grievance. The prior item reads "If I experienced unequal treatment, harassment or intimidation at Boise State, my first course of action would probably be to contact…." followed by a list of possibilities including my supervisor, a co-worker, HR, the president, a lawyer, etc.	51 comments (21 negative, 24 neutral, 6 positive)
HR	Comment specifically references HR. In most instances is probably a sub-category of the Grievance coding.	25 comments (23 negative 1, neutral, 1 positive)
Discrimination	Comment discusses a form of discrimination	17 comments (13 negative, 2 neutral, 2 positive)
Harassment	Comment discusses bullying or harassment in any form	54 comments (35 negative, 7 neutral, 12 positive)
General	General comment that lacks specific focus	30 comments (23 negative, 5 neutral, 2 positive)
None	Comment indicates that no problems have been experienced	7 comments (5 neutral, 2 positive)
Other	Comment doesn't fit in any of the above categories	20 comments (4 negative, 12 neutral, 4 positive)

Harassment comments: This category had the greatest number of comments (54/206 or 26%). Some harassment and intimidation can be a tricky path to identify and to negotiate, although comments showed how a number of individuals have managed to do so. The presence of someone such as a faculty ombuds or other supportive individual made a difference in managing the difficulty in some instances. In general, most comments were related to past instances rather than current practices.

Grievance comments: This category had almost as many comments as the harassment category (51/206 or 25%). A majority of comments in this category were neutral, however, probably because a number of individuals were commenting about a hypothetical situation as a follow-up to an immediately preceding question that asked about what actions the respondent would take first if they had a grievance.

HR comments: Because a number of comments specifically referenced HR, this set of comments became a category of their own instead of remaining as part of the Grievance category (25/206 comments or 12%). Respondents generally felt that HR was unsupportive in the grievance process.

Summary:

This final study from the Workplace Climate Committee presented the survey items related to respect on campus. The topics covered treating people fairly and equally, valuing everyone, providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination, and handling grievances. In addition, overall respect scores were used to explore any group differences based on role, gender, minority status, age, and sexual orientation.

Compared to 2005, more employees reported that their experiences have been free of harassment and intimidation (71% vs. 77% in 2013). In addition, 77% agreed they have received fair and equal treatment at Boise State—a similar percentage to 2005. Ratings of a commitment to providing a campus climate that values everyone also had similar results for 2005 and 2013 at the department/unit level and college/division

level. However, at the university level, ratings dropped significantly; most of the drop in ratings appeared to come from changes in faculty responses.

While individual responses to the items varied widely, a summary of responses to the items, labelled "respect scores," showed no differences based on role, gender, minority status, or sexual orientation. Based on the weighting or value of the items to develop the respect scores, it appears that respect is highest when employees feel comfortable offering dissenting opinions, policies are applied consistently and fairly, contributions of faculty and staff are valued equally, and departmental level administrators are committed to promoting a climate that values everyone and handle grievances fairly when they arise.

At the end of the survey, respondents were invited to comment on any issues related to harassment, discrimination and the handling of grievances; a total of 206 (16%) respondents made comments. The largest numbers of comments were related to harassment. Most comments on this topic were about past harassment or bullying issues which had been resolved.

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