Rankin & Associates, Consulting

Assessment • Planning • Interventions

MiraCosta College

Your Experience:
Learning, Living, and Working
Executive Summary

July 2020

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History of the Project

This report provides the findings from a survey entitled "Your Experience: Learning, Living, and Working," conducted at MiraCosta Community College District (MiraCosta College). In the spring semester 2019, MiraCosta College contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting (R&A) to conduct a college-wide study. Seventeen (17) MiraCosta College faculty, staff, students, and administrators formed the Climate Survey Working Group (CSWG). The CSWG worked with R&A to develop the survey instrument and promote the survey's administration in Fall 2019. All members of MiraCosta College were encouraged to complete the survey.

Responses to the multiple-choice format survey items were analyzed for statistical differences based on various demographic categories (e.g., MiraCosta College position, gender identity, disability status) where appropriate. Where sample sizes were small, certain responses were combined into categories to make comparisons between groups and to ensure respondents' confidentiality. Throughout the report, for example, the Faculty category included tenured, tenure-track, and associate faculty who were directors, instructors, librarians, or counselors.

In addition to multiple-choice survey items, several open-ended questions provided respondents with the opportunity to describe their experiences at MiraCosta College. Comments were solicited to 1) give "voice" to the quantitative findings and 2) highlight the areas of concern that might have been overlooked owing to the small number of survey responses from historically underrepresented populations. For this reason, some qualitative comments may not seem aligned with the quantitative findings; however, they are important data.

Two-thousand eight hundred fifteen (2,815) surveys were returned for a 16% overall response rate. Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Of the respondents, 80% ($n = 2,237$) of the sample were Students, 10% ($n = 281$) were Faculty members, and 11% ($n = 297$) were Staff members (Table 1).

Table 1. MiraCosta College Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Subgroup	*n*	% of Sample
Position status	Student	2,237	79.5
	Faculty	281	10.0
	Staff	297	10.6
Gender identity	Women	1,843	65.5
	Men	874	31.0
	Trans-spectrum	51	1.8
	Unknown/Missing/Not Listed	47	1.7
Racial/ethnic identity	Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx	831	29.5
	Respondents of Color	361	12.8
	White/European American	1,066	37.9
	Multiracial	415	14.7
	Unknown/Missing/Not Listed	142	5.0
Sexual identity	Bisexual	212	7.5
	Heterosexual	2,182	77.5
	Queer-spectrum	206	7.3
	Unknown/Missing/Not Listed/Asexual	215	7.6
Citizenship status	U.S. Citizen - Birth	2,243	79.7
	U.S. Citizen - Naturalized	246	8.7
	Non-U.S. Citizen	272	9.7
	Unknown/Missing	54	1.9
Disability status	Single Disability	307	10.9
	No Disability	2,259	80.2
	Multiple Disabilities	203	7.2
	Unknown/Missing	46	1.6
Religious affiliation	Christian Affiliation	1,124	39.9
	Additional Affiliation	254	9.0
	No Affiliation	1,187	42.2
	Multiple Affiliations	99	3.5
	Unknown/Missing	151	5.4

Note: The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.
*ND: No data available

High Levels of Comfort With the Climate at MiraCosta College

Most survey respondents were "very comfortable" or "comfortable" with the overall environment at MiraCosta College (86%, $n = 2,409$, p. 67), with the environment in their departments/program or work units (71%, $n = 407$, p. 67), and with the environment in their classes (89%, $n = 2,243$, p. 67). Student respondents were significantly more comfortable with the overall environment than were Faculty and Staff respondents (p. 68). Respondents of Color, Multiracial respondents, and Queer-spectrum respondents were significantly less comfortable with the overall environment than were Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx respondents and Heterosexual respondents (p. 71 - 73).

1. **Faculty Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Faculty Work**

   Tenured and Tenure-Track

   Most Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents held positive attitudes about faculty work at MiraCosta College and indicated that teaching and service were valued at MiraCosta College (p. 160).

   Associate

   More than three-fourths of Associate Faculty respondents believed that teaching was valued by MiraCosta College, and nearly three-fourths felt that service was valued by MiraCosta College (p. 166).

   All Faculty

   Approximately three-fourths of all Faculty respondents thought that MiraCosta College was a good place to work (p. 173). Similarly, they felt valued by faculty, staff, and students in their departments/programs and by their department/program chairs (p. 176).

2. **Staff Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Staff Work**

   Staff respondents generally viewed working at MiraCosta College positively. Staff respondents felt their supervisors and coworkers/colleagues gave them job/career advice or guidance when they needed it (p. 181). More than three-fourths of Staff respondents thought that MiraCosta College provided them with resources to pursue training/professional development opportunities (p. 171). The majority of Staff respondents felt that their supervisors provided adequate support for them to manage

work-life balance (p. 183). Almost three-fourths would recommend MiraCosta College as a good place to work (p. 196).

3. **Student Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Academic Experiences**

   Overall, Student respondents had positive perceptions of their experiences at MiraCosta College. Most Student respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they had faculty whom they perceived as role models (p. 229). More than three-fourths of Student respondents indicated that they felt valued by MiraCosta College faculty and staff (p. 220). Some findings suggested that credit students, students with disabilities, first-generation/low-income students, and student respondents of color had less positive perceptions than did their peers (p. 220).

Experiences of Exclusionary, Intimidating, Offensive, and/or Hostile Conduct

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.[1] Research also underscores the relationship between workplace discrimination and subsequent productivity.[2] The survey requested information on experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.

- 13% ($n = 363$) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 88). Of these respondents, 25% ($n = 89$) noted that the conduct was based on position status at MiraCosta College and 19% ($n = 67$) suggested that the conduct was based on ethnicity (p. 88).

Differences Based on Position Status and Racial Identity

- By position status, a higher percentage of Faculty respondents (27%, $n = 75$) and Staff respondents (31%, $n = 91$) than Student respondents (9%, $n = 197$) believed that they had experienced this conduct (p. 89).

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[1] Aguirre & Messineo (1997); Flowers & Pascarella (1999); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005); Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora (2011)

[2] Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley (Silverschanz et al., 2008); Waldo (1998)

○ A higher percentage of Staff respondents (46%, $n = 42$) and Faculty respondents (32%, $n = 24$) than Student respondents (10%, $n = 19$) thought that the conduct was based on their position status (p. 89).

- By racial identity, a higher percentage of Multiracial respondents (17%, $n = 69$) than Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx respondents (11%, $n = 87$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (p. 90).

○ A higher percentage of Respondents of Color (34%, $n = 13$) than White/European American respondents (10%, $n = 13$) who had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their ethnicity (p. 90).

Respondents Who Seriously Considered Leaving MiraCosta College

Faculty and Staff Respondents

Forty percent ($n = 111$) of Faculty respondents and 40% ($n = 119$) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving MiraCosta College in the past year (p. 203). Forty-one percent ($n = 45$) of Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because lack of sense of belonging and 39% ($n = 43$) because of limited advancement opportunities (p. 205). Fifty-three percent ($n = 63$) of Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of a limited advancement opportunities and 45% ($n = 54$) seriously considered leaving because of a lack of sense of belonging (p. 204).

Student Respondents

Fifteen percent ($n = 324$) of Student respondents had seriously considered leaving MiraCosta College in the past year (p. 232). Twenty-nine percent ($n = 93$) of Student respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of personal reasons (e.g., medical, mental health, family emergencies) and 19% ($n = 61$) seriously considered leaving because they lacked a sense of belonging (p. 233).

Challenges and Opportunities Related to Campus Climate

Staff Respondents

Staff respondents indicated that they felt less positive about several aspects of their work life at MiraCosta College. Less than half ($n = 129$) of Staff respondents felt that the performance evaluation process was productive (p. 182) and that clear procedures existed on how they could advance at MiraCosta College ($n = 98$) (p. 195). Less than half of Staff respondents felt that MiraCosta College policies (e.g., Family Medical Leave Act) were fairly applied across MiraCosta College (p. 191). More than one-third of Staff respondents indicated that their workload increased without additional compensation as a result of other staff departures (p. 185). More than half of Staff respondents noted that a hierarchy existed within staff positions that allowed some voices to be valued more than others (p. 185). Less than half of all Staff respondents felt that staff opinions were valued on MiraCosta College committees or by MiraCosta College faculty and administration (p. 194).

Faculty Respondents

Less than one-fifth of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents felt that MiraCosta College faculty who qualify in delaying their tenure-clock felt empowered to do so (p. 159), and more than half thought that they were burdened by service responsibilities (e.g., committee memberships, departmental/program work assignments) beyond those of their colleagues with similar expectations (p. 161). Less than half of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents felt that faculty opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators (p. 162).

Findings suggested that Associate Faculty respondents met several challenges at the institution. They felt that the criteria for contract renewal were not clear and that the criteria were not applied equally to all positions (p. 165). Less than one-third of Associate Faculty respondents felt they had job security (p. 165) and more than one-third felt that their opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators (p. 167).

Approximately one-fourth of all Faculty respondents felt child care benefits were competitive (p. 169) and that MiraCosta College provided adequate resources to help

them manage work-life balance (p. 171). Less than half of all Faculty respondents thought that they had job security (p. 173).

Student Respondents

Analyses of the Students' survey responses revealed statistically significant differences based on student status (i.e., credit versus noncredit), disability status, first-generation/income status, racial identity, citizenship status, and sexual identity, where students from backgrounds historically underrepresented at colleges held less positive views of their experiences than did their peers from "majority" backgrounds (p. 220).

Student Respondents' *Perceived Academic Success*

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Perceived Academic Success* scale derived from Question 13 on the survey. Using this scale, analyses revealed:

- A significant difference existed in the overall test for means for Student respondents by gender identity on *Perceived Academic Success* (p. 218). Trans-spectrum Student respondents had less *Perceived Academic Success* than Women Student respondents and Men Student respondents, and Men Student respondents had less *Perceived Academic Success* than Women Student respondents.

A Meaningful Percentage of Respondents Experienced Unwanted Sexual Conduct

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a substantial issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the MiraCosta College survey requested information regarding sexual assault.

- 5% ($n = 144$) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct while at MiraCosta College (p. 123).
    - 1% ($n = 36$) experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting, p. 124).
    - 2% ($n = 58$) experienced stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls, p. 123).

- ○ 3% (*n* = 70) experienced sexual interaction (e.g., catcalling, repeated

  sexual advances, sexual harassment, p. 123).

- ○ 1% (*n* = 26) experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling, rape,

  sexual assault, penetration without consent, p. 123).

- Respondents identified MiraCosta College students, current or former

  dating/intimate partners, acquaintances/friends, and strangers as sources of

  unwanted sexual contact/conduct (pp. 125 – 143).

- Most respondents did not report the unwanted sexual contact/conduct (pp. 127 –

  144).

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted
sexual contact/conduct. The primary reason cited for not reporting these incidents was that the
incidents did not feel serious enough to report. Other rationales included respondents fear of
reporting and having to manage the social stigma that comes with reporting (p. 128 - 145).

Conclusion

MiraCosta College climate findings[3] were consistent with those found in higher education
institutions across the country, based on the work of R&A Consulting.[4] For example, 70% to
80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be "very comfortable" or
"comfortable." A slightly higher percentage (86%) of MiraCosta College respondents indicated
that they were "very comfortable" or "comfortable" with the overall climate at MiraCosta
College (p. 67). Twenty percent to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they
personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At
MiraCosta College, a lower percentage of respondents (13%) indicated that they personally had
experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 88). The results also
paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the
literature.[5]

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[3] Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in
the full report.

[4] Rankin & Associates Consulting (2016)

[5] Guiffrida, Gouveia, Wall, & Seward (2002); Harper & Hurtado (2007); Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado &
Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart (2006); Silverschanz et
al. (Silverschanz et al., 2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

MiraCosta College's climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity and inclusion, and addresses MiraCosta College's mission and goals. While the findings may guide decision-making regarding policies and practices at MiraCosta College, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus's environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating additional action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the MiraCosta College community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. MiraCosta College, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime position to actualize its commitment to promote an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

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