

Gender Equity Climate Survey

Campbellsville University Title IX Office

Introduction

Campbellsville University's Title IX office has worked strategically to promote gender equity across the institution. Though siloed events and programs have helped this cause, the university historically has not collected any campus climate data. Aside from required reporting under federal compliance laws such as the Clery Act, the institution typically only surveys students about their broad college experience, never quite delving into issues of gender equity. In an effort to establish some sort of baseline of understanding of how gender equity is perceived throughout the institution, the Title IX office sent out the Gender Equity Climate Survey in the spring 2021 semester to all employees and students.

This survey intentionally focused on the language of gender equity, as it is among the broadest terms which includes things such as equity in policy, sexual harassment, and sexual violence prevention and education efforts. Promoting gender equity is the ultimate goal and purpose of Title IX. Many campus climate surveys take a deep dive into accounts of sexual harassment and the environmental factors surrounding them. That was not the aim of this survey. The Gender Equity Climate Survey was developed to inquire about broad ideas of gender equity within each level of CU's Title IX framework. This framework is based on a nested social ecological structure of the individual, interpersonal relationships, campus, and broader community with the assumption that change must happen within the individual before it can permeate relationships, the campus and local community. Because Title IX's definition of 'sex' is inclusive of gender identity and sexual orientation, it was important that the survey used inclusive language as well to reflect these gender and/or sexual identities.

Demographic Information

The Gender Equity Climate Survey (GECS) was developed by the Title IX Coordinator to survey broad topics related to gender equity within the social ecological framework for its prevention and education efforts. This survey was administered in the spring 2021 semester. All Campbellsville University employees and students had an opportunity within a two-week period to complete the survey. Before participants could complete the survey, they had to give informed consent. All questions were optional. In addition to basic demographic questions, the survey consisted of twenty questions asking participants rank statements about gender equity on a five-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). There were five questions pertaining to each of the four levels of the social ecological framework. There were also four narrative style questions. All of the questions were intentionally written through an appreciative lens, giving participants the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which they agreed with a positive statement.

A total of 187 participants completed the GECS. Of these, 50.3% were employees and 49.7% were students. Among students, graduate or professional students represented 35% of participants, while Sophomores and Juniors represented a combined 24% of student participants. More students from the College of Arts and Sciences (39.8%) participated than any other academic school or college. Among employee participants 43.6% were faculty, 38.3% were staff, 14.9% were administrators, and 3.2% were coaches. Among all participants, 82.9% were White, while Hispanic, Black, Asian, and Native American averaged 3.3% of total participants. Nearly 70% of participants identified their birth sex as female. Interestingly, 3.7% of participants described their gender identity as non-binary, transgender, or two-spirited. Regarding sexuality, 92.5% of participants answered this

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question and 13.9% described their sexuality as something other than heterosexual – this included employee and student participants. Not surprising was that the most prominent religious affiliation was that of Baptist at 31.6% of participants. It should also be noted that Campbellsville University has employees and students representing *at least* 20 different denominational or religious faith beliefs, including no religious affiliation and atheist. It is certainly worth noting that while we may have been able to anticipate that a majority of participants would identify as heterosexual and with gender identities aligning with their birth sex, we can now definitively say there is, in fact, an LGBTQ+ population present at Campbellsville University, comprised of students *and* employees.

Discussion of Results

The discussion that follows is organized by the four levels of Campbellsville University's Title IX social ecological framework. Each level was examined by the extent to which participants agreed with statements pertaining to gender equity, specific to that level. Because of the nested structure of the social ecological framework, many of the results from one level can be understood as influential or important to understanding results from other levels.

Individual

The individual level is at the core of the social ecological model. The values and beliefs of the individual are what promote change at each of the successive levels. To that end, participants indicated that their personal experiences are more influential in determining views of gender and sexuality than any other factor. Even as most participants identified within the male/female gender binary and as heteronormative, they cite personal experiences as more influential than other factors like race/ethnicity or religious beliefs. This could support recent research which suggests that developing interpersonal relationships is critical to promoting inclusivity. At the individual level, participants seem to be most indifferent about learning more about their own identities, whether gender, sexual, racial/ethnic, religious, or personal values. Yet, with the importance that the participants have placed on personal experience in shaping their views on gender and sexuality, a predominantly neutral response to more deeply understanding one's own identities is a surprising contrast.

Relationship

The relationship level is a direct extension of the individual level and provides an opportunity to leverage personal values in developing interpersonal relationships. Among each of the levels, the relationship level had the highest percentage of participants in agreement with the statements they evaluated in each question. The extent to which participants agreed with statements in the relationship level was nearly 8% higher than the next highest level (individual).

Within this level there was a question about one's own attitude of being welcoming toward others with different identities (gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, personal values). Of all the questions on the survey, this was the most decisive in that it garnered the least amount of neutral response. Also worth noting is the fact that participants overwhelmingly rated themselves as welcoming toward others with any differing identities, on average above 90%. Yet, at the individual level, only an average of 74.2% of participants said their own identities or values are welcomed at Campbellsville University. This could perhaps be an indication of: a) an individual's misconception of how their identities are viewed and welcomed by others, b) an individual's misrepresentation of their own welcoming attitude, or c) a combination of both. It may also

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represent a difference in how individuals feel welcomed or included by colleagues or peers as opposed to the entity of the educational institution.

Two other points developed from the questions in the relationship level that continue to speak to some of these discrepancies. Participants, which are almost equal parts employees and students, indicated that gender equity is more important to students than to faculty, staff, coaches, or administrators. More participants disagreed (22.9%) that gender equity is a priority of administrators than of any other group. Furthermore, on average, less than 50% of participants indicated that Campbellsville University is preparing them to meaningfully engage with others who have different identities from their own. Though not establishing a causal link between the previously discussed discrepancies, this may suggest that there is a difference in how individuals feel their identities are welcomed by colleagues and peers as opposed to the University itself.

Campus

As we move further from the individual level toward an environmental level (campus), we now start to see a decline in the overall percentage of participants in agreement with statements about gender equity. This is important because, as was previously stated, all the questions are written in an appreciative way. The fact that fewer participants can agree with the statements when evaluating the campus level indicates that at the very least less may be known about institutional priorities or positions on issues of gender equity. There are also consistently larger responses of neutrality when evaluating gender equity at the campus level than at the individual or relationship levels, though not as high as in the community level.

What is perhaps most striking in the campus level of questions is that the responses suggest that gender equity may not be a priority in the University's functional areas, *or* that if it is, the efforts of different functional areas to promote gender equity are not known to campus stakeholders, specifically students and employees. Three functional areas, which are likely more removed from general employee and student awareness, were rated lowest. These were a) development and donor relations, b) finance/business operations, and c) university operations and administration. Among the more visible functional areas, athletics was seen as the functional area where gender equity is less of a priority as compared with a) academic programs and support, b) enrollment, and c) student services.

Community

The community level is representative of the culminating efforts and energies of the preceding levels. The community level may encompass anywhere from local civic engagement to a larger national community. For the purpose of the Title IX social ecological framework and the GECS, community is viewed as the local civic community surrounding any one of Campbellsville University's physical locations. The questions at the community level garnered slightly higher levels of neutrality in responses, which again may indicate a lack of awareness of how Campbellsville University engages with its local communities or what supports or initiatives exist in these communities.

The results suggest that individuals may have access to greater resources of support in expressing any of their identities from their home or prior communities than they do in one of Campbellsville University's local communities. What is very encouraging is that a large majority of participants agreed that Campbellsville University can be a leader in promoting gender equity within

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its local communities as well as among its affiliations and connections with local church congregations. This reflects a posture of hope among employees and students that while there is substantial room to improve efforts in promoting gender equity, students and employees believe Campbellsville University can help lead this change.

Conclusion

While there are many salient points uncovered within this study, there are limitations which should be known as well. The survey participants overwhelmingly represent dominant populations and therefore may not reflect a completely accurate narrative for underrepresented and/or underserved populations. Future studies should aim to capture a more representative sample of the University student and employee populations. The aim of this study is not to generate generalizable data, but instead to establish some baseline information for perceptions of gender equity efforts at Campbellsville University. It is intended to generate questions and conversation for the consideration of University stakeholders in the decision-making processes of the University, at all levels. Students, faculty, staff, administrators, coaches and trustees should weigh the perceptions made as a result of this study.

Campbellsville University must acknowledge that within its employee and student population exists a community of LGBTQ+ persons. The University must consider this in light of its efforts to provide supportive resources for students and employees, understanding that gender identity and sexual orientation are including in the federal definition of 'sex' under Title IX. There is much research on how LGBTQ+ individuals experience life as a student or employee at Christian colleges and universities. Campbellsville University should consult this research as well as engage LGBTQ+ students and employees in increasing efforts toward inclusivity. The institution should also draw upon the positive attitudes of employees and students to create opportunities to develop interpersonal relationships, and providing them with tools to communicate across differences (Hughes & Hurtado, 2018).

Aside from what is learned through interpersonal relationships, it does not appear that much is known about the University's efforts to provide an equitable environment across each of its main functional areas. This is not to say that gender equity is not a priority, but if it is, it may not be very visible to students and employees. While some of this may be due to the nature of some functional areas to be inherently less visible to the general University community (ex: donor relations), even the highly visible functional areas like athletics, student services, or enrollment should consider what they can do make their efforts toward gender equity more evident.

Finally, Campbellsville University's students and employees believe that this institution can be an example and leader in promoting gender equity. The institution's role within local communities and relationships with local churches can provide a powerful platform to address issues of gender equity. The University can also be a source for generating this knowledge to be able to share with communities and congregations. Campbellsville University not only has the opportunity, but the responsibility to take greater action in promoting gender equity – reconciled to its faith convictions and for the good of those whom we serve.