

Study Group on University Diversity Campus Climate Report

What do we mean by “campus climate”?

Campus climate is a measure—real or perceived—of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions. In a healthy climate, individuals and groups generally feel welcomed, respected, and valued by the university. A healthy climate is grounded in respect for others, nurtured by dialogue between those of differing perspectives, and is evidenced by a pattern of civil interactions among community members (*UCR Framework for Diversity Report*). Not all aspects of a healthy climate necessarily feel positive—indeed, uncomfortable or challenging situations can lead to increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation. Tension, while not always *positive*, can be *healthy* when handled appropriately. Conversely, in an unhealthy environment, individuals or groups often feel isolated, marginalized, and even unsafe. The University of California strives to create and promote healthy climates across its campuses, where all community members, including students (graduate, undergraduate, and professional), staff and faculty feel welcomed, supported, included and valued.

Campus climate is a multifaceted reflection and manifestation of diversity. Campus climate is about moving beyond the numbers (Hurtado, 2007). The very presence of individuals from different backgrounds results in *diversity*. *Climate*, on the other hand, refers to the *experience* of individuals and groups on a campus—and the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals. Diversity and inclusion efforts are not complete unless they also address climate. Stated another way, addressing campus climate is an important and necessary component in any comprehensive plan for diversity.

Why does climate matter?

Addressing climate benefits *all* campus community members, not just historically under-represented students, faculty and staff. Research shows that a hostile campus climate directly impacts a student's ability to transition successfully into college (Hurtado, Milem, Clatyon-Pederson & Allen, 1999). In an unhealthy climate, students are less likely to adjust academically and are less likely to develop a sense of belonging on the campus. Furthermore, positive intergroup interactions affect academic outcomes positively. Research demonstrates the link between climate and educational outcomes, both for minority and for majority students (Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005). Healthy tension, if handled properly, can produce teachable moments and encourage personal growth and reflection. It is when the tension is allowed to fester or transform into something more insidious that the climate becomes untenable and negative outcomes ensue.

The climate of a campus directly impacts student learning, and therefore the very mission of the university. Similarly, climate impacts the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff, as well as the productivity and success of all members of the academic community. A campus profile of UC Riverside, included in the appendix to this report, demonstrates how diversity, excellence, and climate go hand in hand.

Assessing campus climate and then taking action to create and sustain a healthy climate are essential steps to creating an environment that supports the fundamental mission of the university—teaching, research, and service. Across the country institutions of higher education are increasingly realizing the value behind assessing and addressing campus climate. Indeed, diversity initiatives are incomplete until campus climate is acknowledged, measured and monitored on a regular basis and across institutional departments and disciplines. In other words, campus climate is not solely a student affairs issue—it is an institutional issue.

In addition to the need to sustain a healthy environment in which students, faculty and staff can thrive, climate also has an effect on our students after they leave the university. Employers have demonstrated that they value diverse workplace skills. However, simply being part of a diverse environment does not automatically produce these skills. In fact, attention to interaction patterns and race/ethnic relations is an important part of the educational process. For example, students who reported that they had negative interactions with diverse peers showed significantly less growth than students who had positive interactions on a host of outcomes necessary for preparation for a diverse workforce during the first two years of college (Saenz, Ngai, & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 2005). Interaction between groups is also one of the most important components of creating positive climate. Producing a climate for such interactions, breaking down stereotypes, sharing perspectives and modeling civil discourse is something that can be modeled and facilitated in the educational environment (Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007).

Study Group on University Diversity—Campus Climate Report

In sum, climate matters because it is the measure of the real experience of our students, faculty and staff. In an unhealthy climate, we are unlikely to achieve our diversity and inclusion goals; similarly, in a healthy climate, the benefits and positive outcomes of diversity can be more fully realized. Climate matters because it is palpable evidence of whether a university is walking its diversity talk.

What factors or dimensions contribute to creating “campus climate”?

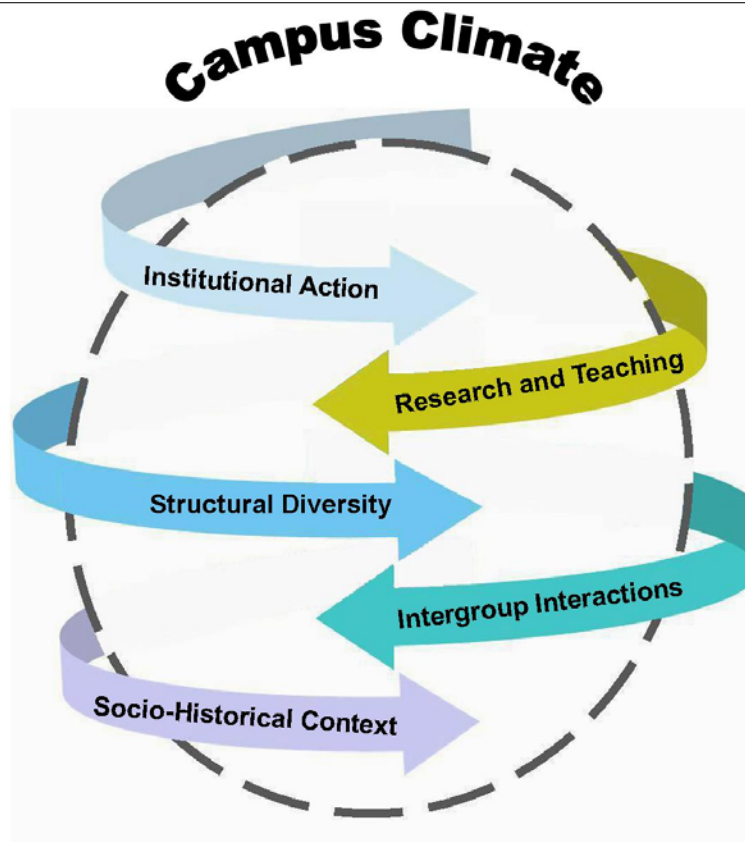
Campus climate is informed by and reflected in five primary dimensions of a university: (1) institutional action, (2) research and teaching, (3) structural diversity, (4) intergroup interaction, and (5) the campus’ socio-historical context.

The responsibility for climate belongs to the institution. The institution must not only recruit diverse faculty, students and staff. We must also take intentional **institutional action**—based upon explicit institutional commitment—to proactively prioritize climate issues. Institutional action must contribute to the success of all campus community members and convey support and willingness to ensure a healthy climate. Providing services, programs, and support mechanisms is one way for an institution to take action; the message the university leadership delivers, through action and words, also is a form of institutional action which contributes to the climate equation.

A discussion of diversity and climate is incomplete without mention of the primary activities of the university: **research and teaching**. The scholarship on a campus both reflects and affects its climate. A diverse campus with a healthy campus climate will both promote and reflect the inclusion of all cultures and perspectives in the research, curriculum and pedagogy across *all* disciplines.

Structural diversity has been the focus of much of the discussion in the Study Group’s report. By structural diversity we mean the actual representation of diverse groups on a campus. The existence of diversity has an impact on climate in important and foundational ways. A diverse student body, for example, can attract additional students of color which then results in a “critical mass” of students who can see their impact and value on the campus simply due to their representative numbers. Similarly, the presence of a critical mass of underrepresented minority faculty often helps attract and retain new underrepresented minority faculty. While structural diversity in this context is important, it is not the only factor that contributes to creating a healthy or unhealthy climate.

Research shows (Chang, in press; Allport, 1954) that the true benefits of diversity, even with the first three foundational elements of climate in place, cannot be fully realized without the fourth dimension: positive **intergroup interaction**. The presence of diverse groups in a classroom, residence hall or academic department is important, but not enough. Intergroup interaction cannot be successful if groups co-exist in a silo mentality. There must be purposeful interaction—within and across all campus constituencies.



The final dimension which must be considered in a discussion of climate is the **socio-historical** context surrounding an institution. The passage of SP-1, SP-2 and Proposition 209 had a chilling effect on diversity initiatives across the University of California. Comprehensive diversity planning on a systemwide level has only recently been reinstated. Similarly, student applications for admission decreased significantly in response to SP-1. It was the perception of those students that they would not be welcome at UC—that they would not be entering a supportive environment committed to their success. While UC has rebounded in some areas, we are still recovering from negative perceptions created during this era. In addition to laws and policy, the socio-historical context is informed by budgetary concerns, educational philosophy, and expressed values.

Campus climate cannot be compartmentalized or addressed with cookie-cutter prescriptions. Campus climate is by its nature fluid and unique from one environment to another. Climate not only varies between campuses, but also within each campus in smaller “micro-climate” settings. As such, climate must be assessed and addressed in individual departments, disciplines, residence halls, off-campus communities and other

settings. The varying climates come together to create a campus and university environment. An unhealthy climate in one department or professional school can affect the climate of an entire campus.

What is the climate at UC?

What we know and what we don't know

The University of California has not conducted or reported any comprehensive campus-wide assessments of climate. A number of reports and studies have been conducted which address diversity and representation, and in some cases address climate in a specific setting or for a specific group or campus. However, no data currently exist that can support a conclusive understanding of the climate at any of our campuses and the system as a whole. A comprehensive and sustained assessment would include data and commentary from faculty, staff, undergraduate students, graduate students and professional students across all departments, disciplines and classifications. To date, no such study has been conducted.

Assessments of staff at UC Riverside (<http://www.climatesurvey.ucr.edu>) or graduate and professional students at UCSD (<http://graduatestudentexperience.ucsd.edu>), for example, reveal that climate is an issue that requires further study and attention. We also know that climate is affected by more than diversity. It is affected by concerns about academic success, about job stability, about future opportunities, and a multitude of other factors. In addition, climate varies between settings; one incident of hate or intolerance can undo years of positive work, and perceptions and reality are not always in accord with one another (Solorzano, 2007). Finally, we also know that institutional and campus leadership is supremely important in addressing climate issues. This is evidenced at the UC Davis King Hall/Law School, where a commitment to change has resulted in success in working towards a healthy climate for underrepresented minorities and women law faculty.

Anecdotes and stories from individuals abound and in many cases confirm the suspicions alluded to in general diversity studies or reports. Without data and comprehensive, sustained assessment, however, there is no way to quantify or understand the source or depth of the potential issues and concerns that are brought forward through these means. We also need data as a baseline, a means to understand where the university is having success on climate issues and where we need to improve. Finally, if and when concerns are identified or confirmed, we need to fully understand the cause and sources of the problems in order to implement constructive change.

UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)

Since 2002, the University of California has conducted the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES). UCUES is a systemwide study that focuses solely on undergraduates. The UC Undergraduate Experience Survey has been designed for many

Study Group on University Diversity—Campus Climate Report

uses including program review and the assessment of student experience and satisfaction on a multitude of issues. UCUES does include some questions relevant to climate, but was not designed as a climate study.

Despite the fact that UCUES was not intended to specifically survey campus climate, a small portion of the questions can be useful in beginning to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of climate. For example, UCUES can demonstrate certain behaviors and attitudes regarding interactions with peers and faculty, perspectives on the level of tolerance on campus, and the impact of the UC experience on students' appreciation for diversity, understanding of racial and ethnic differences, and awareness of their own ethnic identity. However, additional and more specific assessment means are needed to draw solid conclusions regarding campus climate.

Other surveys and assessment methods may serve as models or tools to assist UC in specifically targeting the core issues of campus climate: the quality of student interactions with faculty, staff and peers and *why* students have certain perspectives about their campus climate. Similar assessments, sustained over time, also need to occur with graduate and professional students, faculty and staff.

How can UC assess climate more completely?

The diversity study team recommends ongoing, dedicated climate assessments that are coordinated systemwide, but administered at the campus level. The climate assessments must be inclusive of faculty, staff, graduate students, professional students and undergraduates, and repeated regularly to understand and respond to an ever-changing climate. Specific mechanisms and strategies to obtain the necessary data are detailed in the committee recommendations. The diversity study team further recommends that the staff diversity council also endorse similar regular assessment.

What can UC do to improve campus climate?

Making the commitment to assess climate on an ongoing basis will in itself be an important institutional action that demonstrates a strong interest in improving climate. The University of California is fortunate enough to house national experts on campus climate who can provide much assistance in these efforts. Utilizing an inclusive and representative body on the systemwide level to identify how to best assess climate will further underscore the university's commitment to achieve success with these initiatives. Careful consideration of which climate factors to assess is essential. Advance commitment to seek improvements if study results indicate the need for change is also paramount to the success of any climate initiative. Reports and assessments, without direct action, are not enough. An implementation plan is critical. A failure to utilize the assessment data for making healthier climates on UC campuses will undermine the espoused commitment to creating healthy climate and could indeed increase tension and hostility.

Study Group on University Diversity—Campus Climate Report

Campus climate is everyone's responsibility

Just as addressing campus climate leads to benefits for all, acknowledging and supporting campus climate initiatives must be a shared responsibility. Campus climate initiatives must be acknowledged and supported campus- and systemwide. Addressing campus climate must be an institutional value supported by all university community members, including administrative leadership, students, faculty and staff. Too often campus climate concerns are deemed the exclusive purview of student affairs divisions and departments; however, a healthy campus climate requires that all university community members engage in work that addresses climate issues.

What does a healthy campus climate look like?

Inclusion of students, faculty, staff and administrators of all backgrounds—achieving critical mass—is only one important component of creating a healthy climate. A curriculum that reflects the historical and contemporary experiences of people of color and other under-represented groups is another way to gauge the climate on a campus. The lack of significant intergroup conflict or tension on campus provides another measure, as does a mission statement that reinforces the university's commitment to diversity. Finally, faculty and administration who are open and responsive to concerns of people of color and other marginalized groups help define and create a healthy climate (Solorzano, 2007).

Other factors that may contribute to improving climate include:

1. The tone of campus and university administration and their willingness to engage on diversity issues;
2. The climate, services and responsiveness of surrounding city/community;
3. For students, the residential life experience (cultural themes, diverse communities) and opportunities to live on campus; and
4. Programs that support the recruitment, recognition, retention and success of students, faculty and staff who are underrepresented or marginalized on campus.

Are there climate "best practices?"

Each campus must chart its own course and each department will have a unique outcome from the comprehensive assessments and will identify strategies that are unique to their individualized circumstances. Indeed, "there is no consensus on what exactly institutions must do to achieve this type of environment. Part of the reason for this lack of consensus is that each college or university faces a set of unique circumstances that cannot be easily addressed by ready-made 'cookbook' strategies" (Chang, in press). While each institution must determine its own strategy, there are a number of best practices to learn from across the country. At UC, diversity and climate initiatives are still in a nascent state, but with commitment, resources and leadership UC is poised to achieve significant results and could serve as an example at the national level.

One certain best practice is to make a strong and substantive commitment to assessing climate, utilizing inclusive processes to conduct the assessment, taking positive action when the results of the assessment are published, and then repeating this process on a regular basis. Assessment and implementation of climate-related initiatives must be a continuous, unending loop. While “a superficial accounting of specific conditions, programs, or policies fails to describe fully the complex dynamics and qualities of a college or university that sustain positive race relations” (Chang, in press), we can turn to one of our own campuses, UC Riverside, to examine conditions and actions that have led to significant success with diversity and campus climate.

UC Riverside serves as an example of a university well on its way to achieving success and real change related to representative diversity and campus climate. The appendix includes a profile of that campus, outlining the specific actions that have been taken and are still under way to make improvements in diversity and climate over the past 15 years. The themes represented in UC Riverside’s story include **leadership** at the highest levels of the university, a commitment to achieve a “**critical mass**” of underrepresented minorities on campus, active support of **student success** through programs and services, **accountability** measures to ensure the implementation of the strategic plan related to diversity and climate, and a willingness to embrace diversity in the **scholarship** endeavors of the campus.

Campus Climate Recommendations

The University of California must make a long-term and sustained commitment to assessing, responding to, and addressing those policies, programs and structural realities that affect climate on all UC campuses. Leadership in all sectors and levels of the university is the critical component to realizing positive change.

Recommendation 1: Regularly Assess Campus Climate

The Regents should require regular monitoring and reporting from the Office of the President in the area of campus climate every year, with the acknowledgement that certain climate areas will take longer to address. The Office of the President should work with the campus climate experts within the University of California as well as outside experts to craft appropriate instruments and methods to measure climate. In addition to conducting surveys and assessments, it is critical that campus climate data is not abandoned or shelved once it is available. Among strategies for assessment, the University should:

- a. Enhance UC Undergraduate Experience Survey items and include narrative assessment;
- b. Implement a UC Graduate Experience Survey (UCGES), including narrative assessment;
- c. Implement a faculty and staff survey and narrative assessment.
- d. Survey faculty, students, and administrators to learn what UC is doing to help students achieve success once on campus;
- e. Survey students of underrepresented groups who are admitted but do not enroll;

Study Group on University Diversity—Campus Climate Report

- f. Initiate focus groups following cohorts of enrolled underrepresented groups at several campuses;
- g. Conduct exit interviews of underrepresented groups upon completion of their degrees;
- h. Conduct exit interviews of staff and faculty when they leave their positions.

All initiatives must include accountability and benchmarks towards progress which are overseen and supported by campus and departmental leadership including UCOP, chancellors, vice chancellors, deans and department chairs.

Recommendation 2: Enhance and Create Programs to Support Success

Intentional programs and frameworks for students, faculty and staff should be implemented and/or enhanced. These programs should include an emphasis on academic and professional success, as well as encourage positive cross-group interactions. Leadership's support for and insistence upon the coordination of a wide variety of strategies is more critical than the implementation of a particular program or policy.

Programs to focus on include but are not limited to:

- a. Advising, mentoring and support programs focused on the overall success of students, staff, and faculty and their increased ability to thrive on our campuses;
- b. Leadership development and cultural programs;
- c. Disability services;
- d. Seeking and utilizing alumni as a resource;
- e. Support for research and teaching that acknowledges and addresses diversity and climate issues.

Recommendation 3: Address Unhealthy Climate Factors

Improve mechanisms to detect, prevent and correct overt and more subtle forms of harassment, racism and discrimination. Campus and university leadership must take an active and consistent stance against actions, events and conduct that undermine the development of a healthy climate. Campuses and individual departments must demonstrate the priority of confronting and eliminating harassment, racism and discrimination through engaging in open dialogue, utilizing faculty expertise and promoting opportunities to increase understanding through formal and informal dialogue and education. In other words, if we strive to be a "pluralistic university, proposing and testing ideas through respectful, civil communication" (*Faculty Diversity Statement*), then we must address unhealthy climate in a consistent, proactive and thorough manner.

Recommendation 4: Apply Funding & Support

University leadership, particularly those responsible for fund allocation, must identify and apply adequate funding for the development of assessments and their ongoing implementation; funding must also be identified to actualize the program and policy changes that the assessments will ultimately and continuously identify. The initial planning process must include an assessment of costs and a commitment to provide the needed support. Without resources to dedicate to the tools for measurement and change, the success in addressing campus climate will be limited or nonexistent.

Conclusion

While campus climate is a measure based on real or perceived observations of the campus environment as they relate to interpersonal, academic and professional interactions, the effects of not addressing campus climate are very real and very damaging. These effects are especially detrimental when campus climate is ignored and/or superficially addressed within an institution that purports to support diversity. Conversely, addressing campus climate in a comprehensive manner benefits *everyone* on campus, and serves to further enrich the experiences of *all* campus community members.

A healthy campus is not based solely on numbers or critical mass, although those measures are inextricably part of the climate mix. More important than who attends or works on a university campus is the role of the leadership of the institution in monitoring, supporting healthy change, and holding itself accountable for the climate of its campuses. Every UC campus, regardless of our diversity in numbers, must be expected to promote and maintain a healthy campus climate.

Climate is an overarching reality which has an impact on faculty, staff and students of every background on every campus. As we aspire to “broaden and deepen both the educational experience and the scholarly environment” (*Faculty Statement on Diversity*) for students and faculty across the University of California, we must not forget about campus climate. Campus climate offers a palpable measure of how UC walks its diversity talk.

References

- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Chang, M.J. (in press). *Beyond artificial integration: Re-imagining cross racial interactions among undergraduates*. In S.R. Harper & L.D. Patton (Eds.), Responding to the Realities of Race. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hurtado, S. (2007). *The climate for diversity in educational organizations*. Presentation to the UC Regents Campus Climate Work Team.
- Hurtado, S. (2005). The next generation of diversity and intergroup relations research. *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J.F., Clatyon-Pederson, A., and Allen, W.A. (1999). *Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the campus climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education*. ASHE-ERIC Series. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milem, J.F., Chang, M.J., & Antonio, A.L. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective*. Washington D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Universities.
- Moses, Y. (2004). *A framework for diversity*. UC Riverside report.
- Saenz, V.B., Ngai, H.N., and Hurtado, S. (2007). Factors influencing positive interactions across race for African American, Asian American, Latino and White college students. *Research in Higher Education*.
- Solorzano, D. (2007). *Notes on campus racial climate*. Presentation to the UC Regents Campus Climate Work Team.
- Zuniga, X., Nagda, B., Chesler, M., & Cytron-Walker, A. (2007). *Intergroup dialogue in higher education: Meaningful learning about social justice*, Vol. 32 (4). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

CAMPUS PROFILE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE
CAMPUS CLIMATE AND DIVERSITY
AUGUST 2007

The University of California Riverside has developed a reputation as a campus with a welcoming climate for a diverse undergraduate student population. A March 23, 2007, article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* carried a headline that read, “In California, a Public Research University Succeeds Because Its Low-Income Students Do.” The article goes on to quote a research analyst at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education as stating that, “Riverside really could be a model for a research university that serves access and excellence missions.”

Previously, a January 15, 2007, article in the *Los Angeles Times* touted UCR as the campus of choice for many black and Latino students, who remark on UCR’s atmosphere and sense of community as key components in attracting new students. This positive campus climate—achieved over the course many years—has had an impact not only on students, but on faculty, staff and even scholarship at UCR.

Likewise, diversity did not always set UCR apart. As shown in the following table, as recently as 1994, the proportion of African American, American Indian and Hispanic students at UCR was on a par with UCLA and only slightly higher than Berkeley. Since that time, however, the proportion of these underrepresented students at UCR has increased by 10.8 percent, while that at most of the other campuses has actually declined.

Proportion of African American, American Indian and Hispanic Students by Campus						
Campus	All Students			Undergraduate Students		
	1994	2006	Change	1994	2006	Change
Berkeley	18.4	14.7	-3.70	20.5	15.4	-5.1
Davis	15.1	13.7	-1.4	16.3	14.9	-1.4
Irvine	15.2	13.8	-1.4	16.3	14.7	-1.6
Los Angeles	21.3	17.6	-3.7	23.7	19.1	-4.6
Merced	n/a	32.4	n/a	n/a	33.0	n/a
Riverside	21.0	31.4	10.4	22.1	32.9	10.8
San Diego	14.7	12.6	-2.1	15.2	13.3	-1.9
Santa Barbara	14.5	20.9	6.4	14.7	22.4	7.7
Santa Cruz	17.7	18.5	0.8	17.7	19.1	1.4

An important factor in the diversification of UCR’s undergraduate student population was the 1995 passage of SP-1. This resolution, adopted by The Regents, prohibited the consideration of race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin as criteria for admission to UC. While other campuses suffered in the face of SP-1 and later Proposition 209, UCR became the beneficiary of what became known as the “cascading effect,” in which UC-eligible students who did not gain

admission into the more selective campuses were admitted to UCR because the campus was able to admit all UC-eligible students. Many of these educationally and/or economically disadvantaged students were underrepresented minorities. For a time UCR's level of selectivity created a stigma around the campus of second or even third choice. Many students felt stigmatized by attending UCR rather than one of the more "prestigious" UC campuses. At the same time, however, UCR took some actions to encourage and support these students, and to make them feel welcome. These actions, described below, also served to increase the diversity of UCR's undergraduate population.

The factors that allowed UCR to create a healthy campus climate that encourages diversity are multiple and interrelated. They can most simply be summarized as a combination of leadership, critical mass, a focus on student success, accountability and scholarship. Taken together, these elements had positive and sometimes surprising effects on climate. In the span of approximately one decade, as indicated by the stories in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Chronicle of Higher Education*, UCR has become a campus of first choice for many students.

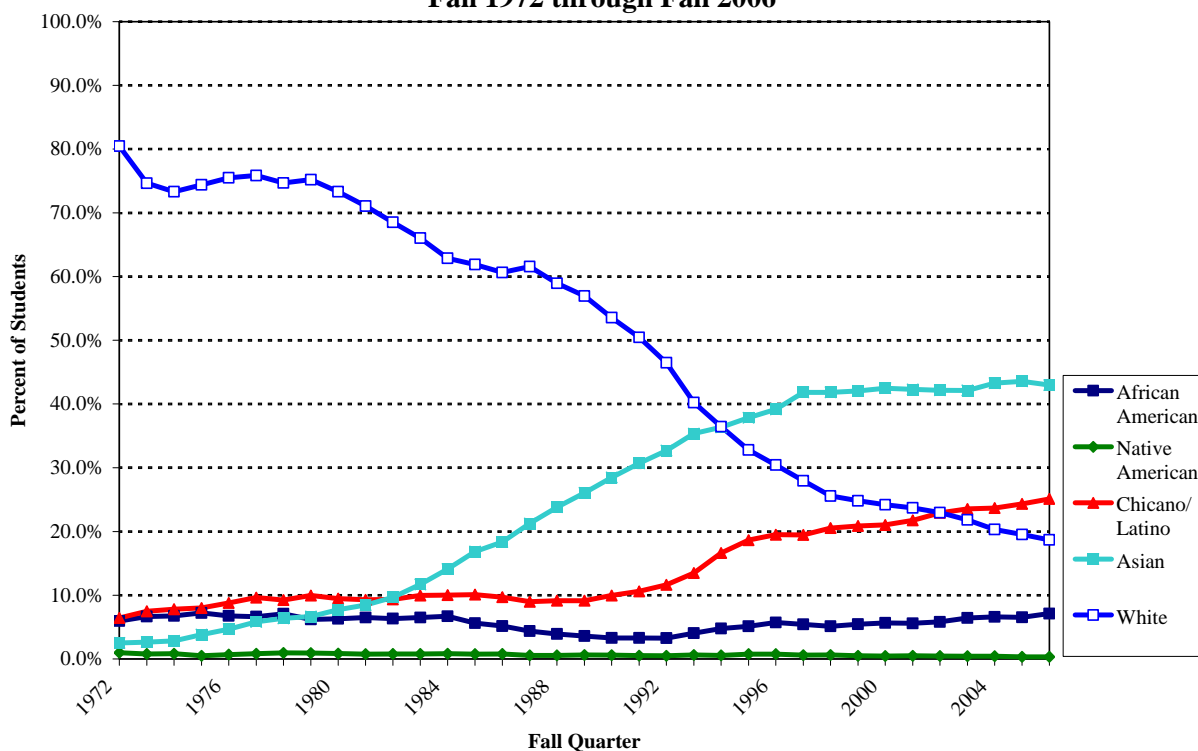
Leadership

UCR's dramatic growth in terms of both diversity and raw numbers of students began during the tenure of the campus's eighth chancellor, Raymond Orbach (1992–2002). Orbach had a passionate commitment to making UCR accessible and affordable to non-traditional students, particularly those who were economically and/or educationally disadvantaged. Often this meant they were also from underrepresented groups. Through what has been termed his "Pied Piper approach," Orbach put himself on the line, visiting countless schools and community groups, and exhorting parents to ensure that their children were college-ready. He oversaw development of a booklet called *Keys to the Future*, which outlined the level of coursework prospective students should be taking, beginning in the fourth grade. He commissioned a group of Hispanic parents to translate the book into Spanish so that it would be readily understood by other Spanish-speaking families. He formed partnerships with area high schools, forming task forces to examine their academic and advising programs to help them prepare students to be UC eligible.

Orbach's efforts, and the impact of Proposition 209 in California, were described in the May 2, 1999, issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, in an article entitled "The End of Affirmative Action (And the Beginning of Something Better)." Even then, author James Traub called attention to UCR's climate, stating, "Virtually every student I talked to remarked on what a welcoming place it was."

Gradually the programs instituted under Orbach's leadership helped create a healthy climate that, in turn, began to attract a growing number of underrepresented students to UCR. The percentage of Chicano/Latino students began to slowly climb in the early 1990s. The percentage of African American students, which had dipped slightly, also began to increase modestly. These trends are illustrated in the chart below. At the same time, the campus overall was undergoing dramatic enrollment growth, so the relative percentage of white students began to drop.

**University of California, Riverside
Undergraduate Student by Ethnicity
Fall 1972 through Fall 2006**



Academic Planning and Budget
May 2, 2006

Subsequent to the passage of SP-1, UCR redoubled its community outreach efforts. Campus leadership worked closely with community-based organizations to improve their understanding of available programs and to increase opportunities for low-income and educationally disadvantaged students to get into the pipeline. Likewise, UCR worked with school districts to ensure that these students took appropriate coursework to be UC eligible.

Diversity continued to increase under the leadership of Chancellor France Córdoba (2002–2007), who not only shared Orbach’s fierce convictions, but served as a living role model. As a woman and a Latina in a field of science dominated by men (astrophysics), Córdoba became a sought-after speaker for promoting women and minorities in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. She also became an advocate for student success, discussed in greater detail below. While student growth tapered off during her administration, Córdoba worked to ensure that UCR continued to diversify. In fall 2006, UCR admitted half of the African American freshmen in the entire UC system. In spring of 2007, UCR became the first highly ranked public research university to become eligible as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Orbach and Córdoba had an enormous influence on campus climate because they set the tone for the entire campus. Faculty and staff gradually adopted the perspective set forth by these two leaders, ultimately leading to significant shifts in campus culture. Diversity has become an integral part of UCR’s value system. The concept of “diversity and excellence” is a clearly

articulated institutional goal, first articulated and then vigorously pursued by Córdova. Students and parents making choices between institutions are influenced by the voice and actions of the campus leadership, making UCR a campus of first choice for many underrepresented students.

Critical Mass

Chancellor Orbach came under criticism by some faculty for increasing the number of students admitted by special action. Yet he was willing to endure such criticism in order to increase campus enrollment and, at the same time, increase diversity. He took a risk that, in the end, paid off. Orbach was willing to use special actions as a tool to identify excellent students who might not have been afforded the advantaged educational circumstances that would guarantee UC eligibility. He succeeded in large part because of the close relationship he had established with area high schools.

As the doors opened to more economically and educationally disadvantaged students, a critical mass of Chicano/Latino and African American students began to develop at UCR. With this came the opportunity to develop more student programs and services aimed at reaching out to various ethnic and racial groups. Some of these programs were social or service-oriented; others were academic. As described in the section below, many of the academic programs were aimed at helping students who came to UCR less academically prepared than some of their counterparts.

In subsequent years, it became easier to recruit diverse students because they not only saw other students who looked like themselves, they also felt supported and welcomed when they visited UCR. Current students and alumni have become UCR's best recruiters—a testament to their experience at UCR.

Students often point to the sense of community that exists at UCR. For example, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* described a Latino student, the first in his family to enroll in college, who first struggled when he entered UCR but turned his grades around under the mentorship of a faculty member. The student, who is now interviewing for admission to medical school, said of UCR, "We're a community and we help each other out." Similarly, a student interviewed by the *Los Angeles Times* explained his choice of UCR over Berkeley: "I liked the black community on campus. I knew that UC Riverside had the most African American students of any UC and that they had a lot of programs geared toward helping African Americans succeed."

Student Success

A key to UCR's healthy climate is this focus on student success. Early on, when Orbach began expanding the campus's admissions, some faculty complained of students who were less academically prepared than their counterparts. Under the leadership of Chancellor Córdova, this attitude, expressed by a minority of faculty, was overwhelmed by a major campus initiative on student success. One element of the initiative was creation of small learning communities, in which about half of all UCR freshmen participate. (Of these, approximately 70 percent are Pell Grant recipients.) As part of small groups, students take a yearlong series of courses, attend workshops and meet with student mentors. Participating students are 10 percent more likely than

their classmates to return for the sophomore year. These learning communities are an example of a program that benefited all participating students, not just underrepresented minorities. Likewise, UCR conducted focus groups of students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds to better understand perceived difficulties and even racial biases with academic advising. The process uncovered a systemic problem, which was subsequently addressed. Thus, the students' feedback led to institutional change that has improved academic advising for all students. Other aspects of the student success initiative include:

- Increased attention to persistence of currently enrolled students through regular meetings of involved constituencies, exit surveys and other midterm intervention or academic support systems;
- Establishment of a professional academic adviser job series and a set of principles for its implementation;
- Strengthening of support and coordination for undeclared students;
- Creation of a Center for Instructional Innovation;
- Integration of the UCR libraries into instructional support and student success programs and initiatives;
- Use of metrics to refine programs or direct resources to improve student success;
- Expansion of summer bridge programs to better prepare incoming students

Already UCR is seeing results. The graduation rates for students from all ethnic and racial groups are virtually identical, hovering around 64 percent. The rate for low-income students is even higher, at about 66.3 percent. A May 2004 report of the Education Trust noted that this rate is 15 percentage points better than the 51 percent median rate of UCR's 33 peer institutions. The report went on to state, "The median graduation rate for Latino students at the peer schools is much lower, less than 39 percent. By contrast, success at UC Riverside is equally distributed across groups." While UCR is working to boost its overall six-year graduation rate, it is significant that students from all backgrounds succeed equally.

Accountability

In May 2004, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Diversity and Excellence Dr. Yolanda Moses authored a "Framework for Diversity" for UCR. This groundbreaking document, commissioned by Chancellor Córdova, outlines a strategic plan for achieving diversity and excellence. For each of several strategies set forth in the framework, an action plan is provided. The section on "Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate," for instance, lays out specific steps that can be taken by executive leadership; the offices of Human Resources, Academic Personnel and Affirmative Action; Student Affairs; and a campus-wide "environment team." As an example, HR was asked to institute diversity training workshops, monitor staff evaluations and development plans to identify climate issues, coordinate comparison of climate assessments across campus (including involvement of students) and seek external funding as appropriate. Other sections of the framework include actions for faculty and staff, deans, department chairs and other unit heads. Built into the plan is an accountability system. Deans are expected to incorporate diversity into their academic plans. Annual evaluations for all executive leaders, staff and now faculty include a diversity component. These measures ensure that the strategies don't just exist on paper, but that they are implemented throughout the campus.

Scholarship

As pointed out in the “Framework for Diversity,” a single incident of intolerance or hate can undo years of effort to create a sense of community. UCR has developed a track record of turning such incidents into learning opportunities. In fall 2003, for example, a forum was held to develop protocols for dealing with issues of difference and intolerance. The precipitating event was a poster that equated the Star of David with the Nazi Swastika. Campus leadership held the forum as a means of engaging a scholarly dialogue around how UCR should respond to such controversial incidents in the future. By turning a potentially explosive situation into a meaningful discussion and plan for follow-up, UCR took advantage of what the institution does best and established an atmosphere of mutual respect. Such a response lent considerable credibility to UCR’s commitment to being an inclusive and multicultural community. It is an example of the importance of fostering constructive intergroup interactions.

UCR’s diversity has become woven into the scholarship of individual faculty members as well. UCR Professor of Philosophy Georgia Warnke, formerly at Yale, refers to the classroom as a laboratory in which the participation of students often has profound effects on what faculty think and write about. She notes that the rare confluence of a top-notch research university with a remarkably diverse student body has provided UCR a resource for thinking and raising questions that other institutions don't offer. A chapter in one of her books was the direct outgrowth of a class she taught on the philosophy of law. Dr. Warnke stated that her work would not have gone in the direction it has were she still at Yale.

At a recent faculty meeting, Assistant Professor of English Vorris Nunley stated that UCR “gets it right” when it comes to diversity. At UCR, he pointed out, it is not “just about the numbers,” or “compositional diversity,” as he calls it, but about the production of knowledge and the approach to teaching—which he refers to as “cognitive or developmental diversity.” He said that the diverse backgrounds and experiences of his students had caused him to change how he teaches and to think differently about his own work in rhetorical and critical theory. This African American faculty member said that this “critical diversity” is what drew him to UCR.

These two examples illustrate how diversity and excellence go hand-in-hand, and how together they influence campus climate. Not only do the faculty benefit from new insights into their teaching and research, students also benefit because it broadens the dialogue in the classroom and opens their eyes to multi-cultural experiences and perspectives. One of Dr. Nunley’s students, a junior majoring in English, said, “He’s my favorite teacher because he is constantly challenging us to stretch our ideas and to learn, not only from him, but from one another.”

Next Steps

UCR acknowledges the need to do more to achieve greater diversity among its graduate students and faculty. For staff, UCR has already formed special workgroups dealing with issues related to professional development, communications and recognition—a direct outgrowth of a staff climate survey completed in spring 2006. Recommendations developed by these work groups are now in the process of being implemented. And for students, efforts continue to enhance

student success and to build on the progress that has been made in creating what is widely perceived to be a welcoming climate.

The campus also recognizes that much of the perception of UCR as a campus with a healthy climate is based on anecdotal evidence. Discussions are now underway to develop research protocols to better evaluate climate and the factors that contribute to a healthy and welcoming environment. The campus is also beginning to ask questions about the impact of programs; a survey has recently been completed, for example, on the value of the learning communities. Another is being conducted on the freshman-year experience. Other studies are in the planning stages.

Among the themes of UCR's upcoming reaccreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is *Learning within a Campus Culture of Diversity*. Within the WASC theme, the campus plans to try to determine the added value of attending a research university rich in diversity. The campus also has made a similar and equally strong commitment to undergraduate education and expanding its culture of evidence focused on student learning outcomes. One step toward embedding this evidence-based focus into the campus culture is the establishment of the Institutional Research Council, which is planning and coordinating the comprehensive collection, analysis and dissemination of data on student learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The two examples of faculty members who have reshaped their research and teaching illustrate the degree to which the UCR community embraces and celebrates the campus' diversity. Diversity summits have been held for faculty, staff and students, with excellent participation and concrete results. At the faculty summit, for example, participants recommended creation of a new position of associate provost for faculty equity and diversity. Subsequently, Chancellor Córdova appointed Dr. Marlene Zuk, a professor of biology, to this important new role. Recently a celebration was held at the UCR Bell Tower to announce the roll-out of a new diversity website, available at <http://www.diversity.ucr.edu/>. Diversity has become a vital part of UCR's identity, one in which the campus community takes great pride.

UCR's goal is to be a campus that lives its values, as expressed in its Principles of Community. This means UCR will have a healthy climate that nurtures the intellectual and personal growth of our students, faculty and staff; sets an example of respect for all people, and provides a safe and welcoming environment for one and all.