



Report on the Climate Survey conducted by the Task Force on Diversity and Community

Diversity deserves our best shared thinking and action. Haverford has evolved, historically, from neglect, to incremental integration, to the aim of multiculturalism, alongside earnest pursuit of diversity, and a focus on inclusion. Our goal should be a truly pluralistic ethos that builds on the affirmation of diversity as an educational value integral to our fundamental mission. We are bringing the full force of our institutional commitment and collective engagement to foster diversity as a multilayered process through which we can sustain excellence and equity in teaching, learning, and the holistic development of every member of our community. Through this, we advance the College as a vibrantly creative, self-challenging, and transformative community.

Kim Benston, President, Haverford College

The **diverse experiences and insights of the Haverford College community** nourish our dynamic educational mission and support its foundation of interdependence and mutuality. Students educated in environments that value such diversity cultivate multiple intelligences, foster innovative approaches to complex situations, and develop a robust understanding of how to engage others with “trust, concern, and respect” in a pluralistic society. For the liberal arts education pursued at Haverford, diversity is not value added; it is a core principle.

In turn, a **staff and faculty comprised of many intersecting backgrounds and identities expands the educational mission** through the multivalent experiences, insights, and approaches that they bring to their work in the curriculum and in the College.

In order to best understand the current state of diversity on campus, we administered our Climate Survey in the Fall of 2015 aiming specifically to **assess the campus community’s perceptions of issues, concerns, and undeveloped possibilities** that we had identified through individual interviews with key campus stakeholders and focus groups throughout the Spring of 2015. In our letter of invitation we pledged to compile the findings into a report to be used by the College to reinforce areas of strength and identify areas of concern in an on-going effort to ensure that all members of the community are valued and respected by one another. In addition to the survey questions, respondents were asked occasionally to provide narrative answers. What follows is a brief overview of our findings.

The following report is divided into three sections:

- Teaching and Learning
- Student Residential and Co-Curricular Experience
- Working and Thriving at Haverford

The working groups of the Task Force on Diversity and Community have delved further into issues consistent with these findings in order to inform their work on the Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion, and to strategize broadly for future work on these issues.

Introduction

Perhaps the best place to begin is to recognize just how welcoming members of the Haverford community are to diversity in their community. When asked about the acceptance of a number of historically marginalized groups on campus (which included people of color, women, people of lower-income backgrounds, transgender people, lesbian or gay people, bisexual people, queer people, differently abled people, and non-US citizens), respondents generally indicated a strong sentiment of acceptance in the community of each of those groups.

Results did indicate three areas of tension, though, displaying a notable bloc of respondents who believe that certain groups are not accepted as full members of the community. The data show that a third of all respondents felt that low-income people were not accepted as full members, and in particular, 43% of faculty and 36% of students responded as such. 27% of all respondents felt that differently abled people are not accepted as full members, which includes 34% of students, and 38% of faculty. When considering people of color, 24% of overall respondents responded that people of color are not accepted as full members; the constituent breakdown within this number bears mentioning: 37% of faculty and 29% of students are included in the 24% of overall respondents. Equally compelling in a final analysis is that 92% of all respondents said that they feel accepted at Haverford now.

Another important community issue centers around the belief that there exists on campus both marginalized and privileged groups. 84% of all respondents agreed that there are privileged groups while 73% of that same group agreed that there are marginalized groups. One respondent commented: “We are not a diverse supportive community. It is a great campus for white men (and women), but a struggle for many other races.” While another concluded that, “white (fè)male privilege is alive and well at Haverford even though we preach social justice and equality.”

I. Teaching and Learning

Evidence of the “Hidden Haverford”

First and foremost, respondents shared a number of reflections on the quality of campus life and integrity of the student relationships at Haverford. Many students wrote of their appreciation of the

educational climate and accessibility that Haverford offers, including professors' availability as well as their investment and passion in areas of study.

At the same time, many wrote of the difficulties of navigating the "hidden Haverford"—the organizing, but unwritten, set of expectations that structure interpersonal interactions and institutional processes. For example, the survey showed among students a fairly strong feeling of *uncertainty* about their freedom to express opinions about race and diversity that do not conform to those they perceive as "majority" views. Nearly 43% of students surveyed felt that they did not have the prerogative to disagree with what they take to be the majority sentiment. This perspective suggests that students perceive that there are normative opinions about race and diversity, and that students are often not in a position to express an honest opinion. One respondent sums up this concern in stating that, "[t]he hidden hierarchies... only come into view when you overreach or make a misstep."

The hidden Haverford exists not only in relation to matters of inclusion but also with respect to routine campus processes and relationships. One respondent wrote: "As a new faculty member, I've found that people have a sense that Haverford is a non-hierarchical community without explicit rules about how things are to be done. This tends to mean that there are rules, but that they remain unspoken. It can be hard to figure out how things work and what the expectations are." Another respondent mentions an interesting consequence of this situation: "people seem hesitant to take responsibility or initiative on issues or projects. For collaborative events there is often times duplication of effort due to no one central leader in a situation. There also seem to be a number of nonsensical staffing responsibilities and it is difficult at times to determine who to contact to obtain help in different situations."

Teaching in the Diverse Classroom

Respondents expressed a desire for more diverse faculty in the classroom. Fully 93% of all those surveyed (students, staff, and faculty) agreed with this sentiment. For faculty, this may help explain why close to 36% felt that they are not able to deal with the diversity of experiences and backgrounds that students bring with them into the classroom. Another strong finding in the survey showed that 64% of faculty felt that they were not well prepared to deal with differently abled students. Given the demographic reality of an increasingly broad range of student identities and backgrounds in all classrooms, this faculty-identified pedagogical concern merits attention.

Taken together, these data are noteworthy given Haverford's commitment to regularly accepting diverse students, including those of different abilities. Indeed, faculty tentativeness in the classroom around of issues of difference can be perceived as part of a broader framework. One student of color illustrated this larger context by expressing a concern with "the white normative culture that is everywhere around this campus. Even in my classes I was talking to one of my white teachers and I told her sometimes I feel like people think that I am 'less than,' as I am the only black student in the class; so whenever she calls on me there is this undue pressure to be able to perform, as I represent a huge minority."

Beyond the specific frame of racial and ethnic diversity, some students believe that the ‘academic culture’ tends not to be adaptive to the current student population. A student wrote, “Professors [are] very particular about how students should learn things, even if the student found a different method of learning the information. If it didn't match the professor's way of learning the material, then that student feels very shut out of academics at Haverford. Like I didn't think the academic[s] accommodated different types of thinking and learning.” A faculty respondent offered this pertinent response: “[I was surprised by] what appeared then to be the expectation that since I had a Ph.D. I could therefore teach. Even if it turns out that I missed something about pedagogical support for new faculty then that fact alone indicates a potential lack of emphasis in ensuring that incoming faculty are aware of such opportunities.”

II. Student Residential and Co-Curricular Experience

Identities within Haverford Student Culture

When asked to consider the intersection of personal identity and Haverford culture, 67% of students responded that they experience projected stereotypical assumptions from other students. Within that group, 82% of students of color and 87% of Black & African-American students specifically agreed with that statement. At the same time, 63% of Haverford students felt that their peers reach across perceived differences to make friends, and 75% agreed that students openly discuss differences of opinion outside of the classroom, while 86% felt their voices and opinions are respected by their peers.

A student wrote: “I didn’t understand why everyone kept saying that Haverford is ‘diverse’ because about 35% of the student body were people of color. Imagine entering Haverford from a high school that was 93% students of color. I went from being a part of the majority to being a part of the minority, yet everyone kept telling me that I should be grateful because ‘at least Haverford was better than other places.’” 56% of students shared that they often hide parts of themselves that do not seem to fit into the campus culture, and 44% of students do not feel free to express opinions about race and diversity that differ from majority opinion. One student described the College community as: “Lots of well-intentioned people who because of their privilege cannot see their prejudices and the ways systemic racism/classism permeates this institution.”

When asked about freedom to express specific personal identities, students overwhelmingly replied affirmatively regarding race (86%), ethnicity (88%), religion (85%), gender (94%), and/or nationality (92%). The only social identity showing significant tension was that of socio-economic class, which only 63% of students felt free to express. When cross-tabulated against students’ class identities, the survey revealed that lower-income, working class, and upper class students felt least comfortable expressing their socio-economic identity. One reflection on this topic contained the following: “I was surprised by my place in the world as an extremely privileged person (especially as it related to being a

white person from a relatively well-off family)—it was something that was presented to me as a college student in a different way from anything I had experienced before.”

Student Self-Governance

As the introduction to the Haverford student experience, Customs was a focus of a number of questions. Students generally agreed that Customs provided a realistic snapshot of life at Haverford (72%). However, the majority of Black & African-American students (65%), as well as Hispanic/Latino students (54%), disagreed that Customs provided a realistic snapshot. Indeed, with Customs serving as the initial introduction to Haverford, such opinions demonstrate the need for further examination of the experiences provided through Customs. As one student relayed, “Customs paints a rather idealistic view of what happens at Haverford and in reality everyone is kind of apathetic about [living] the changes and confrontations that ought to happen.” When asked if Customs presented information necessary to succeed at Haverford, 67% of students agreed. Finally, a smaller number of students (60%) agreed that they learned how to handle academic issues that may arise during their Haverford careers. There was strong student consensus (92%) that Quaker values are an important part of Haverford’s identity; yet only 75% of students agreed that those values were well explained. 91% of students agreed that the Honor Code is important in creating a climate of respect for differences. A total of 75% of student respondents felt that there is a difference between the expressed Quaker values of the College and the way members of the community interact among themselves. Nevertheless, students strongly agreed that consensus (82%) and confrontation (72%) are useful practices in making decisions or contending with conflict.

III. Working and Thriving at Haverford

The survey sought to highlight and examine the wide range of workplace environments and experiences on campus. The overwhelming majority (89%) of staff and faculty expressed that they felt their voice and opinion were respected by their fellow employees. Indeed, both staff and faculty responses reflected positive interaction within their respective groups (84 and 79%, respectively), and noted slightly less positive interaction between the two groups (74%).

Staff & faculty felt strongly (93%) that Quaker values are an important part of Haverford’s identity, although a significant portion did not feel that those values were well-explained (34% of staff and 46% of faculty). 76% of all employees felt that consensus was a useful practice in making decisions, while only 59% of faculty and 51% of staff felt that confrontation was a useful practice in contending with conflict. One employee shared, “[t]he College, from its website, looks like an idyllic community where everyone’s opinions matter and reaching consensus is paramount. That seems like it is true for student-run government and may, in fact, be true for how faculty are governed, but staff are not a part of that community.”

Upon starting at Haverford, an overwhelming number of faculty and staff felt welcomed to campus (95%), while 86% felt accepted from day one of their employment, and 76% felt equally welcomed by every member of their department. In regards to preparation for working at Haverford, 96% of employees agreed that previous experience prepared them well for their position; however, only 68% thought that Haverford did a good job of training them when they began. Anecdotally, employees noted that the complexity of the institution is not adequately communicated or explained upon arrival to the College, as there is no official onboarding/training, or orientation handbook.

The survey showed that 83% of faculty and 94% of staff felt that their co-workers respected differences in background and identity. When examining more specific identities, 76% of employees felt free to express their socio-economic/class identity, and 85% felt free to express their racial identity. When it comes to sharing opinions and viewpoints on race and diversity that may conflict with majority opinion, 66% of employees felt comfortable doing so. Many qualitative responses echoed those sentiments; however, it is important to note that a number of those responses (from staff, students, and faculty) spoke to a lack of diversity across the employee community, and/or to a staffing environment in which most employees of color occupy hourly-wage positions (most notably, those in Facilities and Dining Services).

Concerning governance and hierarchy, 88% of staff agreed that their supervisor respects the opinions of everyone in their department. 73% of employees felt that their opinions were heard by senior leadership, and 70% agreed that senior leadership understands what is important to them. One employee appreciated “[h]ow Haverford didn't function as a 'top down' organization whereby decisions were made by the President through (usually) informed decisions. I hadn't worked at an organization or institution where other sectors (e.g. faculty) had decision-making responsibilities.” It is also worth noting that 80% of employees felt that changes in senior leadership affect their job, given the extensive turnover in senior leadership in the past five years.

Sincerely, Climate Survey Working Group

Tobi Alliyu '16

Franklyn Cantor, *Special Assistant to the President*

Kevin Iglesias, *Assistant Director of Institutional Research*

Matt McKeever, *Professor of Sociology*

Terry Nance, *Member of the Corporation*

Theresa Tensuan, *Associate Dean of the College, Dean of Diversity, Access, and Community Engagement; Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs*