

In Spring 2021, Helena College's Diversity and Inclusion Committee conducted a campus climate survey for both students and employees. Below are the findings the Diversity and Inclusion Committee believes will help our campus climate and our institution's responsibility towards diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Simple Random Sample of 624 Students

162 students participated in the campus climate survey, giving our institutional response rate of 25.96%. At the time of the survey (February – March 2021), 113 students on the Airport Campus and 511 students from the Donaldson Campus were eligible to participate in the survey.

Demographics:

Students with Disabilities: 38.5% self-identified as having a mental disability or long-term mental health condition and 18% of survey participants self-identified as having a physical disability or long-term physical health condition. The Postsecondary National Policy Institute cites that in 2015-2016, 19% of enrolled undergraduates report having a disability. Of students with disabilities, 35% are full-time undergraduate students; about 65% of part-time students reported having a disability.

The committee is concerned about the number of students self-identifying as having a mental disability or long-term mental health condition. This number is indicative of larger trends in community colleges on a national level and deserves immediate institutional attention. A 2016 study published by the Wisconsin HOPE lab reported that 36% of community college students suffer from depression and 29% struggle with anxiety. The study also concluded that 88% of community colleges do not have a licensed prescriber, contracted services, or psychiatrist available to students, and 57% do not provide suicide prevention. Lastly, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 20.6% of U.S. adults experienced mental illness in 2019.

Sexual Orientation: The sample sizes for the following categories in the sexual orientation demographic questions were too low to report: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual, Pansexual, Questioning. The committee combined these variables into the bucket variable of LGB+ which reflects 25% of survey participants. According to the Postsecondary National Policy Institute as of 2016, 10% of undergraduates identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, asexual, pansexual or questioning.

Transgender, Gender Queer/Gender Non-Conforming/Nonbinary: The sample sizes for the following categories in the gender and transgender demographic questions were too low to report: Transgender, Gender Queer/Gender Non-Conforming/Nonbinary. The committee combined these variables into the bucket variable of Gender+ which reflects 6% of the survey participants. UCLA's Williams Institute finds that 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender.

Race: The sample sizes for the following categories in the race demographic questions were too low to report: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The committee combined these variables in addition to those who chose one of these options + white into the bucket variable of Person of Color/Multiracial which reflects 10% of the survey participants.

1. Feeling safe, connected, and welcomed at Helena College.

98% of student respondents feel safe at HC and over 85% believe that Helena College faculty and staff are genuinely concerned about student welfare. 29% of participants do not feel connected to people at this school and 30% indicated that it is difficult to find people on campus who understand them.

2. Harassment Policy and Procedures

The D&I Committee is worried about with the number of students who are unsure of Helena Colleges harassment and discrimination policies. As evident in Table 1, over 20% of surveyed students are uncertain on where to find policies, unclear on procedures, and do not know how to find support when it comes to issues of harassment and discrimination.

Table 1:

#	Field	Agree	Disagree	Total
1	I know how to report an incident of harassment or discrimination to the school.	77.78% 119	22.22% 34	153
2	If a friend or I experienced harassment or discrimination, I would know where to go to get help.	76.47% 117	23.53% 36	153
3	I know where I can access my school's harassment and discrimination policy.	78.43% 120	21.57% 33	153
4	I understand my school's formal procedures to address complaints of harassment or discrimination.	76.47% 117	23.53% 36	153
5	I am confident my school would administer the formal procedures to fairly address reports of harassment or discrimination.	89.47% 136	10.53% 16	152

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

3. Commitments to Diversity

80% - 90% of student respondents agree that the communities they belong to are adequately represented in college communications, curriculum, events, faculty, staff, student organizations, student body. Meanwhile, 64% – 74% of students of color/multiracial participants and 64% - 84% of LGB+ participants agreed to the same matrix of questions. And overall, 24% of participants indicate that the communities they belong to are missing completely from the school environment.

23% of respondents do not agree that there are enough opportunities on campus to gain knowledge about their cultural community and 21% do not feel like Helena College provides enough programming to promote meaningful interactions between students from different cultures. And 60% of students feel like most students at HC have values and attitudes different from their own.

The committee looked at how various sub-groups on our campus answered questions related to diversity and inclusion: student age, sexual orientation, gender, race, first-generation status, disabilities, and campus affiliation. Areas of interest to the committee and data that was statistically significant are expressed in Table 2.

Table 2:

I feel like my school provides enough programs that promote meaningful interactions between students from different cultures.	Agree	Disagree	Most students at this school have values and attitudes different from my own.	Agree	Disagree
Overall Student Respondents	79%	21%	Overall Student Respondents	60%	40%
White Respondents	84%	16%	White Respondents	58%	42%
Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	64%	36%	Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	88%	14%
LGB+	64%	36%			
Straight	85%	15%			
I have been singled out in class because of my identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religious affiliation, etc.).	Agree	Disagree	I feel that the communities I belong to are missing completely from my school environment.	Agree	Disagree
Overall Student Respondents	9%	91%	Overall Student Respondents		
Airport Campus Respondents	23%	77%	Airport Campus Respondents	42%	58%
Donaldson Campus Respondents	6%	94%	Donaldson Campus Respondents	20%	80%
			White Respondents	22%	78%
			Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	46%	54%

4. Educational and Institutional Values

80% - 90% of student respondents agree that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in the curriculum, in courses, by faculty, school leadership, in student organizations, school communications, and in the institution’s mission. Areas of interest to the committee and data that was statistically significant are expressed in Table 3.

Table 3

Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in the curriculum?	Agree	Disagree	Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in student organizations?	Agree	Disagree
Overall Student Respondents	80%	20%	Overall Student Respondents	84%	16%
White Respondents	85%	15%	Gender+	50%	50%
Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	64%	36%			
LGB+	67%	29%	Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in class?	Agree	Disagree
Straight	85%	15%	Overall Student Respondents	85%	15%
Gender+	50%	50%			
Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in school communications?	Agree	Disagree	Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed by school leadership?	Agree	Disagree
Overall Student Respondents	85%	15%	Overall Student Respondents	85%	15%
White Respondents	89%	11%	White Respondents	88%	12%
Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	64%	36%	Persons of Color/Multiracial Respondents	71%	29%
Gender+	50%	50%	Gender+	50%	50%
Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed in the school mission?	Agree	Disagree			
Gender+	50%	50%			

5. Rate the climate on campus for various sub-communities.

Table 4 corresponds to the survey question that asks participants to rate the climate on campus for various sub-communities. More than 80% of respondents rated that Helena College is a ‘respectful’ place for veterans and 1st generation students.

Sub-groups in which more than 5% of respondents rated a ‘disrespectful’ campus climate are for transgender individuals (5%), political conservatives (5.5%), and political liberals (8%). ‘Unsure’ responses for all groups identified in the question matrix ranges from 12% - 33%, with socioeconomically disenfranchised, political

liberals, political conservatives, transgender, those from Christian religions, those from non-Christian religions above 25%.

Table 4:

#	Field	Respectful	Disrespectful	Unsure	Total
1	Affected by learning disabilities (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)	73.29%	1.86%	24.84%	161
2	Affected by mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression)	72.05%	4.35%	23.60%	161
3	Affected by physical disabilities	75.63%	1.88%	22.50%	160
4	From non-Christian religions	63.98%	3.11%	32.92%	161
5	From Christian religions	70.00%	2.50%	27.50%	160
6	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, questioning	75.16%	1.86%	22.98%	161
7	Transgender	68.75%	5.00%	26.25%	160
8	Veterans	81.99%	0.62%	17.39%	161
9	Non-traditional students (25 years and older)	85.09%	2.48%	12.42%	161
10	Politically conservative	64.60%	5.59%	29.81%	161
11	Politically liberal	63.35%	8.07%	28.57%	161
12	Socioeconomically disadvantaged	69.57%	4.35%	26.09%	161
13	1st Generation (neither of your parents/guardians earned a bachelor's degree by the time you reached 18 or attended college)	78.26%	0.00%	21.74%	161

Showing rows 1 - 13 of 13

In Spring 2021, Helena College's Diversity and Inclusion Committee conducted a campus climate survey for both students and employees. Below are the findings the Diversity and Inclusion Committee believes will help our campus climate and our institution's responsibility towards diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Simple Random Sample of 127 Employees

80 out of 127 employees participated in the campus climate survey, giving our institutional response rate of 62.99%. Participants included 14 contract professionals, 33 full-time classified staff, 11 temporary staff, 29 full-time faculty, and 40 adjuncts.

New Variables: Due to the low response rate for racial demographics, new variables were created in order to examine this sub-group:

- **Race** variables (bucketed from the data below):
 - Person of Color/Multiracial (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and those that choose one of these option + white)
 - White
 - Uncategorized (Choose Not to Answer)

1. Feeling safe, connected, and welcomed at Helena College.

97% of employee respondents feel safe at HC and 88% believe that employees are genuinely concerned about their welfare. However, 40% of respondents feel like they need to hide aspects of their identity to fit in. Additionally, 83% of employee respondents feel comfortable sharing their own perspectives and experiences at work, while 28% do not agree that all employees feel welcome and supported at this school, regardless of background or identity. Of note, 24% of respondents have heard faculty express stereotypes based on identity.

2. Harassment Policy and Procedures

Over 90% of respondents know how report an incident of harassment and know where to go for help should they or a colleague experience harassment; yet almost 30% of respondents (28.77%) do not understand Helena College's formal procedures to address harassment and 26% lack confidence in the college's ability to administer formal procedures to fairly address reports of harassment or discrimination.

The committee looked at how various sub-groups on our campus answered this matrix of questions: employee age, role, length of employment, gender, disabilities, and race. Areas of interest to the committee and data that was statistically significant are expressed in Table 1.

Table 1:

I do NOT know how to report an incident of harassment or discrimination to the school.	
Full-Time Faculty	19%
Person of Color/Multiracial	33%
If a colleague or I experienced harassment or discrimination, I would NOT know where to go to get help.	
Full-Time Faculty	19%
I do NOT know where I can access Helena College's harassment and discrimination policy.	
Full-Time Faculty	19%
Contract Professionals	20%
Person of Color/Multiracial	33%
I do NOT understand Helena College's formal procedures to address complaints of harassment or discrimination.	
Full-Time Classified Staff	21%
Contract Professionals	30%
Full-Time Faculty	28%
Self-Identified Mental Disability or Long-Term Mental Health Condition	33%
Person of Color/Multiracial	68%
Lacks confidence that Helena College would administer the formal procedures to fairly address reports of harassment or discrimination.	
Full-Time Classified Staff	22%
Contract Professionals	40%
Full-Time Faculty	24%
Self-Identified Mental Disability or Long-Term Mental Health Condition	46%

3. In the last year, have you seriously considered leaving this this place of employment?

42% of employee respondents indicated that they have seriously considered leaving Helena College as a place of employment. The committee looked at how various sub-groups on our campus answered this question: employee age, role, length of employment, gender, disabilities, and race. Of concern to the committee is that

those who self-identified as having a mental disability or long-term mental health condition, 69% of have seriously considered leaving Helena College in the last year.

The committee is highly troubled that almost 50% of employees have considered leaving Helena College in the past year and we recommend that HR conducts interviews or focus groups, to learn more about the validity of the survey to help the institution understand employee sentiments.

4. Commitments to Diversity

84% of respondents agree that school leaders are visibly committed to fostering respect for diversity on campus and 92% agree that their department/division is accountable for diversity and inclusion progress. Interestingly, only 75% agree that ‘Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion’ is a core value of our institution’s mission. 25% of respondents do not agree that diversity is fully embrace within the campus culture, and only 50% agree that the college has a way to effectively measure our diversity and inclusion success.

42% surveyed indicate that they have not received adequate diversity training to engage with students and employees on campus and over 16% would like more inter-group discussion and diversity related workshops.

5. Educational Values

83% of survey participants agree that an important educational goal is to engage students in civil discourse around controversial issues. Over 90% of surveyed agree that an important educational goal is to teach student tolerance and respect for different beliefs.

6. Rate the climate on campus for various sub-communities.

Table 2 corresponds to the survey question that asks participants to rate the climate on campus for various sub-communities. More than 80% of respondents rated that Helena College is a ‘respectful’ place for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, for veterans, non-traditional students, socioeconomically disadvantaged people, and 1st generation.

Sub-groups in which less than 80% of respondents rated a ‘respectful’ campus climate are for people from non-Christian religions, people from Christian religions, LGB+, transgender, political conservatives, and political liberals. Respondents did not clearly indicate that the campus climate is ‘disrespectful’ to these groups, rather the ‘unsure’ response rate was near or over 20% for these categories. In a separate question on the survey, 24% of respondents did not agree that all students feel welcome and supported at Helena College, regardless of background or identity.

Areas of concern:

32% of respondents indicated that they are ‘unsure’ of the campus climate for transgender individuals, the highest percentage in that rating category. 7% of respondents indicated that they are uncomfortable working with an openly transgender man, transgender woman, or non-binary individual, which is the highest ‘uncomfortable’ rating for individuals listed in this question (race/ethnicity different from your own, a person with a physical disability, personal affected by mental health, openly gay or bisexual

man/woman, person with religious beliefs different from your own, person from a different socioeconomic background, a person in a different age group, and a veteran). Lastly, 41% of respondents disagree that gender diversity should be more strongly reflected in the curriculum.

Table 2:

#	Field	Respectful	Disrespectful	Unsure
1	Affected by learning disabilities (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)	89.19%	1.35%	9.46%
2	Affected by mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression)	85.14%	5.41%	9.46%
3	Affected by physical disabilities	90.54%	2.70%	6.76%
4	From non-Christian religions	70.27%	5.41%	24.32%
5	From Christian religions	78.38%	4.05%	17.57%
6	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, questioning	75.34%	5.48%	19.18%
7	Transgender	59.46%	8.11%	32.43%
8	Veterans	93.06%	0.00%	6.94%
9	Non-traditional students (25 years and older)	94.52%	4.11%	1.37%
10	Politically conservative	68.49%	10.96%	20.55%
11	Politically liberal	75.34%	4.11%	20.55%
12	Socioeconomically disadvantaged	83.33%	6.94%	9.72%
13	1st Generation (neither parents/guardians earned a bachelor's degree by the time you reached 18 or attended college)	95.89%	1.37%	2.74%

Diversity and Inclusion Committee's DEI Institutional Recommendations

High Priority Institutional Recommendations:

1. Build campus confidence in College's harassment and discrimination procedures (item #2 in both student and employee summary reports). See Culture of Respect Grant for prioritizing initiatives.
2. Prioritize wellness for both students and employees. Survey demographics conclude that 17.5% of employee respondents and 39.51% of student respondents self-identify as having a mental health disability. See Culture of Respect Grant for prioritizing proposals.
3. HR interviews or focus groups with employees to gather more data on employee satisfaction (item #3 in employee summary report).

Institutional Recommendations:

4. Create a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council, reflective of the broader representation of campus stakeholders to develop and implement an institutional diversity and inclusion action plan with benchmarking activities and measurable outcomes. The advisory council will meet 2-3 times each semester during the 2021-2022 academic year. The DEI action plan will work to create an inclusive campus climate to support the retention and success of all students and employees and integrate DEI within all aspects of the institution.

The Institutional Diversity Officer (IDO) will be primarily responsible for monitoring implementation and progress of the college's diversity action plan. However, the work of inclusive excellence necessarily involves all college units, departments, students, staff, faculty, and board members. This action plan should be organized around goals that require all college stakeholders to take responsibility for implementing Helena College's vision for inclusive excellence.

The framework for the DEI strategic plan is recommended to be organized around nine categories that are essential to inclusive and equity practices: 1) public commitment, 2) leadership, 3) data, 4) procedures, 5) curriculum, 6) student success interventions and treatment, 7) faculty and staff hiring, retention, promotion, and rewards, 8) professional development, and 9) community engagement.

Recommended members for the council:

- Institutional Diversity Officer
- A Cabinet Member that can influence college policies and procedures (Per recommendation #5, install Institutional Diversity Officer as a member of the Dean's Cabinet allowing the IDO to operate as the cabinet representative)
- Community member affiliated with Helena College (foundation member, alumni, etc.)
- Faculty representation from each of the following areas: general education, trades, and nursing
- Staff representation from each of the following areas: advising, enrollment, compliance/financial aid, IT, facilities
- Director of Student Life
- Director of Marketing and Communication
- HR General Specialist
- Director of Retention Initiatives
- Student representation

Diversity and Inclusion Committee's DEI Institutional Recommendations

5. Install Institutional Diversity Officer as a member of Dean's Cabinet. Per growing evidence and professional standards this role functions most effectively when able to coordinate and ensure from the vantage point where campus-wide decision-making processes take place to ensure oversight of all DEI work, programs, and activities. (Association of American Colleges & Universities, National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education)
6. IDO and HR General Specialist collaboration on recruitment and hiring best practices with a specific focus on:
 - Actively recruiting, retaining, and advancing a diverse community of faculty and staff with a special emphasis on underrepresented groups.
 - Developing and adopting innovative best practices to improve recruitment of employees from underrepresented groups.
 - Developing recruiting partnerships with institutions and organizations serving underrepresented communities to develop hiring pipelines.
 - Developing best practices for providing information to applicants during the search process regarding Helena College's commitment to advancing inclusive excellence.
7. Provide transparent data on diversity related demographics and outcomes. Monitor students and staff retention and advancement by gender, race, age, and ethnicity (and other minoritized groups as possible) and take necessary steps to achieve equity.
8. Evaluate and update centralized websites to ensure diverse representation and communicate a shared understanding of diversity, inclusion, and equity.
9. Departmental updates on current and/or future DEI efforts in preparation for the creation of the DEI strategic plan. Data can be pulled from departmental work plans but if data is not available additional information will be requested.
10. Communicate leadership's dedication to DEI through clear and consistent messaging across platforms and audiences.