

2007 Kansas State University Community and Climate Survey



In the Spring of 2007 the *Kansas State University (K-State) Community and Climate Survey* was distributed to all faculty to assess their perceptions of the environment in which they work and live. “Climate” was defined as attitudes, behaviors, and standards concerning the access to, inclusion of, and level of respect for, individual and group needs, abilities, and potential. The development of the survey was guided by K-State’s *Principles of Community*; these principles help frame the climate at K-State and affirm collective expectations for the campus community. This executive summary presents findings from the survey.¹ It is organized into five sections: I. Demographics, II. Overall Satisfaction with K-State Climate, III. Current Work Environment, IV. Current Institutional Environment, and V. Professional Advancement.

Survey Demographics

A total of 612 K-State faculty responded to the *2007 K-State Community and Climate Survey* for a 48.5% response rate. Of the 612 respondents, 573 (93.6%) completed the entire survey. Respondent demographics were similar to the K-State faculty population:

- 207 were female (34% vs. 31% in the population)
- 394 were male (64% vs. 69% in the population)
- 518 were White (85% vs. 81% in the population)
- 85 were Non-White (14% vs. 19% in the population²)
- 391 were tenured (64% vs. 57% in the population)
- 125 were tenure-track (20% vs. 20% in the population)
- 62 were non-tenure track (10% vs. 23% in the population)

Respondents were also similar to the population by College:

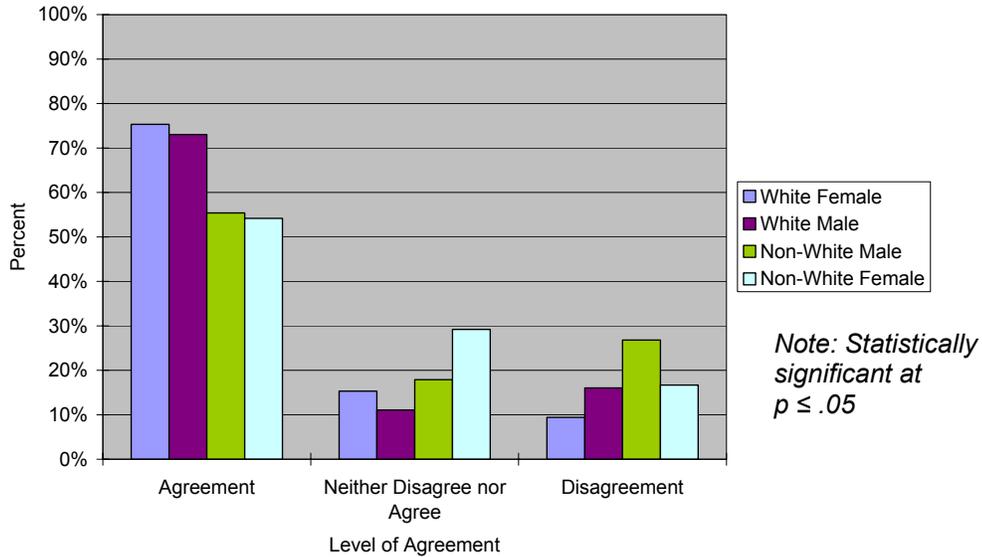
- 80 in Agriculture (13% vs. 17% in the population)
- 16 in Architecture, Planning, and Design (3% vs. 5% in the population)
- 168 in Arts and Science (28% vs. 36% in the population)
- 25 in Business (4% vs. 4% in the population)
- 37 in Education (6% vs. 6% in the population)
- 55 in Engineering (9% vs. 10% in the population)
- 36 in Human Ecology (6% vs. 6% in the population)
- 26 in Technology and Aviation (4% vs. 4% in the population)
- 31 in Veterinary Medicine (5% vs. 8% in the population)

Note: Not all respondents reported their college affiliation, (n=137). In addition, all percentages are rounded.

Overall Satisfaction with K-State Climate

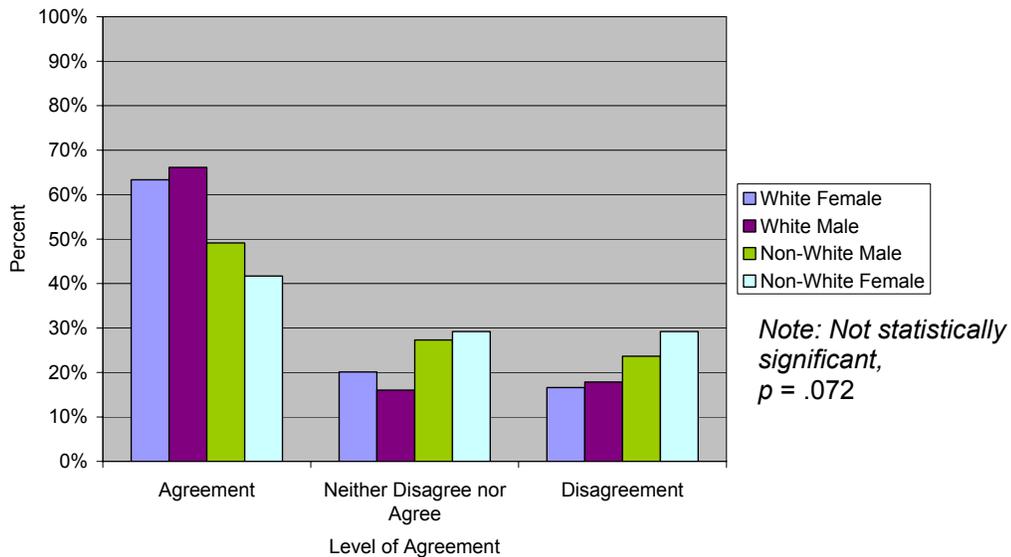
Survey respondents were asked to address statements related to satisfaction with their jobs and their career progression at the university.

I Am Satisfied With My Job at the University



A test of significance³ indicated that more White faculty respondents (both men and women) reported being satisfied with their jobs than Non-White faculty respondents. There were no significant differences in satisfaction for men as compared to women.

I Am Satisfied With the Way My Career Has Progressed at the University



A test of significance indicated that all gender/ethnicity groups responded similarly within their respective groups in regard to their career progression; more than 40% of all faculty groups indicated satisfaction with their career progression.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to provide a more detailed picture of job satisfaction and career progression satisfaction. Two analyses were conducted; the first with job satisfaction as the

dependent variable and the second with career progression satisfaction as the dependent variable. In the first step of both models, variables representing respondents' gender/ethnicity group were entered (e.g., White female) to control for their predictability on the dependent variable. For the second step, constructs that were significantly correlated and meaningful⁴ to both areas of satisfaction were included (Financial Aspects of the Hiring Process, Qualitative Aspects of the Hiring Process, Current Work Environment, Attitudes toward the Tenure Process, Achieving Balance, On-Campus Support, Discrimination by Category).⁵

Job satisfaction had four significant predictors: Satisfaction with Qualitative Aspects of the Hiring Process, Satisfaction with Current Work Environment, Positive Attitudes toward the Tenure Process, and Success in Achieving Work/Life Balance. Career progression satisfaction had three significant predictors: Satisfaction with Current Work Environment, Positive Attitudes toward the Tenure Process, and Success in Achieving Work/Life Balance.

"I appreciate the Department Chair's collaborative approach to our work, and his openness to new ideas and new ways of doing business. The positive attitude of the others in the department make this a great place to practice our profession."

When given an opportunity to list key factors that influenced satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction with their jobs at the university, more respondents listed areas of dissatisfaction than satisfaction (284 vs. 110). Below is a summary of themes which emerged:

Dissatisfaction: work environment (e.g., heavy research/teaching/service/administrative loads); salary (e.g., lower salaries than peer institutions, inequities within and between departments); departmental issues (e.g., low morale); lack of resources; and considering other employment.

"Salary compression and inversion is quite common in the various faculty ranks. This is one of the critical issues that needs to be addressed in the future."

Satisfaction: overall gratification with the university; work environment (e.g., faculty are collegial/collaborative/supportive); reward and recognition structure; and colleagues and students.

Current Work Environment

The survey asked about faculty members' attitudes toward their current work environment. Across most dimensions White faculty respondents indicated positive aspects more frequently than did Non-White faculty respondents. There were few differences by rank. Faculty at every rank were positive about their work environment, though University Distinguished Professors were particularly so.

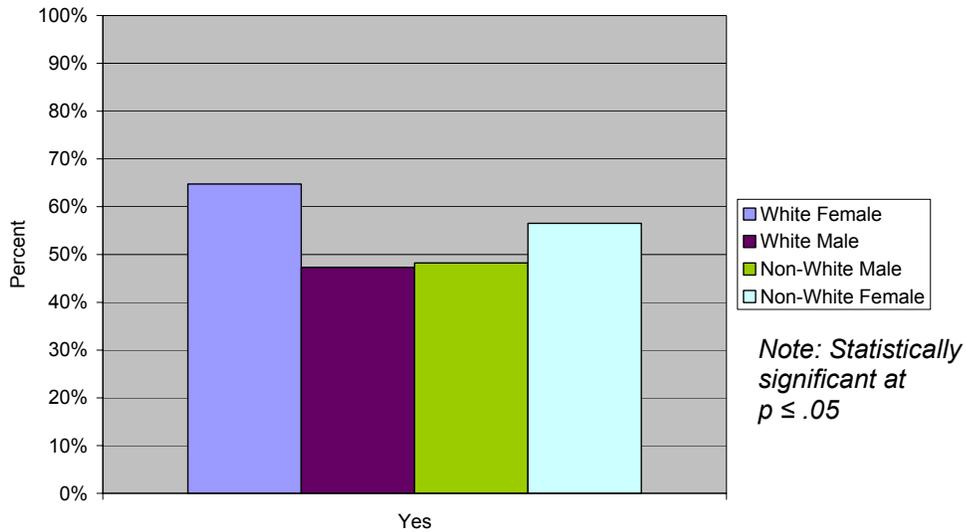
The survey also addressed respondents' perceptions of types of workloads (e.g., teaching, advising, service, upper-level grad courses, research requirements, extension service, and committee work) in comparison to colleagues with similar appointments. Across the following four types of workloads (advising, graduate courses, research, and committee work), tenured faculty respondents perceived having a higher workload than tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty respondents.

Other questions addressed whether faculty had access to various resources (e.g., teaching assistant support, release time, staff support), as well as perceptions of the quality of their office and lab space. Results showed that there were no significant differences in perceptions about access to resources among the faculty ranks. Faculty with both office space and lab space reported being significantly more satisfied with their office space than their lab space.

On issues related to mentorship, more female faculty respondents reported having had an individual who assisted them in career development than did male faculty respondents. Of the respondents who had mentors, 75% or more reported their mentors 1) served as a role model, 2) provided advice about promotions, and 3) encouraged professional development.

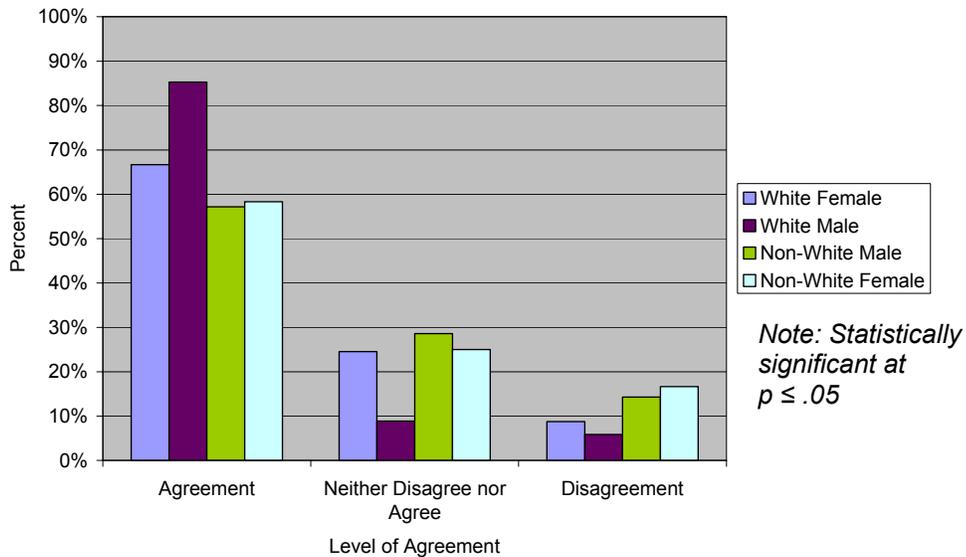
"I was assigned two faculty mentors within my department - one has been awesome. I have also met someone outside the department who has been a great mentor, particularly regarding my research program."

Have you had or do you currently have individuals at this university who assist you in your career development?



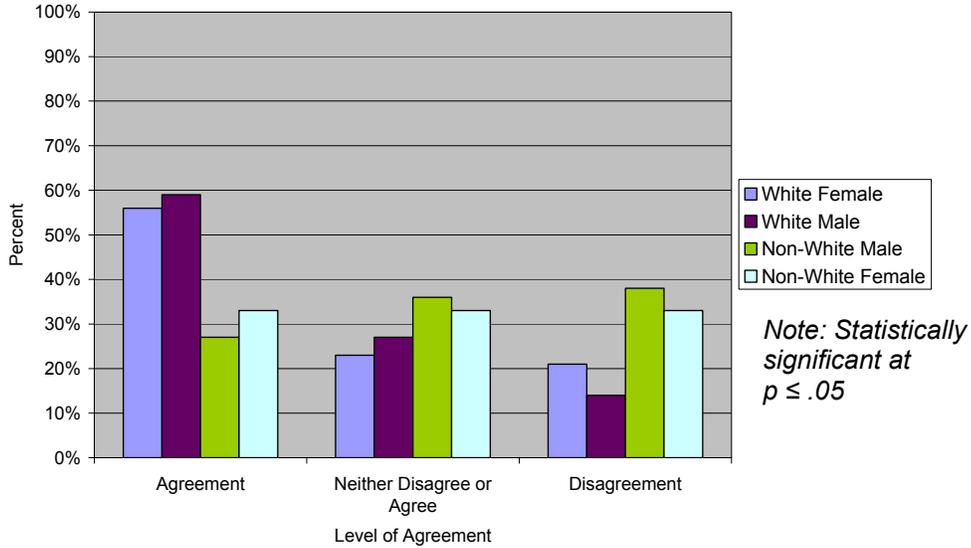
The survey also addressed faculty perceptions of efforts in their departments to increase gender and racial diversity among faculty.

My Department has Actively Recruited Women Faculty



White male faculty were more likely than any other respondent group to perceive that their departments actively recruit women faculty.

My Department has Actively Recruited Faculty of Color

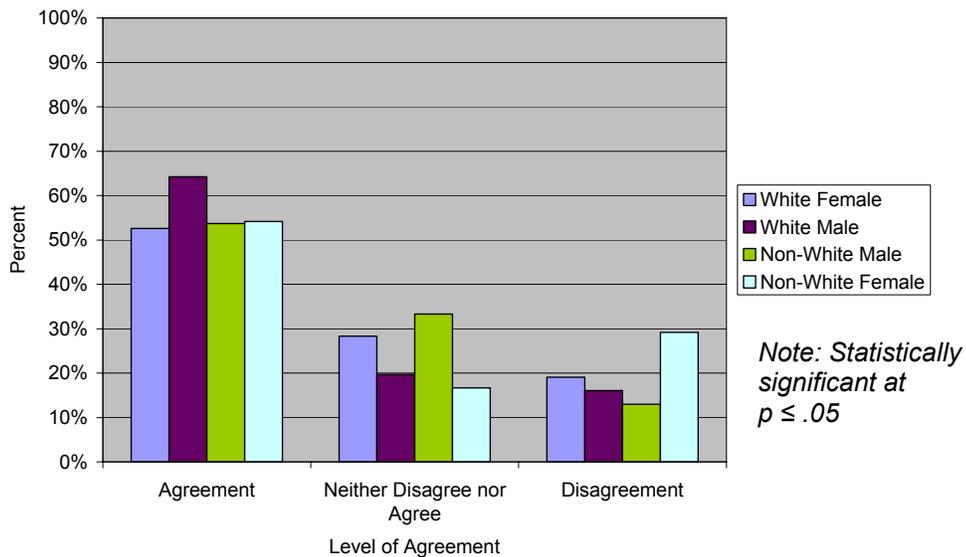


On efforts to achieve racial diversity, White faculty (both men and women) were significantly more likely than Non-White faculty to agree that their departments had actively recruited faculty of color.

Current Institutional Environment

The survey examined the extent to which the institution creates and preserves a climate that adheres to the *Principles of Community* and offers a positive working environment. Questions asked about work-life conflict; specifically the ease of achieving balance between work and personal life and the quantity and quality of on-campus support. Correlation analyses indicated that as work-life conflict increased, the ease of achieving balance decreased, and as on-campus support increased, the ease of achieving balance increased.

I am Able to Balance My Professional and Personal Life



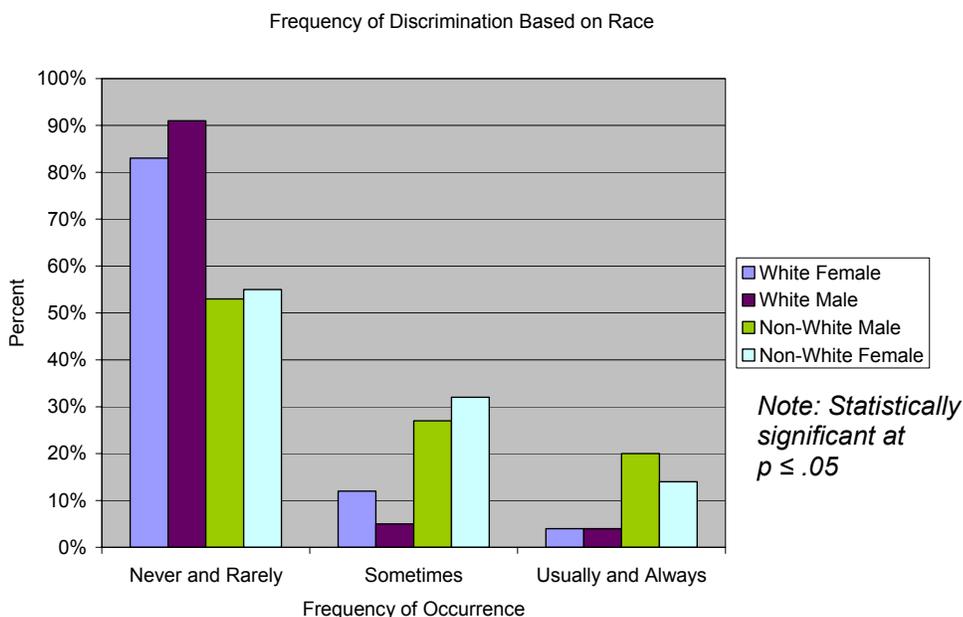
On questions about work/family balance, White male faculty were more likely than any other respondent group to agree that they were able to balance their professional and personal lives.

The survey addressed items related to dual career couples. Correlations between items showed that as partner/spouse job satisfaction increased, respondents were significantly less likely to consider leaving the university to enhance their partner/spouses' career opportunities.

When asked to elaborate or offer additional thoughts about campus climate issues or ways that K-State might improve, work/life balance issues emerged as central, such as the need for more family-friendly policies, childcare, the challenge of balancing teaching/service/research loads, and difficulties with finding acceptable positions for potential spousal hires.

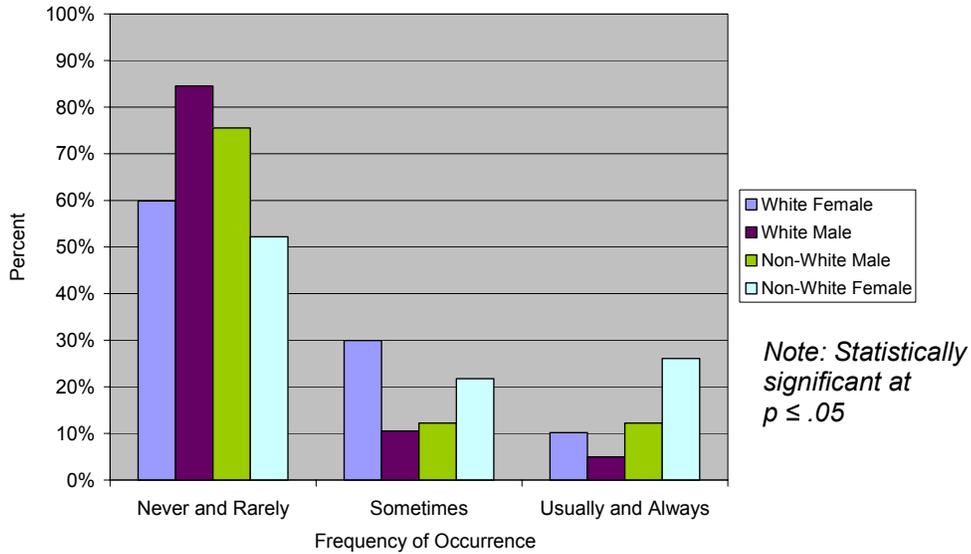
"I think it is unacceptable that the University cannot do more to accommodate spousal hires when the spouses are looking for academic positions."

Several survey items addressed the frequency of discriminatory behavior based on categories outlined in the institution's *Principles of Community*. On racial discrimination, higher proportions of Non-White faculty reported that discrimination based on ethnicity occurs more frequently (i.e., "Usually" or "Always" or "Sometimes") than did White faculty.



On gender discrimination, there were differences by both sex and race. Men were more likely than women to report that gender discrimination occurs "rarely or never." White faculty were also more likely than Non-White faculty to report that gender discrimination occurs "rarely or never."

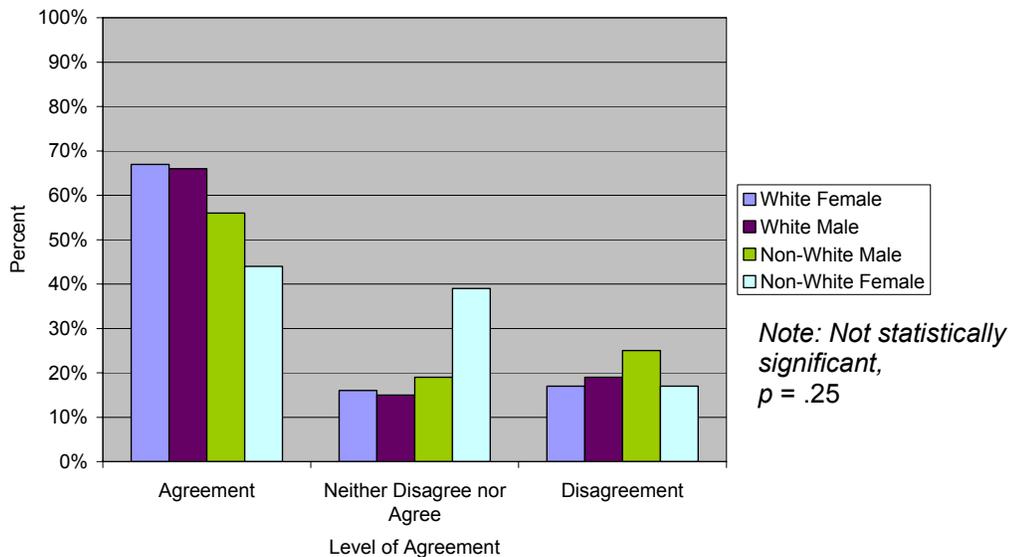
Frequency of Discrimination Based on Gender



Professional Advancement

Respondents were asked to respond to statements about their most recent experience with the tenure or promotion process.

Satisfaction with Tenure Process Overall



When asked if they were satisfied with the tenure/promotion process overall, statistical results indicated similar amounts of agreement among the race/ethnicity groups. As the graph indicates, fewer Non-White women faculty respondents were satisfied with the process overall. However, given the small number of women in this group the results were not statistically significant.

The survey included questions pertaining to respondents' retrospective and current attitudes toward aspects of the hiring process. There were no significant differences in these attitudes based on sex or race; however, respondents overall reported having more positive attitudes toward qualitative aspects of

the hiring process (e.g., faculty in the department made me feel welcome) than the financial aspects of the hiring process (e.g., I was satisfied with my start up package).

Summary

This summary provides the highlights from the *2007 K-State Community and Climate Survey*. These highlights include results from only the survey respondents and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of all K-State faculty.

In general, respondents were fairly positive about the community and climate at K-State. This is evidenced by respondents' overall satisfaction with their job and career progression, access to resources, and positive attitudes toward the hiring and tenure/promotion processes. Areas of concern included attitudes toward current work environment, inadequate recruitment of female faculty and faculty of color, issues related to dual career hires, perception of low faculty salaries, and the challenges of balancing professional and personal life. Comments made on the survey suggested that faculty were appreciative of the opportunity the survey provided them to express their opinions and perceptions of the climate of K-State.

"Thanks for the opportunity to respond. I have not been in academia long enough to really understand the dynamics of the university. But as I rise in the academic ranks, it seems to me that it is the responsibility of the faculty to contribute to improvements in the campus climate and the institutional environment. It seems to me that we have a long way to go, but I am excited about contributing to making our institution an increasingly relevant, responsive and respectful player in serving the needs of Kansas and the world."

Notes

¹ All reported findings were statistically significant ($p \leq .05$), unless otherwise indicated. Quotations that illustrate findings are from the non-required open-ended questions in the survey.

² *Non-White* included Asian (9.3%), Black (1.8%), Hispanic (2.5%), and Native American (0.2%).

³ Statistical tests for significance used in this report included chi-square, ANOVA, multiple regression, logistic regression, and correlation analyses.

⁴ Meaningful correlations were defined as $r > .20$.

⁵ Overall, the predictors accounted for 43.1% of the variance for job satisfaction and 38.4% of the variance for career progression satisfaction.