



**Rankin & Associates
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Assessment · Planning · Intervention

New Jersey Institute of Technology

Learning, Living, and Working Climate Assessment

Executive Summary

April 2022

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History of the Project

This report provides the findings from the survey entitled “*Learning, Living, and Working Climate Assessment*,” conducted in fall 2021 at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). In late 2020, NJIT contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting, LLC (R&A) to conduct an institution-wide study. Twenty-three NJIT faculty, staff, students, and administrators formed the Campus Climate Working Group (CCWG), which worked with R&A to develop the survey instrument and promote the survey’s administration. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NJIT has worked to ensure the safety and well-being of all community members with targeted policies and processes that allowed the return to in-person activities in fall 2021.

All NJIT faculty, staff, and students were encouraged to complete the survey. Responses to the multiple-choice format survey items were analyzed for statistical differences based on various demographic categories decided upon by the CCWG.¹ Where sample sizes were small, some responses choices were combined into larger categories to make comparisons between groups and to ensure respondents’ confidentiality. For example, the survey offered nine response choices for the question asking respondents about their racial/ethnic identity.² To run analyses and maintain respondents’ confidentiality, the CSWG collapsed some response choices to create seven categories: Asian/Asian American, Black, Indigenous/Pacific Islander (IPI), Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African (MENA), Multiracial, and White.

In addition to multiple-choice survey items, several open-ended questions provided respondents with opportunities to describe their experiences at NJIT. Comments were solicited to give “voice” to the quantitative findings and to highlight the areas of concern that might have been overlooked owing to the small number of survey responses from historically underrepresented populations. For this reason, some qualitative comments may not seem aligned with the

¹ For Student respondents, the CCWG selected position status, gender identity, racial identity, first-generation/low-income status, sexual identity, and religious/spiritual identity. For Faculty and Staff respondents, the CCWG chose position status, gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, disability status, and years of NJIT employment. Additionally, NJIT will receive the dataset in spring 2022, allowing the university to further explore the data to better understand community members’ experiences and, ultimately, improve the campus climate.

² Response choices were Alaska Native/American Indian/Native American/Indigenous, Asian/Asian American, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx, Middle Eastern/North African, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, White/European American, and a racial/ethnic identity not listed here.

quantitative findings while others repeat what the quantitative findings note; all are important data.

One thousand eight hundred sixty (1,860) surveys were returned for a 14% overall response rate. Table 1 provides the percentages of survey respondents—based on selected demographic characteristics—that comprised the sample. Of the respondents, 67% ($n = 1,243$) of the sample were Undergraduate Students, 10% ($n = 178$) were Graduate/Professional Students and Post-Doctoral Scholars/Fellows (Graduate Student/Post-Docs), 6% ($n = 116$) were Faculty/Instructional Staff members, and 17% ($n = 323$) were Staff members. Table 2 in the full report shows how the sample compares to NJIT’s population data.

Table 1. NJIT Sample Demographics

| Characteristic | Group | <i>n</i> | % of Sample |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Position status | Undergraduate Student | 1,243 | 66.8 |
| | Graduate Student/Post-Doc | 178 | 9.4 |
| | Faculty/Instructional Staff | 116 | 6.3 |
| | Staff | 323 | 17.4 |
| Gender identity | Women | 766 | 41.2 |
| | Men | 1,016 | 54.6 |
| | Trans-spectrum/Another | 38 | 2.0 |
| | Missing | 40 | 2.2 |
| Racial/ethnic identity | Asian/Asian American | 498 | 26.8 |
| | Black/African American/African | 192 | 10.3 |
| | Indigenous and Pacific Islander | 6 | 0.3 |
| | Latinx/Hispanic | 279 | 15.0 |
| | Middle Easter/North African | 93 | 5.0 |
| | Multiracial | 149 | 8.0 |
| | White/European American | 541 | 29.1 |
| Missing/Another/Unknown | 102 | 5.5 | |

Table 1. NJIT Sample Demographics

| Characteristic | Group | <i>n</i> | % of Sample |
|--|---|----------|-------------|
| Sexual identity | Queer-spectrum | 139 | 7.5 |
| | Asexual | 61 | 3.3 |
| | Bisexual | 125 | 6.7 |
| | Heterosexual | 1,343 | 72.2 |
| | Missing/Another | 192 | 10.3 |
| Disability status (all respondents) | Single Disability | 122 | 6.6 |
| | No Disability | 1,634 | 87.8 |
| | Multiple Disabilities | 72 | 3.9 |
| | *Missing/Unknown | 32 | 1.7 |
| Disability status (employees only) | One or More Disabilities | 45 | 10.3 |
| | No Disability | 384 | 87.5 |
| | Missing | 10 | 2.3 |
| Religious/spiritual affiliation | Christian Affiliation | 728 | 39.1 |
| | Non-Christian Affiliation (<i>n</i> ≥ 10) responses | 408 | 21.9 |
| | <i>Hindu</i> | 208 | 11.2 |
| | <i>Muslim</i> | 143 | 7.7 |
| | <i>Jewish</i> | 59 | 3.2 |
| | <i>Buddhist</i> | 20 | 1.1 |
| | <i>Sikh</i> | 16 | 0.9 |
| | <i>Secular Humanist</i> | 10 | 0.5 |
| | Multiple Affiliations | 95 | 5.1 |
| | No Affiliation | 505 | 27.2 |
| Missing | 124 | 6.7 | |

Note: The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

*210 respondents indicated that they had a condition/disability that influences their learning, living, or working activities. Of those respondents, 16 did not complete the follow-up question asking which conditions they had that affected their learning, living, or working activities and we recoded as “Unknown” in the collapsed categories for the disability variable.

Following are the highlighted findings from the report. More information is available for each finding in the full narrative. Overall, the findings both parallel the findings of other climate studies and the experiences offered in the literature of historically excluded constituent groups.³

³ Guiffrida et al. (2008); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); S. R. Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles et al. (2006); Silverschanz et al. (2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

Comfort With Campus, Workplace, and Classroom Climate at NJIT

Research on campus climate⁴ generally has focused on the experiences of faculty, staff, and students associated with historically underserved social/community/affinity groups (e.g., women, People of Color, people with disabilities, first-generation and/or low-income students, queer-spectrum and/or trans-spectrum individuals, and veterans).⁵ Several of these groups at NJIT indicated on the survey that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, their workplace, and their classrooms.

Most survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the overall climate at NJIT (70%, $n = 1,299$, p. 68), with the climate in their academic units (61%, $n = 71$, p. 68), with the climate in their divisions (65%, $n = 204$, p. 68), with the climate regarding day-to-day interactions in their work unit (75%, $n = 240$, p. 68), and with the classroom climate at NJIT (69%, $n = 1,050$, p. 69). However, Student respondents and Staff respondents were significantly more “comfortable” with the overall environment than were Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (p. 69). In addition, differences emerged by gender identity. Men respondents were significantly more comfortable with the overall NJIT climate than were Women respondents (p. 71), and Men Staff respondents were significantly more comfortable with the climate in their divisions than were Women Staff respondents (p. 73). Analyses by racial identity revealed a number of distinctions, with specific People of Color groups feeling less comfortable with the overall climate (p. 75), the climate regarding staff members’ day-to-day interactions in their work unit (p. 77), and the classroom climate (p. 78). By sexual identity, Bisexual respondents were significantly less comfortable with the overall NJIT climate than were their counterparts (p. 79), and Queer-spectrum Faculty/Instructional Staff and Student respondents were significantly less comfortable with the classroom climate at NJIT than were their Heterosexual peers (p. 80). Further, distinctions emerged by disability and first-generation status, where Respondents with Multiple Disabilities and First-Generation Student respondents were less comfortable with of the overall NJIT climate than were Respondents with No Disability (p. 81) and Not-First-Generation

⁴ Climate is defined as “the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards, and practices of employees and students in an institution” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 264).

⁵ Garvey et al. (2015); Goldberg et al. (2019); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); Jayakumar et al. (2009); D. R. Johnson (2012); Means & Pyne (2017); Soria & Stebleton (2013); Rankin (2003); Rankin & Reason (2005); Walpole et al. (2014)

Student respondents (p. 84). Similar patterns were noted for respondents' levels of comfort with the classroom climate (p. 83 and p. 85).

Faculty/Instructional Staff Respondents – Views About Faculty/Instructional Work

Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents indicated that NJIT valued research (74%, $n = 55$, p. 147) and teaching (51%, $n = 37$, p. 147).

Instructional Staff

Instructional Staff respondents held diverse perspectives about their work at NJIT. Over three-fourths of Instructional Staff respondents felt that NJIT valued research (78%, $n = 32$, p. 152) and half indicated that NJIT valued teaching (50%, $n = 20$, p. 152).

All Faculty/Instructional Staff

Seventy percent ($n = 79$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents felt that health insurance benefits were competitive, and over half felt that retirement/supplemental benefits were competitive (54%, $n = 60$, p. 155). Additionally, just over half of all Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents indicated that they would recommend NJIT as a good place to work (52%, $n = 59$, p. 156).

Staff Respondents – Views About Staff Work

Staff respondents also held various views about working at NJIT. For example, Staff respondents felt their supervisors (61%, $n = 196$, p. 162) and coworkers/colleagues (69%, $n = 223$, p. 162) gave them job/career advice or guidance when they needed it. Sixty-nine percent ($n = 217$) of Staff respondents indicated that their supervisors provided adequate support for them to manage work-life balance (p. 165), and almost three-quarters (71%, $n = 225$, p. 168) of Staff respondents agreed that they were given a reasonable time frame to complete assigned responsibilities. Slightly more than half of Staff respondents felt that NJIT (55%, $n = 174$, p. 171) and their supervisors (53%, $n = 168$, p. 171) provided them with resources to pursue training/professional development opportunities and that NJIT (58%, $n = 181$, p. 171) and their supervisors (61%, $n = 192$, p. 172) were supportive of their taking leave. Regarding benefits, 71% ($n = 221$, p. 174) of Staff respondents agreed that vacation and personal time benefits were competitive, 67% ($n = 210$, p. 175)

agreed that health insurance benefits were competitive, and 52% ($n = 165$, p. 175) indicated that retirement/supplemental benefits were competitive. Sixty percent ($n = 190$, p. 177) of Staff respondents would recommend NJIT as a good place to work. Some findings suggested that Staff respondents with disabilities, Staff respondents who had been employed at NJIT longer, Salary Staff respondents, People of Color Staff respondents, and Women Staff respondents had less positive perceptions than did their peers.

Student Respondents – Attitudes About Academic Experiences

The ways in which students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.⁶ Similar to Faculty and Staff, Student respondents held diverse perceptions of their experiences at NJIT. For example, half of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had faculty (52%, $n = 718$, p. 206) and staff (49%, $n = 676$, p. 206) whom they perceived as advocates. About two-thirds of Student respondents felt valued by staff (62%) and by faculty (67%) and students in the classroom (65%). Across items, findings suggested that Student of Color respondents, first-generation/low-income Student respondents, and certain Queer-spectrum Student respondents had less positive views than did their peers.

In general, Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents viewed their NJIT experiences favorably. Seventy-six percent ($n = 135$) of Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents were satisfied with the quality of advising they received from their departments (p. 217). Additionally, the majority of Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents felt that they had adequate access to their advisors (81%, $n = 144$, p. 217), that their advisors provided clear expectations (73%, $n = 128$, p. 217), that they received support from their advisors to pursue personal research interests (69%, $n = 122$, p. 217), and that they felt comfortable sharing their professional goals with their advisors (82%, $n = 144$, p. 218).

Over three-fourths of Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents indicated that their advisors (87%, $n = 154$, p. 217), department faculty members (81%, $n = 144$, p. 218),

⁶ For a review of extant literature, see Mayhew et al. (2016) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005).

department staff members (82%, $n = 145$, p. 218), and the Office of Graduate Studies (74%, $n = 130$, p. 218) responded to their emails, calls, or voicemails in a prompt manner. The majority of Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents felt that the Office of Graduate Studies clearly communicated policies and procedures for graduate students (79%, $n = 140$, p. 218) and opportunities for internal and external funding (67%, $n = 119$, p. 218). Additionally, most Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents felt that adequate opportunities existed for them to interact with other university faculty outside of their departments (60%, $n = 105$, p. 218), that their department faculty members encouraged them to produce publications and present research (68%, $n = 120$, p. 218), and that their department had provided them opportunities to serve the department or university in various capacities outside of teaching or research (60%, $n = 107$, p. 219).

Experiences of Exclusionary, Intimidating, Offensive, and/or Hostile Conduct

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.⁷ Research also underscores the relationship between hostile workplace climates and subsequent productivity.⁸ Further, scholars have explored Black and Latinx student populations' experiences with microaggressions.⁹ Campus climate research specific to women faculty revealed experiences of gender discrimination, professional isolation, lack of work-life balance, and disproportionate service expectations within campus environments.¹⁰

Fourteen percent ($n = 258$, p. 90) of NJIT respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. Of these respondents, 24% ($n = 61$) suggested that the conduct was based on their position status at NJIT, 23% ($n = 60$)

⁷ Dugan et al. (2012); Garvey et al. (2018); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Kim & Hargrove (2013); Mayhew et al. (2016); Oseguera et al. (2017); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005); Strayhorn (2012)

⁸ Bilimoria & Stewart (2009); Costello (2012); Dade et al. (2015); Eagan & Garvey (2015); Garcia (2016); Hirshfield & Joseph (2012); S. J. Jones & Taylor (2012); Levin et al. (2015); Rankin et al. (2010); Silverschanz et al. (2008)

⁹ Mills (2020); Yosso et al. (2009)

¹⁰ Grant & Ghee (2015)

indicated that the conduct was based on their gender/gender identity, and 21% ($n = 54$) noted that the conduct was based on their racial identity (p. 91).

Differences Based on Position Status, Gender Identity, and Racial Identity

- By position status, a higher percentage of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (36%, $n = 42$) than Staff respondents (22%, $n = 69$) and Student respondents (10%, $n = 147$) indicated that they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct in the past two years. Additionally, a statistically greater percentage of Staff respondents (22%, $n = 69$) than Student respondents (10%, $n = 147$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (p. 91).
 - A higher percentage of Staff respondents (38%, $n = 26$) than Student respondents (18%, $n = 26$) suggested that the conduct was based on their position status (Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents [21%, $n = 9$] were not statistically different from the other groups) (p. 91).
- By gender identity, a higher percentage of Women respondents (18%, $n = 138$) than Men respondents (10%, $n = 102$) indicated that they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct within the past two years (p. 93).
 - A greater percentage of Women respondents (38%, $n = 52$) than Men respondents ($n < 5$) who had experienced this conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their gender identity (p. 93).
- By racial identity, higher percentages of Multiracial respondents (18%, $n = 27$), Black respondents (17%, $n = 32$), and White respondents (17%, $n = 92$) than Asian respondents (8%, $n = 40$) indicated that they experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct within the past two years (Latinx respondents [12%, $n = 33$] and MENA¹¹ respondents [5%, $n = 5$] were not statistically different from the other groups) (p. 94).
 - A higher percentage of Black respondents (69%, $n = 22$) than Asian respondents (13%, $n = 5$), Latinx respondents ($n < 5$), White respondents (8%, $n = 7$), and Multiracial respondents (30%, $n = 8$) who had

¹¹ Middle Eastern/North African

experienced such conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their racial identity (p. 94).

- A higher percentage of Multiracial respondents (30%, $n = 8$) than White respondents (8%, $n = 7$) indicated that the conduct was based on their racial identity (MENA respondents [$n < 5$] were not statistically different from the other groups) (p. 94).

Respondents Who Seriously Considered Leaving NJIT

Campus climate research has demonstrated the effects of campus climate on faculty and student retention.¹² Research specific to student experiences has found that sense of belonging is integral to student persistence and retention.¹³ Noteworthy percentages of NJIT respondents indicated that they seriously considered leaving NJIT.

Faculty/Instructional Staff Respondents

Fifty-three percent ($n = 61$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving NJIT (p. 185). Forty-three percent ($n = 26$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of institutional support (e.g., technical support, laboratory space/equipment) and a lack of sense of belonging (p. 187). A higher percentage of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents (62%, $n = 46$) than Instructional Staff respondents (36%, $n = 15$) seriously considered leaving the institution, and a higher percentage of Women Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (61%, $n = 28$) than Men Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (41%, $n = 24$) seriously considered leaving NJIT (p. 188). Faculty/Instructional Staff comments suggested that they seriously considered leaving NJIT because of their perceived lack of leadership at NJIT.

Staff Respondents

Fifty-eight percent ($n = 186$) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving NJIT (p. 185). Forty-nine percent ($n = 91$) of Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of limited opportunities for advancement, and 40% ($n = 75$)

¹² Blumenfeld et al. (2016); Gardner (2013); Garvey & Rankin (2018); D. R. Johnson et al. (2014); Kutscher & Tuckwiller (2019); Lawrence et al. (2014); Pascale (2018); Ruud et al. (2018); Strayhorn (2013); Walpole et al. (2014)

¹³ Booker (2016); García & Garza (2016); Hausmann et al. (2007)

seriously considered leaving because they felt they were underpaid (p. 185). A higher percentage of Salary Staff respondents (61%, $n = 180$) than Hourly Staff respondents (21%, $n = 6$) seriously considered leaving NJIT, and a higher percentage of Women Staff respondents (62%, $n = 121$) than Men Staff respondents (48%, $n = 53$) seriously considered leaving the institution (p. 186).

Qualitative analysis of comments revealed that Staff respondents cited compensation as a reason they had seriously considered leaving NJIT. They also reported having limited career advancement opportunities at NJIT and suggested that they considered leaving NJIT for a position that allows for a more flexible work schedule (p. 189).

Student Respondents

Twenty-seven percent ($n = 329$) of Undergraduate Student respondents and 19% ($n = 34$) of Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents had seriously considered leaving NJIT (p. 221). Subsequent analyses for Undergraduate Student respondents and Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents revealed differences by racial identity, religious/spiritual affiliation, and first-generation/low-income status. Specifically, higher percentages of Black Undergraduate Student respondents (35%, $n = 39$) and White Undergraduate Student respondents (32%, $n = 96$) than Asian Undergraduate Student respondents (19%, $n = 67$) seriously considered leaving the institution (Latinx Undergraduate Student respondents [22%, $n = 52$], MENA Undergraduate Student respondents [20%, $n = 16$], and Multiracial Undergraduate Student respondents [29%, $n = 37$] were not statistically different from the other groups) (p. 221). Thirty-four percent ($n = 13$) of No Religious Affiliation Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents, compared with 15% ($n = 19$) of Religious Affiliation Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents, seriously considered leaving the institution (p. 222). Lastly, a higher percentage of First-Generation/Low-Income Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents (33%, $n = 12$) than Not-First-Generation/Low-Income Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents (16%, $n = 22$), seriously considered leaving NJIT (p. 222).

Forty-seven percent ($n = 155$) of Undergraduate Student respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because they did not like the way classes were taught. Forty-

two percent ($n = 139$) of Undergraduate Student respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because they lacked a social life at NJIT (p. 222). Forty-four percent ($n = 15$) of those Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents who seriously considered leaving did so owing to academic reasons, 35% ($n = 12$) seriously considered leaving because of the commute, and 35% ($n = 12$) indicated that they seriously considered leaving for financial reasons (p. 223).

Six themes emerged from analysis of Undergraduate Student respondents' comments: the high degree of academic rigor, various opinions about the COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates, the lack of social life at NJIT, financial stress, "inadequate" teaching, and contemplation about changing a major to one not available at NJIT (p. 225).

Respondents' *Sense of Belonging*

Campus climate influences individuals' sense of belonging within social and academic institutional environments.¹⁴ Sense of belonging can be defined as one's perceived social support on campus, feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering, or importance to the campus community or others on campus.¹⁵ A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Sense of Belonging* scale derived from Questions 105, 108, and 109 on the survey, and higher scores on the *Sense of Belonging* factors suggested an individual or constituent group felt a stronger sense of belonging at NJIT. Using this scale, analyses revealed the following:

- For Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents, no significant differences emerged by position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of employment, sexual identity, or disability status on *Faculty/Instructional Staff Sense of Belonging* (p. 158).
- For Staff respondents, no significant differences emerged by position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of employment, sexual identity, or disability status on *Staff Sense of Belonging* (p. 179).
- Analyses by student position status, gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, religious/spiritual affiliation, and first-generation/low-income status

¹⁴ Museus et al. (2017); Rankin & Reason (2005); Strayhorn (2012, 2013)

¹⁵ Strayhorn (2012)

indicated that Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents had higher *Student Sense of Belonging* scores than did Undergraduate Student respondents. Analyses also suggested that Asian Student respondents had higher *Student Sense of Belonging* scores than Black Student respondents and White Student respondents; that Latinx Student respondents had higher *Student Sense of Belonging* scores than Black Student respondents; and that MENA Student respondents had higher scores than Black Student respondents. Lastly, the results suggested that Non-Christian Affiliation Student respondents had higher *Student Sense of Belonging* scores than Christian Student respondents and that Non-Christian Affiliation Student respondents had higher *Student Sense of Belonging* scores than No Religious Affiliation Student respondents (p. 200).

Challenges and Opportunities Related to Campus Climate

Staff Respondents

Staff responses indicated that they regarded some of their experiences at NJIT as less than ideal. For example, 42% ($n = 133$) of Staff respondents felt that the performance evaluation process was productive (p. 164). Less than one-third (30%, $n = 97$) felt that NJIT provided adequate support to help them manage work-life balance (p. 165). Additionally, thirty-eight percent ($n = 122$, p. 166) of Staff respondents felt as though they were asked to perform work outside of their current job description, 27% ($n = 87$, p. 166) felt that they were burdened by work responsibilities beyond those of their colleagues with similar performance expectations, and 39% ($n = 125$, p. 166) believed that they performed more work than colleagues with similar performance expectations. Over half of Staff respondents (52%, $n = 166$) indicated that their workload increased without additional compensation owing to other staff departures or long-term staff member absence (p. 168), and approximately one-third (34%, $n = 108$) of Staff respondents felt pressured by departmental/program work requirements that occurred outside of normally scheduled hours (p. 168).

Forty-six percent ($n = 148$) of Staff respondents agreed that an informal hierarchy existed within staff positions that allowed some voices to be valued more than others (p. 168). Additionally, less than half of all Staff respondents felt their opinions were valued by

NJIT committees (40%, $n = 126$, p. 176), NJIT faculty (25%, $n = 79$, p. 176), and senior administrators (35%, $n = 109$) (p. 176).

Regarding benefits and work schedules, approximately half of Staff respondents (44%, $n = 138$, p. 173) felt that NJIT was not supportive of flexible work schedules, and 35% ($n = 109$, p. 174) felt that staff salaries were not competitive. Also, less than half of Staff respondents (40%, $n = 127$) felt positive about their career opportunities at NJIT (p. 177), and over one-third of Staff respondents (35%, $n = 109$) indicated that clear procedures on how they could advance at NJIT did not exist (p. 176). Lastly, 27% ($n = 85$) of Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust hiring practices, 24% ($n = 74$) of Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust employment-related discipline or action, and 29% ($n = 122$) of Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust promotion, tenure, reappointment, and/or reclassification practices.

Faculty/Instructional Staff Respondents

Findings suggested that Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents met several challenges at the institution. For example, 43% ($n = 32$, p. 146) of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents felt that tenure standards were not applied equally to faculty across the university. Less than half of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents felt supported and mentored during the tenure-track years (35%, $n = 33$, p. 146) and that NJIT faculty who qualify for delaying their tenure-clock felt empowered to do so (44%, $n = 32$, p. 146). In addition, 38% ($n = 28$, p. 147) of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents disagreed that NJIT valued their service contributions, and 36% ($n = 26$, p. 148) felt burdened by service responsibilities beyond those of their colleagues. Almost half (47%, $n = 34$) of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents indicated that they performed more work to help students than did their colleagues (p. 148).

Additional areas of potential improvement were reflected in findings such as the percentage of Instructional Staff respondents who felt burdened by service responsibilities beyond those of their colleagues with similar performance expectations (33%, $n = 14$, p. 152), those who indicated that they performed more work to help students than their colleagues (45%, $n = 19$, p. 153), those who felt pressured to do extra

work that was uncompensated (37%, $n = 15$, p. 153), and those who disagreed that salaries for instructional staff positions at their rank were competitive (61%, $n = 25$, p. 153). Also, only 34% ($n = 14$) of Instructional Staff respondents felt supported and mentored (p. 151).

Challenges and opportunities emerged related to both shared governance and senior administrators. For example, only 33% ($n = 24$) of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents felt that senior administrators took faculty opinions seriously (p. 149). Nearly half of these Faculty respondents (44%, $n = 32$) believed that the senior administration did not abide by shared governance, soliciting input from relevant constituent groups before making decisions (p. 150). Approximately one-third of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents (32%, $n = 24$) did not feel that the Faculty Senate was an effective advocate for faculty concerns (p. 149), and nearly half of Instructional Staff respondents (45%, $n = 18$) indicated that the Faculty Senate did not adequately address instructional staff interests and concerns (p. 153). Further, 45% ($n = 19$) of Instructional Staff respondents disagreed that shared governance committees valued instructional staff opinions (p. 153).

Among all Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents, 40% ($n = 44$) did not feel as though NJIT provided adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance (p. 155). Professional development and resource availability also appeared to be challenges. Approximately half of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (44%, $n = 49$) disagreed that NJIT provided them with resources for research, scholarship, and creative output for professional development (p. 155). Thirty-eight percent ($n = 43$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents indicated that NJIT did not provide them with resources for teaching professional development (p. 155). Also, less than half of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents (47%, $n = 53$) felt positive about their career opportunities at NJIT (p. 156). Lastly, 32% ($n = 37$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust hiring practices, 20% ($n = 23$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust employment-related discipline or action, and 27% ($n = 31$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents indicated that they had observed unjust promotion, tenure, reappointment, and/or reclassification practices.

Student Respondents

Analyses of Student survey responses revealed several areas for potential improvement. For example, less than half (49%, $n = 676$) of Student respondents had staff whom they perceived as advocates (p. 206). Additional analyses revealed that Undergraduate Student respondents and Black Student respondents were less likely than some of their peers to indicate that they had staff advocates (p. 206). Over one quarter (27%, $n = 368$) of Student respondents felt that faculty prejudged their abilities based on their perception of their identity/background, with a gap emerging for First-Generation/Low-Income students (p. 206).

Some Student respondents felt that their English-speaking skills (16%, $n = 217$) and their English-writing skills (17%, $n = 238$) limited their ability to be successful at the institution (pp. 209–211). In both regards, significant differences emerged by student position status, gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, religious/spiritual affiliation, and first-generation/low-income status, with minoritized student populations more commonly holding these perspectives.

Student Respondents' *Perceived Academic Success*

How students perceive their academic success often contributes to their decision to persist in higher education. Research indicates that when students experience an unwelcoming college climate, they also experience a decline in persistence and academic performance.¹⁶ A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Perceived Academic Success* scale derived from Question 13 on the survey. Using this scale, analyses revealed:

- A significant difference existed in the overall test for means for Student respondents by student position status, racial identity, and religious/spiritual affiliation on *Perceived Academic Success*. Findings indicated that Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents were more likely than their Undergraduate Student counterparts to perceive themselves as academically successful. Additionally, Asian Undergraduate Student respondents had higher *Perceived Academic*

¹⁶ Allen & Alleman (2019); Booker (2016); D. R. Johnson (2012); Kim & Hargrove (2013); Kutscher & Tuckwiller (2019); Reynolds et al. (2010)

Success scores than did Black Undergraduate Student respondents, and White Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents had higher *Perceived Academic Success* scores than Multiracial Graduate Student/Post-Doc respondents. Lastly, Non-Christian Affiliation Undergraduate Student had higher *Perceived Academic Success* scores than did No Religious Affiliation Undergraduate Student respondents (p. 194).

A Meaningful Percentage of Respondents Experienced Unwanted Sexual Conduct

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a substantial issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the NJIT survey requested information regarding respondents' experiences with sexual assault.

- 6% ($n = 119$) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct (defined separately below) while at NJIT (p. 121).
 - 1% ($n = 14$) experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting, p. 122).
 - 3% ($n = 52$) experienced stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls, p. 122).
 - 4% ($n = 67$) experienced unwanted sexual interaction (e.g., catcalling, repeated sexual advances, obscene images/videos, sexual harassment, p. 127).
 - 1% ($n = 20$) experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent, p. 134).
- Respondents identified acquaintances/friends, current or former dating/intimate partners, NJIT students, and strangers as sources of unwanted sexual contact/conduct (pp. 122–136).
- Most respondents did not report the unwanted sexual contact/conduct (pp. 122–137).

Student Financial Hardship

Thirty-nine percent ($n = 548$) of Student respondents indicated they experienced financial hardship while attending NJIT (p. 59). Of those Student respondents, several had difficulty

affording tuition (63%, $n = 347$), books/course materials (53%, $n = 290$), food (36%, $n = 198$), and housing (34%, $n = 186$).

NJIT's Initiatives

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they believed certain initiatives currently were available at NJIT and how each initiative does or would influence the climate. Examples of overall findings are presented below. For each result, most respondents felt that the initiative does or would positively influence the campus climate; however, respondents were not always certain whether an initiative was available at NJIT. A complete overview of findings related to institutional actions is provided on pages 230–249 of the report.

Examples of Findings for Student Respondents

- 64% ($n = 762$) of Student respondents thought that effective academic advising was available, and 86% ($n = 913$) of Student respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 246).
- 49% ($n = 584$) of Student respondents thought that effective faculty mentorship of students was available, and 83% ($n = 880$) of Student respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 246).
- 48% ($n = 578$) of Student respondents thought that a process to address student complaints of bias by faculty/staff in learning environments was available, and 82% ($n = 881$) of Student respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 244).
- 47% ($n = 567$) of Student respondents thought that opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue among students were available, and 81% ($n = 858$) of Student respondents thought that such opportunities did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 244).
- 41% ($n = 487$) of Student respondents thought that opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue among faculty, staff, and students were available, and 80% ($n = 850$) of Student respondents thought that such opportunities did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 245).

Examples of Findings for Faculty/Instructional Staff Respondents

- 46% ($n = 50$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that mentorship for new faculty was available, and 90% ($n = 86$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 232).
- 25% ($n = 26$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that fair processes to resolve conflicts were available, and 88% ($n = 81$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that such processes did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 233).
- 28% ($n = 30$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that clear processes to resolve conflicts was available, and 87% ($n = 80$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that such processes did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 232).
- 60% ($n = 64$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that access to counseling for people who have experienced harassment was available, and 87% ($n = 80$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 232).
- 7% ($n = 7$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that affordable childcare was available, and 84% ($n = 77$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 234).
- 49% ($n = 52$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that tenure clock flexibility was available, and 83% ($n = 78$) of Faculty/Instructional Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 230).

Examples of Findings for Staff Respondents

- 65% ($n = 199$) of Staff respondents thought that access to counseling for people who have experienced harassment was available, and 91% ($n = 248$) of Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 237).

- 37% ($n = 111$) of Staff respondents thought that clear processes to resolve conflicts were available, and 91% ($n = 240$) of Staff respondents thought that such processes did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 238).
- 35% ($n = 104$) of Staff respondents thought that fair processes to resolve conflicts were available, and 90% ($n = 231$) of Staff respondents thought that such processes did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 239).
- 39% ($n = 119$) of Staff respondents thought that career development opportunities for staff were available, and 90% ($n = 236$) of Staff respondents thought that such opportunities did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 239).
- 47% ($n = 146$) of Staff respondents thought that supervisory training for supervisors/managers was available, and 88% ($n = 243$) of Staff respondents thought that it did or would positively influence the NJIT climate (p. 237).

Conclusion

In some regards, NJIT climate findings¹⁷ were consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country, based on the work of Rankin & Associates Consulting, LLC.¹⁸ For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” A comparable percentage (70%) of NJIT respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the overall climate at NJIT (p. 68). Twenty percent to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At NJIT, a lower percentage of respondents (14%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 90). The results also paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.¹⁹

Prior research reveals that:

Student body diversity in institutions of higher education is important not only for improving the economic and educational opportunities for underrepresented students, but

¹⁷ Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

¹⁸ Rankin & Associates Consulting (2021)

¹⁹ Guiffrida et al. (2008); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); S. R. Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles et al. (2006); Silverschanz et al. (2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

also for the social, academic, and societal benefits that diversity presents for all students and communities. Diverse learning environments help students sharpen their critical thinking and analytical skills; prepare students to succeed in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world; break down stereotypes and reduce bias; and enable schools to fulfill their role in opening doors for students of all backgrounds.²⁰

Everyone benefits from a more welcoming institution. To create a more inclusive, welcoming environment, NJIT must acknowledge areas of opportunity and take responsibility for restoring, rebuilding, and implementing action that prioritizes those most negatively affected in the current structure.

NJIT's climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity and inclusion and addresses NJIT's mission and goals. While the findings may guide decision making regarding policies and practices at NJIT, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating subsequent action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the NJIT community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. NJIT, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime position to actualize its commitment to promote an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

²⁰ United States Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development and Office of the Under Secretary (2016, p. 5)

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