



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

Assessment • Planning • Interventions

Rhode Island College

Campus Climate  
Research Study  
Executive Summary

October 2019



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

## Executive Summary

### History of the Project

Rhode Island College seeks to promote an environment characterized by openness, fairness, and equal access for all students, staff, and faculty. Creating and maintaining a welcoming community environment that respects individuals, their needs, abilities, and potential is critically important.

The college undertook the campus climate survey to evaluate the current campus climate as it is experienced and perceived by all members of the college community. The goals were multifold:

- Identify successful initiatives.
- Uncover any challenges facing members of the Rhode Island College community.
- Develop strategic initiatives to build on successes, address challenges, and create lasting positive change.

To ensure full transparency and to provide a more complete perspective, Rhode Island College contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting (R&A) to help lead this effort. Beginning on March 2018, an R&A team worked with a Campus Climate Working Group (CCWG) of Rhode Island College students, staff, and faculty to develop an assessment and promote it during the March 19 to April 19 survey administration period. Two thousand five hundred sixty-three (2,563) members of the Rhode Island College community completed the *Rhode Island College Assessment of Campus Climate for Learning, Living, and Working*, which represented a 30% response rate.

## **Methodology**

**Focus Groups.** The first phase of the climate assessment process was to conduct a series of focus groups at Rhode Island College to gather information from students, faculty, administrators, and staff about their perceptions of the campus climate. On October 15, November 27, and November 28, Rhode Island College students, faculty, and staff (119 in total) participated in 20 focus groups conducted by R&A facilitators. Feedback from these focus groups directly informed how items were selected and most appropriately worded, so that the assessment would provide the insight necessary for Rhode Island College to understand key elements of the learning, living, and working environment.

**Survey Instrument.**<sup>1</sup> The CCWG reviewed several drafts of the initial survey that R&A proposed and vetted the questions to be contextually appropriate for Rhode Island College. The working group also reviewed the final focus group report and revised/added questions to the survey based on the themes that emerged from the focus groups. The final college-wide survey instrument contained 118 questions, including 93 quantitative questions and 25 open-ended questions for respondents to provide commentary. Respondents also had opportunities to “write-in” responses should the list of available response choices not include the specific response they wished to offer.

**Incentives.** As an incentive for completing the assessment, eligible members of the Rhode Island College community were offered the opportunity to enter a random drawing for awards such as such as gift cards, RIC spirit gear, an iPad.

**Institutional Review.** The study was vetted through an Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, which is meant to ensure confidentiality and protect the rights and welfare of individuals participating in a research study. The IRB reviewed the survey and processes and approved the assessment on March 8, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> The full survey is available in Appendix D in the full report.

**Sample Construction.** All eligible members of the Rhode Island College community were invited to participate in the assessment.<sup>2</sup> Prospective respondents received an invitation from President Sánchez that contained the URL link to the survey instrument. The CCWG’s marketing subcommittee worked with Rhode Island College’s communications team to create inclusive, thoughtful, and tailored messaging for email distribution, social media platforms, and items including posters, tent cards, flyers, computer lab screens, and staff/faculty/student online RIC portals and digital screens. Two thousand five hundred sixty-three (2,563) surveys were returned for a 30% overall response rate. Of respondents, 62% ( $n = 1,595$ ) of the sample were Undergraduate Students, 11% ( $n = 291$ ) were Graduate Students, 14% ( $n = 354$ ) were Faculty/Academic Administrators, 1% ( $n = 19$ ) were Non-Academic Administrators, and 12% ( $n = 304$ ) were Staff. Position status data for respondents were collapsed into the following categories for analyses: Undergraduate Student respondents, Graduate Student respondents, Faculty/Academic Administrator respondents, and Staff/Non-Academic Administrator respondents.<sup>3</sup> Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of assessment respondents.

**Quantitative Data Analysis.**<sup>4</sup> The data first were analyzed to tabulate responses to each of the questions in the survey.<sup>5</sup> Descriptive statistics were calculated by salient group memberships (e.g., gender identity, racial identity, primary position) to provide additional information regarding participant responses.<sup>6</sup> This report presents data using valid percentages.<sup>7</sup> Actual percentages<sup>8</sup> with missing or “no response” information may be found in the frequency analyses tables in Appendix B. The purpose for this difference in reporting was to note the missing or “no response” data in the appendices for institutional information, while removing such data within

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<sup>2</sup> A detailed presentation of sample characteristics is offered in the full report.

<sup>3</sup> The CCWG, in collaboration with R&A, decided to collapse Staff ( $n = 304$ ) and Non-Academic Administrators ( $n = 19$ ) because of the small number of respondents in the latter category, thereby leading to more methodologically sound analyses.

<sup>4</sup> More details on the quantitative and qualitative methods are provided in the methodology section of the full report.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete review of the responses for each question offered in the survey, refer to Appendix B of the full report.

<sup>6</sup> Analyses were performed to explore how survey responses differed based on selected demographic characteristics. All the findings are presented as percentages of the entire sample or of the subgroups being examined. The percentages in these figures and tables do not always add up to 100 as a result of respondents being able to select more than one answer to a question (“mark all that apply”) or owing to rounding. Where the  $n$ ’s were considered small enough to compromise the identity of the respondent(s),  $n < 5$  is reported.

<sup>7</sup> Valid percentages were derived using the total number of respondents to an item (i.e., missing data were excluded).

<sup>8</sup> Actual percentages were derived using the total number of survey respondents.

the report for subsequent cross tabulations and significance testing using the chi-square test for independence. Chi-square tests identify that significant differences exist but do not specify if differences exist between specific groups. Therefore, these analyses included post hoc investigations of statistically significant findings by conducting  $z$ -tests between column proportions for each row in the chi-square contingency table, with a Bonferroni adjustment for larger contingency tables. This statistical approach is useful because it compares individual cells to each other to determine if they are statistically different. Thus, the data may be interpreted more precisely by showing the source of the greatest discrepancies. The report offers statistically significant distinctions between groups. For groups with response rates less than 30%, caution is recommended when generalizing to the entire constituent group.

### Factor Analysis<sup>9</sup>

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on one scale embedded in Question 11 of the assessment. The factor score for *Perceived Academic Success* was created by taking the average of the scores for the six sub-questions in the factor. Each respondent who answered all the questions included in the given factor was given a score on a five-point scale. The factor score for *Perceived Academic Success* was created by taking the average of the scores for the six sub-questions in the factor. The score was then reverse-coded so higher scores on *Perceived Academic Success* factor suggest a student or constituent group perceives themselves as more academically successful.

### Means Testing

When only two categories existed for the specified demographic variable (e.g., income status) in the factor analysis, a  $t$ -test for difference of means was used. If the difference in means was significant, effect size was calculated using Cohen's  $d$ . Any moderate-to-large effects are noted. When the specific variable of interest had more than two categories (e.g., racial identity), ANOVAs were run to determine whether any differences existed. If the ANOVA was significant, post hoc tests were run to determine which differences between pairs of means were significant. Additionally, if the difference in means was significant, effect size was calculated using  $\text{Eta}^2$  and any moderate-to-large effects are noted.

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<sup>9</sup> A more detailed review of the factor analysis methodology is offered in the full report.

**Qualitative Data Analysis.**<sup>10</sup> Several assessment questions provided respondents the opportunity to describe their experiences at Rhode Island College, elaborate upon their assessment responses, and append additional thoughts. Comments were solicited to give voice to the data and to highlight areas of concern that might have been missed in the quantitative items of the survey. Analyses of each question generated common themes, which are provided later in the narrative of the full report directly following the analyses of the quantitative question that primed the qualitative response.

**Limitations.**<sup>11</sup> Two limitations existed in this project that may have influenced the representativeness of the sample. Respondents “self-selected” to participate in the study. This type of bias can occur when an individual’s decision to participate is correlated with experiences and concerns being measured by the study, causing a type of non-representativeness known as selection bias. The second limitation is that response rates were less than 30% for some groups. For groups with response rates less than 30%, caution should be used when generalizing the results to the entire constituent group.

**Table 1. Rhode Island College Sample Demographics**

Characteristic	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	% of Sample
Position status	Undergraduate Student	1,595	62.2
	Graduate Student	291	11.4
	Faculty/Academic Administrator	354	13.8
	Non-Academic Administrator	19	0.7
	Staff	304	11.9
Gender identity	Men	630	24.6
	Women	1,828	71.3
	Trans-spectrum	54	2.1
	Missing	51	2.0

<sup>10</sup> Qualitative analyses are offered in the full report.

<sup>11</sup> A more detailed explanation on limitations is offered in the full report.

**Table 1. Rhode Island College Sample Demographics**

Characteristic	Subgroup	<i>n</i>	% of Sample
Racial/ethnic identity	Additional People of Color	90	3.5
	Hispanic/Latinx/Afro-Latinx	331	12.9
	Black/African/African American	180	7.0
	White	1,631	63.6
	Multiracial	207	8.1
	Missing	124	4.8
Sexual identity	Bisexual	188	7.3
	Heterosexual	1,965	76.7
	Queer-spectrum	243	9.5
	Missing	167	6.5
Citizenship status	U.S. Citizen, Birth	2,201	85.9
	U.S. Citizen, Naturalized	214	8.3
	Non-U.S. Citizen	102	4.0
	Missing	46	1.8
Disability status	Single Disability	243	9.5
	No Disability	2,093	81.7
	Multiple Disabilities	176	6.9
	Missing	51	2.0
Religious/spiritual identity	Christian Affiliation	1,217	47.5
	Additional Religious Affiliation	131	5.1
	No Affiliation	961	37.5
	Multiple Affiliations	94	3.7
	Missing	160	6.2

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

## Key Findings – Areas of Strength

### 1. High Levels of Comfort With the Climate at Rhode Island College

Climate was defined as the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of faculty, staff, administrators, and students—as well as the campus environment and university policies—that influence the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential.<sup>12</sup> The level of comfort experienced by faculty, staff, and students is one indicator of campus climate.

- 74% ( $n = 1,904$ ) of survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at Rhode Island College.
- 72% ( $n = 484$ ) of Faculty and Staff respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their departments/programs or work units.
- 82% ( $n = 1,819$ ) of Student and Faculty respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate in their classes.

### 2. Faculty Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Faculty Work

#### *Tenured and Tenure-Track*

- 83% ( $n = 195$ ) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that teaching was valued by Rhode Island College.
- 81% ( $n = 189$ ) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had opportunities to teach courses that they wanted to teach.

#### *Non-Tenure-Track*

- 83% ( $n = 89$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that teaching was valued by Rhode Island College.
- 80% ( $n = 87$ ) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that expectations of their responsibilities were clear.

#### *All Faculty*

- 81% ( $n = 283$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by faculty in their departments/programs.
- 81% ( $n = 281$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by their department chairs/program directors.

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<sup>12</sup> Rankin & Reason (2008)

- 89% ( $n = 307$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by students in the classroom.

### **3. Staff Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Staff Work**

- 77% ( $n = 245$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College provides them with adequate physical space/work environment to perform their jobs.
- 80% ( $n = 247$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their supervisors were supportive of their taking leave.
- 79% ( $n = 251$ ) of Staff respondents indicated that they felt valued by coworkers in their division.

### **4. Student Respondents – Positive Attitudes About Academic Experiences**

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.<sup>13</sup> Research also supports the pedagogical value of a diverse student body and faculty for improving learning outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Attitudes toward academic pursuits are one indicator of campus climate.

- 75%, ( $n = 1,402$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by Rhode Island College faculty in the classroom.
- 72% ( $n = 1,330$ ) of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had faculty whom they perceived as role models.
- 84% ( $n = 239$ ) of Graduate Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” they felt comfortable sharing their professional goals with their advisors.
- 82% ( $n = 236$ ) of Graduate Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their advisors/major professors responded to their emails, calls, or voicemails in a prompt manner.

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<sup>13</sup> Pascarella & Terenzini (2005)

<sup>14</sup> Hale (2004); Harper & Hurtado (2007); Harper & Quaye (2004)

## Key Findings – Opportunities for Improvement

### 1. Experiences of Exclusionary, Intimidating, Offensive, and/or Hostile Conduct

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.<sup>15</sup> Research also underscores the relationship between workplace discrimination and subsequent productivity.<sup>16</sup> The survey requested information on experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. Differences between demographic groups offered throughout this report are statistically significant, unless otherwise noted.

- 15% ( $n = 377$ ) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct that had interfered with their ability to learn, live, or work at Rhode Island College within the past semester.<sup>17</sup>
  - 24% ( $n = 90$ ) believed that the conduct was based on their position status; other top perceived bases for the conduct were the respondent's racial identity (18%,  $n = 66$ ), gender identity (16%,  $n = 61$ ), and ethnicity (16%,  $n = 60$ ).

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

- By position status, 22% ( $n = 79$ ) of Faculty respondents, 20% ( $n = 63$ ) of Staff respondents, 13% ( $n = 38$ ) of Graduate Student respondents, and 12% ( $n = 197$ ) of Undergraduate Student respondents believed that they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.
  - Of those respondents who noted that they had experienced this conduct, higher percentages of Staff respondents (35%,  $n = 22$ ), Faculty respondents (32%,  $n = 25$ ), and Graduate Student respondents (34%,  $n =$

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<sup>15</sup> Aguirre & Messineo (1997); Flowers & Pascarella (1999); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005); Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora (2011)

<sup>16</sup> Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley (2008); Waldo (1998)

<sup>17</sup> The literature on microaggressions is clear that this type of conduct has a negative influence on people who experience the conduct, even if they feel at the time that it had no impact (Sue, 2010; Yosso et al., 2009).

13) than Undergraduate Student respondents (15%,  $n = 30$ ) thought that the conduct was based on their position status.

- By gender identity, a higher percentage of Trans-spectrum respondents (40%,  $n = 21$ ) than Women respondents (14%,  $n = 250$ ) or Men respondents (14%,  $n = 88$ ) indicated that they had experienced this conduct.
  - A higher percentage of Trans-spectrum respondents (57%,  $n = 12$ ) than Women respondents (13%,  $n = 33$ ) or Men respondents (11%,  $n = 10$ ) who had experienced this conduct believed that the conduct was based on their gender identity.
- By racial identity, there were no statistically significant differences in the percentages of Respondents of Color (16%,  $n = 97$ ), Multiracial respondents (18%,  $n = 37$ ), and White respondents (13%,  $n = 206$ ) who indicated that they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct within the past semester.
  - Higher percentages of Respondents of Color (37%,  $n = 36$ ) and Multiracial respondents (32%,  $n = 12$ ) than White respondents (6%,  $n = 13$ ) who had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct believed that the conduct was based on their racial identity.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct at Rhode Island College. One hundred forty-nine respondents elaborated on experiences with this conduct. One theme emerged from Graduate Student respondents: bullying. One theme emerged from Undergraduate Student respondents: faculty/student bullying. Staff respondent responses generated one theme: lack of institutional support. One theme emerged from Faculty respondents: prejudicial behavior.

## **2. Less Comfort With Campus, Workplace, and Classroom Climates**

Prior research on campus climate 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 students, and

veterans).<sup>18</sup> Several groups at Rhode Island College, including Trans-spectrum respondents, Additional Respondents of Color, Multiracial Faculty and Student respondents, Queer-spectrum respondents, Respondents with a Single Disability, Respondents with Multiple Disabilities, and First-Generation Student respondents indicated that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, workplace, and classroom.

***Examples of Findings for Overall Climate at Rhode Island College***

- A lower percentage of Staff respondents (34%,  $n = 110$ ) than Faculty respondents (50%,  $n = 177$ ), Graduate Student respondents (53%,  $n = 154$ ), and Undergraduate Student respondents (55%,  $n = 876$ ) felt “comfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College.
- A lower percentage of Tenure-Track Faculty respondents (19%,  $n = 45$ ) than Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents (39%,  $n = 43$ ) felt “very comfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College.
- 27% ( $n = 169$ ) of Men respondents compared with 9% ( $n = 5$ ) of Trans-spectrum respondents felt “very comfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College (Women respondents [22%,  $n = 407$ ] did not statistically differ from the other two groups). In addition, a higher percentage of Women respondents (54%,  $n = 983$ ) than both Men respondents (47%,  $n = 297$ ) and Trans-spectrum respondents (35%,  $n = 19$ ) felt “comfortable” with the overall climate. Trans-spectrum respondents (32%,  $n = 17$ ) felt “uncomfortable” and “very uncomfortable” with the overall climate at a higher percentage than either Men respondents (8%,  $n = 51$ ) or Women respondents (6%,  $n = 117$ ).
- 6% ( $n = 5$ ) of Additional Respondents of Color compared with 1% ( $n = 18$ ) of White respondents and fewer than five Hispanic/Latinx/Afro-Latinx respondents were “very uncomfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College (Black/African/African American respondents [3%,  $n = 6$ ] and Multiracial respondents [3%,  $n = 6$ ] did not significantly differ from the other groups).

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<sup>18</sup> Harper & Hurtado (2007); Hart & Fellabaum (2008); Rankin (2003); Rankin & Reason (2005); Worthington, et al. (2008)

- A higher percentage of Queer-spectrum respondents (4%,  $n = 10$ ) than Heterosexual respondents (1%,  $n = 24$ ) felt “very uncomfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College (Bisexual respondents [ $n < 5$ ] did not statistically differ).
- Lower percentages of Respondents with a Single Disability (17%,  $n = 40$ ) and Respondents with Multiple Disabilities (15%,  $n = 27$ ) compared with Respondents with No Disability (24%,  $n = 509$ ) were “very comfortable” with the overall climate at Rhode Island College.
- A higher proportion of Not-First-Generation Student respondents (55%,  $n = 587$ ) than First-Generation Student respondents (49%,  $n = 719$ ) were “comfortable” with the overall campus climate.

#### ***Examples of Findings for Department/Program and Work Unit Climate***

- There were no significant differences in how comfortable respondents were with the climate in their departments/programs or work units.

#### ***Examples of Findings for Classroom Climate***

- A higher percentage of Undergraduate Student respondents (6%,  $n = 95$ ) than Faculty respondents (2%,  $n = 8$ ) were “uncomfortable” with the climate in their classes (Graduate Student respondents [6%,  $n = 16$ ] did not statistically differ on this dimension.)
- Lower percentages of Faculty and Student Respondents of Color (24%,  $n = 131$ ) and Multiracial Faculty and Student respondents (24%,  $n = 48$ ) than White Faculty and Student respondents (34%,  $n = 476$ ) were “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes.
- A higher percentage of Queer-spectrum Faculty and Student respondents (3%,  $n = 6$ ) than Heterosexual Faculty and Student respondents (1%,  $n = 12$ ) felt “very uncomfortable” with the climate in their classes at Rhode Island College (Bisexual Faculty and Student respondents [0%,  $n = 0$ ] did not statistically differ).
- A lower percentage of Faculty and Student Respondents with Multiple Disabilities (22%,  $n = 35$ ) compared with Faculty and Student Respondents with

No Disability (32%,  $n = 574$ ) were “very comfortable” with the climate in their classes (Faculty and Student Respondents with a Single Disability [27%,  $n = 59$ ] were not statistically different). Additionally, higher percentages of Faculty and Student Respondents with Multiple Disabilities (11%,  $n = 18$ ) and Faculty and Student Respondents with a Single Disability (9%,  $n = 19$ ) compared with Faculty and Student Respondents with No Disability (4%,  $n = 79$ ) were “uncomfortable” with the climate in their classes.

- A higher percentage of First-Generation Student respondents (14%,  $n = 174$ ) than Not-First-Generation Student respondents (10%,  $n = 94$ ) were “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable” with the climate in their classes.

### **3. Faculty and Staff Respondents – Seriously Considered Leaving Rhode Island College**

- 45% ( $n = 158$ ) of Faculty respondents and 55% ( $n = 175$ ) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving Rhode Island College in the past year.
  - 61% ( $n = 106$ ) of those Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of low salary/pay rate and 48% ( $n = 84$ ) because of limited opportunities for advancement. Other reasons included tension with their supervisors/managers (36%,  $n = 64$ ), increased workload (34%,  $n = 59$ ), lack of professional development opportunities (33%,  $n = 57$ ), tension with coworkers (32%,  $n = 56$ ), and interest in a position at another institution (30%,  $n = 52$ ).
  - 75% ( $n = 119$ ) of those Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of low salary/pay rate, and 37% ( $n = 59$ ) for reasons related to institutional support. Other reasons included a lack of professional development opportunities (31%,  $n = 50$ ), interest in a position at another institution (31%,  $n = 49$ ), increased workload (29%,  $n = 46$ ), and tension with coworkers (29%,  $n = 46$ ).

One hundred ninety-nine Employee (Non-Academic Administrators, Faculty, and Staff) respondents elaborated on why they had seriously considered leaving. One theme emerged from Non-Academic Administrators: poor compensation and benefits. From

Faculty respondents, one theme emerged: poor compensation. Two themes emerged from Staff respondents: poor compensation and hostile work environment.

#### **4. Staff Respondents – Challenges With Work-Life Issues**

- Few Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that staff salaries were competitive (21%,  $n = 67$ ) or that they were equitable in their division (24%,  $n = 75$ ).
- 40% ( $n = 126$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the performance evaluation process was clear and 30% ( $n = 94$ ) thought that it was productive.
- 39% ( $n = 123$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that staff opinions were valued on Rhode Island College committees, and 37% ( $n = 117$ ) felt that staff opinions were valued by Rhode Island College faculty and administration.
- 36% ( $n = 114$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College provided adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance.
- 44% ( $n = 140$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College was supportive of flexible work schedules.
- 22% ( $n = 70$ ) of Staff respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that clear procedures existed on how they could advance at Rhode Island College and 32% ( $n = 100$ ) of Staff respondents felt positive about their career opportunities at Rhode Island College.

Staff respondents elaborated on their perceptions of the workplace climate at Rhode Island College. Among the several themes that emerged from these responses were inadequate facilities, felt undervalued/disrespected (especially by faculty and administrators), and poor compensation.

#### **5. Faculty Respondents – Challenges With Faculty Work**

##### ***Tenured and Tenure-Track***

- 27% ( $n = 62$ ) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College faculty who qualify for delaying their tenure clock felt empowered to do so.

- 31% ( $n = 71$ ) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that faculty opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators (e.g., dean, vice president, provost).
- 16% ( $n = 38$ ) of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College provided adequate resources (e.g., funding, time, institutional support, technology) for them to pursue their research/scholarship agenda.

***Non-Tenure-Track***

- 46% ( $n = 49$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the criteria used for reappointment were applied equally to positions.
- 24% ( $n = 26$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they had job security.
- 46% ( $n = 50$ ) of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that their opinions were taken seriously by senior administrators.

***All Faculty***

- 15% ( $n = 54$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for tenure-track faculty positions were competitive and 11% ( $n = 38$ ) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries for non-tenure-track faculty were competitive.
- 27% ( $n = 93$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that salaries were equitable in their department.
- 11% ( $n = 38$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College provided adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance and 32% ( $n = 112$ ) felt that Rhode Island College provided them with resources to pursue professional development.
- 38% ( $n = 132$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that Rhode Island College provided adequate resources for teaching.
- 47% ( $n = 163$ ) of Faculty respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by Rhode Island College senior administrators.

Faculty respondents elaborated on statements regarding their perceptions of faculty work at Rhode Island College. Five themes emerged from the Faculty respondents’ comments: salary concerns, limited resources, inadequate facilities, lack of professional development funding, and

undervalued teaching and service. In addition, Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty respondents described a lack of financial support for professional development. Among Tenured Faculty respondents specifically, two themes emerged: research not valued, and subjective tenure criteria. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents expressed feelings of job insecurity.

## **6. Student Respondents' *Perceived Academic Success***

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Perceived Academic Success* scale derived from Question 11 on the survey. Using this scale, analyses revealed:

- Significant differences existed in tests for means for Student respondents by gender identity, racial identity, and disability status on *Perceived Academic Success*.

### ***Examples of Findings***

- Trans-spectrum Undergraduate Student respondents had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than both Women Undergraduate Student respondents and Men Undergraduate Student respondents. Trans-spectrum Graduate Student respondents had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than Men Graduate Student respondents.
- Multiracial Undergraduate Student respondents had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than White Undergraduate Student respondents. Multiracial Graduate Student respondents had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than both Hispanic/Latinx/Afro-Latinx Graduate Student respondents and White Graduate Student respondents.
- Undergraduate Student Respondents with Multiple Disabilities had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than Undergraduate Student Respondents with No Disability. Graduate Student Respondents with Multiple Disabilities had a lower *Perceived Academic Success* score than Graduate Student Respondents with No Disability.

## **7. 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 Rhode Island College survey requested information regarding sexual assault.

- 6% ( $n = 162$ ) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct while at Rhode Island College.
  - 1% ( $n = 36$ ) experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting).
  - 2% ( $n = 57$ ) experienced stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls).
  - 4% ( $n = 96$ ) experienced unwanted sexual interaction (e.g., catcalling, repeated sexual advances, sexual harassment).
  - 1% ( $n = 31$ ) experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g. fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent).
- Non-Transfer Undergraduate Student respondents, Trans-spectrum respondents, Women respondents, Multiracial respondents, Bisexual respondents, Queer-spectrum respondents, Respondents with a Single Disability, Respondents with Multiple Disabilities, Not-First-Generation Student respondents, respondents with Multiple Religious Affiliations, and respondents with No Religious Affiliation noted experiencing unwanted sexual contact/conduct at higher rates than their counterparts.
- Respondents identified Rhode Island College students, Rhode Island College staff members, Rhode Island College faculty members, current or former dating/intimate partners, strangers, and acquaintances/friends as sources of unwanted sexual contact/conduct.
- 75% to 92% of respondents did not report the unwanted sexual contact/conduct.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted sexual contact/conduct. The rationales cited for not reporting these incidents included fear of retribution, the behavior was not serious enough to report, or they were generally afraid.

## Conclusion

Rhode Island College climate findings<sup>19</sup> were somewhat consistent with those found in higher education institutions across the country, based on the work of R&A Consulting.<sup>20</sup> For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” A similar percentage (74%) of Rhode Island College respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the climate at Rhode Island College. Twenty percent to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. Differently, at Rhode Island College, a lower percentage of respondents (15%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. However, the results paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.<sup>21</sup>

Rhode Island College’s climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and addresses Rhode Island College’s mission and goals. While the findings may guide decision-making regarding policies and practices at Rhode Island College, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and the unique aspects of each campus’s environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating additional action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the Rhode Island College community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. Rhode Island College, 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

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<sup>19</sup> Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

<sup>20</sup> Rankin & Associates Consulting (2019)

<sup>21</sup> Guiffrida, Gouveia, Wall, & Seward (2002); Harper & Hurtado (2007); Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart (2006); Silverschanz et al. (2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

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