

Stetson College of Law Campus Climate Survey

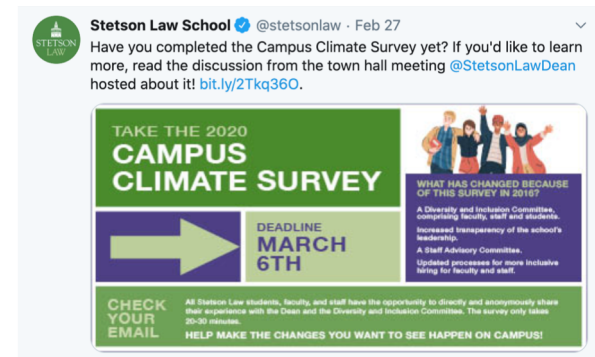
2020 Executive Summary

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Campus Climate Survey

Survey Instrument created by Rankin & Associates

- 2016 Administered by Rankin & Associates
- 2020 Administered by Pryor Education Insights
- All faculty, administrators, staff, and students on all campuses were invited to take the web-based survey 2/3 to 3/14.
- Response rates at CoL
 - 2016: 34%
 - 2020: 37%



Respondents by position

| | N | Response Rate |
|----------------------|-----|---------------|
| Students | 282 | (32%) |
| Staff/Administration | 95 | (69%) |
| Faculty | 36 | (38%) |

Reporting

Due to small numbers in sex and race and ethnicity categories, sex, race and ethnicity by position is not examined. Racial breakouts are for the full group, as they were with the 2016 results.

Campus Climate Survey

Selected Demographics

| | Student Population | Student Survey | Staff Population | Staff Survey | Faculty Population | Faculty Survey |
|--------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| White | 70% | 67% | 84% | 70% | 78% | 86% |
| Latinx | 15% | 12% | 5% | 15% | 4% | 4% |
| Black | 6% | 10% | 9% | 6% | 6% | 7% |
| Asian | 3% | 2% | | | | |

Survey respondent race and ethnicity approximate the total population, although the groupings used for the population and in the questionnaire differed slightly.

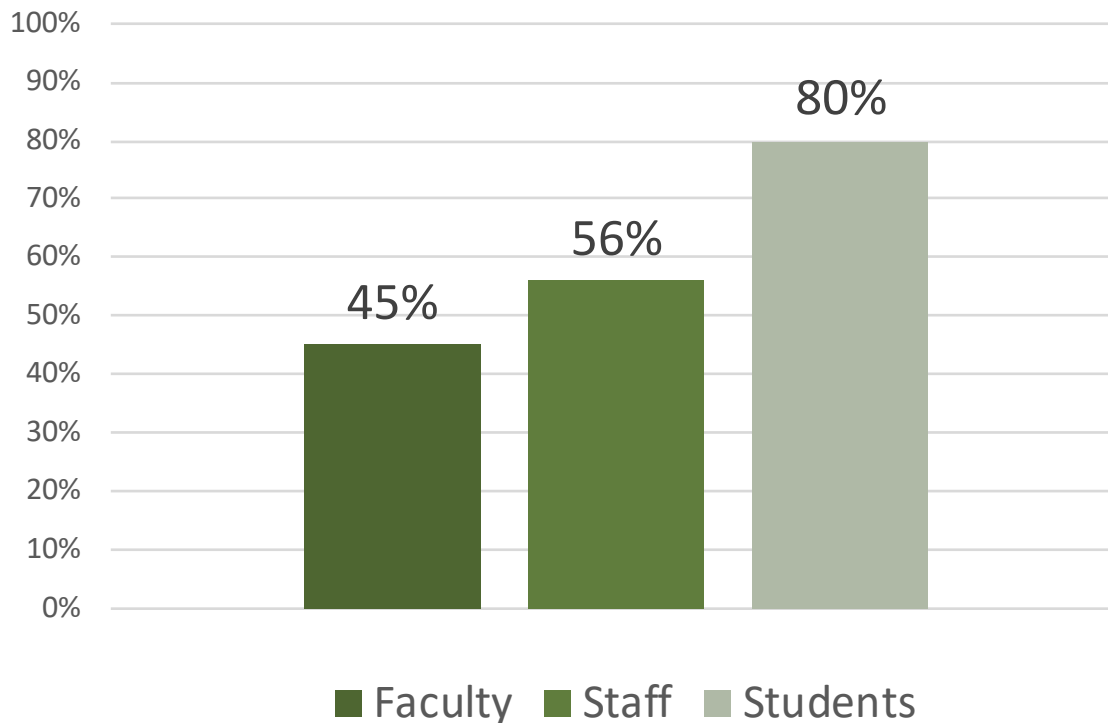
| | Student Population | Student Survey | Staff Population | Staff Survey | Faculty Population | Faculty Survey |
|--------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Female | 54% | 68% | 65% | 72% | 48% | 55% |
| Male | 46% | 32% | 35% | 28% | 52% | 45% |

Survey respondent sex, as with most surveys, tends to skew female.

General Campus Climate

Campus Climate Survey

Most Were “Very Comfortable” or
“Comfortable” with
Campus Climate



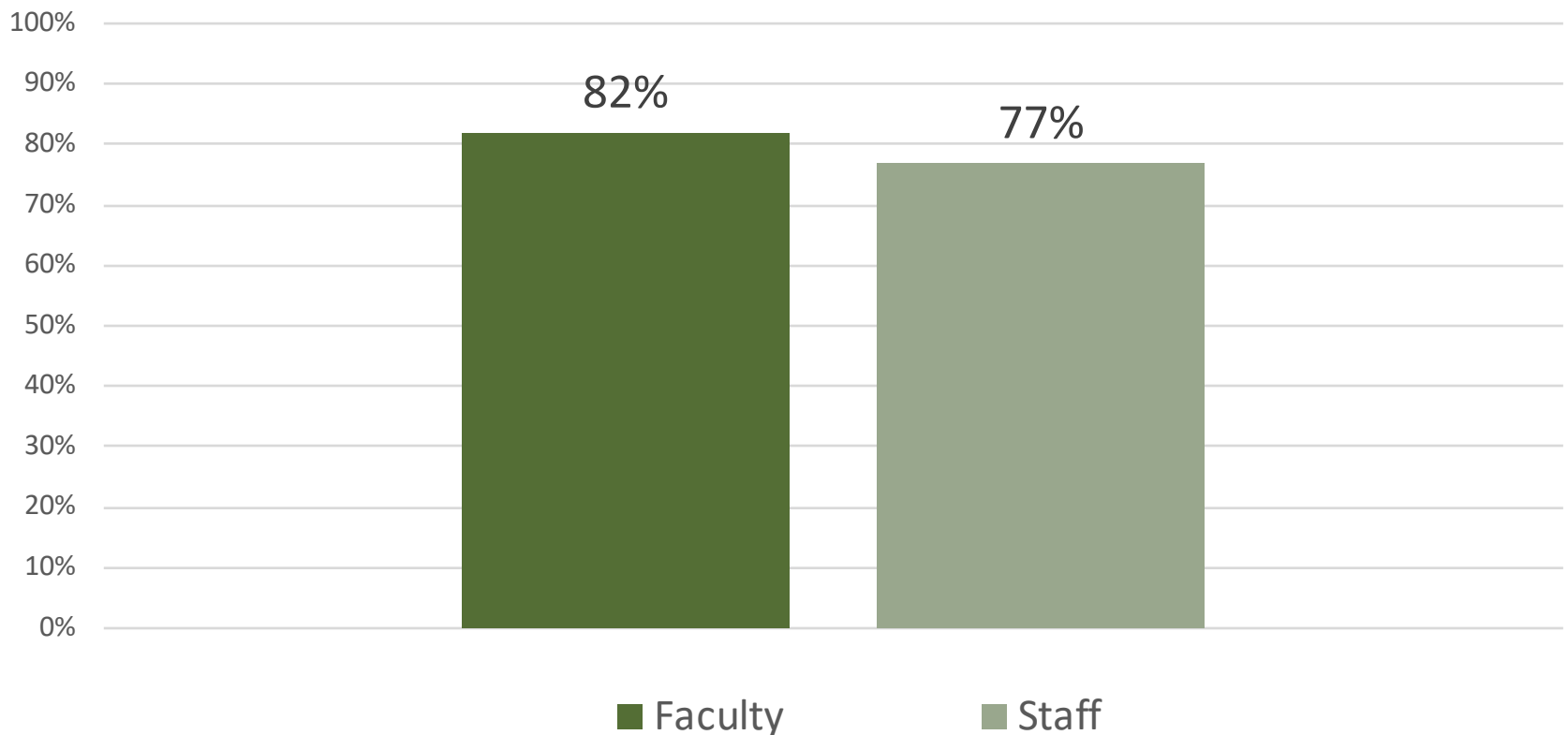
“Very Comfortable”

Faculty (17%) and staff (15%) responses were same as 2016, but students in 2020 dropped 12 percentage points to 26%.

- 25% of Latinx respondents
- 14% of White respondents
- 19% of Black respondents

Campus Climate Survey

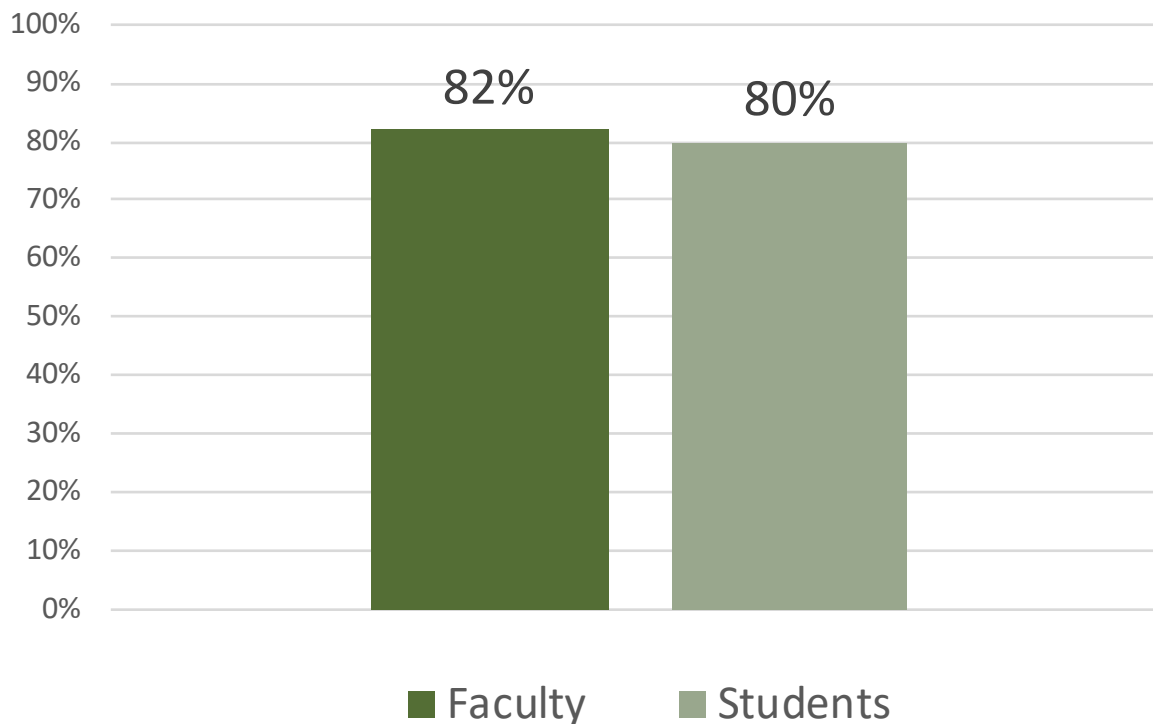
Most Were “Very Comfortable” Or “Comfortable” With
The Climate In Their Department



Note: Students were not asked this question

Campus Climate Survey

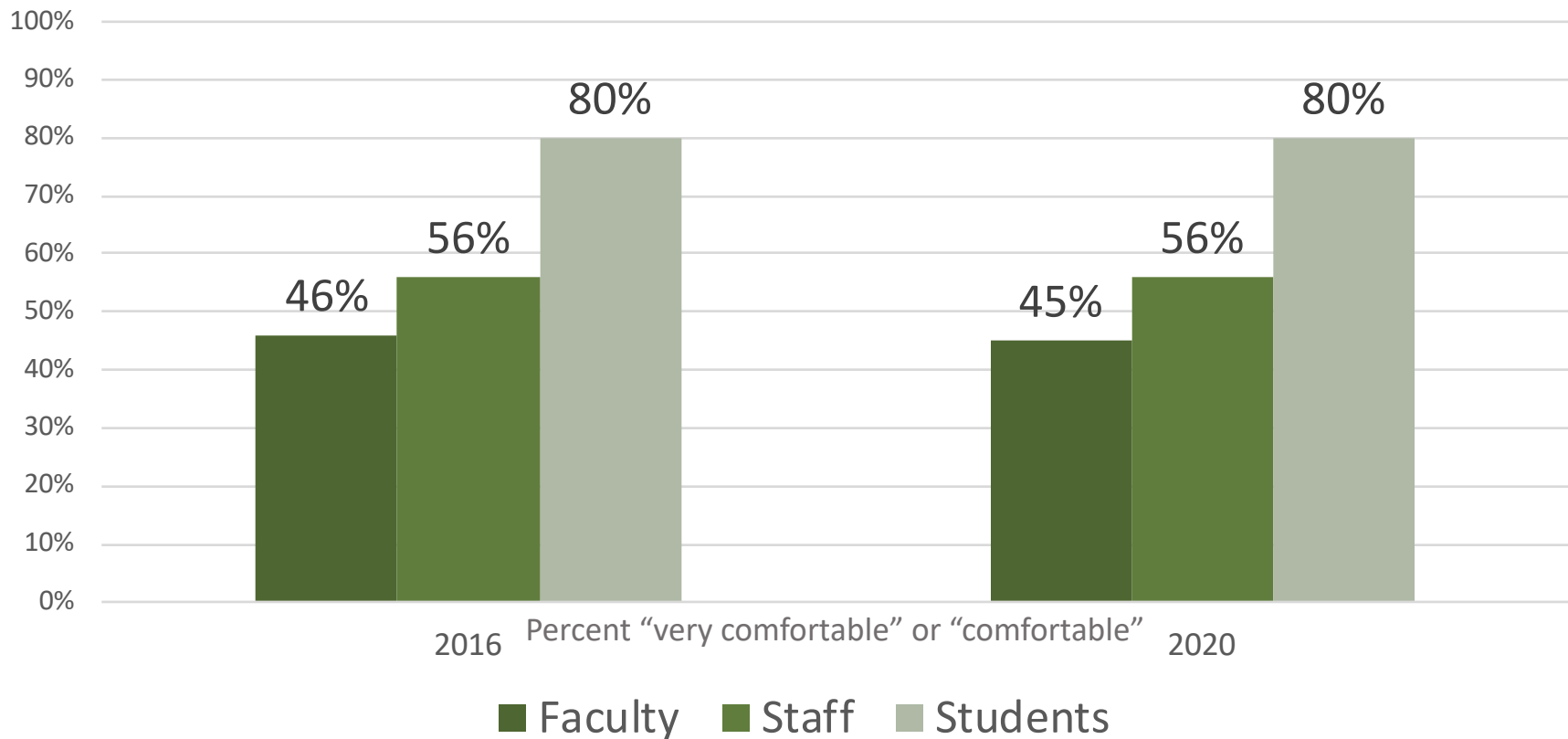
Most Were “Very Comfortable” Or
“Comfortable” With
Climate In The Classroom



Black respondents (19%) were much less likely than White (33%) and Latinx (43%) respondents to be “very comfortable” with the classroom climate.

Campus Climate Survey

No Differences From 2016 To 2020
In General Campus Climate



Campus Climate Survey

Have you ever seriously considered leaving Stetson?

- 29% of Students
Students considered leaving because they felt a lack of a sense of belonging.
- 66% of Staff
Staff cited limited opportunities for advancement.
- 58% of Faculty
Faculty considered leaving because they felt the campus was not welcoming.

"The biggest thing for me was the lack of a "community" aspect the law school had to offer. I did not feel welcomed by students and the biggest checkmark was the lack of sense of belonging I experienced daily."

"This place sucks. Those in power abuse it without consequence, we keep people down instead of providing them opportunities for advancement, and the hard-working, good-hearted people are exploited by the bad apples."

"When I came to Stetson 15 years ago, it was the culture (or "campus climate", if you prefer) that particularly attracted me. It was welcoming, enthusiastic, open-minded, and very much can-do. Now it's dominated by lazy people with jealous and narrow minds, who claim to the idea of innovation but don't want to actually do anything innovative at all. The students (and some colleagues) are still great. But those in charge should be taking a long, cold, hard look at themselves — and then leave."

Exclusionary Behavior

Campus Climate Survey

Have you personally experienced any exclusionary behavior¹ that has interfered with your ability to work or learn at Stetson?

- Overall population in 2020 (28%) showed no change from the 25% found in 2016.
 - 25% of Students in 2020
 - 33% of Staff in 2020
 - 36% of Faculty in 2020

"The disrespect and bullying occurs in faculty meetings and committee meetings, in the presence of other faculty and the Dean. Nobody seems to think it's inappropriate or wrong. It's 'just the way we are.'"

"Unless you identify as one particular party you have no place for acceptance on the college of law campus. Rude, uncivil behavior has been witnessed here when discussing politics."

1. Exclusionary behavior was described as "exclusionary (e.g., shunned, ignored), intimidating, offensive and/or hostile conduct (bullied, harassed)"

Exclusionary Behavior

- Overall, 27% of those on the College of Law campus who had experienced exclusionary conduct reported it.
- This is almost identical to the 2016 results, when 24% responded that they had reported such conduct.
- Of those reporting, the majority felt that the reporting was not responded to appropriately.

Observing Exclusionary Behavior

In addition to experiencing exclusionary behavior, respondents were asked if they had observed such behavior taking place.

Overall, 38%² had observed such behavior:

- 28% of Students
- 38% of Staff
- 50% of Faculty

"This toxic culture is so pervasive and extensive. I don't have the time to report it every time it happens."

"Rude comments, derogatory language are the norm at the college of law."

"Our campus has changed a lot in the last year. Many people in the administration and professors have left; things Stetson was known for when I started law school are no longer true about Stetson. The only direction Stetson Law seems to be going right now is down, and while I used to feel welcomed in so many offices on campus, that is no longer the case. What is going on at Stetson? It is not the place I fell in love with."

2. These figures are almost identical to those in 2016 (36%).

Campus Climate Survey

Percentages who experienced...

| | Law School |
|--|------------|
| Unwanted sexual contact | 1% |
| Unwanted sexually-related experiences ³ | 2% |
| Relationship violence | 1% |
| Stalking | 1% |
| None | 95% |

3. cat-calling, repeated sexual advances, sexual harassment.

Workplace Climate

Campus Climate Survey

Workplace Climate: Staff

- 20% of staff reported that they “strongly agree” that Stetson is a good place to work. Another 57% “agreed.”
- 41% reported their workload was permanently increased without additional compensation due to other staff departures and 37% were unable to complete assigned duties during work hours.
- 49% agreed that they perform more work than their Stetson colleagues with similar performance expectations (e.g., formal and informal mentoring or advising, helping with student groups and activities, providing other support).
- 73% agreed that their supervisor gave them career advice and adequate support to manage a work-life balance.
- 17% agreed that there are clear procedures on how they can advance at Stetson.
- Four out of five (81%) staff disagreed that staff salaries are competitive.
- 40% agreed that staff opinions are valued by Stetson faculty and administration.
- Over half (58%) disagreed that Stetson provides adequate resources to help them manage work-life balance.

Workplace Climate: Faculty

All faculty:

- Many (72%) felt that Stetson is a good place to work; however, only 31% “strongly agree” with this statement.
- None of the faculty strongly agreed that Stetson helped them with resources to manage a work-life balance. 65% disagreed.
- ...and thought that people who have children or eldercare are burdened with balancing work and family responsibilities (56%).

Tenure-track faculty:

- they have the opportunity to participate in substantive committee assignments (90%),
- the criteria for tenure are clear (77%),
- their research/creative activity is valued by the school (73%), and
- they were supported and mentored during their tenure track years (72%).
- 68% feel they work more to help students than do their Stetson colleagues,
- 58% feel burdened by service responsibilities beyond those of their Stetson colleagues with similar performance expectations, and
- 50% feel faculty opinions aren’t taken seriously by senior administrators.

Hiring Practices

Campus Climate Survey

Unjust Hiring Practices

- 34% of staff and 44% of faculty had observed unjust hiring practices.
 - 56% of Black respondents
 - 36% of White respondents
 - 2% of Latinx respondents
- Staff up from 14% in 2016.

Unjust Promotion Practices

- 31% of staff and 26% of faculty had observed unjust promotion or reclassification practices.
 - More women (31%) than men (17%) report this.
 - Faculty believe it is related to gender (26%) or race (16%).
 - Staff believe it is related to education credentials (21%).

Accessibility

Conditions that Influence Learning, Working, or Living

- 14% indicated that they had a condition/disability that influences their learning, working, or living activities.
 - 26% of faculty and 14% of staff reported a chronic illness or medical condition.
 - 17% of students reported a learning disability.

Conditions that Influence Learning, Working, or Living

- Barriers at Stetson College of Law
 - 12% Construction
 - 8% Doors
 - 8% Office furniture
 - 8% Campus transportation/parking
 - 8% Restrooms

Dimensions of Campus Climate

Ratings on Aspects of Campus Climate

In five cases there were sex differences, when looking at the “very positive” ratings.

- Men were more likely than women to perceive the campus as friendly (45% versus 34%), inclusive (40% versus 25%), and welcoming (49% versus 39%).
- Women were more likely to perceive the campus as positive for men (63% versus 41%) and positive for those with high socioeconomic status (71% versus 52%).

Dimensions of Campus Climate

- Socioeconomic status was a key issue, as the perception of Stetson as being “very positive” for people of high socioeconomic status was rated most highly, at 64%, and the lowest percentage of “very positive” aspects of campus climate was for people of low socioeconomic status (21%). In addition, 14% thought CoL was “very negative” for people of low socioeconomic status.
- The climate for people of various political affiliations was seen as less positive. People were more likely to rate the climate as more positive for men than they were for women.
- And, while most thought the climate was welcoming and friendly, in looking at specific aspects of positivity for subgroups at the CoL, they were fairly low.

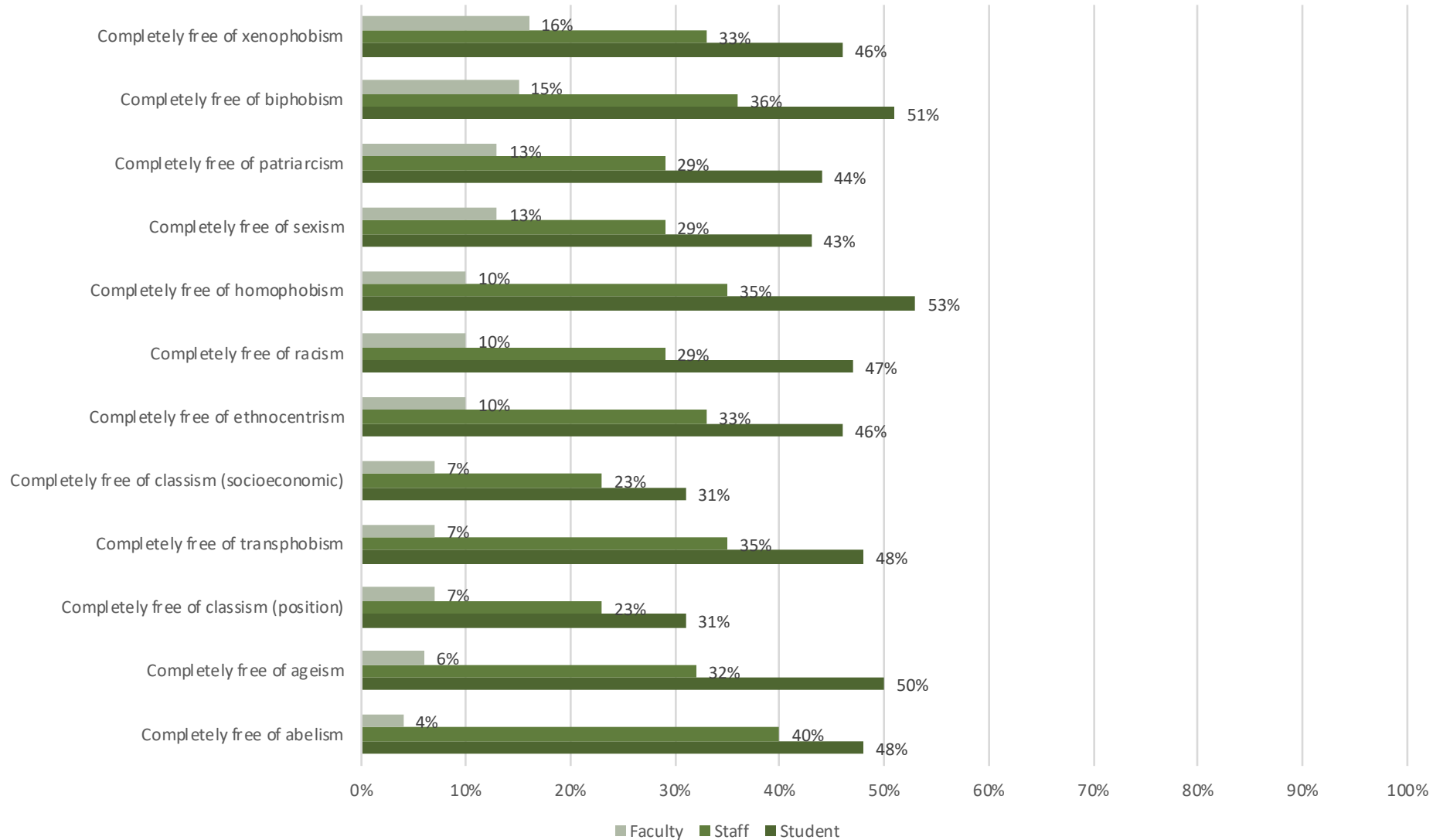
Dimensions of Campus Climate

- Black (33%) respondents were less likely than Latinx (46%) and White (49%) respondents to view Stetson as very friendly.
- Black (20%) respondents were less likely than White (32%) or Latinx (37%) respondents to report that Stetson was very inclusive.
- Black respondents (25%) were less likely than White (40%) or Latinx (41%) respondents to report that Stetson was very respectful.
- Black (18%) respondents were also less likely than Latinx (34%) and White (36%) respondents to report that Stetson was very positive for people of color.

Dimensions of Campus Climate

- When rating various aspects of campus climate, some of the lowest rated areas are those of classism.
- This is similar to the findings in the 2016 report, as only 27% in 2020 and 22% in 2016 felt that CoL was not classist with respect to socioeconomic status and 31% in 2020 and 24% in 2016 felt that CoL was not classist with respect to position on campus.
- In both 2020 and 2016 these were the lowest areas when ranked by results in the first column of answers (e.g., “completely free of classism”).

Ratings on Aspects of Campus Climate by Respondent Type



Campus Climate Survey

Student Ratings on Feeling Valued and Appreciated

- Students “strongly agree” (46%) that they have faculty role models.
- Students were more likely than faculty or staff to believe that the campus climate encourages free and open discussion of difficult topics.
- Most students agree that Stetson is a good place to go to college.
- 25% agree that faculty pre-judge them based on a perception of their identity/background.

Campus Climate Survey

Staff Ratings on Feeling Valued and Appreciated

- Many staff at CoL feel valued by their co-workers, supervisors, and students. They are much less likely to feel valued by Stetson senior administrators and faculty.
- Only 11% “strongly agree” that they feel valued by Stetson faculty.
- When asked if Stetson encourages free and open discussion of difficult topics, only 14% answered “strongly agree” but 43% “agree.”

Campus Climate Survey

Faculty Ratings on Feeling Valued and Appreciated

- Many CoL faculty feel valued by most people at CoL, but 33% disagree that they are valued by senior administrators.
- The figure is similar for not feeling appreciated by senior administrators (34%).
- Nobody on the CoL faculty strongly agreed that Stetson encourages free and open discussion of difficult topics. 19% strongly disagreed.

Institutional Priorities

Institutional Priorities Rated “Highest Priority”

| | Student Highest priority | Staff Highest priority | Faculty Highest priority |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Promote student success equally for all Stetson students | 43% | 53% | 45% |
| Provide adequate institutional resources to ensure student success for all students | 43% | 52% | 45% |
| Provide adequate support for faculty teaching | 38% | 27% | 39% |
| Provide adequate support for faculty research and scholarly writing | 25% | 19% | 31% |
| Develop a sense of community among students, faculty, administrators, and staff | 29% | 42% | 31% |
| Make the institution affordable for all Stetson students | 31% | 23% | 28% |
| Promote racial and ethnic diversity in the faculty and administration | 27% | 31% | 18% |
| Promote gender diversity in the faculty and administration | 31% | 29% | 14% |
| Recruit more traditionally underrepresented students | 36% | 17% | 7% |

All three groups felt that promoting student success for all Stetson students was one of the institution’s highest priorities.

More staff and students thought that promoting racial and ethnic diversity and gender diversity in the faculty and administration was among the highest priorities than did faculty.

Stetson and the Surrounding Community

Campus Climate Survey

Views on the Surrounding Community

Respondents were asked if their experiences on campus were different from those they experience in the community surrounding campus.

The surrounding community is mostly regarded as more welcoming and open-minded than the College of Law.

Individuals on both sides of the political aisle view Stetson College of Law differently. Some conservatives think the school is too liberal, and some liberals think the school is too conservative. Both, however, feel intolerance from the other side.

Campus Climate Survey

Views on the Surrounding Community

“Wildly different. Take a walk in downtown St. Petersburg. It has to be one of the most positive, open-minded, can-do places in the US right now. The law school, by contrast, seems largely to have reverted to a mindset from the 1950s.”

“The community surrounding campus is quite welcoming and unified.”

“The general community gives me some respect for my personal and professional accomplishments. I don't feel that way at work.”

Recommendations and final comments from Survey Respondents

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Student Replies***

- A number of law school students recommended less of a focus on diversity and climate and more of a focus on academics, preparing them for the bar, and increasing the school's ranking.
- Others asked for Stetson to be more affordable.
- The need for both conservative and liberal points of view to be respected was mentioned several times, although no recommendations were made on how to address the rift.

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Student Replies***

“Stop focusing on climate and begin focusing on academics. Hire better faculty who are not lazy. Hire faculty who will be published and active in the legal community to increase our impact in the legal world. Diversity is important, but it should not be the sole focus of school administration.”

“Focus more on academics, bar passage results, and trying to get students careers after graduation, and less on diversity and issues on race. Issues of diversity and race are not going to help anyone pass the bar or get a career after graduation. I feel like it is a waste of money and creates tension between people on this campus.”

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Student Replies***

“Focus on excellence--help high performing students become even better. Help struggling students become good, confident, competent students. "Diversity" is just noise--excellence crosses all boundaries. Look at those factors that impact Stetson's reputation among law schools and improve them--like BAR PASSAGE RATES. Focus on those areas that really matter and make the most difference to those who attend and graduate.”

“Making it more affordable as well as more inclusive.”

“Focus on making Stetson affordable. No one will care about any of this if they can't afford the education. No one will care about any of this if tuition is raised and bar passage continues to decrease. Focus on the quality of instructors; not the color of their skin.”

“Training to re-teach gender roles, stereotypes, etc. in order to decrease the toxic masculinity that seems somewhat prevalent at the law school.”

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Student Replies***

“Stop trying to “improve” the climate. A climate should organically grow over time. Trying to force it to change will only lead to negative results. The students get along. We are here to learn. Very few people want to take this survey because they really don't care. They just want you to stay out of their way and let them learn.”

“I have wanted to attend this institution for some time however, having now been exposed to numerous problems ranging from favoritism of faculty, transitional problems in the administration, and alarming radical ideology within the student body, my time at this school is quickly becoming one for the most disappointing experiences of my life.”

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Staff Replies***

- Staff feel undervalued, underpaid, and underappreciated and want that to change.
- They want chances for promotions at CoL and want more hiring from within.
- A number do not feel supported by Human Resources would like it revamped.
- They feel a divide between staff and faculty that makes working at Stetson unpleasant and stressful and would like that changed.

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Staff** Replies*

“Work to bridge the rather wide faculty-staff divide, improve staff morale/attitudes, and provide more opportunities for staff advancement and professional development.”

“Pay staff more. Staff are underappreciated and undervalued. We put forth our fair share here like being a volunteer to put together graduation with no representation from Faculty. The pay inequality between faculty and staff must be closed in some way.”

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Staff** Replies*

“I believe that Stetson should promote people to other departments within Stetson - not always hire outside. By not hiring within Stetson has lost a lot of good people. Give a chance to in-house candidates before hiring outside of Stetson.”

“Stetson has lost a huge amount of good people in the last year and needs to adjust its course and ask itself why. Surveys mean nothing if no one believes the responses or takes steps to remedy issues.”

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Faculty Replies***

Three themes emerged from the recommendations from faculty.

- Climate is perceived negatively and people do not like coming to work.
- Make workloads reasonable and promote promotions.
- Divergent views on diversity trainings. Some want them, others feel they in themselves are divisive.

Campus Climate Survey

*Do you have any specific recommendations for improving the climate at Stetson? **Faculty Replies***

“Stop making war on everyone. No one wants to come to work, because it’s gotten so bad here.”

“Don't let money get in the way of hiring additional faculty rather than burdening a small number of faculty to take on overloads on a consistent basis.”

“Make staff feel like they can actually get a promotion around here.”

“Ongoing diversity training, with a focus on racial bias.”

“I think we are overdoing it and making the situation worse by dividing the students (and employees) to into ever increasing distinct subgroups with a result of lack of cohesion into a community.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- Results from the Rankin survey tell us a few things.
- One is that not much has changed with respect to campus climate at Stetson in the past four years. Many of the 2020 results are very similar to those in 2016.
- When there has been change, in many cases the situation had worsened.

Conclusions

- People with experience at Stetson College of Law describe, with remorse, a school that has become more divisive.
- The word “toxic” was used by multiple people in describing a place where people do not want to come to work or to learn.
- They do not have confidence that positive change can be made under circumstances where senior administration stays behind closed doors that are monitored with cameras or where the Human Resources department is seen as perpetuating the problems and stifling change.

Conclusions

- While the toxic culture was pointed out multiple times, it cannot easily be tied to one area.
- Conservatives and liberals feel attacked.
- Faculty and staff feel overworked and underappreciated as they perceive others not working enough and receiving unmerited praise.
- They see that many people have left due to displeasure with the climate and lack of opportunity for advancement in both career opportunities and salary.

Conclusions

- The predominantly white law student body has very different views about diversity. Many do not feel that it should be a focus. They don't want to hear about it and wish the school would instead focus on improving academics and having a higher bar pass rate and ranking.
- They do not see a connection between the numerous complaints they have about ineffective faculty and policies that are not student-centered. They do not feel heard by faculty or the administration when they encounter difficulty.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Stetson College of Law should embark upon a year-long consideration of communication and respect for others in the Law School community.

This should be a fundamental focus of each community-wide event, speaker, faculty senate meeting, department meeting, and other opportunities to interact. If there are not sufficient skills and resources to drive this on campus, then a consultant with expertise in this area should be consulted.

Once faculty, staff, and students at College of Law are better able to communicate with respect, many of the other issues of concern in this report will likely improve.

Recommendations

Recommendation #2: Change how Stetson Law handles promotion.

The perceived lack of ability to be promoted, from both a professional aspect and related to compensation, needs to be addressed as a major contributor to a negative campus climate. Because Human Resources, which might spearhead such an examination, is seen as contributing towards the problem, such an examination would be best taken on by another group.

Recommendations

Recommendation #3: Promote greater awareness of current existing initiatives that people at Stetson already believe can improve campus climate and initiate ones that are not already in place.

A number of faculty, students, and staff were unaware of initiatives Stetson College of Law already has in place to improve campus climate.

Communications plans about these initiatives should be improved.

To paraphrase one of the respondents, it seems as if CoL already knows what initiatives would improve campus climate and would be better off engaging in them instead of repeatedly asking about them in a survey.

Recommendations

Recommendation #4: Address issues of economic importance.

Faculty, staff, and students all were concerned about finances. Many feel that they are compensated less at Stetson than their peers at other universities and organizations in the community. For some, this has led them to look elsewhere for employment.

A primary complaint was the lack of assistance from Stetson with childcare.

For students, there were concerns about being able to afford tuition as well as expenses of college.

It would mean a lot to those with childcare concerns to make some progress in this area.

A salary study could be helpful.

Recommendations

Recommendation #5: Review the assessment plan for campus climate.

While the Rankin survey can illustrate areas of inequity and discrimination, it is not as good at illuminating how to improve such areas. Rather than waiting four years to again revisit these same questions, it would be more useful for Stetson to examine campus climate issues more frequently, perhaps through existing surveys or focus groups.

A series of shorter “pulse taking” surveys conducted more frequently would provide quicker and better data to help improve action plans.