

The Campus Climate for Diversity: Student Perceptions



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Executive Summary

Virginia Tech graduate and undergraduate students were surveyed during the Fall 1998 semester about their perceptions of the campus climate. This assessment effort was part of the university's commitment to improve the working and learning climate at Virginia Tech as outlined in the *Update of the University Plan 1996-2001*.

The *Undergraduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate* was mailed to 3,000 undergraduate students enrolled at Virginia Tech during the Fall 1998 semester. The overall response rate for undergraduates was 38.7%. The *Graduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate* was mailed to 1,000 on-campus graduate students enrolled during the Fall 1998 semester. The overall response rate for graduate students was 48.5%. New students (both undergraduate and graduate) were excluded from the samples. Results for both surveys were analyzed by gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, and college. The following points are among the critical findings of the surveys.

- ◆ There is no single, uniformly perceived climate for diversity at Virginia Tech. One must consider multiple climates in terms of group membership based on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability status, and major (among others) as well as combinations of each.
- ◆ Almost all students (94% of both graduate and undergraduate students) agree that diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted. There is less agreement about the specific factors that contribute to a supportive climate for diversity. For example, students are less likely to agree that the Virginia Tech climate fosters diversity (73% of undergraduates and 68% of graduates). In addition, 49% of undergraduate and 32% of graduate student respondents believe that Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity.
- ◆ Minorities (i.e., anyone who is not white, male, heterosexual, Christian, and without disability) perceive a less positive climate overall and have greater sensitivity toward and respect for other minorities, regardless of the specific nature of the minority status.
- ◆ Undergraduate men and women at Virginia Tech appear to view a different campus in terms of its overall climate and its promotion of diversity. Undergraduate women see a climate that is less supportive of diversity in general than do men. Women are also more likely than men to experience unfair treatment based on gender and are more likely to engage in proactive diversity-related behaviors such as attending programs and challenging derogatory remarks.
- ◆ For virtually every dimension on which significant racial differences existed, the two groups differing most in perception were African American and White American undergraduate respondents. African Americans see and experience a less hospitable climate than do White Americans. They report more incidents of discrimination and harassment, less positive interactions with faculty, and seriously strained racial/ethnic relations in and out of the classroom. While 96% of White Americans find Blacksburg a comfortable community, only 57% of African Americans agree or strongly agree with this statement.
- ◆ Non-heterosexual undergraduate students rate every general climate item less positively than did heterosexuals. Undergraduate respondents rate the university climate for non-heterosexuals as least supportive of the various underrepresented groups. Only 39% of heterosexuals and 12% of non-heterosexuals rate the climate for non-heterosexuals as relatively positive. Non-heterosexuals were also more aware of and critical of issues facing other groups. Heterosexuals seem not only to have personally experienced a more welcoming campus, they also appear to be largely unaware of the intolerance endured by others.

- ◆ Undergraduate students with disabilities differ little from students without disabilities on the more generic climate factors (such as overall perception of Virginia Tech climate and diversity in general) but considerably on those involving personal treatment (including interactions with faculty and fair treatment by others). For example, compared with students without disabilities, fewer students with disabilities feel they have received adequate faculty guidance (56% versus 79%), believe there is a faculty member or administrator with whom they could discuss problems (63% versus 73%), or think their academic advisor is sensitive to their needs or concerns (55% versus 70%).
- ◆ Undergraduates also hold different perceptions of the climate at Virginia Tech depending upon the college in which they are majoring. The greatest differences among colleges occur on factors pertaining to diversity-related teaching, attitudes toward affirmative action, challenging derogatory remarks, awareness of services/programs, proactive diversity-related behavior, faculty behavior, and unfair treatment by others. Climate experiences across colleges tend to be moderated by gender, although this is not true when considering race. Racial differences in attitudes are so strong that they transcended any differences in climate that might be present from college to college.
- ◆ In contrast with the undergraduate survey results, male and female graduate students appear to hold remarkably similar views of the Virginia Tech campus climate. In general, both men and women perceive their departmental climate as well as the overall university climate in a positive way. At the departmental level, graduate students see faculty as supportive and fair and also rate their social and interpersonal relations with departmental staff and other graduate students as being favorable. At the general university level, graduate students perceive Virginia Tech as an institution which promotes diversity and is supportive of various minority groups.
- ◆ When looking at the perception of climate by race, a slightly different picture emerges. Although graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups agree that the departmental climate is supportive, differences were found by race on items relating to the Virginia Tech climate in general. African American graduate students observe a significantly less hospitable environment than any other racial group. In comparison, international students provide the most positive ratings on virtually every item measuring this facet of the climate.
- ◆ Gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students overwhelmingly believe they have to change some aspect of their personal characteristics (language, dress, behavior) in order to fit in (71% agreed with this compared to 28% of heterosexual students). Non-heterosexuals feel their interactions with faculty and staff are generally positive and that they are treated equitably within their departments, but they still have experienced more unpleasant treatment on campus than have heterosexuals. In particular, 51% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students have been harassed or otherwise treated unfairly at Virginia Tech because of their sexual orientation.
- ◆ Graduate students with disabilities experience a less supportive departmental climate than students without disabilities, including being treated less fairly and with less respect by faculty. Additionally, graduate students with disabilities rate their departments as being less accessible and less supportive of them than Virginia Tech as a whole.
- ◆ Similar to the results for undergraduate students, significant differences were found for graduate students depending on the college in which they were studying. Of the 17 climate dimensions, significant differences by college were found on all but three. For example, students in Natural Resources rate both the overall departmental climate as well as departmental equity most positively while students in the Pamplin College of Business on average rate these two dimensions least favorably.

Preface

The Context for Diversity at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech's history of exclusion is important to recall because that history continues to have an impact on our campus climate. It is not uncommon today, for example, to hear a black student say that they know they are not really wanted here and that they were recruited "for the numbers," or to hear a female student report a chilly classroom climate, particularly in the male-dominated disciplines.

It is only recently that Virginia Tech broke with its segregationist past and admitted first a black male (1953) and later, black women (1966). With the dropping of the requirement for participation in the Corps of Cadets in the mid-60s came the opportunity to admit women on the same basis as men to all of Virginia Tech's academic programs. Those who chose to come in those early days of integration of both blacks and women did so because they wanted to participate in Tech's fine and growing academic programs. However, they had to do so largely on terms created by and for the majority males who had been Tech's nearly exclusive clientele for its first hundred years. Access and participation by women and individuals of color in the academic, social, and cultural life of the institution increased gradually over the subsequent decades.

Documentation of the steps we've taken to overcome our history of exclusion is equally important. In recent years, a variety of initiatives give testament to our commitment to diversity and growing realization of the changes we need to make if all participants in the Virginia Tech community are going to thrive. A few of the most important diversity initiatives from the last decade or so are:

- ◆ Establishment of women's studies (1989) and black studies (1991) programs to reflect the burgeoning scholarship in many fields;
- ◆ Creation of the Black Cultural Center (1991), the Multicultural Center (1996), and the Women's Center (1994), joining an already existing Cranwell International Center;
- ◆ Expansion of the services for individuals with disabilities through the establishment of the ADA Coordinator position;
- ◆ Establishment of the Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence to coordinate retention initiatives for all students and to give special attention to the academic concerns and progress of black students;
- ◆ Creation of the Office of International Programs to encourage student study abroad, exchanges with institutions in other countries, and incorporation of global perspectives throughout the curriculum;
- ◆ Investment in the Exceptional Opportunity Program and the ABD Fellow Program (since 1992) providing salary support for recruitment and retention of senior women and underrepresented minorities on the faculty;
- ◆ Presentation of numerous events and educational programming concerning a wide variety of multicultural and women's issues, including celebration of women's month, black history month, and hispanic heritage month;
- ◆ Diversity training for academic administrators;
- ◆ Funding of a small grants program to foster diversity projects campuswide;
- ◆ Establishment of the Office of Minority Academic Opportunities Programs housed in

the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which offers a set of programs designed to attract and retain minority students in agriculture, natural resources, the life sciences, and related fields;

- ◆ Establishment of the Office of Minority Engineering Programs, which offers programs and services designed to increase the recruitment and retention of undergraduates from groups underrepresented in engineering;
- ◆ Investment in women's sports to bring athletic programs into compliance with Title IX;
- ◆ Establishment of partnerships with regional historically black colleges and universities; and
- ◆ Convening of the annual Diversity Summit beginning in 1998 on Martin Luther King's birthday to increase dialogue and understanding among a wide variety of constituency groups within the university community.

These efforts and commitments have begun to move Virginia Tech from an institution characterized by homogeneity to one that values diversity. Yet, for some, there is a sense that the progress is too slow and that incidents of racism, sexism, and homophobia continue to embroil the campus in controversy, thus perpetuating the image that Virginia Tech is not yet a place where all members of the community feel equally welcomed and valued.

This sense of frustration was further heightened by an incident involving a racist e-mail message in Fall 1997. President Torgersen addressed the campus community in November 1997 and acknowledged that there were serious problems in the climate for diversity at Virginia Tech. He also announced the creation of a new position of vice president for multicultural affairs, reporting to the president, whose responsibilities would include assessment of and improvement in the campus climate for diversity.

In Spring 1998, Senior Vice President and Provost Peggy Meszaros created a task force charged with a multifaceted assessment of diversity at Virginia Tech, which would provide vital information for both planning and programming related to diversity. The task force was charged with four major assignments:

- ◆ to prepare a report on the status of women and minorities (now completed and available from the Office of the Provost or from the university diversity website—www.diversity.vt.edu);
- ◆ to conduct and report surveys of faculty members, staff, and students concerning their perceptions of the climate for diversity;
- ◆ to prepare an inventory of diversity-related programs and initiatives; and
- ◆ to review policies.

This report concerning students' perceptions of the climate is the second in the series of several reports providing results of the campus climate surveys. The reports are being disseminated widely and used to foster discussions throughout the university community to enhance understanding of our campus climate. In addition, they have served as a partial basis for development of a strategic plan for diversity under the leadership of the vice president for multicultural affairs.

Diversity as an Institutional Priority

Following the 1987 self-study for regional accreditation prepared for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Virginia Tech has developed an institutional capacity for and commitment to planning. We define the pressing issues facing the university through analysis and discussion. And from those analyses, we develop goals designed to move us even further toward excellence and toward our vision of a model land grant university of the 21st century which effectively meets the ever-changing needs of its students and of its many other constituencies.

Becoming an institution with a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body is an important element of that vision already documented as part of the *Update to the University Plan 1996-2001* and the subsequent *Academic Agenda*. The strategic plan for diversity clearly identifies the goals and objectives that will help us realize this commitment, along with the measures we will use to evaluate our progress.

Diversity must become a more compelling part of our vision of an excellent university, especially one that is committed to serving the needs of the Commonwealth. There are many reasons, beyond a commitment to social justice, why this should be so. Currently, Virginia Tech's student body does not reflect the demography of the college-age population in the state. While 20% of Virginia's population is African American, only 4.2% of the undergraduates at Virginia Tech in Fall 1999 were African American. Hispanics, Native Americans, and women are also underrepresented in the student body. This means, quite simply, that Virginia Tech is not contributing adequately to the development of talent and leadership among all groups of Virginia citizens on which our collective economic future depends. Nor does Virginia Tech's workforce reflect the availability of women and minorities with the requisite credentials, which means that the perspectives and experiences of many in the population are not adequately reflected in our decision making, curriculum development, or programmatic initiatives.

A commitment to diversity is not simply a matter of achieving adequate representation, however. It also means preparing our students, especially students from the majority group, for their role in a multicultural workforce in which the talent of all must be brought to bear on economic, political, and social issues in a global context. Employers are increasingly demanding from our graduates the skills, competencies, and experiences to function effectively in work teams of women and men from many backgrounds. A few employers have already terminated their campus recruitment visits to Virginia Tech because of the lack of diversity in the student body. Diversity is a practical agenda that we must address if our graduates are to remain prized recruits for many of the businesses and organizations that have sought them in the past.

While there are clearly lessons and ideas that we might draw from businesses and other universities that have achieved a greater degree of success with diversifying their workforce and/or student body, we must also shape a plan that reflects our history and circumstances. We do this, in part, by generating a broader, more widely shared understanding of the complex issues related to diversity. This report on undergraduate and graduate students' perceptions, along with the already published and forthcoming reports on faculty and staff, respectively, will serve that end by providing vital information about the ways in which the climate for diversity is perceived by many different groups within the university community.

Organization of the Report

The report includes findings for both the undergraduate and graduate student assessments of campus climate. The first part of the report begins with a description of the survey purpose, methodology, and demographic characteristics of undergraduate respondents. Subsequent chapters address differences in perceptions for specific campus subgroups based on gender (Chapter 2), race/ethnicity (Chapter 3), sexual orientation (Chapter 4), disability status (Chapter 5), and college in which respondents were majoring (Chapter 6). The second half of the report summarizes survey responses for graduate student respondents. Chapters 7 through 12 parallel the organization of undergraduate findings with each chapter devoted to comparisons of responses for particular subpopulations. Chapter 13 examines similarities and differences between undergraduate and graduate perceptions of the climate at Virginia Tech.

1

Survey Purpose, Methodology, and Description of Respondents— Undergraduates

The instrument used for this survey was modeled after campus climate surveys conducted at other major research universities and was developed collaboratively by Associate Provost Patricia Hyer, the Work Group on Campus Climate appointed by Provost Peggy Meszaros and chaired by Elyzabeth Holford, and the Center for Survey Research. The content of this survey appeared to be more inclusive in its definition of diversity and “otherness” than those used at other institutions. Furthermore, the survey developed for the Virginia Tech assessment of climate included questions concerning both attitudes toward and experiences with diversity, which did not appear on other campus climate surveys. It included a number of items which parallel those in campus climate surveys administered to Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and graduate students.

The questionnaire was pretested with undergraduate students in several classes at Virginia Tech as well as with the President’s Student Advisory Committee and then refined further by the Center for Survey Research before being mailed to sample members. The four-page climate survey contained sections to gather information on students’ perceptions of the general climate at Virginia Tech, attitudes about diversity issues, experiences related to campus climate, familiarity with particular services and programs offered on campus, and demographic information. A copy of the survey and cover letter is included in Appendix A.

Methodology

The Virginia Tech *Undergraduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate* was mailed to 3,000 of 13,174 eligible undergraduate students enrolled at Virginia Tech during the Fall 1998 semester. First-time freshmen were excluded from the sample because of the brevity of their experience at Virginia Tech. Of the 2,895 deliverable surveys, 1,120 completed surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 38.7%.

In order to obtain sufficient numbers of minority responses for comparisons across racial/ethnic groups, surveys were sent to all African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American undergraduate students. In contrast, White American students as well as students having citizenship in a country other than the United States were sampled at relatively low, albeit similar rates of 12.9% and 13.8%, respectively. To identify students for potential sample selection, race categories identified on Virginia Tech student records were used instead of self-reported race. As a result, there was some disparity in self-reported versus Virginia Tech-based race designations across the six categories. Most of the inconsistency resulted from the absence of a mixed race category in the Virginia Tech coding scheme in conjunction with the inclusion by Virginia Tech of international status as a racial group. Race codes were unavailable for eight of the respondents.

When differences in response rates were compared across racial/ethnic group (based on Virginia Tech race categories), White Americans responded at a significantly ($p < .01$) higher

rate than either African Americans or Asian Americans. All other tests of proportions found similar response rates across the groups. Comparison of response rates by gender indicated women (44.4%) responding at a significantly ($p < .01$) higher rate than men (31.7%). Across gender and racial/ethnic group, female international (57.9%) and Native American (57.1%) students had the highest overall response rates while male African Americans (20.6%) and male Native Americans (25.0%) responded at the lowest overall rates. Table 1.1 lists the response rates by gender and racial/ethnic group. It should be noted that because the Office of Institutional Research was unable to track nondeliverable surveys by race and gender, numbers in the table are based on the total number of surveys initially distributed. Therefore, these response rates are likely to be slight underestimations for all groups based on the assumption that rates of nondeliverable surveys were approximately equal across gender and race.

Table 1.1 Response rates by race/ethnicity and gender

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black/African American ¹	97/253	38.3	60/291	20.6	157/544	28.9
Native American	4/7	57.1	5/20	25.0	9/27	33.3
Asian American	109/270	40.4	126/406	31.0	235/676	34.8
Hispanic	37/89	41.6	35/124	28.2	72/213	33.8
White	301/618	48.7	317/871	36.4	618/1489	41.5
International	11/19	57.9	11/36	30.6	22/55	40.0
Total ²	559/1256	44.5	554/1748	31.7	1112/3004	37.0

¹Race groups are based on Virginia Tech categories. ²Values in table do not account for nondeliverables.

The initial survey was sent in early October 1998, along with a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope. Shortly after the initial mailing, a follow-up postcard was sent to encourage those who had not yet responded to complete and return their surveys. Once the receipt of incoming completed surveys had slowed, a second complete survey package was mailed to all nonrespondents. Student identification numbers were included on the survey forms to facilitate tracking of nonrespondents as well as to match student responses with the Virginia Tech race categories described above. Consequently, although responses were confidential they were not anonymous.

Prior to conducting analyses on the survey items, sampling weights were computed and applied to take into account the disproportionate sampling design. Weights were based on the probability of being selected in the sample and equaled 7.73 for White Americans, 7.22 for international students, and 1.0 for all others. Application of such weights is intended to produce sample data which are more reflective of the Virginia Tech population in terms of racial/ethnic composition than unweighted data.

Data analytic procedures included descriptive statistics, z-tests of proportions, factor analysis, reliability analysis, χ^2 tests of independence, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Prior to comparing various subgroups on the survey items, factor analysis was used to

determine if the items could be clustered into meaningful subsets (or factors). Five factor analyses were run based on general sections of the survey including overall Virginia Tech climate, general perceptions of diversity at Virginia Tech, diversity-related experiences, diversity-related behavior and actions, and familiarity with programs and services offered at Virginia Tech. Underlying clusters of items were identified using patterns of factor loadings (i.e., correlations between items and underlying factors) based on both oblique and orthogonal rotation. Items not exhibiting salient loadings or adhering to the principle of simple structure were omitted from analyses involving composite scores. As a result of the factor analyses, 15 interpretable dimensions were identified and used in subsequent analyses involving group comparisons. Table 1.2 lists the 15 dimensions and the specific survey items included within each. Internal consistency reliability (R_{xx}) based on Cronbach's alpha is noted next to each dimension.¹ Reliability was satisfactory ($\geq .70$) for 10 of the 15 scales and was $> .60$ for the remaining scales.

Scores on each dimension were obtained by summing responses to all items within the dimension. Raw scores were then standardized to facilitate comparisons across different dimensions. Mean comparisons were made across the 15 climate dimensions on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, and college using factorial ANOVAs and independent samples t-tests.²

All statistical tests were based on an alpha of .05. Where multiple tests were conducted, the Bonferroni adjustment was applied to minimize the risk of obtaining significant results merely by chance.

Table 1.2 **Survey items and dimensions identified within the *Undergraduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate***

Virginia Tech Climate

- ◆ General Virginia Tech Climate for Groups ($R_{xx} = .84$)
 - ◇ Respect by faculty members for students of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ University commitment to the success of students of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ University commitment to the success of women students
 - Rate the climate at VT in general in terms of being:*
 - ◇ accessible/inaccessible to people with disabilities
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of people with disabilities
 - ◇ racist/non-racist
 - ◇ sexist/non-sexist
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of different religious beliefs
- ◆ Interaction with Faculty and Administrators ($R_{xx} = .74$)
 - ◇ I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ When I have a concern/problem, I feel that there is a faculty member/administrator at Virginia Tech who I can talk to
 - ◇ My current academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns
 - ◇ I feel that there are faculty or administrator role models for me at Virginia Tech
- ◆ Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus ($R_{xx} = .84$)
 - ◇ Racial/ethnic integration on campus
 - ◇ Friendship between students of different racial and ethnic groups

¹Frequencies for individual items by gender and race/ethnicity are presented in Appendixes B and C.

²Appendix D notes the significant mean differences by group for the 15 factors.

- ◇ Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom
- ◇ Interaction among students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom
- ◆ Social/Interpersonal Climate ($R_{xx} = .67$)
 - ◇ I often feel that I don't "fit in" at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics in order to "fit in" at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself
 - ◇ I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating

Diversity at Virginia Tech

- ◆ General Diversity at Virginia Tech ($R_{xx} = .74$)
 - ◇ Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity
 - ◇ Top university administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background
 - ◇ Virginia Tech provides an adequate program of support for students experiencing academic difficulty
 - ◇ Students at Virginia Tech have significant input in university matters
 - ◇ Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable
- ◆ Affirmative Action/Diversity Attitudes ($R_{xx} = .67$)
 - ◇ Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators
 - ◇ Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity
 - ◇ Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified students
 - ◇ All Virginia Tech undergraduates should be required to take at least one course that focuses on racial/ethnic minorities and/or women's history, culture, or perspectives
- ◆ Diversity Teaching ($R_{xx} = .86$)
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech attempt to integrate racial/ethnic issues into courses
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech attempt to integrate gender issues into courses

Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

- ◆ Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences ($R_{xx} = .87$)

How often have you read, heard, or seen insensitive or negative comments/materials about each of the following:

 - ◇ racial/ethnic minorities
 - ◇ women
 - ◇ individuals with disabilities
 - ◇ non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ individuals from the Appalachian region (including southwest Virginia)
 - ◇ individuals from different national origins
 - ◇ religious groups
- ◆ Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions ($R_{xx} = .86$)

How often have you felt you were not free to voice your true opinion about issues concerning each of the following groups?

 - ◇ racial/ethnic minorities
 - ◇ women
 - ◇ non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ people with disabilities

◆ Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics ($R_{xx} = .68$)

How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at Virginia Tech because of the personal characteristics below:

- ◇ race/ethnicity
- ◇ gender
- ◇ sexual orientation
- ◇ religion
- ◇ age
- ◇ accent/dialect
- ◇ national origin
- ◇ disability
- ◇ social class origin

◆ Fair Treatment by Groups ($R_{xx} = .74$)

How fairly do you feel you have been treated by the following groups at Virginia Tech?

- ◇ residence hall personnel
- ◇ professors
- ◇ teaching assistants
- ◇ administrators
- ◇ other students
- ◇ the town of Blacksburg community

Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

◆ Challenge Derogatory Remarks ($R_{xx} = .83$)

- ◇ Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory remarks
- ◇ Challenged others on sexually derogatory remarks

◆ Proactive Diversity Behavior ($R_{xx} = .63$)

- ◇ Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed
- ◇ Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women
- ◇ Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups

◆ Derogatory Comments ($R_{xx} = .62$)

- ◇ Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons
- ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours
- ◇ Refused to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture, or gender
- ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region (including southwest Virginia)
- ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities

Awareness of Virginia Tech Services and Programs

◆ Overall Awareness of Services and Programs ($R_{xx} = .83$)

Please indicate the extent to which you are familiar with each of the Virginia Tech services and programs below:

- ◇ Women's Center
- ◇ Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts & Education)
- ◇ Multi-Cultural Center
- ◇ Black Cultural Center
- ◇ Academic Enrichment Office
- ◇ Services for Students with Disabilities
- ◇ Cranwell International Center

Note: Prior to analyses, all items were recoded so that larger values indicated higher levels of the trait being measured (in general this usually meant higher levels of agreement or greater frequency of occurrence).

Description of the Respondents

Table 1.3 presents demographic and background information for the total undergraduate sample and by gender. These values reflect unweighted, observed responses.³ Based on frequency of response to the demographic items the majority of respondents were White (55%), Christian (71%), heterosexual (98%) U.S. citizens (98%). Men (49.8%) and women (50.2%) were almost equally represented in the sample despite the greater relative proportion of men (58%) than women (42%) enrolled at Virginia Tech. Although respondents came from all colleges the majority were from either Arts and Sciences (32%) or Engineering (24%). However, college majors did differ somewhat by gender with women coming mostly from Arts and Sciences (40%) and Human Resources and Education (16%) and men majoring primarily in Engineering (37%) and Arts and Sciences (25%). As might be expected, cumulative grade point average tended to be somewhat normally distributed with most students falling in the 2.5 to 2.99 range (33%) and somewhat fewer in the 2.0 to 2.49 (22%) and 3.0 to 3.49 (26%) ranges. Only 19% of the respondents were the first in their families to attend a four-year college.

In terms of other background variables that might be relevant to climate perceptions, students were asked several questions concerning their community experiences prior to attending Virginia Tech. The largest proportion of respondents (47%) indicated that they had spent most of their lives in suburban communities of 50,000 or more while relatively few (14%) came from rural areas. These proportions did differ by race/ethnicity, however, with Asian respondents most likely (60.3%) and African American respondents least likely (34.2%) to have grown up in suburban communities. More White respondents (19.3%) spent their childhoods in rural areas than any other racial/ethnic group. Differences in community type among the groups were statistically significant ($\chi^2(9) = 75.7, p < .001$). Prior experiences with respect to racial/ethnic composition of childhood neighborhoods, high schools, and friendships also differed considerably among respondents, particularly when race/ethnicity was considered. For example, whereas the majority of White Americans reported that their neighborhoods and high schools were comprised primarily of White students, most Asian Americans indicated that their neighborhoods and high schools included mostly non-Asians. African American respondents appeared to come from more racially balanced neighborhoods and high schools with a large number reporting about half the same/different race/ethnicity in their neighborhoods (30%) and in their high schools (31%). Racial/ethnic composition of friends followed similar patterns.

³ Appendix E presents the demographic information after sampling weights were applied.

Table 1.3

Demographic and background characteristics of undergraduate respondents by gender

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Current Class Standing</i>						
Total respondents	558	100	556	100	1114	100
Freshman	4	1	10	2	14	1
Sophomore	171	31	164	30	335	30
Junior	184	33	179	32	363	33
Senior	199	36	203	37	402	36
<i>Race/Ethnicity (self-reported)</i>						
Total respondents	559	100	555	100	1114	100
Asian	78	14	107	19	185	17
Black/African American	85	15	52	9	137	12
Hispanic	26	5	24	4	50	5
Native American	3	<1	2	<1	5	<1
White	299	54	314	57	613	55
Other/mixed	68	12	56	10	124	11
<i>Citizenship Status</i>						
Total respondents	560	100	556	100	1116	100
US citizen	550	98	538	97	1088	98
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	7	1	16	3	23	2
Non-U.S. citizen	3	<1	2	<1	4	<1
<i>College in Which Majoring</i>						
Total respondents	560	100	556	100	1116	100
Agriculture/Life Science	39	7	29	5	68	6
Arts and Sciences	226	40	136	25	362	32
Architecture/Urban Studies	15	3	29	5	44	4
Business	83	15	96	17	179	16
Engineering	61	11	207	37	268	24
Natural Resources	13	2	16	3	29	3
Human Resources/Education	91	16	15	3	106	10
University Studies	10	2	8	1	18	2
Double Major/Other College	22	4	20	4	42	4
<i>Cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech</i>						
Total respondents	558	100	553	100	1111	100
3.5 - 4.0	93	17	74	13	167	15
3.0 - 3.49	161	29	131	24	292	26
2.5 - 2.99	170	31	193	35	363	33
2.0 - 2.49	113	20	128	23	241	22
below 2.0	21	4	27	5	48	4
<i>Religious Faith</i>						
Total respondents	560	100	555	100	1115	100
Christian	418	75	376	68	794	71
Jewish	8	1	5	1	13	1
Muslim	6	1	9	2	15	1
None	79	14	114	21	193	17
Other	49	9	51	9	100	9
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>						
Total respondents	558	100	557	100	1114	100
Heterosexual	547	98	542	98	1089	98
Gay or Lesbian	5	1	6	1	11	1
Bisexual	6	1	8	1	14	1

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Disability</i>						
Total respondents	557	100	553	100	1110	100
Yes	18	3	19	3	37	3
No	539	97	534	97	1073	97
<i>First in Family to Attend College</i>						
Total respondents	559	100	556	100	1115	100
Yes	105	19	111	20	216	19
No	454	81	445	80	899	81
<i>Setting Where Spent Most of Life</i>						
Total respondents	558	100	555	100	1113	100
Rural area	76	14	75	14	151	14
Small town/city	120	22	116	21	236	21
Suburb of 50,000 or more	264	47	253	46	517	47
City of 50,000 or more	98	18	111	20	209	19
<i>Racial Composition of Neighborhood</i>						
Total respondents	557	100	556	100	1113	100
Nearly all same race as you	150	27	145	26	295	27
Mostly same race as you	129	23	146	26	275	25
About half same race	123	22	97	17	220	20
Mostly different race than you	95	17	100	18	195	18
All or nearly all different race	60	11	68	12	128	12
<i>Racial Composition of High School</i>						
Total respondents	559	100	556	100	1115	100
Nearly all same race as you	116	21	78	14	194	17
Mostly same race as you	129	23	167	30	296	27
About half same race	154	28	127	23	281	25
Mostly different race than you	110	20	120	22	230	21
All or nearly all different race	50	9	64	12	114	10
<i>Racial Composition of Friends</i>						
Total respondents	559	100	556	100	1115	100
Nearly all same race as you	133	24	101	18	234	21
Mostly same race as you	221	40	213	38	434	39
About half same race	97	17	107	19	204	18
Mostly different race than you	56	10	81	15	137	12
All or nearly all different race	52	9	54	10	106	10

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

2

Differences by Gender for Undergraduate Students

Male and female undergraduate students¹ at Virginia Tech appear to differ in their views of campus climate issues in several key areas. Of the 15 climate and diversity dimensions, statistically significant gender differences were found on seven. Moreover, on six dimensions in which there were no overall gender differences, men's and women's experiences and perceptions tended to depend upon the college in which they were majoring. Not too surprisingly, women majoring in traditionally male-dominated fields such as engineering and agriculture and life sciences tended to express less positive attitudes than their male classmates in the same areas.

In addition to offering contrasting perceptions of several aspects of campus experience, undergraduate men and women seem to differ in their diversity-related behaviors. Men admitted to engaging in more negative behaviors such as making derogatory remarks about others whereas women indicated greater participation in proactive diversity-related activities including attendance at non-classroom programs. Women were also more aware of the various programs and services offered on campus.

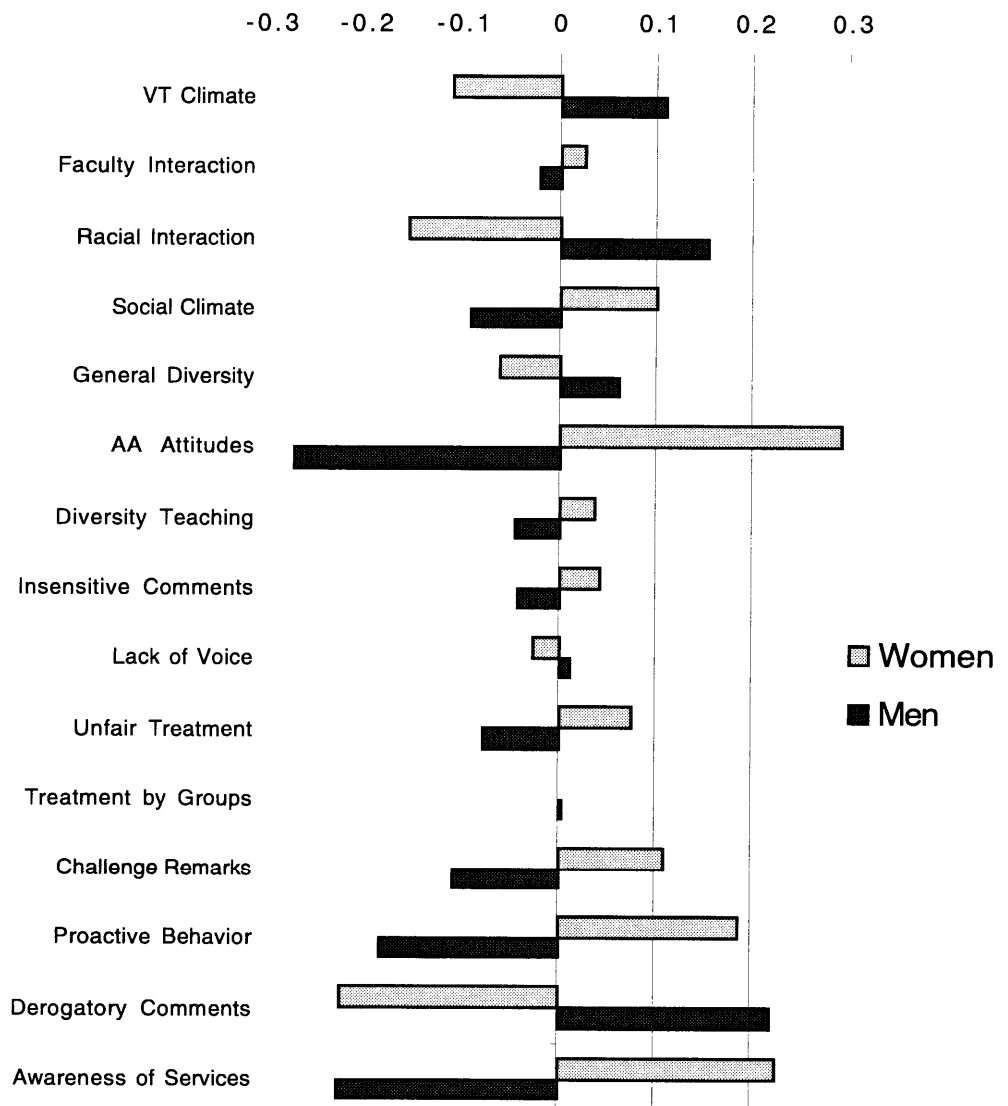
Despite some of the gender-related differences in campus experiences, undergraduate women generally believe they are treated as fairly as undergraduate men by faculty and others on campus including residence hall staff, teaching assistants, etc. They also feel free to voice their true opinions about diversity-related issues and in general they have encountered insensitive comments or offensive materials at about the same frequency as undergraduate men.

Figure 2.1 presents the gender differences graphically for all 15 dimensions. Scores have been standardized so that zero represents the average score for that dimension. Bar length represents relative deviation of the group from the overall sample mean with bars to the right of zero corresponding to higher mean responses. For example, on the dimension reflecting attitudes toward affirmative action (AA Attitudes), the long bar to the right reflects women's average responses and the darker bar to the left of center represents men's average responses. These bars indicate considerable discrepancy between men and women on this dimension with women reporting greater support of affirmative action than men. On dimensions such as "Faculty Interaction," "Lack of Voice," and "Treatment by Groups," the relatively short bars suggest little difference in perception between male and female respondents. For most dimensions positive values indicate more positive climate attitudes and experiences, but for a few dimensions, such as making derogatory remarks (Derogatory Comments), a positive value indicates greater likelihood of participating in negative behavior.

¹ Throughout this report, the terms "student" and "respondent" are used interchangeably. The reader is advised that this is not intended to refer to the population as a whole. Due to the relatively low response rate, generalizations should be made cautiously.

Figure 2.1

Differences between men and women undergraduates on z-scores for 15 factors



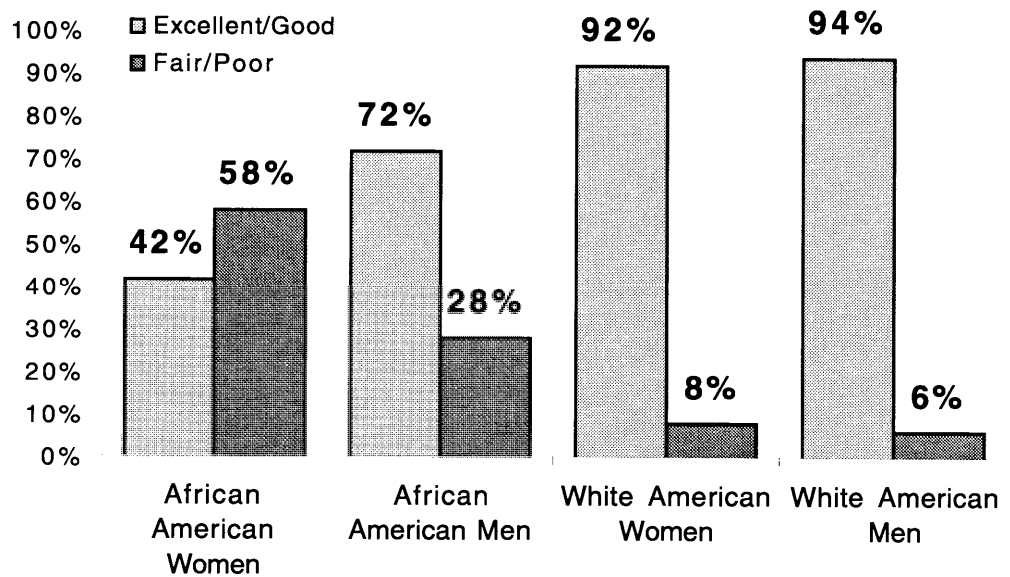
Virginia Tech Climate in General

Assessment of general campus climate included the dimensions of climate at Virginia Tech in general, interaction with faculty and administrators, racial/ethnic interaction on campus, and social/interpersonal climate. (See table 1.2 on page 3 for a listing of items associated with each dimension). Men perceived a more supportive environment overall in terms of the university being non-sexist, non-racist, supportive of people with disabilities, and supportive of non-heterosexuals. Undergraduate men were also more optimistic with regard to racial/ethnic interaction on campus. They saw more friendships between students of different racial/ethnic groups as well as interaction among these groups outside of the classroom.

Interestingly, some of the gender differences on individual survey questions concerning the general climate were present only for certain racial groups. For example, more White

American men (89%) than women (79%) believed the university is committed to the success of women students and that the campus is accessible to people with disabilities (68% and 55% of White American men and women, respectively). Similarly, African American male and female respondents differed in their perception of respect shown by faculty members for students of different racial/ethnic groups, with 72% of African American men and only 42% of African American women rating the level of respect as good or excellent (figure 2.2). Gender differences were also seen for White American respondents regarding the issue of racial/ethnic interaction on campus. Significantly more White American men than White American women rated the climate for racial/ethnic integration (60% of men and 45% of women) and for classroom relations among students of different races (82% of men and 74% of women) as good or excellent. For other racial groups there were no gender differences on individual survey items concerning the general Virginia Tech climate or racial/ethnic interaction on campus.

Figure 2.2 Ratings of respect shown by faculty members for students of different racial and ethnic group



Despite the gender differences described above, women respondents did not differ from men respondents in their perceived treatment by faculty and administrators regarding adequacy of faculty guidance and availability of faculty/administrators for discussing concerns and problems. More importantly, both men and women rated their interaction with faculty and administrators as generally positive with the majority agreeing they had received adequate guidance from faculty (69%), could talk with a faculty member/administrator when they had a problem (70%), and had faculty or administrator role models at Virginia Tech (73%). Undergraduate men and women also expressed similar views on social and interpersonal aspects of the Virginia Tech climate indicating they feel they “fit in” with other students (67%) and that they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech (94%). However, when race was taken into account to assess gender differences, White American

men (20%) were more inclined than White American women (9%) to feel they had to change their personal characteristics to fit in at Virginia Tech whereas more White American women (87%) than men (76%) indicated greater satisfaction with opportunities for social activities. Respondents of other racial/ethnic groups did not differ by gender in their responses to items concerning treatment by faculty or social/interpersonal climate.

Although undergraduate women overall perceived comparable treatment by faculty/administrators, this perception did not hold across all colleges. Specifically, in Agriculture & Life Sciences female students perceived significantly less favorable treatment than their male counterparts whereas in Human Resources and Education they experienced significantly more favorable treatment than their male classmates. In response to individual items, 23% of women and 49% of men in Agriculture & Life Sciences strongly agreed that they had received adequate guidance from Virginia Tech faculty. Similarly, only 29% of women in that college strongly agreed there was a faculty member or administrator to whom they could talk when faced with a concern or problem, compared with 57% of men from Agriculture and Life Sciences who strongly agreed to that item. In contrast, 37% of women and 20% of men in Human Resources & Education strongly agreed that there is a faculty member to whom they can talk when they have a concern or problem. Similarly, more undergraduate women (43%) than men (17%) from Human Resources & Education strongly agreed that their academic advisor is sensitive to their needs and concerns.

Diversity at Virginia Tech

Diversity at Virginia Tech comprised the factors of general diversity at Virginia Tech, affirmative action/diversity attitudes, and diversity teaching. With respect to general diversity at Virginia Tech, men and women did not differ significantly in their perceptions. Results, as illustrated in figure 2.3, indicated that both men and women on average agreed that faculty are generally fair to students regardless of background (84%) and are approachable outside the classroom (83%). In addition, men and women respondents believe students experiencing difficulty receive adequate support (74%), Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity (73%), and to a lesser extent Virginia Tech is a good place to gain an understanding of multicultural issues/perspectives (64%). Although there was no significant overall gender difference on perceptions of general diversity, men and women respondents did differ depending upon their race and college. African American women observed a significantly less positive climate with respect to diversity than African American men while Asian Americans, White Americans, and other race respondents did not differ by gender. For example, more African American men (68%) than women (51%) feel that Virginia Tech faculty are fair to all students regardless of background and that Virginia Tech students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussions and activities (45% and 31% of African American men and women, respectively). When considering gender in the context of college, women majoring in the College of Engineering experienced a significantly less favorable climate for diversity than men in the same college. Men and women in the other colleges did not differ in their perceptions of the general climate for diversity at Virginia Tech.

In terms of attitudes toward affirmative action, there was a significant difference between undergraduate men and women with women students expressing more positive views toward diversity and affirmative action efforts at the university (figure 2.4). Specifically, more women (98%) than men (90%) believed diversity should be promoted at Virginia Tech and that all undergraduates should be required to take one course that focuses on racial/ethnic minorities and/or on women's issues (55% of women and 33% of men). Moreover men were

Figure 2.3 Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing, combined responses of men and women

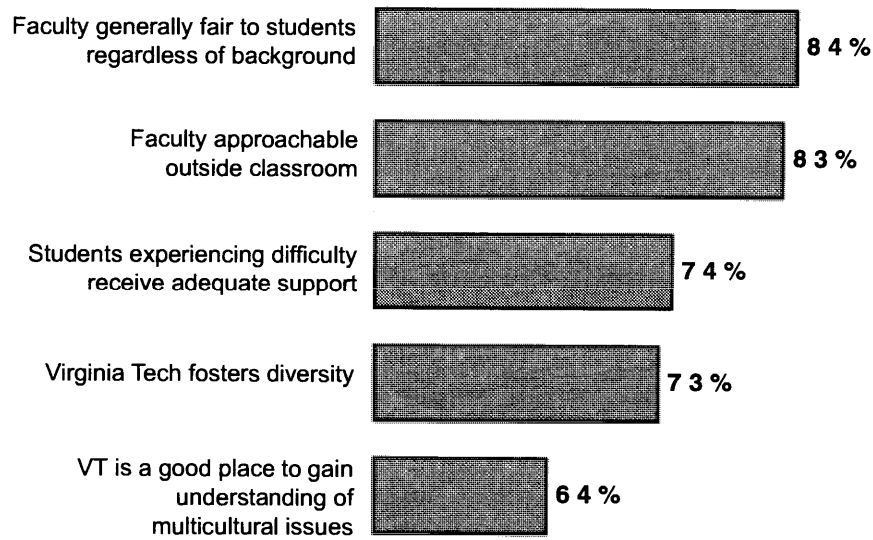
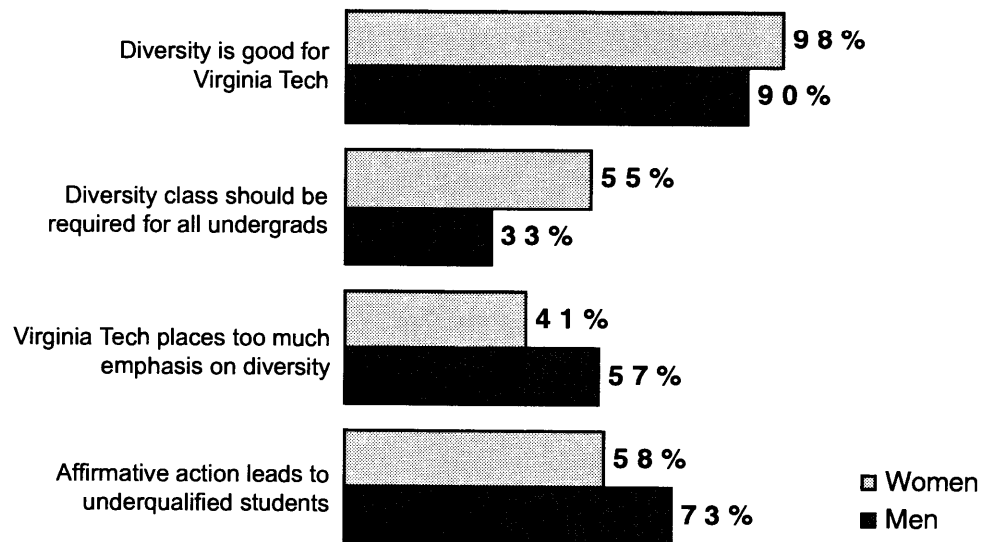


Figure 2.4 Undergraduate students' attitudes toward diversity and affirmative action, percent agreeing or strongly agreeing



more likely (57%) than women (41%) to believe that Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on diversity and that affirmative action leads to admission of underqualified students (73% and 58% of men and women, respectively).

Undergraduate men and women in general did not differ in their perceptions of the extent to which faculty are incorporating gender and racial issues into their courses. However,

women majoring in Arts and Sciences perceived more diversity-related teaching than men in the same college whereas in the College of Architecture, women experienced less diversity-related teaching than their male classmates. Fifty-seven percent of women and 50% of men in Arts & Sciences agreed that faculty are integrating gender issues into their courses whereas only 38% of women in the College of Architecture indicated that VT faculty are incorporating racial/ethnic issues into their courses compared with 70% of men majoring in architecture.

Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

Diversity-related experiences included unfair treatment based on personal characteristics, fair treatment by others at Virginia Tech, viewing insensitive materials and/or hearing derisive comments, and inability to express true opinions concerning various subgroups. It was encouraging to find that undergraduate men and women did not differ significantly on any of the four aspects of diversity-related experiences. The results suggest that men and women overall believe they are receiving comparable treatment on campus by professors, teaching assistants, administrators, as well as by other students, although their perceptions differed somewhat depending upon the college in which they were majoring. Across respondents as a whole over 86% indicated that they had been treated fairly by all of the campus groups above as well as by the Blacksburg community. However, when college was considered, women respondents in Agriculture & Life Sciences and Arts & Sciences perceived a higher level of fair treatment than did the men from the same colleges. In contrast, women majoring in Natural Resources felt they were treated less fairly than the men in that college. In particular, 86% of men had been treated fairly by both professors and teaching assistants compared with 80% and 63% of women who had been treated fairly by professors and teaching assistants, respectively.

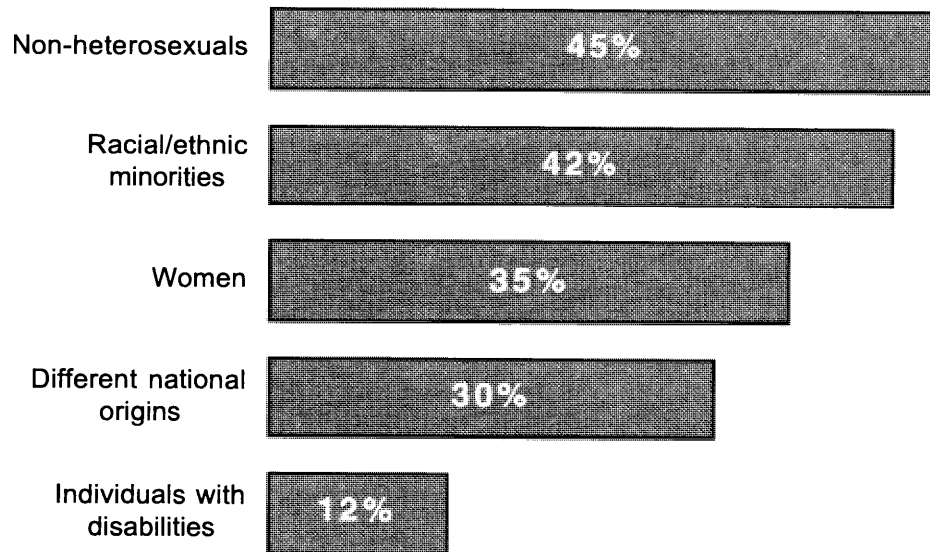
With respect to unfair treatment based on personal characteristics including race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc., both men and women respondents indicated they had rarely or never experienced such treatment. The notable exception was on the item related to unfair treatment based on gender where 21% of undergraduate women indicated they had been treated unfairly sometimes or often compared with only 6% of undergraduate men who had been treated unfairly because of their gender.

Respondents also did not differ by gender in the frequency with which they had read insensitive materials or heard negative comments about people in various subgroups including racial/ethnic minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, etc. However, it is worth noting that despite the absence of gender differences, the frequency with which *both* men and women have encountered these types of materials and comments was somewhat disturbing with a low of 12% having seen or heard negative materials or comments about people with disabilities to 45% sometimes or often having read or heard such materials/comments concerning non-heterosexuals (figure 2.5).

Overall, undergraduate men and women felt equally free to voice their true opinions either in the classroom or in other public settings at Virginia Tech concerning racial/ethnic minorities, women, non-heterosexuals, or people with disabilities. However, within the Colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences and Engineering, men did feel significantly less free to express their opinions than women in the same colleges. For example, only 13% of women in Agriculture & Life Sciences felt they could not voice their opinions about women whereas 29% of men in the same college believed they were not free to express their true opinions about women. Among Engineering majors, only 9% of women respondents felt constrained in voicing their opinions about non-heterosexuals in contrast to 21% of the men in Engineering indicating they could not voice their true feelings about non-heterosexuals.

Figure 2.5

Percent of undergraduate students who have sometimes or often read, heard, or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at Virginia Tech about specific populations



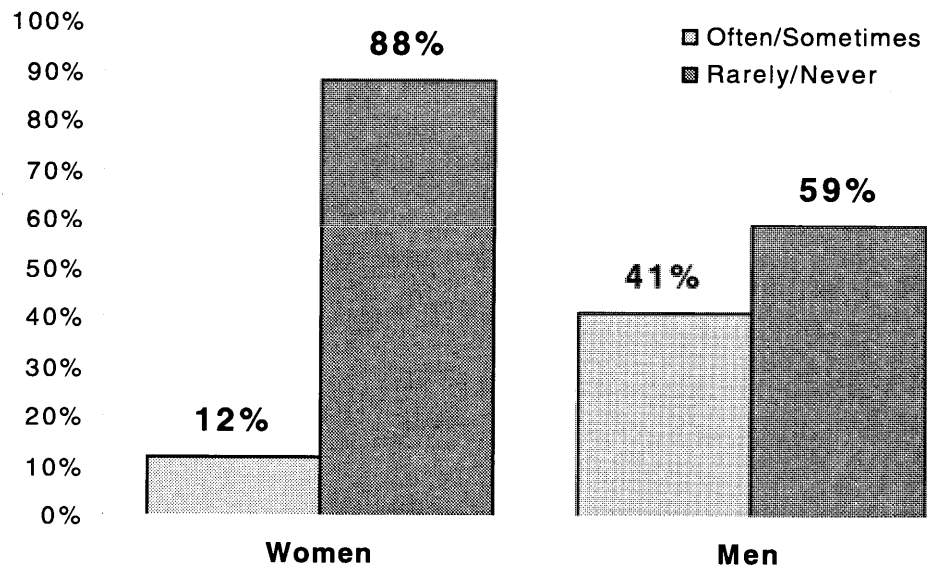
Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

Diversity-related behaviors included both positive and negative actions taken by undergraduate students including making derogatory remarks about others based on their personal characteristics, challenging others who make derogatory comments, and engaging in proactive diversity behaviors such as attending non-classroom activities related to diversity issues. Men and women differed in their frequency of engaging in all three types of behaviors. Undergraduate women were more likely than undergraduate men to challenge others who made derogatory comments that were either sexually or racially/ethnically based. Women were also more likely to attend non-classroom programs addressing gender or women's issues as well as activities concerning the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial or ethnic groups. Conversely, men made significantly more derogatory comments about gays or lesbians, people of other religions, persons with disabilities, and persons from the Appalachian region.

Interestingly, when examining response patterns for specific survey items most of the gender differences were only observed for White American respondents. For example, White American women (33%) were significantly more likely to challenge others on sexually derogatory remarks than White American men (25%) whereas White American men (19%) were more likely than White American women (7%) to make a derogatory statement about a different religion. For the other racial/ethnic groups, men and women did not differ significantly on these items. On some behaviors, however, such as making derogatory comments about gays or lesbians, men (41%) were more inclined than women (12%) to engage in such behavior regardless of race/ethnicity (figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6

Frequency with which male and female undergraduate students report making a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons



Awareness of Services and Programs at Virginia Tech

Awareness of services and programs at Virginia Tech measured overall familiarity with seven different campus services tailored to meet the needs of women, racial/ethnic minorities, students experiencing academic difficulties, and students with disabilities. Overall, women indicated significantly greater familiarity with these services and specifically with the Women’s Center and Project SAFE. Sixty-one percent of undergraduate women respondents were familiar with the Women’s Center compared with only 23% of undergraduate men respondents, while 21% of women and 10% of men indicated familiarity with Project SAFE. Gender differences were consistent across both race and college with women of all races and majors reporting greater awareness of campus services than men.

Discussion

Undergraduate men and women at Virginia Tech do appear to view a different campus in terms of its overall climate and its promotion of diversity. As will be seen in subsequent chapters the perceptions and behaviors of undergraduate women are similar in many respects to those of students characterized as minorities based on other personal characteristics including race, sexual orientation, and disability status. Although the gap in male versus female enrollment at Virginia Tech is not as great as it is among racial/ethnic groups, women are only 40% of undergraduate enrollment at Virginia Tech, compared to 53.7% nationally, and their views of the campus seem to reflect that minority status. Undergraduate men (and White American men in particular) generally see a campus that is supportive, comfortable,

and sufficiently diverse. In contrast, undergraduate women (particularly African American women) see a less inviting environment that is not especially supportive of minorities (i.e., anyone who is not White, male, heterosexual, Christian, and without disability) nor one that is conducive to interactions among students of different races.

Undergraduate women not only differ from undergraduate men in their opinions regarding the campus climate but they also tend to differ in their diversity-related conduct. Again, responses by women to questions regarding specific behaviors resemble those of racial minorities and of non-heterosexuals in their increased likelihood of challenging others on derogatory remarks, participating in diversity-related activities, and refraining from uttering derogatory comments. Apparently minority status seems to inspire greater sensitivity toward and respect for other minorities, regardless of the specific nature of the minority status.

Despite the differences between undergraduate men and women in their perceptions of the treatment of others and of the overall climate, it was encouraging to note that on aspects of climate related to personal treatment, men and women did not differ. Evidently while women recognize shortcomings of the university at the institutional level, their personal experiences with others including faculty, residence hall personnel, and administrators appear to be generally positive. This is consistent with findings of the faculty climate survey in which faculty women felt that they were treated respectfully within their own departments despite their rather pessimistic portrayal of the campus as a whole.

The results further suggest that it would be difficult to characterize climate at Virginia Tech for undergraduate men and women in any global way without also taking into account students' race and the college in which they are majoring. Although differences between men and women cut across race and college on some climate-related dimensions, other gender-based distinctions were only apparent when either race or college were considered. For example, despite the absence of an overall gender difference with respect to perceptions of the general climate for diversity, African American men and women were quite dissimilar in their responses with African American women rating the climate less positively. Similarly, when considering college major, women and men within certain colleges tend to have different experiences. What is most disturbing is that men and women are experiencing differentially satisfactory interactions with faculty as well as varying levels of fair treatment by others (including faculty and teaching assistants), depending upon the college in which they are majoring. This is in contrast to the overall comparison of men and women which found no difference in treatment. Many of these differences in treatment and perceptions were most apparent in colleges with the greatest disparity in male versus female enrollment such as Engineering (with 68% more men than women) and Human Resources & Education (with 52% more women than men). The results suggest that climate perceptions for women at Virginia Tech may depend to a certain extent on their experiences not necessarily as women on campus but as women in a particular college or of a given race. Differences based on race and college major will be discussed more fully in chapters 3 and 6, respectively.

3

Differences by Race/Ethnicity for Undergraduate Students

Table 3.1 presents demographic and background information for respondents by race. These values reflect unweighted, observed responses. Although data were collected on six racial/ethnic groups, responses for Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and international students were combined for statistical analyses due to small sample size. This combined group will hereafter be referred to as “other race.”

Respondents differed by race on several of the demographic variables including gender, grade point average, citizenship status, and religious faith. Racial differences based on community of origin which were also present have already been discussed in Chapter 1.

Differences in participation rates by gender were quite striking for African American respondents with a 24% discrepancy in female (62%) and male (38%) participation in the survey. These proportions do not reflect the male to female distribution in the Virginia Tech student population where African American men actually outnumber African American women by five percent. As previously noted in Chapter 1, the response rate for African American men was the lowest of any race or gender subgroup (21%) resulting in underrepresentation of this group in the survey sample (see table 1.1, page 2). By comparison, the other three racial/ethnic groups had relatively balanced gender representation.

Cumulative grade point averages also showed differential patterns by race with more White American respondents (51%) falling in the 3.0 to 4.0 range than any other group. African American undergraduates reported the lowest cumulative average with only 22% in the 3.0 to 4.0 range. The grades for Asian American and other race respondents fell somewhere between those of the White and African American respondents.

Of potential relevance to climate questions regarding treatment of different religions was the fact that greater proportions of African American (86%) and White American (77%) respondents identified as Christian compared with Asian Americans (50%) and other race respondents (65%). For all racial groups except White Americans, “none” was the second most frequently selected religious affiliation following Christian.

In addition, the four groups differed in the proportion who were the first in their family to attend a four-year college or university with more African American respondents answering affirmatively to this item (31%) compared with members of the other three groups: Asian Americans (23%), other race (22%), and White Americans (15%).

Students of different racial/ethnic groups varied consistently in their perceptions of the climate at Virginia Tech with significant differences found on 13 of 15 climate dimensions. The notable exceptions were lack of freedom to voice opinions and making negative comments/derogatory remarks about others, for which no racial differences were found.

For virtually every dimension on which significant racial differences existed, the two groups differing most in perception were African American and White American respondents. On all dimensions related to attitudes about the Virginia Tech climate, African Americans saw a less hospitable climate than did White Americans. On the dimensions specifically related to experiences or behaviors, African American undergraduates were more likely than their White American classmates to have encountered unpleasant diversity-related

Table 3.1

Demographic and background characteristics of undergraduate respondents by race

	African American		Asian American		White American		Other Race	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Gender</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	233	100	616	100	103	100
Female	97	62	108	46	300	49	54	52
Male	59	38	125	54	316	51	49	48
<i>Current Class Standing</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	233	100	617	100	103	100
Freshman	4	3	4	2	6	1	0	0
Sophomore	52	33	70	30	182	30	33	32
Junior	53	34	66	28	197	32	43	42
Senior	47	30	93	40	232	38	27	26
<i>Citizenship Status</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	618	100	103	100
U.S. citizen	154	99	226	97	617	100	86	84
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	1	1	8	3	1	<1	13	13
Non-U.S. citizen	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	4
<i>College in Which Majoring</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	235	100	618	100	103	100
Agriculture/Life Science	5	3	6	3	52	8	6	5
Arts and Sciences	57	37	70	30	202	33	30	30
Architecture/Urban Studies	7	5	5	2	27	4	5	5
Business	22	14	46	20	94	15	17	17
Engineering	35	22	70	30	131	21	30	30
Forestry/Wildlife Resources	1	1	6	3	18	3	3	3
Human Resources/Education	21	14	18	8	58	9	9	9
University Studies	1	1	4	2	13	2	0	0
Double Major/Other College	7	5	10	4	23	4	3	3
<i>Cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech</i>								
Total respondents	154	100	233	100	616	100	103	100
3.5 - 4.0	7	5	28	12	117	19	14	14
3.0 - 3.49	26	17	51	22	196	32	22	21
2.5 - 2.99	53	34	85	37	180	29	40	39
2.0 - 2.49	53	34	58	25	105	17	23	22
below 2.0	15	10	11	5	18	3	4	4
<i>Religious Faith</i>								
Total respondents	155	100	234	100	618	100	103	100
Christian	133	86	118	50	477	77	67	65
Jewish	0	0	0	0	13	2	0	0
Muslim	1	1	13	6	0	0	1	1
None	11	7	61	26	92	15	26	25
Other	10	7	42	18	36	6	9	9
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	615	100	103	100
Heterosexual	151	97	226	97	605	98	101	98
Gay or Lesbian	3	2	2	1	6	1	0	0
Bisexual	2	1	6	3	4	1	2	2
<i>Disability</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	617	100	103	100
Yes	5	3	4	2	24	4	4	4
No	151	97	230	98	593	96	99	96

	African American		Asian American		White American		Other Race	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>First in Family to Attend College</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	617	100	103	100
Yes	49	31	54	23	91	15	23	22
No	107	69	189	77	526	85	80	78
<i>Setting Where Spent Most of Life</i>								
Total respondents	155	100	234	100	616	100	103	100
Rural area	20	13	8	14	119	19	6	6
Small town/city	37	24	41	18	141	23	17	17
Suburb of 50,000 or more	53	34	141	60	267	43	52	51
City of 50,000 or more	45	29	44	19	89	14	28	27
<i>Racial Composition of Neighborhood</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	616	100	102	100
Nearly all same race as you	37	24	6	3	237	39	295	27
Mostly same race as you	11	7	7	3	240	39	17	17
About half same race	46	30	34	15	119	19	22	22
Mostly different race than you	34	22	115	49	17	3	27	27
All or nearly all different race	28	18	72	31	3	1	23	23
<i>Racial Composition of High School</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	617	100	103	100
Nearly all same race as you	19	12	5	2	158	26	12	12
Mostly same race as you	17	11	6	3	255	41	15	15
About half same race	48	31	35	15	174	28	25	24
Mostly different race than you	51	33	123	53	27	4	27	26
All or nearly all different race	21	14	65	28	3	1	24	23
<i>Racial Composition of Friends</i>								
Total respondents	156	100	234	100	617	100	103	100
Nearly all same race as you	29	19	14	6	180	29	9	9
Mostly same race as you	51	33	24	10	341	55	18	18
About half same race	34	22	51	22	86	14	33	32
Mostly different race than you	25	16	83	36	8	1	20	19
All or nearly all different race	17	11	62	27	2	<1	23	22

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

incidents and were more likely to have engaged in positive diversity-related behaviors including challenging others' derogatory remarks and participating in diversity-related campus activities.

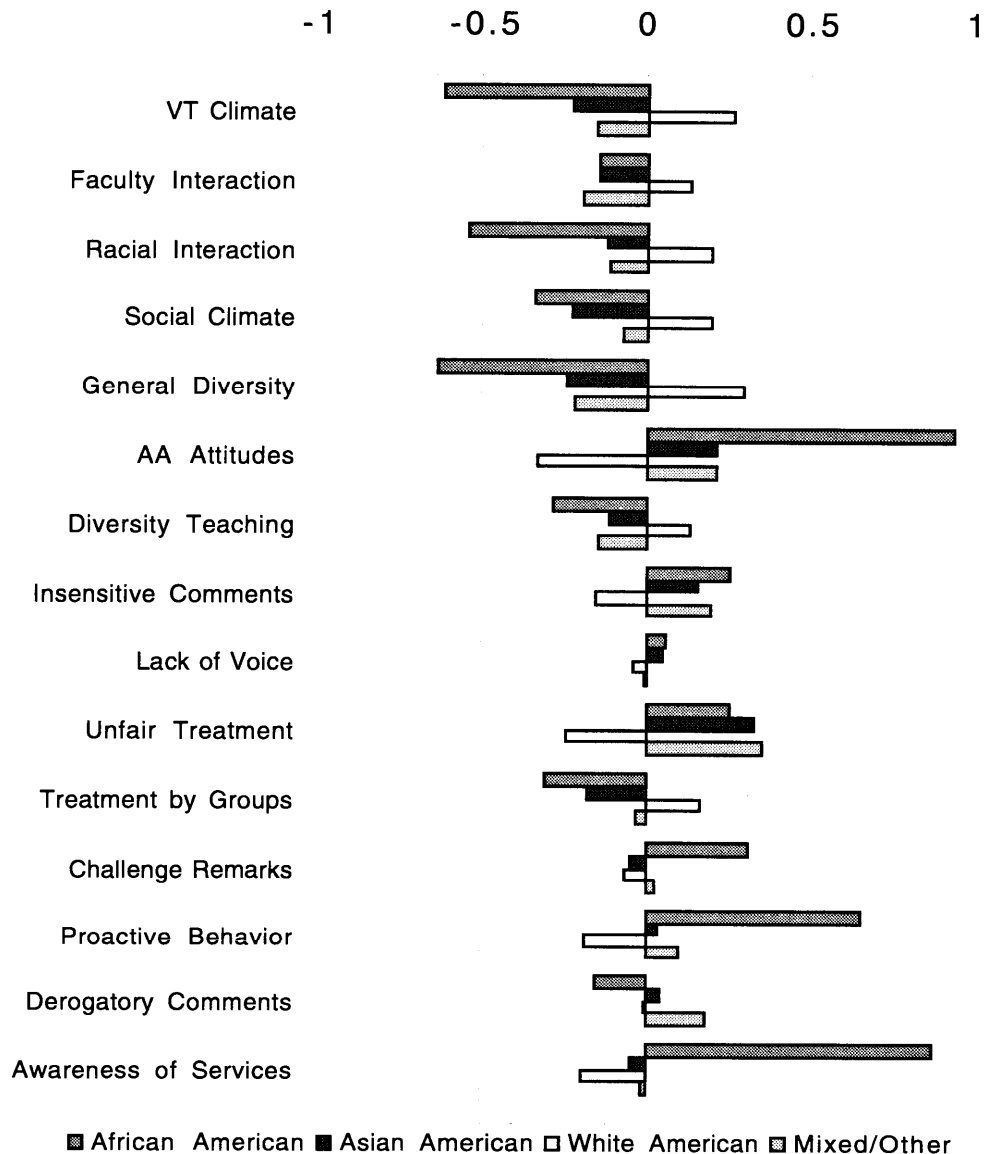
As noted in Chapter 2, on several dimensions race and gender interacted in such a way that some differences were most pronounced for certain racial/gender combinations. In particular, African American women and White American men revealed starkly contrasting views of their experiences at Virginia Tech in terms of overall campus climate and general diversity at the university with African American women expressing substantially less favorable perceptions.

Despite the pervasive racial differences, it is worth observing that students of all races generally believe they have received fair treatment by others at Virginia Tech and have experienced minimal levels of unfair treatment based on personal characteristics. Furthermore, the majority of students, regardless of race, rated their social/interpersonal experiences on campus in a positive way. And most importantly students of all races strongly agreed that they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech.

Figure 3.1 presents racial differences graphically for all 15 dimensions based on standardized values with zero representing the average score for that dimension. Bar length represents

relative deviation of the group from the overall sample with bars to the right of zero corresponding to higher mean responses. To illustrate interpretation of the figure, note the discrepancy in bar length as well as direction relative to “Awareness of Services,” with African American respondents showing considerably greater awareness of campus services overall than the other three racial/ethnic groups. Although the three other groups did not differ much from each other, White American respondents did indicate somewhat less familiarity with these services than either Asian American or other race respondents. For most dimensions positive values indicate more positive climate attitudes and experiences, but for a few dimensions, such as “Derogatory Comments,” a positive value indicates greater likelihood of participating in negative behavior.

Figure 3.1 Difference between racial/ethnic groups on z-scores for 15 factors

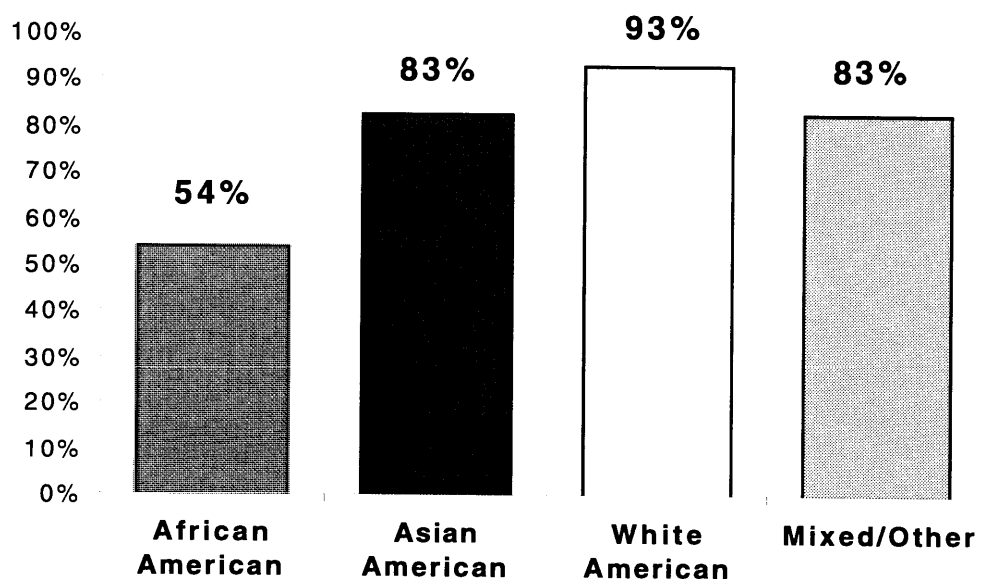


Virginia Tech Climate in General

Statistically significant differences were found on all four dimensions reflecting the general campus climate at Virginia Tech, which included overall climate for various campus groups, interaction with faculty, campus race relations, and social/interpersonal interactions. On each of the dimensions African American respondents expressed the least positive attitudes whereas White American respondents consistently expressed the most positive attitudes.

Items measuring general climate at Virginia Tech addressed such issues as respect by students for faculty of different racial/ethnic groups, the university's commitment to the success of female students, supportiveness of people with disabilities, supportiveness of non-heterosexuals, and racism. White American students rated all items the most positively of all the racial groups in contrast to African Americans who expressed the least favorable ratings. When also taking gender into account, African American females were the least positive and White American males the most positive on the dimension. In addition, significant racial differences were present on all general climate items with the exception of the item concerning support of non-heterosexuals. All racial groups agreed (68%) that Virginia Tech does not provide a supportive environment for non-heterosexuals. The greatest disparities in item-level responses occurred in terms of respect by faculty members for students of different racial/ethnic groups, the university's commitment to the success of students from different racial/ethnic groups, and Virginia Tech's supportiveness of different religious beliefs. For example, while the overwhelming majority of White American (93%), Asian American (83%), and other race respondents (83%) indicated that faculty show respect for students of different racial/ethnic groups, African American respondents did not agree, with only 54% responding positively to this item (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that faculty members at Virginia Tech promote respect for all students regardless of their background

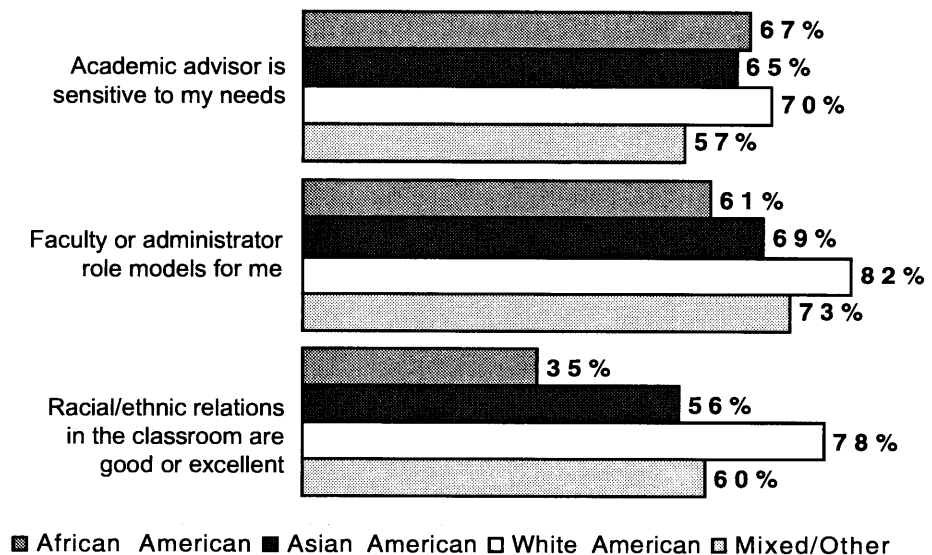


When asked to rate their interactions with faculty and administrators White American respondents provided significantly more positive ratings than all other racial groups. As an illustration, 70% of White American respondents believe their academic advisor is sensitive to their needs compared with 67%, 65%, and 57% of African American, Asian American, and other race respondents, respectively. Although the majority of students from all racial/ethnic groups agreed that there are faculty or administrator role models for them at Virginia Tech, more White American respondents (82%) saw role models than did the other groups. African Americans were the least inclined (61%) to see faculty or administrator role models (figure 3.3).

Similarly, White Americans viewed the quality of racial/ethnic relations on campus more positively than the other three racial groups while African American respondents perceived campus racial interaction the least positively. This difference in perspective was most pronounced on the items pertaining to racial integration on campus and racial and ethnic relations in the classroom. Seventy-eight percent of White American respondents rated racial/ethnic relations in the classroom as good or excellent. In contrast, the majority of African American respondents (65%) rated such relations as only fair or poor.

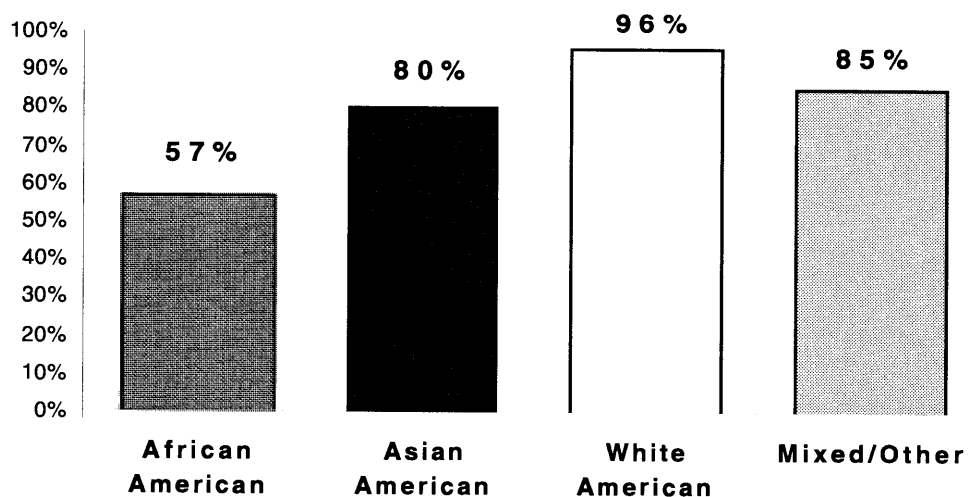
The social/interpersonal climate at Virginia Tech was generally viewed in a positive way by most respondents, although it was rated significantly more positively by White American respondents than by African American, Asian American, or other race respondents. For example, while fewer than 40% of respondents overall indicated that they don't fit in at Virginia Tech or that they have to change their personal characteristics in order to fit in, White Americans were the least likely to agree to these two items. On the positive side, all racial groups (82%) agreed that they have opportunities at Virginia Tech to socialize with people different from themselves and that they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech, regardless of race (>90%).

Figure 3.3 Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing on selected academic questions



Respondents of different racial/ethnic groups expressed significantly different perceptions of the three dimensions related to Virginia Tech diversity climate. White American respondents rated the general climate for diversity significantly more positively than did the other three racial groups. Moreover, of all groups, African American women held the least positive and White American men the most positive views of the climate. The two groups disagreed most on the commitment of university administrators to increasing diversity, fairness of faculty to students based on background, and level of campus participation by students of different ethnic/racial backgrounds. In all cases, White American men perceived a substantially more favorable climate than African American women. Only 36% of African American undergraduate women believe Virginia Tech administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity compared with 77% of White American undergraduate men. Also, fewer African American women respondents (51%) than White American men respondents (88%) felt that faculty are fair to all students regardless of background. The patterns were similar, though not as extreme, when all respondents were compared across race. In addition to expressing positive evaluations of the campus diversity climate, White American respondents (96%) were the most likely to rate Blacksburg as a community in which they feel comfortable. In contrast, only slightly more than half (57%) of African American respondents feel comfortable in Blacksburg (figure 3.4).

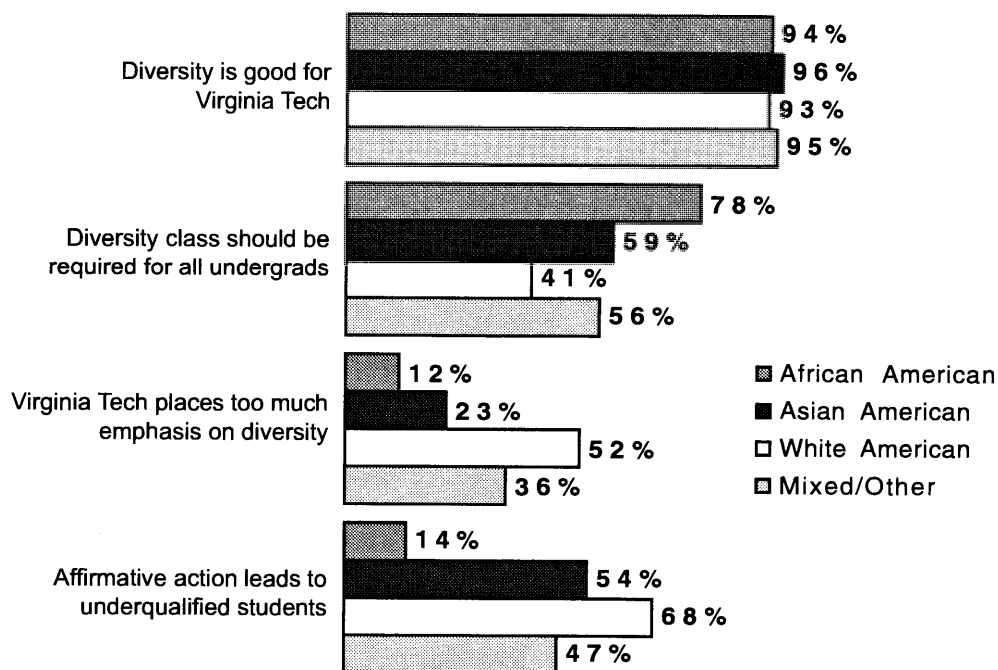
Figure 3.4 Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that Blacksburg is a comfortable community



When considering attitudes toward Affirmative Action and the value of diversity, again African American and White American respondents were the most disparate of the racial groups in their views, with Asian American and other race respondents falling somewhere in the middle of the two extremes (figure 3.5). For example, significantly more White American undergraduates (68%) than African American (14%), Asian American (54%), and other race respondents (47%) agreed that Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified

Figure 3.5

Undergraduate students' attitudes toward diversity, percent agree or strongly agree



students. Conversely, fewer White American respondents (41%) than African American (78%), Asian American (59%), and other race respondents (56%) felt that all Virginia Tech undergraduates should be required to take at least one course on ethnic or gender issues. It was interesting that despite these differences, over 90% of all respondents believe diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted (figure 3.5).

Apparently, relatively few faculty are incorporating gender and racial/ethnic issues into their teaching. Although significantly more White American respondents see gender (51%) or ethnic/racial (44%) issues addressed in their courses, overall, fewer than half of all respondents feel that faculty are integrating such issues into their courses.

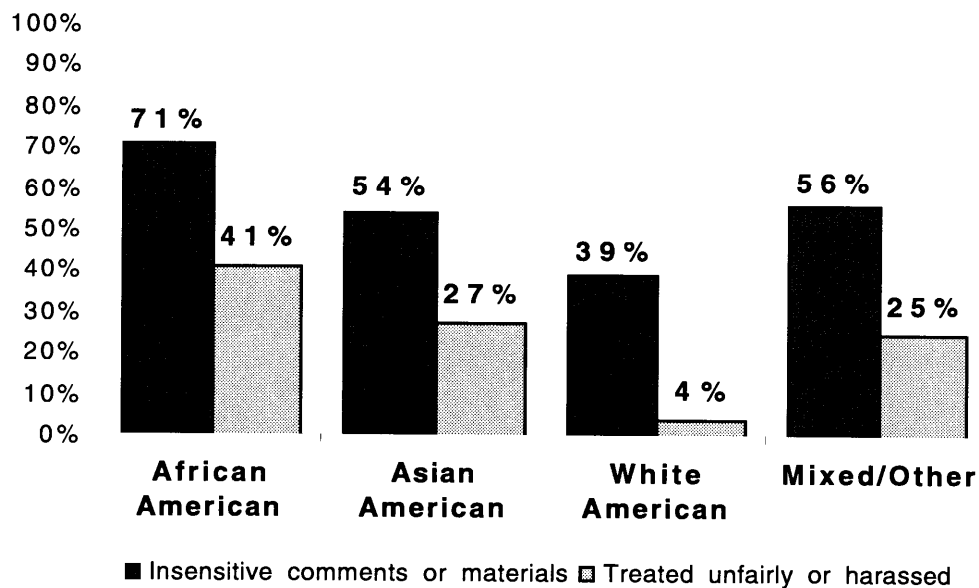
Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

Of the four dimensions assessing diversity-related experiences, the only one for which racial differences were *not* present was lack of freedom to voice opinions about various groups. However, there was a significant relationship between race and level of agreement to the item concerning freedom to voice true opinions about racial/ethnic minorities with more African Americans (38%) frequently unable to express their opinions than Asian Americans (27%), White Americans (25%), and other race respondents (26%).

White American undergraduates had viewed the fewest offensive materials and/or heard the fewest insensitive remarks about such groups as racial/ethnic minorities, women, non-heterosexuals, and individuals with disabilities. African American, Asian American, and other race respondents experienced significantly more of these types of materials/comments for all

Figure 3.6

Percent of undergraduate students who report having read, heard, or seen insensitive or negative comments or materials about racial/ethnic minorities and those who report being treated unfairly or harassed because of race or ethnicity

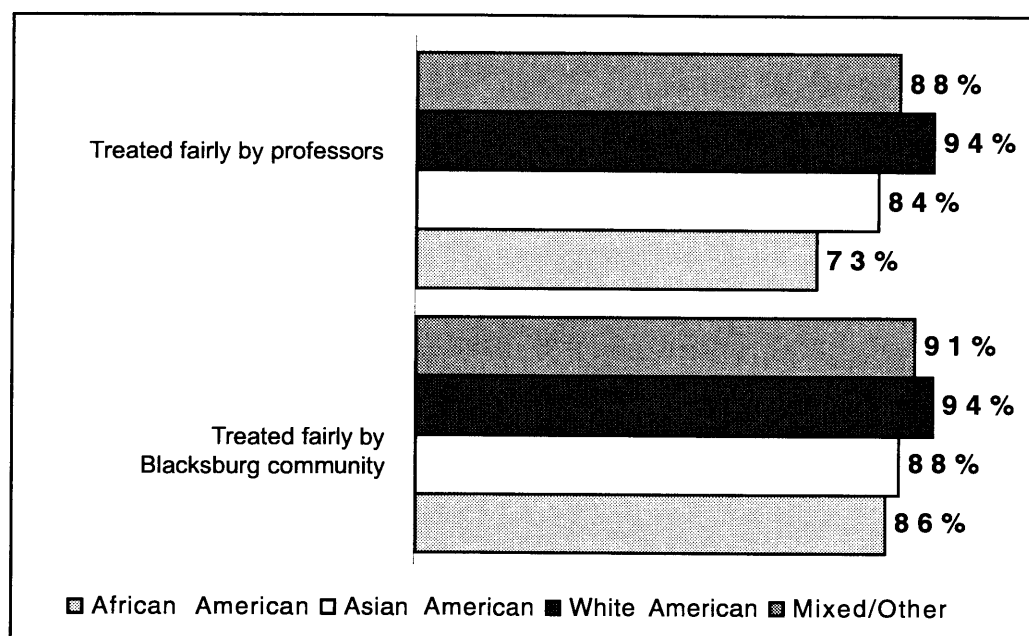


target groups except individuals from the Appalachian region and members of religious groups. As might be expected, White American respondents had encountered fewer negative comments or materials (39%) about racial/ethnic minorities than African Americans (71%), Asian Americans (54%), and other race respondents (56%) (figure 3.6). However, similar trends were reported when the subject of these negative materials/comments concerned women, individuals with disabilities, non-heterosexuals, or individuals of different national origins. For example, fewer White American (44%) and Asian American (44%) undergraduates had seen or heard derogatory materials or comments about non-heterosexuals than either African American (60%) or other race (54%) respondents.

When asked how often they had been treated unfairly or harassed at Virginia Tech because of various personal characteristics, overall White American respondents reported that they had been treated the least unfairly of all racial/ethnic groups particularly when treatment was based on race/ethnicity. As can be seen in figure 3.6, only 4% of White American respondents had been treated unfairly based on race/ethnicity compared with 41% of African American respondents. Significant differences in unfair treatment among racial groups also occurred in terms of religion, national origin, and social class origin. African American respondents were the least likely (3%) and other race respondents the most likely (10%) to have been treated unfairly based on their religion. Frequency of unfair treatment across racial groups did not differ significantly based on gender, sexual orientation, age, accent/dialect, or disability. Of greater importance than the presence/absence of racial differences in unfair treatment was the fact that few undergraduates had experienced unfair treatment regardless of their race. With the exception of treatment based on race/ethnicity and treatment based on gender for African American respondents, incidence of unfair treatment was less than 20% for all other groups on all items.

Figure 3.7

Percent of undergraduate students agreeing that they have been treated fairly



Although there was a significant racial difference on the dimension of fair treatment, the vast majority of undergraduate respondents felt they had been treated fairly by various campus groups including residence hall personnel, professors, teaching assistants, and administrators. As figure 3.7 illustrates, significantly more White American respondents believed they had been treated fairly by professors, yet over 85% of all other racial groups also felt their professors had treated them fairly. The greatest racial difference appeared with respect to treatment by the Town of Blacksburg. Ninety-four percent of White American respondents rated their treatment by the Blacksburg community as fair compared with only 73% of African American respondents.

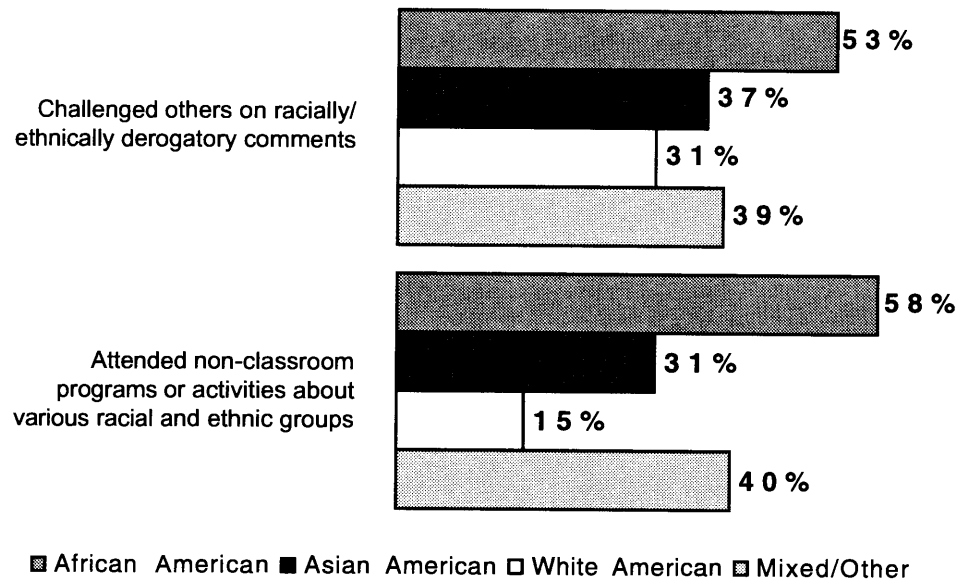
Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

Diversity-related behaviors (both positive and negative) included challenging others who make derogatory comments, engaging in proactive diversity behaviors, and making derogatory remarks. Although there were no racial differences in the frequency with which respondents made derogatory remarks, there were differences in the likelihood of challenging others who made such remarks. African Americans were more likely than either White Americans or Asian Americans to challenge others, particularly in terms of challenging others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments (figure 3.8). The four groups did not differ in terms of challenging others on sexually derogatory comments.

African American respondents were the most likely and White American respondents the least likely to engage in proactive diversity behaviors including attending non-classroom programs related to women or various racial/ethnic groups. It should be noted, however, that despite the significant racial differences, relatively few undergraduate respondents overall indicated frequent participation in these types of activities. The most frequent participation

Figure 3.8

Undergraduate students' reported diversity-related behavior; percent responding sometimes or often



occurred for African Americans (58%) who attended non-classroom activities related to the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial/ethnic groups (figure 3.8). Regardless of race, respondents seldom (<11%) took action to have offensive graffiti removed.

Awareness of Services and Programs at Virginia Tech

Across various services and programs offered by Virginia Tech, African American respondents reported significantly greater awareness than members of all other racial/ethnic groups. Differences were most dramatic in terms of awareness of the Multicultural Center, the Black Cultural Center, and the Academic Enrichment Office. From Table 3.2 which reports percentages of respondents by race who were familiar with these three services, it can be seen that there was a 71% discrepancy between African American and White American respondents in their awareness of the Black Cultural Center.

Table 3.2

Percent of undergraduate students very familiar or somewhat familiar with campus services

	African American	Asian American	White American	Other/Mixed
Multi-Cultural Center	74	39	21	46
Black Cultural Center	91	31	20	35
Academic Enrichment	80	29	26	29

Similarly, African American respondents reported substantially greater awareness of the Academic Enrichment Office than respondents from any of the other racial/ethnic groups. Not too surprisingly, the Cranwell International Center was most familiar to the other race group (33%) which included students classified as international. Fewer than 20% of African American, Asian American, or White American respondents indicated familiarity with this center. No significant differences in familiarity were found by race for the Women's Center, Project SAFE, or Services for Students with Disabilities.

Discussion

The results suggest that despite numerous efforts by the university to promote diversity initiatives in recent years, there is still considerable racial divisiveness on campus among undergraduate students. In general minorities see a less receptive climate while White American respondents observe an institution where students are treated fairly and where diversity is actively promoted. And unlike the results based on gender, racial differences were pervasive across the colleges with minority students consistently expressing less positive attitudes, regardless of college major. Not only did non-White students rate the general climate as less supportive and conducive to diversity but they also rated their personal treatment in a less positive way. This was especially disconcerting when considering faculty behavior which White American students rated more positively than any other racial group. Non-white students (regardless of race) also felt treated less fairly by others (including faculty) and experienced more offensive materials/remarks targeted toward minorities.

Although White American respondents differed in perceptions and experiences from all other racial groups on at least some climate dimensions, racial differences in general were most consistent and greatest in magnitude between African American and White American students. One possible explanation might be the paucity of tenure-track African American faculty to serve as role models. Of the 1,387 full-time, tenure-track faculty at Virginia Tech as of Fall 1999, only 34 (2.5%) were African American, meaning that African American faculty do not have a visible presence in campus classrooms. A number of African American administrators provide invaluable mentoring to minority students outside the classroom setting. Even so, 21% more of the White American than African American respondents indicated that they saw faculty or administrator role models at Virginia Tech. Interestingly, racial differences in perceptions of faculty treatment essentially disappear when taking into account the presence or absence of faculty role models. Across all racial groups faculty behavior was rated most favorably by students strongly agreeing that they have role models and least favorably by those strongly disagreeing to the presence of role models. This suggests that if African American students are to have a positive college experience at Virginia Tech, especially in terms of their interactions with faculty, the university needs to begin active recruitment of minority faculty in general and African American faculty in particular.

Despite their negative perceptions of the climate and of their treatment on campus, minority students still feel they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech. What this may imply is that non-White students are willing to endure a generally inhospitable environment in exchange for the opportunity to gain an education at Virginia Tech. However, the long-term effects of this are unclear in terms of the ability of the university to recruit minority students. Perhaps the inability of Virginia Tech to attract large numbers of minority students may already be the result of the university's reputation within the minority community as being somewhat indifferent to those who are not White. Unless the university makes greater strides in improving the climate for non-White students, many bright and motivated minority students may opt for "friendlier" institutions within and outside of the Commonwealth.

4

Differences Based on Sexual Orientation for Undergraduate Students

Of the 1,116 students responding to the survey item concerning sexual orientation, only 25 (2.3%) undergraduate respondents classified themselves as non-heterosexual, with 11 (1%) identifying themselves as gay or lesbian and 14 (1.3%) as bisexual. Non-heterosexuals were equally distributed based on gender and were similar to heterosexuals in relative distribution based on race. However, they did differ from heterosexuals in several ways. Proportionally more gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (55%) majored in Arts & Sciences than heterosexuals (32%) and fewer non-heterosexuals (3%) were the first in their families to attend a college or university than heterosexuals (16%). In terms of the setting where they spent most of their lives prior to attending Virginia Tech, the majority of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (60%) came from suburban communities of 50,000 or more or from rural areas (20%). Most, though relatively fewer, heterosexuals also came from suburbs of 50,000 or more (44%) or from small towns (23%).

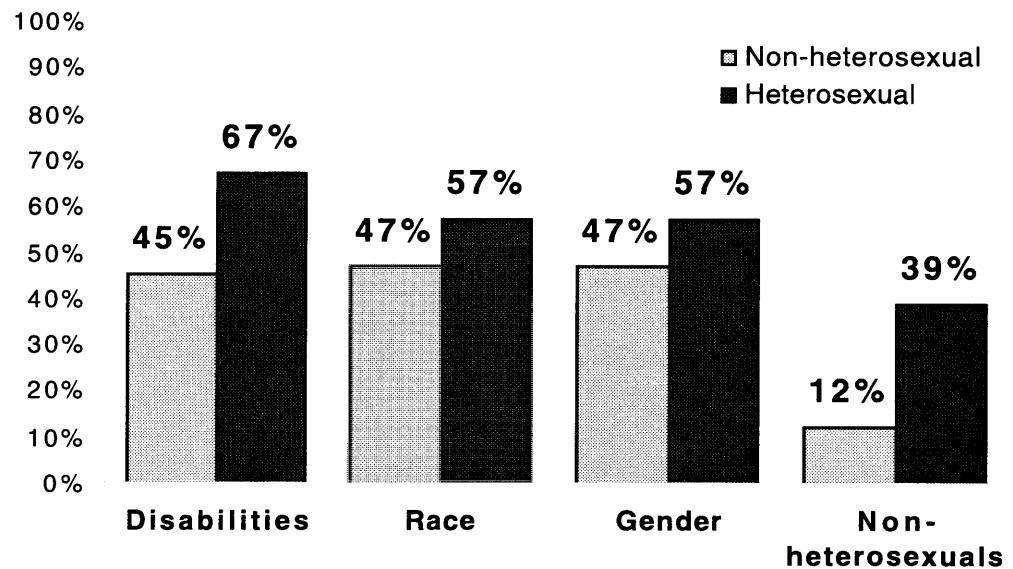
Consistent with findings for racial minorities non-heterosexual undergraduates generally viewed the climate at Virginia Tech much less positively than their heterosexual classmates. Significant differences based on sexual orientation were found on 11 of the 15 campus climate dimensions. Of the 11 dimensions on which respondents differed, the greatest discrepancies in perceptions were related to perception of the overall climate at Virginia Tech, number of experiences with offensive comments and/or materials, frequency of unfair treatment based on personal characteristics, and tendency to participate in proactive diversity activities. Heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals did not differ in terms of fair treatment by others, treatment by faculty and administrators, frequency of making derogatory comments, and perceptions of diversity-related teaching.

Non-heterosexuals rated every general climate item less positively than did heterosexuals. In some cases, differences between the two groups were substantial. As would be expected, fewer gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (12%) than heterosexuals (39%) believe Virginia Tech is supportive of non-heterosexuals. However, non-heterosexuals overall viewed the campus climate as less supportive of minorities, regardless of the minority status. For example, non-heterosexuals were more likely to rate the campus as being racist, sexist, nonsupportive of people with disabilities, and nonsupportive of different religious beliefs (figure 4.1).

Similarly, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals had viewed and/or heard a greater number of insensitive materials or comments with respect to all target groups including non-heterosexuals, racial/ethnic minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, individuals from the Appalachian region, individuals from different national origins, and different religious groups. As might be expected, when derisive materials or comments targeted non-heterosexuals, differences in experience between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals were considerable. Eighty-one percent of non-heterosexuals compared with only 44% of heterosexuals had seen or heard such materials or comments (figure 4.2). However, similar disparities in experience between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals were present across all target groups. For

Figure 4.1

Percent of undergraduate students rating the Virginia Tech climate as supportive of different population groups



example, whereas 65% of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals had seen or heard negative materials or comments about different religious groups, only 18% of the heterosexuals recalled having encountered such materials or comments. Differences in frequencies between the two groups were close to 40% for all of the target groups.

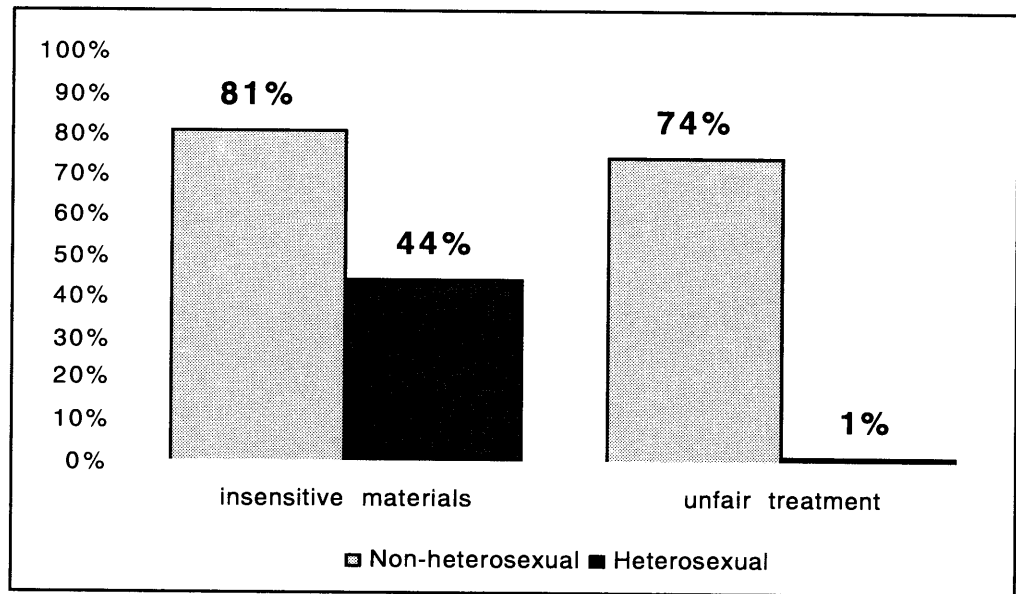
Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals had also experienced generally higher levels of unfair treatment based on personal characteristics than their heterosexual counterparts. The most striking discrepancy between the groups, not too surprisingly, was related to unfair treatment based on sexual orientation. While virtually none of the heterosexuals (1%) had been treated unfairly based on their sexual orientation, 74% of non-heterosexuals had been treated unfairly because they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual (figure 4.2). Non-heterosexuals also had experienced greater levels of unfair treatment based on race, gender, religion, age, and social class origin, though these differences were not nearly so great as they were for treatment based on sexual orientation. The only personal characteristic for which heterosexuals felt they had been treated more unfairly was accent or dialect (9% and 1% of heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, respectively). Few of the respondents, regardless of sexual orientation, felt they had been treated unfairly because of their national origin or disability status.

Not only did heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals differ in their perceptions of the climate and in their diversity-related experiences on campus, they also differed in the level of participation in proactive diversity-related activities. More gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (36%) than heterosexuals (7%) had been involved in having offensive graffiti removed, or had attended activities related either to gender or race/ethnicity issues.

For the other dimensions on which heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals differed, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals consistently perceived a less favorable climate, regardless of the dimension. They were also more likely to challenge others who made derogatory remarks and less likely to make such remarks about other groups on campus. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals tended to reflect greater valuing of diversity and affirmative action efforts and to be more aware of various services and programs offered to Virginia Tech students. They also felt less

Figure 4.2

Percent of undergraduate students who report having read, heard, or seen insensitive or negative comments or materials about non-heterosexuals and those who have been treated unfairly or harassed because of sexual orientation



free than heterosexual respondents to voice their opinions about various groups, particularly about non-heterosexuals. While 67% of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals felt they were sometimes or often unable publicly to express their true opinions about non-heterosexuals, only 20% of heterosexuals felt constrained in voicing their opinions.

Discussion

Results of the campus climate survey suggest that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are not only more aware of problems on campus related to sexual orientation, they also seem to have a heightened sensitivity to the plight of other minority groups on campus. This pattern has also been discussed with respect to differences in perception based on gender and race. Undergraduate students who can be characterized as minorities based on their sexual orientation generally view the Virginia Tech campus as a less pleasant environment toward anyone who appears to be “different,” regardless of the nature of the differences (i.e., whether based on sexual orientation, race, religion, or other personal characteristics). Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, of all minority groups examined in this report, were also the most frequently constrained in the ability to express their candid opinions about particular minority groups on campus. Heterosexuals, in contrast, seem not only to have personally experienced a more welcoming campus, they also appear to be largely unaware of the intolerance endured by others.

It was encouraging to find that both heterosexual undergraduates and gay, lesbian, and bisexual undergraduate students generally feel well-treated by others on campus, including faculty, residence hall personnel, teaching assistants, etc. Consistent with the patterns seen in responses by undergraduate women, gay, lesbian, and bisexual respondents appear to make a distinction between their experiences with bigotry at the personal level and the presence of

intolerance at the institutional or general campus level. The two notable exceptions were the far greater exposure of non-heterosexuals to offensive materials or remarks and their less equitable treatment based on being gay, lesbian, or bisexual. When responses by non-heterosexuals are compared to those of African Americans in terms of unfair treatment based on personal characteristics it is evident that being a sexual minority at Virginia Tech is perceived more negatively than being a racial minority. Despite this, non-heterosexuals, particularly gays and lesbians, indicated that their experiences with faculty and administrators were quite positive.

Also similar to what was found for females and for African Americans, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals tend to place greater value on diversity and to engage in more active promotion of diversity. Non-heterosexuals were more supportive of affirmative action efforts, participated in more non-classroom diversity-related activities, and more frequently challenged those who belittled others on the basis of personal characteristics. In fact, gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as a group were much more likely to challenge derogatory remarks and engage in proactive-diversity related behaviors than either women or African Americans as a whole.

5

Differences Based on Disability Status for Undergraduate Students

Whether or not a respondent thought of himself or herself as a person with a disability also proved to be an important determinant of campus climate perceptions. Just over three percent (3.4%) of undergraduate respondents considered themselves to have a disability. Of these, 54% were female and 46% were male.

Students with a disability differed from those without on 7 of 15 climate dimensions. Students with a disability either expressed significantly less positive perceptions of the climate or had experienced more negative treatment across each of the seven dimensions. The two groups differed on their interactions with faculty and administrators, social and interpersonal interactions, awareness of university services, experiences with insensitive remarks or materials, freedom to voice opinions, fair treatment by others, and unfair treatment based on personal characteristics. Somewhat surprisingly, students with disabilities perceived a more supportive (78%) and accessible (66%) campus environment for people with disabilities than did respondents without disabilities. Sixty-six percent and 61% of respondents without a disability thought the campus was supportive and accessible, respectively.

Students with disabilities were less likely to rate their interactions with faculty and administrators in a positive way (figure 5.1). Compared with students without disabilities, fewer students with disabilities felt they had received adequate faculty guidance (56% versus 79%), believed there is a faculty member or administrator with whom they could discuss problems (63% versus 73%), or thought their academic advisor was sensitive to their needs/concerns (55% versus 70%).

Disability status was also related to differences in social and interpersonal experiences at Virginia Tech. For most of the items related to this dimension, ratings by students with a disability were in the less positive direction. Students with disabilities more often felt they did not fit in at the university (43%) in contrast with 22% of respondents without disabilities. They also saw fewer opportunities (79%) than other respondents (86%) to socialize with people different from themselves. In addition, students with disabilities did not believe as strongly that they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech. Eighty percent of students with disabilities and 95% of students without disabilities agreed to this item (figure 5.2).

Students with and without disabilities differed in the frequency with which they had heard derogatory comments or had seen negative materials about individuals with disabilities. As might be expected more students with disabilities (33%) than without (11%) had seen or heard these types of comments/materials. Similarly, respondents with disabilities felt more restrained in expressing their true opinions about people with disabilities. Thirty-two percent of undergraduates with disabilities did not feel free to voice their opinions while only 9% of other respondents felt similarly stifled. Students with disabilities also felt less able to reveal their opinions about women, racial/ethnic minorities, and non-heterosexuals.

The most salient differences between students with and without disabilities were seen in

Figure 5.1

Undergraduate students' ratings of academic climate, percent agreeing or strongly agreeing

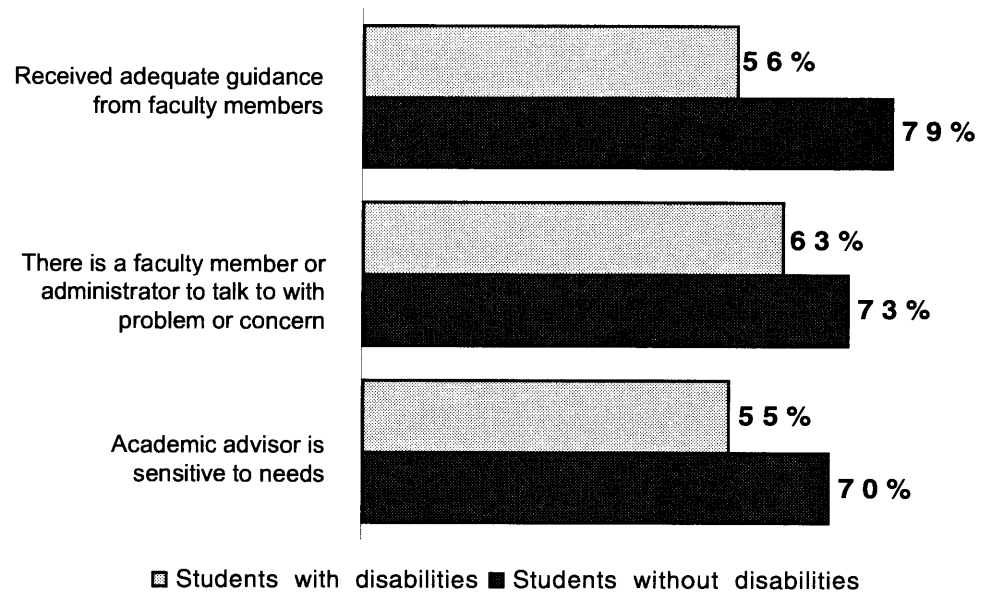
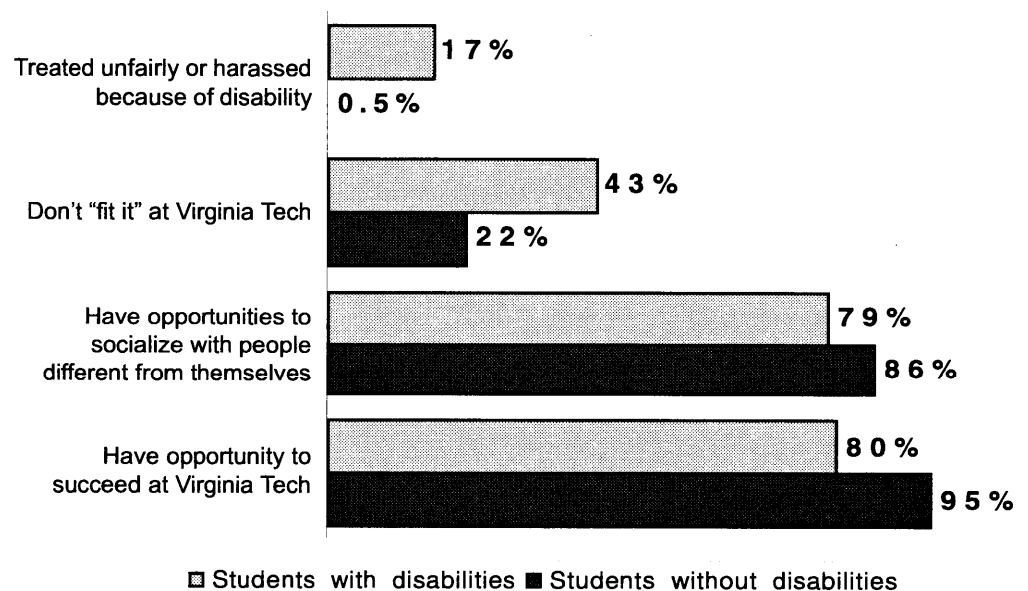


Figure 5.2

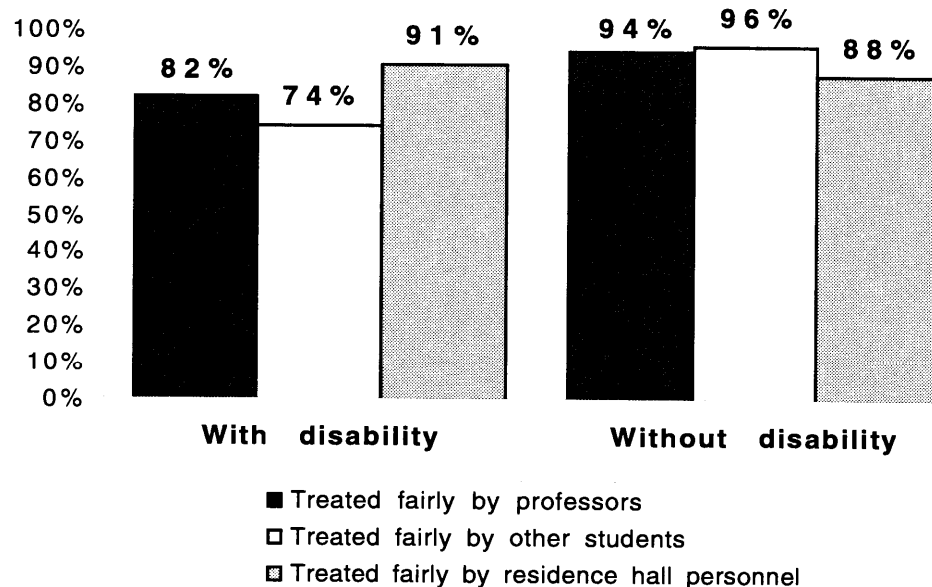
Ratings of social and interpersonal climate at Virginia Tech, percent agreeing or strongly agreeing



the levels of fair and unfair treatment the two groups had received at Virginia Tech. On the basis of every personal characteristic except national origin, students with disabilities felt they had been treated unfairly more often than students without disabilities. Seventeen percent of respondents with disabilities had been treated unfairly or harassed because of their disability while less than 1% of other respondents had been treated in a prejudicial manner because of disability status (figure 5.2). Similar differences in experience were also apparent for treatment based on race, gender, religion, accent or dialect, and social class. For example, 21% of students with disabilities compared with only 3% of students without disabilities had encountered discriminatory treatment based on their social class. Students with disabilities also generally believed they were treated less fairly by others on campus including professors, teaching assistants, administrators, and other students (figure 5.3). Almost all respondents without disabilities rated their treatment by professors and other students as fair (94% and 96%, respectively) in contrast with 82% and 74% of students with disabilities who thought they were treated equitably by professors and other students, respectively. Despite their generally less optimistic perceptions of treatment by others, students with disabilities were slightly more inclined (91%) to rate their treatment by residence hall personnel favorably than students without disabilities (88%). Most respondents (>92%), regardless of disability status, rated their experiences with the Blacksburg community as being generally fair.

Students with disabilities, consistent with other campus minorities, also expressed significantly greater awareness of various services and programs offered by Virginia Tech. The disparity was greatest in terms of Services for Students with Disabilities which were familiar to 54% of respondents with disabilities compared with only 10% of respondents without disabilities. Students with disabilities were also more familiar with the Women's Center, the Multi-Cultural Center, and the Black Cultural Center. The two groups seemed to be comparably aware of both Project SAFE (16%) and the Academic Enrichment Office (28%). The

Figure 5.3 Percent of undergraduate students who report being treated somewhat fairly or very fairly at Virginia Tech



only program more familiar to students without disabilities was the Cranwell International Center which was known to 17% of students without disabilities and to only 6% of undergraduates with disabilities.

Discussion

Undergraduate students with disabilities differ from other minority groups in that they not only see greater injustice for minority students in general but they also perceive greater injustice at the personal level. For example, while women generally perceived a less positive overall climate and less campus diversity than men, they tended to rate dimensions involving personal experiences as positively as did the male respondents. Similarly, although gays, lesbians, and bisexuals perceived a generally less welcoming campus environment not only for non-heterosexuals but for other minority-status students as well, they seemed to have generally positive interactions with others in terms of treatment, e.g., non-heterosexuals didn't differ from heterosexuals in their rating of interactions with faculty and administrators, feeling equally fairly treated by others, etc. In contrast, students with disabilities differed little from students without disabilities on the more generic climate factors (such as overall perception of Virginia Tech climate and diversity in general) but considerably on those involving personal treatment (including interactions with faculty and fair treatment by others). This is also somewhat contrary to the findings relative to race in which racial minorities expressed greater awareness of climate and diversity difficulties at the campus level as well as at the personal level. When comparing the perceptions of students with disabilities to other minorities on campus, students with disabilities rated their social and interpersonal experiences, interactions with faculty, and level of fair treatment by others more negatively than either African American or non-heterosexual students. For students with disabilities, attending Virginia Tech seems to be a potentially lonely experience offering little in the way of positive interaction with other members of the campus community.

6

Differences Based on College Major for Undergraduate Students

Undergraduates also held different perceptions of the climate at Virginia Tech depending upon the college in which they were majoring. Overall, most students majored in programs located in the Colleges of Arts & Sciences (32%), Engineering (22%), Business (16%), and Human Resources & Education (9%). However, the distribution differed significantly by gender with the majority of women majoring in Arts & Sciences (41%), Human Resources & Education (16%), Business (14%), and Engineering (10%). In contrast male undergraduates came mostly from Engineering (34%), Arts & Sciences (24%), Business (18%), and Agriculture & Life Sciences (7%). Tables 1.3 (page 7) and 3.1 (page 20) present the complete breakdown of majors by gender and race, respectively.

Based on analysis of weighted data, there were significant differences among the colleges on all 15 of the climate dimensions. Of these, the greatest differences among colleges occurred on factors pertaining to diversity-related teaching, attitudes toward affirmative action, challenging derogatory remarks, awareness of services/programs, proactive diversity-related behavior, faculty behavior, and unfair treatment by others. While no college appeared at the extreme on all of these factors, some trends were apparent. Students from the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Human Resources & Education were similar in their awareness of university services and programs, proactive diversity-related behaviors, and perceptions of race relations on campus. As might be expected given the larger numbers of women enrolled in these two colleges, responses resembled those provided by undergraduate women as a whole (described in Chapter 2). Students majoring in Arts & Sciences and Human Resources & Education tended to be more aware of university services, to judge current race relations on campus less positively, and to engage more frequently in proactive diversity-related behaviors such as attending programs on race and gender. In addition, students in the College of Human Resources & Education were among those most likely to value diversity and to favor affirmative action. They also saw more diversity-related teaching in their classes than students from all other colleges except Architecture & Urban Studies and University Studies.

At the other end of the perception continuum were students from the College of Engineering. Again, it was no surprise to find that students from this college provided responses that closely matched the responses given by undergraduate men as a whole. Male respondents outnumbered female respondents in Engineering by more than three to one. Engineering majors were the *least* apt to favor diversity and affirmative action, to experience unfair treatment by others, to participate in proactive diversity-related activities, and to experience diversity-related teaching in their classes. They also were inclined to view race relations on campus more favorably than students from most other colleges, with the exception of Natural Resources.

Consistent with students from Engineering, University Studies respondents were also among those who were generally unaware of campus services and programs, who seldom were treated unfairly by others, and who rarely attended gender and race-related programs outside of class. Unlike their counterparts in Engineering, students in University Studies did

observe more diversity-related teaching than students from most other colleges. Since University Studies students are by definition freshmen and sophomores, their responses seem to reflect relative inexperience rather than the male dominance of student enrollments in Engineering (85% of University Studies survey respondents were either freshmen or sophomores).

Other college-based patterns worth noting include the high frequency with which students from Natural Resources challenged others on their racially or sexually derogatory remarks. In contrast, students from Business challenged others the least often. Natural Resources respondents as well as those from Architecture & Urban Studies felt they had been treated unfairly more often based on personal characteristics than students from the remaining colleges.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, some of the differences in perception and experience among the various colleges were contingent upon the respondent's gender. For example, when considering students' interactions with faculty and administrators, perceptions of undergraduate men and women were similar in the colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Arts & Sciences, Architecture & Urban Studies, Business, and Natural Resources, but were significantly different in Engineering and Human Resources & Education. In Engineering women students tended to express less favorable attitudes toward their interactions with faculty while in Human Resources & Education, women rated their experiences more favorably than did their male classmates. For additional examples of gender differences by college, see Chapter 2.

Although climate experiences across colleges tended to be moderated by gender, this was not true when considering race. Racial differences in attitudes were so strong that they transcended any differences in climate that might be present from college to college.

Discussion

Examination of the Virginia Tech campus climate based on college major provides yet another indication that there is no single, uniformly perceived climate for diversity at Virginia Tech. One must consider multiple climates in terms of group membership based on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability status, and major (among others) as well as combinations of each. Students in a given college might view the campus in positive terms, unless they are female, or gay, or African American, or disabled, etc. Conversely, some students might feel generally persecuted at the university on the basis of some personal characteristic(s) until they retreat into the safety of their particular department where they are well-regarded by faculty, teaching assistants, etc.

Much of the disparity in climate by college appears to be a factor of relative enrollment by men and women. Perhaps as gender-based choice of undergraduate majors diminishes in the future, inter-college differences may also decrease. Undoubtedly, lack of parity in faculty gender distributions among the colleges also plays a role in the differences in climate perceptions based on major.

One problem with examining differences by college major is the likelihood of considerable within-college differences. Possibly a more useful unit of analysis in examining the extent to which students in different majors perceive differences in climate would be to compare departments, although this information was not available in the current survey. The current analysis by college may lead to unfair judgment of all departments (and in turn, the faculty) within a given college, when in fact students' negative evaluations might be limited to a few programs.

7

Survey Purpose, Methodology, and Description of Respondents— Graduate Students

The Virginia Tech *Graduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate* was conducted for the purpose of gathering baseline data about the campus climate at Virginia Tech for graduate students. This assessment effort was part of the university's commitment to improve the working and learning climate at Virginia Tech as outlined in the *Update of the University Plan 1996-2001*.

The instrument used for this survey was similar to the one used for the *Undergraduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate* and was modeled after campus climate surveys conducted at other major research universities. It was developed collaboratively by Associate Provost Patricia Hyer, the Work Group on Campus Climate appointed by Senior Vice President and Provost Peggy Meszaros and chaired by Elyzabeth Holford, and the Center for Survey Research.

The questionnaire was pretested with graduate students in several graduate classes at Virginia Tech and then refined further by the Center for Survey Research before being mailed to sample members. The four-page climate survey includes sections to gather information on students' perceptions of their departmental climate, the general climate at Virginia Tech, attitudes about diversity issues, experiences related to campus climate, familiarity with particular services and programs offered on campus, and demographic information. A copy of the survey and cover letter is included in Appendix F.

Methodology

The survey was mailed to 1,000 of 2,213 eligible graduate students enrolled at Virginia Tech during the Fall 1998 semester. Of the 969 deliverable surveys, 470 completed surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 48.5%. Of these, 463 were retained by the Office of Institutional Research in the final data file for analysis.

Although off-campus students constitute a significant portion of total graduate enrollment, they were not surveyed since there is no common understanding of "campus climate" for students who are so geographically dispersed and less intensely related to the university. A separate study of relevant issues for this population is certainly warranted.

In order to obtain sufficient numbers of minority responses for comparisons across racial/ethnic groups, surveys were sent to all African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American graduate students. In contrast, White American students as well as students having citizenship in a country other than the United States were sampled at lower rates of 42.2% and 38.4%, respectively. To identify students for potential sample selection, race categories identified on Virginia Tech student records were used instead of self-reported race. As a result, there was some disparity in self-reported versus Virginia Tech-based race designations across the six categories. Most of the inconsistency resulted from the absence of

a mixed race category in the Virginia Tech coding scheme in conjunction with the inclusion by Virginia Tech of international status as a racial group. Only one respondent was missing the Virginia Tech race code.

When differences in response rates were compared across racial/ethnic group (based on Virginia Tech race categories), Asian Americans responded at the highest rate (60%), followed by Native American (50%), international (47%), and White American (46%) students. Comparison of response rates by gender indicated females (52%) responding at a higher rate than males (43%). Across gender and racial/ethnic group, Asian American female and male students (62.5% and 57.9%, respectively) had the highest overall response rates while male African Americans (32.4%) and Hispanic Americans (38.9%) responded at the lowest overall rates. Technically, the rate of 100% for female Native Americans represents the highest response rate but this group was comprised of only a single individual. Table 7.1 lists the response rates by gender and racial/ethnic group. It should be noted that because the Institutional Research Office was unable to track nondeliverable surveys by race and gender, numbers in the table are based on the total number of surveys initially distributed. Therefore, these response rates are likely to be slight underestimations for all groups based on the assumption that rates of nondeliverable surveys were approximately equal across gender and race.

Table 7.1 Response rates by race/ethnicity and gender

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black/African American ¹	22/51	43.1	12/37	32.4	34/88	38.6
Native American	1/1	100.0	2/5	40.0	3/6	50.0
Asian American	10/16	62.5	11/19	57.9	21/35	60.0
Hispanic	9/18	50.0	7/18	38.9	16/36	44.4
White	107/194	55.2	145/351	36.4	252/545	46.2
International	39/81	48.2	98/209	46.9	137/290	47.2
Total	188/361	52.1	275/639	43.0	463/1000 ²	46.3

¹ Race groups are based on Virginia Tech categories. ² Values in table do not account for nondeliverables.

The initial survey was sent in early October 1998, along with a cover letter and a postage paid envelope. Shortly after the initial mailing, a follow-up postcard was sent to encourage those who had not yet responded to complete and return their surveys. Once the receipt of incoming completed surveys had slowed, a second complete survey package was mailed to all nonrespondents. Student identification numbers were included on the survey forms to facilitate tracking of nonrespondents as well as to match student responses with the Virginia Tech race categories described above. Consequently, as in the case of the undergraduate surveys, although responses were confidential they were not anonymous.

Prior to conducting analyses on the survey items, sampling weights were computed and applied to take into account the disproportionate sampling design. Weights were based on the probability of being selected in the sample and equaled 2.37 for White Americans, 2.60 for international students, and 1.0 for all others. Application of such weights is intended to produce sample data which are more reflective of the Virginia Tech graduate student population in terms of racial/ethnic composition than unweighted data.

Data analytic procedures included descriptive statistics, z-tests of proportions, factor analysis, reliability analysis, χ^2 tests of independence, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Prior to comparing various subgroups on the survey items, factor analysis was used to determine if the items could be clustered into meaningful subsets (or factors). Five factor

analyses were run based on general sections of the survey including departmental climate, Virginia Tech climate, diversity-related experiences, diversity-related behavior and actions, and familiarity with programs and services offered at Virginia Tech. Underlying clusters of items were identified using patterns of factor loadings (i.e., correlations between items and underlying factors) based on orthogonal rotation. Items not exhibiting salient loadings or adhering to the principle of simple structure were omitted from analyses involving composite scores. As a result of the factor analyses, 17 interpretable dimensions were identified and used in subsequent analyses involving group comparisons. Table 7.2 lists the 17 dimensions and the specific survey items included within each. Internal consistency reliability (R_{xx}) based on Cronbach's alpha is noted next to each dimension.¹ Reliability was satisfactory ($\geq .70$) for 14 of the 17 scales and was greater than .60 for two of the remaining scales. Internal consistency reliability for the factor related to proactive diversity-related behaviors was only .53, suggesting that any conclusions drawn about this factor should be made with caution.

Scores on each dimension were obtained by summing responses to all items within the dimension. Raw scores were then standardized to facilitate comparisons across different dimensions. Mean comparisons were made across the 17 climate dimensions on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, and college using factorial ANOVAs and independent samples t-tests.²

All statistical tests were based on an alpha of .05. Where multiple tests were conducted, the Bonferroni adjustment was applied to minimize the risk of obtaining significant results merely by chance.

Table 7.2

Survey items and dimensions identified with the *Graduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate*

Departmental Climate

- ◆ General Department Climate ($R_{xx} = .89$)
 - ◇ When I have a concern/problem, there is a faculty or administrator in my department who I can talk to
 - ◇ My academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns
 - ◇ Faculty members and administrators in my department are supportive of my academic pursuits
 - ◇ I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members in my department
 - ◇ Faculty members in my department treat me with respect
 - ◇ Faculty members in my department are sensitive to the needs of all students
 - ◇ I feel I have been treated fairly by faculty members in my department
 - ◇ Students who are openly critical of aspects of my department have no cause to fear retribution
 - ◇ Graduate students in my department have significant input into department decisions which affect them
 - ◇ My department provides adequate help for students who are experiencing academic difficulty
- ◆ Department Support for Groups ($R_{xx} = .77$)

Rate the climate in your department in terms of being:

 - ◇ accessible/inaccessible to people with disabilities
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of people with disabilities
 - ◇ racist/non-racist
 - ◇ sexist/non-sexist
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of different religious beliefs

¹Frequencies for individual items by gender and race/ethnicity are presented in Appendixes G and H.

²Appendix I notes the significant mean differences by group for the 17 factors.

- ◆ Department Discrimination ($R_{xx} = .72$)
 - ◇ I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my gender
 - ◇ I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my race/ethnicity
- ◆ Departmental Equity toward Students ($R_{xx} = .76$)
 - ◇ I feel I have received the same opportunity to teach classes as other graduate students in my department
 - ◇ I feel I have received the same opportunity to work on funded projects as other students
 - ◇ A serious effort is made by my department to award financial assistance fairly
 - ◇ A serious effort is made by my department to recruit a diverse group of graduate students
- ◆ Departmental Social and Interpersonal Relations ($R_{xx} = .72$)
 - ◇ The office staff in my department are friendly and helpful
 - ◇ I feel that I have been treated fairly by other graduate students in my department
 - ◇ I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students in my department
 - ◇ I often feel I have to change some of my personal characteristics in order to "fit in" in my department
 - ◇ Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities in my classes
 - ◇ I feel that my professors ignore my comments and questions in class
 - ◇ There is a serious effort made to promote racial/ethnic understanding in my department

Virginia Tech Climate

- ◆ Support of Groups ($R_{xx} = .82$)

Rate the climate at Virginia Tech in general in terms of being:

 - ◇ accessible/inaccessible to people with disabilities
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of people with disabilities
 - ◇ racist/non-racist
 - ◇ sexist/non-sexist
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ supportive/not supportive of different religious beliefs
- ◆ Interaction with Faculty and Administrators ($R_{xx} = .76$)
 - ◇ I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom
 - ◇ I feel that there are faculty or administrator role models for me at Virginia Tech
 - ◇ Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background
- ◆ Valuing of Diversity ($R_{xx} = .66$)
 - ◇ Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity
 - ◇ Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators
 - ◇ Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified graduate students
- ◆ Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus ($R_{xx} = .90$)
 - ◇ Interaction among students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom
 - ◇ Friendship between graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom
 - ◇ Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ Racial/ethnic integration on campus
 - ◇ Respect by faculty members for graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups
 - ◇ University commitment to the success of graduate students of different racial/ethnic groups
 - ◇ University commitment to the success of women graduate students
- ◆ General Climate for Diversity at Virginia Tech ($R_{xx} = .84$)
 - ◇ At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself
 - ◇ The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating
 - ◇ Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives
 - ◇ Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable

- ◇ Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech seem to be committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences
- ◇ Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity
- ◇ Top university administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech

Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

- ◆ Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences ($R_{xx} = .86$)
How often have you read, heard, or seen insensitive or negative comments/materials about each of the following:
 - ◇ racial/ethnic minorities
 - ◇ women
 - ◇ individuals with disabilities
 - ◇ non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ individuals from the Appalachian region (including southwest Virginia)
 - ◇ individuals from different national origins
 - ◇ religious groups
- ◆ Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics ($R_{xx} = .77$)
How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at Virginia Tech because of the personal characteristics below:
 - ◇ race/ethnicity
 - ◇ gender
 - ◇ sexual orientation
 - ◇ religion
 - ◇ age
 - ◇ accent/dialect
 - ◇ national origin
 - ◇ disability
 - ◇ social class origin
- ◆ Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions ($R_{xx} = .88$)
How often have you felt you were not free to voice your true opinion about issues concerning each of the following groups?
 - ◇ racial/ethnic minorities
 - ◇ women
 - ◇ non-heterosexuals
 - ◇ people with disabilities

Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

- ◆ Challenge Derogatory Remarks ($R_{xx} = .86$)
 - ◇ Challenged others on sexually derogatory remarks
 - ◇ Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory remarks
- ◆ Derogatory Comments ($R_{xx} = .66$)
 - ◇ Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons
 - ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region (including southwest Virginia)
 - ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours
 - ◇ Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities
- ◆ Proactive Diversity Behavior ($R_{xx} = .53$)
 - ◇ Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed
 - ◇ Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women
 - ◇ Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups

Awareness of Virginia Tech Services and Programs

◆ Overall Awareness of Services and Programs ($R_{xx} = .78$)

Please indicate the extent to which you are familiar with each of the Virginia Tech services and programs below:

- ◆ Women's Center
- ◆ Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts & Education)
- ◆ Multi-Cultural Center
- ◆ Black Cultural Center
- ◆ Services for Students with Disabilities
- ◆ Cranwell International Center

Note: Prior to analyses, all items were recoded so that larger values indicated higher levels of the trait being measured (in general this usually meant higher levels of agreement or greater frequency of occurrence).

Description of the Graduate Student Respondents

Table 7.3 presents demographic and background information for the total graduate student sample and by gender. These values reflect unweighted, observed responses.³ Based on frequency of response to the demographic items the majority of respondents were White (58%), male (59%), Christian (56%), heterosexual (95%) U.S. citizens (69%). Though the 18% disparity in men versus women respondents may seem large, it still reflects considerable underrepresentation of men who comprise 66% of graduate students at Virginia Tech. The number of respondents enrolled in master's degree programs (47%) was comparable to those enrolled in doctoral programs (52%). Students responding to the survey had been at Virginia Tech an average of 3.5 years ($SD = 3.5$), which should have provided ample opportunity to form definitive attitudes concerning the climate on campus. Average age of all graduate students was 29.4 ($SD = 6.5$), with significant differences in age depending upon college. Students in Human Resources & Education were the oldest on average ($M = 33.8$, $SD = 9.3$) and students in Arts & Sciences the youngest ($M = 27.7$, $SD = 4.0$). Although no information was available concerning marital status, 18% of respondents had young children living with them at the time of the survey. The majority of graduate students represented majors in either Engineering (31%) or Arts & Sciences (22%). However, college majors did differ somewhat by gender with women respondents coming mostly from Arts & Sciences (25%) and Human Resources & Education (25%) and men majoring primarily in Engineering (39%) and Arts & Sciences (20%). Only 21% of the respondents were the first in their families to attend a four-year college.

The largest proportion of respondents (44%) indicated that they had spent most of their lives in a city of 50,000 or more prior to attending Virginia Tech with few (8%) coming from rural areas. These proportions did differ by race/ethnicity, however, with African American respondents most likely (68%) to have grown up in a city of 50,000 or more in contrast with the majority of White American respondents (36%) who were raised in large suburbs. Of those spending their childhood in rural areas, most were White Americans (89%). Prior experiences with respect to racial/ethnic composition of childhood neighborhoods, undergraduate institutions, and friendships also differed among respondents depending upon race/ethnicity. For example, whereas the majority of White Americans (80%) reported that their neighborhoods were comprised primarily of other White Americans, most African Americans (67%) indicated that their neighborhoods included mostly non-African Americans. Level of

³ Appendix J presents the demographic information after sampling weights were applied.

exposure to various racial and ethnic groups during the undergraduate experience also differed among respondents by race. International students and White American students came from the most racially segregated undergraduate institutions with 80% of international students and 77% of White American students attending schools in which all or mostly all other students were of their same race. Most African American graduate students (76%) attended undergraduate institutions composed of all or mostly all non-African American students. Similarly, the ethnic composition of friends is the most diverse for African American respondents with 57% indicating their friends are mostly not African American and least diverse for White Americans, the majority of whom (76%) tend to socialize with mostly other White Americans.

Table 7.3 Demographic and background characteristics of graduate respondents by gender

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Degree Being Sought</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	272	100	459	100
Non-degree seeking	1	<1	—	—	1	<1
Master's	93	50	124	46	217	47
Doctorate	93	50	147	54	240	52
Other	—	—	1	<1	1	<1
<i>Race/Ethnicity (self-reported)</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	273	100	460	100
Asian	16	16	74	27	104	23
Black/African American	23	12	13	5	36	8
Hispanic	8	4	9	3	17	4
Native American	—	—	1	<1	1	<1
White	115	62	153	56	268	58
Other/mixed	11	6	23	8	34	7
<i>Citizenship Status</i>						
Total respondents	185	100	269	100	454	100
U.S. citizen	144	88	171	64	315	69
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	5	3	6	2	11	2
Non-U.S. citizen	31	17	88	33	119	26
<i>College in Which Majoring</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	272	100	459	100
Agriculture/Life Science	16	9	16	6	32	7
Arts and Sciences	226	40	136	25	362	32
Architecture/Urban Studies	17	9	25	9	42	9
Business	17	9	21	8	38	8
Engineering	33	18	107	39	140	31
Natural Resources	7	4	14	5	21	5
Human Resources/Education	47	25	32	12	79	17
Veterinary Medicine	3	2	4	2	7	2
<i>Cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech</i>						
Total respondents	186	100	273	100	459	100
3.5 - 4.0	147	79	224	82	371	81
3.0 - 3.49	34	18	46	17	80	17
below 3.0	5	3	3	1	8	2

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Religious Faith</i>						
Total respondents	184	100	272	100	454	100
Christian	113	61	139	52	252	56
Jewish	2	1	4	2	6	1
Muslim	6	3	18	7	24	5
None	40	22	68	25	108	24
Other	23	13	41	15	64	14
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>						
Total respondents	186	100	268	100	454	100
Heterosexual	179	96	253	94	432	95
Gay or Lesbian	4	2	8	3	12	3
Bisexual	3	2	7	3	10	2
<i>First in Family to Attend College</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	272	100	459	100
Yes	38	20	58	21	96	21
No	149	80	214	79	363	79
<i>Person with a Disability</i>						
Total respondents	186	100	272	100	458	100
Yes	5	3	9	3	14	3
No	181	97	263	97	444	97
<i>Setting Where Spent Most of Life</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	273	100	460	100
Rural area	12	6	26	10	38	8
Small town/city	48	26	54	20	102	22
Suburb of 50,000 or more	54	29	65	24	119	26
City of 50,000 or more	73	39	128	100	201	44
<i>Racial Composition of Neighborhood</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	273	100	460	100
Nearly all same race as you	87	47	121	44	208	45
Mostly same race as you	49	26	91	33	140	30
About half same race	31	17	29	11	60	13
Mostly different race than you	15	8	19	7	34	7
All or nearly all different race	5	3	13	5	18	4
<i>Racial Composition of Undergraduate Institution</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	272	100	459	100
Nearly all same race as you	54	29	77	28	131	29
Mostly same race as you	77	41	126	46	203	44
About half same race	30	16	35	13	65	14
Mostly different race than you	14	8	23	9	37	8
All or nearly all different race	12	6	11	4	23	5
<i>Racial Composition of Friends</i>						
Total respondents	187	100	273	100	460	100
Nearly all same race as you	39	21	43	16	82	18
Mostly same race as you	78	42	133	49	211	46
About half same race	49	26	62	23	111	24
Mostly different race than you	10	5	29	11	39	9
All or nearly all different race	11	6	6	2	17	4

* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

8

Differences by Gender for Graduate Students

Male and female graduate students appear to hold remarkably similar views of the Virginia Tech campus climate. Of the 17 dimensions on which gender differences were examined, the only significant difference was with respect to whether or not respondents felt they were free to voice their opinions about various groups on campus. And despite the statistical significance on this factor, the actual mean difference was rather trivial.

In general, both men and women perceive their departmental climate as well as the overall university climate in a positive way. At the departmental level, graduate students see faculty as supportive and fair and also rate their social and interpersonal relations with departmental staff and other graduate students as being favorable. Also within their departments, they have experienced relatively little discrimination and have encountered equitable treatment in terms of allocation of resources and research and teaching opportunities. At the general university level, graduate students perceive Virginia Tech as an institution which promotes diversity and is supportive of various minority groups. Both men and women have had mostly positive interactions with university faculty, have encountered relatively little unfair treatment, and have viewed primarily positive interactions among racial/ethnic groups on campus. In terms of their diversity-related behavior, while only a small percentage of graduate students habitually make derogatory comments about minorities on campus, relatively few graduate students tend to challenge such remarks when made by others.

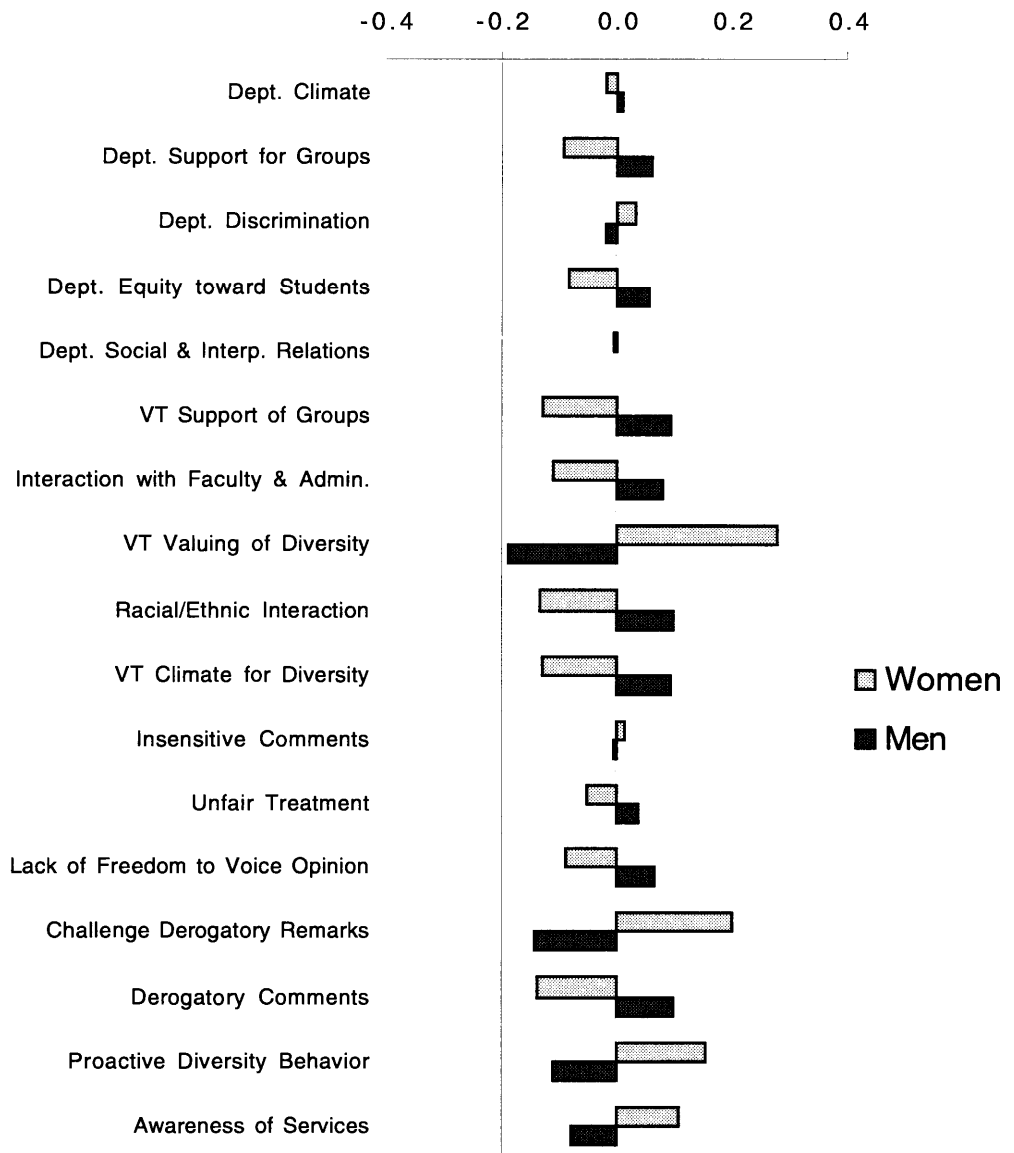
Figure 8.1 presents the gender differences graphically for all 17 dimensions. Scores have been standardized so that zero represents the average score for that dimension. Bar length represents relative deviation of the group from the overall sample with bars to the right of zero corresponding to higher mean responses. For example, on the bars representing frequency of challenging others who make derogatory remarks, the bar for women falls slightly to the right of the center axis indicating the greater than average likelihood that women will challenge others. The bar for men, which falls slightly to the left, indicates that men were less likely on average to challenge derogatory remarks made by others. However, the fact that none of the bars deviates much from center reflects the absence of strong gender differences in climate perceptions among graduate students. For most dimensions positive values indicate more favorable climate attitudes and experiences, but for a few dimensions, such as “making derogatory remarks,” a positive value (or bar to the right of center) indicates greater likelihood of participating in negative behavior.

Departmental Climate

Attitudes toward departmental climate were assessed along five dimensions including overall departmental climate, discrimination within the department, departmental equity, social and interpersonal relations within the department, and departmental support of various subgroups. Average ratings did not differ by gender on any of these dimensions for graduate student survey respondents. Moreover, both male and female graduate students appear to be

Figure 8.1

Differences between men and women graduate students on z-scores for 17 factors



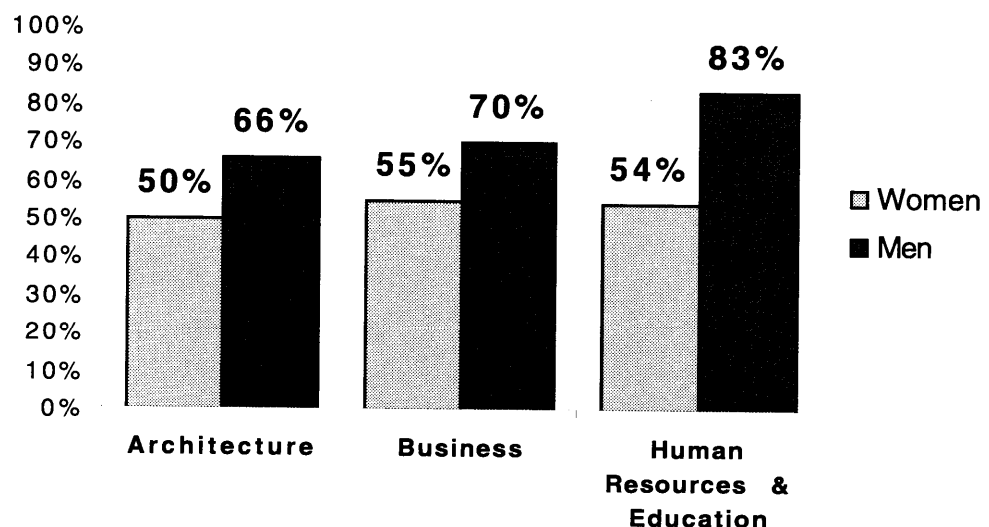
pleased with most aspects of the climate in their departments as reflected by positive responses to nearly all items related to departmental climate.

In evaluating the general departmental climate, over 80% of graduate student respondents, regardless of gender, agreed that their department was characterized by adequate faculty guidance, fair treatment and respect by faculty, and supportiveness of faculty. Somewhat fewer students (73%) were confident that students who are openly critical of the department have no reason to fear retribution. However, neither men (47%) nor women (51%) were especially convinced that graduate students have significant input into departmental decisions which affect them.

On the two items assessing departmental discrimination, men and women respondents did differ significantly, but in opposite directions. Though relatively few students felt they had experienced discriminatory practices within their departments, significantly more women (13%) than men (8%) believed they had been discriminated against due to their gender. Conversely, more men (14%) than women (9%) had been discriminated against because of their race/ethnicity. It is worth noting that more than twice as many male respondents as female respondents were international students, which might explain this latter finding to some extent.

Departmental equity was composed of items primarily related to fair allocation of teaching assignments, funded research opportunities, and financial resources. It also included efforts by the department to recruit a diverse group of graduate students. Although men and women responded similarly to most items related to departmental equity, they differed in their perceptions of the extent to which they received the same opportunity to work on funded research projects with significantly more men (75%) than women (67%) respondents agreeing to this item. In some cases gender differences in perceived equity of resource allocation differed depending upon the college in which the respondent was majoring. For example, within the College of Natural Resources more men (79%) than women (46%) indicated that they have the same opportunity to teach classes as other students in their department. In other colleges, teaching opportunities seem to be granted equitably but funded research opportunities appear to be somewhat gender-based. In the Colleges of Architecture & Urban Studies, Business, and Human Resources & Education, significantly more men than women felt they had the same opportunity to work on funded research projects as other graduate students in the department (figure 8.2). Similarly, more men in Architecture & Urban Studies and in Veterinary Medicine (66% and 100%, respectively) than women (50% in Architecture & Urban Studies and 71% Veterinary Medicine) believe their department makes a serious effort to award financial assistance fairly.

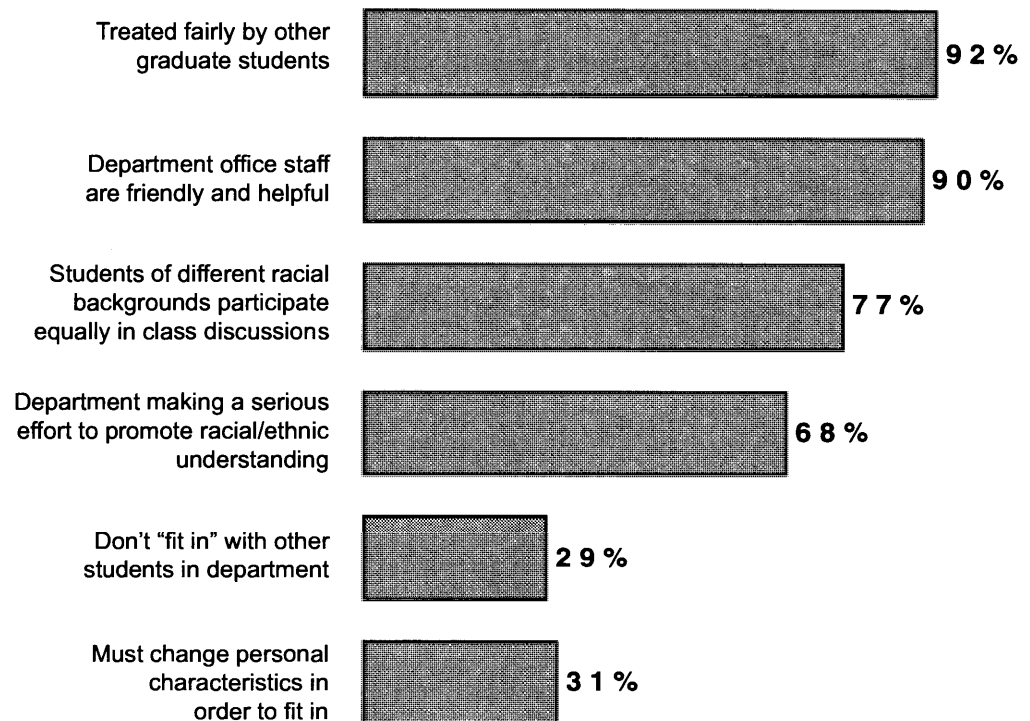
Figure 8.2 Percent of graduate students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have equal opportunity to work on funded research projects



Overall, graduate men and women did not differ in their ratings of departmental supportiveness of various groups including people with disabilities, people of different races, men and women, non-heterosexuals, and people with different religious beliefs. However, they did differ on the specific items related to accessibility of the department to people with disabilities, level of sexism in the department, and supportiveness of non-heterosexuals. More men than women believe the department is accessible to people with disabilities (74% men and 66% women) and that the department is non-sexist (77% men and 73% women). In contrast, more women (60%) than men (53%) indicated that their department was supportive of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. It should be noted that although there were no overall gender differences on the dimension of departmental supportiveness, this was not true for African American or White American respondents among whom men perceived a more supportive departmental climate than women.

For the most part, departmental social and interpersonal climate was rated not only similarly but also favorably by male and female respondents (figure 8.3). Most (>90%) graduate students feel they have been treated fairly by other graduate students in the department and that the departmental office staff is friendly and helpful while few (<10%) believe their professors ignore their comments and questions in class. The majority of graduate men and women (77%) indicated that students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussions and activities and that the department is making a serious effort to promote racial/ethnic understanding (68%). However, it was somewhat disturbing

Figure 8.3 Rating of the departmental climate by graduate students, combined men and women; percent agreeing or strongly agreeing



that close to a third of both men and women feel they do not “fit in” well with other students in the department (29%) or that they often have to change personal characteristics (such as language, dress, behaviors, etc.) in order to fit in (31%). Despite the fact that overall evaluations of the social and interpersonal climate did not differ by gender, women in the College of Human Resources & Education rated the departmental climate more positively than did their male classmates.

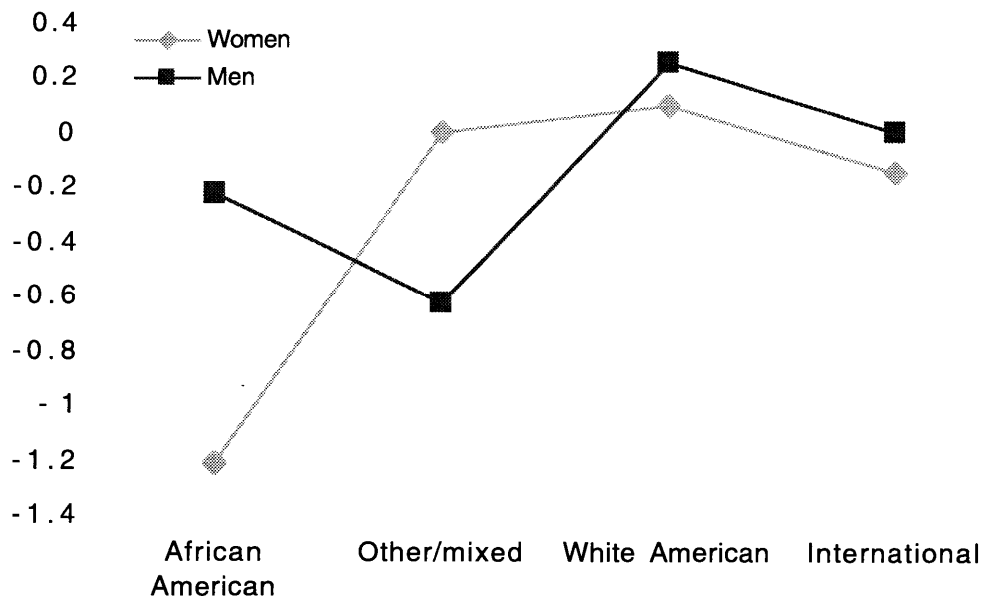
Virginia Tech Climate

Evaluation of the Virginia Tech climate included the five subdomains of Virginia Tech climate for diversity, faculty interaction at Virginia Tech, valuing of diversity and affirmative action, supportiveness of various campus groups, and racial interaction and relations on campus. Average responses for graduate men and women did not differ significantly on any of these five dimensions, although differences were present on certain items and for certain college majors.

In general, graduate men and women were in agreement regarding the overall climate for diversity at Virginia Tech with both men and women rating various aspects of the climate in a generally positive way. The majority of both men and women respondents believe the university has a climate which fosters diversity (73%) and agree that faculty and administrators are committed not only to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech (79%) but also to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences (77%). Similarly, most graduate students feel that Virginia Tech has a variety of social opportunities in which they are interested in participating (69%) and which allow them to socialize with people different from themselves (74%). Furthermore, virtually all of the respondents (89%) indicated that they feel comfortable in the Blacksburg community. Men and women did disagree in their perception of Virginia Tech as being a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives with men (77%) more inclined than women (63%) to rate this aspect of the university favorably.

Graduate students, regardless of gender, tend to view their interactions with faculty as being satisfactory. Eighty-three percent of men overall and 80% of women see role models within the Virginia Tech faculty or administration. And, consistent with undergraduate respondents, graduate student respondents overwhelmingly agree that they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech (94% of men and 93% of women). Men and women did differ in the extent to which they perceive that faculty are approachable outside of the classroom and fair to students regardless of background. Women graduate students (90%) see faculty as being more approachable than do their male classmates (83%). However, more men (81%) than women (67%) believe the faculty are fair to all students. The gender patterns differed somewhat when race was taken into account. African American men consistently expressed more positive attitudes about interactions with faculty than did African American women while men and women of other racial or ethnic groups were more consistent across gender in their responses (figure 8.4). For example, for African Americans there was a considerable disparity in perceptions of men and women regarding the presence of faculty or administrator role models with most African American men (73%) and only half of African American women (50%) feeling there are role models for them at Virginia Tech. In addition, African American women, contrary to their female classmates from other racial/ethnic groups, were less likely (86%) than African American men (100%) to rate Virginia Tech faculty as being approachable outside of class and less likely (77%) than African American men (100%) to believe they have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech.

Figure 8.4 Mean differences for faculty interactions by race and gender



With respect to the valuing of diversity and affirmative action, although the overwhelming majority of graduate students (94%) agreed that diversity is good for Virginia Tech, more of the women (97%) than men (92%) agreed to this item. Also related to valuing of diversity and affirmative action, more graduate men than women felt that Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity (38% men and 27% women) and that affirmative action leads to admission of underqualified graduate students (59% and 44%, men and women, respectively). Moreover, some gender differences in overall valuing of diversity and affirmative action were only present in certain colleges. Women in Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, and Human Resources & Education were significantly more supportive of diversity and affirmative action than were men in the same colleges, whereas in the remaining colleges men and women respondents responded similarly.

Despite the lack of overall differences between men and women related to perceptions of the supportiveness of Virginia Tech toward various subgroups on campus, significant differences were found on several individual items comprising this scale. Interestingly, these were the same three items on which gender differences were found when posed in the context of departmental supportiveness. For example, consistent with the pattern seen with respect to departmental supportiveness, more men than women believe that the campus is accessible to people with disabilities (78% of men and 71% of women) and that the campus is non-sexist (70% of men and 62% of women). Conversely, more women (53%) than men (48%) tend to feel that the campus is supportive of non-heterosexuals. This was similar to gender-based perceptions at the departmental level although the environment within the department was seen as somewhat more supportive than for the campus in general. In addition, patterns of responses by gender regarding overall perceptions of campus supportiveness differed by college. Women in Natural Resources and men in Human Resources & Education were more inclined to see the campus as supportive of and accessible to various subgroups such as people with disabilities, non-heterosexuals, and people with different religious beliefs.

Both graduate men and women tend to see Virginia Tech as a campus characterized by amicable interaction among the races. The majority of respondents (87%) believe that the respect shown by faculty for graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups is good or excellent and in turn that the level of respect shown by students for faculty of different racial/ethnic groups is likewise good or excellent (81%). The greatest gender-based difference in perception was related to the university's commitment to the success of women graduate students with more men (86%) than women (76%) indicating that the university's commitment is satisfactory. Similarly, men were somewhat more likely (78%) than women (73%) to rate racial and ethnic relations in the classroom in the positive direction. Neither men nor women graduate students, 55% and 49%, respectively, seem to think the level of racial/ethnic integration at Virginia Tech is optimal. Nor did they rate the out-of-class interaction among graduate students of different racial/ethnic groups very positively (58% of male and 52% of women).

Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

Diversity-related experiences included viewing of derogatory materials and/or hearing insensitive remarks about various subgroups on campus, encountering unfair treatment or harassment on the basis of various personal characteristics, and feeling restrained from publicly voicing opinions about racial/ethnic minorities, women, non-heterosexuals, and people with disabilities. Male and female graduate students did not differ significantly on any of these three dimensions.

While the absence of gender differences in frequency of encountering derisive materials/remarks is laudable, it was nevertheless discouraging to note that approximately a third of all graduate students had heard derogatory comments or read insulting materials concerning racial/ethnic minorities (37%), non-heterosexuals (32%), and individuals from Appalachia (30%). Fewer though substantial numbers of all graduate students had also heard or read negative comments or materials about individuals of different national origins (27%), women (26%), and religious groups (20%) while only 6% had encountered such materials or remarks about individuals with disabilities.

Relatively few respondents had experienced unfair treatment or harassment at Virginia Tech based on their personal characteristics. Less than 10% of all graduate students had been treated unfairly or harassed based on their national origin (9%), age (8%), religion (7%), social class origin (5%), sexual orientation (4%), or disability status (1%). A slightly greater number of both men and women (11%) had been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity. Not too surprisingly, women (19%) had more frequently been treated unfairly based on their gender than had men (8%). In contrast, men were more likely (16%) than women (11%) to have endured unfair treatment or harassment due to their accent or dialect.

Men and women differed significantly in their freedom to voice true opinions about racial/ethnic minorities, women, non-heterosexuals, and people with disabilities, although the gender differences occurred only for White Americans and for students comprising the "other" racial group which included Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. In both cases, men more frequently felt unable to express their true opinions. Respondents felt the most constrained in speaking candidly about racial and ethnic minorities (29% and 22% of men and women, respectively) and the least restricted in openly discussing their feelings about people with disabilities (9% and 7% of men and women, respectively).

Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

Likelihood of engaging in either positive or negative diversity-related behaviors, including making derogatory remarks about others, challenging those who make derogatory remarks, and participating in proactive diversity behaviors, was comparable for male and female graduate students.

Graduate students, regardless of gender, seldom make (or at least, admit to making) jokes or derogatory remarks about people with disabilities (2%) or about other religions (8%) but are somewhat more inclined to belittle people from the Appalachian region (17%). In addition, men (16%) more often than women (6%) deride gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons.

While relatively few graduate students make derogatory comments about certain subgroups on campus, less than half tend to challenge others who make such comments. Specifically, less than 23% of graduate men sometimes or often challenge others who make racially or sexually derisive remarks. Women fared better; yet, only 40% denounced others for their sexually disparaging remarks while 38% did so when hearing racial/ethnic slurs.

As a group, graduate students do not appear to be highly involved in proactive diversity-related behaviors. Fewer than a third of either men or women respondents have attended non-classroom programs or activities about women's issues although women were more than three times as likely (26%) as men (8%) to attend such a program. Both men and women were more apt to attend a program or activity related to the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups (31% of women and 25% of men). Only 3% of women respondents and 8% of men respondents had taken action to have offensive graffiti removed.

Awareness of VT Services and Programs

Graduate students did not differ by gender in their overall awareness of various programs and services offered by Virginia Tech, although they did differ with respect to a few specific services. For the most part, Virginia Tech graduate students do not seem to be keenly aware of services available to particular student populations. Less than 50% of graduate students were familiar with the Women's Center, Project SAFE, the Multi-Cultural Center, the Black Cultural Center, and Services for Students with Disabilities. As might be expected, approximately twice as many women as men were acquainted with the Women's Center (48% and 21% of women and men, respectively) and with Project SAFE (15% and 8% of women and men, respectively). A little less than a third of graduate students were aware of the Multi-Cultural Center and the Black Cultural Center. Students were least familiar with Services for Students with Disabilities (16%) and most familiar with the Cranwell International Center with 57% of men and 53% of women respondents indicating at least some familiarity.

Discussion

Despite the minority status of women graduate students at Virginia Tech, women enrolled as graduate students view their experience at the university quite similarly to their male classmates. This holds across college and for the most part, across race/ethnicity as well. These results differ markedly from what was found for undergraduate students and for faculty as reported in *The Campus Climate for Diversity: Faculty Perceptions* where gender differences were much more pervasive.

On a few factors, including valuing of diversity and challenging others on derogatory remarks, men and women did differ significantly when gender was examined in isolation; however, these differences disappeared when either race or college major were taken into account. Consequently, on some climate dimensions what at first might appear to reflect gender differences were actually differences based on race or on major. It should be noted that the proportions of men and women in the sample differed significantly by race as well as by college major. However, even without race and major controlled, on most dimensions, there were still no significant gender differences contrary to what was seen in the undergraduate analyses.

One possible explanation for the absence of gender differences among graduate students in their perceptions of the general Virginia Tech climate is that for graduate students the university climate as a whole is much less relevant to them than their departmental climate. Thus, they may be generally less aware of what occurs on the larger campus. With respect to the similarity of responses on items assessing departmental climate, perhaps within their own departments the experiences for men and women graduate students truly are more equitable from a gender perspective than they are for faculty.

The gender differences within certain colleges in terms of perceived fairness in allocation of financial assistance and opportunities for working on funded projects was somewhat disconcerting. However, it would be relatively easy to determine if these perceptions are accurate not. Average dollar amounts for financial aid could be computed and compared for men and women within each college. Similarly, proportions of men and women working on funded research projects could be compared with proportions of men and women enrolled in the college to determine if these types of opportunities are actually gender-based as suggested by the survey respondents.

9

Differences by Race/Ethnicity for Graduate Students

For the purpose of making comparisons among racial/ethnic groups the university's race categories were used and then collapsed into four groups: African American, White American, international, and other. The "other" category, consisting of Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans, was created because none of these groups individually was of sufficiently large size for conducting meaningful analyses. It should be noted that the international category includes students of various races because non-U.S. citizenship is a characteristic which supercedes race in characterization.

Graduate student respondents in the four racial/ethnic categories did differ on a number of demographic factors including gender, type of degree program and major, grade point average, location of undergraduate degree, presence of young children in the home, and type of religious faith. Race was not related to being a first generation college student, sexual orientation, or disability status. Table 9.1 presents the complete breakdown of demographic characteristics by race.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, representation by gender did differ significantly by race with the majority of international (71%) and White American (57%) students being men and the majority of African American students (65%) being women. Gender distribution for students in the other race category was split evenly between men (50%) and women (50%).

Type of degree program as well as college also differed by race. For example, most White American students (55%) were pursuing master's degrees while the majority of African American (71%), international (58%), and other race respondents (63%) were in doctoral programs. Moreover, the four racial groups differed in proportions affiliated with each of the eight colleges. While most graduate students in general were majoring either in Engineering (31%) or Arts & Sciences (22%), this was not the case for African American students who were primarily enrolled in Human Resources & Education (38%) and Arts & Sciences (32%). For international students, Engineering was clearly the major of choice (47%) with substantially fewer international students majoring in Arts & Sciences (15%) and Agriculture & Life Sciences (10%).

More than a third of White American graduate students had also received their bachelor's degrees from Virginia Tech. This was significantly higher than for all other racial groups. Most African American (91%) and international graduate students (98%) had obtained their undergraduate degrees from institutions other than Virginia Tech.

Race also played a role in religious faith. The majority of African American (88%), White American (67%), and other race respondents (63%) identified their religious faith as Christian, whereas international students represented more diverse faiths including Muslim (16%), other (27%), and none (33%). Other differences in demographic characteristics based on race have already been noted in Chapter 7 under the general description of participants.

Table 9.1

Demographic and background characteristics of graduate respondents by race/ethnicity

	African American		White American		International		Other Race	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Gender</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	249	100	136	100	40	100
Female	22	65	106	43	39	29	20	50
Male	12	35	143	57	97	71	20	50
<i>Degree Currently Pursuing</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	248	100	136	100	40	100
Non-degree seeking	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Master's	10	29	137	55	55	40	15	38
Doctorate	24	71	111	45	79	58	25	63
<i>Citizenship Status</i>								
Total respondents	33	100	245	100	135	100	40	100
U.S. citizen	33	100	241	98	1	1	39	98
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	0	0	1	<1	9	7	1	2
Non-U.S. citizen	0	0	1	<1	118	87	0	0
Other	0	0	2	1	7	5	0	0
<i>College primarily affiliated with</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	248	100	136	100	40	100
Agriculture/Life Science	2	6	16	6	13	10	1	2
Arts and Sciences	11	32	58	23	21	15	10	25
Architecture/Urban Studies	1	3	21	10	9	7	7	18
Business	2	6	21	8	11	8	4	10
Engineering	4	12	60	24	64	47	12	30
Natural Resources	1	3	13	5	6	4	1	2
Human Resources/Education	13	38	50	20	10	7	5	12
Veterinary Medicine	0	0	5	2	2	2	0	0
<i>Cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	249	100	136	100	39	100
3.5 - 4.0	18	53	211	85	111	82	30	77
3.0 - 3.49	14	41	33	13	24	18	9	23
below 3.0	2	6	5	2	1	1	0	0
<i>Religious Faith</i>								
Total respondents	33	100	247	100	133	100	40	100
Christian	29	88	165	67	32	24	25	62
Jewish	0	0	5	2	0	0	1	2
Muslim	1	3	0	0	21	16	2	5
None	1	3	56	23	44	33	7	18
Other	2	6	23	8	36	27	5	12
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	248	100	131	100	40	100
Heterosexual	34	100	233	94	126	96	38	95
Gay or Lesbian	0	0	9	4	2	2	1	2
Bisexual	0	0	6	2	3	2	1	2
<i>First in Family to Attend College</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	248	100	136	100	40	100
Yes	11	32	42	17	34	25	9	22
No	23	68	206	83	102	75	31	78

	African American		White American		International		Other Race	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Person with Disability</i>								
Total respondents	33	100	248	100	136	100	40	100
Yes	0	0	11	4	0	0	3	8
No	33	100	237	96	136	100	37	92
<i>Setting Where Spent Most of Life</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	249	100	136	100	40	100
Rural area	1	3	34	14	2	2	1	2
Small town/city	5	15	75	30	15	11	7	18
Suburb of 50,000 or more	5	15	89	36	12	9	12	30
City of 50,000 or more	23	68	51	20	107	79	20	50
<i>Racial Composition of Neighborhood</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	249	100	136	100	40	100
Nearly all same race as you	11	32	111	45	77	57	8	20
Mostly same race as you	7	21	87	35	39	29	7	18
About half same race	5	15	40	16	9	7	6	15
Mostly different race than you	7	21	8	3	7	5	12	30
All or nearly all different race	4	12	3	1	4	3	7	18
<i>Racial Composition of Undergraduate Institution</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	248	100	136	100	40	100
Nearly all same race as you	15	44	44	18	68	50	3	8
Mostly same race as you	3	9	147	59	41	30	12	30
About half same race	1	3	51	21	9	7	4	10
Mostly different race than you	9	26	3	1	10	7	15	38
All or nearly all different race	6	18	3	1	8	6	6	15
<i>Racial Composition of Friends</i>								
Total respondents	34	100	249	100	136	100	40	100
Nearly all same race as you	9	26	49	20	23	17	1	2
Mostly same race as you	8	24	140	56	49	36	13	32
About half same race	10	29	51	20	42	31	8	20
Mostly different race than you	6	18	7	3	16	12	10	25
All or nearly all different race	1	3	2	1	6	4	8	20

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Graduate students differed by race on 13 of 17 campus climate dimensions. The four dimensions on which racial/ethnic differences were not found were all related to departmental climate and included overall departmental climate, departmental discrimination, departmental equity, and departmental support of groups. Consistent with what has been presented in Chapter 8 with respect to gender-based perceptions of departmental climate, students across the four racial groups rated most aspects of their departmental climate in a positive way. The only exception was the departmental social and interpersonal climate which was viewed more or less favorably depending upon racial/ethnic background.

In some cases patterns of racial differences were similar to those found for undergraduates with African American and White American students reflecting the greatest discrepancy in climate perceptions and experiences. However, for some aspects of the climate such as general climate for diversity, campus support of various groups, inability to voice opinions, encountering insensitive remarks or materials, making derogatory comments, and challenging derogatory remarks, it was the international students who differed most from all other racial groups. Where these differences occurred, international students tended to express the most positive attitudes and to be the least likely to engage in proactive diversity-related behaviors.

Figure 9.1 **Difference between racial/ethnic groups on z-scores for 17 factors**

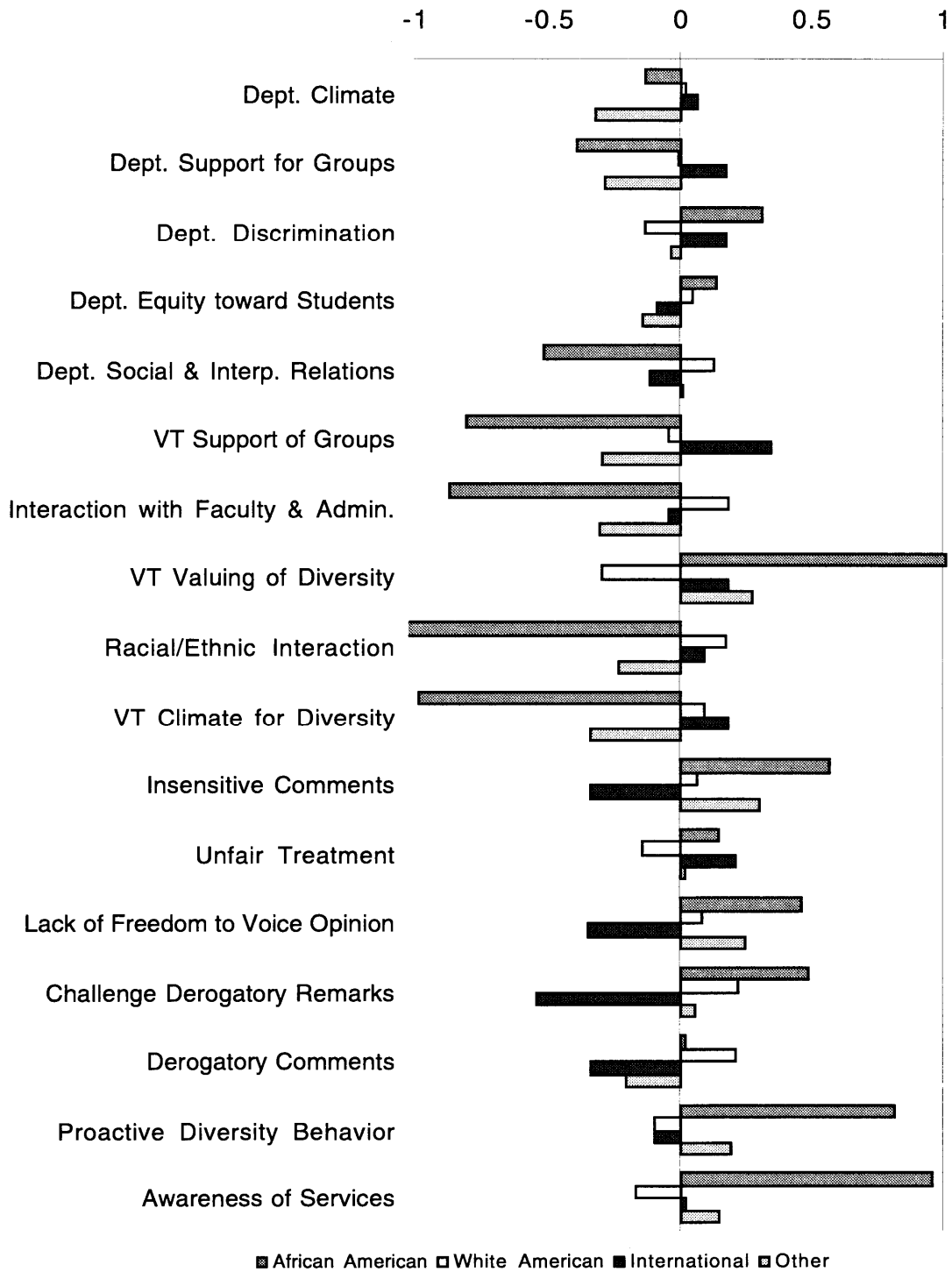


Figure 9.1 presents the racial differences graphically for all 17 dimensions. Scores have been standardized so that zero represents the average score for that dimension. Bar length represents relative deviation of the group from the overall sample with bars to the right of zero corresponding to higher mean responses. For example, note on the section corresponding to valuing of diversity and affirmative action, the bars for African Americans, international students, and other race respondents all fall to the right of center whereas the bar for White Americans falls to the left. This indicates that White Americans on average placed less value on diversity and were more opposed to affirmative action than were the other three racial/ethnic groups. Moreover, the longer bar length for African Americans reflects their higher valuing of diversity relative to the other groups. For most dimensions positive values (i.e., bars to the right of center) indicate more positive climate attitudes and experiences, but for a few dimensions, such as “making derogatory remarks,” a positive value indicates greater likelihood of participating in negative behavior.

Departmental Climate

Departmental climate included five dimensions related to graduate students’ attitudes toward and personal experiences within their respective departments including overall departmental climate, departmental discrimination, departmental equity, departmental social and interpersonal relations, and departmental support of groups. Of the five dimensions, significant racial/ethnic differences were found only on social and interpersonal relations and these were present just for women. African American women rated their social and interpersonal relations less favorably than did White American or other race students. Specifically, fewer African American women (81%) felt they had been treated fairly by other graduate students in their department compared with 96% of White American, 87% of international, and 90% of other race students who had been treated fairly. Furthermore, African American women more often than other graduate students believed professors had ignored their comments and questions in class.

Although students across the four racial groups generally perceived their departments similarly and positively, they did differ on a few specific aspects of departmental climate. For example, more White American (80%), international (76%), and other race (73%) respondents than African American respondents (58%) agreed that faculty members in their departments were sensitive to the needs of all students. Similarly, White American students were more likely than students of the other racial groups to feel that their departments provide adequate help for students experiencing academic difficulty.

Differences in perception were also found in terms of the presence of sexism and racism in the department. More African American (21%) and other race respondents (20%) believe their departments are relatively racist in contrast to only 6% of White Americans (figure 9.2). Graduate students also disagreed about the level of sexism in their departments with the vast majority of international students (84%) rating their departments as non-sexist compared with only 46% of African Americans.

It was encouraging to find that relatively few (<15%) respondents of any race had been discriminated against because of their gender; however, it was dismaying that three times as many African American and international students as White Americans had been discriminated against at Virginia Tech because of their race (21%, 21%, and 7% of African American, international, and White American respondents, respectively).

Despite the presence of racism and race-based discrimination within many respondents’ departments, most students in the four racial/ethnic groups thought that teaching opportunities as well as financial assistance are allocated fairly. Similarly, there were no racial differences

Figure 9.2 Graduate student rating of departmental level of racism

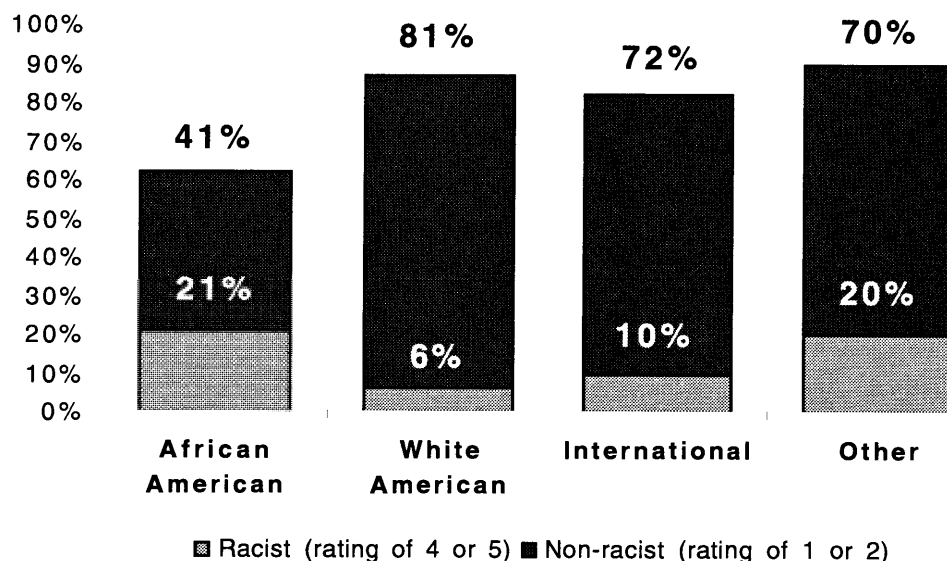
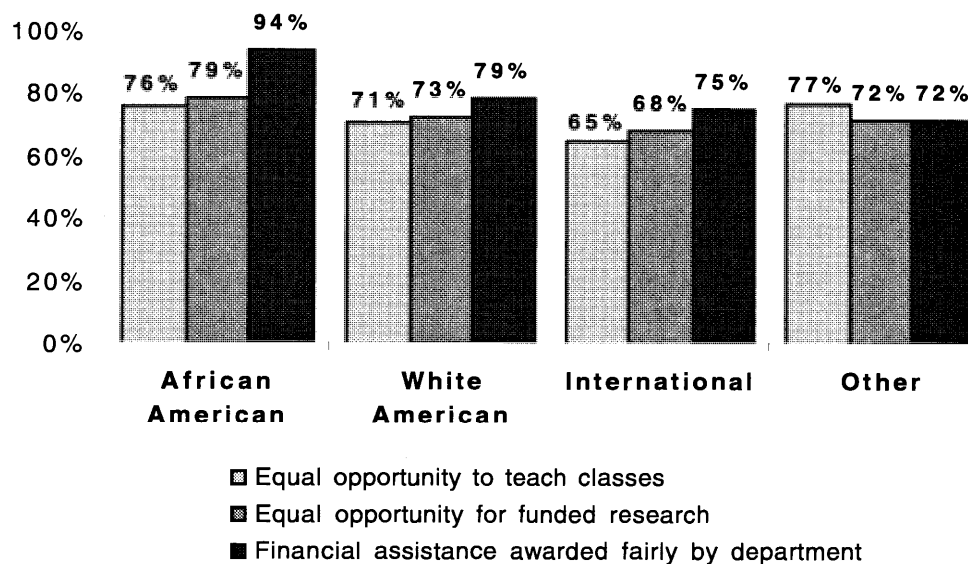


Figure 9.3 Percent of graduate students agreeing or strongly agreeing that opportunities are awarded fairly



in opportunities to work on funded projects with 72% of graduate respondents indicating they had received the same opportunities as others (figure 9.3). However, there appeared to be some difference of opinion regarding the efforts of departments to recruit a diverse group of students. More international students (86%) than any other group (White American, 78%; other, 68%; African American, 61%) rated their departments positively in this regard.

Virginia Tech Climate

Judgment of the university climate reflected more diverse responses based on race/ethnicity than seen in ratings of departmental climate. Significant racial/ethnic differences were found on all five aspects of Virginia Tech climate including interaction with faculty and administrators, valuing of diversity and affirmative action, support of groups, racial relations on campus, and overall campus climate for diversity. African Americans provided the most pessimistic view of the climate on all five of the general climate dimensions, with either international or White American students at the other end of the continuum.

When considering the general climate for diversity at Virginia Tech, African American graduate students observed a significantly less hospitable environment than any other racial group. In comparison, international students provided the most positive ratings on virtually every item measuring this facet of the climate. The greatest discrepancy occurred with regard to the issue of whether or not Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity. The majority of both international (78%) and White American (75%) respondents seem to think so, while few (12%) African American respondents concur. Similar, though less extreme, response patterns were seen on the other items in this scale. More international students (84%) than any other group indicated that Virginia Tech is a good place to gain an understanding of multicultural issues and perspectives. African American students (34%) were the least likely to agree to this, followed by other race (53%) and White American respondents (67%). Likewise only 46% of African American respondents compared with >80% of non-African American respondents agreed that Blacksburg is a community in which they feel comfortable. African American students also seem to be the most skeptical about the university's genuine commitment to increasing diversity and promoting respect for and understanding of group differences. Whereas most international (80%) and White American (82%) graduate students believe the university is committed to promoting diversity, only 38% of African American students agree.

The four racial/ethnic groups also differed in their ratings of supportiveness shown toward various groups on campus (table 9.2). Again, African American and international students were in greatest disagreement over the extent to which the university provides a supportive environment for such groups as people with disabilities, non-heterosexuals, racial minorities, etc. Racial/ethnic differences were most contrary regarding the level of racism on campus with 58% of African American, 26% of other race, 14% of White American, and 11% of international graduate student respondents characterizing Virginia Tech as racist. Responses for the four racial/ethnic groups reflected comparable patterns of differences in terms of level of sexism, as well as supportiveness of non-heterosexuals, people with disabilities, and people of different religions.

Table 9.2

Percent of graduate students who rate the Virginia Tech climate as supportive/positive for different groups

	African American	White American	International	Other Race
Racial/Ethnic minorities	15	62	68	53
Women	9	66	76	45
Individuals with disabilities	50	76	83	68
Non-heterosexuals	23	49	55	42
Individuals with different religious beliefs	45	66	73	57

The perceived quality of racial relations on campus also seemed to depend on one’s racial or ethnic group. African American respondents see a campus where faculty are unlikely to show respect for students of different racial and ethnic groups and in turn, where students tend not to respect faculty of different races and ethnic backgrounds. They see little racial/ethnic integration on campus in general, and few interracial friendships in particular. Even racial and ethnic relations within the classroom were rated as good or excellent by fewer than half of African Americans. Moreover, most African American respondents do not believe the university is committed to the success of graduate students of different racial or ethnic groups. For all items related to campus racial interaction, more than half of African American students selected negative ratings whereas in most cases, the majority of all other racial groups endorsed favorable options. The two exceptions involved racial/ethnic integration on campus and out-of-class interaction among graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups. In both cases less than half of other race respondents responded affirmatively (41% and 49% for integration and interaction, respectively). And while more White American and international students rated these aspects of the climate as good or excellent, the percentages hovered just above 50% indicating that a large number of graduate students, regardless of race or ethnicity, believe Virginia Tech is essentially a racially segregated campus.

The same basic patterns of racial/ethnic differences were also evident in the way students rated the value of diversity and affirmative action and the quality of interactions with faculty and administrators. White American respondents were most likely to believe that Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on diversity (42%) and that affirmative action results in admission of underqualified graduate students (58%) while most African American respondents disagreed. Faculty and administrator role models were present for most White American (84%) and international (82%) students but only for slightly more than half (58%) of African American graduate students. The majority of students (>80%) across all races agreed that Virginia Tech faculty are approachable outside of the classroom but respondents were racially divided on the issue of fairness of faculty. More than twice as many White American (78%), international (76%), and other race (72%) students as African Americans (29%) felt that faculty are fair to students regardless of their background.

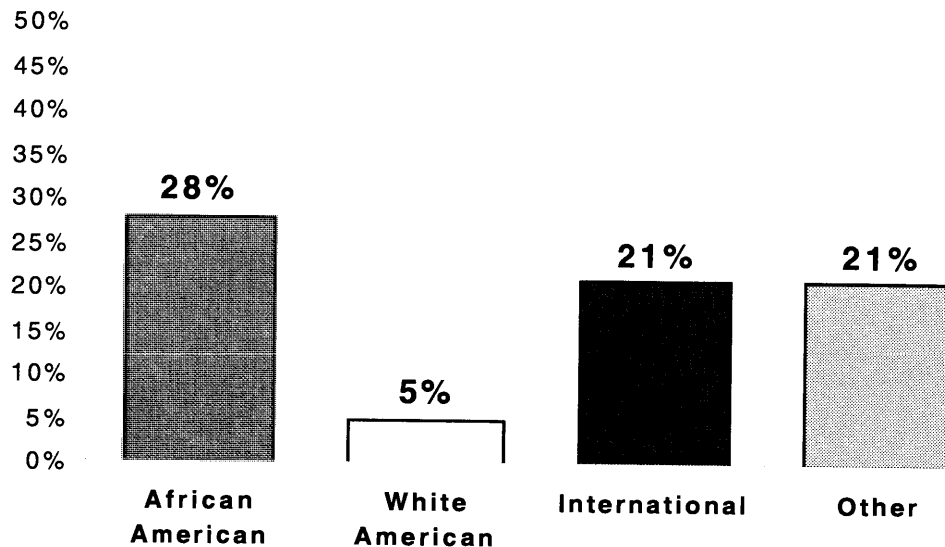
Diversity-Related Experiences at Virginia Tech

Diversity-related experiences reflected generally unpleasant encounters including unfair treatment based on one’s personal characteristics, hearing insensitive remarks or reading offensive materials, and feeling hindered from voicing honest opinions about particular

groups on campus. Graduate students of different racial/ethnic groups differed significantly with respect to all three types of diversity-related experiences.

International students were overall the group most likely to have been treated unfairly or harassed due to personal characteristics. This was due primarily to their being mistreated on the basis of their national origin (21%) as well as their accent or dialect (26%). For students of the other three racial groups, these two characteristics seldom elicited unwarranted treatment. The only other personal characteristics which led to maltreatment were gender and race. In both cases, more African American respondents than respondents of any other race had been harassed because of their race (28%) or gender (31%) (figure 9.4).

Figure 9.4 Percent of graduate students reporting unfair treatment sometimes or often based on race or ethnicity



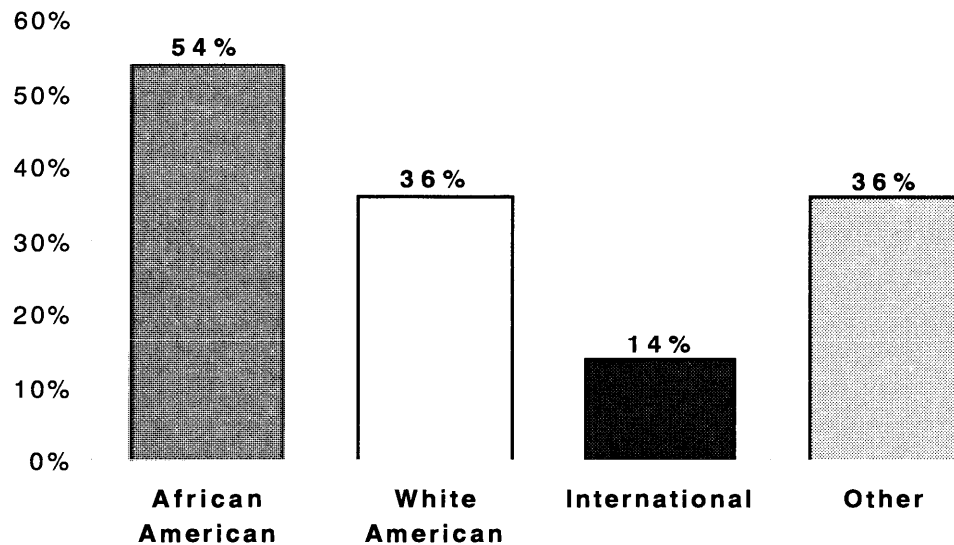
Racial/ethnic differences in terms of experiencing derogatory remarks or materials and inability to express true opinions appeared to be largely reflective of differences in nationality or culture rather than race. On both dimensions of climate international students differed significantly from all other groups. Students of U.S. citizenship, regardless of race, felt less free than non-U.S. students to voice their opinions about racial/ethnic minorities, women, non-heterosexuals, and people with disabilities. International respondents also differed from U.S. students in the frequency with which they had read, heard, or seen negative materials or comments about various groups on campus. International students were far less aware of insensitive comments or materials than U.S. students. Awareness of such materials or remarks varied most dramatically when the targets were racial/ethnic minorities, women, and non-heterosexuals.

Diversity-Related Behavior and Actions

Diversity-related behaviors included making derogatory remarks, challenging derogatory remarks, and participating in proactive diversity-related activities. Significant racial differences were found for all three types of behaviors.

White American graduate students issued more derogatory remarks in general and, in particular, made more negative comments about those of other religions (12%) and about persons from the Appalachian region (23%). International students were the least likely to ridicule or joke about persons from various subgroups. However, international students were also the least inclined to challenge others who engaged in this type of behavior (figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5 Percent of graduate students reporting that they often or sometimes challenge others on derogatory comments regarding race or ethnicity



In terms of participation in positive diversity-related activities, African American respondents were the most active with 39% attending non-classroom programs on gender issues and 68% attending programs related to cultural or social concerns of various racial or ethnic groups. Relatively few (6%) international graduate students participated in gender-related programs while White American students were the least involved (21%) in race-oriented non-classroom programs.

Awareness of VT Services and Programs

Graduate students in the four racial/ethnic groups reflected differential levels of awareness of the various programs and services offered on the Virginia Tech campus. For all services and programs, except the Cranwell International Center, African American respondents were the

most familiar and international students the least familiar of the racial/ethnic groups. Ninety-four percent of international students indicated familiarity with the Cranwell International Center while less than a fourth of international students expressed familiarity with any of the other services. The greatest discrepancy in awareness occurred with respect to the Black Cultural Center which was familiar to virtually all (97%) African American students and to only 49%, 25%, and 23% of other race, White American, and international students, respectively. Respondents were least aware of Services for Students with Disabilities and Project SAFE. Although more African American graduate students knew something about these two programs, only about a third were familiar with either program.

Discussion

It was encouraging to find that most graduate students, regardless of race, find the faculty within their departments to be generally supportive and fair in their treatment of students. These findings were similar to what was found in the survey of faculty, which also indicated that people tended to rate their immediate environment in a more positive way than they rated the campus as a whole. Students of different races seem to be treated well and to perceive generally strong support within their own departments but see clear deficiencies in terms of the university-wide climate. Not only were ratings at the campus level somewhat less positive, but they tended to reflect greater disparities in the experiences of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. For example, on the scales rating supportiveness of groups both within the department and at Virginia Tech in general, respondents rated the departmental climate more positively than the overall climate in terms of level of racism, sexism, supportiveness of non-heterosexuals, and supportiveness of different religious beliefs.

Differences in climate perceptions between international students and students of U.S. citizenship possibly reflect cultural differences in respondents' frame of reference. For example, the freedom international students feel in expressing their views about others may be relative to the lack of such freedom on their undergraduate campuses. Or the greater feeling by international students that departments are making efforts to recruit a diverse group of students may reflect differences of opinion regarding what is meant by "diverse." While no information was available regarding specific nationalities of international students, self-reported race indicated that by far the majority of international respondents were Asian (65%), followed by White (18%), mixed/other (10%), Hispanic (5%), and Black (2%). Consequently, responses by international students can be considered largely a proxy for Asian perspectives of the climate. Clearly there is a need for open discussions with groups of international students to provide greater insights into their experiences as students at Virginia Tech.

10

Differences Based on Sexual Orientation for Graduate Students

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students represented close to 5% of the graduate student campus climate survey respondents, with 2.6% being gay or lesbian and 2.2% indicating they were bisexual. Sexual orientation did not differ significantly by race, gender, or age but did differ by citizenship status. Somewhat more non-heterosexuals (80%) than heterosexuals (67%) were either U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents. Differences in sexual orientation were also seen based on college major with most heterosexuals majoring in either Engineering (32%) or Arts & Sciences (20%) and most non-heterosexuals majoring in Arts & Sciences (35%) or Architecture & Urban Studies (18%). Interestingly, significantly more non-heterosexuals (35%) than heterosexuals (20%) were the first in their family to attend a four-year college.

Significant differences in perception of campus climate based on sexual orientation were found on 9 of the 17 climate dimensions. Dimensions which were related to sexual orientation included departmental and university level support of groups, the general climate for diversity at Virginia Tech, racial relations on campus, unfair treatment based on personal characteristics, lack of voice about groups, experiencing insensitive materials/remarks, challenging derogatory comments, and involvement in proactive diversity-related activities. As had been seen in comparisons based on gender and race, heterosexual and non-heterosexual students did not differ for the most part in their ratings of dimensions related to departmental climate, with the exception of departmental support of groups. For all nine dimensions on which non-heterosexuals and heterosexuals disagreed, average differences were all in the expected directions. Heterosexuals as a group saw a more welcoming campus climate, had fewer negative diversity-related experiences at Virginia Tech, and were less likely to be involved in proactive diversity-related activities.

In terms of departmental supportiveness of groups, heterosexuals consistently saw greater support and accessibility for all groups. Discrepancies were greatest in terms of accessibility to and supportiveness of people with disabilities and supportiveness of different religious beliefs.

Somewhat surprisingly, heterosexuals did not differ substantially from non-heterosexual respondents in their perceptions of level of supportiveness for non-heterosexuals. Approximately half of both heterosexuals (56%) and gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (51%) rated their departments as being supportive. Although students rated their departmental social and interpersonal climate positively overall, regardless of their sexual orientation, significantly more non-heterosexual (71%) than heterosexual (28%) students did feel they have to change in order to fit in with others in their department. In addition, heterosexuals were more likely to agree that students of different racial and ethnic groups participate equally during class activities.

With respect to evaluation of the climate at Virginia Tech in general, heterosexual students rated the general climate for diversity, the university's support of groups, and the quality of racial relations more positively than did non-heterosexual students. Non-heterosexual respondents were more likely than heterosexuals to question the genuine commitment of

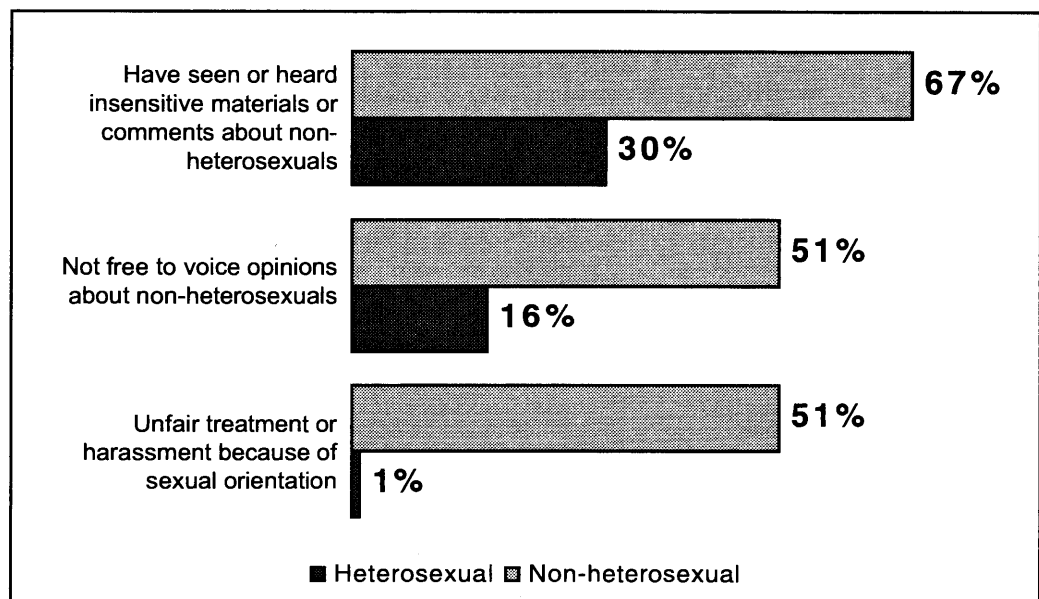
faculty and administrators in creating a diverse campus. Similarly, most heterosexuals (74%) seem to think that Virginia Tech promotes diversity compared with only 42% of non-heterosexuals who share their optimism. And almost twice as many heterosexual respondents (73%) as gay, lesbian, and bisexual respondents (38%) believe Virginia Tech is a good place for learning about multicultural issues and perspectives.

Compared with the level of presumed supportiveness for groups in the departments, supportiveness on the overall campus was rated less positively in general, and considerably lower with respect to certain groups. For example, while the majority of both heterosexuals (77%) and non-heterosexuals (71%) believe their departments are non-racist, 63% of heterosexuals and only 35% of non-heterosexuals consider Virginia Tech to be a non-racist institution. The pattern was similar regarding level of sexism with 68% of heterosexuals rating the university as non-sexist in contrast to only 44% of non-heterosexuals. This represented a 25% reduction in the number of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals who had indicated their departments are non-sexist.

Differences based on sexual orientation were also evident with respect to perceptions of the quality of racial and ethnic interactions at Virginia Tech. Heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals disagreed most on the university's commitment to the success of graduate students of different racial/ethnic groups and on the respect shown by students for faculty of different racial/ethnic groups. In both cases, heterosexuals were more inclined to rate these aspects of the climate as good or excellent than were non-heterosexuals.

Although non-heterosexuals feel their interactions with faculty and staff are generally positive and that they are treated equitably within their departments, they still have experienced more unpleasant treatment on campus than have heterosexuals (figure 10.1). In particular, 51% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students have been harassed or otherwise treated unfairly at Virginia Tech because of their sexual orientation while essentially none of the heterosexual respondents (1%) have received this type of treatment. Curiously, a

Figure 10.1 Graduate student rating of Virginia Tech climate, percent agreeing or strongly agreeing



significantly larger proportion of non-heterosexuals (33%) than heterosexuals (6%) also indicated they had been treated unfairly due to their age. Recall from above that there was no age difference between heterosexual and non-heterosexual respondents that might have explained this disparity.

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual respondents were also more likely to have encountered belittling materials or remarks and to have felt constrained from publicly expressing their opinions about various groups. Not too surprisingly, they were most restricted in making comments about non-heterosexuals (51%) compared with only 16% of heterosexuals who felt similarly hindered. Non-heterosexuals also had read or seen significantly more insensitive remarks or materials concerning racial/ethnic minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. This is despite the fact that there were no significant differences in race, gender, or disability status between heterosexual and non-heterosexual respondents. As might be expected, more than twice as many gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (67%) as heterosexuals (30%) had read or heard derogatory materials or comments about non-heterosexuals. Similar responses were found when the targets of the derisive materials/remarks were racial/ethnic minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, graduate students at Virginia Tech as a whole do not seem to be a very politically active group. However, this does not appear to be the case for non-heterosexual students who not only tend to participate in more diversity-related activities but also are more apt to challenge others who utter racist or sexist remarks. Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals more often take action to have offensive graffiti removed (21% versus 6% of heterosexuals), attend activities about gender or women's issues (40% compared with 14% of heterosexuals), and attend activities concerning racial and ethnic issues (51% versus 26% of heterosexuals). Moreover, more non-heterosexuals (71%) than heterosexuals (26%) challenge others who make racial slurs or who make sexually derogatory comments (56% and 27% of non-heterosexuals and heterosexuals, respectively).

Discussion

Despite their differences in experience at Virginia Tech, graduate students, regardless of sexual orientation, seem to feel comfortable within the confines of their own departments and generally indicate fair and equitable treatment by others at a personal level. Where survey responses appear to be most discrepant are perceptions about how others are treated. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students do not generally seem to feel that their sexual orientation plays in role in their departmental treatment or in their interactions with faculty or students. However, they do see a fairly inhospitable climate overall for minority students at Virginia Tech, regardless of whether that minority status is based on race, gender, disability status, religious affiliation, etc. As was seen in the undergraduate results, gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students tend to reflect a greater awareness of and sensitivity to the plight of minorities in general. This pattern has appeared consistently in subgroup comparisons from the undergraduate survey as well as in the racial comparisons among graduate students.

11

Differences Based on Disability Status for Graduate Students

Students considering themselves to have a disability comprised 3.1% of graduate student respondents. This number was similar to the 3.4% reporting disabilities among undergraduate students. Of these, 78.6% were White Americans, 64.3% were male, and 35.7% were female. Gender and disability status were unrelated.

Students with and without disabilities differed on only 4 of 17 climate dimensions including general departmental climate, departmental and campus-wide support of groups, and challenging derogatory remarks. Overall, students with disabilities experienced a less positive climate within their respective departments, saw less departmental as well as institutional supportiveness for groups, and were more likely to challenge derogatory remarks made by others.

Although students with disabilities differed significantly from students without disabilities on only a few of the items measuring general departmental climate, trends on all items suggested more positive ratings by students without disabilities (table 11.1). Proportionally more students without disabilities believe they can talk with departmental faculty about concerns or problems, that they receive adequate guidance from departmental faculty, that departmental faculty treat them with respect, and that they have been treated fairly by faculty in their department.

Table 11.1 Rating of departmental climate by graduate students with and without disabilities

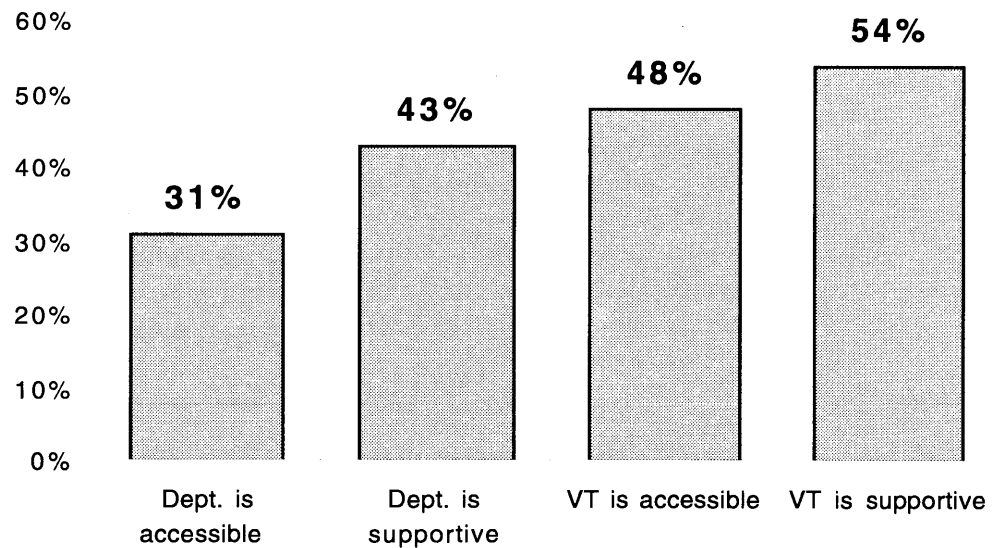
	People with disabilities		People without disabilities	
	Agree %	Disagree %	Agree%	Disagree%
Received adequate guidance from department faculty	61	39	82	18
Faculty/administrator available to help with concern or problem	59	41	84	16
Treated with respect by department faculty	64	36	91	9
Treated fairly by department faculty	69	31	90	10

In addition, substantially fewer students with disabilities (10%) compared with students without disabilities (50%) feel that graduate students in their department have significant input into pertinent departmental decisions. Similarly, disabled respondents were less likely to be of the opinion that students who are openly critical of their departments need not fear retribution.

At both the departmental and institutional level, students with disabilities perceived a less supportive environment for most groups than did students without disabilities. For example,

more than twice as many students without disabilities as students with disabilities (72% versus 31%) rated their departments as being accessible to people with disabilities. Consistent with findings for other minority groups, students with disabilities also rated the climate less favorably in terms of level of sexism, supportiveness of non-heterosexuals, and supportiveness of different religions. Patterns were similar for both departmental and campus-wide ratings although some aspects of the climate were rated somewhat higher for Virginia Tech in general. Specifically, students with disabilities saw greater accessibility to and supportiveness of people with disabilities at the university in general than they did within their particular departments (figure 11.1).

Figure 11.1 Percent of graduate students with disabilities giving a positive rating (1 or 2) regarding accessibility and supportiveness



Finally, students with disabilities more often than students without disabilities tend to challenge others who make either racist or sexist remarks. While only about a fourth of students without disabilities challenge others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments (28%) or on sexually derogatory comments (27%), 55% and 48% of students with disabilities challenge such remarks, respectively.

Discussion

These results are quite different from what was seen in the undergraduate survey where students with disabilities appeared to be among the most disenfranchised students on campus. Perhaps smaller class sizes, closer interaction with faculty and with other graduate students, or other aspects of graduate education have created a more welcoming environment for graduate students with disabilities. It is also possible that graduate and undergraduate students might differ in the type of disabilities they have. For example, students who are

physically challenged could experience a different climate than students with learning disabilities. The results suggest the need for more in-depth discussions with graduate and undergraduate students with disabilities, perhaps through focus groups organized in conjunction with the Services for Students with Disabilities.

Still, with respect to certain aspects of the climate such as the perceived level of accessibility to and supportiveness of people with disabilities, there remains a lack of awareness on the part of graduate students without disabilities. For example, problems with wheelchair access in many of the older buildings or unavailability of signers for hearing-impaired students are simply non-issues for most students. Results based on disability status underscore the general survey finding that students in the minority (regardless of the nature of the minority status) are generally more sensitive to the needs and problems of others while students in the majority are typically limited in their appreciation of others' experiences.

12

Differences Based on College Major for Graduate Students

As mentioned in Chapter 7, the majority of graduate student respondents were pursuing degrees in Engineering (31%), Arts & Sciences (22%), or Human Resources & Education (17%). See chapters 7 and 9 for additional information regarding demographic differences across the colleges.

Of the 17 climate dimensions, significant differences by college were found on all but three. Respondents did not differ by college on level of departmental supportiveness, interaction with faculty, or lack of voice. On five dimensions the nature and degree of differences among the colleges differed for men and women.

Throughout this chapter, the reader should be aware that the number of respondents in some categories is very small and differences may be, at best, indicative rather than definitive.

In terms of departmental climate, average responses by college differed with respect to overall departmental climate, departmental discrimination, departmental equity, and departmental social and interpersonal relations. Students in Natural Resources rated both the overall departmental climate as well as departmental equity most positively while students in the Pamplin College of Business on average rated these two dimensions least favorably. The measure of general departmental climate was comprised primarily of items pertaining to the quality of faculty interactions including adequacy of faculty guidance, accessibility of faculty, respectfulness of faculty, and sensitivity of faculty to the needs of students. Consequently, ratings on this dimension were largely reflective of interactions with departmental faculty (table 12.1).

Table 12.1 Departmental climate rating by college¹, percent agreeing or strongly agreeing

	<u>CALS</u>	<u>A&S</u>	<u>CAUS</u>	<u>BUS</u>	<u>ENGR</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>CHRE</u>	<u>VM</u>
Received adequate guidance from department faculty	89	78	87	61	82	96	82	100
When I have a concern/problem, there is a faculty member/admin I can talk to	92	79	78	79	80	100	91	88
Department faculty treat me with respect	85	87	87	95	92	100	90	100
Academic advisor is sensitive to my needs	77	86	77	64	85	96	85	100

With respect to equitable practices regarding resource allocation, more students in Natural

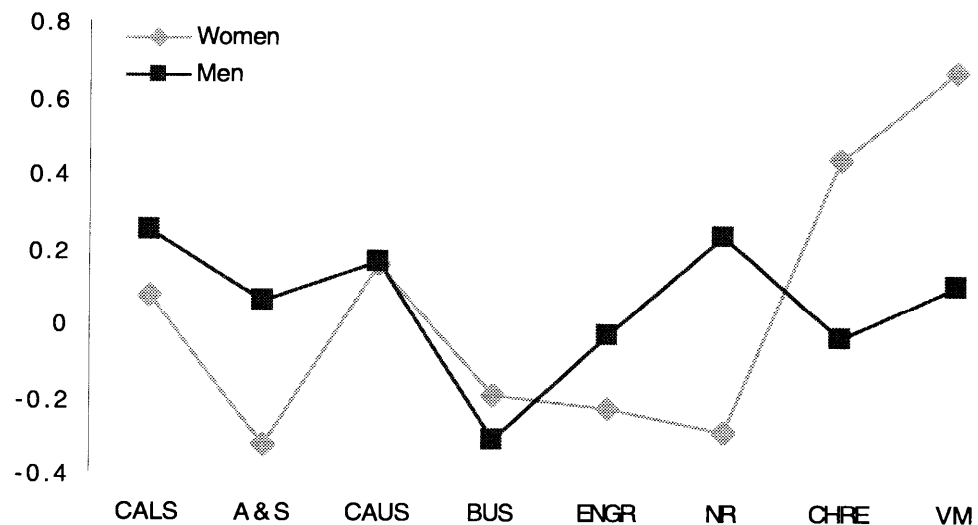
¹ CALS: Agriculture & Life Sciences; A&S: Arts & Sciences; CAUS: Architecture & Urban Studies; BUS: Business; ENGR: Engineering; NR: Natural Resources; CHRE: Human Resources & Education; VM: Veterinary Medicine

Resources (96%) and in Agriculture & Life Sciences (82%) than in other colleges felt they were given the same opportunities to work on funded research projects as other students in their department. Graduate students in Arts & Sciences (60%), Architecture & Urban Studies (61%), and Business (62%) were the least likely to agree that they were given equal opportunities. Natural Resources and Veterinary Medicine seemed to award financial assistance most fairly with 96% and 88% of students in these two colleges, respectively, agreeing to this item. Architecture & Urban Studies had the fewest students (72%) believing financial assistance is awarded fairly in their departments.

On the two items measuring discriminatory practices within the departments, less than 13% of respondents in any of the colleges believe they have been discriminated against because of their gender. However, students in Agriculture & Life Sciences and in Veterinary Medicine did report more gender-based discrimination (12%) than respondents in any of the other colleges. Racial discrimination was seen mostly by respondents in the Colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences (19%) and in Engineering (18%) which are also the two colleges with the largest enrollment of international students. Discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity was not reported as a frequent problem in either Veterinary Medicine or Natural Resources. However, there were no minority respondents in Veterinary Medicine and only two in Natural Resources (one respondent did report experiencing discrimination or harassment). The small number of respondents for these colleges were mostly white with a few international students.

Differences among the colleges on departmental social and interpersonal climate depended to a certain degree upon gender (figure 12.1). For example, women in Human Resources & Education rated their departmental climate significantly more positively than did men or women in Arts & Sciences, men or women in Engineering, and men or women in Business. Overall, the most positive responses came from women in Veterinary Medicine (n=3) and women in Human Resources & Education—these are the two colleges where

Figure 12.1 Mean differences on departmental social and interpersonal climate for eight colleges by gender



women are more than 50% of the student bodies. Men in Natural Resources, men in Agriculture & Life Sciences, and men in Architecture & Urban Studies also rated their departmental social and interpersonal climates above the mean. The least favorable ratings were given by men in the College of Business, women in Arts & Sciences, women in Forestry & Wildlife Services, women in Engineering, and women in Business. On most aspects of the social and interpersonal climate, men in the various colleges did not differ significantly whereas women often differed substantially. For example, 62% of women in Forestry & Wildlife Services, 42% in Arts & Sciences, and 42% in Agriculture & Life Sciences indicated that they do not fit in with other students in their departments in contrast to only 9% of women from the College of Architecture & Urban Studies who do not fit in with their classmates. Similarly, half of the women (50%) in Arts & Sciences believe they need to change their personal characteristics in order to belong with others in their department compared with 15% of women in Architecture & Urban Studies. Men did not differ by college on either of these two items. College also played a more important role for women respondents in perceptions of efforts made by departments to promote racial/ethnic understanding. Few women graduate students in Forestry & Wildlife Services (22%) or in Engineering (50%) agree that their departments are making much of an effort in this area while 100% of women in Veterinary Medicine agreed to this item. Again, men did not differ by college.

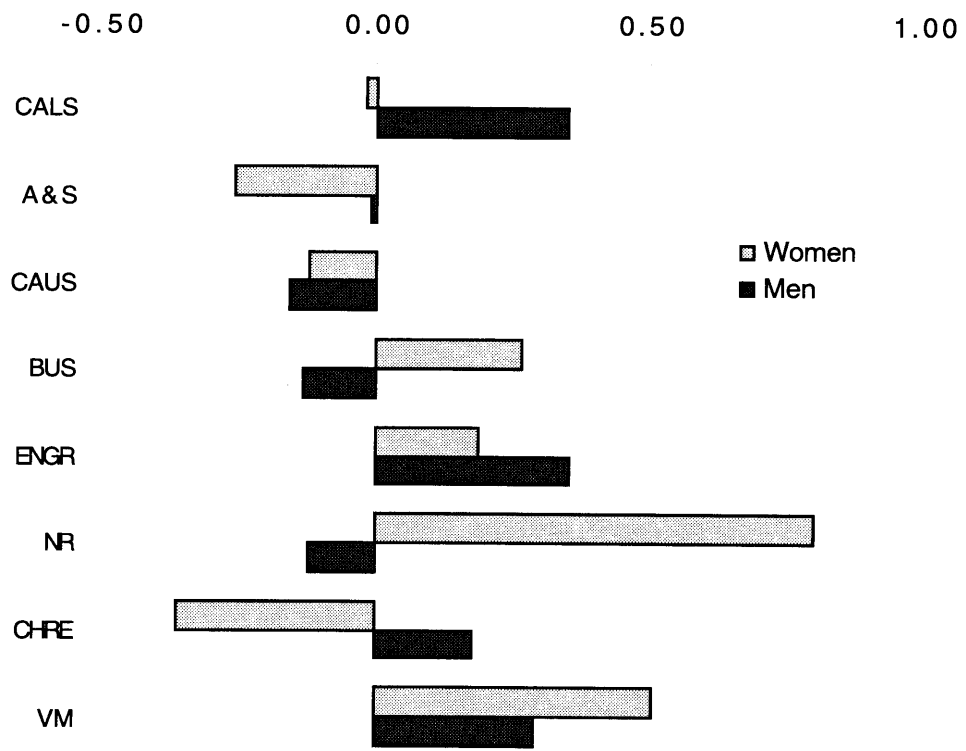
In evaluating the overall campus climate, significant differences were found among the colleges in perceptions of the climate for diversity and in the quality of race relations on campus. Students in Agriculture & Life Sciences saw the greatest overall support for and promotion of diversity on campus whereas students in Human Resources & Education perceived an environment that is much less conducive to diversity. Relations among the races were rated as good or excellent by more students in Veterinary Medicine and in Natural Resources than in any other college. Conversely, students in Arts & Sciences were less likely to see indications of positive racial interaction including friendships among students of different races, racial/ethnic relations in the classroom, and racial/ethnic integration on campus.

Differences were also found among respondents by college with respect to valuing of diversity and affirmative action and supportiveness of various groups, but the nature of these differences depended upon whether respondents were men or women. Women in several colleges reflected disparate attitudes toward affirmative action practices and in the merit of promoting diversity at Virginia Tech. Women in Human Resources & Education and in Arts & Sciences most strongly endorsed diversity and affirmative action while women in Natural Resources were most likely to believe that Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity (39%) and that affirmative action leads to admission of underqualified graduate students (92%). Similar to what was seen in evaluation of the departmental social and interpersonal relations, men in the different colleges did not differ significantly in their perceptions of this aspect of the campus climate.

College-based perceptions of Virginia Tech's support for various groups including people with disabilities, women, non-heterosexuals, etc. also differed for male and female respondents (figure 12.2). Overall, women in Natural Resources rated campus support the highest with women in Human Resources & Education providing the lowest ratings of support. Women in the College of Human Resources & Education were significantly more pessimistic in the level of support they reported than were women from Business, Engineering, Natural Resources, and Veterinary Medicine. For men respondents, the only difference found between colleges was the significantly lower support ratings given by respondents from Architecture & Urban Studies compared with respondents from Engineering. As seen in other analyses, the college in which one is majoring seems to have a greater influence on

Figure 12.2

Mean differences on z-scores for male and female graduate students by college on Virginia Tech's supportiveness of groups



perceptions of the university's supportiveness for women than it does for men.

The extent to which students had either endured unfair treatment based on their personal characteristics or had heard or read insensitive remarks or materials was also related to the respondents' college. Students in the least racially diverse colleges including Natural Resources, Veterinary Medicine, and Agriculture & Life Sciences tended to have fewer negative diversity-related experiences at Virginia Tech than did students in more racially/ethnically heterogeneous colleges such as Arts & Sciences. In fact, when race was taken into account, differences between the colleges on both unfair treatment and insensitive remarks/materials essentially disappeared indicating that some college-based differences are essentially reflecting differences in racial distributions among the colleges.

Students in different colleges also varied in their levels of engaging in proactive diversity-related behaviors. Students in Arts & Sciences were the most active in participating in such activities as attending gender or race-related programs or classes while students in Veterinary Medicine were least active. In addition, there were disparities among the colleges in respondents' likelihood of making or challenging derogatory remarks about others. Though women in Veterinary Medicine were the least likely to make derogatory remarks about others, they were likewise the most reluctant to challenge such remarks. Similarly, men in Engineering and Agriculture & Life Sciences seldom defended groups such as gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons, people of different religions, and people from the Appalachian region when derided by others. In contrast, women in Human Resources & Education and in Arts

& Sciences and men in Architecture & Urban Studies most frequently challenged others who made derogatory remarks about these groups.

With respect to the awareness of programs and services at Virginia Tech, overall students in the College of Human Resources & Education reported greater familiarity than did students in the other colleges, although this depended to some extent on the particular service. Students in Veterinary Medicine appeared to be the least familiar with the programs and services offered on campus. In particular, significantly more students in Human Resources & Education (53%) were familiar with the Women's Center compared with only 15% in Business and 20% in Engineering. These inconsistencies are no doubt reflective of the proportional differences in enrollment based on gender with substantially more women than men enrolled in Human Resources & Education and more men than women in both Business and Engineering. Familiarity with the Cranwell International Center was greatest among students in Natural Resources, Engineering, and Agriculture & Life Sciences. Differences in graduate students' awareness can be explained at least partially by the relatively large proportions of international students in these colleges. Significant differences were also found among the colleges on all other programs and services.

Discussion

Differences in ratings of climate across colleges do suggest that the campus environment for graduate students does vary greatly across Virginia Tech. Further, results indicate that in some cases the quality of the experience within a given college depends upon whether one is male or female. In some cases, perceptions are associated with the level of disparity in male versus female enrollment in a particular college. For example, females in Human Resources & Education, males in Natural Resources, and males in Architecture & Urban Studies were among those providing the highest ratings of social and interpersonal relations in their departments. Perhaps not coincidentally, these represent demographic groups in the majority in their colleges. Females enjoy a 60% to 40% majority over males in the College of Human Resources & Education, while males similarly hold the enrollment advantage in both Natural Resources and in Architecture & Urban Studies. Moreover, females in the College of Engineering, who were among the least pleased with the interpersonal aspects of their departments, are outnumbered by males 24% to 76%.

Despite the absence of overall gender differences noted in Chapter 8, there were contrasting perceptions of climate between males and females depending upon the college. College seemed to matter more for women than it did for men on certain climate aspects, e.g., social and interpersonal relations in the department, for which differences were observed among the colleges for women but not for men.

As with the undergraduate survey data, no disaggregated departmental data were available. On aspects of the campus climate where college-level perceptions differed, it would be of interest to follow up with students representing various departments to determine if climate problems are pervasive throughout a particular college or if they are limited to specific departments. It would also be useful to know why college seemed to play a more important role for women in their perceptions of the climate than it did for men. Perhaps women attend more to their surrounding environments than do men. In addition, the small number of respondents for some colleges suggests that qualitative methods may be more effective in identifying issues of concern for certain populations in the college.

13

Comparison of Findings for Graduate versus Undergraduate Students

When comparing differences in response patterns between graduate and undergraduate students, differences in demographic characteristics should also be considered. In general, graduate respondents represented a somewhat more diverse group than the undergraduate respondents. While virtually all of the undergraduates (98%) were U.S. citizens, 29% of the graduate respondents were international students. Based on the sampling plan described in Chapters 1 and 7, numbers of international survey participants underestimate the actual presence of international students at Virginia Tech in both the graduate and undergraduate samples. Graduate students also included a larger percentage of non-heterosexuals (5%) than in the undergraduate sample (2%) and a smaller percentage of students of the Christian faith (56%) compared with 71% Christian respondents among the undergraduates. In terms of racial/ethnic distributions, proportions of White American respondents were comparable in the graduate (58%) and undergraduate (55%) samples but differed somewhat for the other racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, proportionally more Asian American and fewer African American respondents were in the graduate sample than in the undergraduate sample. There was also a greater discrepancy among male and female graduate respondents, with more men (59%) than women (41%) in the sample. Numbers of male versus female respondents were almost identical in the undergraduate sample. The disproportionate representation by gender for graduate respondents actually more closely reflects the population of graduate students whereas the equal participation of men and women among undergraduates misrepresents the undergraduate student population where men outnumber women 58% to 42%. The higher response rate overall for graduate students of 46% compared with only 37% for undergraduate students also suggests possibly greater representativeness of graduate respondents.

Overall there were more differences in perception based on gender for undergraduate than for graduate respondents, which could have been a function of several possible factors. The larger sample size for the undergraduate sample could have resulted in greater statistical power for tests conducted on the undergraduate data. However, the sample of 463 graduate students should have been sufficient to detect any meaningful group differences if they existed. Differences in scale reliabilities should always be considered when comparing different rates of statistical significance, but do not appear to be problematic in this case given the similar reliability estimates for both the graduate and undergraduate measures. Another possibility is that graduate men and women are generally treated more equitably than undergraduate students despite the greater inequality in enrollment by gender in the graduate school. The results do not suggest that the absence of gender differences is attributable to more positive overall perceptions among graduate students. In fact, when comparing graduate and undergraduate responses on an item-by-item basis, there are no discernable trends other than those related to diversity behaviors. Undergraduate students were more likely not only to make derogatory remarks about such targets as non-heterosexuals, persons from Appalachia, and other religions, but they were also more apt to challenge these types of remarks when made by others.

Disagreements by race seemed to be just as pervasive among graduate students as they were among undergraduates with significant differences found on almost all dimensions. The major difference in findings was related to departmental climate which was seen as generally friendly by students of all races. Since no questions were posed to undergraduates regarding their departmental experiences (with the exception of a few isolated items), there is no way to determine if undergraduate respondents would have been equally as pleased with the climate in their departments.

A notable difference between undergraduate and graduate respondents on dimensions where racial differences were found was in terms of the racial/ethnic groups which differed most. For undergraduates the greatest discrepancies in perception tended to occur between African American and White American respondents. For graduate students, this was true with respect to some climate dimensions, but more often, the disparity was between African American and international students. Because so few international students were present in the undergraduate sample, no comparison between African American and international students was possible. Therefore, there is no way to know if this pattern was also present among undergraduates. Given that international students included students of various races, significant differences between international students and students in the other racial/ethnic groups reflected differences in cultural perspectives as opposed to purely racial differences. As mentioned in Chapter 9, although no information was available regarding country of origin, the majority of international respondents were Asian.

Results for undergraduate and graduate respondents based on sexual orientation tended to be similar. In both cases, significant differences between heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals were found on over half of the dimensions. Both graduate and undergraduate gay, lesbian, and bisexual students reported greater levels of unfair treatment and harassment based on sexual orientation than did their heterosexual classmates. They also tended to differ from heterosexual students in their awareness of the extent to which minorities in general are treated less kindly at Virginia Tech. Non-heterosexual students also tended to be more actively engaged in diversity-related activities and behaviors and to be more familiar with the various services and programs offered on campus.

Disability status did appear to assume greater importance for undergraduates than it did for graduate students. Undergraduate students with disabilities seemed to experience a generally unpleasant environment at Virginia Tech where they felt less fairly treated by others and where they encountered less satisfactory interpersonal relations with other students as well as with faculty. In contrast, graduate students with disabilities tended to differ from students without disabilities more in terms of their perceptions of general aspects of the climate including overall departmental climate and supportiveness of groups within the department as well as on campus. They seemed less inclined than undergraduates to see their disability status as being related to their personal treatment at Virginia Tech. Perhaps graduate students with disabilities feel more respected and valued because most of their campus experience is limited to work experiences and course-taking within their major departments. As mentioned previously, graduate students as well as faculty have been fairly consistent in rating their departmental experiences more positively than the campus as a whole. Undergraduates with disabilities may be rating their treatment less favorably because of their exposure to the less comfortable environment of the larger campus.

Differences in perception of the Virginia Tech climate across the colleges were ubiquitous for both graduate and undergraduate students. Although no definitive conclusions can be made about the quality of climate for particular colleges, it is clear that in many cases discrepancies in perceptions among respondents of different colleges depended upon the respondents' gender. Not too surprisingly men and women tended to disagree most in the colleges with the greatest disparities in male versus female enrollment.

A

Cover Letter and Questionnaire—Undergraduate Survey



President and John W. Hancock, Jr. Chair

Office of the President
210 Burruss Hall (0131), Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
(540) 231-6231 Fax: (540) 231-4265

Fall, 1998

Dear Student:

At Virginia Tech, we have a commitment to increasing the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body, and to improving the working and learning climate for all. I am asking that you help us make the commitment a reality by completing the enclosed questionnaire. Your responses will help us understand the climate for diversity at Virginia Tech and identify areas in which we need to improve. The information gathered will be an invaluable resource as we develop a strategic plan for diversity during the coming years and work toward a more consistently welcoming and inclusive climate for everyone who comes to Virginia Tech.

The questionnaire is similar to diversity climate surveys conducted at other major research universities. The questions were refined by the Workgroup on Campus Climate, and by a number of representatives of the student body. We are taking a random sample of the student population. Therefore, every response is very important to the validity of the study. All completed surveys should be returned in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope to the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research. The Center will process the completed surveys while assuring complete confidentiality. The questionnaire is coded for purposes of follow-up only. No individual responses will be disclosed and only statistical summaries will be generated and provided by the Center for subsequent analysis. If you have any concerns about the handling of completed survey instruments and matters of confidentiality, please address them to Alan Bayer, Director of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (vtcsr@vt.edu).

The climate for diversity at Virginia Tech is a matter of important concern for all of us. Please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible so that your opinions and concerns will be heard. Your cooperation on this important project is what will make it successful. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Torgersen
President

Benjamin Dixon
Vice President for Multicultural Affairs

*A Land-Grant University - The Commonwealth Is Our Campus
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution*



Virginia Tech Undergraduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate

We are interested in your opinions about the Virginia Tech campus climate. The following section includes questions about your experiences at Virginia Tech.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. The response categories are as follows:

	STRONGLY AGREE=1	SOMEWHAT AGREE=2	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE=3	STRONGLY DISAGREE=4	(circle one)
a. I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members at Virginia Tech.....	1	2	3	4	4
b. When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator at Virginia Tech who I can talk to.....	1	2	3	4	4
c. My current academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns.....	1	2	3	4	4
d. I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students at Virginia Tech.....	1	2	3	4	4
e. I feel that there are faculty or administrator role models for me at Virginia Tech	1	2	3	4	4
f. I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics (for example: language, dress, behaviors) in order to "fit in" at Virginia Tech.....	1	2	3	4	4
g. At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself.....	1	2	3	4	4
h. I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech.....	1	2	3	4	4
i. In my classes at Virginia Tech, I feel that my professors ignore my comments and questions.....	1	2	3	4	4
j. The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating..	1	2	3	4	4

2. On a scale from 1 to 5, please rate the climate at *Virginia Tech in general* by circling the appropriate number on each line between the two opposing statements:

	------(circle one)-----					
Accessible to people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Inaccessible to people with disabilities
Supportive of people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of people with disabilities
Non-racist	1	2	3	4	5	Racist
Non-sexist	1	2	3	4	5	Sexist
Supportive of non-heterosexuals	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of non-heterosexuals
Supportive of different religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of different religious beliefs

3. Please rate the following aspects of the climate at *Virginia Tech in general*. The response categories are as follows:

	EXCELLENT=E	GOOD=G	FAIR=F	POOR=P	-----(circle one)----
a. Respect by faculty members for students of different racial and ethnic groups.....	E	G	F	P	P
b. Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups.....	E	G	F	P	P
c. Racial/ethnic integration on campus.....	E	G	F	P	P
d. University commitment to the success of students of different racial and ethnic groups.....	E	G	F	P	P
e. University commitment to the success of women students.....	E	G	F	P	P
f. Friendship between students of different racial and ethnic groups.....	E	G	F	P	P
g. Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom.....	E	G	F	P	P
h. Interaction among students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom.....	E	G	F	P	P

In the following section, we are asking your opinions about diversity at Virginia Tech.

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. The response categories are as follows:

- | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| STRONGLY AGREE=1 | SOMEWHAT AGREE=2 | SOMEWHAT DISAGREE=3 | STRONGLY DISAGREE=4 | (circle one) |
| a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Top university administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified students..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Faculty members at Virginia Tech attempt to integrate racial/ethnic issues into courses..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Faculty members at Virginia Tech attempt to integrate gender issues into courses..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech seem to be committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. All Virginia Tech undergraduates should be required to take at least one course that focuses on racial/ethnic minorities and/or women's history, culture, or perspectives..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l. Virginia Tech provides an adequate program of support for students who are experiencing academic difficulty..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m. Students at Virginia Tech have significant input in university matters..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| n. Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities at Virginia Tech..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| o. Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| p. Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

5. How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at Virginia Tech because of each of the personal characteristics listed below? The response categories are as follows:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| OFTEN=O | SOMETIMES=S | RARELY=R | NEVER=N | ----(circle one)---- |
| a. Race/Ethnicity..... | O | S | R | N |
| b. Gender..... | O | S | R | N |
| c. Sexual orientation..... | O | S | R | N |
| d. Religion..... | O | S | R | N |
| e. Age..... | O | S | R | N |
| f. Accent/Dialect..... | O | S | R | N |
| g. National origin..... | O | S | R | N |
| h. Disability..... | O | S | R | N |
| i. Social class origin..... | O | S | R | N |

6. How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at Virginia Tech about issues concerning each of the following groups? The response categories are as follows:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|---------|----------------------|
| OFTEN=O | SOMETIMES=S | RARELY=R | NEVER=N | ----(circle one)---- |
| a. Racial/Ethnic minorities..... | O | S | R | N |
| b. Women..... | O | S | R | N |
| c. Non-heterosexuals..... | O | S | R | N |
| d. People with disabilities..... | O | S | R | N |

How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at Virginia Tech about each of the following? The response categories are as follows:

OFTEN=O	SOMETIMES=S	RARELY=R	NEVER=N	----	(circle one)	----
a. Racial/Ethnic minorities.....				O	S	R N
b. Women.....				O	S	R N
c. Individuals with disabilities.....				O	S	R N
d. Non-heterosexuals.....				O	S	R N
e. Individuals from the Appalachian region (including Southwest Virginia).....				O	S	R N
f. Individuals from different national origins.....				O	S	R N
g. Religious groups.....				O	S	R N

How fairly do you feel you have been treated by the following groups at Virginia Tech? The response categories are as follows:

VERY FAIRLY=1	SOMEWHAT FAIRLY=2	SOMEWHAT UNFAIRLY=3	VERY UNFAIRLY=4	----	(circle one)	----
a. Residence hall personnel.....	1	2	3	4		
b. Professors.....	1	2	3	4		
c. Teaching assistants.....	1	2	3	4		
d. Administrators.....	1	2	3	4		
e. Other students.....	1	2	3	4		
f. The Town of Blacksburg community.....	1	2	3	4		

The following section includes questions about your actions relative to diversity.

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors? The response categories are as follows:

OFTEN=O	SOMETIMES=S	RARELY=R	NEVER=N	----	(circle one)	----
a. Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments.....				O	S	R N
b. Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments.....				O	S	R N
c. Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons...				O	S	R N
d. Developed friendships with people from different cultures or groups.....				O	S	R N
e. Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours.....				O	S	R N
f. Refused to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture, or gender				O	S	R N
g. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region (including Southwest Virginia).....				O	S	R N
h. Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed.....				O	S	R N
i. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities.....				O	S	R N
j. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women.....				O	S	R N
k. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups.....				O	S	R N

The following group of questions regard programs and services offered at Virginia Tech.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you are familiar with each of the Virginia Tech services and programs listed below. The response categories are as follows:

VERY FAMILIAR=1	SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR=2	SOMEWHAT UNFAMILIAR=3	NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR=4	----	(circle one)	----
a. Women's Center.....	1	2	3	4		
b. Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts & Education).....	1	2	3	4		
c. Multi-Cultural Center.....	1	2	3	4		
d. Black Cultural Center.....	1	2	3	4		
e. Academic Enrichment Office.....	1	2	3	4		
f. Services for Students with Disabilities.....	1	2	3	4		
g. Cranwell International Center.....	1	2	3	4		

Finally, this section includes a few general questions about you.

11. How many *courses* for credit have you taken at Virginia Tech that have focused primarily on the culture, history, or social concerns of racial and ethnic groups? _____
12. How many *courses* for credit have you taken at Virginia Tech that have focused primarily on the culture, history, or social concerns of women? _____
13. What is your current class standing? (check one)
- _____ Freshman
 _____ Sophomore
 _____ Junior
 _____ Senior
14. Please indicate your cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech. (check one)
- _____ 3.5-4.0
 _____ 3.0-3.49
 _____ 2.5-2.99
 _____ 2.0-2.49
 _____ below 2.0
15. Please indicate the college in which you are currently majoring. (check all that apply)
- _____ Agriculture and Life Sciences
 _____ Arts and Sciences
 _____ Architecture and Urban Studies
 _____ Business
 _____ Engineering
 _____ Forestry and Wildlife Resources
 _____ Human Resources and Education
 _____ University Studies
 _____ Veterinary Medicine
16. What year did you first enter Virginia Tech? _____
17. Were you the first person in your family (including your parents and siblings) to attend a four-year college or university?
- _____ Yes
 _____ No
18. What is your sex?
- _____ Female
 _____ Male
19. What is your sexual orientation?
- _____ Heterosexual
 _____ Gay/Lesbian
 _____ Bisexual
20. Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?
- _____ Yes
 _____ No
21. Please indicate your citizenship status. (check one)
- _____ U.S. Citizen
 _____ Non-U.S. Citizen, U.S. Permanent Resident
 _____ Non-U.S. Citizen
 _____ Other (please specify: _____)
22. Which group best describes you? (if more than one group describes you, please check all that apply)
- _____ Asian
 _____ American Indian/Native Alaskan/Aleut
 _____ Black/African American
 _____ Hispanic
 _____ White/Caucasian (excluding Hispanic)
 _____ Other (please specify: _____)
23. What is your religious faith? (check one)
- _____ Christian
 _____ Jewish
 _____ Muslim
 _____ None
 _____ Other (please specify: _____)
24. In what setting did you spend most of your life before first coming to Virginia Tech? (check one; if several apply, use the most recent)
- _____ Rural area
 _____ Small town or small city
 _____ Suburb of a city of 50,000 or more
 _____ City of 50,000 or more
25. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhood where you grew up. (check one)
- _____ All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ About ½ same and ½ different race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 _____ All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you
26. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of the high school you attended. (check one)
- _____ All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ About ½ same and ½ different race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 _____ All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you
27. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of your group of friends. (check one)
- _____ All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 _____ About ½ same and ½ different race/ethnicity as you
 _____ Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 _____ All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you

Please return your completed confidential form in the accompanying postage paid reply envelope or to:

Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research
 207 West Roanoke Street (0543)
 Blacksburg, VA 24061

If you have any additional comments about this survey or your experiences at Virginia Tech, or if you have suggestions on improving the campus climate at Virginia Tech, please send a separate sheet with your comments to the address above.

B

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

		Women		Men			
Factor 1: General Virginia Tech Climate for Groups							
Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:							
		%	%	%	%		
		Good/ Excellent	Fair/ Poor	Good/ Excellent	Fair/ Poor		
3a.	Respect by faculty members for students of different racial and ethnic groups	89.3	10.7	91.8	8.2		
3b.	Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups	67.4	32.6	66.8	33.2		
3d.	University commitment to the success of students of different racial and ethnic groups	78.6	21.4	82.2	17.8		
3e.	University commitment to the success of women students	73.5	26.5	87.0	13.0		
		%	%	%	%	%	
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	
2a.	Virginia Tech is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	54.0	26.9	19.1	68.1	23.8	8.2
2b.	Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	62.9	27.5	9.6	70.3	25.7	3.9
2c.	Virginia Tech is Non-racist/Racist	53.7	27.8	18.6	60.2	26.7	13.1
2d.	Virginia Tech is Non-sexist/Sexist	52.2	27.7	20.1	61.8	26.6	11.7
2e.	Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	42.6	36.7	20.7	33.1	46.6	20.3
2f.	Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	71.0	22.1	6.9	68.2	26.5	5.3

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

		Women		Men	
		%	%	%	%
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Factor 2: Interaction with Faculty and Administrators					
1a.	I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members at VT	80.5	19.5	76.1	23.9
1b.	When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator at Virginia Tech who I can talk to	73.4	26.6	71.5	28.5
1c.	My current academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns	68.5	31.5	69.2	30.8
1e.	I feel that there are faculty or administrator role models for me at Virginia Tech	81.8	18.2	78.2	21.8

Factor 3: Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus

Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:

		%	%	%	%
		Good/ Excellent	Fair/ Poor	Good/ Excellent	Fair/ Poor
3c.	Racial/ethnic integration on campus	43.4	56.6	57.8	42.2
3f.	Friendship between students of different racial and ethnic groups	58.6	41.4	68.8	31.2
3g.	Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom	70.1	29.9	80.1	19.9
3h.	Interaction among students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom	41.5	58.5	50.4	49.6

Appendix B

**Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender
Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998**

		Women		Men	
		% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 4: Social/Interpersonal Climate					
1d.	I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students at Virginia Tech	22.6	77.4	22.7	77.3
1f.	I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics in order to "fit in" at Virginia Tech	10.8	89.2	21.9	78.1
1g.	At VT there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself	85.8	14.2	85.3	14.7
1h.	I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech	95.3	4.7	93.5	6.5
1j.	The VT community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating	84.7	15.3	75.4	24.6
Factor 5: General Diversity at Virginia Tech					
		% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
4c.	Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity	73.0	27.0	72.3	27.7
4d.	Top university administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at VT	72.2	27.8	78.2	21.8
4f.	Faculty members at VT are approachable outside of the classroom	83.4	16.6	87.0	13.0
4k.	Faculty members at VT are fair to all students regardless of their background	80.9	19.1	87.0	13.0
4l.	Virginia Tech provides an adequate program of support for students who are experiencing academic difficulty	74.0	26.0	73.3	26.7
4m.	Students at VT have significant input in university matters.	38.2	61.8	36.5	63.5
4n.	Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities at VT	68.3	31.7	74.7	25.3
4o.	VT is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives	65.6	34.4	63.0	37.0
4p.	Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable	92.9	7.1	93.8	6.2

Appendix B

**Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender
Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998**

	Women		Men	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 6: Affirmative Action/Diversity Attitudes				
4a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators	97.6	2.4	89.5	10.5
4b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity	40.4	59.6	57.8	42.2
4e. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified students	58.4	41.6	72.6	27.4
4j. All VT undergraduates should be required to take at least one course that focuses on racial/ethnic minorities and/or women's history, culture, or perspectives	55.2	44.8	32.2	67.8

Factor 7: Diversity Teaching

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
4g. Faculty members at VT attempt to integrate racial/ethnic issues into courses	45.3	54.7	39.9	60.1
4h. Faculty members at VT attempt to integrate gender issues into courses	52.4	47.6	45.7	54.3

Factor 8: Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences

How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at VT about:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
7a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	41.8	58.2	41.7	58.3
7b. Women	38.6	61.4	31.4	68.6
7c. Individuals with disabilities	14.7	85.3	9.7	90.3
7d. Non-heterosexuals	43.6	56.4	45.7	54.3
7e. Individuals from the Appalachian region	37.1	62.9	34.7	65.3
7f. Individuals from different national origins	29.1	70.9	29.9	70.1
7g. Religious groups	17.3	82.7	19.8	80.2

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Women

Men

Factor 9: Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions

How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at VT about:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
6a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	26.7	73.3	25.7	74.3
6b. Women	16.8	83.2	19.9	80.1
6c. Non-heterosexuals	18.6	81.4	22.9	77.1
6d. People with disabilities	9.8	90.2	9.8	90.2

Factor 10: Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics

How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at VT because of:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
5a. Race/Ethnicity	5.8	94.2	9.2	90.8
5b. Gender	20.9	79.1	6.2	93.8
5c. Sexual orientation	2.3	97.7	2.6	97.4
5d. Religion	6.9	93.1	6.3	93.7
5e. Age	11.7	88.3	11.3	88.7
5f. Accent/Dialect	9.2	90.8	8.6	91.4
5g. National origin	1.3	98.7	3.9	96.1
5h. Disability	1.2	98.8	0.9	99.1
5i. Social class origin	3.7	96.3	4.2	95.8

Appendix B

**Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender
Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998**

	Women		Men	
	% Fairly	% Unfairly	% Fairly	% Unfairly
Factor 11: Fair Treatment by Groups				
How fairly do you feel you have been treated by:				
8a. Residence hall personnel	89.0	11.0	87.6	12.4
8b. Professors	94.9	5.1	91.9	8.1
8c. Teaching assistants	89.7	10.3	88.3	11.7
8d. Administrators	88.7	11.3	86.4	13.6
8e. Other students	94.2	5.8	95.9	4.1
8f. The Town of Blacksburg community	92.5	7.5	92.9	7.1

Factor 12: Challenge Derogatory Remarks

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	Women		Men	
	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9a. Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments	34.0	66.0	30.2	69.8
9b. Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments	42.5	57.5	24.5	75.5

Factor 13: Proactive Diversity Behavior

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	Women		Men	
	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9h. Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed	5.5	94.5	9.7	90.3
9j. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women	23.2	76.8	10.4	89.6
9k. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups	20.2	79.8	15.6	84.4

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

		Women		Men	
Factor 14: Derogatory Comments					
In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?					
		% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9c.	Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons	12.3	87.7	41.4	58.6
9e.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours	7.5	92.5	17.7	82.3
9f.	Refused to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture, or gender	74.2	25.8	62.0	38.0
9g.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region	23.9	76.1	27.9	72.1
9i.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities	0.8	99.2	4.8	95.2

Factor 15: Overall Awareness of Services and Programs

		% Familiar	% Unfamiliar	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar
10a.	Women's Center	58.9	41.1	22.0	78.0
10b.	Project SAFE	21.1	78.9	9.1	90.9
10c.	Multi-Cultural Center	27.0	73.0	20.9	79.1
10d.	Black Cultural Center	26.8	73.2	19.2	80.8
10e.	Academic Enrichment Office	32.8	67.2	22.9	77.1
10f.	Services for Students with Disabilities	12.5	87.5	9.9	90.1
10g.	Cranwell International Center	18.0	82.0	14.4	85.6

C

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American
Asian
White
All Others

Factor 1: General Virginia Tech Climate for Groups

Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor	% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor	% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor	% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor
3a. Respect by faculty members for students of different racial and ethnic groups	53.5	46.5	83.3	16.7	93.0	7.0	82.5	17.5
3b. Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups	49.0	51.0	47.4	52.6	68.9	31.1	65.0	35.0
3d. University commitment to the success of students of different racial and ethnic groups	36.4	63.6	58.5	41.5	83.9	16.1	64.1	35.9
3e. University commitment to the success of women students	52.9	47.1	67.0	33.0	82.8	17.2	63.1	36.9
	% Positive		% Positive		% Positive		% Positive	
	% Neutral		% Neutral		% Neutral		% Neutral	
	% Negative		% Negative		% Negative		% Negative	
2a. Virginia Tech is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	50.6	30.1	19.2	12.1	61.6	25.1	52.0	22.5
2b. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	53.2	37.8	9.0	7.4	67.5	26.3	55.9	15.7
2c. Virginia Tech is Non-racist/Racist	23.7	35.9	41.8	24.1	59.3	26.8	48.0	27.5
2d. Virginia Tech is Non-sexist/Sexist	25.6	41.0	33.3	19.7	59.3	26.3	45.6	26.2
2e. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	25.0	48.7	27.9	23.6	38.8	41.3	34.7	23.8
2f. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	48.7	41.0	54.5	12.0	71.7	22.9	57.8	11.8

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American Asian White All Others

Factor 2: Interaction with Faculty and Administrators

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
1a. I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members at VT	73.7	26.3	69.8	30.2	79.3	20.7	68.9	31.1
1b. When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator at Virginia Tech who I can talk to	64.1	35.9	68.1	31.9	73.5	26.5	69.9	30.1
1c. My current academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns	67.3	32.7	65.0	35.0	69.8	30.2	56.9	43.1
1e. I feel that there are faculty or administrator role models for me at Virginia Tech	60.6	39.4	68.7	31.3	81.8	18.2	73.0	27.0

Factor 3: Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus

Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:

	% Good/Excellent			% Fair/Poor		
	% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor		% Good/Excellent	% Fair/Poor	
3c. Racial/ethnic integration on campus	17.5	82.5	34.3	65.7	47.1	52.9
3f. Friendship between students of different racial and ethnic groups	46.5	53.5	59.0	41.0	35.4	64.6
3g. Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom	34.8	65.2	56.4	43.6	21.7	78.3
3h. Interaction among students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom	29.0	71.0	38.9	61.1	47.5	52.8

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 4: Social/Interpersonal Climate								
1d. I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students at Virginia Tech	39.7	60.3	30.2	69.8	21.2	78.8	33.0	67.0
1f. I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics in order to "fit in" at Virginia Tech	36.5	63.5	26.0	74.0	14.4	85.6	24.3	75.7
1g. At VT there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself	82.7	17.3	79.1	20.9	86.2	13.8	80.6	19.4
1h. I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech	94.2	5.8	91.9	8.1	94.7	5.3	94.2	5.8
1j. The VT community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating	67.3	32.7	75.7	24.3	81.2	18.8	73.8	26.2
Factor 5: General Diversity at Virginia Tech								
4c. Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity	45.4	54.6	61.4	38.6	74.5	25.5	61.8	38.2
4d. Top university administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at VT	41.1	58.9	60.1	39.9	77.1	22.9	67.7	32.3
4f. Faculty members at VT are approachable outside of the classroom	74.7	25.3	81.9	18.1	86.3	13.7	78.4	21.6
4k. Faculty members at VT are fair to all students regardless of their background	57.5	42.5	80.3	19.7	85.5	14.5	73.5	26.5

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
4l. Virginia Tech provides an adequate program of support for students who are experiencing academic difficulty	76.3	23.7	68.0	32.0	74.6	25.4	61.8	38.2
4m. Students at VT have significant input in university matters.	38.8	61.2	42.8	57.2	36.2	63.8	42.0	58.0
4n. Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities at VT	36.6	63.4	56.8	43.2	74.1	25.9	64.7	35.3
4o. VT is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives	40.5	59.5	51.1	48.9	65.9	34.1	52.0	48.0
4p. Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable	56.9	43.1	80.3	19.7	95.8	4.2	85.3	14.7
Factor 6: Affirmative Action/Diversity Attitudes								
4a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators	94.1	5.9	95.7	4.3	93.2	6.8	95.1	4.9
4b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity	11.8	88.2	22.7	77.3	52.4	47.6	36.3	63.7
4e. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified students	14.4	85.6	54.3	45.7	68.4	31.6	46.9	53.1
4j. All VT undergraduates should be required to take at least one course that focuses on racial/ethnic minorities and/or women's history, culture, or perspectives	77.8	22.2	59.2	40.8	41.2	58.8	55.9	44.1

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
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Factor 7: Diversity Teaching

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
4g. Faculty members at VT attempt to integrate racial/ethnic issues into courses	31.4	68.6	36.2	63.8	44.0	56.0	34.3	65.7
4h. Faculty members at VT attempt to integrate gender issues into courses	35.5	64.5	38.9	61.1	50.8	49.2	38.2	61.8

Factor 8: Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences

How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at VT about:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
7a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	70.5	29.5	54.3	45.7	39.3	60.7
7b. Women	51.3	48.7	42.7	57.3	33.5	66.5
7c. Individuals with disabilities	15.5	84.5	16.4	83.6	11.3	88.7
7d. Non-heterosexuals	60.0	40.0	44.0	56.0	44.0	56.0
7e. Individuals from the Appalachian region	34.6	65.4	41.4	58.6	36.0	64.0
7f. Individuals from different national origins	41.9	58.1	43.1	56.9	28.0	72.0
7g. Religious groups	24.5	75.5	24.5	75.5	18.0	82.0

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American Asian White All Others

Factor 9: Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions

How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at VT about:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
6a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	38.7	61.3	26.6	73.4	25.4	74.6
6b. Women	20.0	80.0	17.6	82.4	18.4	81.6
6c. Non-heterosexuals	13.6	86.4	19.0	81.0	21.1	78.9
6d. People with disabilities	7.8	92.2	12.0	88.0	9.6	90.4

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
	26.5	73.5	18.6	81.4
	20.6	79.4	11.8	88.2

Factor 10: Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics

How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at VT because of:

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
5a. Race/Ethnicity	40.6	59.4	29.6	70.4	3.7	96.3
5b. Gender	23.9	76.1	12.9	87.1	13.1	86.9
5c. Sexual orientation	3.2	96.8	4.3	95.7	2.4	97.6
5d. Religion	2.6	97.4	7.7	92.3	6.6	93.4
5e. Age	10.3	89.7	6.9	93.1	11.5	88.5
5f. Accent/Dialect	6.5	93.5	4.3	95.7	8.1	91.9
5g. National origin	3.9	96.1	16.7	83.3	1.1	98.9
5h. Disability	0.6	99.4	0.4	99.6	1.1	98.9
5i. Social class origin	9.1	90.9	3.9	96.1	3.6	96.4

	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
	24.5	75.5	17.6	82.4
	2.0	98.0	9.8	90.2
	16.8	83.2	13.9	86.1
	10.8	89.2	2.0	98.0
	12.7	87.3		

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American Asian White All Others

Factor 11: Fair Treatment by Groups
How fairly do you feel you have been treated by:

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Fairly	% Unfairly	% Fairly	% Unfairly	% Fairly	% Unfairly	% Fairly	% Unfairly
8a. Residence hall personnel	82.7	17.3	87.4	12.6	88.7	11.3	86.9	13.1
8b. Professors	85.9	14.1	88.4	11.6	94.0	6.0	91.2	8.8
8c. Teaching assistants	85.8	14.2	88.0	12.0	89.4	10.6	86.3	13.7
8d. Administrators	83.9	16.1	79.3	20.7	88.2	11.8	83.3	16.7
8e. Other students	83.3	16.7	90.6	9.4	96.0	4.0	86.3	13.7
8f. The Town of Blacksburg community	72.7	27.3	83.6	16.4	94.1	5.9	88.2	11.8

Factor 12: Challenge Derogatory Remarks

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	Challenge Derogatory Remarks		Challenge Derogatory Remarks	
	% Sometimes/Often	% Rarely/Never	% Sometimes/Often	% Rarely/Never
9a. Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments	53.2	46.8	37.3	62.7
9b. Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments	41.7	58.3	30.5	69.5

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American Asian White All Others

Factor 13: Proactive Diversity Behavior

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	% Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9h. Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed	9.8	90.2	6.5	93.6	7.7	92.3	9.9	90.1
9j. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women	36.1	63.9	16.7	83.3	16.3	83.7	18.9	81.2
9k. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups	58.3	41.6	30.9	69.1	15.4	84.5	40.4	59.6

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Black/African American
Asian
White
All Others

Factor 14: Derogatory Comments

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9c. Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons	16.2	83.8	19.8	80.2	28.1	71.9	28.4	71.6
9e. Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours	8.3	91.6	10.4	89.7	13.2	86.8	12.8	87.2
9f. Refused to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture, or gender	80.0	20.0	72.3	27.7	67.0	33.0	76.7	23.3
9g. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region	19.9	80.1	27.0	73.0	26.3	73.7	30.0	70.0
9i. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities	5.2	94.8	3.0	97.0	2.6	97.4	7.1	92.9

Responses for Undergraduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Fall 1998

Factor 15: Overall Awareness of Services and Programs

	Black/African American		Asian		White		All Others	
	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar
10a. Women's Center	57.7	42.3	39.2	60.8	40.6	59.4	36.6	63.4
10b. Project SAFE	22.4	77.6	11.2	88.8	14.9	85.1	17.8	82.2
10c. Multi-Cultural Center	74.4	25.6	39.5	60.5	20.9	79.1	45.1	54.9
10d. Black Cultural Center	91.0	9.0	31.3	68.7	19.9	80.1	35.3	64.7
10e. Academic Enrichment Office	79.5	20.5	29.2	70.8	25.9	74.1	29.4	70.6
10f. Services for Students with Disabilities	13.5	86.5	7.7	92.3	11.7	88.3	6.9	93.1
10g. Cranwell International Center	18.6	81.4	18.9	81.1	14.6	85.4	33.3	66.7

D

Significant Mean Differences on Factor Scores— Undergraduate Students

Significant Mean Differences on Factor Scores Undergraduate Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Disability	College
General Virginia Tech Climate for Groups	◆	◆	◆		◆
Interaction with Faculty and Administrators		◆		◆	◆
Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus	◆	◆	◆		◆
Social/Interpersonal Climate		◆	◆	◆	◆
General Diversity at Virginia Tech		◆	◆		◆
Affirmative Action/Diversity Attitudes	◆	◆	◆		◆
Diversity Teaching		◆			◆
Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences		◆	◆	◆	◆
Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions			◆	◆	◆
Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics		◆	◆	◆	◆
Fair Treatment by Groups		◆		◆	◆
Challenge Derogatory Remarks	◆	◆	◆		◆
Proactive Diversity Behavior	◆	◆	◆		◆
Derogatory Comments					◆
Overall Awareness of Services and Programs	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

E

Demographic Variables Based on Weighted Data—Undergraduates

**Demographic and Background Characteristics of Undergraduate
Respondents by Gender—Weighted Responses
Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998**

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Current Class Standing						
Total respondents	2638	100	2745	100	5383	100
Freshman	11	<1	44	2	55	1
Sophomore	841	32	762	28	1603	30
Junior	820	31	927	34	1747	33
Senior	966	37	1012	37	1978	37
Race/Ethnicity (self-reported)						
Total respondents	2647	100	2743	100	5390	100
Asian	103	4	142	5	245	5
Black/African American	84	3	52	2	136	3
Hispanic	26	1	36	1	62	1
Native American	3	<1	9	<1	12	<1
White	2290	87	2355	86	4645	86
Other/mixed	133	5	141	5	274	5
Citizenship Status						
Total respondents	2647	100	2743	100	5390	100
U.S. citizen	2587	98	2663	97	5250	97
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	38	1	72	3	110	2
Non-U.S. citizen	22	1	8	<1	30	1
College in Which Majoring						
Total respondents	2645	100	2745	100	5390	100
Agriculture/Life Science	240	9	183	7	423	8
Arts and Sciences	1079	41	650	24	1729	32
Architecture/Urban Studies	55	2	177	6	232	4
Business	357	14	492	18	849	16
Engineering	262	10	936	34	1198	22
Forestry/Wildlife Resources	53	2	96	4	149	3
Human Resources/Education	440	17	62	2	502	9
University Studies	57	2	48	2	105	2
Double Major/Other College	102	4	101	4	203	4
Cumulative QCA at Virginia Tech						
Total respondents	2631	100	2741	100	5372	100
3.5 - 4.0	550	21	422	15	972	18
3.0 - 3.49	879	33	756	28	1635	30
2.5 - 2.99	692	26	927	34	1619	30
2.0 - 2.49	455	17	515	19	970	18
below 2.0	55	2	121	4	176	3
Religious Faith						
Total respondents	2646	100	2744	100	5390	100
Christian	2077	79	1982	72	4059	75
Jewish	62	2	39	1	101	2
Muslim	6	<1	15	<1	21	<1
None	340	13	505	18	845	16
Other	161	6	203	7	364	7

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Demographic and Background Characteristics of Undergraduate
Respondents by Gender—Weighted Responses
Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998**

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sexual Orientation						
Total respondents	2630	100	2743	100	5373	100
Heterosexual	2586	98	2696	98	5282	98
Gay or Lesbian	25	1	26	1	51	1
Bisexual	19	1	21	1	40	1
Disability						
Total respondents	2645	100	2755	100	5400	100
Yes	99	4	100	4	199	4
No	2546	96	2655	96	5201	96
First in Family to Attend College						
Total respondents	2639	100	2744	100	5383	100
Yes	400	15	459	17	859	16
No	2239	85	2285	83	4524	84
Setting Where Spent Most of Life						
Total respondents	2637	100	2737	100	5374	100
Rural area	466	18	472	17	938	18
Small town/city	624	24	579	21	1203	22
Suburb of 50,000 or more	1169	44	1209	44	2378	44
City of 50,000 or more	378	14	477	17	855	16
Racial Composition of Neighborhood						
Total respondents	2630	100	2744	100	5374	100
Nearly all same race as you	957	36	962	35	1919	36
Mostly same race as you	881	34	1033	38	1914	36
About half same race	539	21	494	18	1033	19
Mostly different race than you	167	6	164	6	331	6
All or nearly all different race	86	3	91	3	177	3
Racial Composition of High School						
Total respondents	2639	100	2744	100	5383	100
Nearly all same race as you	748	28	541	20	1289	24
Mostly same race as you	868	33	1153	42	2021	38
About half same race	770	29	692	25	1462	27
Mostly different race than you	177	7	263	10	440	8
All or nearly all different race	76	3	95	4	171	3
Racial Composition of Friends						
Total respondents	2639	100	2744	100	5383	100
Nearly all same race as you	831	32	631	23	1462	27
Mostly same race as you	1311	50	1414	52	2725	51
About half same race	351	13	501	18	852	16
Mostly different race than you	81	3	128	5	209	4
All or nearly all different race	65	3	71	3	136	3

F

Cover Letter and Questionnaire—Graduate Survey



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

President and John W. Hancock, Jr. Chair

Office of the President
210 Burruss Hall (0131), Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
(540) 231-6231 Fax: (540) 231-4265

Fall, 1998

Dear Student:

At Virginia Tech, we have a commitment to increasing the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body, and to improving the working and learning climate for all. I am asking that you help us make the commitment a reality by completing the enclosed questionnaire. Your responses will help us understand the climate for diversity at Virginia Tech and identify areas in which we need to improve. The information gathered will be an invaluable resource as we develop a strategic plan for diversity during the coming years and work toward a more consistently welcoming and inclusive climate for everyone who comes to Virginia Tech.

The questionnaire is similar to diversity climate surveys conducted at other major research universities. The questions were refined by the Workgroup on Campus Climate, and by a number of representatives of the student body. We are taking a random sample of the student population. Therefore, every response is very important to the validity of the study. All completed surveys should be returned in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope to the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research. The Center will process the completed surveys while assuring complete confidentiality. The questionnaire is coded for purposes of follow-up only. No individual responses will be disclosed and only statistical summaries will be generated and provided by the Center for subsequent analysis. If you have any concerns about the handling of completed survey instruments and matters of confidentiality, please address them to Alan Bayer, Director of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (vtcsr@vt.edu).

The climate for diversity at Virginia Tech is a matter of important concern for all of us. Please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible so that your opinions and concerns will be heard. Your cooperation on this important project is what will make it successful. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul E. Torgersen".

Paul E. Torgersen
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Dixon".

Benjamin Dixon
Vice President for Multicultural Affairs

*A Land-Grant University - The Commonwealth Is Our Campus
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution*



President and John W. Hancock, Jr. Chair

Office of the President
210 Burruss Hall (0131), Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
(540) 231-6231 Fax: (540) 231-4265

December 1, 1998

Dear Student,

Several weeks ago, we sent you the Campus Climate Assessment Survey which seeks your opinions about the campus environment at Virginia Tech. We have not yet received your completed survey and would appreciate your help with this important project.

At Virginia Tech, we have a commitment to increasing the diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body, and to improving the working and learning climate for all. Your survey responses will help us understand the climate for diversity at Virginia Tech and identify areas in which we need to improve. The information gathered will be an invaluable resource as we develop a strategic plan for diversity during the coming years and work toward a more consistently welcoming and inclusive climate for everyone who comes to Virginia Tech.

Since you are one of a small random sample of students, it is essential that your responses be included if the results are to accurately represent the opinions of all students at Virginia Tech. For your convenience, we have enclosed another copy of the survey along with a postage paid reply envelope. If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to complete and return it today.

Your help with this study is what will make it a success. Your survey responses will be completely confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Torgersen
President

Benjamin Dixon
Vice President for Multicultural Affairs



Virginia Tech Graduate Student Assessment of Campus Climate

We are interested in your opinions about the Virginia Tech campus climate. The following section includes questions about the climate in your department at Virginia Tech.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. The response categories are as follows:

STRONGLY AGREE=1 SOMEWHAT AGREE=2 SOMEWHAT DISAGREE=3 STRONGLY DISAGREE=4
(circle one)

- a. I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members in my department at Virginia Tech..... 1 2 3 4
- b. When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator in my department who I can talk to about it..... 1 2 3 4
- c. Faculty members and administrators in my department are supportive of my academic pursuits..... 1 2 3 4
- d. Students who are openly critical of aspects of my department have no cause to fear retribution..... 1 2 3 4
- e. I feel that I have received the same opportunity to teach classes as other graduate students in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- f. I feel that I have received the same opportunity to work on funded research projects as other graduate students in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- g. I feel that I have been treated fairly by faculty members in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- h. I feel that I have been treated fairly by other graduate students in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- i. The office staff in my department are friendly and helpful..... 1 2 3 4
- j. There is a serious effort made to promote racial/ethnic understanding in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- k. A serious effort is made by my department to award financial assistance fairly..... 1 2 3 4
- l. A serious effort is made by my department to recruit a diverse group of graduate students..... 1 2 3 4
- m. Faculty members in my department are sensitive to the needs of all students..... 1 2 3 4
- n. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my gender..... 1 2 3 4
- o. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my race/ethnicity..... 1 2 3 4
- p. My academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns..... 1 2 3 4
- q. My department provides adequate help for students who are experiencing academic difficulty..... 1 2 3 4
- r. I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students in my department..... 1 2 3 4
- s. Faculty members in my department treat me with respect..... 1 2 3 4
- t. I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics (for example, language, dress, behaviors) in order to "fit in" with others in my department at Virginia Tech..... 1 2 3 4
- u. I feel that my professors ignore my comments and questions in class..... 1 2 3 4
- v. Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities in my classes..... 1 2 3 4
- w. Graduate students in my department have significant input into departmental decisions which affect them.. 1 2 3 4

2. On a scale from 1 to 5, please rate the climate *in your department at Virginia Tech* by circling the appropriate number on each line between the two opposing statements:

	------(circle one)-----					
Accessible to people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Inaccessible to people with disabilities
Supportive of people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of people with disabilities
Non-racist	1	2	3	4	5	Racist
Non-sexist	1	2	3	4	5	Sexist
Supportive of non-heterosexuals	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of non-heterosexuals
Supportive of different religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of different religious beliefs

In the following section, we are asking your opinions about the climate at Virginia Tech in general.

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements below. The response categories are as follows:

STRONGLY AGREE=1 SOMEWHAT AGREE=2 SOMEWHAT DISAGREE=3 STRONGLY DISAGREE=4
(circle one)

- a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators..... 1 2 3 4
- b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity..... 1 2 3 4
- c. Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity..... 1 2 3 4
- d. Top University administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech..... 1 2 3 4
- e. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background..... 1 2 3 4
- f. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified graduate students..... 1 2 3 4
- g. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom..... 1 2 3 4
- h. I feel that there are role models for me within the faculty or administration at Virginia Tech..... 1 2 3 4
- i. I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech..... 1 2 3 4
- j. The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating..... 1 2 3 4
- k. Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech seem to be committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences..... 1 2 3 4
- l. At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself..... 1 2 3 4
- m. Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable..... 1 2 3 4
- n. Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives..... 1 2 3 4

4. On a scale from 1 to 5, please rate the climate at *Virginia Tech in general* by circling the appropriate number on each line between the two opposing statements:

------(circle one)-----

Accessible to people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Inaccessible to people with disabilities
Supportive of people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of people with disabilities
Non-racist	1	2	3	4	5	Racist
Non-sexist	1	2	3	4	5	Sexist
Supportive of non-heterosexuals	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of non-heterosexuals
Supportive of different religious beliefs	1	2	3	4	5	Not supportive of different religious beliefs

5. Please rate the following aspects of the climate at *Virginia Tech in general*. The response categories are as follows:

EXCELLENT=E GOOD=G FAIR=F POOR=P
------(circle one)-----

- a. Respect by faculty members for graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups..... E G F P
- b. Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups..... E G F P
- c. Racial/ethnic integration on campus..... E G F P
- d. University commitment to the success of graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups..... E G F P
- e. University commitment to the success of women graduate students..... E G F P
- f. Friendship between graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups..... E G F P
- g. Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom..... E G F P
- h. Interaction among graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom..... E G F P

6. How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at Virginia Tech because of each of the personal characteristics listed below? The response categories are as follows:

OFTEN=O SOMETIMES=S RARELY=R NEVER=N
------(circle one)-----

- a. Race/Ethnicity..... O S R N
- b. Gender..... O S R N
- c. Sexual orientation..... O S R N
- d. Religion..... O S R N
- e. Age..... O S R N
- f. Accent/Dialect..... O S R N
- g. National origin..... O S R N
- h. Disability..... O S R N
- i. Social class origin..... O S R N

7. How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at Virginia Tech about issues concerning each of the following groups? The response categories are as follows:

	OFTEN=O	SOMETIMES=S	RARELY=R	NEVER=N	
					---(circle one)---
a. Racial/Ethnic minorities.....					O S R N
b. Women.....					O S R N
c. Non-heterosexuals.....					O S R N
d. People with disabilities.....					O S R N

8. How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at Virginia Tech about each of the following? The response categories are as follows:

	OFTEN=O	SOMETIMES=S	RARELY=R	NEVER=N	
					---(circle one)---
a. Racial/Ethnic minorities.....					O S R N
b. Women.....					O S R N
c. Individuals with disabilities.....					O S R N
d. Non-heterosexuals.....					O S R N
e. Individuals from the Appalachian region (including Southwest Virginia).....					O S R N
f. Individuals from different national origins.....					O S R N
g. Religious groups.....					O S R N

The following section includes questions about your actions relative to diversity.

9. In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors? The response categories are as follows:

	OFTEN=O	SOMETIMES=S	RARELY=R	NEVER=N	
					---(circle one)---
a. Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments.....					O S R N
b. Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments.....					O S R N
c. Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons.....					O S R N
d. Developed friendships with people from different cultures or groups.....					O S R N
e. Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours.....					O S R N
f. Refused to participate in comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture or gender....					O S R N
g. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region (including Southwest Virginia).....					O S R N
h. Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed.....					O S R N
i. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities.....					O S R N
j. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women.....					O S R N
k. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups.....					O S R N

The following group of questions regard programs and services offered at Virginia Tech.

10. Please indicate the extent to which you are familiar with each of the Virginia Tech services and programs listed below. The response categories are as follows:

	VERY FAMILIAR=1	SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR=2	SOMEWHAT UNFAMILIAR=3	NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR=4	
					---(circle one)---
a. Women's Center.....	1	2	3	4	
b. Project SAFE (Sexual Assault Facts & Education).....	1	2	3	4	
c. Multi-Cultural Center.....	1	2	3	4	
d. Black Cultural Center.....	1	2	3	4	
e. Services for Students with Disabilities.....	1	2	3	4	
f. Cranwell International Center.....	1	2	3	4	

Finally, this section includes a few general questions about you.

11. What degree are you currently pursuing? (check one)
- Non-Degree Seeking or Certificate Program
 Master's
 Doctorate
 Other (please specify: _____)
12. Please indicate the college in which you are primarily affiliated for your degree program. (check one)
- Agriculture and Life Sciences
 Arts and Sciences
 Architecture and Urban Studies
 Business
 Engineering
 Forestry and Wildlife Resources
 Human Resources and Education
 Veterinary Medicine
13. Please indicate your cumulative grade point average in your graduate program at Virginia Tech. (check one)
- 3.5-4.0
 3.0-3.49
 below 3.0
14. What year did you first enter Virginia Tech? 19__
15. Did you receive a bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech?
- Yes
 No
16. Were you the first person in your family (including your parents and siblings) to attend a four-year college or university?
- Yes
 No
17. What is your sex?
- Female
 Male
18. What is your sexual orientation?
- Heterosexual
 Gay/Lesbian
 Bisexual
19. Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability? (check one)
- Yes
 No
20. Do you have any children who are age 18 or under living with you currently?
- Yes
 No
21. In what year were you born?
- 19__
22. Please indicate your citizenship status. (check one)
- U.S. Citizen
 Non-U.S. Citizen, U.S. Permanent Resident
 Non-U.S. Citizen
 Other (please specify: _____)
23. Which group best describes you? (if more than one group describes you, please check all that apply)
- Asian
 American Indian/Native Alaskan/Aleut
 Black/African American
 Hispanic
 White/Caucasian (excluding Hispanic)
 Other (please specify: _____)
24. What is your religious faith? (check one)
- Christian
 Jewish
 Muslim
 None
 Other (please specify: _____)
25. In what setting did you spend most of your life before first coming to Virginia Tech? (check one; if several apply, use the most recent)
- Rural area
 Small town or small city
 Suburb of a city of 50,000 or more
 City of 50,000 or more
26. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhood where you grew up. (check one)
- All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 About 1/2 same and 1/2 different race/ethnicity than you
 Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you
27. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of the undergraduate institution you attended. (check one)
- All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 About 1/2 same and 1/2 different race/ethnicity than you
 Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you
28. Please indicate how you would describe the racial/ethnic composition of your group of friends. (check one)
- All or nearly all the same race/ethnicity as you
 Mostly the same race/ethnicity as you
 About 1/2 same and 1/2 different race/ethnicity than you
 Mostly of different race/ethnicity than you
 All or nearly all of different race/ethnicity than you

Please return your completed confidential form in the accompanying postage paid reply envelope or to:

Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research
 207 West Roanoke Street (0543)
 Blacksburg, VA 24061

If you have any additional comments about this survey or your experiences at Virginia Tech, or if you have suggestions on improving the campus climate at Virginia Tech, please send a separate sheet with your comments to the address above.

G

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Women		Men	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 1: General Departmental Climate				
1a. I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members in my department at Virginia Tech	78	22	83	17
1b. When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator in my department who I can talk to about it	80	20	84	16
1c. Faculty members and administrators in my department are supportive of my academic pursuits	85	15	88	12
1d. Students who are openly critical of aspects of my department have no cause to fear retribution	72	28	70	30
1g. I feel that I have been treated fairly by faculty members in my department	85	15	90	10
1m. Faculty members in my department are sensitive to the needs of all students	70	30	81	19
1p. My academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns	77	23	86	14
1q. My department provides adequate help for students who are experiencing academic difficulty	69	31	72	28
1s. Faculty members in my department treat me with respect	89	11	89	11
1w. Graduate students in my department have significant input into departmental decisions which affect them	51	49	48	52

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Women			Men		
	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
Factor 2: Department Support for Groups						
2a. Department is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	63	19	18	74	16	10
2b. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	70	24	6	78	18	4
2c. Department is Non-racist/Racist	70	20	10	78	12	10
2d. Department is Non-sexist/Sexist	72	15	13	74	16	10
2e. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	58	34	8	55	37	8
2f. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	71	23	6	71	22	6

Factor 3: Department Discrimination

	Women		Men	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
1n. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my gender	13	87	9	91
1o. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my race/ethnicity	8	92	16	84

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

		Women		Men	
		% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 4: Departmental Equity toward Students					
1e.	I feel that I have received the same opportunity to teach classes as other graduate students in my department	66	34	71	29
1f.	I feel that I have received the same opportunity to work on funded research projects as other graduate students in my department	68	32	74	26
1k.	A serious effort is made by my department to award financial assistance fairly	80	20	76	24
1l.	A serious effort is made by my department to recruit a diverse group of graduate students	74	26	81	19
Factor 5: Departmental Social and Interpersonal Relations					
		% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
1h.	I feel that I have been treated fairly by other graduate students in my department	91	9	94	6
1i.	The office staff in my department are friendly and helpful	90	10	90	10
1j.	There is a serious effort made to promote racial/ethnic understanding in my department	64	36	68	32
1r.	I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students in my department	33	67	27	73
1t.	I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics (for example, language, dress, behaviors) in order to "fit in" with others in my department	30	70	32	68
1u.	I feel that my professors ignore my comments and questions in class	11	89	8	92
1v.	Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities in my classes	74	26	78	22

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Women			Men		
	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative	% Positive	% Neutral	% Negative
Factor 6: Support of Groups						
4a. Virginia Tech is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	69	14	17	77	16	8
4b. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	73	19	8	77	18	5
4c. Virginia Tech is Non-racist/Racist	53	25	22	64	21	15
4d. Virginia Tech is Non-sexist/Sexist	57	27	16	67	24	10
4e. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	50	31	19	47	38	15
4f. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	64	25	11	67	23	10

Factor 7: Interaction with Faculty and Administrators

	Women		Men	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
3e. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background	66	34	79	21
3g. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom	88	12	84	16
3h. I feel that there are role models for me within the faculty or administration at Virginia Tech	76	24	82	18
3i. I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech	91	9	93	7

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Women		Men	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 8: Valuing of Diversity				
3a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators	97	3	92	8
3b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity	24	76	37	63
3f. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified graduate students	39	61	58	42

Factor 9: Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus

Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:

	Women		Men	
	% Good/ Excellent	% Fair/ Poor	% Good/ Excellent	% Fair/ Poor
5a. Respect by faculty members for graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	80	20	87	13
5b. Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups	77	23	79	21
5c. Racial/ethnic integration on campus	45	55	54	46
5d. University commitment to the success of graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	74	26	76	24
5e. University commitment to the success of women graduate students	73	27	83	17
5f. Friendship between graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	64	36	69	31
5g. Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom	71	29	77	23
5h. Interaction among graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom	49	51	58	42

Appendix G

**Responses for Graduate Students by Gender
Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998**

		Women		Men	
		% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
Factor 10: General Climate for Diversity at Virginia Tech					
3c.	Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity	62	38	72	28
3d.	Top University administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech	73	27	79	21
3j.	The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating	61	39	72	28
3k.	Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech seem to be committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences	71	29	79	21
3l.	At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself	71	29	76	24
3m.	Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable	83	17	89	11
3n.	Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives	59	41	75	25

Factor 11: Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences

How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at VT about:

		% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
8a.	Racial/Ethnic minorities	41	59	39	61
8b.	Women	30	70	26	74
8c.	Individuals with disabilities	8	92	6	94
8d.	Non-heterosexuals	31	69	36	64
8e.	Individuals from the Appalachian region	33	67	29	71
8f.	Individuals from different national origins	27	73	29	71
8g.	Religious groups	21	79	21	79

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

		Women		Men	
		%	%	%	%
		Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never
Factor 12: Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics					
How often have you been treated unfairly or harassed at VT because of:					
6a.	Race/Ethnicity	12	88	14	86
6b.	Gender	20	80	8	92
6c.	Sexual orientation	4	96	4	96
6d.	Religion	8	92	7	93
6e.	Age	8	92	8	92
6f.	Accent/Dialect	11	89	16	84
6g.	National origin	6	94	10	90
6h.	Disability	2	98	1	99
6i.	Social class origin	3	97	7	93

Factor 13: Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions

How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at VT about:

		%	%	%	%
		Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never
7a.	Racial/Ethnic minorities	24	76	32	68
7b.	Women	16	84	19	81
7c.	Non-heterosexuals	15	85	20	80
7d.	People with disabilities	5	95	11	89

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

		Women		Men	
		% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
Factor 14: Challenge Derogatory Remarks					
In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?					
9a.	Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments	37	63	26	74
9b.	Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments	39	61	22	78

Factor 15: Derogatory Comments

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

		% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9c.	Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons	6	94	16	84
9e.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours	7	93	8	92
9g.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region	15	85	17	83
9i.	Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities	2	98	1	99

Factor 16: Proactive Diversity Behavior

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

		% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
9h.	Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed	2	98	10	90
9j.	Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women	29	71	9	91
9k.	Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups	35	65	25	75

Responses for Graduate Students by Gender Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	Women		Men	
	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar	% Familiar	% Unfamiliar
Factor 17: Overall Awareness of Services and Programs				
10a. Women's Center	50	50	21	79
10b. Project SAFE	18	82	9	91
10c. Multi-Cultural Center	33	67	33	67
10d. Black Cultural Center	34	66	30	70
10e. Services for Students with Disabilities	18	82	16	84
10f. Cranwell International Center	52	48	55	45

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Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

Factor 1: General Departmental Climate

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
1a. I feel that I have received adequate guidance from faculty members in my department at Virginia Tech	79	21	78	22	79	21	86	14
1b. When I have a concern or problem, I feel that there is a faculty member or administrator in my department who I can talk to about it	74	26	70	30	84	16	85	15
1c. Faculty members and administrators in my department are supportive of my academic pursuits	85	15	80	20	86	14	91	9
1d. Students who are openly critical of aspects of my department have no cause to fear retribution	56	44	62	38	70	30	80	20
1g. I feel that I have been treated fairly by faculty members in my department	79	21	88	12	90	10	88	12
1m. Faculty members in my department are sensitive to the needs of all students	58	42	72	28	80	20	76	24
1p. My academic advisor is sensitive to my needs and concerns	79	21	74	26	81	19	88	12
1q. My department provides adequate help for students who are experiencing academic difficulty	62	38	65	35	73	27	69	31
1s. Faculty members in my department treat me with respect	85	15	77	23	90	10	93	7
1w. Graduate students in my department have significant input into departmental decisions which affect them	53	47	55	45	47	53	50	50

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

African American Other/Mixed White American International

Factor 2: Department Support for Groups

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International			
	% Positive	% Neutral	% Positive	% Neutral	% Positive	% Neutral	% Positive	% Neutral		
2a. Department is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	56	26	18	20	62	18	15	78	15	7
2b. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	68	26	6	32	58	10	20	75	5	2
2c. Department is Non-racist/Racist	41	38	21	10	70	20	13	81	6	10
2d. Department is Non-sexist/Sexist	46	27	27	12	65	22	18	73	9	6
2e. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	55	41	3	29	51	20	35	56	9	5
2f. Department is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	70	27	3	18	68	13	24	70	5	5

Factor 3: Department Discrimination

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
1n. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my gender	9	91	12	88	11	89	9	91
1o. I feel that I have been discriminated against in my department because of my race/ethnicity	21	79	12	88	6	94	21	79

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
	Factor 4: Departmental Equity toward Students							
1e. I feel that I have received the same opportunity to teach classes as other graduate students in my department	76	24	77	23	71	29	65	35
1f. I feel that I have received the same opportunity to work on funded research projects as other graduate students in my department	79	21	72	28	73	27	68	32
1k. A serious effort is made by my department to award financial assistance fairly	94	6	72	28	79	21	75	25
1l. A serious effort is made by my department to recruit a diverse group of graduate students	61	39	68	32	78	22	86	14
Factor 5: Departmental Social and Interpersonal Relations								
1h. I feel that I have been treated fairly by other graduate students in my department	88	12	90	10	94	6	93	7
1i. The office staff in my department are friendly and helpful	86	15	95	5	90	10	89	11
1j. There is a serious effort made to promote racial/ethnic understanding in my department	47	53	62	38	71	29	67	33
1r. I often feel that I don't "fit in" very well with other students in my department	50	50	28	72	28	72	29	71

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American	Other/Mixed	White American	International
1t. I often feel that I have to change some of my personal characteristics (for example, language, dress, behaviors) in order to "fit in" with others in my department	35	25	26	41
1u. I feel that my professors ignore my comments and questions in class	21	8	7	10
1v. Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in classroom discussion and activities in my classes	73	78	76	79

Factor 6: Support of Groups

	% Positive			% Neutral			% Negative		
	%	Neutral	Negative	%	Neutral	Negative	%	Neutral	Negative
4a. Virginia Tech is Accessible/Inaccessible to people with disabilities	52	15	33	66	13	21	72	16	13
4b. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of people with disabilities	50	28	22	68	16	16	76	18	6
4c. Virginia Tech is Non-racist/Racist	15	27	58	53	21	26	62	23	14
4d. Virginia Tech is Non-sexist/Sexist	9	53	38	45	34	21	66	22	12
4e. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of non-heterosexuals	23	60	17	42	31	28	49	29	22
4f. Virginia Tech is Supportive/Not Supportive of different religious beliefs	45	55	0	57	22	22	66	22	12

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

African American
Other/Mixed
White American
International

Factor 7: Interaction with Faculty and Administrators

	% African American		% Other/Mixed		% White American		% International	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
3e. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are fair to all students regardless of their background	29	71	72	28	78	22	76	24
3g. Faculty members at Virginia Tech are approachable outside of the classroom	91	9	84	16	89	11	80	20
3h. I feel that there are role models for me within the faculty or administration at Virginia Tech	58	42	67	33	84	16	82	18
3i. I feel that I have the opportunity to succeed at Virginia Tech	85	15	79	21	96	4	92	8

Factor 8: Valuing of Diversity

	% African American		% Other/Mixed		% White American		% International	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
3a. Diversity is good for Virginia Tech and should be actively promoted by students, staff, faculty, and administrators	97	3	95	5	91	9	98	2
3b. Virginia Tech is placing too much emphasis on achieving diversity	6	94	18	82	42	58	24	76
3f. Affirmative Action leads to the admission of underqualified graduate students	12	88	38	62	58	42	52	48

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

African American Other/Mixed White American International

Factor 9: Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus

Rate the following aspects of the climate at Virginia Tech in general:

	% Good/Excellent		% Fair/Poor		% Good/Excellent		% Fair/Poor		% Good/Excellent		% Fair/Poor	
5a. Respect by faculty members for graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	36	64	74	26	91	9	89	11				
5b. Respect by students for faculty of different racial and ethnic groups	34	66	77	23	81	19	85	15				
5c. Racial/ethnic integration on campus	16	84	41	59	54	46	55	45				
5d. University commitment to the success of graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	34	66	64	36	86	14	71	29				
5e. University commitment to the success of women graduate students	45	55	68	32	83	17	84	16				
5f. Friendship between graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups	44	56	64	36	71	29	64	36				
5g. Racial and ethnic relations in the classroom	46	54	74	26	81	19	71	29				
5h. Interaction among graduate students of different racial and ethnic groups outside of the classroom	42	58	49	51	58	42	53	47				

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	%		%		%		%	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
3c. Virginia Tech has a climate which fosters diversity	12	88	45	54	75	25	78	22
3d. Top University administrators are genuinely committed to increasing diversity at Virginia Tech	38	62	68	32	82	18	80	20
3j. The Virginia Tech community offers a variety of social activities in which I am interested in participating	46	54	64	36	65	35	77	23
3k. Faculty and administrators at Virginia Tech seem to be committed to promoting respect for and understanding of group differences	52	48	67	33	77	23	82	18
3l. At Virginia Tech there are many opportunities to socialize with people different from myself	81	19	69	31	75	25	73	27
3m. Blacksburg is a community in which I feel comfortable	46	54	80	20	91	9	91	9
3n. Virginia Tech is a good place to gain understanding about multicultural issues and perspectives	34	66	53	47	67	33	84	16

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	% Sometimes/ Often		% Rarely/ Never		% Sometimes/ Often		% Rarely/ Never	
	% Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never	% Sometimes/ Often	% Rarely/ Never
8a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	82	18	46	54	35	65	35	65
8b. Women	52	48	41	59	29	71	16	84
8c. Individuals with disabilities	12	88	13	87	7	93	4	96
8d. Non-heterosexuals	61	39	45	55	41	59	13	87
8e. Individuals from the Appalachian region	36	64	35	65	39	61	14	86
8f. Individuals from different national origins	41	59	36	64	25	75	27	73
8g. Religious groups	28	72	33	67	19	81	18	82

Factor 11: Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences

How often have you read, heard or seen insensitive or negative comments or material at VT about:

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American				Other/Mixed				White American				International			
	Sometime/		Rarely/		Sometime/		Rarely/		Sometime/		Rarely/		Sometime/		Rarely/	
	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never		
6a. Race/Ethnicity	28	72	21	79	5	95	21	79	5	95	21	79	21	79		
6b. Gender	31	69	10	90	14	86	10	90	14	86	8	92	8	92		
6c. Sexual orientation	3	97	8	92	4	96	8	92	4	96	3	97	3	97		
6d. Religion	0	100	10	90	8	92	10	90	8	92	6	94	6	94		
6e. Age	3	97	10	90	10	90	10	90	10	90	4	96	4	96		
6f. Accent/Dialect	3	97	13	87	7	93	13	87	7	93	26	74	26	74		
6g. National origin	3	97	10	90	2	98	10	90	2	98	21	79	21	79		
6h. Disability	0	100	3	97	1	99	3	97	1	99	1	99	1	99		
6i. Social class origin	0	100	5	95	7	93	5	95	7	93	4	96	4	96		

Factor 13: Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions

How often have you felt that you were not free to voice your true opinion in classrooms or other public settings at VT about:

	Sometime/		Rarely/		Sometime/		Rarely/		Sometime/		Rarely/	
	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never	Often	Never
	7a. Racial/Ethnic minorities	58	42	38	62	27	73	38	62	27	73	20
7b. Women	31	69	28	72	21	79	28	72	21	79	4	96
7c. Non-heterosexuals	22	78	25	75	24	76	25	75	24	76	5	95
7d. People with disabilities	9	91	18	82	10	90	18	82	10	90	4	96

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American			Other/Mixed			White American			International		
	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%
Factor 14: Challenge Derogatory Remarks												
In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?												
9a. Challenged others on racially/ethnically derogatory comments	54	46		36	64		36	64		14	86	
9b. Challenged others on sexually derogatory comments	46	54		33	67		37	63		10	90	

Factor 15: Derogatory Comments

In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?

	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	%
9c. Made a derogatory comment or joke about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgendered persons	21	79		5	95		15	85		7	93	
9e. Made a derogatory statement or joke about a religion other than yours	3	97		5	95		12	88		2	98	
9g. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons from the Appalachian region	9	91		18	82		22	78		7	93	
9i. Made a derogatory statement or joke about persons with disabilities	3	97		0	100		1	99		2	98	

Responses for Graduate Students by Race/Ethnicity Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

	African American		Other/Mixed		White American		International	
	%		%		%		%	
	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes/ Often	Rarely/ Never
Factor 16: Proactive Diversity Behavior								
In the past year, how often have you engaged in the following behaviors?								
9h. Taken action to have offensive graffiti removed	9	91	10	90	5	95	9	91
9j. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about gender or issues related to women	39	61	28	72	18	82	6	94
9k. Attended non-classroom programs or activities about the history, culture, or social concerns of various racial and ethnic groups	67	33	38	62	21	79	32	68
Factor 17: Overall Awareness of Services and Programs								
10a. Women's Center	64	36	32	68	36	64	21	79
10b. Project SAFE	36	64	18	82	12	88	7	93
10c. Multi-Cultural Center	76	24	49	51	26	74	30	70
10d. Black Cultural Center	97	3	49	51	25	75	23	77
10e. Services for Students with Disabilities	33	67	18	82	17	83	12	88
10f. Cranwell International Center	46	54	49	51	34	66	94	6

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Significant Mean Differences on Factor Scores— Graduate Students

Significant Mean Differences on Factor Scores Graduate Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998

Graduate Survey Factor	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Disability	College
General Departmental Climate				◆	◆
Department Support for Groups			◆	◆	
Department Discrimination					◆
Departmental Equity toward Students					◆
Departmental Social and Interpersonal Relations		◆			◆
Support of Groups		◆	◆	◆	◆
Interaction with Faculty and Administrators		◆			
Valuing of Diversity		◆			◆
Racial/Ethnic Interaction on Campus		◆	◆		◆
General Climate for Diversity at Virginia Tech		◆	◆		◆
Insensitive/Negative Comments or Experiences			◆		◆
Unfair Treatment Based on Personal Characteristics		◆	◆		◆
Lack of Freedom to Voice Opinions		◆	◆		◆
Challenge Derogatory Remarks		◆	◆	◆	◆
Derogatory Comments		◆			◆
Proactive Diversity Behavior		◆	◆		◆
Overall Awareness of Services and Programs		◆			◆

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Demographic Variables Based on Weighted Data—Graduate Students

**Demographic and Background Characteristics of Graduate Student
Respondents by Gender—Weighted Responses
Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998**

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>Degree Currently Pursuing</i>						
Total respondents	395	100	621	100	1016	100
Non-Degree Seeking or Certificate Program	3	1	0	0	3	<1
Master's	204	52	288	46	492	48
Doctorate	188	48	330	53	518	51
Other	0	0	3	<1	3	<1
<i>Race/Ethnicity (self-reported)</i>						
Total respondents	398	100	627	100	1025	100
Asian	73	18	174	28	247	24
Black/African American	25	6	16	3	41	4
Hispanic	12	3	16	3	28	3
Native American	0	0	1	<1	1	<1
White	264	66	364	58	628	61
Other/mixed	24	6	56	9	80	8
<i>Citizenship Status</i>						
Total respondents	392	100	613	100	1005	100
U.S. citizen	287	73	359	59	646	64
Non-U.S. citizen, U.S. permanent resident	14	4	13	2	27	3
Non-U.S. citizen	78	20	231	38	309	31
Other	13	3	10	2	23	2
<i>College Primarily Affiliated With</i>						
Total respondents	395	100	621	100	1016	100
Agriculture/Life Science	36	9	39	6	75	7
Arts and Sciences	93	24	120	19	213	21
Architecture/Urban Studies	33	8	58	9	91	9
Business	42	11	43	7	85	8
Engineering	75	19	250	40	325	32
Forestry/Wildlife Resources	13	3	35	6	48	5
Human Resources/Education	96	24	66	11	162	16
Veterinary Medicine	7	2	10	2	17	2
<i>Cumulative QCA in Graduate Program</i>						
Total respondents	393	100	623	100	1016	100
3.5 - 4.0	319	81	518	83	837	82
3.0 - 3.49	66	17	97	16	163	16
below 3.0	8	2	8	1	16	2
<i>Received Bachelor's Degree from Virginia Tech</i>						
Total respondents	395	100	621	100	1016	100
Yes	72	18	154	25	226	22
No	323	82	467	75	790	78
<i>Religious Faith</i>						
Total respondents	389	100	615	100	1004	100
Christian	228	59	301	49	529	53
Jewish	3	1	9	2	12	1
Muslim	14	4	44	7	58	6
None	92	24	163	26	255	25
Other	52	13	98	16	150	15

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Demographic and Background Characteristics of Graduate Student
Respondents by Gender—Weighted Responses
Campus Climate Survey, Spring 1998**

	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sexual Orientation						
Total respondents	392	100	611	100	1003	100
Heterosexual	374	95	578	95	952	95
Gay or Lesbian	11	3	17	3	28	3
Bisexual	7	2	16	3	23	2
Person with Disability						
Total respondents	394	100	621	100	1015	100
Yes	12	3	17	3	29	3
No	382	97	604	97	986	97
First in Family to Attend College						
Total respondents	395	100	621	100	1016	100
Yes	72	18	154	25	226	22
No	323	82	467	75	790	78
Setting Where Spent Most of Life						
Total respondents	394	100	623	100	1017	100
Rural area	29	7	58	9	87	9
Small town/city	103	26	126	20	229	22
Suburb of 50,000 or more	111	28	148	24	259	26
City of 50,000 or more	151	38	291	47	442	44
Racial Composition of Neighborhood						
Total respondents	396	100	624	100	1020	100
Nearly all same race as you	193	49	290	46	483	47
Mostly same race as you	114	29	207	33	321	32
About half same race	63	16	67	11	130	13
Mostly different race than you	19	5	38	6	57	6
All or nearly all different race	7	2	22	4	29	3
Racial Composition of Undergrad Inst.						
Total respondents	395	100	621	100	1016	100
Nearly all same race as you	120	30	179	29	299	29
Mostly same race as you	169	43	301	48	470	46
About half same race	70	18	79	13	149	15
Mostly different race than you	19	5	39	6	58	6
All or nearly all different race	17	4	23	4	40	4
Racial Composition of Friends						
Total respondents	394	100	624	100	1018	100
Nearly all same race as you	82	21	104	17	186	18
Mostly same race as you	180	46	300	48	480	47
About half same race	100	25	148	24	248	24
Mostly different race than you	16	4	58	9	74	7
All or nearly all different race	16	4	14	2	30	3

