

Executive Summary

The Change Agent States project (originally known as the Change Agent States for Diversity – CAS – and hereafter referred to as CAS) represents a catalytic step in leading change within the Land Grant University System. In December 1998, the National Sub-Committee on Extension Diversity (SED) developed this visionary project in which eight states were selected to participate in a pilot effort focusing on diversity. In October 1999, representatives from the eight states and selected members of the SED began working together to develop and implement a plan of action to address diversity in their organizations and institutions. The Assessment Subcommittee of the CAS was charged with developing plans, related tools, and an implementation strategy for the eight states individually, and the CAS as a whole, to use in determining the organizations' status and climate as they relate to diversity. The committee determined that the first step in this process was an internal assessment of the current climate at each location.

Beginning in the fall 2000 semester, CAS contracted with an outside consultant¹ to identify through an internal assessment challenges confronting the CAS community with respect to underrepresented groups. The assessment was a proactive initiative by CAS cooperating members to review the climate for underrepresented groups in their respective organizations. Seven of the original eight states (Tier I states) participated in this climate assessment effort: Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Pennsylvania. In June 2004, six new states (Tier II states) were selected to participate in the CAS project, under the umbrella of the national Extension Diversity Task Force (formerly SED). The Tier II states included: Delaware, Idaho, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Washington.

A third tier of four additional states was selected in June 2007 to participate in the CAS project. These states included Kansas, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee (Tier III states). In these states, five institutions (two in Tennessee: the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University) participated in the climate assessment project. Together, the

¹ *Rankin & Associates Consulting* was contracted as the outside consultant for this project.

CAS states have worked to model effective strategies and sustainable efforts to make diversity and pluralism a reality in the Land Grant University and CSREES System.

The Tier III states used the original survey template and made several modifications reflecting the input of Tier I and II states' experiences. In addition, each state had the opportunity to add up to two additional state-related questions. The final survey contained 70 questions, including open-ended questions for respondents to provide commentary regarding their experiences².

This report contains the results from the climate assessment conducted in Kansas State University Extension. The instrument was distributed to the community in January and February 2008. All members of the Kansas State University Extension workforce were invited to participate in the survey. The survey was designed to gather information about participants' personal experiences with regard to climate issues, their perceptions of the climate for underrepresented members of the Extension community, their perceptions of organizational actions (including administrative policies and organizational initiatives) regarding climate issues, and concerns in the organization. A summary of the findings is presented in bullet form below. More in-depth information is provided in the body of the report.

² The final survey is provided in Appendix C.

Sample Demographics

448 surveys were returned representing the following:

- 👍 64 percent response rate
- 👍 30 People of Color³, 410 White respondents
- 👍 9 people who identified as having a disability
- 👍 18 people who identified as gay, bisexual, or questioning
- 👍 269 women; 175 men; 1 transgender⁴
- 👍 43 people who identified their spiritual affiliation as other than Christian (including those with no affiliation)

Quantitative Findings

Personal Experiences with Organizational Climate⁵

- **Fifteen percent of all respondents reported that they personally experienced offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct that interfered unreasonably with their ability to work or learn in their organizations (hereafter referred to as harassment)⁶. Age was most often cited as the reason given for the harassment. Harassment largely went unreported.**
 - The conduct was most often based on the respondents' age (46%), gender (43%), family status (19%), and physical characteristics (13%).
 - Compared with 15 percent of White people, 20 percent of People of Color personally experienced such conduct.
 - Of Respondents of Color who reported experiencing this conduct, 50 percent stated it was because of their race.
 - 15 percent of heterosexual respondents and 29 percent of gay, bisexual, or questioning respondents experienced harassment.

³ While recognizing the vastly different experiences of people of various racial identities (e.g., Chicano(a) versus African-American or Latino(a) versus Asian-American), and those experiences within these identity categories (e.g., Hmong versus Chinese), Rankin and Associates found it necessary to collapse some of these categories to conduct the analyses due to the small numbers of respondents in the individual categories. ⁴ "Transgender" refers to identity that does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender, but combines or moves between these (Oxford English Dictionary 2003). OED Online. March 2004. Oxford University Press. Feb. 17, 2006 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00319380>>. ⁵ Listings in the narrative are those responses with the greatest percentages. For a complete listing of the results, the reader is directed to the tables in the narrative and Appendix B. ⁶ Under the United States Code Title 18 Subsection 1514(c)1, harassment is defined as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose" (<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/vii.html>). In higher education institutions, legal issues discussions define harassment as any conduct that has unreasonably interfered with one's ability to work or learn on campus. The questions used in this survey to uncover participants' personal and observed experiences with harassment were designed using these definitions.

- 9 percent of men and 20 percent of women experienced harassment within the organization.
- The harassment experienced most often occurred in the form of derogatory remarks or being deliberately ignored or excluded.
- 23 respondents (34%) of those who experienced this harassment made a complaint to an appropriate official and 35 (52 %) considered changing their jobs.

Perceptions of Organizational Climate

- **When asked if they had heard various employees make insensitive or disparaging remarks about people based on assorted demographic characteristics, respondents were most likely to have heard field faculty/agents and campus faculty/specialists make disparaging or insensitive remarks about inability to speak English and women, support staff make remarks about inability to speak English and age, administrators make remarks about age, women, and inability to speak English, and paraprofessionals/technicians make disparaging remarks about inability to speak English.**
 - ○ Conversely, 21percent had heard an employee *challenge* insensitive or disparaging remarks made regarding inability to speak English.
 - ○ Smaller percentages of respondents witnessed colleagues challenge remarks based on age (19%), ethnic background (20%), women (21%), men (13%), racial background (14%), and sexual orientation (11%).
- **Most respondents indicated that they were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with the overall climate in their organizations (78%) and in their work units (82%). The figures in the narrative show disparities based on race.**
 - ○ Compared with 80 percent of White people, 66 percent of People of Color were comfortable with the overall climate.
 - ○ Compared with 83 percent of White people, 76 percent of People of Color were comfortable with the climate in their work units.
- **20 percent of respondents reported they had observed harassment in the organization. The observed harassment was most often based on gender. LGBQ respondents and women were more aware of such harassment. Fewer paraprofessionals/technicians than other employee groups were aware of such harassment, and such incidents often were not officially reported.**
 - Most of the observers attributed this harassment to on gender (37%), age (29%), family status (18%), physical characteristics (17%), and ethnicity (14%).
 - 20 percent of White people and 20 percent of People of Color had observed such conduct.

- Compared with 24 percent of women, 13 percent of men had observed or been made aware of such conduct.
 - Compared with 11 percent of paraprofessionals/technicians, between 17 and 26 percent of other employees had observed such conduct.
 - The observed harassment most often occurred in the form of derogatory remarks or being deliberately ignored or excluded.
- These incidents were reported to an appropriate official only 27 percent of the time.

- **Some respondents observed discriminatory employment practices and indicated that they were most often based on gender.**

- ○ 14 percent of respondents reported observing discriminatory hiring in the organization. Of those, 31 percent believed that the discrimination was based on gender and 23 percent on age.
- ○ Of the 2 percent who observed discriminatory firing, 40 percent said the discrimination was based on age, and 30 percent based on physical disability.
- ○ Of the 12 percent who witnessed discriminatory promotion, 36 percent reported the actions were based on gender, 23 percent based on employment category or age.

- **A notable percentage of respondents felt that the climate was welcoming to employees from underrepresented groups.**

- ○ 70 percent of respondents felt the workplace climate was welcoming for employees from historically underrepresented groups.
- ○ Administrators and men respondents were more likely than other respondents to agree with this view.
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- **Respondents felt that the workplace was welcoming to clients from of underrepresented groups.**

- ○ 74 percent of respondents felt the workplace climate was welcoming for clients from underrepresented groups.
- ○ Support staff were more likely to agree with this statement than other employee groups, and men and LGBQ respondents were more likely to agree with this statement than other respondents.

Institutional Actions

- More than half of the respondents believed that their Extension Service organizations proactively addressed issues related to age, ethnicity, gender, physical disability, race, and socioeconomic class; fewer than half, however, believed the organization addressed issues related to gender identity, mental disability, non-native English speakers, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.
- 73 percent of responding employees believed their administration had visible leadership to foster diversity, and paraprofessionals/technicians and administrators were most apt to agree.

- Respondents of Color and women respondents were much less likely than White respondents and men respondents to think that their administration visibly fostered diversity.
- 74 percent of all respondents believed their unit management demonstrated a commitment to diversity.
- 55 percent of all respondents believed their organization's commitment to diversity had increased over the last five years; however, only 44 percent of LGBQ respondents believed that the organization had increased its efforts over the last five years.