College Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Harassment on Campus: An Exploration of Gender Differences

Robert D. Reason, Susan R. Rankin*

Using a campus climate assessment instrument developed by Rankin (1998), we surveyed students (N = 7,347) from 10 campuses to explore the different experiences with harassment and campus climates reported by men and women. Both men and women reported experiencing harassment, although women experienced harassment at statistically significantly higher rates than men. Women reported higher rates of sexual harassment, while men reported higher rates of harassment based upon sexuality. These findings are understood, and implications are provided, using a lens of power and privilege.

How students experience their campus environment influences both learning and developmental outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Negative campus climates, those in which students experience harassment and/or discrimination, hinder educational attainment and positive outcomes. Conversely, students who experience a campus as supportive are more likely to experience positive learning outcomes (Milem, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006, in press; Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Recent research indicates harassment based on social group membership (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) remains a problem on college campuses (Rankin & Reason, 2005), likely negatively affecting the outcomes of a college education. Research also indicates that students experience campus climates differently based upon social group membership (Chang, 2003; Miller, Anderson, Cannon, Perez, & Moore, 1998). Understanding how students from various social groups experience campus climate thus should be important to higher education professionals in designing interventions more effectively and removing obstacles to the success of all students.

While a good deal of recent research focusing on the racial and ethnic differences in perceptions of campus climate has been conducted, gender-related differences have been largely ignored in the last several years. What research does exist is dated, focuses exclusively on perceptions of sexual harassment, and is outside the student development/higher education literature. The purpose of our study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of

* *Robert D. Reason is an assistant professor and research associate, Susan R. Rankin is an assistant professor and research associate, both at Penn State University. Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to rdr12@psu.edu.*

harassment on campus for male and female students. We entered this study with the understanding that different experiences likely influence the outcomes of higher education; therefore, exploration and understanding of these differences is essential to maximizing the positive benefits of education for all students.

Literature Review

Student outcomes research (e.g., Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005) highlights the relationship between perceptions of campus learning environments and student learning outcomes. Another body of research explores the different perceptions of campus climate by social group membership (Chang, 2003; Miller et al., 1998; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Understood from an interactionalist perspective (Evans, Forney, & Guido-Dibrito, 1998), these two bodies of research highlight the importance of continued exploration of differential perceptions of campus climate for social groups. Findings from this exploration can be used to improve campus climates for all students, thus removing obstacles to student success.

Campus Climates and Student Outcomes

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments to positive learning and developmental outcomes (Aguirre & Messineo, 1997; Flowers & Pascarella, 1999; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), in their comprehensive review of student outcomes literature, concluded that attending an Historically Black College or University (HBCU) related to greater educational attainment, academic self-image, and cognitive development for African American students. Although causal connections are difficult to identify, HBCUs appear to positively influence outcomes for African American students because "black colleges provide a social-psychological environment more conducive to black students' social integration and personal development than do predominantly white colleges" (p. 601).

Whitt et al. (2001), in a longitudinal study of 1,054 students over their first three years of college, found that the perception of a non-discriminatory environment was one of seven statistically significant predictors of openness to diversity and challenge. Flowers and Pascarella (1999) reinforced these findings examining the responses for African American respondents from the same dataset. African American respondents' perception of a non-discriminatory environment was also significantly related to their openness to diversity and challenge.

Other studies have identified the deleterious effects of discriminatory environments (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn; 1999; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Cabrera and his colleagues,

in a study of 1,454 students, found statistically significant relationships between the students' perceptions of racism on campus and their (a) academic and social experiences, (b) academic and intellectual development, (c) institutional commitment, and (d) persistence. These relationships between perceived campus environment and student outcomes held for both African American and White students, with the exception of the relationship with social experiences. Basically, the perception of a campus climate as "racist" negatively influenced the academic experiences, academic and intellectual development, institutional commitment, and persistence of both African American and White students.

Perception of climate also appears to influence the degree of engagement with the learning enterprise. Salter and Persaud (2003) examined the classroom climate for 142 women in either education or engineering courses to explore how classroom climate encouraged (or discouraged) participation. Women who reported a better "fit" with the classroom environment participated at higher levels than did women who felt less of a fit with the environment. The findings reinforced previous work by the same authors (Persaud & Salter, 2003).

Differential Perceptions Based Upon Social Group Membership

Clearly, the perception of a campus climate plays a large role in students' educational experiences and outcomes. The importance of the role of students' perceptions of educational environment has been well established. Empirically-supported student development and environmental theories indicate that students from different social groups likely perceive campus environments differently (Chang, 2003; Evans et al., 1998; LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Our understanding of campus climates must therefore incorporate differences based on social identity group membership.

Miller et al. (1998), in a survey of 433 undergraduate students at one institution, found statistically significant differences in perceptions of campus policies by racial identity. Caucasian students described their campus racial climate as positive; African American students rated their campus racial climate as more negative. Caucasian students also rated highly instructors' efforts to include multiple viewpoints in the curriculum and institutional policies related to recruitment and retention of people of color. African American and other students of color described interracial interactions on campus as less friendly and reported being the targets of racism.

Empirical studies also reveal that men and women perceive sexual harassment quite differently. Men tend to hold more tolerant attitudes regarding sexual harassment than do women (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1992; LaRocca & Kromrey, 1999). Dietz-Uhler and Murrell surveyed 157 undergraduate students (93 women, 64 men) and found that men held statistically significantly more

tolerant attitudes on 6 of 14 sexual harassment items. Men, for example, were more likely to agree with the statement, "This issue of sexual harassment has been greatly exaggerated."

LaRocca and Kromrey (1999), in a larger and more recent study, highlighted similar findings. In this study, 295 women and 296 men read various short sexual harassment vignettes and reported their perceptions of the level of harassment involved in the scenarios. Men indicated the scenarios were less harassing than did women respondents. These findings are typical of the extant literature related to perceptions of sexually-harassing climates by gender (e.g., Sigal, Braden-Maguire, Patt, Goodrich, & Perrino, 2003).

College campuses historically have been difficult environments for students who do not identify as heterosexual (Dilley, 2002). Bieschke, Eberz, and Wilson (2000) completed a review of empirical research related to the college experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) students. In the studies reviewed, LGB students reported experiencing high levels of harassment on campus. In the three studies that compared LGB and non-LGB students' experiences, LGB students reported statistically significantly higher levels of harassment. Although Bieschke and her colleagues identified only six studies addressing the experience of LGB students (and none that addressed the experiences of transgender students), the consistency of the results lends credence to the conclusion that LGB students experience campus climates much more negatively than do heterosexual students.

A recent national study by Rankin (2003) found similar results, reinforcing Bieschke et al.'s (2000) conclusions and indicating a continuing problem. Rankin's study revealed that LGBT students fear for their physical safety, conceal their sexual orientation to avoid intimidation, and feel that discussing their sexual orientation to those in power may lead to negative consequences. Student-on-student harassment was the most prevalent form, reinforcing the need to educate students about LGBT issues and concerns.

Different Experiences, Different Outcomes

If students from different social identity groups experience, or at least perceive, campus climates differently, and perceptions of campus climates can affect education and developmental outcomes of college students, individuals concerned with college student outcomes are obliged to continue the study of campus climates in search of effective, targeted intervention strategies. While necessary attention has been paid to issues of racial and ethnic differences, little higher education research explores the different perceptions of women and men. The current study attempted to explore those differences and understand the connection between climate and student learning outcomes. The results of

our study point to several targeted interventions to improve campus climates for underrepresented groups.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected as part of an assessment of campus climates for under-represented and under-served populations. The conceptual model used as the foundation for this assessment of campus climate was developed by Rankin (2002), based on Smith et al.'s (1997) meta-analysis. The survey data reported are part of a comprehensive data collection strategy that also included focus groups, individual interviews, and document analyses. Results, reported at the aggregate level for this article, were used to facilitate a process of change and improvement at the institutional level.

Participating Institutions

Initially, 30 institutions were invited to participate in the study. Invitations were extended purposefully in order increase geographic representation. Data from the 10 campuses that completed the survey are included in this study. The participating institutions were geographically diverse, with one institution from the Northeast, two from the mid-Atlantic states, one from the Southeast, two from the Great Lakes region, one from the Midwest, two from the Southwest, and one from the Northwest. The institutional sample included two private and eight public colleges and universities.

Survey Instrument

The survey items were constructed using primarily the work of Rankin (1994) and further informed by instruments reviewed in a meta-analysis of LGBT climate studies (Rankin, 1998). The final instrument contained 55 items with space for respondents to provide commentary. The survey was designed to have respondents provide information about their personal campus experiences (Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient = .84), their perception of the campus climate (r = .81), and their perceptions of institutional actions including administrative policies and academic initiatives regarding diversity issues and concerns on campus (r = .74). For the purposes of this study, we defined "climate" as "the current perceptions and attitudes of faculty, staff, and students" regarding issues of diversity on a campus. This definition was shared with respondents on the survey instrument.

Sampling Procedure

Participating institutions used one of two sampling techniques. Smaller campuses employed population samples, while larger institutions used purposeful sampling of underrepresented individuals, snowball-sampling procedures for invisible minorities (e.g. disabled persons, lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender individuals) and random sampling of the majority. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling techniques have been used when sampling numerical minorities in order to over-sample populations of interest (Maxwell, 2005; Rankin, 2003). Given the low numbers of underrepresented persons on college campuses, if a simple random sampling technique was used, the "climate" would be that experienced by the majority constituents. The purpose of this project was to examine the climate for underrepresented groups. Purposeful sampling thus allowed the voices of underrepresented constituents to be heard (Maxwell; Weiss, 1994). Snowball sampling is a technique whereby those underrepresented individuals who were "known" on campus via constituent-specific listservs or groups were initially contacted to participate in the study. They were asked to share the survey with any other persons they knew who may not participate in any groups or listservs or who chose not to disclose their identity.

Sample Demographics

Undergraduate students (N = 7,347) comprised the largest cohort responding to the survey, however, a substantial number of staff (n = 3,244), faculty (n = 2,117), and graduate students (n = 1,497) also participated in the project. This article reviews only the data provided by those respondents who identified as an "undergraduate student." Subsequent analyses are based only on undergraduate students' responses and by those who identify their gender as either "male" or "female." Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics for the undergraduate student sample by gender. Twelve respondents identified as transgender and are not included in this analysis. A separate article reviewing the responses of transgender students is forthcoming (Rankin & Beemyn, in process).

Statistical Methods

The relevant data are the frequencies with which male and female students rated their experiences and perceptions—all nominal-level data. When statistical comparisons are made, therefore, chi-square tests of significance were used. Chi-square tests are appropriate because we compared expected with observed frequencies within response categories (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Limitations

Although the sample is large (a total of 15,356 surveys were returned from faculty, staff, and students) and offers some insight into the climate for underrepresented persons on campus, we caution against attempts to generalize from the results. Neither institutions nor individual students were selected randomly, which calls into question the representative nature of the sample. That said, institutions were initially identified purposefully to increase

representation, which should mitigate the lack of random sampling (Gall et al., 1996). Finally, we employed nonparametric data analysis techniques for descriptive rather than inferential purposes. Findings from this analysis should be viewed within the limited purpose of the study.

Findings

The remainder of this article focuses on the differences in students' responses by gender. As previously stated, the survey addressed the three areas of personal campus experiences, perception of the campus climate, and perceptions of institutional actions. The following sections thus present results of these three areas.

Personal Experiences

Harassment was defined as any offensive, hostile, or intimidating conduct that interferes unreasonably with one's ability to work or learn on campus (US Code Title 18). Twenty-five percent (n = 1,800) of undergraduate students responding to the survey indicated that they had personally experienced such behavior. A statistically significantly greater percentage of female respondents (75%; n = 1345) reported experiencing harassment than male students (25%; χ^2 (1, n = 455) = 40.15, p. < .05). Interestingly, when further reviewing the data provided by male students, 62% of those reporting experiencing this behavior were members of two underrepresented groups (212 men of color and 71 sexual minority men).

Female student respondents suggested that the basis of their experienced harassment was most often their gender (69%, n = 921) or their race (25%, n = 331), while male students indicated the harassment was due most often to their race (38%, n = 172) or their religious beliefs (24%, n = 108). When reviewing the data by race, the majority of women students of color (63%; n = 391) and White female students (74%; n = 530) reported experiencing harassment based on gender, compared to 48% (n = 296) and 4.9% (n = 35) of women who experienced harassment based on race. This finding may suggest that gender is more salient than race in regard to harassment experienced by women.

Over 80% of men and women who experienced harassment experienced it in the form of derogatory comments from others. Threats of physical violence were more often experienced by male students (13%, n = 61), while actual physical assaults were most experienced by women (7%, n = 89). Further analysis of these data by race revealed that 30% of women respondents (n = 26) and 38% of male respondents (n = 8) who were physically assaulted were students of color. The largest majority of the physical assaults reported by women was based on their gender (84%, n = 75). The source of the assault was most often reported as other students (female, 73%; male, 79%) and faculty (female, 21%; male 21%). The harassment occurred most often in the

residence halls (female, 41%; male, 47%), in the classroom (female, 39%; male, 34%) or in a public space on campus (female, 33%; male, 42%).

Table 1

Sample Demographics by Sex of Respondent (*N* = 7,347)

	Female		Male	
Residence	%	*n*	%	*n*
On Campus – Residence Hall	54.2	2721	53.7	1226
Off-campus	34.8	1749	31.6	722
Other Campus Housing	3.1	156	3.4	78
Fraternity/Sorority Housing	7.2	33	10.4	237
Family Student Housing	0.7	33	1.0	22
Race				
Caucasian/White	57.8	2907	66.0	1512
Student of Color	42.2	2123	34.0	778
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	94.6	3906	92.2	1946
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual	5.4	225	7.8	164
Age				
Traditional (22 and under)	91.5	4603	87.4	2002
Returning Adult (23 and over)	8.5	427	12.6	288
International Status				
US citizen – born in US	91.5	4594	89.3	2037
US citizen – naturalized	3.0	150	4.3	97
International (F-1; J-1 visa)	5.5	270	6.4	148

Students were also asked if they "observed any conduct on this campus that you feel has created an offensive, hostile, intimidating working or learning environment?" Forty percent (n = 2,968) of all student respondents indicated that they observed this conduct. Female students observed harassment more often than male students (female, 43%; male, 39%; $\chi^2(1, n = 2{,}968+) = 8.46; p < .05$). Female respondents report that the observed harassment is due most often to gender (53%), race (53%), and sexual orientation (51%), while male respondents report that they observed harassment mainly due to one's sexual orientation (57%), race (53%), and gender (40%).

Perceptions of Campus Climate and Institutional Actions

The campus climate is not only a function of what one has personally experienced, but also is influenced by perceptions of how various social groups are regarded on campus. Chi-square analyses illustrated that a significantly greater proportion of women students view the campus climate as "sexist," "hostile," and "disrespectful" as compared to male students. Conversely, a significantly greater proportion of male students view the campus climate as "non-sexist."

Students also were requested to share their views of the campus climate in regard to racism and heterosexism. Overall, 22% of student respondents suggest that the climate was racist and 42% indicate that the climate was heterosexist. A significantly greater proportion of male students viewed the climate as "non-racist" and "non-heterosexist" as compared to female students.

Interestingly, a significantly greater proportion of male students viewed the campus climate as "less accepting of men" than their female counterparts. When reviewing a similar question regarding the campus "acceptance of women," both male and female respondents suggest that the climate is accepting of women.

Students also were asked a series of questions about how the university and university administrators responded to the overall climate in regard to gender issues and concerns. Table 4 indicates that, in general, female students perceived the university less favorably than male students. A significantly greater proportion of male students agreed that the university addressed sexism as compared to female students. Conversely, a significantly greater proportion of female student residents disagreed that the university addressed sexism as compared to male students. Both female and male students agreed that the University administration was fostering diversity, with a significantly greater proportion of men agreeing than woman. Similar findings were discovered when asking if the "curriculum represented the contributions of people from underrepresented groups."

Table 2
Reported Basis, Form, Source, and Location of Harassment by Sex of Respondent

	Female (*n*=1345)		Male (*n*=455)	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
Basis of Harassment				
Gender	68.5	921	20.9	95
Race	24.6	331	37.8	172
Religious Beliefs	13.7	184	23.7	108
Sexual Orientation	7.3	98	16.7	76
Age	17.7	238	15.8	72
Disability	3.6	49	5.1	23
Ethnicity	14.7	198	20.9	95
Form of Harassment				
Derogatory remarks	83.4	1122	85.5	389
Written comments	13.2	178	18.5	84
Anonymous phone calls	10.3	138	8.6	39
Unsolicited e-mails	5.9	79	8.6	39
Graffiti	6.2	84	12.5	57
Threats of physical violence	6.8	91	13.4	61
Actual physical violence	6.6	89	4.6	21
Source of Harassment				
Student	73.0	982	78.5	357
Faculty	20.8	280	21.1	96
Administrator	3.3	44	6.2	28
Resident Assistant	1.3	17	4.2	19
Teaching Assistant	6.5	88	6.4	29
Staff	8.9	120	8.8	40
Site of Harassment				
Residence Hall	40.9	550	46.8	213
Classroom	38.9	523	33.6	153
Public Space	33.4	449	42.2	192
Office	7.4	99	9.7	44
Walking on Campus	31.2	420	31.9	145
Campus Event	11.0	149	14.7	67
University Job	9.7	131	10.1	46

Gender Differences in Perceptions of and Experiences with Harassment

The women and men in our study reported different perceptions of and experiences with their campus climates. Women experienced and observed harassment on campus, defined as any offensive, hostile, or intimidating behavior that interferes with learning, at greater rates than men. While both men and women experienced harassment most often in residence halls and public places, the majority of women reported the basis of the harassment was gender (69%). A substantial percentage of women (25%) and a plurality of men (38%) reported race as the basis of their experienced harassment. A notable percentage of men also experienced harassment based upon sexual orientation (17%).

Gender Harassment of Women

Three quarters of students who reported experiencing harassment were women, and the majority of women experienced this harassment based on gender. Gender surpasses race as the prevalent basis for harassment of women, even for women of color. While a substantial percentage of women of color (47%) reported harassment based on race, a majority (63%) reported experiencing harassment based upon gender. Finally, the majority of women who observed harassment on campus cited gender as the basis for the harassment.

The prevalence of the gender-based harassment of women reported in our study leads to the conclusion that colleges and universities remain hostile environments for many women students. Given the relationships between campus climate and student learning outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005), and specifically the connection between women's perceptions of hostile climates and reductions in cognitive outcomes during the first year of college (Pascarella et al., 1997), student affairs professionals must continue to focus on initiatives addressing campus climate for women students.

It should be noted that a non-trivial percentage of men (21%) also reported harassment based on gender. Both Davis (2002) and Ludeman (2004) concluded that rigidity in male gender roles, as well as fear of femininity and experiences that run counter to traditional masculine expectations, evoke emotional conflict and restrict emotional expression. In the context of these conclusions, the relatively large percentage of men reporting gender harassment is both surprising and noteworthy. Perceiving oneself as a victim of a sexual harassment, and expressing a sense of victimization, runs counter to traditional masculinity (Wright Dziech & Hawkins, 1998).

Table 3

Perceptions of Campus Climate by Sex of Respondent

	Female		Male		X^2 (df = 2)
	%	*n*	%	*n*	
Sexism					46.1*
Non-Sexist	39.7	1606	48.6	1004	
Neutral	35.1	1421	31.1	642	
Sexist	25.2	16.7	20.3	419	
Friendliness					22.4*
Friendly	73.1	2970	78.4	1623	
Neutral	22.0	894	16.9	351	
Hostile	4.9	197	4.7	97	
Respectful					6.1**
Respectful	54.8	2219	57.6	1189	
Neutral	32.1	1299	29.0	600	
Disrespectful	13.1	529	13.4	277	
Racism					57.48*
Non-Racist	40.6	1646	50.4	1041	
Neutral	36.4	1476	28.4	588	
Racist	23.0	933	21.2	438	
Heterosexism					13.97*
Non-Heterosexist	23.7	958	27.8	574	
Neutral	34.1	1377	30.7	634	
Heterosexist	1.9	1.9	1.4	32	

Table continues

Table 3 continued

	Female		Male		X^2 (df = 2)
	%	*N*	%	*N*	
Campus Climate for Men					
Accepting	42.1	1700	41.4	855	39.73*
Uncertain	95.9	4759	93.1	2102	
Not Accepting	3.1	153	4.0	90	
Campus Climate for Women					
Accepting	1.0	52	3.0	67	2.87
Uncertain	93.7	4647	94.7	2132	
Not Accepting	4.4	216	3.9	88	

$p < .05$

Table 4

Perceptions of Institutional Actions to Improve Climate by Sex of Respondent

	Female		Male		X^2 (df = 2)
	%	n	%	N	
Institution addresses sexism					50.51*
Agree	52.4	2600	59.5	1342	
Uncertain	23.1	1147	23.1	521	
Disagree	24.5	1218	17.3	391	
Institutional leadership visibly fosters diversity					5.43**
Disagree	27.1	1349	24.8	564	
Uncertain	30.7	1533	30.4	690	
Agree	42.2	2105	44.8	1018	
Curriculum represents contributions of underrepresented groups					62.05*
Disagree	30.4	1516	22.3	505	
Uncertain	22.0	1099	28.3	640	
Agree	47.6	2371	494	1119	

* p. < .05; ** p. < .001

Racial Harassment—Crossing Gender Lines

To conclude that gender is more salient than race as a basis for the harassment of women must not be perceived to mean race is no longer important. As reported, approximately half of the women of color reported harassment based upon their race. Of the men who reported experiencing harassment in our sample, the plurality of them (38%) reported that race was the basis for their harassment. In a previous study, we also found that men experienced harassment on campus, particularly men of color (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Approximately 29% of the men of color in that study reported personal experience with some form of harassment.

The finding that people of color experience harassment based on their race is not a new discovery. Research by Watson, Terrell, Wright, and Associates (2002) and Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) both provided great detail into the painful experiences of students of color, particularly African American students, on predominately White campuses. Our findings, however, add to this literature as they reveal the importance of the interaction between gender and race, particularly for women of color. The saliency of sexual harassment in women of color, who also experience racial harassment, indicates many of these women face a dual oppression. Understanding both oppressions as components of a dual oppression is necessary before real change can take place.

Sexuality and the Harassment of Men

A paucity of research exists into the experiences of men as victims of harassment on college campuses, particularly sexuality or gender-based harassment (Wright Dziech & Hawkins, 1998). Although research exists exploring differences between men's and women's attitudes and experiences related to sexual harassment on college campuses, much research focuses on the experiences of women. Given the current construction of power and privilege in our society, (McIntosh, 1995) women are the victims of the majority of sexual harassment (Berman Brandenburg, 1997), making their experiences essential to understand. Men do experience harassment on our campuses, however, and we should not neglect these experiences (Rhoads, 1995, 1997; Wright Dziech & Hawkins, 1998).

Men in our study experienced harassment based upon their perceived sexual orientation at a greater rate then women experienced sexuality-based harassment. Rhoads (1995, 1997), in a two-year ethnographic study, also cited the prevalence of sexuality-based harassment for gay and bi-sexual men on one college campus. The most often cited negative consequence of coming out on campus was the increase in harassment and discrimination associated with higher visibility. The men in Rhoads's study reported both physical and verbal

assaults following their coming-out. Many respondents also reported homophobic or heterosexist incidents inside and outside the classroom.

Rhoads (1995, 1997) concluded that gay and bisexual men experience considerable sexuality-based harassment on campus; based on our findings, we must report little has changed. Approximately 17% of men who reported harassment indicated that the harassment was based on sexual orientation. Coupled with the rate at which all respondents reported observing sexuality-based harassment, this form of harassment appears to be prevalent. Approximately 57% of men and 51% of women reported that sexual orientation was the basis of harassment they observed on campus.

Unfortunately, sexuality-based harassment of men continues to be overt and commonplace on our college campuses. Davis (2002) linked the hegemony of masculinity and its resulting fear of femininity to the tendency for men in exhibiting homophobic attitudes and perpetuating more anti-gay incidents. The fear of being labeled or associated with anything feminine or "gay" results in negative, and often violent, reactions from men. It is logical to conclude that similar fear, and an attempt to prove oneself as masculine, likely motivates the sexuality-based harassment of men.

Power, Privilege, and Possible Solutions

An understanding of the results of this study must be contextualized in terms of power and privilege. Harassment is a tool to maintain the status quo of social hierarchy (Johnson, 2000). According to Johnson, harassment occurs as those in more powerful, dominant social groups attempt to oppress targeted social groups. Women, LGBT students, and students of color experience harassment at greater rates than male, straight, or white students because of their lack of power in the social system. Harassment occurs as individuals from dominant groups attempt to maintain their social power; harassment also occurs as members of target groups attempt to advance their relative position at the expense of other target groups (e.g., the harassment of LGBT students by women or students of color).

Viewing harassment through a lens of power and privilege explains the different ways men and women experience campus climate. Women in our study were more likely to rate the campus climate as sexist, hostile, and disrespectful, but more men indicated that the campus was non-sexist. Men also reported witnessing incidents of sexual harassment less often then women. A power-and-privilege-cognizant interpretation of the disconnection between experiences and climate assessments would suggest that men were able to overlook more subtle incidents of gender harassment because they are not directly targeted. Further, the incidents men did witness did not influence their assessments of the climate as much as the incidents women witnessed. Male

privilege allows men to remain oblivious to, ignore, or diminish incidents of sexual harassment because they do not feel personally affected (McIntosh, 1995).

No difference existed between men's and women's perceptions of the campus as "racist" or "heterosexist." Men were as likely as women to consider the campus either racist or heterosexist. Given that men were more likely to experience racist and heterosexist harassment, their negative perceptions of the campus climate related to these two areas were not surprising. These perceptions do reinforce, however, our understanding of power and privilege. Direct experiences with harassment seemed to influence men's perceptions of the climate as they were not able to ignore these experiences, unlike their observations of gender-based harassment of women. Interestingly, even though women reported proportionally fewer direct experiences with sexuality-based harassment, they reported the campus climate as heterosexist at similar rates as men. Women may be less able to ignore negative campus climates, even when not directly affected. Often target group members, like women, remain sensitive to issues of harassment, even when not directly affected (Johnson, 2000).

Implications and Interventions

Contextualizing campus climate in terms of power and privilege also leads to several strategies for implementing change. Perhaps most importantly, a power-and-privilege-cognizant approach requires campus climate issues be examined from a systemic perspective, as research suggests that no single intervention is powerful enough to affect institutional change (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Smith, et al., 1997). As Pascarella and Terenzini concluded "*multiple forces* operate in *multiple* settings to shape student learning and change" (p. 629). If we are to effectively encourage change, we must use multiple forces in multiple settings.

Campus climate transformation starts with the systems that maintain the power imbalance. Researchers (Rankin, 2003; Smith et al. 1997) have identified five areas within the higher education system that influence campus climate: (a) access/retention (b) research/scholarship, (c) inter- and intra-group relations, (d) curriculum and pedagogy, and (e) university commitment. Changes in these areas will result in systemic, organizational change with promise to upset the status quo. We, therefore, present the implications for higher education institutions in these five dimensions.

Access and retention. Many authors have pointed out that access to higher education, while an admirable goal, is only one part of the equation (Heller, 2002; Rankin, 2003). Higher education professionals must be concerned with the inclusion *and* the academic success of underrepresented groups (Rankin,

2003). Through their admissions process, student affairs professionals must continue to support policies and practices that encourage a diverse student body, and must provided students once on campus with the supports necessary to succeed academically and socially.

Research and scholarship. Rankin (2003) and Smith et al. (1997) suggested encouraging diversity of educational and scholarly roles of an institution as essential to creating climate change. Higher education administrators must support scholarly activities that include diverse perspectives and methodologies. Institutional policies that recognize the importance of scholarly advocacy, civic engagement, or public scholarship around issues of social justice, and provide rewards for such activities in the promotion and tenure process, would increase the possibility of faculty members engaging in these activities. Further, such policies would institutionalize advocacy and social justice in a manner consistent with the mission of higher education in the United States, sending an important message to students (Rowley, Hurtado, & Panjuan, 2002).

An aggressive and continual climate assessment is a form of institutional-level research and scholarship that may provide similar benefits for students. A comprehensive strategy that includes a large sample, multi-model approach is necessary to get a sense of the true climate for underrepresented and underserved populations (Rankin, 2003). Data gathered from an internal assessment process must be understood in light of the institutional history of inclusion or exclusion of diverse students and the structural diversity of the student body (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998). Institutional history and structural diversity provide the context in which a climate is situated and experienced. They are institutional characteristics that both influence, and are influenced by, the way students experience the campus climate. Coupled with the data from an internal assessment, an understanding of institutional history and structural diversity provide a complete picture of the campus racial climate and the specific interventions for improvement.

Inter- and intra-group relations. Empirical literature supports the understanding that a diverse student body encourages learning and the development of multicultural skills (Milem, 2003), however, diversifying a group without educationally purposeful interventions to improve inter-group relationships likely will result in increased tension. Educational and programmatic interventions that encourage inter-group interactions, especially around issues of social justice, may alleviate tensions and result in learning (Chang, 2001). Intra-group interactions are often overlooked. Functioning student groups, formal or informal, around social identities provide visible support for traditionally underrepresented groups. Focusing programmatic interventions on building or improving interactions within social identity groups may lead to further success.

The most common form of harassment experienced on campus was derogatory comments targeted at individuals. Although offensive speech is difficult to legislate, education can be an effective tool to improve inter- and intra-group relations. Education should focus not only on recognition and elimination of inter-group harassment, but also interpersonal skill development to encourage conflict resolution within groups.

Curriculum and pedagogy. Studies suggest the efficacy of proactive educational interventions (Harris, Melaas, & Rodacker, 1999; Hippensteel & Pearson, 1999; Hobson & Guziewicz, 2002; Williams, Lam, & Shively, 1992) in reducing harassment and raising awareness on college campuses, particularly around issues of the gender harassment of women. Harris et al. (1999) found, for example, that institutionalizing Women's Studies courses during the 1990s at one institution resulted in more progressive gender roles orientation for both men and women, while Williams et al. (1992) found a decrease in harassing behaviors after the implementation of educational programming and policies. Institutions of higher education that teach students about power, privilege, and harassment seem to raise awareness and decrease prevalence of harassment. Unfortunately, the findings of our study suggest that intervention in areas of curriculum and pedagogy are still needed: less than 50% of men and women agreed that their institutional curricula represented the contributions of underrepresented groups and students are the source of most harassment perceived by students in our study. Educating students about issues of power and privilege seems an essential first step toward changing the environment for traditionally underrepresented populations on campus.

University policies and programs. Institutions convey a sense of commitment to diversity and social justice by visibly, systematically, and proactively addressing issues of harassment via their policies and programs (Rankin, 2002). Implementing programmatic change in the areas of access and retention, research and scholarship, inter- and intra-group relations, and curriculum and pedagogy convey a sense of commitment to social justice. University commitment often manifests in institutional statements such as diversity or anti-discrimination statements with mixed results (Rowley et al., 2002). These institutional documents, when powerfully worded and widely disseminated, seem to influence behaviors positively. Unfortunately, approximately 58% of women in our study disagreed or were uncertain that institutional leadership visibly fostered diversity on their campuses. If the institutions in this sample were conveying strong messages of support for diversity, these messages were not being received by students.

Finally, institutional decision makers convey commitment to diversity through the behavioral policies that define the community standards of the institution. Our findings indicate harassment is most likely to occur in residence halls and classrooms, two areas over which institutions have varying levels of control.

Effective institutional policies must clearly indicate appropriate behaviors in these environments and delineate recourse for those who are wronged and encourage students to report all incidents of harassment (Hippensteel & Pearson, 1999; Hobson & Guziewicz, 2002).

Conclusion

This study explored differences between the experiences and perceptions of men and women related to campus climate. Differences in the type, frequency, and effects of harassment were noted. When contextualized within a power-and-privilege-cognizant perspective, results for our study indicate that substantial, systemic change is necessary if higher education is to be a supportive environment for all students. Given the connection between perceptions of campus climates and student learning outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), a deeper understanding of the experiences of all students may allow higher education and student affairs professionals to effectively remove barriers to learning.

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