

Campus Climate Diversity Survey Report

Diversity Committee

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VITERBO
UNIVERSITY

“We have to move from climate study to climate action.” (Fred A. Bonner II)

Purpose of the Campus Climate Survey

The Diversity Committee conducted the Viterbo Campus Climate survey in April 2019. The survey asked students and employees to reflect on their experience at Viterbo in general and as related to diversity and inclusion. Topics covered in the survey included: (1) classroom experience, (2) use of student services, (3) interactions with others on campus, and (4) participation in campus activities. The survey asked respondents about their opinions on the importance of diversity in higher education. It asked about the extent to which Viterbo emphasizes and supports diversity on campus. It also asked about the experiences that shape respondents’ attitudes toward diversity.

The goals of the survey are to help us better understand campus community members’ experience with and perception of diversity and inclusion at this institution, and to make Viterbo a more welcoming place for all students and employees. We intend to identify where we can improve with regards to campus climate and determine where more education/training is needed to promote diversity and inclusion.

A Closer Look at Demographics: Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation

The response rate for the survey was eight percent for students (2,492 students received the survey, 208 responded) and 33 percent for employees (949 faculty and staff received the survey, 313 responded). We gathered data on a range of demographics, but chose to focus our analysis on race/ethnicity and sexual orientation because of historic and current injustices experienced by marginalized members of these groups. Our goal is to better understand and address discrimination based on race and sexual orientation at Viterbo.

One hundred forty-four students and 216 employees responded to the question about their race/ethnicity. Of these students, 117 (81 percent) were White, 19 (13 percent) were students of color, and eight (6 percent) preferred not to answer question about their race/ethnicity. Of these employees, 194 (90 percent) were White, 11 (5 percent) were employees of color, and 11 (5 percent) preferred not to answer question about their race/ethnicity.

One hundred thirty-six students and 215 employees responded to the question about their sexual orientation. Of these students, 105 (77 percent) were heterosexual and 22 (16 percent) were non-heterosexual (bisexual, fluid, gay, lesbian, asexual, queer, questioning, and self-identify sexual orientation), and 9 (7 percent) preferred not to answer question about their sexual orientation. Of these employees, 173 (81 percent) were heterosexual, 26 (12 percent) were non-heterosexual (bisexual, fluid, gay, lesbian, asexual, queer, questioning, and self-identify sexual orientation), 16 (7 percent) preferred not to answer question about their sexual orientation.

General Findings

Most students and employees reported that the university was very or somewhat friendly (80 percent of students and 87.5 percent of employees). Most students and employees also

reported that diversity was important to them (95 percent of students and 94 percent of employees). However, when asked about the overall campus climate, more than one in three respondents (38 percent of students and 34 percent of employees) reported that Viterbo was neither regressing nor improving, regressing somewhat, or regressing very much. Although diversity is important to more than 90 percent of students and employees, around one in five respondents (22 percent of students and 19 percent of employees) believe that diversity was not important at Viterbo. Likewise, 16 percent of students and 20 percent of employees believe that Viterbo has not achieved a positive climate for diversity.

How Welcoming is Viterbo?

Most respondents believed and responded with relative certainty that Viterbo was welcoming to certain groups of people. Ninety-seven percent of students and 97 percent of employees believed that Viterbo was welcoming to people who are White. Eighty-six percent of students and 97 percent of employees believed that Viterbo was welcoming to people of high socioeconomic status (SES). Ninety-five percent of students and 97 percent of employees believed that Viterbo was welcoming to Catholics. Eight-three percent of students and 97 percent of employees believed that Viterbo was welcoming to first generation students.

Employees also had the option to indicate whether they believed Viterbo was not welcoming to certain groups. In addition to having a similar option to that of employees, students had the option to indicate that they did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to certain groups. We have decided to include both the “was not welcoming” and “did not know” options in our analysis of students’ responses because understanding where students lack knowledge about how welcoming Viterbo is to certain groups can reveal groups for whom Viterbo may not feel as inclusive. This information can also underscore pertinent areas for continuous training and education as Viterbo strives to be more inclusive and welcoming.

Around one in four employees (26 percent) believed that Viterbo is not welcoming to transgender people, and around one in two students (53 percent) believe that Viterbo is not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to transgender people. Around one in four employees (26 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming to LGBTQ+ people, and around one in three students (34 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to LGBTQ+ people. One in five employees (20 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to immigrants, and one in three students (33 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to immigrants. Around one in five employees (22 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to students with children/dependents, and more than one in four students (30 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to students with children/dependents.

Sixteen percent of employees believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to pregnant or nursing women, and more than one in three students (36 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to pregnant or nursing women. Twelve percent of employees believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to Hispanic/Latinx

people, and around one-quarter of students (26 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to Hispanic/Latinx people. Around one in five employees (21 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming to people of low SES, and more than one-quarter of students (31 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to people of low SES. Last, one-quarter of employees (25 percent) believe that Viterbo was not welcoming to people who are agnostic or atheist, and more than one in three students (35 percent) believed that Viterbo was not welcoming or did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to people who are agnostic or atheist.

Accessibility of Physical Spaces on Campus

A relatively large percentage of respondents reported that on-campus parking was not accessible (20.5 percent of employees and 30 percent of students). Regarding accommodation for sight impaired, 24 percent of employees and 13 percent of students reported that this was not accessible. In addition, regarding accommodation for hearing impaired, nearly one-quarter of employees (24 percent) and around one in ten students (11 percent) reported that this was not accessible.

Actions Considered because of Experience with Discrimination or Harassment on Campus

Sixty-one employees and 53 students responded to the question about what actions they have considered because of their experience with discrimination or harassment on campus. Of these respondents, around one in three employees (33 percent) and 43 percent of students reported that they have considered not recommending Viterbo to prospective students or employees. Fifteen percent of employees reported that they have considered transferring to another department or office, and 40 percent of students reported that they have considered transferring to another school. Last, approximately 32 employees (52.5 percent of those who responded to this question) reported that they have considered applying for another job, and 17 percent of students reported that they have considered dropping out of college because of discrimination or harassment.

Question about Having a Disability

Sixty-three employees and 45 students responded to the question about whether they have a disability. The most common disability experienced by employees and students was emotional or psychological illness. Approximately 20 employees (33 percent of those who responded to the question about disability) and 19 students (42 percent of those who responded to the question about disability) reported experiencing an emotional or psychological illness.

Other Experiences at Viterbo University

Regarding other experiences employees and students have had at Viterbo, a relatively large percentage of respondents reported that they felt isolated or left out (25 percent of employees and 17.5 percent of students); and that they felt ignored or excluded (18 percent of employees and 13.5 percent of students).

Non-Heterosexual and Non-White Students' Responses

One hundred and thirty-six students responded to the question about their sexual orientation. Of these students, 105 (77 percent) reported that they were heterosexual, 22 (16 percent) indicated a non-heterosexual orientation, and 9 (7 percent) preferred not to answer. In addition, 144 students responded to the question about race/ethnicity. Of these students, 117 (81 percent) reported that they were White, 19 (13 percent) indicated a non-white race, and 8 (6 percent) preferred not to answer. We report here a number of noteworthy findings from the analyses of 31 students who indicated non-heterosexual/prefer not to answer and from 27 students who indicated a race other than White/prefer not to answer on the survey.

Of 31 non-heterosexual/prefer not to answer students, 21 percent reported that Viterbo was unwelcoming to transgender individuals and 40 percent did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to transgender individuals. Around 20 percent of students reported that Viterbo was unwelcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals and around 20 percent reported that they did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals. Of these students, around 24 percent disagreed with the statement that Viterbo's learning environment is welcoming for students of varying gender identities, and around 29 percent disagreed that Viterbo's learning environment is welcoming for students with varying physical disabilities. In addition, around 26 percent disagreed that Viterbo's learning environment is welcoming for students with varying political views, and around 23 percent disagreed that Viterbo's learning environment is welcoming for students with varying mental health statuses.

Seventeen students who indicated non-heterosexual/prefer not to answer on the survey also responded to the question about having a disability. Of these students, nine (53 percent) indicated that they have an emotional or psychological illness, which was the most common disability reported by these students. This was also 11 percent higher than students, in general, who responded to this question.

Of the 27 students who indicated a race other than White/prefer not to answer, 21 percent reported that Viterbo was unwelcoming to people of color, and 9 percent did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to people of color. Of these students, 24 percent reported that Viterbo was unwelcoming to people of low socio-economic status (SES), and 24 percent did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to people of low SES. In addition, between 20 and 47 percent of students did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to the following groups: immigrants, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American or Alaska Native, Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, Hmong, and Mixed Race. However, only 10% of these students did not know whether Viterbo was welcoming to White individuals, while 90% of these students reported that Viterbo was welcoming to White individuals.

Last, of these 27 students, one in five (20 percent) reported that they felt isolated or left out when asked about other experiences at Viterbo.

Non-Heterosexual Employees' Responses

Two hundred and fifteen employees responded to the question about their sexual orientation. Of these employees, 173 (81 percent) reported that they were heterosexual, 26 (12 percent) indicated a non-heterosexual orientation, and 16 (7 percent) preferred not to answer. We report here a number of noteworthy findings from the analyses of 42 employees who indicated non-heterosexual/prefer not to answer.

Of 42 non-heterosexual/prefer not to answer employees, 31 percent disagreed that Viterbo has achieved a positive climate for diversity, and 27 percent disagreed with the statement that diversity is important at Viterbo. Of these employees, 28 percent believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to transgender individuals, 31 percent believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals, and 31 percent believed that Viterbo was not welcoming to students with children or dependents. Regarding other experiences at Viterbo, 21 percent of these employees reported that they felt isolated or left out as well as ignored/excluded.

Nineteen of these employees responded that they have considered one of three actions because of their experience with discrimination or harassment on campus. Eleven (58 percent) reported that they have considered applying for another job, six (32 percent) have considered not recommending Viterbo to a prospective student or employee, and two (10 percent) have considered transferring to another department or office at Viterbo.

Eighteen of these employees also responded to the question about having a disability. Five (28 percent) indicated that they have an emotional or psychological illness, which was the most common disability reported by these employees.

It is worth noting here that although we report noteworthy findings for students of color, we are unable to do the same for employees of color. Of 216 employees who responded to the question about their race/ethnicity, 11 (5 percent) indicated that they were a race other than White. The small number of employees in this group and, consequently, fewer responses for these employees make it difficult to identify noteworthy information for this group.

Recommendations to Make Viterbo More Welcoming and Inclusive

Based on the above data, the Diversity Committee and Combatting Racism and Injustices Summer Work Group recommend that:

- All employees (including those in leadership positions) and students complete the antiracism training
- Viterbo University prioritizes time throughout the year for employees and/or students to engage in conversations about race and racism and/or other diversity issues
- Viterbo University observes MLK, Jr. Day—while the university closes for day, the institution with the support of faculty, encourage students to engage in meaningful activity in observance of this holiday

- Viterbo University continues to seek and provide training around LGBTQ+ sensitivity and awareness (with a focus on transgender issues) to foster a welcoming environment for all sexual orientations and gender identities institution-wide.
- Viterbo University institutionalizes a hate/bias response policy and corresponding team to combat discrimination and harassment more effectively.
- Viterbo University works diligently on hiring processes (unconscious bias training...) that lead to more diversity in our employee pool. Address challenges to recruiting diverse employees by doing the following: (1) advertising on platforms or using media that focus on diversity, equity, and justice (e.g., *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*); (2) use more targeted recruiting by, for example, reaching out to local partners that focus on diversity issues in the community and creating a pipeline through these organization (e.g., GLADC); (3) offer more competitive salaries.



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