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Assessment • Planning • Interventions

Kean University

Assessment of Climate for  
Learning, Living, and  
Working

Executive Summary

October 2022



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## Executive Summary

### History of the Project

This report provides the findings from the survey entitled *Kean University Assessment of Climate for Learning, Living, and Working*, conducted at Kean. In the 2021 fall semester, Kean contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting, LLC (R&A) to conduct a university-wide study. Eighteen Kean faculty, staff, students, and administrators formed the Climate Survey Working Group (CSWG), which worked with R&A to develop the survey instrument and promote the survey's administration in spring 2022.

All members of Kean were encouraged to complete the survey. In addition to multiple-choice survey items, several open-ended questions provided respondents the opportunity to describe their experiences at Kean. Comments were solicited to give “voice” to the quantitative findings and to highlight the areas of concern that might have been overlooked owing to the small number of survey responses from historically underrepresented populations. For this reason, some qualitative comments may not seem aligned with the quantitative findings; however, they are important data.

Responses to the multiple-choice format survey items were analyzed for statistical differences based on various demographic categories decided upon by the CSWG.<sup>1</sup> Where sample sizes were small, certain responses were combined into categories to make comparisons between groups and to ensure respondents' confidentiality. For example, the survey offered 13 response choices for the question asking respondents about their racial/ethnic identity.<sup>2</sup> To run analyses and maintain respondents' confidentiality, the CSWG collapsed some response choices to create five

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<sup>1</sup> For Student respondents, the CSWG selected position status, gender identity, racial identity, first-generation, sexual identity, and disability status. For Employee respondents, the CSWG chose position status, gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, religious affiliation, and years of service. Additionally, Kean will receive the dataset in fall 2022, allowing the college to further explore the data to better understand community members' experiences and, ultimately, improve the campus climate.

<sup>2</sup> Response choices were Alaska Native, American Indian/Native American/Indigenous, Asian/Asian American, African/Afro-Caribbean/Black/African American, Jewish, Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx, Middle Eastern, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Southeast Asian, White/European American, and a racial/ethnic identity not listed here.

categories: White, Hispanic/Latinx, Black/African American, Additional Racial/Ethnic Respondents,<sup>3</sup> and Multiracial.

One thousand nine hundred seventy-one (1,971) surveys were returned for a 14% overall response rate. Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Of the respondents, 54% (*n* = 1,066) of the sample were Undergraduate Students, 9% (*n* = 169) were Graduate Students, 17% (*n* = 328) were Staff members, and 21% (*n* = 408) were Faculty members.

**Table 1. Kean Sample Demographics**

Characteristic	Category <sup>4</sup>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Position status	Undergraduate Student	1,066	54.1
	Graduate Student	169	8.6
	Faculty	408	20.7
	Staff	328	16.6
Gender identity	Women	1,359	68.9
	Men	546	27.7
	Trans-spectrum/Not Listed	31	1.6
	Missing/Not Declared	35	1.8
Racial/ethnic identity	Black/African American Respondents	332	16.8
	Hispanic/Latinx Respondents	353	17.9
	White Respondents	722	36.6
	Additional Racial/Ethnic Respondents	203	10.3
	Multiracial Respondents	274	13.9
	Missing/Other/Unknown	87	4.4
Sexual identity	Queer-spectrum	173	8.8
	Heterosexual	1,388	71.7
	Bisexual	158	8.0
	Asexual	77	3.9
	Missing/Not Listed	175	8.9

<sup>3</sup> The report uses the term “Additional” to avoid “othering” respondents who do not self-identify with the responses listed in the survey.

<sup>4</sup> R&A and the CSWG recognize and honor the vastly different identities and experiences of the individual respondents who were categorized in the various groups in this table and report; the terms were used for analysis, recognizing that not every respondent in each group would self-identify as such.

**Table 1. Kean Sample Demographics**

Characteristic	Category <sup>4</sup>	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Citizenship status	U.S. Citizen–Birth	1,542	78.2
	U.S. Citizen–Naturalized/Non-U.S. Citizen	378	19.2
	Missing	51	2.6
Disability status	Learning and/or Attention Issues	50	2.5
	Physical Disability/Condition	73	3.7
	Mental Health Issue/Condition	60	3.0
	No Disability	1,686	85.5
	Multiple Disabilities	72	3.7
	Missing	30	1.5
Religious affiliation	Christian Religious Affiliation	1,066	54.1
	Additional Religious Affiliation	177	9.0
	No Religious Affiliation	540	27.4
	Multiple Religious Affiliations	82	4.2
	Missing	106	5.4

Note: The total *n* for each demographic characteristic may differ as a result of missing data.

This summary provides highlighted findings from the full report, where more information is available for each finding. In some ways, the findings are similar to the results of other climate studies—in other ways they differ—and mirror the experiences offered in the literature about historically excluded constituent groups.<sup>5</sup>

### **Comfort With Campus, Workplace, and Classroom Climate at Kean**

Research on campus climate<sup>6</sup> generally has focused on the experiences of faculty, staff, and students associated with historically underserved social/community/affinity groups (e.g., women, People of Color, people with disabilities, first-generation and/or low-income students, queer-spectrum and/or trans-spectrum individuals, and veterans).<sup>7</sup> Several groups at Kean indicated on

<sup>5</sup> Guiffreda et al. (2008); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); S. R. Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles et al. (2006); Silverschanz et al. (2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

<sup>6</sup> Climate is defined as “the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards, and practices of employees and students in an institution” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 264).

<sup>7</sup> Garvey et al. (2015); Goldberg et al. (2019); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); Jayakumar et al. (2009); D. R. Johnson (2012); Means & Pyne (2017); Soria & Stebleton (2013); Rankin (2003); Rankin & Reason (2005); Walpole et al. (2014)

the survey that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus, workplace, and classroom.

Most survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the overall environment at Kean (76%,  $n = 1,503$ , p. 64), with the environment in their departments/program or work units (71%,  $n = 521$ , p. 64), and with the environment in their classes (83%,  $n = 1,366$ , p. 64). Undergraduate Student respondents were significantly more comfortable with the overall environment than were Employee respondents (Graduate Student respondents were not statistically different from the other groups, p. 65). Women respondents (p. 69), Black/African American respondents (p. 72), Multiracial respondents (p. 72), Respondents With at Least One Disability (p. 76), and No Religious Affiliation respondents (p. 79) were significantly less comfortable with the overall environment than were their counterparts.

### **Faculty Respondents – Views About Faculty Work**

#### ***Tenured/Tenure-Track***

Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents held mostly positive beliefs about faculty work at Kean and indicated that research (63%,  $n = 76$ , p. 151) and teaching (63%,  $n = 78$ , p. 151) were valued at Kean.

#### ***Not on Tenure-Track***

A majority of Not on Tenure-Track Faculty respondents indicated that Kean values teaching (75%,  $n = 207$ , p. 157) and research (75%,  $n = 207$ , p. 157).

#### ***All Faculty***

Over half of all Faculty respondents noted that they would recommend Kean as a good place to work (59%,  $n = 235$ , p. 166).

### **Staff Respondents – Views About Staff Work**

Staff respondents felt their colleagues/coworkers (74%,  $n = 240$ , p. 177) gave them job/career advice or guidance when they needed it. Sixty-eight ( $n = 220$ ) of Staff respondents indicated their supervisor provided adequate support for them to manage work-life balance (p. 179). Many Staff respondents felt that health insurance benefits

were competitive (66%,  $n = 217$ , p. 188) and that they were given a reasonable timeframe to complete assigned responsibilities (63%,  $n = 206$ , p. 181).

### **Student Respondents – Attitudes About Academic Experiences**

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.<sup>8</sup> Overall, Undergraduate Student respondents had positive perceptions of their experiences at Kean. The majority of Student respondents “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they felt valued by faculty in the classroom (79%,  $n = 969$ , p. 371). Approximately three-quarters of Undergraduate Student respondents indicated that they felt valued by Kean faculty (74%,  $n = 901$ , p. 371), staff (71%,  $n = 868$ , p. 371), and other students in the classroom (70%,  $n = 853$ , p. 371). Some findings suggested that students with disabilities, first-generation students, low-income students, and students of color had less positive perceptions than did their peers.

In general, Graduate Student respondents also viewed their Kean experiences favorably. Most Graduate Student respondents were satisfied that department faculty members (84%,  $n = 141$ , p. 228) and staff members (80%,  $n = 134$ , p. 228) responded to emails, calls, or voicemails in a prompt manner. Seventy-nine percent ( $n = 132$ ) of Graduate Student respondents were comfortable sharing their professional goals with their advisor (p. 227).

### **Experiences of Exclusionary, Intimidating, Offensive, and/or Hostile Conduct**

Several empirical studies reinforce the importance of the perception of non-discriminatory environments for positive learning and developmental outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Research also underscores the relationship between hostile workplace climates and subsequent productivity.<sup>10</sup> Further, scholars have explored the experiences Black and Latinx student populations have with

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<sup>8</sup> For a review of extant literature, see Mayhew et al. (2016) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005).

<sup>9</sup> Dugan et al. (2012); Garvey et al. (2018); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Kim & Hargrove (2013); Mayhew et al. (2016); Oseguera et al. (2017); Pascarella & Terenzini (2005); Strayhorn (2012)

<sup>10</sup> Bilimoria & Stewart (2009); Costello (2012); Dade et al. (2015); Eagan & Garvey (2015); Garcia (2016); Hirshfield & Joseph (2012); S. J. Jones & Taylor (2012); Levin et al. (2015); Rankin et al. (2010); Silverschanz et al. (2008)

microaggressions.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, when taking only gender into consideration, campus climate research specific to women faculty revealed experiences of gender discrimination, professional isolation, lack of work-life balance, and disproportionate service expectations within campus environments.<sup>12</sup> Significant differences in respondents' experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct includes:

Sixteen percent ( $n = 308$ ) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 94). Of these respondents, 28% ( $n = 87$ ) suggested that the conduct was based on position status at Kean, 22% ( $n = 62$ ) noted that the conduct was based on their age, and 18% ( $n = 55$ ) indicated that the conduct was based on their ethnicity.

#### ***Differences Based on Position Status, Age, and Ethnicity***

- By position status, a lower percentage of Undergraduate Student respondents (11%,  $n = 119$ ) than Faculty respondents (17%,  $n = 69$ ) and Staff respondents (26%,  $n = 86$ ) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (Graduate Student respondents [20%,  $n = 34$ ] were not significantly different from Employee respondents, but were significantly different from Undergraduate Student respondents; and Faculty respondents were significantly different from Staff respondents, p. 94).
  - A lower percentage of Undergraduate Student respondents (17%,  $n = 20$ ) than Faculty respondents (44%,  $n = 30$ ) suggested that the conduct was based on their position status (Graduate Student respondents [27%,  $n = 9$ ] and Staff respondents [33%,  $n = 28$ ] did not significantly differ from these groups, p. 94).
- There were no significant differences between age groups that experienced this conduct.
- By ethnicity, a higher percentage of Multiracial respondents (23%,  $n = 63$ ) than White respondents (16%,  $n = 113$ ) and Additional Racial/Ethnic (including Hispanic/Latinx and Black/African American) Respondents (13%,  $n = 113$ )

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<sup>11</sup> Mills (2020); Yosso et al. (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Grant & Ghee (2015)

indicated that they had exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct within the past year (p. 97).

- A higher percentage of Additional Racial/Ethnic (including Hispanic/Latinx and Black/African American) Respondents (27%,  $n = 30$ ) than White respondents (12%,  $n = 14$ ) who had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their racial identity (Multiracial respondents [18%,  $n = 11$ ] did not significantly differ from the other groups, p. 97).

### **Respondents Who Seriously Considered Leaving Kean**

Campus climate research has demonstrated the effects of campus climate on faculty and student retention.<sup>13</sup> Research specific to student experiences has found that sense of belonging is integral to student persistence and retention.<sup>14</sup> Noteworthy percentages of respondents indicated that they seriously considered leaving Kean.

#### ***Faculty Respondents***

Forty-two percent ( $n = 170$ ) of Faculty respondents had seriously considered leaving Kean in the past year (p. 198). Forty-five percent ( $n = 77$ ) of Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of limited opportunities for advancement. Forty-two percent ( $n = 72$ ) of Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of an increased workload (p. 199).

#### ***Staff Respondents***

Sixty percent ( $n = 197$ ) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving Kean in the past year (p. 198). Fifty percent of Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of a low salary/pay rate ( $n = 98$ ) and/or due to limited opportunities for advancement (49%,  $n = 96$ , p. 201).

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<sup>13</sup> Blumenfeld et al. (2016); Gardner (2013); Garvey & Rankin (2018); D. R. Johnson et al. (2014); Kutscher & Tuckwiller (2019); Lawrence et al. (2014); Pascale (2018); Ruud et al. (2018); Strayhorn (2013); Walpole et al. (2014)

<sup>14</sup> Booker (2016); García & Garza (2016); Hausmann et al. (2007)

### ***Student Respondents***

Twenty-two percent ( $n = 239$ ) of Undergraduate Student respondents and 17% ( $n = 29$ ) of Graduate Student respondents had seriously considered leaving Kean in the past year (p. 229). Of Undergraduate Student respondents who seriously considered leaving, the majority did so because of a lack of a social life at Kean (41%,  $n = 97$ , p. 233). Of Graduate Student respondents who seriously considered leaving, they did so owing to personal reasons (41%  $n = 12$ ) and/or due to financial reasons (38%,  $n = 11$ , p. 234).

An analysis of Student respondent comments revealed most seriously considered leaving Kean due to the cost of attending, discontentment with faculty, experiencing and witnessing discrimination, lack of courses or specific programs, and not feeling connected to the community at Kean.

### ***Respondents' Sense of Belonging***

Campus climate influences individuals' sense of belonging within social and academic institutional environments.<sup>15</sup> Sense of belonging can be defined as one's perceived social support on campus, feeling or sensation of connectedness, and/or the experience of mattering or importance to the campus community or others on campus.<sup>16</sup> A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Sense of Belonging* scale derived from Questions 105, 106, and 102 on the survey, and higher scores on the *Sense of Belonging* factors suggested an individual or constituent group felt a stronger sense of belonging at Kean. Using this scale, analyses revealed the following.

- No significant differences between Faculty respondents by faculty status, gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, religious affiliation, or years of service on *Faculty Sense of Belonging* (p. 173).
- No significant differences between Staff respondents by racial identity, sexual identity, religious affiliation, and years of service on *Staff Sense of Belonging*. Significant differences on gender identity indicated that Men Staff respondents

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<sup>15</sup> Museus et al. (2017); Rankin & Reason (2005); Strayhorn (2012, 2013)

<sup>16</sup> Strayhorn (2012)

had higher *Staff Sense of Belonging* scores than those of Women Staff respondents (p. 196).

- Significant difference between Student respondents by gender identity, sexual identity, and disability status emerged on *Student Sense of Belonging*. Findings indicated that Women and Men Student respondents (compared to Trans-spectrum respondents); Heterosexual Student respondents; and No Disability Student respondents were more likely than their counterparts to feel a stronger sense of belonging at Kean (pp. 217–219).

## **Challenges and Opportunities Related to Campus Climate**

### ***Faculty Respondents***

Many Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents disagreed that the tenure standards/promotion standards were applied equally to faculty in their school/division (62%,  $n = 75$ , p. 151). Similarly, Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents disagreed that the criteria for tenure were clear (59%,  $n = 72$ , p. 151). Less than half of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty respondents agreed they were supported and mentored during the tenure-track years (44%,  $n = 54$ , p. 151).

Thirty-five percent of Not on Tenure-Track Faculty respondents agreed that Kean committees ( $n = 97$ ) and senior administrators ( $n = 97$ ) valued not-on-tenure-track faculty opinions (p. 158). Forty-two percent ( $n = 119$ ) of Not on Tenure-Track Faculty respondents agreed that the criteria for contract renewal were clear (p. 156).

Nearly half of all Faculty respondents disagreed that Kean provided them with resources to pursue professional development (44%,  $n = 172$ , p. 164). Forty-one percent ( $n = 161$ ) of Faculty respondents disagreed that the performance evaluation process was clear (p. 164), and 37% ( $n = 145$ ) of faculty respondents disagreed that they had job security (p. 167).

### ***Staff Respondents***

Staff responses indicated that they felt less positive about several aspects of their work life at Kean. Fifty-one percent ( $n = 167$ ) of Staff respondents disagreed that clear procedures existed on how they could advance at Kean (p. 189). Forty-five percent ( $n =$

146) of Staff respondents disagreed that they felt positive about promotion/reclassification opportunities at Kean (p. 190). Forty-one percent ( $n = 135$ ) of Staff respondents disagreed that staff salaries were competitive (p. 188.) Thirty-three percent ( $n = 99$ ) of Staff respondents agreed that faculty valued staff opinions (p. 188). Thirty-six percent ( $n = 115$ ) of Staff respondents agreed that the performance evaluation process was productive (p. 178).

### ***Student Respondents***

Analyses of the Students' survey responses revealed statistically significant differences based on disability status, first-generation status, income status, racial identity, citizenship status, and sexual identity, where students from backgrounds historically underrepresented at colleges held less positive views of their experiences than did their peers from "majority" backgrounds (pp. 220–221). Findings indicated that White Undergraduate Student respondents, Multiracial Undergraduate Student respondents, Not-First-Generation Student respondents were more likely to "strongly disagree" that their English-speaking skills limited their ability to be successful compared to their counterparts (p. 220).

### **Student Respondents' *Perceived Academic Success***

How students perceive their academic success often contributes to their decision to persist in higher education. Research indicates that when students experience an unwelcoming college climate, they also experience a decline in persistence and academic performance.<sup>17</sup> A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the *Perceived Academic Success* scale derived from Question 12 on the survey. Using this scale, analyses revealed:

- A significant difference existed in the overall test for means for Student respondents by gender identity, sexual identity, and disability status on *Perceived Academic Success*.
- Women Undergraduate Student respondents had higher *Perceived Academic Success* scores than those of Men Undergraduate Student respondents (p. 212).

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<sup>17</sup> Allen & Alleman (2019); Booker (2016); D. R. Johnson (2012); Kim & Hargrove (2013); Kutscher & Tuckwiller (2019); Reynolds et al. (2010)

- Undergraduate Student respondents with no disabilities had higher *Perceived Academic Success* scores than those Undergraduate Student respondents with multiple disabilities (p. 214).

### **A Meaningful Percentage of Respondents Experienced Unwanted Sexual Conduct**

In 2014, *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* indicated that sexual assault is a substantial issue for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the physical health, mental health, and academic success of students. The report highlights that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. One section of the Kean survey requested information regarding respondents' experiences with sexual assault.

- 5% ( $n = 98$ ) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct while at Kean (p. 126).
  - 1% ( $n = 11$ ) experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting) (p. 127).
  - 2% ( $n = 37$ ) experiencing stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls) (p. 129).
  - 3% ( $n = 61$ ) experiencing sexual harassment (e.g., cat-calls, repeated sexual advances) (p. 132).
  - 1% ( $n = 9$ ) experiencing forcible sexual assault (e.g., fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent) (p. 137).
  - 0% ( $n = 0$ ) experienced non-forcible sexual assault (e.g., incest, statutory rape) (p. 126).
- Respondents identified Kean students, current or former dating/intimate partners, and acquaintances/friends as sources of unwanted sexual contact/conduct (pp. 127–139).
- Most respondents did not report the unwanted sexual contact/conduct (p. 126).

Respondents were offered the opportunity to elaborate on why they did not report unwanted sexual experiences. The primary reason cited for not reporting these incidents was that respondents were not sure if or where to report them (p. 137).

## **Student Financial Hardship**

51% ( $n = 632$ ) of Student respondents indicated they experienced financial hardship while attending Kean (p. 57). Students indicated they experienced financial hardship in the following areas.

- 72% had difficulty affording books/course materials
- 60% had difficulty affording tuition
- 33% had difficulty commuting to campus
- 32% had difficulty affording food

## **Kean's Initiatives**

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they believed certain initiatives currently were available at Kean and the degree to which they thought that those initiatives would influence college climate. Examples of overall findings are presented below. For each result, the majority of respondents felt that the initiative would positively influence the campus climate. A complete overview of findings related to institutional actions is provided on pages 241–249 of the full report.

### ***Examples of Findings for Faculty Respondents***

- 79% of Faculty thought that access to counseling for people who have experienced harassment was available and 21% of Faculty thought it was not available (p. 243).
- 78% of Faculty thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity education for faculty was available and 22% of Faculty thought that such training for faculty was not available (p. 242).
- 75% of Faculty thought that religious accommodations for holiday celebration were available and 25% of Faculty thought that such accommodations were not available (p. 244).
- 73% of Faculty thought that affordable child care was available and 27% of Faculty thought that it was not available (p. 244).

### ***Examples of Findings for Staff Respondents***

- 79% of Staff thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity training for staff was available and 21% of Staff thought that it was not available (p. 249).
- 79% of Staff thought that access to counseling for people who have experienced harassment was available and 21% of Staff thought that it was not available (p. 249).
- 75% of Staff thought that affordable child care was available and 25% of Staff thought that it was not available (p. 251).
- 70% of Staff thought that religious accommodations for holiday celebration were available and 30% of Staff thought that such accommodations were not available (p. 251).

### ***Examples of Findings for Student Respondents***

- 86% of Students thought that effective academic advising was available and 14% of Students thought that it was not available (p. 254).
- 85% of Students thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity education for faculty was available and 15% of Students thought that it was not available (p. 254).
- 85% of Students thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity education for staff was available and 15% of Students thought that it was not available (p. 256).
- 85% of Students thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity education for students was available and 15% of Students thought that it was not available (p. 254).

### **Conclusion**

Kean climate findings<sup>18</sup> were consistent with those found in R&A’s work with higher education institutions across the country.<sup>19</sup> For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be “very comfortable” or “comfortable.” A similar percentage (76%) of Kean respondents indicated that they were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with

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<sup>18</sup> Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

<sup>19</sup> Rankin & Associates Consulting (2021)

the overall climate at Kean (p. 64). Twelve percent to 20% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At Kean, a similar percentage of respondents (16%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 94). The results parallel findings from other climate studies examining specific constituent groups offered in the literature.<sup>20</sup>

Prior research reveals that:

Student body diversity in institutions of higher education is important not only for improving the economic and educational opportunities for underrepresented students, but also for the social, academic, and societal benefits that diversity presents for all students and communities. Diverse learning environments help students sharpen their critical thinking and analytical skills; prepare students to succeed in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world; break down stereotypes and reduce bias; and enable schools to fulfill their role in opening doors for students of all backgrounds.<sup>21</sup>

Everyone benefits from a more inclusive collegiate community. To create a more inclusive environment, Kean must acknowledge areas of opportunity and take responsibility for restoring, rebuilding, and implementing action that prioritizes those most negatively affected in the current structure.

Kean's climate assessment report provides baseline data on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. While the findings may guide decision making regarding policies and practices at Kean, it is important to note that the cultural fabric of any institution and unique aspects of each campus's environment must be taken into consideration when deliberating action items based on these findings. The climate assessment findings provide the Kean community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. Kean, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime

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<sup>20</sup> Guiffrida et al. (2008); S. R. Harper & Hurtado (2007); S. R. Harper & Quaye (2004); Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005); Rankin & Reason (2005); Sears (2002); Settles et al. (2006); Silverschanz et al. (2008); Yosso et al. (2009)

<sup>21</sup> United States Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development and Office of the Under Secretary (2016, p. 5)

position to actualize its commitment to promote an inclusive campus and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of its dynamic campus community.

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