

2016

Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success

San José • Evergreen Community College District

Research Briefing Report RB2016-01



Executive Summary

In Spring 2015, the district-wide Civility Task Force charged the Department of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success with conducting a Civility Survey, the second survey since Spring 2013. IESS distributed two surveys (one for faculty and staff and one for students) via email. The surveys asked respondents about their demographics, their role and history at the district, how certain keywords shape their own personal definition of civility and their tolerance for and witness to certain uncivil behaviors.

The results of the survey provide a good foundation for planning the next steps for the work of the Civility Task Force. The faculty, staff, and students give voice to the desire of the district and community to have about a civil environment. Clear from these voices are several themes, which are bulleted in this section.

Results

- Staff and faculty define civility with words such as politeness, tolerance, decency, respect, as very important words in their definition of civility.
- Students hold as important respect, politeness, courtesy, and ethical behavior as words that help define their personal definition of civility. Students also include professionalism, compassion, and honesty.
- Staff and faculty indicated objection to employees and supervisors who talk harshly to each other and who keep up negative talk about others.
 - 1/3 of Staff and 1/5 of Faculty indicated they witness this behavior at least once per week
- Students indicated that they do not like it when professors are rude to students, when people are rude to one another, and when people do not act in a professional manner. Students, much more so than staff and faculty, are also concerned about making sure others take care of their physical surrounding by picking up trash and taking pride in their environment.
- Staff and faculty specify that treating each other with kindness, modeling civil behaviors on a personal level, and making sure there is institutional accountability for not behaving in a civil manner.
- Students believe that encouraging more student involvement in activities and having special events on campus provides a civil environment.
- Students also believe that picking up trash, not smoking, and providing better safety on campus as is a part of a civil environment.
- Students are concerned about the way they are treated by staff members, providing a sobering reminder that customer service is a large part of maintaining a civil environment.
 - 113 student respondents explicitly mentioned that respect is a two way street.
 - “Teachers need to show mutual respect to students as well as students need to respect teachers”
 - “This semester I had two teachers that showed mutual respect for people, for their roles, for their knowledge and expertise. And the other two teachers did not show conscious demonstration of mutual respect -- for people, for their roles, for their knowledge and expertise.”

Recommendations of Survey Respondents

The following recommendations are offered as next steps:

- Continue to offer opportunities to have dialogues among faculty and staff regarding civility. Perhaps hold forums where employees have the opportunity to talk and suggest ideas to the administration.
- Figure out a way to institutionalize the civility conversation outside of the civility committee.
- Continue to monitor district-wide email.
- Provide more opportunities for students to talk about what civility means to them.
- Provide training for faculty and staff about what civility is and how it impacts their personal work environment.
- Continue to emphasize customer service and student centeredness in all aspects of the district's work.

Background

In Spring 2015, the district-wide Civility Task Force charged the Department of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success with conducting a Civility Survey, the second survey since Spring 2013. IESS distributed two surveys (one for faculty and staff and one for students) via email. The surveys asked respondents about their demographics, their role and history at the district, how certain keywords shape their own personal definition of civility and their tolerance for and witness to certain uncivil behaviors.

Methodology

Students and employees were sent separate but similar surveys via email. The surveys remained open for a period of two weeks.

In spring 2013, there were 15,924 students attending school at the San José/Evergreen Community College District. There were 639 student respondents, a response rate of approximately four percent. There were 1,044 staff and faculty when this survey was administered. With a total of 138 staff and faculty respondents, the response rate for this group was 13.2%.

The first section of the survey asked respondents how certain words shaped their personal definition of civility. Words like: Politeness, Courtesy, Decency, Respect, and Judgment, were included as prompts and respondents were given space to add their own words as well. In addition, open-ended questions were included for the respondent to state their thoughts. In the student survey, the two free-response questions were: 1) "What do you think about when you read the words, mutual respect?" 2) "What are some actions that you would suggest people take to promote civil school environment?" For the faculty/staff survey, the free-response questions were: 1) "What do you think about when you read the words, mutual respect?" 2) "What are some actions that you would suggest people take to promote more civil work environment?" and 3) "What are some ways that you would use to help communicate our new statement of civility?"

The survey asked respondents to think about the extent to which certain uncivil behaviors bother them. The response categories ranged from 1 (Not at All) to 6 (Extremely). The survey also asked respondents to indicate how often they may have witnessed any of the same behaviors in their environment. The response categories ranged from "Never" to "Every Day."

Results

Demographics

Staff and Faculty

There were one hundred thirty eight respondents for the Staff and Faculty Survey: eleven (8%) were administrator or manager, fifty (36%) classified, three (3%) confidential and seventy-four (53%) faculty responses. The overwhelming majority of responses were from full-time (72%) employees. There were 46% from San Jose City and 43% from Evergreen Valley College. These percentages are very similar to the responses from the 2013 survey.

	N	Percent
Faculty	42	30%
Adjunct Faculty	32	23%
Staff	50	36%
Administrator	11	8%
Other	3	3%

With regard to race, the group with the largest responses came from White with 42%, followed by Asian at 16%, then by Hispanics at 15%. The full table is right below:

	N	Percent
Asian	21	16%
Black/African-American	5	4%
Hispanic	20	15%
Mixed	11	8%
Other	21	16%
White	56	42%

The proportion of the different employee and ethnic groups is reflective to the employee information on the State Chancellor Office's DataMart. However, an issue is that sample gender is not reflective of the district's gender distribution. Women disproportionately responded at a higher rate than males; making up 66% of the responses to 28% for males.

Students

There were 639 student respondents. Out of the 639 respondents, two-hundred eighty six (44.8%) are part-time and three hundred fifty three (55.2%) are full-time students. 50.9% attend San José City, 47.7% attend Evergreen, and 1.4% are at the Workforce Institute.

Percentage of full-time and part-time student respondents

	N	Percent
Full-time student	286	44.8%
Part-time student	353	55.2%

Third Year or Over constitute the largest portion of respondents for all three locations. First Years were the smallest group of respondents for San José City and Evergreen Valley College, making up 29% and 28% of the respondents respectively. For the Workforce Institute, Second Years made up 8% of their respondents but since they had very few respondents, this is a non-issue.

The following tables show the ethnic and gender breakdown of student respondents.

Table 1: Student Demographics by Location

	N	Percent
Asian	214	34%
Hispanic	197	32%
White	96	15%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	197	1%
Black/African American	36	6%
Native American	11	2%
Mixed Race	22	4%
Other	40	6%

Table 2: Student Gender Distribution by Location

	N	Percent
Female	398	64%
Male	211	34%
I Choose Not to Identify	11	2%
I Identify as Transgendered	2	0%
None of These Options Apply to Me	3	0%

Survey Responses

Faculty and Staff

One of the questions on the civility survey had a list of ten words and asked respondents to indicate the importance of each word on a 5-point Likert scale that range from “Not Important” to “Very Important.”

Out of the ten words, “Respect” and “Ethical Behavior” were rank highest, with at least 90% of respondents rating them at least “Somewhat Important” in shaping their personal definition of civility. Closer examination of the responses for “Respect” and “Ethical Behavior”, 68% of staff ranked “Respect” as “Very Important” and 64% ranked “Ethical Behavior” as “Very Important.” For faculty respondents, 76% marked “Respect” as “Very Important” and 83% marked “Ethical Behavior” as “Very Important.” Furthermore, “Aesthetic Sensitivity,” “Judgment,” and “Selflessness” had the least responses for being at least “Somewhat Important” in shaping an individual’s definition of civility.

Another question had a list of negative behaviors such as “Using harsh language towards others” and “Insensitivity to people of different religions” as asked respondents to indicate the extent the listed behaviors would bother them if they witness them at work. The response for each listed behavior range from where 1 is “not at all” to 6 is “extremely” bothered.

Out of the fifteen behaviors, eleven of the behaviors mean was at least 5, or “really bothered.” The two negative behaviors with the highest “bothered” mean were “Unethical Professional Practices” with 5.63 and “Being rude to people or groups of people” with a mean of 5.54. For “Unethical Professional Practices”, 70% of staff ranked it at least “really bothered” while 81% of faculty ranked at least “really bothered.” For “Unethical Professional Practices”, 72% of staff ranked it at least “really bothered” while 73% of faculty ranked at least “really bothered.” The two lowest means were “Not saying ‘thank you’ when appropriate” and “Not throw away trash and garbage” with the means of 4.52 and 4.55.

A follow up question asked respondents how often they saw the listed negative behaviors within the last six months. The overwhelming majority responded that they witnessed the negative behaviors at most “once in a while.” In addition, for the negative behaviors “Insensitivity to people of different religions,” “Insensitivity to people based upon gender” and “Insensitivity toward issues of sexual orientation,” the overwhelming majority responded that they “Never” witnessed of these behaviors at the workplace. Unfortunately, we do have a blemish, 40% of respondents responded that they see individuals not throw away their trash or garbage at least once a week.

Students

Students were also asked on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is “Not at all” and 6 is “Extremely” to indicate the extent to which they’ve experienced certain behaviors. For students, the highest rated statements are, “I receive fair and unbiased treatment from instructors at my college”, “I receive fair and unbiased treatment from administrative staff at my college”, and “It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on my campus.” This shows that the student experience in the classroom and at school is positive.

Question	2015 Mean
I receive fair and unbiased treatment from instructors at my college.	4.54
I receive fair and unbiased treatment from administrative staff at my college.	4.54
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on my campus.	4.53
I feel safe on my college grounds, parking lots, and in the buildings.	4.49
I receive fair and unbiased treatment from other students at my college.	4.48
Instructors are interested in my academic problems and success.	4.47
My college encourages students to set goals and work hard.	4.47
At least one instructor or administrative staff person at my college cares about me and my academic progress.	4.44
Students at my college are made to feel welcome and included.	4.44
I feel safe expressing my thoughts and opinions at my college.	4.42
My racial/ethnic group is treated with respect at my college.	4.41
The administrative staff at my college are caring and helpful.	4.38
Administrative staff is interested in my academic problems and success.	4.36
I ask classmates for help and information about my classes.	4.33
I am likely to seek campus help when I feel confused about my course work.	4.32
My college environment supports my cultural background and beliefs.	4.3
The other students at my college are caring and helpful.	4.29
I have a voice on campus to express my opinions and communicate my concerns if needed.	4.2

2013 vs 2015 Results

The staff civility surveys administered in 2015 was structured the same as the survey sent out in 2013, allowing us to draw comparisons between the two. The 2013 survey had 206 staff and faculty respondents compare to the 138 respondents for 2015. Below is a table that shows the proportion of each employee class by survey year:

	2013	2015
Faculty	56%	53%
Staff	32%	36%
Administrator	8%	8%
Other	3%	3%

The proportion of employee class respondents stayed the same between 2013 and 2015. Examining the respondents' race by survey year, there was a 5% decrease in Hispanic respondents and 4% increase in Mixed respondents in 2015. There was no drastic change in the composition of Asian, African-American, Other, and White respondents in the 2015 survey. Below is a table that shows the proportion of respondent's race by survey year:

	2013	2015
Asian	15%	16%
Black/African-American	3%	4%
Hispanic	20%	15%
Mixed	4%	8%
Other	13%	15%
White	45%	42%

Examining respondents by sex, 62% of the respondents for the 2013 survey were female and 33% were male. For the 2015 survey, 66% of the respondents were women and 28% were male.

Comparing the responses that indicate the importance of each word in shaping the respondent's personal definition of civility, the three words ranked the highest in 2013 (high to low) were "Respect", "Ethical Behavior", and "Courtesy." For 2015, the same three words ranked the highest but in a different order, with "Ethical Behavior" being ranked the highest, followed by "Respect" then by "Courtesy." Below is a table showing how respondents marked the importance of the word in defining their personal definition of civility. The scores are out of five, five being "Very Important" and one being "Not Important at All."

	2013	2015	Difference
Aesthetic Sensitivity	3.796117	3.818182	0.022065
Courtesy	4.606796	4.663934	0.057138
Decency	4.567961	4.433333	-0.134628
Ethical Behavior	4.684466	4.775	0.090534
Judgment	3.927184	3.94958	0.022396
Lead by example	4.383495	4.586777	0.203282

Politeness	4.548544	4.581967	0.033423
Respect	4.752427	4.737705	-0.014722
Selflessness	3.92233	3.866667	-0.055663
Tolerance	4.587379	4.6	0.012621

Respondents for both years were consistent in which words they ranked the least important in defining their personal definition of civility (low to high): Aesthetic Sensitivity, Selflessness, and Judgement.

When it comes to the student civility survey, it is not easy to draw comparisons between the 2013 and 2015 surveys. The 2015 student civility survey was revised to address some of the concerns that students mentioned in the open responses in 2013 survey. Furthermore, several questions were added to the survey after analyzing the transcripts from the Student Enrollment Focus Group study that was conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year. However, both surveys asked students how certain key words shape their personal definition. Below is the table showing how important each word was in shaping the respondents personal definition of civility:

	2013	2015	Difference
Aesthetic Sensitivity	3.963109	4.112245	0.14913554
Courtesy	4.598814	4.662	0.06318577
Decency	4.382082	4.469512	0.08743051
Ethical Behavior	4.487484	4.625	0.13751647
Judgement	3.868248	3.951515	0.08326746
Lead by example	4.192358	4.330645	0.1382868
Politeness	4.649539	4.682635	0.03309586
Respect	4.714097	4.824	0.1099025
Selflessness	4.034914	4.125253	0.09033816
Tolerance	4.400527	4.457831	0.05730432

Students' responses were consistent between the two years. For both years, the three highest and lowest ranked words stayed the same (and in the same order). "Respect" was the highest ranked in defining students' definition of civility, followed by "Politeness" then "Courtesy." The three words that were the least important for students definition of civility (low to high) were: Judgement, Aesthetic Sensitivity, Selflessness.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as next steps:

- Continue to offer opportunities to have dialogues among faculty and staff regarding civility. Perhaps hold forums where employees have the opportunity to talk and suggest ideas to the administration.
- Figure out a way to institutionalize the civility conversation outside of the civility committee.
- Continue to monitor district-wide email.
- Provide more opportunities for students to talk about what civility means to them.
- Provide training for faculty and staff about what civility is and how it impacts their personal work environment.
- Continue to emphasize customer service and student centeredness in all aspects of the district's work.