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Mary L. Zanetti
University of Massachusetts Medical School

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DIVERSITY CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS: CHANGING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Zanetti, ML, Wilson, MV, Carlin, MM, Barrett, SV, Kadish, SJ
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Purpose:
To gather and analyze data at two points in time on perceptions of institutional values connected to a wide range of diversity issues. This study gauges student, faculty, and staff views on institutional support of diversity with results guiding future inclusion and training efforts within the organization.

Methods:
An online survey comprised of 16 items on a 5-point agreement scale and four open-ended items was disseminated in 2004 and 2008. Responses were stratified into two groups: Whites (2004 n=599; 2008 n=953) and underrepresented minorities (URMs: Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics) (2004 n=52; 2008 n=93). Quantitative analyses were conducted where upper and lower ends of agreement scale were collapsed and compared across groups and years using the approximation of the binomial distribution. Researchers also performed qualitative analysis independent of quantitative results.

Results:
Baseline results in 2004 indicated statistically significant differences between Whites and URMs at upper end of the agreement scale on nine items (p<.05) and three at the lower end (p<.05). Overall, Whites rated level of institutional support for diversity higher than their URM counterparts. The item with the greatest difference was “People of Color are valued at medical school” where 72.1% of Whites rated “strongly agree/agree” compared to 44.2% of URMs. Initial qualitative results suggested more opportunities for professional development, worklife balance, and increasing recruitment of women and People of Color into faculty and leadership positions was warranted. Institutional action is illustrated in the timeline below. Subsequent comparative analyses were conducted; results by group across years indicated there were six statistically significant differences found for Whites only (p<.05). Four items reflected an upward shift in ratings of “strongly agree/agree” and two items reflected a downward shift in ratings of “strongly disagree/disagree” (see table).

Conclusion:
Overall, Whites and URMs have varying perceptions of diversity; therefore, several diverse constituent groups and institutional initiatives have been and continue to be developed to address these findings.