

**Survey of the Racial Climate  
At the  
University of Missouri – Kansas City**

**Undertaken by the  
Minority Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee  
Of the  
Strategic Enrollment Management Team**

**With support from the divisions of  
Academic Affairs and  
Student Affairs and Enrollment Management**

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## **Introduction**

The Minority Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee of the Strategic Enrollment Management Team is comprised of interested and committed individuals representing the divisions of Academic Affairs as well as Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. The Subcommittee worked for many months to create a plan to be included as part of the university's overall Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and one of the initiatives of the subcommittee was a survey of the racial climate at UMKC. It was believed this was an important first step in eventually creating the kind of university that would attract, retain and graduate a higher number of students of color which is a clearly stated goal of the university. Further, the previous survey was conducted in 1999 and all agreed that UMKC had changed significantly in that period of time, making it necessary to survey students again.

The subcommittee began seriously discussing this survey in Fall 2005. A plan that included both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the racial climate was presented to Dr. Mary Lou Hines (Academic Affairs) and Mel Tyler (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management) so that the project would be funded and approved.

In April 2006 the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) invited Dr. Shaun Harper, Assistant Professor of Education, Center for the Study of Higher Education, Pennsylvania State University, to conduct a campus environmental audit. The purpose of a campus environment audit is: to assess campus racial climates, the experiences of traditionally underrepresented students (African-American, Latino and Native American) and assess the extent that diverse groups of students interact meaningfully across racial groups. Dr. Harper is the former faculty member and Executive Director of the Higher Education Program at the University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education. He has conducted extensive research in the area of African-American males on college and university campuses. He has been awarded a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon foundation to study the effects of mentoring on African-American males in highly-selective graduate and professional colleges. Dr. Harper is currently working on a major policy report on African-American male success for the Dellums Commission in Washington D.C. Prior to his visit Dr. Harper had conducted racial climate audits at eight colleges and universities, all primarily rural and predominately white campuses. UMKC was Dr. Harper's first audit at an urban university.

Additionally, the subcommittee worked on developing a survey that could be administered via the internet. It was a compilation of questions from the 1999 UMKC Campus Climate Survey and several different widely-used surveys. The survey contained questions that asked about student relationships with university personnel and other students, their success at UMKC and interaction across race.

## **The Campus Environment Audit**

### **The structure of the visit**

Dr. Harper's visits normally occur within a three-day time frame. On the first and second days (March 28-29) of his visit to UMKC Dr. Harper met with specific focus groups and key campus administrators: Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (Mel Tyler) and the Director, Minority Student Affairs (Catherine Kironde). Dr. Harper also met with the School of Education faculty and visited a graduate higher education class as well as an urban affairs class in the college of Arts and Sciences.

During the first two days Dr. Harper also conducted ethnographic fieldwork. He was taken on a walking campus tour by four racial/ethnic minority student leaders. Throughout the tour Dr. Harper requested to be taken to key campus locations that were mentioned in focus groups. These are locations that students perceive to be uncomfortable or racially exclusive i.e. "white spaces".

On the third day, March 30, Dr. Harper presented the preliminary PowerPoint presentation of his findings from his focus groups to key campus constituents.

### **The Composition of the focus groups**

The focus groups were dictated by Dr. Harper. The requested groups were: White student leaders, a diverse group of racial/ethnic minority student leaders, UMKC staff/administrators, African-American students, Latino students, and Native- American students. The focus groups also included two additional groups that addressed research that Dr. Harper is currently compiling: African-American males and African-American male student athletes.

A list of students was compiled through names submitted from academic unit diversity managers/directors/representatives, the Admissions, Student Life and Minority Student Affairs Offices as well as from the Registrar. The students were solicited via email and personal contact. A total of 65 students both undergraduate and graduate were confirmed to participate in the six focus groups. Twelve staff participated in the staff/administrator focus group.

The Native-American focus group did not occur due to lack of success soliciting student participation. An email was sent to all of the registered active UMKC Native American students and only one student responded. The student attended the racial/ethnic minority student leader focus group.

### **Methodology**

The Environmental Audit was conducted by Dr. Harper over a three-day time period in March of 2006. Dr. Harper met with several student groups, faculty, staff and administrators. The environmental audit includes a walking campus tour wherein Dr. Harper visits campus "white spaces" that are discussed in the focus groups. His visit concluded with a presentation of his findings to key university administrators.

## **Data Findings**

**Focus Groups:** The qualitative results highlighted several areas of student concern: academic advising, student-faculty relations, a perceived culture of low-expectations as it pertained to students of color, and lack of cross-racial engagement. Dr. Harper also found that overall, African-American students were the most dissatisfied with their cultural experience at UMKC.

## **Report of Findings**

As a condition of his visit to any college or university Dr. Harper requests that all students, faculty, and staff that participate in the focus groups be invited to a public presentation as well as any others who may deem the findings and recommendations useful. Dr. Harper was invited to return to UMKC on April 21, 2006 to present his public PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Harper began the presentation with national and local data and trends. He observed that of all the campuses he had visited UMKC problems were not of a nature that were insurmountable nor was the environment such that racism was a prevailing/overt operation of the campus culture.

Dr. Harper indicated that he normally does not go into detail or discuss student services in his focus groups. He made an exception in regard to advising as it became a topic of discussion in each focus group he moderated.

Dr. Harper is a proponent of cross-cultural engagement. Research has shown that cross-cultural engagement leads to greater retention, transition and academic success for students of color.

## **Highlighted Areas of Statistical Significance**

Dr. Harper highlighted UMKC's six year graduation rates for African-American and Latino males that were reported to the U.S. Department of Education. The six-year graduation rates for African American males (17.2%) and Latino males (12.5%) are very low. This is compared to 56.4% of African-American females, 33.3% of Latino females and 40% of White males and 44.2% of White females who graduate within six years. Dr. Harper was especially concerned with these graduation rates and urged the University to address the lack of matriculation in the African-American and Latino male populations.

Dr. Harper also highlighted the lack of faculty of color on the UMKC campus citing statistics provided by UMKC to the U.S. Department of Education. Of the population of full professors 111 are White and 4 are of color. Of the population of Assistant Professors 129 are White and 11 are of color. Of the Associate Professors, 150 are White and 9 are of color.

## **Environmental Issues**

"There were very few racially exclusive and segregated spaces on campus", Dr. Shaun Harper, PowerPoint Presentation, April 21, 2007 [slide 14]. However, he found that the most racist space on the UMKC campus is the classroom [based upon faculty-student interaction]. The second [most segregated space] is the dining hall in the University Center.

## **Recurring themes and Issues from the focus groups:**

- A tremendous disconnect between espoused and enacted institutional values—perceived as rhetoric by White and minority students alike
- Institutional bragging is unwarranted – “The most diverse UM campus” – what does that mean for climate?
- Disproportionate (almost exclusive) emphasis is placed on structural diversity—simply increasing the numbers—while climate is overlooked
- Conversations on race are avoidable — don’t occur often – too few structured opportunities for cross-racial learning
- Little evidence of institutional or individual accountability for diversity across the university
- No evidence of institutional intentionality for promoting cross-racial engagement
- High levels of satisfaction among White students
- White students report low levels of racial/ethnic minority student engagement in clubs and organizations – “we have one or two in our organization”
- Perceived overrepresentation of International students, especially in Computer Science and Engineering, which creates an unwelcoming environment
- Virtually no outlets for mentoring for all students – mentioned repeatedly by racial/ethnic minority students
- Inadequate staffing, space, and resources in Multicultural Student Services
- Absence of qualitative assessment efforts and outreach to racial/ethnic minority students. Reportedly, Dr. Harper was the first to ask about the qualitative realities of their experiences.
- Virtually no same-race faculty and staff role models for Black and Latino students
- Academic advising is extremely problematic for all students, especially racial/ethnic minorities
- Inequitable access to social capital and information networks—differential treatment by faculty and advisors
- Latino students report no sense of community or support...
  - Only 2-3 venues for out-of-class engagement
  - No cultural space to call their own
  - They see and interact with each other infrequently
- ...yet, they express higher degrees of satisfaction than do Black students. High levels of Black student dissatisfaction
  - Inequitable access to institutional resources
    - Space for Black student organization events
    - Housing for fraternities and sororities
    - Funds from Student Life and APC for Black events
  - Disappointment with disconnect between the University and the city
  - Too few Black professors from faculty
  - Culture of low expectations
  - Constant contention with race-based stereotypes, especially from faculty
  - Culturally irresponsive pedagogy and curricula
  - Believe the institution is set up to promote underachievement and failure
  - Threat of losing the African American Culture House
  - African American males feel especially unsupported
  - Few campus events reflect their cultural interests

## **Recommendations from Campus Environment Audit**

At the conclusion of his Power Point presentation Dr. Harper offered several recommendations that addressed issues mentioned in the audit. These recommendations have been incorporated into those made by the committee (please see committee recommendations section below). He urged the university to create marketing material that details the programs/services that are on campus that promote cross-cultural interaction, diversity and community involvement. Dr. Harper recommended

that the University continue with ongoing qualitative assessment of the realities of race on the UMKC campus. This would entail student interviews, individual interviews, focus groups, environmental auditing and ethnographic fieldwork and analysis of students' reflections/experiences through journals. Finally, Dr. Harper encouraged UMKC to create a structured system of accountability as it pertains to issues of diversity and those responsible for overseeing it.

In his PowerPoint presentation held on April 21 Dr. Harper stated that UMKC is positioned to succeed as a leader in retention of students of color and that as a university we have the capability to achieve it within the next ten years.

## **The Climate Survey**

### **Methodology**

The Racial Climate Survey was administered online during the last two weeks of the Winter 2006 semester at UMKC. All undergraduate students of color were invited to participate in this study and approximately one-fourth of the white undergraduate student population was randomly selected to participate. The total sample size for the study was 3,390 and 426 students, or 12.6%, completed the survey. Analysis shows that the likelihood of responding did not vary significantly by ethnicity. The respondents, however, differed from non-respondents in some important ways: the respondents were more likely to be academically advanced and successful than non-respondents.

The survey asked questions pertaining to a student's college search, interaction with faculty and advisers, campus environment, and overall satisfaction.

### **Data Findings**

**Survey:** The quantitative results provide a different look at the racial climate of UMKC in comparison with the data collected from the focus groups. While the two major issues to emerge from the focus groups were concerns of racism in the classroom and with academic advising, the survey indicates that when sampling a larger population, these do not present themselves as issues of the same magnitude. We first looked at the questions by White students responses as compared to those of students of color overall. We then further disaggregated the questions that were of statistical significance for African-American as compared to the remaining students and Hispanic students as compared to the remaining students. Additionally the data were reviewed by gender for African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian students in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their concerns. Finally, the responses of all males were compared to those from all of the females.

A total of 132 African-American students responded to the survey (31% of respondents). Further disaggregation of the data and a review of African-American students alone highlighted the following questions that revealed areas of statistical significance between African-American students and non-African-American students.

#### **The Questions:**

How important was a racially diverse student body in your decision to attend UMKC?

How satisfied are you with your social life at the university?

How satisfied are you with your academic performance?

I feel that the campus environment is free from racial conflict.

I feel a sense of belonging on this campus.

I feel UMKC needs classes that emphasize multicultural diversity.  
I feel that diversity enriches the educational experience.  
I feel that UMKC provides a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity.  
I feel students feel comfortable coming forward with racial harassment complaints on campus.  
When seeking advice about my academic career, I prefer to consult with a counselor or faculty member of my own race.  
When seeking advice about my academic career, the race of the person I consult is irrelevant.

A total of 43 Hispanic students (10% of respondents) responded to the survey. When the Hispanic students' responses were analyzed by gender there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between male or female Hispanic students. Further disaggregating of the data and a review of Hispanic students alone highlighted the following questions as two areas of statistical significance between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic students.

### **The Questions:**

How satisfied are you with the quality of classroom instruction.  
How satisfied are you with the quality of Academic advising.

### **Faculty Interaction**

A majority of students of color (58.6%) as well as white students (55.9%) indicate that they have discussed career plans with a faculty member. Further, a majority of both groups indicate they have met informally with a faculty member. When asked if they had worked with a faculty member on one of their projects, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups. While a majority of both groups answered this question to the negative, a larger number of students of color (47 or 23.2% compared to 27 or 13.8% of white students) indicated that they had worked with a faculty member on a project. Another issue that could speak to the presence of racism in the classroom, a majority of both groups (67% of students of color and 73.8% of white students) indicated they find their professors to be available outside of the classroom. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups. Finally, when asked if they had received encouragement from professors to interact in classroom activities, there were no statistically significant differences between groups with a majority of both groups answering affirmatively.

Students were asked about their satisfaction with the quality of classroom instruction at UMKC. A majority of both white students and students of color indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied (81.3% of students of color and 85.7% of white students). When asked if they were satisfied with their intellectual development since enrolling at UMKC, a majority of students of both groups answered yes (62.1% of students of color and 67.2% of white students).

There was no statistically significant difference when this data was reviewed for African-American or Hispanic students alone.

### **Relationship with Academic Advisors**

Statistically significant differences were found between the white students and students of color when asked if they had discussed career plans with an advisor. More students of color (61.1%) than white students (51.8%) answered this question affirmatively. A quarter of each group indicated that they had established an important relationship with an advisor.

It is interesting to note that when asked how satisfied they are with the quality of academic advising, an issue that emerged from the focus groups, we found no statistically significant differences between the groups. A majority of both groups indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of academic advising. This was true for 61.1% of the respondents of color and 66.2% of the white students.

Finally, it is notable that there were no statistically significant differences between white students and students of color when asked about the preferred race of an advisor or faculty member. Two questions specifically addressed this issue. The first asked if when seeking advice about their academic career students prefer to consult with a counselor or faculty member of their same race. A majority of both groups (70% of students of color and 85.1% of white students) answered “no”. When asked “When seeking advice about my academic career the race of the person I consult is irrelevant,” a majority of students of color (73.9%) and white students (88.7%) answered affirmatively. However, it is important to note that for nearly 25% of students of color, a person of the same race is important.

### **Other Campus Climate Issues**

Welcoming atmosphere. When asked if, when they first arrived at UMKC, they felt welcome on campus, a majority of both white students and students of color (better than 50%) answered yes. However, just over a quarter of students of both groups answered no. Students were also asked if they currently feel that UMKC is a welcoming community. The responses were close to showing statistically significant differences between groups with 52.2% of students of color stating they feel UMKC is welcoming and 63.1% of white students responding the same way. For those stating they feel UMKC is not welcoming, 26% of students of color and 20% of white students' state they believe this.

A statistically significant difference is evident when the African-Americans student responses were reviewed. When asked if they felt a sense of belonging on the campus 46.9% of African-American students strongly disagreed or disagreed and 46.2% agreed or strongly agreed; whereas 37% of the remaining students agreed or disagreed with 58.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing. When the responses of the African-American students is separated by gender there is even further disparity with 52.1% of women disagreeing or strongly disagreeing as compared to 35% of men.

Interracial relationships. When comparing the responses of white students to those of students of color, nearly 75% of both groups indicated they had made friends with students whose race is different from theirs. However, when asked how often they had attended interracial parties since enrolling at UMKC, most students of both groups said “sometimes” or “never”. For students of color, 37.9% of respondents had never attended an interracial party while 48.2% of white students had never attended an interracial party. There were statistically significant differences between groups when asked if they felt a sense of belonging on campus. For students of color, 48.2% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement while 61.1% of white students answered the same way.

When examining this data there were statistically significant differences specifically for African-American students. 72.5% of African-American students in comparison to 42.9% of non-African-American students stated that a racially diverse student body was important to their decision to attend UMKC. When reviewed by gender; 81.6% of African-American women answered that they sometimes or never attend interracial parties in contrast to 52.5% of African-American males. When the Hispanic students' responses were analyzed there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them or the majority of students.

Racial conflict. Two items dealt specifically with racial conflict and harassment and students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The first stated the campus environment is free from racial conflict. There were statistically significant differences between the responses of white students when compared to those of the students of color with 59.6% of students of color either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement and 72.8% of white students either agreeing or strongly agreeing. In response to the statement that students feel comfortable coming forward with complaints about racial harassment on campus, 51.8% of students of color either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement while about one-third (33.8%) of white students answered the same way.

In answer to the question whether the campus was free from racial conflict 58.4% of African-American students versus 25.5% of non-African American students strongly disagreed or disagreed (with 34.1% of African-Americans agreeing or strongly agreeing and 70.1% of non-African-American students) When responding to the question whether students felt comfortable coming forward with racial harassment complaints 62.1% of African -American students indicated that they did not feel comfortable in comparison to 32.3% of non African-American students (60.2% of non-African-American students did feel comfortable as compared to 30.3% of African-American students). When the Hispanic students' responses were analyzed there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them and the rest of the respondents.

These responses highlight a vastly divergent campus climate perception between our current student ethnic populations.

Campus Life. When asked if there are sufficient opportunities for involvement in campus activities, we found statistically significant differences between white students and students of color. More white students (71.3%) compared to students of color (59.6%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement. There is a statistically significant difference between white female and males in regard to opportunities for campus involvement; 30.1% of white females disagreed with the statement whereas only 21% of white males felt the same way. However, no statistically significant differences were found between groups when asked how satisfied they are with student organizations at UMKC. A majority of both groups (65.6% of students of color and 66.6% of white students) indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied. Finally, when asked how satisfied they are with the social life at UMKC, again, a majority of students of both groups (58.2% of students of color and 69.8% of white students) indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied with the social life at UMKC.

When looking at the responses of African-American students compared to all other responders, 38.6% were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with their social life at UMKC versus 28.2% non-African American students. When asked about opportunities to become involved in campus activities 64.1% of African-American women felt that there were sufficient opportunities in contrast to 45% of African-American males. When the Hispanic students' responses were analyzed there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them or the remaining responders.

In response to a statement that UMKC provides a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity, more than 60% of students of color disagree or strongly disagree while 50% of white students responded in a similar manner.

When this question is examined with African-American students only 57.5% disagree or strongly disagree with 35.6% that agree or strongly agree. When the Hispanic students' responses to this

particular question were analyzed there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them or the rest of the responders. When the students were asked whether they were aware of financial resources that are available in their community 64.1% of African-American women did not agree in comparison to 45% of African-American males.

### **Academic/Curricular Issues**

Academic perception: When UMKC African-American students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their academic performance 69.7% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied versus 80.67% of other students. When asked if UMKC needed classes that emphasize multicultural diversity 80.3% of African-American students agreed or strongly agreed whereas 51.3% of other students agreed or strongly agreed. Another statistically significant disparity was shown when the students were asked if they felt that diversity enriches the educational experience. 88.7% of African-American students agreed or strongly agreed whereas 79% of non-African-American students agreed or strongly agreed. When African-American student responses are reviewed by gender in response to the question *How satisfied are you with the quality of classroom instruction?* 18.5% of African-American women were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied whereas only 2.5% of African-American males felt the same way. When the Hispanic students' responses to these questions were analyzed there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them and all other responders.

Academic Career: When asked about seeking advice about their academic career 25.8% of African American students indicated that they prefer to consult with a counselor or faculty member of the same race while 11.6% of non-African-American students answered in a like manner. When looking at the responses of African-American students, 72% indicated that the race of the person they consult with is irrelevant while 84.4% of non-African-American students agreed. When the Hispanic students' responses were analyzed for this question there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them and all other responders.

Academic Satisfaction: The Hispanic students that responded to the survey focused primarily on issues that impact their academic career. When asked whether they were satisfied with the quality of their classroom instruction 20.9% of Hispanic students were dissatisfied in comparison to 12.5% of non-Hispanic students. Conversely, 82.7% of non-Hispanic students were satisfied or very satisfied compared to 76.8% of Hispanic students. When asked if they were satisfied with the quality of academic advising 55.8% of Hispanic students were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied in contrast to 29.5% of non-Hispanic students. Less than half (41.8%) of Hispanic students were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of academic advising as were 65% of non-Hispanic students. When the African-American students' responses were analyzed for these questions there were no statistically significant areas of disparity between them and all other responders.

### **Comparison of White Students by Gender**

When looking at the responses of White students by gender, statistically significant differences were found in their responses to a handful of questions. When asked how satisfied they were with their academic performance, more White males indicated they are dissatisfied with their academic performance than White females. Conversely, more White females than males responded that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their academic performance. When asked if they were aware of financial resources, more females than males strongly disagree with this statement and, conversely, more males than females strongly agree with this. It would appear that males have more access to information on financial resources than do females. Finally, when asked if they had attended interracial parties, far more White females than males said they had never (54.1%) or sometimes had

(23.3%) attended an interracial party. However, of the males, 35.5% had never attended an interracial party and 40.3% said they sometimes attended interracial parties.

### **Comparison of all Respondents by Gender**

To determine if there were any differences between the genders overall, the data were cut along these lines. There were three questions that yielded statistically significant differences in responses. First, when asked if diversity enriches the educational experience, more females (51%) than males (39.1%) strongly agree. More males (16.4%) than females (7.4%) disagree with this. Among the respondents who either strongly disagree or agree with this question, there were no statistically significant differences between males and females. When asked if UMKC needs classes that emphasize multicultural diversity, statistically significant differences were found between men and women who either strongly agree (29.2% of females vs. 20.3% of males) or strongly disagree (20.3% of males vs. 11.4% of females). Finally, regarding the question of cost, a higher percentage of female respondents than male respondents find this to be important or extremely important. Conversely, a higher percentage of male respondents than female respondents responded that this was “not too important” or “not at all important”

### **2005 NSSE Survey results**

*\*a comparison table of UMKC 2006 survey, NSSE national data and urban university comparator schools can be found beginning on page 20 of this document\**

The Minority Recruitment and Retention subcommittee believe there is value in looking at specific questions and the responses from the 2005 administration of the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), administered to freshman and senior undergraduate students. The responses were tabulated for students of color compared to white students to see if there is consistency between the answers to the two surveys.

Classroom: We know that a key factor in the success of minority students is their interaction with faculty. When asked if faculty included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments, nearly two-thirds of respondents of both groups indicated this occurred often or very often. There were no statistically significant differences between groups. Students were also asked about the quality of their relationships with faculty members and 61.4% of white students and 64.7% of students of color indicated they found faculty to be more available, helpful and sympathetic on a Likert scale from 1 (unavailable, unhelpful and unsympathetic) to 7 (available, helpful and sympathetic). About one-third of each group say they have talked to a faculty member about career plans either often or very often but 25% in both groups said they'd never spoken with a faculty member about this. Another question that addressed faculty engagement with students asked if students had discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty outside of class. Nearly 40% of both groups reported that they had never had this type of discussion with faculty outside of class while 40% of both groups said they sometimes had this type of discussion with faculty. Among students of color, 65.8% report receiving prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance and 71.3% of white students responded the same way.

Campus Climate: When asked if they had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than their own, there were statistically significant differences between the groups. Students of color were more likely than white students (65.7% of students of color compared to 57.3% of whites) to answer often or very often. On a Likert scale measuring 1 (unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation) to 7 (friendly, supportive, sense of belonging), 73.6% of white students and 74.3% of

students of color had responses that were on the friendly, supportive and belonging side of the scale when asked about the quality of their relationships with other students.

Academic Advising: The NSSE asked “overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?” Consistent with the Racial Climate survey, about two-thirds of both groups (65.8% of white students and 67.9% of students of color) indicated that the quality of advising was either good or excellent. A quarter of both groups rated advising as “fair” while 8.4% of white students and 6% of students of color indicated the quality of advising was poor.

Institutional Support: Three questions on the NSSE seem to be pertinent to the Racial Climate survey. The first asked if there was an institutional emphasis to encourage contact among students from different economic, social and racial or ethnic backgrounds. One half of students of both groups (47.1% of white students and 50.5% of students of color) indicate they thought there was “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis on this. More than one third of both groups said there was “some” emphasis on this while 15.8% of white students and 13.1% of students of color said “very little”.

Students were also asked if there was an institutional emphasis on providing the support students need to help them succeed academically. Two-thirds of both groups (67.6% of white students and 66.9% of students of color) said there was “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis on this. About a quarter of the students said there was “some” emphasis on this. Finally, 5.7% of white students and 8.9% of students of color indicated there was “very little” emphasis on this.

When they were asked if there was an institutional emphasis on providing the support students need to thrive socially, more than a quarter of the students of both groups said “very little” (28.1% of white students and 26.3% of students of color). Of the students of color, 37.3% of respondents indicated there was “some” emphasis on this (44.7% of white students responded in a like manner). For white students, 20.5% would say there is “quite a bit” of emphasis on social support while 25.8% of students of color would say the same.

When asked how they would evaluate their entire educational experience at UMKC, 23.3% of white students and 26.6% of students of color would rate their overall experience as “excellent”. Rating their experience as “good” were 55.5% of white students and 50.5% of students of color. About 20% of both groups (18.5% of white students and 20.2% of students of color) rated their experience as “fair” and less than 3% of both groups would rate their overall experience as “poor”

### **1999 UMKC Survey Comparison of Results**

The Minority Recruitment and Retention subcommittee also referred to the findings of the 1999 survey as a measure for past student perceptions and responses.

The 1999 survey was mailed to 3,751 minority and non-minority students. There were a total of 843 responses within a four-month time period. The 2006 climate survey contained twelve of the 1999 questions. The actual climate survey responses were disaggregated into two categories: *How do the students attending UMKC perceive the overall campus climate?* (favorable and negative responses) and areas of statistical significance between minority and non-minority students. *Are there differences in the perception of campus climate at UMKC between minority and non-minority students?*

A review of the two surveys show an overall favorable reaction from the UMKC students in response to statements that: *Diversity enriches the educational experience, As far as I know, minorities are*

*comfortable at UMKC, I feel comfortable going to any campus activity regardless of the racial composition of those who attend and Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.* The negative responses that remain the same between 1999 and 2006 are: *UMKC provides a new student orientation that adequately addresses multicultural diversity. I am satisfied with the amount of financial aid I receive from UMKC and I am aware of financial resources that are available in my community.*

In the 1999 survey overall the statement: *I feel a sense of belonging on this campus* was categorized with negative responses. The same statement in 2006 is now placed in the category of statistically significant between minority and non-minority students as well as: *The campus environment is free from racial conflict, UMKC needs classes that emphasize multicultural diversity., and My education at UMKC has included exposure to the history and culture of minority groups.,*

There are several negative questions that garnered negative responses in 1999 but are not rated negatively by the 2006 cohort: *I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among faculty. I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among students. I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among staff. I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among administrators. Where appropriate, professors address multicultural issues in the classroom.*

### **Summary**

Dr. Harper's work identified general areas of student concern at UMKC; the survey helped us pinpoint the areas of concern to different student ethnic groups and better estimate the magnitude of the concerns. African-American students, based upon survey and focus group responses, are the most dissatisfied ethnic group on the UMKC campus. The survey and focus group also indicate that UMKC may benefit from a concentrated effort to engage their Hispanic student population in regard to conveying their feedback on their UMKC experience. The Hispanic students' areas of statistical significance were issues that stemmed specifically from their concerns about their academic career whereas the African-American students areas of statistical significance primarily addressed campus diversity and inclusion within the environment, and student life.

Dr. Harper's work identified general areas of student concern at UMKC e.g. advising. The survey helped us to pinpoint the areas of concern to different student ethnic groups and better estimate the magnitude of the problems. The qualitative and quantitative methods that were utilized in the acquisition of the data would account for any inconsistencies in student responses. Overall the Campus Environment Audit and the Racial Climate Survey were important and timely initiatives to be undertaken.

## **Committee Recommendations**

The committee recommendations were developed to address the issues raised in both the qualitative and quantitative surveys that were conducted. In order to ensure that student satisfaction measures such as intellectual development/welcoming environment increase incrementally and in consideration of all the above; the Minority Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee makes the following draft recommendations and suggested accountabilities for UMKC next steps:

### A. How can UMKC determine successful next steps and action plans?

- Engage Sylvia Hurtado as Consultant

•Dr. Hurtado will analyze the recommendations of Dr. Harper and the Committee, the climate data that UMKC has compiled, as well as demographic data. Based upon her expertise in the field of climate and retention of students of color she would then advise the university as to what recommendations would be most successful and suited to the environment of UMKC (urban, PWI). The committee's reasons for recommending Dr. Hurtado are twofold: 1. she is a nationally known, well-respected professor in the field of Higher Education who has done significant research in the field of retention of students of color, campus climate and student interactions across race. 2. She is a faculty member who has credentials that are not easily dismissed and her recommendations for successful best practices may carry more weight with our faculty.

•Dr. Hurtado's visit could also include an open forum with faculty/deans' where they, as a group determine the timelines, accountabilities and order of the chosen recommendations.

***Accountability: Provost & Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.***

### B. How UMKC can increase faculty diversity?

•Create a public statement regarding the institution's commitment to hiring a more diverse faculty

•Create strategic planning teams that focus specifically on purposeful efforts to recruit and retain racial/ethnic minority faculty

- University-wide strategic plan

- Strategic plans created for and within individual academic schools

•Make the provision of quantifiable gains in attracting a more diverse faculty part of institutional accountability efforts and the evaluation of deans and academic affairs administrators

•Hire a senior-level administrator who concentrates exclusively on faculty recruitment and retention. This person would be best situated in the Office of the Provost

***Accountability: Provost, Academic Deans, Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity***

### C. How UMKC can increase curricular diversity

•Engage in strategic planning – the “Diversity Plan” for each academic unit should include curricular matters

- Add questions regarding diversity to course evaluations

- Identify high-performing departments and units and ask them to share best practices.

- Facilitate focus groups with students after courses end to get real-time feedback on issues.

- Host a two-day retreat for faculty focusing on curricula

- Place emphasis on the socialization of new faculty

•Peer review – Create teams within academic schools to review and offer feedback on course syllabi.

- Inclusion of readings on race, social justice, and multiculturalism

- Inclusion of readings from authors and scholars of color

- Incentives and rewards for those who do it well

- Create at the department level teams to assess the representation of diverse perspectives in the curriculum. This team should include students

*Accountability: Provost, Academic Deans, Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity*

D. How UMKC can engage diverse student populations

- Identify and provide resources for minority student organizations
  - Funds for programming
  - Advisors and staff support
  - Housing
- Create a Latino Cultural Center
- Increase financial support and staffing in Multicultural Student Services
- Increase accountability and staff diversity in Student Life
- Increased representation of Black and Latino students on APC and Student Government
- Larger array of cultural programming at the campus level

*Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management*

E. How UMKC can improve Academic Advising

- Consider centralizing advising services
- The exploration of best practices from within and from other institutions
- Incentives and recognition for excellence in advising (no certificates though)
- Student evaluations of individual advisors
- Investment in the professional development of advising staff – support to attend the National Academic Advising Association conference
- Investment in technological resources and web-based advising portals
- Hiring and socialization of new advisors
- Administer an academic tracking system for trial admits and students on probation with assigned advisors/staff to connect them to resources. The advisors/staff along with the student would develop a realistic plan for success for the students.

*Accountability: Provost, Academic Deans, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment management, Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity*

F. How UMKC can illustrate intentionality in cross-racial engagement.

**Orientation and First-Year Student Programming**

- Community Service Projects – systematically divide students into small groups to participate in a community service activity. Ask reflection questions that enable students to envision themselves as part of a larger, diverse community.
- Summer Reading Program – intentionally weave the summer reading book into courses (e.g., first-year seminars).

*Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Provost, Academic Deans, Faculty*

**Classroom Environments**

- Cross-Cultural Engagement First-Year Seminar – develop a seminar for all first-year students taught by effective facilitators of difficult dialogues. The seminar will enable students to develop skills in interacting with and learning from their peers across differences and vantage points.
- Peer Networks – construct peer networks through non-residential learning communities where students have numerous, sustained opportunities for meaningful engagement with their diverse peers by enrolling in similar courses and interacting outside of class.

***Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Provost, Academic Deans, Faculty***

### **Student Activities and Programming**

- Multicultural Programming Board with one representative from each registered student organization (RSO) on campus – board representation requisite for becoming an RSO. Board plans diversity programs for the campus community with support from an advisory group of staff and faculty.

- Student Organization Clustering – strategically matching four diverse student organizations and offering resources, incentives, and recognition for collaborative programming.

- Pre-college assessment of prior exposure to difference – inventory mailed to all incoming first-year students, returned, and scanned. List of recommended clubs and activities automatically generated based on students’ responses, mailed back to their homes, and possibly shared with their academic advisors and RAs (*with permission*). An incentive is necessary (i.e., free iPods).

***Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management***

### **Sororities and Fraternities**

- Greek Diversity Programming Council with two representatives from each sorority and fraternity chapter on campus. The council meets regularly and is broken into subcommittees that plan programs on different aspects of difference (race, sexual orientation, SES, etc.) for other members of the sorority and fraternity community.

- Greek Diversity Retreat with officers and select members of all chapters. The retreat agenda should include learning outcomes and bold activities to ignite consciousness and dialogue about difference, oppression, power, and privilege.

***Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management***

### **Physical Space Design**

- Permanent displays of art representing multiple cultures

- Rotating exhibit in the student union or another popular space on campus. Market the exhibits to faculty, Community Assistants, and student groups. Possibly host reception to introduce each new exhibit. Do not hide exhibit in a random hall somewhere!

- Create designated cross-cultural conversation spaces in different parts of campus, with a plaque describing the intended outcomes of the spaces.

***Accountability: Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management***

### **G. How UMKC can address the issues of Faculty, Advisors and Student Interaction**

- Align faculty and academic advisors with organizations targeted to serve students of color.

Hold developmental workshops or job training on how to build relationships with the faculty/academic advisors. The faculty/ staff advisor of the student organizations can then serve as a liaison between the two groups.

- Create programming/activities that allow for faculty-student interaction that is focused on student success and support.

***Accountability: Provost, Academic Deans, Faculty, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment management***

H. How UMKC can address the issue of reporting racial conflict

- Incorporate formal training for students regarding their rights and procedures for reporting racial conflict or harassment. It could also be included in Community Assistants training or the student handbook.

- Recommend a more accessible and safe avenue for coming forward with complaints about racial harassment

- Define the process and develop an easily navigable system for reporting racial harassment for students on campus.

**Accountability: Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment management, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources**

I. How UMKC can encourage Interaction across Race

- Student diversity is a strength of UMKC. Encouraging student groups to co-sponsor events to encourage broader participation across students groups primarily comprised of a single race.

**Accountability: Minority Student Affairs, Student Life**

- Recommend to SGA to favor co-sponsored events in allocating funds.

**Accountability: Student Life**

- Recommend new student orientation programs incorporate multicultural diversity programming.

**Accountability: Office of Admissions**

- Begin dialogue groups for cross-cultural learning and discussion

**Accountability: Counseling, Health and Testing Center, Minority Student Affairs, Student Life.**

J. How UMKC can create an institutional culture change

- Continue university-wide diversity/multicultural training, making it mandatory for all employees.

**Accountability: Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity**

- Implement a program for increasing diversity within the faculty and staff/administrator ranks at UMKC

**Accountability: Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity, Human Resource, Academic Affairs.**

- Incorporate multiculturalism into the general education courses

**Accountability: Faculty, Academic Deans, Provost**

- Develop new programs in Latin American Studies; strengthen Black Studies program.

**Accountability: Faculty, Academic Deans, Provost**

K. How UMKC can create new Initiatives

- Apply for and receive a grant to implement *Difficult Dialogues* (<http://www.difficultdialogues.org/>) at UMKC. Pursue other sources of funding for multicultural activities and initiatives

**Accountability: Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity**

- UMKC should have diversity specific funding for the retention and success of students of color.

**Accountability: Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Vice Chancellor of University Advancement and Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity**

L. How UMKC can continue data/assessment

- Conduct additional research to determine why a majority of African American and Latino males do not persist and graduate within six-years; develop measures to reverse this trend.
- Continue to administer a climate survey on a yearly basis in order to assess university progress.
- Expand the climate survey or create one that addresses Graduate climate issues.
- Conduct additional research to determine why continuing students feel less welcome on campus as they progress through UMKC?

***Accountability: Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity, Institutional Research***

M. How UMKC can ensure accountability

- In order for any diversity based initiative to work at UMKC it must be part of the culture and university goals. To achieve this UMKC can connect diversity to its financial systems. Diversity performance and measures should be a requirement for budget allocation, merit reviews, promotions, faculty evaluations and hiring.
- Develop a strategic plan for diversity that addresses the centralized and decentralized areas of the University e.g. The University overall should have a strategic plan for diversity with measures, outcomes and accountabilities assigned. Each academic unit, departments and divisions must have its own diversity impact and retention plan along with accountabilities assigned.

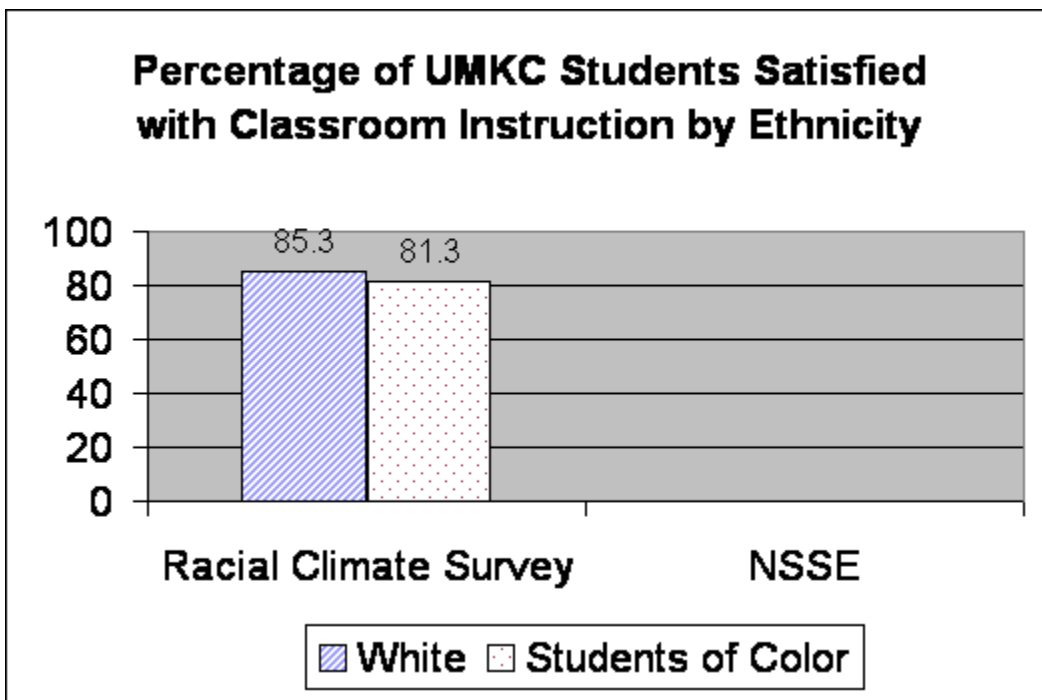
***Accountability: Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Vice Chancellor of University Advancement and Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity, Academic Deans, Division Chairs, Directors***

N. How UMKC can address the culture of Low Expectations

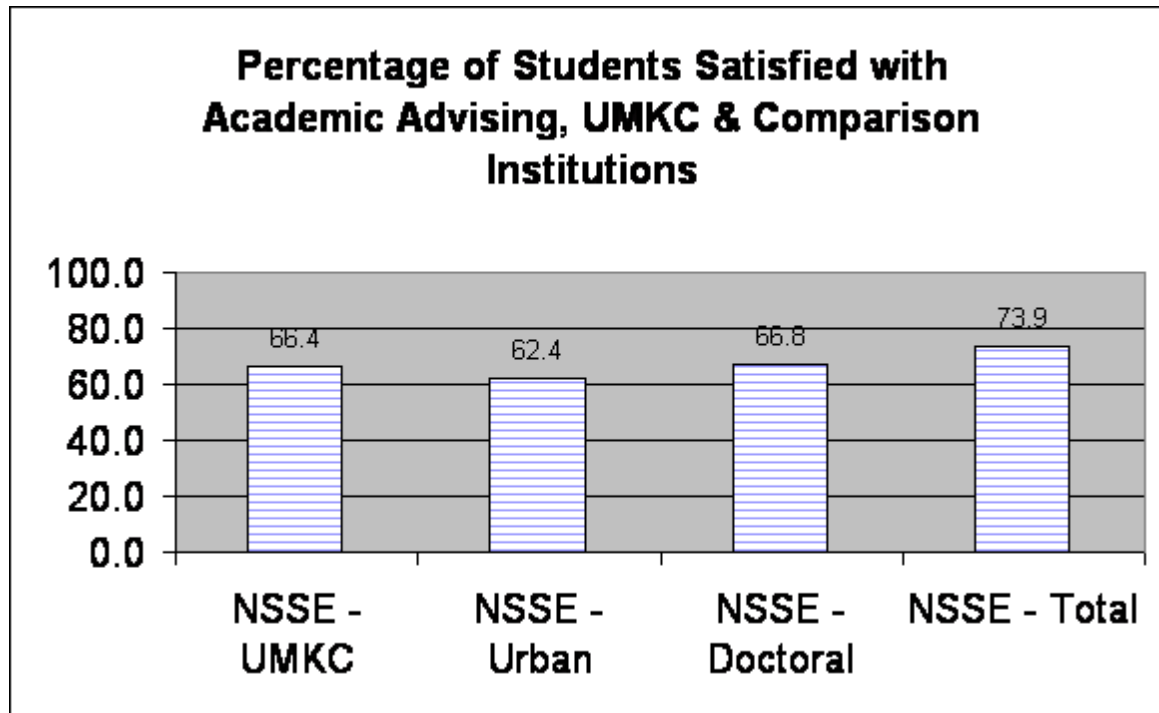
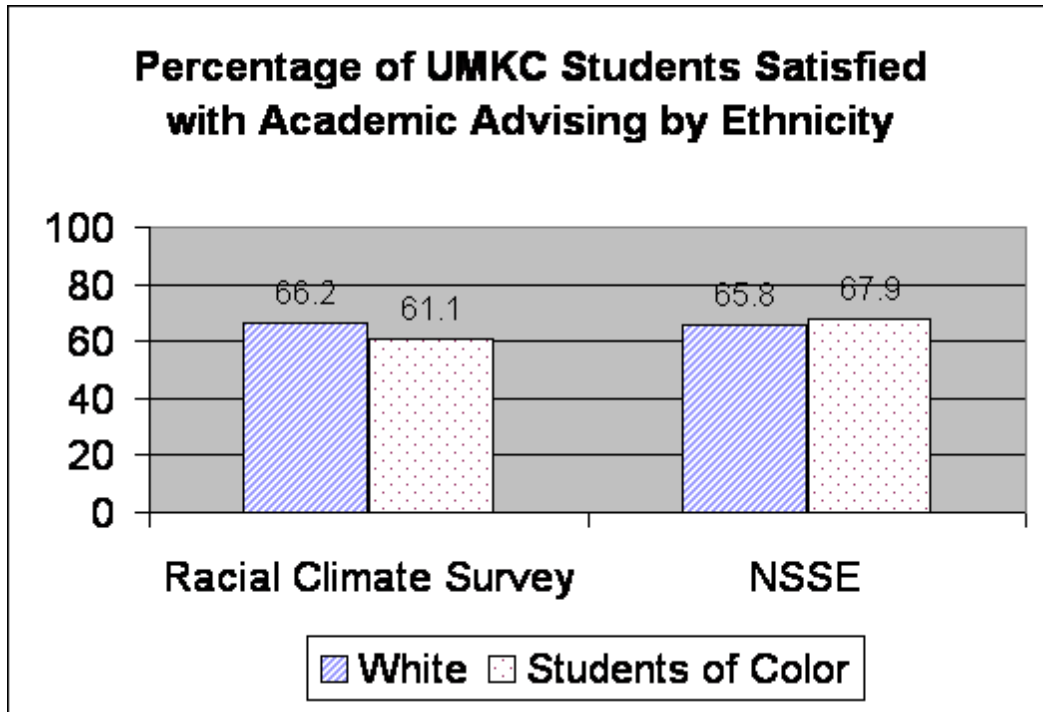
- Heighten awareness of the "deficit" language that is used on the UMKC campus.
- Take steps to avoid and not promote this type of language.

***Accountability: Faculty, Academic Deans, Provost, Deputy Chancellor, Diversity and Equity***

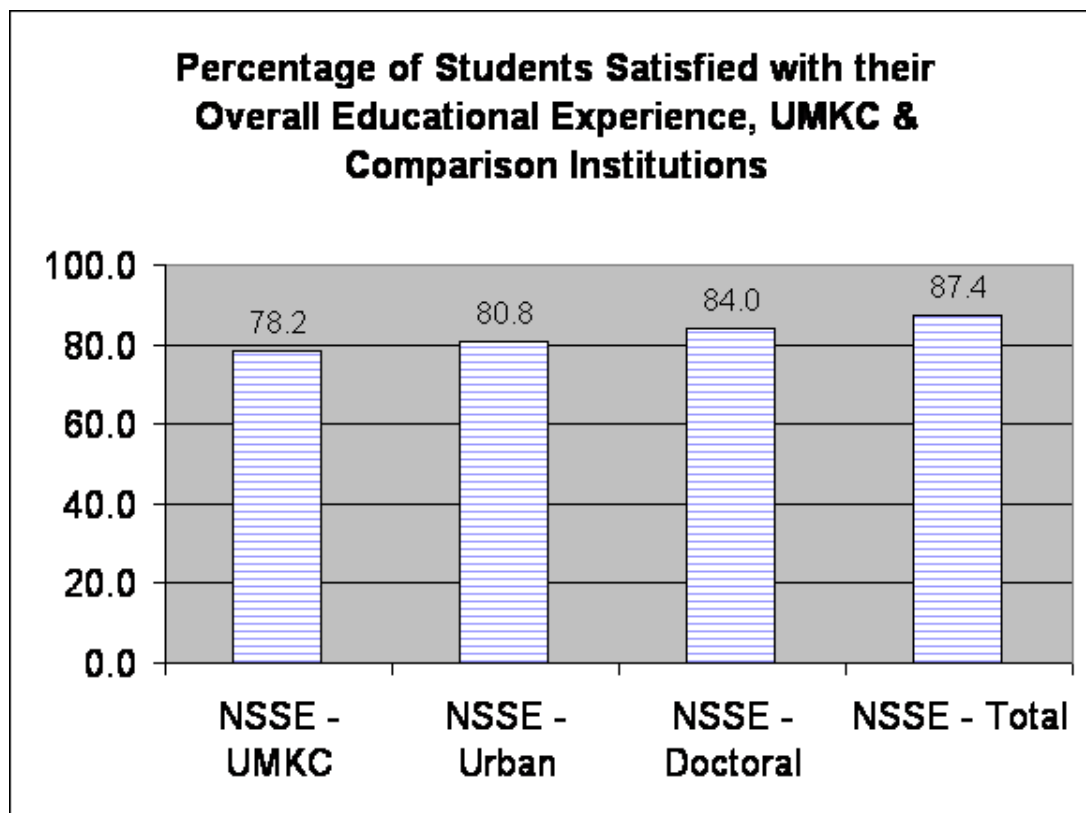
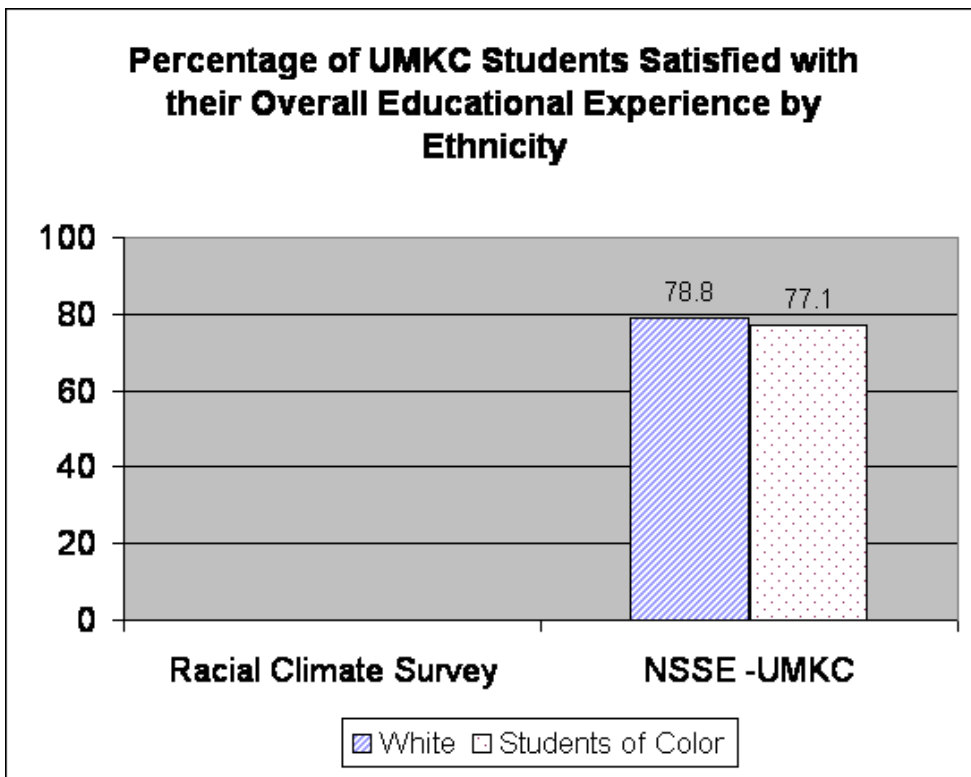
## 1. Classroom Instruction



## 2. Academic Advising



### 3. Overall Educational Experience



#### 4. Relationships with Faculty

