



Rankin & Associates
Consulting, LLC

Lehman College
Executive Summary

Assessment of Climate
for Learning, Living,
and Working

October, 2022

Executive Summary

History of the Project

This report provides the findings from the survey titled *Assessment of Climate for Learning, 0020Living, and Working* conducted at Lehman College. In the 2021 fall semester, Lehman College contracted with Rankin & Associates Consulting, LLC (R&A) to conduct a university-wide study. Twenty-five Lehman College faculty, staff, students, and administrators formed the Campus Climate Survey Working Group (CCSWG), which worked with R&A to develop the survey instrument and promote the survey's administration in spring 2022.

All members of Lehman College 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 Lehman College. 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 CCSWG.¹ 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 eight response choices for the question asking respondents about their gender identity.² To run analyses and maintain respondents' confidentiality, the CCSWG collapsed some response choices to create three categories: Woman, Man, and Trans-spectrum.

¹ For Student respondents, the CCSWG selected position status, gender identity, racial identity, first-generation status, income status, disability status, and sexual identity. For Faculty and Staff respondents, the CCSWG chose position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of employment, and caregiving status. Additionally, Lehman College 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.

² The CCSWG aimed for 30% as this is supported in the professional literature as a response that allows for greater generalizability. Although the total response rate did not meet this percentage, the voices of community members, particularly those with minoritized identities, were captured and presented. This is identified and discussed as a limitation in the methodology section.

One thousand five hundred ninety-four (1,594) surveys were returned for a 10.9%³ overall response rate. Table 1 provides a summary of selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Of the respondents, 75% ($n = 1,191$) of the sample were Students, 11% ($n = 178$) were Faculty members, and 14% ($n = 225$) were Staff.

Table 1. Lehman College Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Category ⁴	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Position status	Student	1,191	74.7
	Faculty	178	11.2
	Staff	225	14.1
Gender identity	Women	1,118	70.1
	Men	414	26.0
	Trans-spectrum	43	2.7
	Missing	19	1.2
Racial/ethnic identity	Additional Respondents of Color	25	1.6
	Asian/of Asian Descent	95	6.0
	Black/of African Descent	352	22.1
	Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx	612	38.4
	White/of European Descent	236	14.8
	Multiracial	197	12.4
	Missing	77	4.8

³ For Student respondents, the CCSWG selected position status, gender identity, racial identity, first-generation status, income status, disability status, and sexual identity. For Faculty and Staff respondents, the CCSWG chose position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of employment, and caregiving status. Additionally, Lehman College 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.

⁴ R&A and the CCSWG 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. Lehman College Sample Demographics

Characteristic	Category ⁴	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Sexual identity	Bisexual	104	6.5
	Heterosexual	1,123	70.5
	Queer-spectrum (not Bisexual)	212	13.3
	Missing	155	9.7
Citizenship status	Non-U.S. Citizen (excluding Permanent Immigrant Status)	67	4.2
	U.S. Citizen, Birth	1,075	67.4
	U.S. Citizen, Naturalized	275	17.3
	Permanent Immigrant Status	142	8.9
	Missing	35	2.2
Student household income	Below \$50,000	777	48.7
	\$50,000-\$99,999	255	16.0
	\$100,000+	97	6.1
Disability status	Multiple Disabilities	75	4.7
	Single Disability	103	6.5
	No Disability	1,398	87.7
	Missing	18	1.1
Religious affiliation	Additional Faith-Based Affiliation	91	5.7
	Christian Affiliation	719	45.1
	Muslim Affiliation	97	6.1
	Multiple Faith-Based Affiliations	69	4.3
	No Faith-Based Affiliation	500	31.4
	Missing	118	7.4
Years of employment (Employees)	5 Years or Less	118	7.4
	6-15 Years	151	9.5
	More than 15 Years	122	7.7
	Missing	391	24.5

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.⁵

Comfort With Campus, Workplace, and Classroom Climate at Lehman College

Research on campus climate⁶ 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).⁷ Several groups at Lehman College indicated on the survey that they were less comfortable than their majority counterparts with the climates of the campus and workplace.

Most survey respondents were “very comfortable” or “comfortable” with the overall climate at Lehman College (72%, $n = 1,144$, p. 57), with the climate in their departments, programs, or work units (68%, $n = 273$, p. 57), and with the climate in their classes (80%, $n = 1,089$, p. 57). Faculty and Staff respondents were significantly less comfortable with the overall climate than were Student respondents (p. 58). Staff respondents were significantly less comfortable with the overall climate than were Faculty respondents (p. 58). Tenured/Tenure-Track /CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents were significantly less comfortable with the climate in their departments, programs, or work units than were Non-Tenure-Track/Adjunct Faculty respondents (p. 59). Undergraduate Student Respondents who Transferred to Lehman were significantly less comfortable with the overall climate than were Undergraduate Student Respondents who Started at Lehman (p. 61). Trans-spectrum respondents and Women respondents were significantly less comfortable with the overall climate than were Men respondents (p. 62). Queer-spectrum (including Bisexual) Faculty and Student respondents were significantly less comfortable with the climate in their classes than were Heterosexual Faculty and Student respondents (p. 64).

⁵ 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)

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

⁷ 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)

Faculty Respondents—Positive Views About Faculty Work

Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible

Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents held positive beliefs about faculty work at Lehman College and indicated that research (74%, $n = 87$, p. 103) and teaching (70%, $n = 81$, p. 103) were valued at Lehman College.

Non-Tenure-Track

Owing to the small number of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty respondents ($n = 7$), findings are not published here.

Adjunct

A large majority of Adjunct Faculty respondents agreed that the process for performance evaluation was clear (83%, $n = 45$, p. 107), clear expectations of their responsibilities existed (83%, $n = 45$, p. 107), their teaching was valued by Lehman College (80%, $n = 43$, p. 107), and the process for course assignments was clear (70%, $n = 38$, p. 107).

All Faculty

Approximately two-thirds of Faculty respondents agreed that they would recommend Lehman College as a good place to work (66%, $n = 115$, p. 112) and that they had job security (67%, $n = 116$, p. 113).

Faculty Sense of Belonging

Campus climate influences individuals' *Sense of Belonging* within social and academic institutional environments.⁸ *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.⁹ Analyses were conducted to determine who felt a stronger *Sense of Belonging* at Lehman College by select Faculty groups (position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of

⁸ Museus et al. (2017); Rankin & Reason (2005); Strayhorn (2012, 2013)

⁹ Strayhorn (2012)

employment, and caregiving status). Analyses revealed one statistically significant difference:

- Non-Tenure-Track/Adjunct Faculty (Part-Time) respondents had greater *Sense of Belonging* than Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents (p. 118).

Staff Respondents—Positive Views About Staff Work

Staff respondents generally held positive views about working at Lehman College. Staff respondents felt their coworkers/colleagues gave them job/career advice or guidance when they needed it (70%, $n = 155$, p. 120) and that clear expectations of their responsibilities existed (71%, $n = 156$, p. 131). Two-thirds of Staff respondents (66%, $n = 147$) agreed that their supervisors were supportive of flexible work schedules (p. 128).

Staff Sense of Belonging

Analyses were conducted to determine who felt a stronger *Sense of Belonging* at Lehman College by select staff groups (position status, gender identity, racial identity, years of employment, and caregiving status). No statistically significant differences existed.

Student Respondents—Positive Attitudes About Academic Experiences

The way students perceive and experience their campus climate influences their performance and success in college.¹⁰ Overall, Student respondents had positive perceptions of their experiences at Lehman College. Seventy-five percent ($n = 891$) of Student respondents felt comfortable with the overall climate at Lehman College (p. 58), and 79% ($n = 940$) felt comfortable with their classroom climate (p. 60). A large majority of Student respondents (87%, $n = 1,024$) intended to graduate from Lehman College (p. 170).

Graduate Student respondents viewed their Lehman College experiences favorably. Most Graduate Student respondents were satisfied with the quality of advising they have

¹⁰ For a review of extant literature, see Mayhew et al. (2016) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005)

received from their programs or departments (81%, $n = 126$, p. 165), had adequate access to their advisors (81%, $n = 126$, p. 165), and felt that their advisors responded to their emails, calls, or voicemails in a prompt manner (78%, $n = 121$, p. 165).

Student Sense of Belonging

Analyses were conducted to determine who felt a stronger *Sense of Belonging* at Lehman College by select student groups (gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, household income status, and first-generation status). Findings indicated:

- Undergraduate Student Respondents who Transferred to Lehman had greater *Sense of Belonging* than Undergraduate Student Respondents who Started at Lehman (p. 150).
- Women Student respondents had greater *Sense of Belonging* than Trans-spectrum Student respondents (p. 151).

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.¹¹ Research also underscores the relationship between hostile workplace climates and subsequent productivity.¹² Further, scholars have explored the experiences Black and Latinx student populations have with microaggressions.¹³ 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.¹⁴ Significant differences in respondents' experiences of exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct includes:

¹¹ 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)

¹² 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)

¹³ Mills (2020); Yosso et al. (2009)

¹⁴ Grant & Ghee (2015)

Ten percent ($n = 160$) of respondents indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct in the past year (p. 69). Of these respondents, 28% ($n = 44$) suggested that the conduct was based on their position status in Lehman College (p. 69) and 29% each indicated it happened in phone calls/text messages/emails ($n = 47$) and in a meeting with a group of people ($n = 46$) (p. 77).

Differences Based on Position, Racial Identity, Years of Employment, and Disability Status

- By position status, higher percentages of Faculty respondents (23%, $n = 41$) and Staff respondents (22%, $n = 49$) than Student respondents (6%, $n = 70$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (p. 70).
 - 35% ($n = 17$) of Staff respondents, 27% ($n = 11$) of Faculty respondents, and 23% ($n = 16$) of Student respondents suggested that the conduct was based on their position status (p. 70).
- By racial identity, a higher percentage of White/of European Descent respondents (19%, $n = 44$) than Black/of African Descent respondents (11%, $n = 37$), Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx respondents (6%, $n = 37$), and Additional Respondents of Color (6%, $n = 7$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (p. 71).
 - 27% ($n = 10$) of Black/of African Descent respondents, 22% ($n = 8$) of Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx respondents, 18% ($n = 8$) of White/of European Descent respondents, and less than five Additional Respondents of Color and Multiracial respondents who had experienced this conduct indicated that the conduct was based on their racial identity (p. 71).
- By years of employment, a higher percentage of Respondents with 6-15 Years of Employment (30%, $n = 45$) than Respondents with 5 Years or Less of Employment (17% $n = 20$) indicated that they had experienced this conduct (p. 72).
- By disability status, higher percentages of Respondents with Multiple Disabilities (17%, $n = 13$) and Respondents with A Single Disability (18%, $n = 18$) than Respondents with No Disability (9%, $n = 123$) indicated that they had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 73).

Respondents Who Seriously Considered Leaving Lehman College

Campus climate research has demonstrated the effects of campus climate on faculty and student retention.¹⁵ Research specific to student experiences has found that sense of belonging is integral to student persistence and retention.¹⁶ Noteworthy percentages of respondents indicated that they seriously considered leaving Lehman College.

Faculty and Staff Respondents

Forty-two percent ($n = 74$) of Faculty respondents and 54% ($n = 121$) of Staff respondents had seriously considered leaving Lehman College in the past year (p. 139). Faculty respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of low salary/pay rate (41%, $n = 30$), lack of institutional resources (39%, $n = 29$), increased workload (38%, $n = 28$), and institutional support (38%, $n = 28$, p. 140). Staff respondents who seriously considered leaving did so because of limited advancement opportunities (52%, $n = 63$) and increased workload (50%, $n = 60$, p. 139).

Qualitative analysis of Faculty and Staff responses amplified why they seriously considered leaving Lehman College. Compensation and limited institutional support were indicated as top reasons for all Employee respondents. Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents and Full-Time Staff respondents elaborated on discriminatory behavior as influencing their desire to leave Lehman. Full-Time Staff respondents also elaborated on two additional factors related to them having seriously considered leaving: limited advancement opportunities and an increased workload.

Student Respondents

Twenty-two percent ($n = 218$) of Undergraduate Student respondents and 16% ($n = 25$) of Graduate Student respondents had seriously considered leaving Lehman College in the past year (p. 168). Fifty-one percent ($n = 124$) of Student respondents who seriously

¹⁵ 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)

¹⁶ Booker (2016); García & Garza (2016); Hausmann et al. (2007)

considered leaving did so in their first year as a student (p. 168). The top reason why Student respondents seriously considered leaving was because they wanted to transfer to another institution ($n = 83$, p. 169).

A major qualitative theme emerged from the voices of Student respondents that further underscored why they seriously considered leaving Lehman College: the effect of COVID-19 on their personal and academic lives. Multiple additional themes emerged for Undergraduate Student respondents including problems with advising, financial challenges, issues related to their academic major, moving and the difficulty with their commute, issues with communication and support of administrative offices, and quality of their teachers.

Challenges and Opportunities Related to Campus Climate

Staff Respondents

Staff responses indicated that they felt less positive about several aspects of their work life at Lehman College. Thirty-seven percent ($n = 81$) of Staff respondents agreed that Lehman College provided adequate information to help them manage work-life balance (e.g., child care, wellness services, elder care, housing location assistance, transportation) (p. 122). Thirty-one percent ($n = 68$) of Staff respondents agreed that clear procedures existed on how they could advance at Lehman College (p. 131). More than half of Staff respondents indicated that their workload increased without additional compensation as a result of other staff departures (53%, $n = 117$, p. 124) and that a hierarchy existed within staff positions that allowed some voices to be valued more than others (52%, $n = 116$, p. 124). Thirty-seven percent of Staff respondents each agreed that staff salaries were competitive ($n = 81$, p. 129) and that committees at Lehman College valued staff opinions ($n = 82$, p. 130).

Faculty Respondents

Half of Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents agreed that that they were burdened by service responsibilities (e.g., committee memberships, departmental/program work assignments) beyond those of their colleagues with similar performance expectations (50%, $n = 58$, p. 104) and that they performed more work to

help students (e.g., formal and informal advising, thesis advising, helping with student groups and activities) than did their colleagues (50%, $n = 58$, p. 104). Twenty-nine percent ($n = 34$) of Tenured/Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-Eligible Faculty respondents agreed that senior administrators valued faculty opinions (p. 105).

Faculty respondents held less positive views about salaries. Just over one-third of Faculty respondents (39%, $n = 68$) agreed that salaries for Tenure-Track/CCE/CCE-eligible faculty positions were competitive (p. 109), and 20% ($n = 35$) agreed that salaries for Non-Tenure-Track faculty positions were competitive (p. 109).

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.¹⁷ Analyses were conducted to determine differences in Student respondents' *Perceived Academic Success* at Lehman College by select student groups (gender identity, racial identity, sexual identity, household income status, and first-generation status). Findings indicated:

- Undergraduate Student Respondents who Transferred to Lehman had greater *Perceived Academic Success* than Undergraduate Student Respondents who Started at Lehman (p. 150).
- Men Student respondents and Women Student respondents had greater *Perceived Academic Success* scores than Trans-spectrum Student respondents (p. 151).

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

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

Lehman College survey requested information regarding respondents' experiences with unwanted sexual conduct.

- 3% ($n = 54$) of respondents indicated that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact/conduct while at Lehman College (p. 94).
 - < 1% ($n = 6$) experienced relationship violence (e.g., ridiculed, controlling, hitting, p. 95).
 - 1% ($n = 19$) experienced stalking (e.g., following me, on social media, texting, phone calls, p. 95).
 - 2% ($n = 25$) experienced sexual interaction (e.g., catcalling, repeated sexual advances, sexual harassment, p. 96).
 - Less than five respondents¹⁸ experienced unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling, rape, sexual assault, penetration without consent, p. 97).

Student Financial Hardship

51% ($n = 609$) of Student respondents indicated they experienced financial hardship while attending Lehman College (p. 53).

Students indicated they experienced financial hardship in the following areas:

- 60% ($n = 367$) had difficulty affording tuition
- 59% ($n = 357$) had difficulty purchasing books/course materials
- 39% ($n = 240$) had difficulty affording food
- 30% ($n = 183$) had difficulty affording housing
- 25% ($n = 153$) had difficulty commuting to campus

Lehman College's Initiatives

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they believed certain initiatives currently were available at Lehman College 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

¹⁸ Groups with less than five respondents are not presented to maintain confidentiality of their identities.

complete overview of findings related to institutional actions is provided on pages 180–192 of the full report.

Examples of Findings for Student Respondents

- 86% ($n = 908$) of the Student respondents thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity training for students was available at Lehman College, and 14% ($n = 147$) of Student respondents thought that it was not available (p. 187).
- 88% ($n = 916$) of Student respondents thought that diversity, equity, and inclusivity training for faculty was available at Lehman College, and 13% ($n = 122$) of Student respondents thought that it was not available (p. 187).
- 83% ($n = 845$) of Student respondents thought that opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue among faculty, staff, and students was available at Lehman College, and 17% ($n = 175$) of Student respondents thought that opportunities for dialogue was not available (p. 188).
- 88% ($n = 902$) of Student respondents thought that effective academic advising was available at Lehman College, and 12% ($n = 119$) of Student respondents thought that it was not available (p. 189)

Examples of Findings for Faculty Respondents

- 73% ($n = 112$) of Faculty respondents thought that access to counseling for people who had experienced harassment was available, and 27% ($n = 41$) of Faculty respondents thought that such counseling was not available (p. 180).
- 47% ($n = 71$) of Faculty respondents thought that equitable funding for operational activities across programs or department was available, and 53% ($n = 80$) of Faculty respondents thought that such funding was not available (p. 180).
- 64% ($n = 100$) of Faculty respondents thought that mentorship for new faculty was available, and 36% ($n = 56$) of Faculty respondents thought that faculty mentorship was not available (p. 181).
- 63% ($n = 93$) of Faculty respondents thought that a fair process to resolve conflicts was available, and 37% ($n = 54$) of Faculty respondents thought that such a process was not available (p. 181).

Examples of Findings for Staff Respondents

- 79% ($n = 165$) of Staff respondents thought that access to counseling for people who had experienced harassment was available at Lehman College, and 21% ($n = 43$) of Staff respondents thought that access to such counseling was not available (p. 183).
- 48% ($n = 96$) of Staff respondents thought that mentorship for new staff was available, and 52% ($n = 105$) of Staff respondents thought that staff mentorship was not available (p. 184).
- 65% ($n = 134$) of Staff respondents thought that career development opportunities for staff were available, and 35% ($n = 71$) of Staff respondents thought that they were not available (p. 184).
- 74% ($n = 147$) of Staff respondents thought that affordable child care was available at Lehman College, and 26% ($n = 51$) of Staff respondents thought that it was not available (p. 185).

Conclusion

Lehman College climate findings¹⁹ were consistent with those found in R&A's work with higher education institutions across the country.²⁰ For example, 70% to 80% of respondents in similar reports found the campus climate to be "very comfortable" or "comfortable." Lehman College respondents indicated a similar degree of comfort with the overall climate at Lehman College (p. 57). Twenty percent to 25% of respondents in similar reports indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct. At Lehman College, a lower percentage of respondents (10%) indicated that they personally had experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct (p. 69). The results also paralleled the findings of other climate studies of specific constituent groups offered in the literature.²¹

Prior research reveals that:

¹⁹ Additional findings disaggregated by position status and other selected demographic characteristics are provided in the full report.

²⁰ Rankin & Associates Consulting (2021)

²¹ 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)

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.²²

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

Lehman College'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 Lehman College, 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 Lehman College community with an opportunity to build upon its strengths and to develop a deeper awareness of the challenges ahead. Lehman College, with support from senior administrators and collaborative leadership, is in a prime 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.

²² United States Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development and Office of the Under Secretary (2016, p. 5)

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