

**Highlights from the
Tarleton State University
Diversity Climate Survey (2006-2007)**

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Prologue

Capturing the essence of a university or college from the perspective of those who inhabit it is no easy task. Although we tend to think of colleges and universities as public, collective entities, the simple fact is that they are rarely experienced that way. On the contrary, attending, teaching or working for a college or university often is a highly individualized endeavor, mediated by both private and personal experiences and concerns. Not only are there psychological dimensions that are influenced by existing social and power structures, but one's role within the institution helps define one's reaction to it. For example, students, by their very nature, tend to be more temporary in terms of their engagement with the institution than either faculty or staff. Faculty, relative to staff members, can be seen as more central to the core teaching and learning functions of postsecondary institutions, while staff are critical in terms of making a complex organization run efficiently, but also in creating a campus environment that supports the work of students, faculty, and the larger communities that institutions seek to serve. As a result, individuals can not only experience the same institution differently but they form very distinct opinions and beliefs about it too.

Understanding how these different ideas and experiences are shaped is an important task to undertake for it can provide crucial insight into how well a college or university functions and meets the needs of those it intends to serve. One way to achieve this understanding is to study the climate of an institution. In general, climate refers to the internal environment or atmosphere of a college or university. Efforts to assess an institution's climate focus on a variety of topics, with the study of different kinds of climates being inherently multidimensional.

This report summarizes the results from three coordinated climate assessment surveys conducted by the Tarleton State University Center for Diversity Initiatives (CDI). The intent of this report is to provide background information and basic details on the methodology used to conduct this assessment as well as an overview of the substantive results, and draws in part from earlier reports on the survey effort. After briefly reviewing the methods used to develop the surveys and collect the data the report will first present student-centered highlights from the three surveys given the centrality of students in diversity concerns at Tarleton and most American campuses, followed in turn by issues of specific concern to Tarleton faculty and staff, respectively.

CDI's Diversity Climate Survey Project

Purpose of survey

Although many interests competed for attention, it was necessary to limit the scope of this survey to only those issues that were deemed most salient and central to the current status of diversity at Tarleton. In the final analyses, what follows is a summary of the intended purposes of the survey.

(1) To assess the climate of diversity by identifying perceptions, attitudes and experiences of diversity among students, faculty and staff at Tarleton.

(2) To assist the Tarleton leadership, and policy makers. Specifically, the CDI survey is intended to help identify some key strengths and weaknesses pertaining to diversity and, in so doing, inform decisions pertaining to the allocation of resources, policies and programs particularly in the following areas:

(a) Implementation of Tarleton's Strategic Plan 2007-2011, especially pertaining to the diversity component of the Strategic Goals and Priorities

(<http://www.tarleton.edu/~policy/strategic0711/strategicgoals.htm>).

(b) Ongoing implementation of the Closing the Gaps initiative, a salient initiatives among all Texas schools.

(3) To assist with proactive leadership. By identifying key areas of weakness, it is hoped that the survey will help the leadership and policy makers at Tarleton to anticipate potential problems by developing proactive policies, procedures, and programs. Some observers would contend that the themed party incident¹ that occurred in Spring 2007 would have been circumvented had Tarleton been more proactive (rather than reactive) to the climate of diversity prior to Spring 2007.

(4) To help serve as a baseline on the climate of diversity. Empirical bases are needed on which Tarleton can assert which aspects of diversity have improved or need improvement. The CDI survey is intended to serve as one of these empirical bases.

(5) In addition to serving as a baseline on particular aspects of diversity on the one hand (see #4 above), the survey is, on the other hand, also intended to measure Tarleton's progress vis-à-vis diversity. In 1998, President Dennis McCabe commissioned a Task Force on Campus Diversity and Inclusion to (a) study diversity and inclusion on the Stephenville campus, and (b) to congeal recommendations. The task force was made up of several faculty, staff and students, assembled into four (4) subcommittees (Students, Academics, Human Resources, General). The following were among the recommendations:

(a) Aggressively recruit and increase diversity representation of students (including international students), faculty and staff by increasing funding allocated to recruitment.

1. In Spring 2007 (beginning in January), the university was pressed into the national media limelight when the Tarleton community reacted to an incident perpetrated by some Tarleton students during the celebration of Martin Luther King Junior's birthday/holiday. The incident involved several students who held a themed party. Photographs of students from this party, dressed in stereotypical ways, were posted on "Facebook." These images, the ensuing firestorm that these images ignited in the community, and the university's responses to these students' behaviors and these images, were the focus of the national media for several weeks in Spring 2007.

(b) To be successful, diversity needs to be promulgated by top administration (i.e. President, Vice Presidents, and Deans). Vice Presidents and Deans should submit diversity plans from their constituents to the President, to include faculty hiring and student retention plans.

(c) Courses in diversity should be implemented across the curriculum.

(d) Diversity programming and training with faculty, staff and students is important to address diversity related concerns, misinformation about diversity, and possible racist attitudes and incidents reported on campus.

(e) Within the underpinnings of due process, aggressively implement a “no tolerance” policy in the disposition of inappropriate conduct related to acts of discrimination.

(f) A university committee on diversity should be created to track Tarleton’s progress regarding recommendations put forth by the Task force on Diversity and Inclusion and adopted by the university. This committee will make subsequent recommendations to the President.

Initial measures of progress in some of these initiatives were completed in 2002. In 1998, the Task Force identified six (6) initiatives and programs designed to improve the climate of diversity at Tarleton: PASS/PASSPORT program; Multicultural Studies and Curriculum; Professional Development Program; Faculty Exchange Program; Tutorial and Mentoring Program; and Multicultural Awareness Training. These initiatives and programs were summarized in a publication, “The Challenge of Diversity and Inclusion at Tarleton State University” (otherwise referred to as “The Butterfly Book”). Tarleton’s progress in these six (6) initiatives was summarized in a subsequent publication about four (4) years later, in 2002, “Report Card,” that assigned differing levels of progress in the implementation of these initiatives. CDI’s Diversity Climate Survey was not designed to measure the specific progress of these six (6) initiatives. Rather, CDI’s survey is intended to measure the impact of these and other diversity efforts, collectively, on the climate of diversity at Tarleton since 1998. In this way, it is hoped that CDI’s survey will help provide a basis for a fuller progress report of the climate of diversity at Tarleton, particularly pertaining to students’ perceptions, attitudes and experiences of diversity.

(6) Related to #5 above, prior to CDI’s Diversity Climate survey, numerous anecdotal perceptions and experiences regarding diversity were reported. For instance, anecdotal reports from minority students was that they feel isolated and feel a general lack of support from Tarleton. This survey is an effort to move beyond the anecdotal and towards measuring the extent to which these individual perceptions and experiences are representative or characteristic of the climate of diversity at Tarleton.

(7) Lastly, but equally important, the CDI survey is intended to stimulate dialogue that will identify recommendations on ways to improve diversity at Tarleton i.e. how to build on our strengths and how to improve areas of weakness. Of special concern is the need to integrate these recommendations into the fabric of the university—to avoid sharing a rather common plight of similar studies that are destined to become icons on a shelf. Extensive deliberations with the Tarleton community will be essential in identifying these recommendations.

Approach and Methods

The approach undertaken in this project was developed at Tarleton but was also similar to instruments and procedures used in other climate assessments undertaken at campuses nationwide, including places such as UC Berkeley, UCLA, Loyola Marymount University, and Miami University (Ohio). For this project the surveys were specifically designed to evaluate attitudes and campus climate as related to diversity. This particular instrument was developed after studying scores of similar instruments. The survey instrument was prepared with feedback from various university constituents. Of special note was feedback from various students through the efforts of CDI's Student Leadership Council. In addition, were feedback from faculty, staff and community members through the efforts of CDI's Advisory Committee, and the Subcommittee for University Surveys of the University Planning Council. Additionally, feedback was sought from leadership within the Division of Student Life (i.e. Vice President, Assistant Vice Presidents, and Directors); and from several other individuals at various stages of survey development.

The questionnaires are designed to be short and usable by all categories to be surveyed--undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Responses were anonymous, and were intended to broadly profile Tarleton's strengths and areas of concern as they relate to diversity. The surveys were intended to address common themes, with unique questions developed to address specific issues that each of the constituent groups were likely to encounter.

The survey questionnaires were administered to all faculty, staff and students on the Stephenville campus through WebSurveyor. WebSurveyor is a web based research tool that assists in developing and distributing questionnaires for survey and analyzing data. Weekly drawings were held to give incentives to those who participated and willingly gave their email addresses for the purpose. Email addresses were kept confidential and were not connected with a particular survey. CDI aggressively advertised the survey to students, in order to ensure the inclusion of a cross-section of students including graduate and undergraduate and those who attend daytime and evening classes. CDI requested the President, the Provost, and the Student Government President to send emails and encourage students, faculty, and staff to participate in the survey. CDI also solicited the assistance of various student organizations to complete the survey. There was strong support from everyone on campus, and yielded responses from 724 students, 173 faculty and 416 staff members. The rate of response ranged across the groups, and yielded demographic breakdowns that are roughly equivalent to those at Tarleton State generally, as indicated below in Table 1.

Table 1 – Demographics of the survey respondents by group

	Student		Faculty		Staff	
	Respondents	TSU	Respondents	TSU	Respondents	TSU
White	79.7%	83.8%	87.1%	90.6%	87.4%	91.0%
Black/African American	2.4%	5.1%	3.5%	1.5%	2.9%	2.2%
Hispanic/Latino	8.4%	7.5%	2.9%	3.8%	2.9%	4.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.4%	0.8%	1.8%	2.8%	2.7%	0.3%
American Indian/Alaskan	0.8%	1.0%	1.8%	0.4%	0.1%	2.2%

The Diversity Experiences of Students at Tarleton

The student survey results clearly show that 8 out of 10 students believe that learning about diversity is important to them for the purpose of their future professional success, but also that they are already somewhat knowledgeable about diversity issues (Table 2). Somewhat fewer students -- about one-half -- report that they learn about global issues and that their courses include diverse perspectives, and about one-third support the idea of additional curricular interventions related to diversity efforts (e.g., course requirement or diversity minor as an opportunity). It is important to note that there are substantial and important differences between students' racial groups, with minority students much less likely to believe that Tarleton educational experiences are infused with diversity content or benefits relative to their white student colleagues. To minority students, Tarleton's curriculum is largely inadequate in the task of preparing one to manage diversity after graduation. It is also quite remarkable that with regard to action steps, minority students are largely and pointedly in favor of a curriculum that would require diversity as a condition for graduation, an endorsement largely not shared by their white counterparts. These differences in student responses is at the heart of the perceived harmony (or lack thereof) between Tarleton's educational mission and the experience of such at the curriculum level. One's experience of this harmony appears to be colored quite remarkably by one's racial identity, a rather concerning finding that calls for further dialogue.

Table 2 – General views of diversity education and the importance of learning about diversity

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All students	White	Minority	Men	Women
Learning about diversity is important for professional success	79.9	80.0	79.7	71.6	84.1
I am knowledgeable about diversity	79.9	81.0	75.5	80.3	79.8
Students and professors accept individual differences in classroom activities	69.3	73.3	53.5	64.8	71.5
I learn about global communities issues through the courses I take	55.4	57.3	47.9	53.0	56.5
My courses include diverse perspectives	51.4	55.3	36.1	46.6	53.9
My education at Tarleton prepares me for a Global economy	48.3	51.1	37.2	48.3	48.3
I learn about diverse cultures through the courses I take	47.1	49.2	38.6	39.9	50.6
The curriculum adequately represents the contributions of diverse peoples	45.4	49.8	27.5	44.6	45.6
A diversity course should be required for graduation	35.2	28.8	60.0	33.0	36.1
There should be a minor in diversity	34.4	28.9	55.9	31.0	35.8

Despite the lack of universal endorsement of the effectiveness of Tarleton's educational experiences on diversity issues, students view the Tarleton faculty as being respectful of cultural differences, encouraging of the free expression of ideas, and generally competent to teach diversity and diverse groups of students (see Table 3). Once again we see a pattern where white students are less likely to be critical of these aspects of faculty ability and effort than are students from other racial groupings. Fewer than 1 in 10 Tarleton faculty are ethnic minorities, with individual racial groups generally ranging in size from 2-4 percent. Moreover, as seen below in Table 12, faculty are unequivocally in agreement across the board that departments are not ethnically diverse. It is, therefore, of particular interest that among students, there are marked differences across racial lines regarding whether there is ethnic diversity among faculty, with white students more likely to perceive affirmatively. These differences may

speak to the different perspectives among students about what constitutes diversity, and the differing thresholds that students consider to be “visible” minority faculty.

Table 3 – Student views of faculty as teachers of diversity

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All students	White	Minority	Men	Women
Faculty respects my cultural background	74.0	76.8	63.2	70.7	75.9
Faculty encourages free expression of ideas	70.4	73.5	58.3	67.1	72.1
Faculty is competent to teach students from diverse backgrounds	65.5	69.2	50.7	64.4	66.2
Faculty is knowledgeable about diversity issues	62.4	66.9	44.4	60.8	63.1
There is visible ethnic diversity among faculty	55.7	59.6	40.3	55.8	55.8
My professors discuss diversity issues in class	43.6	46.7	31.3	39.2	45.8

Table 4 shows how faculty view themselves and the connections they have to diversity topics. These results suggest that faculty self-assessment roughly mirrors the views of students, in that nearly all of them believe that they are knowledgeable about diversity. At the same time, there is contrast in that students are less likely to endorse knowledge of diversity to faculty, and minority students even far less likely to do so. Regarding action steps to address the curriculum, faculty responses largely mirror that of students. Minority faculty are generally more likely to be in favor of a curriculum that requires diversity as a condition for graduation, an endorsement largely not shared by their white counterparts. Interestingly, some responses from white faculty appear to be more supportive of diversity goals and its integration into their teaching, with regard to pedagogy and syllabi, which may be a reflection of disciplinary differences across the faculty groups as some fields are inherently more challenging when it comes to integrating diversity issues into course content.

Table 4 – Faculty views about diversity and the teaching of diversity

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All faculty	White	Minority	Men	Women
I am knowledgeable about diversity	92.7	92.6	94.1	90.0	93.4
I am concerned about student welfare beyond the classroom	89.6	91.1	76.5	86.4	89.5
Diversity is important to me	80.6	83.1	58.8	76.7	84.2
Diversity is an important part of my pedagogy	65.5	66.2	58.8	58.9	72.4
Diversity is an important part of the content of my syllabi	44.1	45.1	35.3	36.0	52.1
The university should offer a course in gender studies	38.2	36.5	52.9	35.6	43.4
A diversity course should be a requirement for graduation	32.9	30.6	52.9	28.9	36.0
The university should offer a minor in diversity	23.2	21.1	41.2	20.0	28.0

Table 5 shows student views about campus community and safety at Tarleton State. The results indicate that students generally feel safe on campus, value interaction across diversity, and tend to also feel a sense of belonging on campus. Minority students, however, are much less likely to feel a sense of belonging at Tarleton. Minority students are also more than twice as likely to feel isolated or left out when working in group projects for classes, when compared to white students. In par with minorities, female students are more likely to value interaction with students from cultures and beliefs different from their own.

Table 5 – Student views about community and safety

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All students	White	Minority	Men	Women
I feel safe on campus	85.5	88.7	73.1	86.2	85.1
I value interaction with students from diverse cultures/beliefs	83.6	82.5	88.2	76.3	87.1
I feel a sense of belonging or community at Tarleton	66.5	72.7	42.4	62.5	68.7
The University leadership and administrators foster diversity on campus	60.0	64.1	43.4	56.2	61.8
There is respect for the expression of diverse perspectives	58.2	62.5	40.8	54.5	60.1
I have discussions with students from diverse ethnic backgrounds	46.2	43.5	56.6	41.2	48.5
Mentoring will help me achieve my goals	42.8	39.2	56.9	41.2	43.5
There is significant interaction among various ethnic groups on campus	42.0	42.2	41.1	44.8	40.5
Administration takes appropriate action on reports of discrimination	35.3	36.3	30.9	34.5	35.5
I feel isolated or left out when students work in groups in class	14.8	11.8	26.4	14.2	14.9

It is worth noting in Table 5 that while most students value interactions with other students from diverse cultures and beliefs, relatively few actually engage in such. In fact, regardless of racial background, students acknowledge that there is lack of significant interaction among various ethnic groups on campus. In addition, students have varying degrees of comfort interacting across race groups, as is shown in Table 6. About two-thirds of the students at Tarleton feel “very comfortable” interacting with white students, compared to fewer than half feeling that level of comfort with Black or Hispanic students. Similarly, students – white students especially – are not particularly comfortable interacting with minority students, which points toward a need for Tarleton to actively work with students on these issues. Engagement between students from diverse backgrounds is a crucial part of an institution’s educational mission. These results point to a rather evident need for Tarleton to prioritize student engagement as it pertains to diversity.

Table 6 – Student comfort interacting across racial groups

<i>Percent very comfortable interacting with...</i>	All students	White	Minority
White students	66.1	67.8	59.7
Black students	44.6	40.9	59.0
Hispanic students	47.4	43.7	61.8
<i>Not comfortable* interacting with...</i>	All students	White	Minority
White students	6.6	5.1	12.5
Black students	16.7	18.5	9.7
Hispanic students	13.8	15.9	5.6

* Very uncomfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or neutral

Although there is a general sense of safety on campus, harassment and discrimination are not unknown on campus. Over one-half of all the student groupings believe that subtle discrimination on campus exists, while more than one-third have personally witnessed what they considered incidents of racism or ethnic discrimination. The numbers are even more pronounced when considering the experiences of students from groups often subjected to

discrimination. Examining the differences across the breakout groups shown in Table 7 we see that minorities are twice as likely as whites to have experienced harassment related to race. A good number of students have reported incidents of discrimination to Tarleton staff and faculty, but at a much lower rate relative to their personal experiences. The results also show that only one in three students believe – roughly equally across the board – that the Tarleton administration takes appropriate action when such incidents are reported. These two latter results speak to the disturbingly low confidence that students have regarding Tarleton’s will to address complaints of discrimination and harassment. In contrast, it is interesting to note that among staff, 69 percent of staff survey respondents (see Table 14) believe that administrators take appropriate action when such incidents are reported, possibly in part because they themselves may be charged with determining responses. Women and minority staff members are somewhat less likely to hold such views, though are nonetheless much more positive about administrative responses and are roughly twice as likely to strongly agree or agree somewhat than the average student respondent.

Table 7 – Student views and experience of discrimination and harassment

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All students	White	Minority	Men	Women	Heterosexual	GLBTQ
I would report an incident of discrimination or harassment	68.4	67.0	73.9	63.4	70.8	68.3	80.0
There are subtle forms of discrimination on campus	55.9	54.6	61.3	56.2	55.7	54.9	76.7
I have witnessed incidents of racism/ethnic discrimination	37.7	34.6	50.4	46.3	33.3	36.3	56.7
Administration takes appropriate action on reports of discrimination	35.3	36.3	30.9	34.5	35.5	35.2	43.3
I have experienced racial discrimination	22.7	18.5	39.4	31.3	18.4	22.1	30.0
I have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment	20.6	20.2	22.3	20.9	20.2	18.9	53.3
I have experienced homophobia	20.4	18.7	27.5	24.9	17.9	18.6	63.3
I have experienced religious harassment	18.7	16.4	28.2	23.2	16.5	17.4	53.3
I have experienced sexual harassment	16.4	16.1	17.6	11.2	18.6	14.7	46.7
I have reported an event of discrimination to staff/faculty	7.8	4.9	19.0	12.1	5.5	6.5	36.7

Of special concern are the experiences of harassment and discrimination as they pertain to sexual orientation. In general, GLBTQ students are more likely to experience homophobia, religious harassment, and sexual harassment than any other group at Tarleton. Additionally, as Table 8 below indicates, homophobic slurs are the most common ones likely to be made in a Tarleton affiliated activity. Members of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are the most likely to participate in a Tarleton affiliated program/activity where the climate would make them feel unwelcome or uncomfortable. While Tarleton has made some efforts to address the needs of GLBTQ students, these results indicate that much more is needed.

Table 8 – Attendance at a Tarleton affiliated program/activity

<i>Percent attending Tarleton events where those from the following groups would likely feel unwelcomed or uncomfortable...</i>	Total	White	Minority	Men	Women	GLBTQ	Hetero sexual
Women	7.5	6.3	12.4	7.3	7.6	20.0	6.7
Members of an ethnic group	16.6	13.0	31.0	14.2	21.6	26.7	16.3
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexuals	22.3	21.7	24.8	20.9	25.4	66.7	20.5
Person with a disability	8.2	6.6	14.5	7.7	8.9	23.3	7.8
Non-native English speaker	13.0	11.5	19.3	10.0	19.5	20.0	12.6
Person from a particular religious background	13.0	12.2	16.6	10.9	17.8	23.3	12.9
White	6.7	5.6	11.0	5.0	10.2	13.3	6.4
Never heard anything negative about any group	42.7	45.0	33.8	43.4	41.5	23.3	43.3

<i>Percent attending events where slurs were directed at...</i>	Total	White	Minority	Men	Women	Hetero sexual	GLBTQ
Women	16.8	16.1	19.3	15.9	19.1	15.8	36.7
Members of an ethnic group	27.3	26.2	31.7	25.1	32.6	26.9	43.3
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexuals	29.4	28.8	31.7	28.2	32.2	28.7	53.3
Person with a disability	12.1	11.3	15.2	11.1	14.0	11.1	33.3
Non-native English speaker	19.0	17.7	24.1	16.7	23.7	17.8	43.3
Person from a particular religious background	11.2	10.6	13.8	9.0	16.1	10.9	13.3
White	15.3	14.6	17.9	14.0	18.2	14.1	36.7
Never heard anything negative about any group	37.6	39.1	31.7	38.4	36.0	37.8	26.7

The student survey also asked where, if experienced, harassment and discrimination occurred. The responses shown in Table 9 indicate that students are generally most likely to have such experiences on campus grounds. Minority students report higher levels of discrimination and about one-quarter of minority student respondents also experienced harassment and discrimination in classroom settings. Other students are by far the most likely source of harassment and discrimination, with nearly 4 out of 10 minority students who experienced such treatment receiving it from other Tarleton students.

Table 9 – Source and location of harassment by student race

Location and sources of harassment and discrimination experienced by students

Location	All students	White	Minority
Classroom	13.9	11.3	24.1
Residence hall	10.3	8.9	15.9
Campus office	5.7	3.5	14.5
Off campus	18.6	16.7	26.2
Campus grounds	19.3	17.4	26.9
Other locations	3.2	2.8	4.8

Source	All students	White	Minority
Students	27.5	24.7	38.6
Faculty	10.5	8.2	20.0
Resident advisor, or other residence hall staff	3.1	1.4	9.7
Graduate assistant	1.9	1.0	5.5
Campus police	3.1	1.2	10.3
Staff	5.0	3.0	13.1
Off-campus person	12.1	9.7	21.4

City police	2.6	1.6	6.9
At off campus job	4.2	3.6	6.2
Other source	1.9	1.4	4.1

The Diversity Experiences of Tarleton Faculty

Turning now to the responses of the faculty, we see interesting patterns at both the campus and departmental level. Table 10 shows how faculty view the Tarleton campus in general, and how specific groups view campus environment. It would appear that about one-third of the faculty have some concern about the treatment and experience of most of the groups mentioned in the survey, with the granted concern being directed at ethnic minorities. A third of all faculty – and fully one-half of the minority faculty – believe that ethnic minorities feel isolated at Tarleton, while one-quarter believe that racial discrimination is a problem on campus. Awareness of these issues may contribute to the generally muted faculty endorsement that Tarleton is ready to receive significant increase of minority students. It should be noted that minority faculty are proportionally more likely to have heard complaints about discrimination. In addition, the pattern of faculty responses pertaining to personal safety and the sense of belonging follows the one seen among students, with minority faculty less likely to feel a sense of belonging at Tarleton. This pattern persists when considering the experience of facing discrimination on campus as well.

Table 10 – Faculty experiences and views about diversity

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All faculty	White	Minority	Men	Women
I feel safe on campus	90.2	90.4	88.2	90.0	92.1
I feel a sense of belonging at Tarleton	77.3	78.1	70.6	76.7	76.3
Non-traditional students are served adequately	70.1	71.4	58.8	67.4	71.1
Tarleton is ready to receive significant increase of minority students	41.3	41.3	41.2	48.3	32.4
I have heard complaints about discrimination	39.4	38.5	47.1	32.2	47.4
Ethnic minorities feel isolated	33.5	31.7	50.0	32.2	36.0
Gay and lesbian students are marginalized	31.7	33.8	12.5	27.3	36.5
Racial discrimination is a problem on campus	25.5	25.0	29.4	20.0	32.9
I have faced discrimination on campus	15.8	13.5	35.3	10	21.1

Departmental actions are important to faculty, given that this is the central organizing experience for most faculty. Although Table 11 shows a range of opinion about the extent to which the special needs of various groups on campus are served, most faculty seem to report that their departments make a reasonable effort with a plurality agreeing to various statements, with about half agreeing that the retention of minority students is a big concern. It is important to note that unlike white faculty, less than half of minority faculty feel that their departments have adequate resources to provide services to diverse students. This may be related to the inimitable experience that minority faculty have with minority students, such as the fact that minority faculty are more likely to have heard complaints about discrimination (see Table 10). Such experiences may, for minority faculty, translate into the perceived need for additional resources to help support diverse students. It is plausible that these differences could also be a function of differing definitions, regarding how faculty across cultural lines define “diverse students.”

Table 11 – Faculty views about departmental climate

<i>Strongly agree or agree</i>	All faculty	White	Minority	Men	Women
Academic needs of minority students are accommodated	67.3	68.9	52.9	70.0	63.2
My department has resources to provide services to diverse students	58.8	60.1	47.1	56.7	60.5
There is strong support for diversity efforts within my department	51.2	51.0	52.9	53.9	45.9
Departmental staff is trained to provide effective services to diverse students	49.1	49.3	47.1	50.6	42.5
Faculty members need competencies to teach in a diverse classroom	47.5	49.0	35.3	36.0	58.1
Retention of minority students is a big concern	46.6	46.5	47.1	50.6	39.7

Table 12 shows additional information on how faculty describe their department and their general approaches to diversity. Over one-half of the faculty agree their departments discuss diversity issues, though minority faculty are substantially less likely to hold this point of view. Roughly one-half of the faculty believe that their departments are proactive at recruiting diverse faculty and staff, with minority and women faculty slightly less likely to hold this view. Only about one-third of the minority faculty believe that their departments are proactively working to diversify their student clientele. There seems to be more agreement that the student population is diverse than there is with respect to faculty diversity. Regarding curricula, faculty generally agree with the minority student experiences as depicted in Table 2 that coursework does not address diversity issues.

Table 12 – Faculty views of departmental descriptors

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All faculty	White	Minority	Men	Women
We discuss diversity issues in our department	57.0	59.5	35.3	54.4	59.2
My department has diverse student population	55.8	54.1	70.6	58.9	53.9
My department proactively recruits diverse faculty and staff	54.0	54.9	47.1	57.3	46.6
My department proactively recruits minority students	45.1	46.3	35.3	46.1	42.1
My department has ethnically diverse faculty	38.4	38.8	35.3	27.0	48.7
My department has courses that address issues of race/ethnicity	40.9	42.0	31.3	31.0	50.7
My department has courses/programs to address diversity issues	40.7	42.8	23.5	31.5	48.6
My department has written guidelines on diversity	20.9	20.6	23.5	15.1	27.4

The Tarleton Staff Perspective

As was the case with students, staff appear to value diversity for the purpose of achieving professional success, while also believing that they are personally knowledgeable about diversity. Table 13 also shows that while staff generally feel safe on campus, minority staff are less likely to express a sense of belonging, a similar pattern to that expressed by students and faculty. This particular finding is consistent across the board and calls for special attention by the Tarleton community. Staff generally feel that their co-workers and supervisors respect diverse perspectives, with minority staff less likely to endorse this position. Also, proportionally more minority staff believe that there is need for, and express more interest for, diversity related programs and training. Staff generally view the campus as being diversity friendly.

Regarding curricula and the need for a course or minor in diversity, the staff responses follow a similar pattern to that gleaned among students and faculty, with minority staff more likely to endorse either. This finding

has been generally consistent across the various constituents and points to an important climate issue regarding the educational experience of diversity at Tarleton

Table 13 – Staff views about community, safety and general climate

<i>Strongly agree or agree</i>	All staff	White	Minority	Male	Female
I feel safe on campus	93.1	94.2	88.3	94.4	92.4
Learning about diversity is important for professional success	86.1	85.0	95.2	81.4	88.0
I am knowledgeable about diversity	83.1	82.2	90.5	83.7	83.5
I feel a sense of belonging or community at Tarleton	78.7	80.9	59.5	76.0	80.0
My colleagues/bosses respect diverse perspectives	77.4	78.6	66.7	75.2	77.1
Campus climate is diversity friendly	76.1	77.5	64.3	73.6	76.1
There is a need for diversity related programs and training	49.8	46.7	76.2	43.4	52.5
There is sufficient ethnic diversity among staff in my department	48.5	48.6	47.6	56.3	44.2
I would like to learn more about diversity	44.6	43.2	57.1	36.7	49.3
A diversity course should be required for graduation	26.1	25.1	41.1	28.4	24.4
There should be a minor in diversity	23.1	21.1	36.1	18.2	24.2

As with other responses by students and faculty delineated elsewhere, the staff experience of diversity at Tarleton appears to be qualitatively colored by racial demography. As seen among students and faculty, these differences in experience and perception can at times be quite pronounced. For example, Table 14 indicates that one-third of the minority staff have felt discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity. About six out of ten Tarleton staff agree that there are subtle forms of discrimination on campus, while four out of ten report having heard negative comments about ethnic minorities on the Tarleton campus. Minority staff are more likely to acknowledge that racial tensions exist. In terms of fostering diversity on campus and making proactive efforts to address race and racism on campus, white respondents are generally more likely to feel that Tarleton addresses these issues.

Table 14 – Staff views and experience with discrimination and harassment

<i>Percent strongly agree or agree</i>	All staff	White	Minority	Men	Women
The University leadership and administrators foster diversity on campus	73.3	74.7	61.9	72.9	72.4
University proactively addresses campus issues related to race or racism	68.1	69.4	56.1	65.9	69.3
Subtle forms of discrimination exist on campus	59.6	58.2	71.4	60.2	60.2
I have heard negative comments about ethnic minorities on campus	42.6	40.7	59.5	44.2	41.0
I have felt discriminated on campus due to my ethnicity	8.2	5.3	33.3	7.8	8.8
Minorities feel isolated on campus	37.1	34.2	68.3	34.4	47.3
There is tension among ethnic groups	47.2	45.1	63.2	48.1	47.2
I would report an incident of discrimination/harassment	66.9	67.5	61.9	64.6	67.1
Administration takes appropriate action on reports of discrimination	69.2	71.2	57.5	67.0	70.1
I have heard negative comments about gay and lesbians	47.3	47.2	47.6	47.7	46.6

Concluding Comment

The results highlighted here suggest that Tarleton has made some strides in promoting the value of diversity (e.g. diversity is perceived by students as critical to professional success). These survey results also reflect upon important areas of improvement. Both of these perspectives provide excellent bases and support for continuing to focus on diversity as an institutional goal. Experiences at Tarleton are not equal across various subgroups in the population. There are substantial differences across race lines (student, faculty and staff) in terms of views, experiences, and exposure to abusive treatment (or even the recognition of it). As the themed party incident from Spring 2007 indicates, Tarleton needs to take an aggressive proactive stance with regard to the climate of diversity at Tarleton. The experiences of all its constituents, and particularly of its minority students, staff and faculty are especially salient in this regard. To ignore varied perspectives of its minority constituents, as depicted throughout this survey, is to perpetuate the maintenance of a status quo that is in discord with Tarleton's vision towards 2017 and beyond. Thus, while Tarleton can be proud of some of its progress (e.g. steady improvement in minority student enrollment), continuing attention toward making Tarleton an inclusive campus, particularly in terms of curricular and student engagement, is quite necessary.

The Tarleton community needs to come together to systematically discuss these survey results, their implications, and develop recommendations that will help launch Tarleton into the next century. These dialogues need to include all constituents i.e. students, faculty and staff, Black, White, etc. The interest depicted among survey respondents in learning more about diversity gives a solid foundation for continuing to build on existing successes. Of special requisite is that Tarleton revisit the recommendations put forth by the 1998 Task Force on Campus Diversity and Inclusion. Results from the CDI survey are relevant to some of the recommendations put forth at that time (e.g. diversity courses should be implemented across the curriculum; aggressively recruit and increase diversity representation of students, faculty and staff, etc). Addressing these recommendations would go a long way to identifying some of the barriers that mitigated implementation at that time, and, as such, provide insights to help avoid those same pitfalls this time around.

It is especially important that these new recommendations be catered to, and be specific to, assist the new president and executive cabinet to provide leadership in the implementation of the diversity component of Tarleton's

Strategic Plan 2007-2011. Tarleton needs to develop a cohesive and thorough action plan, a comprehensive road map vis-à-vis diversity, that will serve as a measure of Tarleton's progress towards diversity.

Although any survey of this type can be seen as reactive, the timing of the CDI survey had virtually nothing to do with the themed party events that occurred in Spring, 2007. The idea for a climate survey was the subject of discussion several years prior. The decision to move forward with a climate survey was made about one year prior to the Spring incident. Since that time, versions of the CDI survey had been through several iterations. At the time of the themed party incident, a final version of the survey was being concluded, with survey dissemination poised for Spring 2007. The CDI survey was not altered in any way as a result of this incident; the themed party incident served only to accentuate the timely need for such a survey.

It is also important to note that in Fall 2006, Tarleton reached an important milestone regarding African American enrollment on the Stephenville campus. For the first time in its history, Tarleton achieved a virtual 5% enrollment (4.989%) of African American students. This same year, Tarleton achieved an unprecedented 7.6% enrollment of Hispanic students. This is an indication of a steady upward trend in enrollment due in large part to several expansive and ongoing initiatives and efforts to recruit minority students through the Division of Enrollment Management (EM).

Of special note is that a 5% threshold represents, for some researchers, a kind of critical mass. Specifically, a 5% minority population is consequential in establishing a milieu where meaningful interactions and engagement between students from different backgrounds can occur. In this way, this 5% threshold is a source of opportunity for Tarleton. As Table 5 shows, although there is interest among students for cross-cultural interaction, this interaction does not actually take place as it should. Increasing the number of diverse students at Tarleton is the surest way to assure opportunities for interactions. However, as Table 6 suggests, Tarleton cannot assume that meaningful interactions will occur automatically. Tarleton will need to take proactive and deliberate measures to foster the desired types of interactions. It is worth noting that a 5% threshold brings with it the increased likelihood that the marginalized experiences of underrepresented students will be more apt to be heard/hit the fray because of a critical mass of collective voices. For example, consider that the attention given to the themed party was predictable when viewed from this point of view, especially when you consider that concerns regarding such parties had been anecdotally reported prior to Spring 2007.

It is worth noting that Tarleton is at a critical junction, given the retirement of the Provost, Dr. Gary Peer, in Fall 2007, and the anticipated retirement of the university President, Dr. Dennis McCabe, this summer. In essence, Tarleton will be presented with new leadership at the highest levels. This provides unique opportunities for Tarleton because with this new leadership, comes the prospect to more meaningfully integrate the value of diversity into the fabric of the Tarleton identity. Results from this survey are well poised to contribute towards that end.

Additional research should be explored using these data to better understand the dynamics of campus climate at Tarleton, and new efforts should also be undertaken to expand it. Examining these issues using multivariate techniques is critical to developing a nuanced understanding of how individuals both shape and experience the Tarleton campus climate. Qualitative techniques should also be used to unravel the complexities of experience, and thereby extend this preliminary work.