FULL REPORT

The University of Nebraska System Climate Study

Understanding Perceptions of Students, Faculty, Staff and Alumni

SEPTEMBER 2018



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About University of Nebraska

The University of Nebraska — through its four campuses — strives to be the best public university in the country as measured by the impact we have on our people and our state, and — through them — the world.

For more information, visit <u>https://nebraska.edu/</u>.

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

For more information, visit <u>www.gallup.com</u> or <u>www.gallup.com/services/170939/higher-education.aspx</u>.

Introduction

In the winter of 2017, the University of Nebraska system partnered with Gallup to learn more about perceptions of a broad range of issues related to campus climate from students, faculty, staff members and alumni. The goals of this partnership were to:

- gather multiple perspectives on issues related to campus climate
- learn community members' views about these complex topics
- encourage rich and meaningful dialogue
- inform the cultivation of a diverse, inclusive and welcoming environment

This report includes findings from web surveys conducted in the spring of 2018. Results are from surveys of more than 4,400 students, 1,800 faculty, 3,600 staff members and 2,800 recent alumni across each of the four University of Nebraska campuses. For a snapshot of the findings, see the executive summary report.

Results of these surveys highlight important issues facing the University of Nebraska and U.S. higher education institutions. It is the University of Nebraska's intent that the study supports new and ongoing efforts to help make the University of Nebraska an even better, more respectful place to live, learn, work, serve and play.

Detailed Findings

Majorities of students, faculty, staff and alumni say the racial climate among students, faculty and staff on their campus is good or excellent.

The campus climate is created through the many ways that people interact with and treat one another and is a reflection of the core values on campus. It is shaped by the tenor of voices that promote and protect those values. Respectful treatment of others through civil dialogue and sincere debate may be considered a hallmark of a healthy campus climate. This study explores several factors that could contribute to climate, including racial climate, civic engagement, trust and fairness, and safety.

RACIAL CLIMATE

This study shows that the majority of students, faculty, staff members and alumni are generally positive about the racial climate among students. Overall, students are about nine times more likely to rate the racial climate among their peers as "excellent" as they are to rate it as "poor." Fifteen percent rate the racial climate as "only fair" or "poor," which includes 42% of black students.

Nearly eight in 10 currently enrolled students (78%) and seven in 10 faculty (70%) and staff members (74%) say the racial climate among students on their campus is "good" or "excellent" - 83% of recent alumni say the racial climate among students was "good" or "excellent."

Seven in 10 currently enrolled nonwhite students say the racial climate among students is "good" or "excellent," which includes 53% of black students and 73% of Asian and Hispanic students. Overall, results are similar to those from a recent study of U.S. college students in which about seven in 10 college students rate their college's racial climate as "good" or "excellent."¹

	All Students	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
% EXCELLENT	28	29	16	27	22
% GOOD	50	52	37	46	51
% ONLY FAIR	12	11	29	19	18
% POOR	3	2	13	4	5
% DON'T KNOW	6	7	5	4	3

Thinking about how students of different races interact and treat one another, how would you rate the overall racial climate on the [Campus Name] campus?

¹ Jones, J. M. (March 2016). College presidents still report positive race relations on campus. Gallup. Results from the Gallup-Knight Foundation 2016 Survey of College Students. This study was a telephone survey of undergraduate students. https://news.gallup.com/poll/190535/college-presidents-report-positive-race-relations-campus.aspx

Similar to ratings of racial climate among students, about three in four faculty and staff members say the overall racial climate among *faculty* is "good" or "excellent." Overall, about one in 10 faculty and staff members say the racial climate among their peers is "only fair" or "poor."

Nonwhite faculty and staff members are more likely than their white peers to rate the racial climate among faculty as "only fair" or "poor." Black faculty and staff members are about as likely to say the racial climate among faculty is "good" or "excellent" (45%) as they are to say it is "only fair" or "poor" (43%).

	All Faculty and Staff	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
% EXCELLENT	29	30	10	25	20
% GOOD	48	49	35	50	48
% ONLY FAIR	9	7	26	16	14
% POOR	2	1	17	4	10
% DON'T KNOW	13	13	11	5	8

Thinking about how <u>faculty</u> of different races interact and treat one another, how would you rate the overall racial climate on the [Campus Name] campus?

Faculty and staff members, overall, are much more likely to say the racial climate among staff members is "good" or "excellent" (79%) than they are to say it's "only fair" or "poor" (11%). Seventy percent of Asian faculty and staff members and 69% of Hispanic faculty and staff members rate the racial climate among staff members as "good" or "excellent." Fewer black faculty and staff members (50%) rate the racial climate among staff members as "good" or "excellent."

	All Faculty and Staff	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
% EXCELLENT	29	30	11	26	19
% GOOD	50	52	39	44	50
% ONLY FAIR	9	7	22	19	14
% POOR	2	1	20	7	9
% DON'T KNOW	10	10	9	5	7

Thinking about how <u>staff members</u> of different races interact and treat one another, how would you rate the overall racial climate on the [Campus Name] campus?

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND CIVIL DISCOURSE

Some colleges and universities are paying more attention to promoting civic engagement and civil discourse among students. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education encouraged higher education institutions to prioritize civic engagement through service learning projects or other means. Results of the University of Nebraska climate study show more faculty and staff members agree or strongly agree that their campus actively promotes civic engagement and civil discourse among students than agree or strongly agree their campus is successful in ensuring them. This pattern is similar to findings in a study of U.S. college and university chief academic officers in which many of these leaders say their institution promotes civic engagement and civil discourse, but fewer say they are able to ensure civic engagement and civil discourse.²

About half of faculty (50%) and staff members (47%) agree or strongly agree their campus actively works to promote civic engagement among students, and about one-third of each group agree or strongly agree their campus is successful in ensuring it. Fewer faculty (37%) and staff members (31%) agree or strongly agree their campus actively works to promote civil discourse by students, and 29% of faculty and 24% of staff members agree or strongly agree their campus is successful in ensuring it. However, many faculty (32%) and staff members (44%) don't know whether their campus is successful in ensuring civil discourse among most students.

Most faculty (68%) and staff members (55%) agree or strongly agree that efforts to promote civic engagement and civil discourse are made more complicated by the national political environment. Just 7% and 6% of faculty and staff members, respectively, disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.³



https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/2018-inside-higher-ed-survey-chief-academic-officers

3 Ibid.

^{2 2018} Inside Higher Ed Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers.

SAFETY

Results of the climate study show that most members of each group surveyed feel safe on campus. Among students and alumni who currently live or at one time lived in residence halls, most say they feel safe or very safe at night and on weekends in those halls; just 1% in these groups say they feel very unsafe or unsafe in their residence hall at night or on weekends. Most students and alumni also say they feel safe or very safe in academic buildings at night. Although, as might be expected, fewer students feel safe walking alone on campus at night – 20% of students and 14% of alumni say they feel unsafe or very unsafe walking alone on campus at night versus 69% and 78% of these groups, respectively, who say they feel safe or very safe.⁴

Faculty and staff members express similar sentiments about walking alone at night — three-fourths of faculty (76%) and two-thirds of staff members (67%) say they feel safe or very safe walking alone on campus at night, and 13% and 15% of each group, respectively, say they feel unsafe or very unsafe. More than eight in 10 faculty (85%) and 74% of staff members feel safe or very safe in academic buildings at night; just 6% and 5%, respectively, feel unsafe or very unsafe in these places at night.



⁴ Results from Gallup's global Law and Order Index indicate about seven in 10 people feel safe walking alone at night where they live. https://news.gallup.com/reports/235310/gallup-global-law-order-report-2018.aspx?g_source=link_newsv9&g_ campaign=item_235391&g_medium=copy

CONFIDENCE IN RESPONSE TO CRITICAL ISSUES

Recent tragic accounts of abuse on college campuses have led U.S. higher education institutions to examine processes to prevent abuse and respond to reports. The University of Nebraska climate study asked respondents how they think the institution would respond if they raised an issue about sexual assault, harassment or discrimination on campus.

Six in 10 students agree or strongly agree their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about sexual assault or harassment. More than six in 10 faculty (64%) and staff members (65%) and 54% of alumni agree or strongly agree their campus would do the right thing; fewer than two in 10 in each group disagree or strongly disagree. Female students are somewhat less confident than male students that their campus would do the right thing if they raised such an issue — 55% and 66%, respectively, agree or strongly agree. Similar differences were found between male and female students in a national study of college students in which about seven in 10 men and two-thirds of women agree or strongly agree their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about sexual assault.⁵

Similarly, among faculty and staff members collectively, women are less confident than men that their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about sexual assault or harassment — 63% and 71%, respectively, agree or strongly agree.



⁵ Strada-Gallup Survey of U.S. College Students, 2017.

Similar to results of a study of college students nationally, respondents from all groups surveyed in the NU climate study are somewhat less confident their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about discrimination on campus than if they raised an issue about sexual assault or harassment.⁶ Nearly half of NU students (47%), faculty (47%) and alumni (45%) and half of staff members (50%) agree or strongly agree they are confident their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about discrimination, and about two in 10 disagree or strongly disagree.

Among student racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic students are least likely to express confidence, and Asian students are most likely to agree or strongly agree their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about discrimination. Additionally, fewer LGBQ students than students who are not sexual orientation or gender identity minorities express confidence their campus would do the right thing if they raised an issue about discrimination (40% vs. 49%, respectively, agree or strongly agree). Among faculty and staff members, black faculty and staff are least likely to express confidence in their campus' response to discrimination issues.

% Strongly agree + % Agree

	All	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
% STUDENTS	47	48	45	52	42
% FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS	49	51	32	47	51
% ALUMNI	45	45	*	52	50

Confidence in Response to Discrimination Issues

*Sample size is insufficient to report

⁶ Strada-Gallup Survey of U.S. College Students, 2017.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Majorities of students, faculty, staff and alumni agree or strongly agree their campus is committed to promoting freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression and academic freedom are historically core values in U.S. higher education, and they are central to a vibrant campus climate.⁷ On campuses nationwide, there has been a good deal of attention on issues concerning free speech. Results of the NU climate study show that majorities in each respondent group think their campus is committed to promoting freedom of expression. Fewer than two in 10 disagree or strongly disagree this is the case.



About two-thirds or more in each group surveyed believe their campus leadership values free speech; though two in 10 from each group say they don't know whether their campus leadership values free speech. Results of a study of U.S. college students show most think their institution's leaders value free speech.⁸

⁷ Governing Board Accountability for Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility http://agb.org/sites/default/files/agb-statements/statement_2016_campus_climate.pdf

⁸ Knight Foundation/Newseum Institute/Gallup Survey of College Students, 2016. This study was a telephone survey. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/pdfs/000/000/184/original/FreeSpeech_campus.pdf



RESPECT FOR FREE SPEECH

Majorities of respondents in each group surveyed think others respect free speech rights. Nearly two-thirds of students (65%) and three-fourths of alumni (74%) say students at their campus generally respect free speech rights; fewer faculty (59%) and staff members (51%) agree or strongly agree, though 23% of staff members, 16% of faculty and 9% of students "don't know" whether students respect free speech rights.⁹

Two-thirds of students (67%) and 74% of alumni agree or strongly agree that faculty generally respect free speech rights. Similarly, majorities of faculty (67%) and staff members (59%) agree or strongly agree that their peers on campus generally respect free speech rights. Less than one in 10 in these groups disagrees or strongly disagrees.¹⁰

⁹ In a separate survey, results show that U.S. college students estimate that about seven in 10 of their peers respect freedom of speech for all. Knight Foundation/Newseum Institute/Gallup Survey of College Students, 2016. https://www.knightfoundation.org/reports/free-speech-campus

¹⁰ A national study of college and university chief academic officers shows 77% of these public-sector leaders think students at their campus respect free speech rights; slightly more (82%) say faculty respect free speech. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/2018-inside-higher-ed-survey-chief-academic-officers

% Strongly agree + % Agree

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
STUDENTS AT [CAMPUS NAME] GENERALLY RESPECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS.	65	59	51	74
FACULTY AT [CAMPUS NAME] GENERALLY RESPECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS.	67	*	*	74
STAFF MEMBERS AT [CAMPUS NAME] GENERALLY RESPECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS.	64	*	*	69
FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS AT [CAMPUS NAME] GENERALLY RESPECT FREE SPEECH RIGHTS.	*	67	59	*

Note: Calculations include "don't know" responses

Additionally, more than half of faculty (52%) and staff members (56%) agree or strongly agree that their campus values diverse opinions and ideas; fewer than two in 10 disagree or strongly disagree.



SHARING VIEWS

About half of students (53%) agree or strongly agree they are comfortable expressing their political views with other students; 20% disagree or strongly disagree. Fewer, about four in 10 students (44%), agree or strongly agree they are comfortable expressing their political views with professors; 28% disagree or strongly disagree.

Four in 10 faculty (42%) and 27% of staff members agree or strongly agree they feel comfortable expressing political views with *faculty*. Three in 10 faculty and staff members agree or strongly agree they feel comfortable expressing political views with *staff members*.

More students agree or strongly agree (41%) than disagree or strongly disagree (31%) that they feel comfortable sharing ideas in class that are probably only held by a small number of students. More faculty agree or strongly agree (41%) than disagree or strongly disagree (25%) they are comfortable encouraging discussion of ideas that are probably only held by a small number of students.

Students are somewhat more likely to agree or strongly agree (35%) than they are to disagree or strongly disagree (29%) that their campus climate prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.

Faculty are about as likely to disagree or strongly disagree (35%) as they are to agree or strongly agree (36%) that the climate on their campus prevents faculty from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive. More staff members agree or strongly agree (39%) that disagree or strongly disagree (26%) that the climate on their campus prevents staff from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive. One in four faculty (26%) don't know whether the climate prevents staff members from saying things they believe, and similarly, 25% of staff members don't know whether the climate prevents faculty from saying things they believe because others.

% Strongly agree + % Agree

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
I feel comfortable expressing my political views with [other] students.	53	24	25	61
I feel comfortable expressing my political views with my professors.	44	*	*	49
I feel comfortable expressing my political views with faculty.	*	42	27	*
I feel comfortable expressing my political views with staff members.	*	30	32	*
I feel very comfortable sharing ideas in class that are probably only held by a small number of students.	41	*	*	47
I feel very comfortable encouraging the discussion of ideas that are probably only held by a small number of students.	*	41	29	*
The climate on my campus prevents some people from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.	36	*	*	23
The climate on my campus prevents faculty from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.	*	36	26	*
The climate on my campus prevents staff members from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive.	*	30	39	*

*Item not asked for this population

Results of the climate study suggest that students need additional opportunities to meaningfully engage with those who hold views that are different from theirs. Though just 13% say they felt silenced often or very often from sharing their views, just 7% have often or very often had a discussion with someone with whom they disagreed on an issue who changed their opinion on that issue. About half of students say they have never or rarely had such a discussion.

Additionally, just 24% of students have actively sought out relationships with those who might challenge their own worldview, while 36% have never or rarely sought out such relationships. More students (30%) have often or very often sought out courses designed to enhance their knowledge of different cultural or political perspectives. Just 7% of students say they have often or very often had tense or hostile interactions with other students — most (71%) have never or rarely had such interactions.

	% Very often + % Often
Actively sought out courses designed specifically to enhance your knowledge of different cultural or political perspectives	30%
Actively sought out relationships with others who might challenge your understanding of the world	24%
Felt silenced from sharing your views	13%
Had a discussion with someone with whom you disagreed on an issue who changed your position on that issue	7%
Had interactions with other students that were tense or hostile	7%

During your time as a student at [Campus Name], how often have you:

Additionally, 48% of students say that most expression and discussion of political or social ideas among students takes place online through social media rather than face-to-face on campus. Results from a national study indicate that just more than half of U.S. college students say most discussion of political or social issues happens online.¹¹

Where do you think most expression and discussion of political or social ideas among students at [Campus Name] takes place these days?

33%



Online through social media

Face-to-face on campus in classrooms

or public areas

19%

Majorities of respondents from each survey group say members of each of the 15 groups studied are able to freely and openly express their views on campus. These results generally align with a national study of college students in that more respondents across survey groups say that female students, male students and whites are able to freely and openly express their views.¹² Also similar to a national study, more University of Nebraska students say that political liberals are able to freely and openly express their views than say political conservatives are able to. NU students are, however, somewhat more likely than students nationally to say political conservatives are able to express their views on campus.¹³

¹¹ Jones, J. M. (March 2018). More U.S. college students say campus climate deters speech. Gallup. From the Gallup-Knight Foundation 2017 Survey of College Students. https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climate-deters-speech.aspx?g_source =link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=More%2520U.S.%2520College%2520Students%2520Say%2520Cam pus%2520Climate%2520Deters%2520Speech

¹² Gallup-Knight Foundation 2017 College Student Survey. https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climatedeters-speech.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=More%2520U.S.%2520College%2520Stu dents%2520Say%2520Campus%2520Climate%2520Deters%2520Speech

¹³ Jones, J. M. (March 2018). More U.S. college students say campus climate deters speech. Gallup. From the Gallup/Knight Foundation 2017 Survey of College Students. https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climate-deters-speech.aspx?g_ source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=More%2520U.S.%2520College%2520Students%2520Say%252 0Campus%2520Climate%2520Deters%2520Speech

% Yes, are able to

On your university's campus, do you think members of each of the following groups are, or are not, able to freely and openly express their views? (% Yes, are able to; % No, are not able to; % Does not apply/Too few on campus)*

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
FEMALE STUDENTS	92	88	90	91
POLITICAL LIBERALS	90	85	88	90
MALE STUDENTS	88	90	90	90
WHITES	88	90	88	90
ASIANS*	88	83	88	83
STUDENTS BORN OUTSIDE THE U.S.	86	78	84	82
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS*	86	82	87	82
HISPANICS OR LATINOS*	85	78	83	80
BLACKS	84	74	82	81
LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL INDIVIDUALS*	83	73	81	79
MUSLIMS*	76	68	76	67
POLITICAL CONSERVATIVES	75	77	75	80
TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS*	66	58	70	53
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES*	61	54	67	52
NATIVE HAWAIIANS/ PACIFIC ISLANDERS*	61	55	67	51

*These groups had at least one survey group in which 10% or more selected "Does not apply/Too few on campus"; therefore the balance of the responses for this item is **not** "% No, are not able to."

Generally, students are far more likely than not to say they feel comfortable having meaningful conversations with other students who hold different views on issues relating to sexual orientation, religion, immigration, race and ethnicity, or political ideology.

Likewise, most faculty feel comfortable or very comfortable having meaningful conversations with students who hold different views on issues relating to sexual orientation, religion, immigration, or race or ethnicity. Somewhat fewer faculty (47%) feel comfortable having such conversations on issues relating to political ideology. While fewer staff members say they are comfortable having conversations about these issues with students, many (about one in four) indicate it is not applicable or they don't interact with students.

% Very comfortable + % Comfortable

How comfortable do you feel having meaningful conversations with [other] students who hold different views on issues relating to:

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	56	52	38	53
RELIGION	68	56	41	62
IMMIGRATION	59	58	40	55
RACE OR ETHNICITY	63	59	42	57
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY	53	47	34	53

Many students (76%), faculty (68%), staff members (69%) and alumni (74%) agree or strongly agree they have many opportunities to learn from others with different perspectives or backgrounds. More than half of students (57%) and nearly two-thirds of alumni (65%) agree or strongly agree they have many opportunities to share their opinions with others in a meaningful way. About half of faculty (49%) and four in 10 staff members (38%) say they have such opportunities.

% Strongly agree + % Agree

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
At [Campus Name], I have many opportunities to learn from others with different perspectives [and backgrounds].*	76	68	69	74
At [Campus Name], I have opportunities to share my opinions with others in a meaningful way.	57	49	38	65

*The phrase "and backgrounds" was included for the student and alumni surveys

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The climate study included questions aimed at understanding how faculty perceive the current state of academic freedom at their institution. Results suggest that while many think academic freedom is as or more secure than it was a year ago, many think more should be done. About two-thirds of faculty (68%) and eight in 10 staff members (82%) say academic freedom at their campus is "as secure" or "more secure" now than it was a year ago. About one-third of faculty say it is less secure now. These data are similar to results from a study of U.S. college chief academic officers, in which 70% of these leaders say academic freedom is "as secure" or "more secure" now than it was a year ago. About one-third secure officers, in which 70% of these leaders say academic freedom is "as secure" or "more secure" now than it was a year ago, and 30% say it is less secure.¹⁴



Additionally, while the plurality of faculty (41%) say their university has done too much or just enough to protect academic freedom, 29% say their university has done too little, and three in 10 are unsure about the steps their university has taken.¹⁵

Relatedly, about half of faculty (51%) feel comfortable or very comfortable expressing their views on matters of faculty governance; 20% feel uncomfortable expressing their views on such matters. A majority of faculty (58%) have not changed how or what they teach much or at all because of concerns they have about offending or upsetting students. Twenty-six percent say they have changed what they teach at least some, including 5% who say they have changed it a lot. Finally, 41% of faculty agree or strongly agree they feel very comfortable using materials that may be unpopular with some students; 20% disagree or strongly disagree.

^{14 2017} Inside Higher Ed Survey of Chief Academic Officers https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/2017-inside-higher-ed-survey-chief-academic-officers

¹⁵ A 2015 national study of U.S. faculty shows nearly eight in 10 agree or strongly agree they have academic freedom. Just one in 10 disagrees. https://cloc.umd.edu/library/research/Gallup-IHE-FacultyEngagementSurvey-2015.pdf

LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION

Faculty and staff members generally agree their leadership is creating a future they want to be a part of, but they need more clarity about that future direction.

The climate study assessed several elements that can contribute to a strong culture at work and optimize the ways people work together, such as communication, future direction and fairness. Campus leaders play a critical role in creating an environment that engages all community members and helps them feel valued and part of the future they are collectively building. Majorities of faculty and staff members agree that leadership is creating a future they want to be part of, but they lack clarity about that direction.

About two-thirds of faculty (69%) and staff members (66%) agree or strongly agree their colleagues demonstrate high integrity and ethics; just one in 10 of each group disagrees or strongly disagrees. More than half of faculty (52%) and staff members (56%) agree or strongly agree their leadership is creating a future they want to be a part of, and more than six in 10 faculty (64%) and staff members (64%) agree or strongly agree they would recommend their campus as a great place to work. About four in 10 faculty (44%) and nearly half of staff members agree or strongly agree that senior leadership is leading their campus in the right direction, while 25% of faculty and 20% of staff members disagree or strongly disagree.

Faculty and staff members are more likely to agree than disagree that their campus leadership creates an environment that is trusting and open. Nearly four in 10 faculty and staff members (38%) agree or strongly agree people are held accountable for their actions; though one in 10 faculty and staff members overall says they don't know. About four in 10 faculty (38%) and staff members (44%) agree or strongly agree that they always trust their campus to be fair to all within their respective peer group. Similarly, about four in 10 faculty (39%) and staff members (37%) agree or strongly agree their peer group is direct and honest in all communications at work. Fewer faculty and staff members agree or strongly agree they have a clear understanding about the future direction of their campus (35% and 37%, respectively). Three in 10 faculty and staff members agree or strongly agree there is open communication throughout all levels of their campus.

% Strongly agree + % Agree

	Faculty	Staff
My colleagues demonstrate behavior of high integrity and ethics.	69	66
I would recommend [Campus Name] as a great place to work.	64	64
The [Campus Name] leadership is creating a future I want to be part of.	52	56
My campus leadership creates an environment that is trusting and open.	46	46
I have confidence that senior leadership is leading [Campus Name] in the right direction.	44	48
I always trust [Campus Name] to be fair to all [faculty members/staff members].	38	44
At work, [Campus Name] [faculty members/staff members] are direct and honest in all of our communications.	39	37
At [Campus Name], people are held accountable for their actions.	38	38
I have a clear understanding about the future direction of [Campus Name].	35	37
There is open communication throughout all levels of [Campus Name].	30	28

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Majorities of students, faculty, staff and alumni agree or strongly agree their campus is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment for all.

A healthy campus climate is predicated on actively promoting equity and fostering a diverse and inclusive environment where all community members are invited to contribute to critical conversations and are treated with generosity where they live, learn and work. Results of the University of Nebraska climate survey suggest that while majorities of community members think their campus environment is inclusive, there is a need to do more to create a campus climate that ensures all people feel welcomed.

More than six in 10 of all groups surveyed agree or strongly agree that their campus is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment for all — and just one in 10 disagrees or strongly disagrees.



Respondents across survey groups are much more likely to say campus leadership values racial and ethnic diversity than to say it does not value it. About eight in 10 students (79%), faculty (78%) and staff members (83%) say leadership values racial and ethnic diversity. These results echo a national study that found that most college students think their leadership values racial and ethnic diversity.¹⁶

16 A national phone study of college students shows most college students think their president or chancellor values racial and ethnic diversity. Knight Foundation/Newseum Institute/Gallup Survey of College Students, 2016. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/pdfs/000/000/184/original/FreeSpeech_campus.pdf



Nonwhite students are less likely than white students to say leadership values racial and ethnic diversity (72% vs. 82%). Similarly, nonwhite faculty and staff members are less likely than whites to say leadership values racial and ethnic diversity.



DISPARAGING COMMENTS

While strong majorities of students say they rarely or never hear someone at their university making disparaging comments about someone's race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion, about one in four say they have frequently or occasionally heard such comments. About one in 10 students say they frequently or occasionally hear offensive comments about someone's disability. Seven in 10 college students in a national study say they rarely or never hear someone at their college make disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive comments about someone's race, ethnicity or religion.¹⁷



At least seven in 10 faculty and staff members say they rarely or never hear students making disparaging comments about someone's race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion — though more than one in 10 frequently or occasionally hear such comments from students. Fewer have heard disparaging comments from students about someone's disability.

About eight in 10 faculty and staff members say they rarely or never hear faculty or staff members make disparaging comments about someone's race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. More than nine in 10 faculty say they rarely or never hear disparaging comments about someone's disability. Fewer, 65% of faculty, say they have never or rarely heard such comments about someone's area of scholarship or research.

¹⁷ Knight Foundation/Newseum Institute/Gallup Survey of College Students, 2016. This study was a telephone survey. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/pdfs/000/000/184/original/FreeSpeech_campus.pdf

% Never + % Rarely

	Faculty	Staff	
-	ear <u>students</u> making o nsive comments about	lisrespectful, inappropriate someone's?	
RACE OR ETHNICITY	78	72	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	76	71	
GENDER IDENTITY	76	70	
DISABILITY	87	80	
RELIGION	77	71	
or offe	nsive comments about		
RACE OR ETHNICITY	88	79	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	88	80	
GENDER IDENTITY	88	79	
DISABILITY	92	82	
RELIGION	84	76	
AREA OF SCHOLARSHIP	65	69	
	r <u>staff members</u> makin nsive comments about	g disrespectful, inappropriate : someone's?	
RACE OR ETHNICITY	81	87	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	81	87	
GENDER IDENTITY	80	87	
	85	91	
DISABILITY	65	91	

More than six in 10 students (64%) and seven in 10 alumni (73%) have never felt uncomfortable on campus because of something someone said in reference to race, ethnicity, gender or religion, whether or not it was directed at them. Thirty-six percent of students have felt uncomfortable — somewhat more than the one in four students nationally who say this.¹⁸

¹⁸ Jones, J. M. (March 2018). More U.S. college students say campus climate deters speech. Gallup. From the Gallup/Knight Foundation 2017 Telephone Survey of College Students. https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climate-deters-speech. aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=More%2520U.S.%2520College%2520Students% 2520Say%2520Campus%2520Climate%2520Deters%2520Speech

Have you, personally, ever felt uncomfortable in a class, living area, public space or other part of campus because of something someone said in reference to race, ethnicity, gender or religion, whether or not it was directed at you?

STUDENTS	ALUMNI
36% Yes	28% Yes
64% No	73% No

WELCOMING PLACE

Students, faculty, staff and alumni are more likely than not to say their campus is a good place for nine student groups studied. Seven in 10 NU students (70%) and staff members (72%) say their campus is a good place for students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities, as do about six in 10 faculty (64%) and alumni (65%). About six in 10 black students (59%) say it is a good place for students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities, and 23% say it is not a good place. Just more than seven in 10 Asian and Hispanic students say their campus is a good place for students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Results of another study of U.S. college students show students are more likely than not to say their campus is a good place for students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender students.¹⁹ However, as is the case for black students at the University of Nebraska, black college students nationally are more likely than white students to say that their school is not a good place for students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Nearly two-thirds of students (65%) and about six in 10 faculty, staff and alumni say their campus is a good place for lesbian, gay or bisexual students. Similarly, 70% of lesbian, gay or bisexual students say it is a good place for this group. About three in 10 or more of all respondent groups say they don't know whether their campus is a good place for these students. About half of students and staff members and 45% and 42% of faculty and alumni, respectively, say that their campus is a good place for transgender students; no more than 10% of respondents say it is not a good place for these students, and many say they don't know.

About six in 10 in all groups say their campus is a good place for students who are members of religious minorities and, again, about one in 10 in each respondent group says it is not a good place for these students. Most respondents say their campus is a good place for military service members and veterans; about 1% disagree. Of the students who are military service members and veterans, most (71%) agree or strongly agree their campus understands their unique needs – 7% disagree or strongly disagree.

About seven in 10 in each group say their campus is a good place for students with disabilities, and slightly more say their campus is a good place for international and female students. No more than 12% of any respondent group say their campus is not a good place for each of the nine student groups rated.²⁰

¹⁹ Strada-Gallup Survey of U.S. College Students, 2017.

²⁰ Each respondent group indicated whether their campus is a "good place" or "not a good place" for nine groups: students who are members of racial and ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay or bisexual students; transgender students; students who are members of religious minorities; military service members and veterans; students with disabilities; undocumented students who came to the U.S. as youth and have been covered under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; international students; female students. Many respondents indicated they "don't know" whether it is a good place.

Welcoming Place for Student Groups

	Students		Faculty		St	Staff		Alumni	
	% Good place	% Not a good place							
FEMALE STUDENTS	87	3	80	5	79	3	84	4	
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	80	4	77	6	78	3	74	4	
MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS	83	1	83	2	82	1	82	1	
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	74	5	72	5	71	4	68	5	
RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES	70	7	64	12	72	7	65	8	
LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL STUDENTS	65	7	57	9	63	6	58	7	
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES	65	8	57	11	61	8	57	9	
TRANSGENDER STUDENTS	53	9	45	10	51	8	42	9	
UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS	49	9	43	10	46	6	37	7	

Is [Campus Name] a good place or not a good place for:

Note: % Don't know responses are not shown

Faculty and staff members were also asked whether their campus is a good place or not a good place for their peers who are members of seven groups studied.²¹ As was the case for the student groups studied, faculty and staff members are much more likely to say their campus is a good place than they are to say it is not a good place for each group.

Two-thirds of faculty and 76% of staff members say their campus is a good place for colleagues of racial and ethnic minorities; 12% of faculty and 6% of staff members say it is not a good place for these groups. Black faculty and staff members are about as likely to say their campus is a good place (43%) as they are to say it is not a good place (41%) for faculty and staff members who are members of racial and ethnic minorities. Seventy-two percent of Asian and 68% of Hispanic faculty and staff members, respectively, say their campus is a good place for colleagues of racial and ethnic minorities.

²¹ Faculty and staff members indicated whether their campus is a "good place" or "not a good place" for seven groups: faculty and staff members who are members of racial and ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay or bisexual faculty and staff members; transgender faculty and staff members, faculty and staff members who are members of religious minorities; military service members and veterans, faculty and staff members with disabilities; female faculty and staff members.

Majorities of faculty (58%) and staff members (65%) say their campus is a good place for lesbian, gay or bisexual faculty and staff members, while fewer say it is a good place for transgender faculty and staff members. However, many faculty (48%) and staff members (43%) say they don't know whether their campus is a good place for transgender faculty and staff members.

More than six in 10 in each employee group say their campus is a good place for colleagues of religious minorities, and most think it is a good place for military service members and veterans. About seven in 10 in each group say their campus is a good place for faculty and staff members with disabilities.

Three-fourths of faculty and 79% of staff members say their campus is a good place for female colleagues. Somewhat fewer female than male faculty and staff members (77% and 81%, respectively) say their campus is a good place for female colleagues.

Welcoming Place for Faculty and Staff Member Groups

	Fac	ulty	Staff		
	% Good place	% Not a good place	% Good place	% Not a good place	
MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS	80	2	83	1	
FEMALE FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS	75	11	79	7	
FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES	69	5	74	4	
RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES	67	12	76	6	
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES	62	9	66	7	
LESBIAN, GAY OR BISEXUAL FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS	58	8	65	5	
TRANSGENDER FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS	43	9	50	7	

Is [Campus Name] a good place or not a good place for:

Note: % "Don't know" responses are not shown

PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY

Exposure to diverse learning environments has been linked to positive outcomes for students. Findings from a national study of college graduates suggests that exposure to people of different backgrounds is linked to graduates strongly agreeing their college degree was worth the cost and an increased likelihood of being engaged with their work after graduation.²²

Respondent groups were asked how diverse their campus is when considering political viewpoints, race or ethnicity, religious identification, and family income or social class of students, faculty and staff. Majorities of respondents from each group say their campus is at least somewhat diverse in each of the four aspects studied.

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
How diverse do you co	nsider [Camp	us Name] in te	rms of <u>stude</u>	<u>nts'</u>
POLITICAL VIEWPOINT	81	78	82	82
RACE OR ETHNICITY	77	57	76	70
RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION	81	68	82	75
FAMILY INCOME AND SOCIAL CLASS	87	82	85	85
How diverse do you co	onsider [Camp	us Name] in te	erms of <u>facult</u>	<u>:v's</u>
POLITICAL VIEWPOINT	*	73	76	*
RACE OR ETHNICITY	*	63	78	*
RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION	*	76	82	*
FAMILY INCOME AND SOCIAL CLASS	*	67	71	*
How diverse do you consi	der [Campus	Name] in term	s of <u>staff me</u>	<u>mbers'</u>
POLITICAL VIEWPOINT	*	73	82	*
RACE OR ETHNICITY	*	60	71	*
RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION	*	68	78	*
FAMILY INCOME AND SOCIAL CLASS	*	69	81	*
*Question not asked of these arouns				

% Highly diverse + % Somewhat diverse

*Question not asked of these groups

22 Marken, S. (2015). Graduates exposed to diversity believe degree more valuable. Gallup. https://news.gallup.com/poll/186257/graduates-exposed-diversity-believe-degree-valuable.aspx

FREE SPEECH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Most students, faculty, staff and alumni think that using violence to stop a speech is never acceptable, and majorities think that denying news media coverage of a protest or rally on campus is never acceptable. However, there is less consensus about other aspects of free speech on campus.

There has been a good deal of attention on free speech on college campuses nationwide. Several questions in the study addressed free speech, generally, in higher education in the United States.

Results are consistent across the survey groups for many issues, and some student survey results align with results from national studies of college students.²³ For some questions, there is a majority consensus. However, other questions elicited divergent perspectives, suggesting the need for more conversation about these complex topics facing higher education today.

IMPACT OF PROTESTS

Results of the climate study suggest the national context may be complicating free speech issues in higher education. For example, when asked if attention to recent protests on campus has led many prospective students and families to think their institutions are less welcoming of diverse populations than is really the case, respondents' opinions diverge. Almost three in 10 students (28%) and alumni (28%) and slightly more faculty (35%) and staff members (31%) agree or strongly agree that attention to protests on campus has led many prospective students and families to think colleges and universities are less welcoming of diverse populations than is really the case. These percentages are somewhat less than the nearly half of U.S. college and university presidents who agree or strongly agree the attention is yielding such perceptions.²⁴

²³ Gallup-Knight Foundation 2017 Survey of College Students. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/pdfs/000/000/248/original/Knight_Foundation_Free_Expression_on_

Campus 2017.pdf

^{24 2017} Inside Higher Ed Survey of U.S. College and University Presidents https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/political-turmoil-public-misunderstanding-survey-presidents



More than half of all respondents — students, faculty, staff members and alumni — say that colleges and universities should allow all types of speech, including speech that is offensive or biased against certain groups of people. Four in 10 or fewer among all respondent groups say that institutions should prohibit offensive or biased speech or expression of viewpoints.



POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A majority of all respondents favor establishing safe spaces and "free speech zones" in which distribution of literature is permitted — about two in 10 oppose such designated areas. More than eight in 10 students nationally favor establishing such places.²⁵

Students, faculty and alumni are about as likely to oppose as they are to favor canceling planned speeches because of concerns about the possibility of violent protests. Staff members are somewhat more likely to favor canceling them for this reason. Four in 10 NU students favor canceling planned speeches due to the possibility of violent protests, and just as many oppose this action. More students nationally — about seven in 10 — favor canceling them for this reason.²⁶ Most respondents oppose disinviting speakers because some students oppose the invitation.

	5	Student	S		Faculty			Staff			Alumni	
	% Favor	% Oppose	% Don't know									
Providing safe spaces, or areas of campus students can go for support	73	20	7	77	16	7	80	14	6	71	24	5
Establishing a free-speech zone	68	20	12	68	21	12	72	18	11	68	22	10
Canceling planned speeches because of concerns about the possibility of violent protests	41	43	17	41	43	15	49	37	15	43	43	15
Disinviting speakers because some students are opposed to the invitation	9	78	13	6	81	13	8	77	16	10	78	12

Please say whether you would favor or oppose each of the following actions taken by some colleges and universities.

25 Gallup-Knight Foundation 2017 Survey of College Students https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/pdfs/000/000/248/original/Knight_Foundation_Free_Expression_on_ Campus_2017.pdf

26 Gallup-Knight Foundation 2017 Survey of College Students https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climate-deters-speech.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_ medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=item_&g_content=More%2520U.S.%2520College%2520Students%2520Say%2520Campus%2520Climate% 2520Deters%2520Speech More than seven in 10 respondents think colleges and universities should be able to restrict intentionally offensive language, while more than two in 10 say they should not. Somewhat fewer, about six in 10 in each group surveyed, think colleges should be able to restrict wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups. These results are similar to the majorities of college students nationally who favor these restrictions.²⁷

Fewer NU students, about one in four, think colleges should be able to restrict the expression of political views that are offensive to certain groups. These findings are similar to results from a 2016 survey of U.S. college students in which a little more than one in four said colleges should be able to restrict the expression of political views that may be upsetting or offensive to certain groups.²⁸

% Yes, colleges and universities should be able to restrict

Again, in your opinion, do you think colleges and universities should or should not be able to establish policies restricting each of the following types of speech or expression on campus?

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
Using slurs and other language on campus that are intentionally offensive to certain groups	71	71	72	74
Wearing costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups	59	56	59	60
Expressing political views that are upsetting or offensive to certain groups	27	23	27	26

²⁷ Jones, J. M. (April 2016). College students oppose restrictions on political speech.

https://news.gallup.com/poll/190451/college-students-oppose-restrictions-political-speech.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_ medium=tile_2&g_campaign=item_229085&g_content=College%2520Students%2520Oppose%2520Restrictions%2520on%2520Political% 2520Speech

POSSIBLE ACTIONS BY STUDENTS

Nearly all respondents oppose violence as a means to stop a speech, protest or rally, and most think it is sometimes or always acceptable to distribute literature on controversial topics. Most faculty, staff members and alumni (82%, 73% and 70%, respectively) think it's never acceptable for college students to deny news media access to cover a protest or rally on campus, though fewer students (62%) say it's never acceptable to deny media access. Likewise, college students nationally largely oppose using violence to stop a protest, and they largely oppose denying access to news media to cover a protest.²⁹

About half or more in all respondent groups say it is never acceptable to shout down speakers or prevent them from speaking. Respondents are split on whether it is acceptable to engage in sit-ins or other attempts to disrupt operations in campus buildings. While about two in 10 in each group say it is always acceptable to do this, at least four in 10 say it is sometimes acceptable. About one in four students, faculty and alumni and 32% of staff members say it is never acceptable to engage in operationally disruptive sit-ins. Most respondents, including 85% of students and 89% of faculty, say it is always acceptable to engage in peaceful counter-protests.

% Never acceptable

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
Using violence to stop a speech, protest or rally	93	97	96	94
Denying the news media access to cover a protest or rally on campus	62	82	73	70
Shouting down speakers or trying to prevent them from talking	52	57	55	49
Engaging in sit-ins or similar attempts to disrupt operations in campus buildings	24	26	32	25
Engaging in protests against speakers	10	7	10	9
Distributing pamphlets or literature on controversial issues	4	3	5	3
Engaging in peaceful counter-protests	1	1	1	1

Do you think each of the following actions that could be taken by college students are always acceptable, sometimes acceptable or never acceptable?

29 Jones, J. M. (March 2017). More U.S. college students say campus climate deters speech. https://news.gallup.com/poll/229085/college-students-say-campus-climate-deters-speech.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g

Looking Ahead

The University of Nebraska climate study can support conversations about ongoing efforts to build a healthy, vibrant institutional climate. The study's results inform many of the critical issues that higher education institutions across the U.S. are carefully considering. And while results of the study reflect that the University of Nebraska is a good place for diverse people and ideas to flourish, they also reveal there is work to be done to ensure a welcoming and respectful environment for all. Results suggest opportunity for the University of Nebraska to boost transparent communication, capitalize on willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue, foster relationship-building with those with different perspectives and champion free expression while honoring others.

Issues surrounding free speech and climate in higher education are broad and complex, and navigating them requires a host of contributing voices and patient — but urgent — planning. To make progress in optimizing the experiences of all students, staff, faculty and alumni at the University of Nebraska, it is necessary to broach the issues with humility, courage *and* intentionality. This study serves as one step in the quest to support a culture of asking and listening.

Methodology

This report includes results from a quantitative research study that Gallup conducted on behalf of the University of Nebraska. The objective of the study was to learn about the opinions and perceptions of students, faculty, staff and alumni about a broad range of issues related to free speech and climate. Gallup developed the surveys with input from a system wide project team of faculty and staff members.

Data are from web-based surveys conducted with faculty and staff members from April 12-29, 2018, and alumni from May 14-29, 2018. To attempt a census of each population, Gallup sent email invitations to 47,951 currently enrolled students, 15,233 faculty and staff members, and 42,631 recent alumni (within the last five years) provided by the University of Nebraska. Gallup sent a series of email reminders throughout the data collection period to increase participation.

PARTICIPATION RATES BY RESPONDENT GROUP

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
SAMPLE SIZE	4,403	1,801	3,616	2,815
PARTICIPATION RATE	9%	32%	38%	7%

Gallup analyzed the student, faculty and staff samples for nonresponse, comparing the final sample distribution to statistics provided by the University of Nebraska for each of the key populations. The sample approximated students' race and ethnicity. Women and graduate-level students participated at a slightly higher rate, which is consistent with survey trends nationally. Gallup weighted the student sample to account for differential response rates among subgroups of the population and to ensure the final sample more closely approximated the currently enrolled student population. The faculty and staff sample approximated the university system gender distribution. Gallup did not weight the alumni and faculty sample. Similarly, alumni survey data were not weighted, as Gallup's review suggested weighting was not required.

In some cases, reported frequencies may not add up to 100% due to rounding. "Don't know" and "Choose not to answer" responses are included in the results.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

		Race		
	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
WHITE	82%	86%	91%	87%
BLACK	3%	3%	3%	3%
ASIAN	8%	7%	3%	4%
HISPANIC	7%	3%	3%	5%
OTHER	0%	1%	1%	1%

Which of the following do you currently describe yourself as?

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
MALE	46%	49%	37%	45%
FEMALE	51%	46%	58%	53%
TRANSGENDER	0%	0%	0%	0%
NON-BINARY OR GENDER QUEER	1%	0%	0%	1%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	2%	5%	5%	2%

Which of the following do you consider yourself to be? You can select more than one.

	Students	Faculty	Staff	Alumni
STRAIGHT OR HETEROSEXUAL	87%	89%	89%	89%
LESBIAN	1%	2%	1%	1%
GAY	3%	2%	1%	3%
BISEXUAL	7%	2%	2%	5%
QUEER	2%	1%	1%	2%
SAME-GENDER LOVING	1%	1%	0%	1%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	3%	7%	7%	3%



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