

# Student Climate

## Students Who Have Disabilities

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

### Student Affairs Assessment Report

Fall 2007

The Climate for Diversity Survey was developed to study the experiences and perceptions of University students related to the campus climate. Results are intended to inform programs, services, and policies and track changes. The survey addresses a variety of climate issues related to student opinions and experiences. Eight specific qualities of diversity are considered in a broad sense in the survey, including 1) race/ethnicity, 2) gender, 3) political orientation, 4) financial standing, 5) age, 6) religion, 7) disability and 8) sexual orientation. The analysis rendered on the academic, social, and overall satisfaction scales are addressed in this report. Total sample (n = 4218)

### Introduction

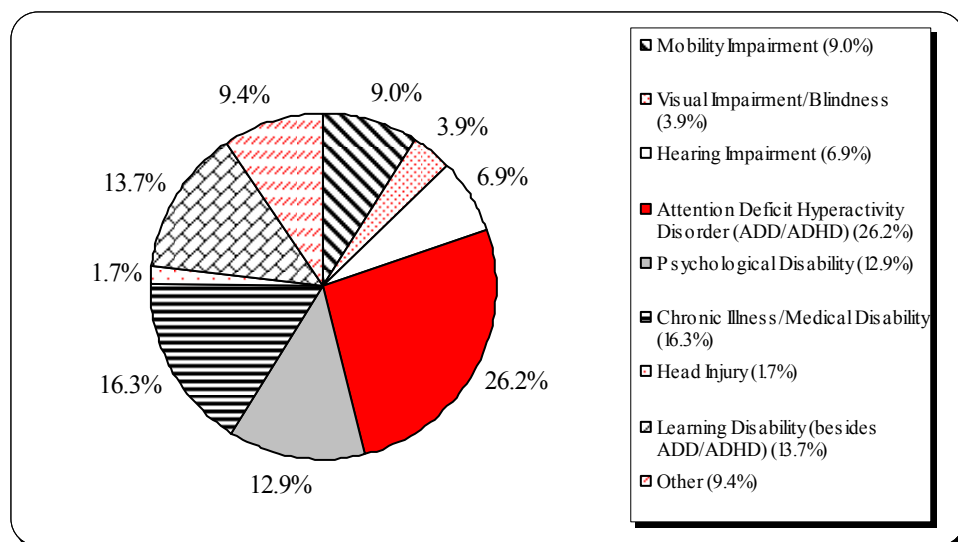
#### Student Climate for Diversity Survey

The mission of the Office for Disability Services (ODS) is to collaborate with and empower students who have disabilities in order to coordinate support services and programs that enable equal access to an education and university life. In the Climate for Diversity Survey, students with disabilities were included as a sub-population in order to assess their overall satisfaction with their university experience. While no specific questions were asked in regards to satisfaction with ODS, the following analysis is intended to grasp a better understanding of students' with disabilities university experience and the need for an office such as ODS.

#### Methodology

An invitation to complete the survey was sent to students in an email with a link to an on-line survey instrument. A random sample of 21,000 students registered on the Columbus campus during spring quarter 2006 were sent survey invitations. A total of 4,128 students completed the survey yielding a response rate of 19.7%. Of those students, 233 (5.6%) reported having a diagnosed and documented disability. These students were asked to report their most prominent disability. Their responses are presented in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1. Students' Most Prominent Disabilities**



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# Findings

Students with disabilities were asked to rate the academic/classroom accessibility of the university in a host of areas. Responses were coded as follows: 1-Very Poor, 2-Poor, 3-Fair, 4-Good, 5-Very Good, 6-Excellent, and 7-Exceptional. **Table 1** Contains the mean and mode scores for each of the areas included in the survey.

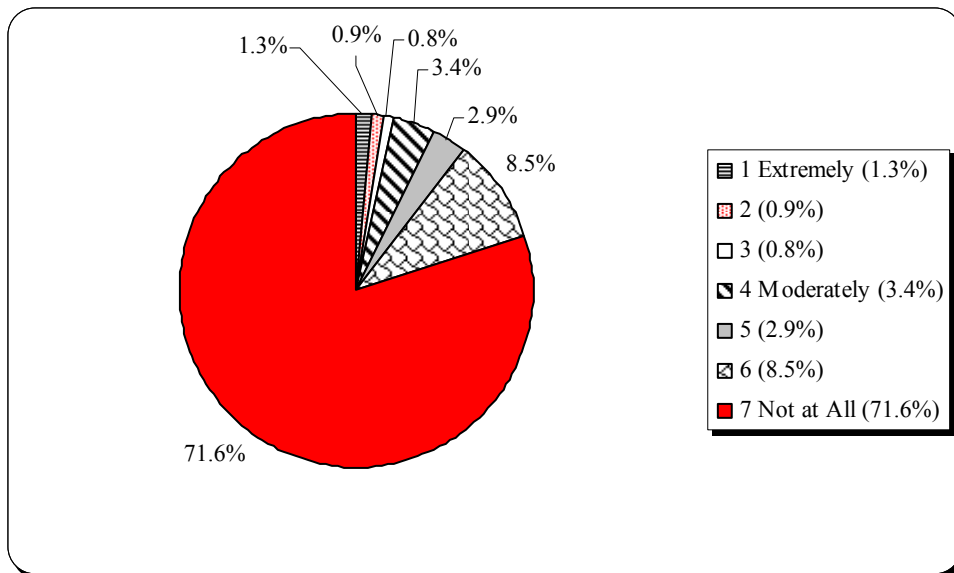
The lowest mean score regarding academic/classroom accessibility of the university is 4.53 in the area of receiving academic advising. The highest mean score is 5.22 in the area of registering for classes. The lowest mode score is 4.00 in the areas of instructional materials, classroom instruction, websites, audio-visual presentations, applying for financial aid, paying tuition and fees, eating on campus, and participating in campus events. The highest mode score is 7.00 in the areas of receiving academic advising and registering for classes. The average rating of the University’s accessibility for the included areas by these students based on their disabilities is 4.65 (between “good” and “very good”). This suggests that students with disabilities who participated in this study are generally satisfied with the academic/classroom accessibility of the university in these areas.

**Table 1. Academic/Classroom Accessibility**

Based on your disability, rate the academic/classroom accessibility of the university in the following areas:	Mean N=233	Mode N=233
Instructional Materials (e.g. text books, handouts)	4.64	4.00
Classroom Instruction (e.g. lectures, activities)	4.55	4.00
Test-taking	4.61	6.00
Websites	4.70	4.00
Audio Visual Presentations (i.e. PowerPoint, overheads, videos)	4.86	4.00
Receiving Academic Advising	4.53	7.00
Registering for Classes	5.22	7.00
Applying for Financial Aid	4.22	4.00
Paying Tuition and Fees	4.59	4.00
Eating on Campus	4.61	4.00
Participating in Campus Events	4.66	4.00

\*Only includes students with disabilities

**Figure 2. Contributions to Class Are Devalued Based on Disability/Ability**



**Figure 2** shows students’ with disabilities responses to the question “to what degree do you believe your contributions to class discussion are devalued based on your disability/ability.” A total of 6.4 percent of students with disabilities extremely to moderately agree with the statement while 83.0% of these respondents disagree with the statement to some extent.

\*Only includes students with disabilities

Respondents were also asked to rate the physical accessibility in a number of locations on campus. Responses were coded from 1-Very Poor to 7-Excellent. **Table 2** reveals the mean and mode of student responses to this question. The lowest mean score is 4.00 related to the physical accessibility of classrooms, administrative buildings, restrooms, grounds, parking, recreational sports facilities, athletic facilities, and public transportation. The highest mean score is 5.00 regarding the physical accessibility of libraries, residence halls, college union/student center, and campus transportation. The lowest mode score is 3.00 for grounds, parking, recreational sports facilities, and athletic facilities physical accessibility. The highest mode score is 6.00 for administrative buildings', libraries', residence halls', college union/student center, campus transportation's, and public transportation's physical accessibility. The average mean score of physical accessibility for these areas is 4.33 which is between "good" and "very good." This suggests that these students are generally satisfied with the physical accessibility of the campus.

**Table 2. Physical Accessibility**

Please rate the physical accessibility of the university in the following areas:	Mean	Mode
	N=233	N=233
Classrooms	4.00	4.00
Administrative Buildings	4.00	6.00
Restrooms	4.00	5.00
Grounds (e.g. snow, construction, etc...)	4.00	3.00
Parking	4.00	3.00
Libraries	5.00	6.00
Recreational Sports Facilities	4.00	3.00
Athletic Facilities	4.00	3.00
Residence Halls	5.00	6.00
College Union/Student Center	5.00	6.00
Campus Transportation	5.00	6.00
Public Transportation	4.00	6.00

\*Only includes students with disabilities

**Table 3. Comparison of Student Opinions**

To what degree do you agree with this statement:	Students with Disabilities N=233  Mean	Other Students N=3972  Mean
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this college/university.*	5.37	5.78
I feel as though I belong to this campus community.*	4.97	5.30
The overall quality of academic programs at this college/university is excellent.*	5.40	5.60
This college/university provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.*	5.38	5.68
An environment that includes people different from me improves my quality of education.	6.06	5.87
I would recommend this college/university to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college.*	5.58	5.87

**Table 3** is a comparison of the means of the opinions of students in the survey who identify having a diagnosed/documentated disability and those who do not. Responses were coded from 1- Strongly Disagree to 7- Strongly Agree. The results reveal that there were statistically significant mean differences between these two groups regarding overall satisfaction with experiences at the university, feeling as though the student belongs to the campus community, overall quality of academic programs at the university, the university as an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs, and whether the student would recommend the university to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college. Students without disabilities had a greater propensity (Mean = 5.68 or between slightly agree and agree) to agree with the aforementioned statements than students with disabilities (Mean = 5.46 or between slightly agree and agree).

\*= statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$

## SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses of the 233 students with disabilities included in this study indicate that these students are generally satisfied with the academic/classroom and physical accessibility of the university. The means for these two areas are 4.65 and 4.33 respectively. In other words, their opinions of these services and buildings at the university are between good and very good. The results also reveal that students included in the survey who do not identify having a diagnosed/documentated disabilities were more likely to agree with the statement “overall, I am satisfied with my experience at this college/university.” The difference between these students and those who identify having a disability was statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Nonetheless, both groups appear to have positive opinions of the university according to the results in **Table 3**.

**Figure 2** are students’ with disabilities responses to the question “to what degree do you believe your contributions to class discussion are devalued based on your disability/ability.” While 83.0% of these students disagree with this statement to some degree, a total of 6.4% agree with it. In **Table 2**, the mode score for the physical accessibility for campus grounds, parking, recreational sports facilities, and athletic facilities is 3 (or fair). This suggests there is still room for improvement. It is for this reason that ODS and similar offices are necessary in order to improve the quality of life and education for this sub-population of students.

As stated earlier, there were no specific questions included in this study concerning students’ with disabilities satisfaction with ODS. Thus, an assessment of this particular office’s fulfillment of its mission cannot be conducted. Further inquiries should be made in terms of those students included in the sample who have used ODS in order to assess the effectiveness of this office. These findings, however, are useful in terms of gauging students’ with disabilities educational and university life experiences thus far. The results suggest that Ohio State has shown the ability to provide a positive atmosphere for all of its students regardless of abilities/disabilities.

[http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/sa\\_assessment.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/sa_assessment.asp)

**Additional information on the Student Climate for Diversity Study is available through the Office of Student Affairs Assessment at (614) 247-6220.**

### Resources:

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