

# THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING CAMPUS CLIMATE AND DIVERSITY

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# Agenda

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- Current context in higher education—Why Diverse Learning Environments matter
- Briefly introduce DLE as a tool for assessing institutional climate and practices and how they relate to student outcomes
- Putting results to use on campus
- Discussion and Questions

# Why Assess Diversity on Campus?

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- Move from reactive stance to proactive stance
- Research now demonstrates that diversity is an asset in learning—we need to know more about creating the conditions to optimize engagement and desired outcomes
- Understand the experiences of target populations to diminish inequity and improve experiences
- Understand how to improve services to meet student needs

*Transformation is fostered by both external and a strong internal impetus for equity and improvement.*

# DLE Instrument

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- Inclusive of diverse social identities
- Longitudinal, encourage its use linked with other student data
- Modules targeting specific topics

# Conceptualization of Diverse Learning Environments and Assessment

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- Built a survey that linked
  - ▣ **Climate** (perceptions and behaviors)
  - ▣ **Practices** (what institutions do)
  - ▣ **Student outcomes** (what students can do)
  
- Allows campuses to link climate with actual programs and practices, and student participation in educational activity associated with diversity

# Key Survey Themes and Constructs

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## Climate (Perceptions, Behaviors)

- ❑ Discrimination and Harassment
- ❑ Positive Cross-racial Interaction
- ❑ Negative Cross-racial Interaction
- ❑ Institutional Commitment to Diversity
- ❑ Academic Validation in the Classroom
- ❑ Conversations Across Difference
- ❑ Student Financial Difficulty
- ❑ General Interpersonal Validation
- ❑ Sense of Belonging

## Practices

### **Student Participation in:**

- ❑ Curriculum of Inclusion
- ❑ Co-Curricular Diversity Activities
- ❑ Navigation
- ❑ Student Support Services

# Key Survey Themes and Constructs

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## Outcomes

- ❑ Integration of Learning
- ❑ Habits of Mind
- ❑ Pluralistic Orientation
- ❑ Social Agency
- ❑ Civic Engagement
- ❑ Academic Self-Concept

# Sense of Belonging ( $\alpha = .864$ )

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**Measures the extent to which students feel a sense of academic and social integration on campus**

*Please Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:*

I feel a sense of belonging to my campus (.884)

I feel that I am a member of this college (.836)

I see myself as a part of the campus community (.787)

If asked, I would recommend this college to others (.611)



# Academic Validation in the Classroom ( $\alpha = .895$ )

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## The extent to which students view of faculty actions in class reflect concern for their academic success

*Please indicate how often you have experienced the following in class at this college:*

Felt that faculty provided me with feedback that helped me assess my progress in class (.857)

Felt like my contributions were valued in class (.852)

Faculty were able to determine my level of understanding of the course material (.799)

Felt that faculty encouraged me to ask questions and participate in discussions (.790)

# Curriculum of Inclusion ( $\alpha = 0.902$ )

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Measures the number of courses a student has taken that include materials and pedagogy addressing diversity

*How many courses have you taken at this institution that included the following:*

Materials/readings about race/ethnicity (.829)

Materials/readings about socioeconomic class differences (.829)

Materials/readings about gender (.789)

Materials/readings about privilege (.784)

Materials/readings about sexual orientation (.783)

Opportunities for intensive dialog between students with different backgrounds and beliefs (.701)

Materials/readings about disability (.610)

Opportunities to study and serve communities in need (e.g., service learning) (.506)

# Habits of Mind ( $\alpha = .862$ )

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*Since entering this college how often have you:*

Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others (.721)

Evaluate the quality and reliability of information you received (.703)

Seek alternate solutions to a problem (.671)

Support your opinions with a logical argument (.670)

Seek feedback on your academic work (.612)

Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for class (.597)

Take a risk because you had more to gain (.593)

Ask questions in class (.537)

Revise your papers to improve your writing (.537)

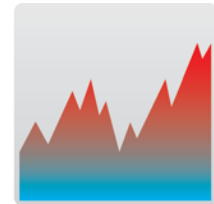
Accept mistakes as part of the learning process (.518)

Look up scientific research articles and resources (.501)

# The DLE at UCLA

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- Participant population
  - ▣ All currently enrolled undergraduates invited to participate (N=25,210)
  - ▣ Response rate (including partial responders) 36%
    - n=7597
  
- Administered core survey and intergroup relations module

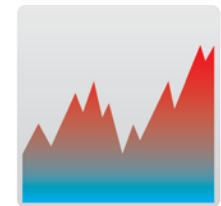


*What's UCLA's temperature?*  
Tell us about campus climate.  
Participate in the DLE Survey.

# Recruitment Strategy—UCLA

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- Incentives
  - ▣ Tiered guaranteed incentive structure tied to response rates
  - ▣ Pool of prizes for 1) early responders & 2) all respondents
  - ▣ All survey participants invited to a symposium presentation of results facilitated by VC Montero and other senior leaders.
  
- Engaging multiple stakeholder groups
  - ▣ Student Affairs
  - ▣ Students
  - ▣ Broader campus

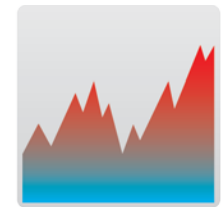


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# Making Sense of Campus Data

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- HERI Reporting
  - Statistical significance v. Effect size
  
- Focus on factors as a starting point—conceptual areas for consideration, but creating reporting that shows data for individual items.
  
- Next Steps: Disaggregation by sub-groups
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Class/SES?

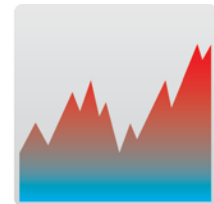


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# DLE Factors

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- Factors where UCLA scores higher than comparison:
  - Sense of Belonging
  - Institutional Commitment to Diversity
  - Negative Cross Racial Interaction
  - Civic Engagement
  - Academic Self Concept (very small difference)
- Factors where UCLA scores lower than comparison:
  - General Interpersonal Validation
  - Academic Validation in the Classroom
  - Curriculum of Inclusion
  - Integration of Learning
  - Habits of Mind
  - Pluralistic Orientation



*What's UCLA's temperature?*  
Tell us about campus climate.  
Participate in the DLE Survey.

# DLE, UCUES, and Other Surveys

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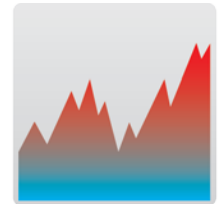
- Ongoing discussion of high agreement/positive findings on climate items on other surveys versus concerns brought by students
- Disaggregation of responses by race/ethnicity categories often doesn't yield major differences.
  - ▣ Exception is items specifically referencing the term "diversity."
- Climate items on UCUES fall primarily into categories that map to "Sense of Belonging" and "Discrimination and Bias" factors
- DLE will allow us to explore certain areas in depth and provide a more nuanced understanding of what we are seeing on our campus.



# Engagement with the Campus

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- Engagement with Students
  - ▣ Student seminar
  - ▣ Symposium
  - ▣ Connecting with student government
- Committee to focus on translating results into action
  - ▣ What are implications of findings for SA and broader campus?
  - ▣ Identifying stakeholders beyond SA
  - ▣ Connecting with existing groups on campus working in area of diversity



***What's UCLA's temperature?***  
Tell us about campus climate.  
Participate in the DLE Survey.

# The DLE at Harvey Mudd College

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- Participant population
  - ▣ 198 sophomores and 184 juniors – 382 total - invited to participate
  - ▣ 72 sophomores and 75 juniors – 187 total - participated, yielding a response rate of 48.95%
- Demographics
  - ▣ Sophomores = 35 women & 37 men
  - ▣ Juniors = 39 men & 36 men

# Harvey Mudd College (con't)

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- Generating student interest and participation
  - ▣ Invitation to students linked directly to HMC priorities:
    - Strategic vision: “Excellence and Diversity at All Levels”
    - WASC Reaccreditation self-study theme: “Diversity”
    - Issue is important to many HMC students
- Other things that worked well
  - ▣ Solid relationship between Office of Institutional Diversity and student body
  - ▣ Name entered into a drawing for a Flip video camera

# Harvey Mudd College (con't)

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- DLE Survey components used at HMC:
  - Main survey
  - Classroom Climate
  - Intergroup Relations

# Key findings for HMC:

## Main Survey

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- Mean score for all HMC students significantly lower at 99% confidence level ( $p < .001$ ) for:
  - It will take me longer to graduate than I had planned
  - I may have to choose between financially supporting my family and going to college
  - Used financial aid advising
  - Discussed course content with students outside of class
  - College appreciates differences in sexual orientation
  - College has lots of racial tension
  - Studied/prepared for class with students of different race  
Socialized/partied with students of different race
  - Personal importance: Influencing the political structure
  - Personal importance: Helping to promote racial understanding
  - Personal importance: Becoming a community leader
  - Personal importance: Participating in community action program

# Key findings for HMC:

## Main Survey (con't)

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- Mean score for all HMC students significantly higher at 99% confidence level ( $p < .001$ ) for:
  - At least one staff member has taken an interest in my development
  - People in my community are counting on me to do well in college
  - Personal importance: Working to correct social and economic inequalities
  - Personal importance: Helping others who are in difficulty

# Key findings for HMC: Classroom Climate Module

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- Mean score for all HMC students significantly different at 99% confidence level ( $p < .001$ ) for:
  - ▣ Faculty know student's names (higher)
  - ▣ Faculty communicate high expectations for student performance (higher)
  - ▣ Faculty have open discussions on privilege, power, oppression (lower)
  - ▣ Faculty are passionate about what they teach (higher)

# Key findings for HMC:

## Intergroup Relations Module

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- Mean score for all HMC students significantly lower at 99% confidence level ( $p < .001$ ) for:
  - I have a lot of pride in my racial/ethnic group and its accomplishments
  - I feel a strong attachment to my own racial/ethnic group
  - I can help people from different groups use conflict constructively
  - I have spent a lot of time trying to learn more about my identity group
  - I have been in situations where I was the only person of my race/ethnic group
  - When people feel proud of the accomplishments of someone of their racial/ethnic group, I feel some of their pride as well
  - Made efforts to educate myself about other groups
  - Thought about: ability/disability status
  - Thought about: race/ethnicity



# Comments and Questions

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