CLEMSON UNIVERSITY AS A WORKPLACE:
FINDINGS FROM
A SURVEY OF BLACK STAFF

Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina, USA

Prepared for The President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff of Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, USA
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY AS A WORKPLACE: FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF BLACK STAFF

Report prepared for Clemson University’s President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff

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Clemson University Black Staff Survey, 2005. ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current study focused on an assessment of Clemson University as a workplace as experienced by black staff. A mail survey was conducted during late Winter, 2005. Most (86.0%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Clemson is a good place to work. Over half (62.4%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel that they can succeed at Clemson. Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they feel welcome at Clemson.

Men and women were similar in agreeing that there is a tendency at Clemson to emphasize differences by rank and that supervisors tend to favor whites in raises. Their ratings on the emphasis on diversity also were similar. Women were significantly more likely to agree that minority staff feel that they should not voice their opinions.

In terms of experiencing racism, women were significantly more likely to report unfair treatment by a non-minority co-worker, unfair treatment by a non-minority supervisor, harassment by a non-minority staff, harassment by a non-minority coworker, harassment by a non-minority supervisor, discrimination by non-minority faculty, and discrimination by a non-minority coworker. In terms of witnessing racism, women were significantly more likely to report witnessing discrimination by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment of other black staff by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment of other black staff by non-minority coworkers, unfair treatment of other black staff by non-minority staff, and unfair treatment of other black staff by non-minority faculty.

In the overall assessment, men tended to rate Clemson more favorably than did women. There were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents on the item, “In general, there is a sense of mutual respect between upper administration and classified black staff.” Females were significantly more likely to disagree that they feel like a valued member of the Clemson “family” and that they are treated fairly by Clemson.

These findings are similar to other corporate and academic workplace climate studies. Recommendations are suggested for improving the workplace climate for minority staff at Clemson.
INTRODUCTION

“Chilly climate,” as defined by Hall and Sandler (1982), occurs when an employee (or student) and/or their work is singled out, ignored or discounted solely on the basis of an ascribed trait. According to Selden and Selden (2001) the two ascribed traits which affect workplace productivity the most are race/ethnicity and sex. Hall and Sandler’s (1982) study focused on women in academia, particularly undergraduate and graduate students. The study identified more than thirty-five discriminatory acts. These acts included male students being called on in class more often than female students, professors using sex-stereotyped examples, and comments about female students’ physical attributes. The key element in Hall and Sandler’s study is the idea that the actions that create a “chilly climate” are often of a subtle, yet significant, nature. Their second report (Sandler and Hall, 1986) focused on the treatment of women faculty, administrators, and graduate students. A similar study by Turner, Myers and Creswell (1999), conducted among 487 colleges and universities, concluded that minority faculty (non-white) experience subtle discriminatory actions such as being denied or overlooked for tenure and promotion, being held to higher standards, and being a “token” faculty member.

Other studies reinforce the idea that “chilling out” (sometimes also called “muting;” see Meares et al., 2004), can occur in both corporate and academic workplaces – and has negative consequences for both the individual and the workplace. The chilling out may take the form of social exclusion, being the recipient of demeaning or insulting behavior, being excluded from decision making, or being given the message that one is neither wanted nor needed (Bronstein and Farnsworth, 1998; Meares et al., 2004). Regardless of the form that the chilling out may take, or even how subtle the chilling out might be, research suggests that its effects are very real.

Workplace diversity has been increasingly emphasized in the United States for a number of reasons. These include remedying the effects of past discrimination, reducing interpersonal stress and conflict, and reducing the risk of legal action (Cox, 1993; Hubbard, 2004; Sanchez and Medkik, 2004). There also is a growing sentiment that workplace diversity is crucial to success in the globalized marketplace. In addition, given the increasing diversity of the American adult population, workplace diversity is

• A “chilly climate” refers to an environment in which an employee or student is treated differently, often subtly so, on the basis of an ascribed characteristic such as race or sex.

• This treatment can be very subtle, but is real in its impact.

• As more workplaces - both academic and corporate - place greater attention on workplace diversity, there also has been an increased focus on workplace culture and climate.

• Workplace diversity is used to remedy past discrimination, reduce the risk of legal action, reduce interpersonal conflict and stress, and tap into the skills and abilities of an increasing diverse population in a global marketplace.
• Research documents a direct correlation between workplace climate and productivity.

• Merely increasing the numbers of minorities in a workplace does not decrease discrimination.

• Policies embracing workplace diversity, implementation plans for diversity, and training also must be in place.

• Studies show that women and minorities need workplace cultures that foster a sense of belongingness, make them feel like part of the “family,” and offer them social support and the opportunity to build networks and broaden and improve their skills.

• Feedback on job performance and support of supervisors also are critical to a supportive, inclusive, and productive work environment.

seen as a great strategy for tapping into the skills, knowledge, and abilities of women and minorities - to the benefit of companies themselves (Seldon and Seldon, 2001).

According to Patterson et al. (2004) there is a direct correlation between a company’s organizational climate and its productivity. It has been documented that low levels of discrimination within the workplace are positively related to work motivation, job satisfaction and job involvement - three of the characteristics shown to increase productivity (Patterson et al., 2004).

A growing number of studies show a trend among colleges and universities to focus on workplace climate. According to Gillespie and associates (2001), stress levels of faculty and staff affect productivity more than any other affective quality. Another study, conducted by Deitch and associates (2003) illustrated that discrimination in the workplace, or, a “chilly climate,” is the leading cause of stress on the job.

As more research documents the direct correlation between workplace climate and productivity, employers are becoming more aware of an increasing need for ameliorating everyday discrimination. According to David Batstone (2004), the key element in decreasing discrimination (thus increasing productivity) is increasing diversity in the workplace. However, merely increasing numbers of minority workers without improving diversity awareness is not effective. Batstone concludes, from his review of five companies, that the key elements in successfully creating a diverse workplace (whether corporate or academic) include organizational commitment, implementation of a plan, and follow up training for all employees (see also Allison, 1999).

Other research points to the importance of a workplace culture in which minorities and women feel a real sense of belongingness, see themselves as part of the workplace “family,” receive feedback about their job performance, are encouraged to enhance and broaden their skills, are supported by their supervisors, and enjoy social support and the opportunities to build networks (Bailey et al., 1996; Friedman and Holtom, 2002; McQuire, 2002; Patterson et al., 2004).
The current study explores perceptions of workplace culture, workplace experiences, and employee assessments of their workplace. The setting is an academic workplace, and the respondents are Black Classified Staff.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Corporate and Workplace Studies

Businesses and corporations are increasingly aware of the importance of a supportive, collegial and diverse workplace. A number of recent studies show that workplace climate directly affects company productivity. For example, a study of forty-two manufacturing companies in the United Kingdom, conducted by Malcolm Patterson and associates, tested organizational climate, overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational performance. The results of the surveys showed that average satisfaction and organizational commitment were direct predictors of productivity (Patterson, Warr & West, 2004).

Studies of workplace climate reflect the increasing interest in both workplace diversity and the effects of discrimination on the job. According to Tomei (2003), discrimination can be both direct and indirect. The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation” (Tomei, 2003, p. 401). Workplace discrimination thus refers to the differential and inequitable treatment based on personal characteristics and social category membership.

The most recent addition to the discrimination and university/workplace culture literature is the idea that a more subtle, everyday discrimination exists. Research shows that discrimination is not disappearing but is “being replaced by less overt forms” which occur on a more regular basis (Deitch, et al., 2003, p.1301). This more subtle form of discrimination early on was referred to as “chilling out” by Hall and Sandler (1982; see also Sandler, 1993).
A review of several previous studies concluded that everyday discrimination leads to lower job satisfaction, higher stress levels, self-esteem and psychological difficulties, and a decrease in physical health and well-being (Deitch, et al., 2003). Other empirical studies support these conclusions (Ensher et al., 2001; Shin and Kleiner, 2001; Feagin and McKinney, 2003).

In a study of employees at a large research and development firm that had over 1,000 employees, Meares et al. (2004) found that employees who, from their perspective, are treated unfairly or suffer what they see as mistreatment over time, find their voices to be muted in the workplace. Meares et al. cite previous research indicating that women and members of minority groups are the most frequent targets of this mistreatment and silencing. In their own study, they found that the more highly educated, majority group, and male employees tended to avoid becoming muted or silenced over time. However, women and members of minority groups did not have the same experience. Rather, gender and ethnicity were key factors in employee mistreatment and muting over time. The authors attribute part of this mistreatment of women and minorities in this workplace to ambiguities in policies and ambiguities in what is considered mistreatment.

Beyond lower job satisfaction and higher stress, everyday discrimination can have lasting financial consequences for those who experience it.

Barriers to networking can stymy promotions and salary increases.

The discriminatory treatment itself now is sometimes referred to as "micro-inequalities" (Renzetti and Curran, 2003) or as "people mistreatment" (Meares et al., 2004).

• “Micro-inequalities” and “people mistreatment” are alternative terms for subtle discrimination.

• Women and minorities are most frequently the targets of mistreatment in the workplace.

• Mistreatment is associated with ambiguities in policies and ambiguities in what is considered mistreatment.

• Everyday discrimination not only is a source of stress for workers, but it is related to health problems, absenteeism, and lowered productivity.

• Everyday discrimination can have lasting financial consequences for those who experience it.

• Barriers to networking can stymy promotions and salary increases.

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Beyond lower job satisfaction and higher stress, everyday discrimination can have lasting financial effects as well. Women and minorities still face challenges in building networks that improve their skills and knowledge - and their probability of promotion or pay increases (Bronstein and Farnsworth, 1998; Seidel et al., 2000; McGuire, 2002). Women and minorities work and strive, but their status and paychecks do not improve. Sometimes, problems in network groups foster employee turnover among minorities (Friedman and Holtom, 2002).
Selden and Selden (2001) document that employee demographics in the United States are changing rapidly, with a great influx of minorities and immigrants. They found that employers increasingly recognize that race/ethnicity and gender are the most important demographics in creating a multicultural model of diversity and that corporations can make use of the demographic diversity of their employees to “better serve the needs” of the workplace climate (Selden & Selden, 2001, p. 304). In a similar vein, Aghazadeh (2004) identified strategies for organizations to improve diversity. These strategies include centering on a goal of social justice while maintaining competitiveness in a global market. According to Aghazadeh, promoting diversity in the workplace is vital to improving overall organizational performance.

It is contended that increased diversity in the workplace can foster both learning and creativity among employees (Meares et al., 2004). It is suggested that one way to mitigate subtle, everyday discrimination is to increase diversity and diversity awareness within the workplace.

At the same time, however, there is research to indicate that implementation of a strategy or movement toward a particular goal or set of goals may be stymied if there is a misfit between the goals and strategy and those responsible for implementation of the strategy and realization of the goals (Burton et al., 2004). If the organizational climate is characterized by distrust, low morale, inequitable reward systems, conflict, scapegoating, or resistance to change, then goals may not be realized.

In the context of the current study, it is important to note that regardless of Clemson’s continued efforts to provide diversity training and to realize a fully multicultural campus and workplace, resistance to such training is a real possibility (Virginia Tech, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1998). Further, even when diversity training is focused on the goal of behavioral change, such training can actually backfire. For instance, in a study of 125 managers and supervisors employed by county government in a large city in the Southeast, Sanchez and Medkik (2004) found that participants may feel singled out, punished, resentful and demoralized (Sanchez and Medkik, 2004).

Employees who are members of the majority may be resentful, perceiving minorities to have unfair and unearned advantages, and believing themselves to be the victims of reverse discrimination (University of Kansas, Office of the Provost, 2001). In at least one case, diversity training was halted because trainees protested what they believed to be bias on the part of the trainer (Business Wire, 2002).
Over the past decade or so, there has been a shift in the United States from focusing on diversity or diversity training, per se, to focusing on cultural competency and training in cultural competency (see, for example, the Cultural Competency Project for the University of Oregon and The Center for Cultural Competency, University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey). According to the American Institutes for Research, cultural competency involves “effectively operating in different cultural contexts” (http://cecp.air.org/cultural/Q_howdifferent.htm). It involves whole systems, policies, and practices that move beyond mere sensitivity and awareness to developmental processes that are sustained over time (Oregon Department of Education, 2005; see also, National Center for Cultural Competence, 2004).

**CAMPUS CLIMATE STUDIES**

Especially since the 1980s, issues of diversity have become a primary concern of institutions of higher learning in the United States (Hurtado, 1992; Richardson and Skinner, 1996; American Council on Education, 2000, 2004; Flowers, 2004). Colleges and universities continue to strive to realize diversity. However, it appears that there still is much to do. Institutions of higher education face real challenges in not only attracting but also retaining minority students through to graduation (see, for example, Feagin, 2002; University of Wisconsin, 2003). Attracting and retaining minority faculty also is still fraught with difficulties (Feagin, 2002; Queneau and Zoogah, 2002; Trower, 2003; Brown, 2004; Flowers, 2004; Patton, 2004). Scholarships, stipends, competitive pay and “startup packages” aside, attention increasingly is focusing on the campus/workplace climate itself as a key ingredient in thwarting institutions’ goals of diversity and multiculturalism (Turner et al., 1999; Hurtado et al., 1998; Greene, 2001-2002; Feagin, 2002).

It should be noted that there are numerous campus climate studies predicated on surveys of students. However, given the focus of the current study, this review will focus on surveys that included staff at institutions of higher learning. In addition, this review does not cover studies that had very few or no blacks or other underrepresented groups in its respondent group (e.g., Pennsylvania State University, with only 2% of the staff respondents being non-white). Likewise, while many universities have been conducting surveys to calibrate the campus climate for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, these studies are not reviewed here.

Clemson University Black Staff Survey, 2005.

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Virginia Tech’s 1998 campus climate study:

- 65% of white staff, in contrast to 21% of black staff, rated the climate as relatively non-racist;
- In contrast to other studies, more women than men gave VT higher ratings on fair treatment;
- 67% of black staff reported unfair treatment or harassment based on race;
- 40% of black staff and 14% of white staff rated VT as racists;
- 40% of faculty, white males in particular, agreed that VT places too much emphasis on diversity;
- 44% of faculty, white males in particular, agreed that affirmative action leads to the hiring of unqualified faculty and the admission of underprepared students;
- Men tended to think that the campus was supportive of women and minorities; women and faculty of color tended to disagree.

Virginia Tech’s 1998 survey of the campus climate was conducted using a mail survey to staff and faculty (and to all students as well). The staff and faculty members were either full- or part-time employees and surveys were sent to all off-campus employees as well. Overall, white staff were more positive about the campus racial climate than were blacks. While only 21% of the black staff rated the climate as relatively non-racist, 65% of the white staff employees rated it as such.

In contrast to many other studies (see, for example, Bronstein and Farnsworth, 1998; University of Kansas, Office of the Provost, 2001; Brown and Dykstra, 2004), staff women participating in the Virginia Tech survey gave higher ratings on fair treatment, supervisors’ appreciation of their work, and opportunities for advancement in their careers. Other findings from the staff survey at Virginia Tech included: 67% of black staff respondents reported unfair treatment or harassment based on their race and 40% of black staff, in comparison to 14% white staff, rated the university as racist.

Unfortunately, questions for staff and faculty were not parallel. For instance, staff were not asked if they thought that the university was placing too much emphasis on diversity and several other related questions. Among the faculty respondents, it was found that 40% agreed that the university placed too much emphasis on diversity, 44% agreed that affirmative action leads to the hiring of unqualified faculty and staff, and that the emphasis on diversity may lead to admitting underprepared students to the university. It was noted that white males held these opinions in higher proportions than did either women or minority faculty. White male faculty members generally agreed that women and minorities were sufficiently represented on committees, and that women and minorities were being given equal opportunities to advance to administrative positions; women and faculty of color tended to disagree with these statements. While men tended to believe that the campus climate was positive for women, women faculty reported experiencing more harassment and discrimination than did their male counterparts. In addition, women also had higher rates of reporting that they had observed sexist and racist treatment of others on the campus.
Studies conducted at two campuses of the University of Kansas—Lawrence and Edwards—in 2000 found that statistically significant differences between minority and white staff members in perceptions of the fairness of the promotion process, mentoring opportunities, job responsibilities, recognition of achievement, and climate of their respective work units. It was found that many staff respondents believe that issues of race and gender “creep in” to the evaluation process, thus fostering inequity in reward systems. Black staff reported that they experienced racism, though it tended to take subtle forms. Several black women wrote that they experienced treatment such as not being chosen to be mentored, and being given the sense that one’s opinion as a black woman was not welcome. Overall, however, staff tended to agree that staff, in comparison to faculty, were treated as second class citizens—especially in the area of pay and salary increases (University of Kansas, Office of the Provost, 2001).

Cypress College in Cypress, California is different from Clemson in many respects. It is a small college, and, as with the rest of the California, has more Hispanic and Asian and fewer black students, faculty, and staff than do Clemson University and South Carolina, respectively. Cypress College’s more recent campus climate survey, conducted in 2004, revealed that more faculty (67.5%) than staff (56.8%) perceived the campus climate to be tolerant. More males (86.7%) than females (73.0%) agreed that women at the college have equal opportunities for advancement, respect, and recognition. Statistically significant differences were found between white and non-white respondents on several items. These included: more whites (56.9%) than non-whites (40.0%) were satisfied with the ethnic backgrounds of the faculty; more whites (63.9%) than non-whites (50.5%) were satisfied with the ethnic backgrounds of staff; more non-whites (30.7%) than whites (16.6%) believed that while there is a lot of superficial friendliness among people of different backgrounds at the college, there is tension underneath these relationships; more whites (61.1%) than non-whites (61.1%) than non-whites (44.0%) agreed that the college is responsive to the changing demographics of the staff and administration; and, more whites (70.1%) than non-whites (48.5%) agreed that the college is committed to increasing the numbers and percentages of minorities in staff, faculty, and administrative positions (Brown and Dykstra, 2004). Finally, though not statistically significant nor broken down by race, the Cypress College study found that more faculty (55%)
Generally, results from campus climate studies are similar to those conducted in nonacademic workplaces.

In the context of campuses, staff and faculty tend to have real differences of opinion and experiences in relation to the climate of their workplaces.

than staff (4.1.2% believe they are given opportunities to participate in governance at the college, and more faculty (74.2%) than staff(45.4%) believed that their current position satisfies their professional goals and aspirations.

Generally, the findings of the campus studies have yielded results similar to those conducted in corporate settings. Men in the majority groups are more satisfied with their jobs, and more positive about their workplaces. They tend to agree that men and women and people of different ethnic/racial backgrounds are treated fairly and have equal opportunities. Women and members of racial/ethnic minorities, however, tend to report more unfair, sexist or racist treatment, and tend to see the climate of their workplace as less tolerant, more sexist and more racist than do white males. Adding a wrinkle here, staff, though generally happy with their campus work environments, still have very real differences of opinion and experiences than do their faculty counterparts.
THE CURRENT STUDY

BACKGROUND

The Clemson University President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff was founded in September of 1998 by the Office of the President. The duty of this Commission is to research the status of black faculty and staff at Clemson and provide the President and the Administrative Council with recommendations for improving the climate of Clemson University. It has been close to a decade since the Commission was founded and they continue to strive towards increasing diversity and improving the quality of life among black employees in the University’s work force.

The focus of the Commission’s 1998-1999 report on black faculty and staff was on the entire work force of Clemson University. This first year of study included a review of desegregation in higher education, the emergence of affirmative action and the presence of blacks in higher education. Between 1981 and 1998 there was a 20% decrease in black staff members and a 12% increase in white staff members. The findings indicate that blacks are six times more likely to have jobs in service-maintenance than skilled craft. Two of the main challenges found in this study were Clemson’s need to retain and increase the number of blacks at the professor level and to increase the number of black staff in top management and administrative positions (President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff, 1999).

In 2001 the President’s Taskforce presented a report on proposed recruitment and retention initiatives for Clemson University. The Commission pursued actions to increase institutional support for recruiting and retaining a diverse work force of talented faculty and staff. The Taskforce recommended that the President provide funding for continuous recruiting and hiring of black faculty and staff. Some other proposed actions were; making it easier for potential employees to have access to campus positions by advertising in local newspapers and actively recruiting potential employees from local black institutions (President’s Taskforce on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff, 2001). The recommendations made from this survey helped Clemson realize a more diverse work force.
The 2003 report on Clemson as a Workplace found that Clemson had what could be classed as a "chilly climate."

In relation to its peers, Clemson fared poorly in programs fostering tolerance.

Though studies show Clemson to be a pleasant place to work, actions can be taken to improve the climate for all employees.

The current study was commissioned by CU’s President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff as a logical follow-up to previous studies.

Surveys were released in February, 2005 and accepted through the end of March.

The response rate was 25.4%.

In 2003 the President’s Commission on the status of Women conducted a study on Clemson University as a workplace. This study was conducted as a result of the findings from Clemson University’s 1998 Campus Wide Sexual Harassment Survey. Found in the results of this survey were several experiences that could be classified as “chilly climate.” This study concluded that compared to its peers, Clemson University is average to slightly below average in its sexual harassment and chilly climate policies, race relations and race-based treatment programs. Clemson was low in relation to peers in its programs for fostering tolerance. Overall, this study found Clemson University to be below all measures of central tendency (Vander Mey et al., 2003).

Although all three studies showed Clemson University to be a relatively pleasant, diverse workforce, many actions can be taken to increasingly improve the climate for all employees of Clemson.

The current study was requested by the Staff Committee of Clemson University’s President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff. This study was seen as a logical follow-up to the three reports just reviewed. In addition, the Commission saw this study as a way to have a clearer understanding of how black staff experience Clemson as a workplace, and as a vehicle for identifying any areas where Clemson could make improvements.

Methodology

After several discussions with members of the Commission and a review of previous research, a survey was constructed. This survey was mailed to all black staff at Clemson. The survey was released in mid-February, 2005. Surveys were accepted through the end of March. In between, black staff received two follow-up/thank you e-mails and two follow-up thank you reminders. A copy of the survey instrument appears in Appendix B.

Response Rates

As can be seen in Table 1 (Appendix A), the overall response rate was 25.4%. The response rate was highest among employees in the Housing unit (66.7%) of the university, and lowest among employees in FMO (Facilities Maintenance Operations) (9.4%).
DEMographics of Respondents

The majority (73.1%) of the respondents were female (Appendix A, Table 2). Most (81.9%) were not graduates of Clemson University (Appendix A, Table 3). Respondents were primarily located in the lower to middle bands, with few in the higher bands (Appendix A, Table 4). Most (55.4%) of the respondents worked in on-campus in units other than FMO or Housing (Appendix A, Table 5). The majority of respondents were in the lowest to middle salary ranges (Appendix A, Table 6). Over one-third (37.6%) of the respondents were between the ages of 45 and 54, and very few were 24 years of age or younger (Appendix A, Table 7). While almost one-third (31.3%) of the respondents had been working at Clemson for less than a year to up to five years, one-third (34.3%) had been employed at Clemson for either 15-20 years or 20 years or more (Appendix A, Table 8).

Reasons for Choosing Clemson

Table 9 (Appendix A) provides the frequency breakdown for reasons that the respondents chose to work at Clemson. As can be seen, needing a job was a key reason to choose to work at Clemson. Other key reasons included the health insurance benefits, the annual leave policies, and Clemson’s proximity to respondents’ homes and families. Figure 1 (below) shows the reasons by sex of respondent. No significant differences were found by sex of respondent.
Many respondents reported that they had learned their current position at Clemson either “hands on” and/or with the help of a co-worker.

Nearly one-third of the respondents reported that they had received on-campus training for their current position at Clemson.

Most (86.0%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Clemson is a good place to work.

61.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel that they can succeed at Clemson.

70.4% of the respondents reported that they feel welcome at Clemson.

42.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that supervisors favor whites over blacks regarding raises.

TRAINING FOR CURRENT POSITION AT CLEMSON

Table 10 (Appendix A) displays the amount of time respondents were trained for their current position at Clemson. Nearly one-third (29.6%) indicated that they received no training for their current position, while 27.2% reported being trained for less than one week. A few (11.2%) respondents reported being trained for three to four weeks, while 16.8% of the respondents reported being trained for more than four weeks.

Respondents were asked by whom and how they were trained. They could check all that applied, thus multiple responses were possible. Nearly half (44.6%) indicated training by co-workers (Appendix A, Table 11), and 14.0% reported receiving training from an outside expert. Half (50.0%) of the respondents reported that they learned their current position hands-on (Appendix A, Table 12). [It is assumed that for respondents, “hands on” and training by co-workers could be seen as similar if not the same type of training.] Nearly one-third of the respondents (29.2%) indicated that they had received training through on-campus workshops.

ASSESSMENT OF CLEMSON AS A WORKPLACE

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their experiences of Clemson University as workplace. Table 13 (Appendix A) provides the frequency distribution of responses on each question. As can be seen from the table, most (86.0%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Clemson is a good place to work, that Clemson makes sure that faculty and staff know about its Racial Harassment Policy (76.6%), that they would recommend Clemson to other blacks as a good place to work (62.5%), and that they believe they can succeed at Clemson (61.4%). In addition, over two-thirds (70.4%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome at Clemson.

However, respondents were fairly evenly divided on whether Clemson allows black staff free and open expression of opinion, 42.8% agreed or strongly agreed that supervisors favor whites over blacks regarding raises, 54.9% agreed or strongly agreed that there is a tendency to emphasize differences by rank at Clemson, and 44.2% agreed or strongly agreed that at Clemson, minority staff get the feeling that they should not voice their opinions.
The assessment questions were divided into several categories. These were: overall assessment of Clemson; personal assessment of Clemson; assessment of services to classified black staff; ombuds needs; and, reservations about Clemson. These items then were analyzed by sex of the respondent. The results are displayed in Figures 2 through 7.

In the overall assessment, men tended to rate Clemson more favorably than did women. There were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents on the item, “In general, there is a sense of mutual respect between upper administration and classified black staff.”

![Figure 2. Overall Assessment of Clemson, by Sex of Respondent.](image)

While men and women alike tended to agree that they believe they can succeed at Clemson and that they feel welcome at Clemson, females were significantly more likely to disagree that they feel like a valued member of the Clemson “family” and that they are treated fairly by Clemson (Figure 3, next page).
Men and women tended to similarly disagree that they are fully informed about mentoring programs, and to agree or have no opinion/be unsure about whether black staff receive the necessary training to do their work well. Statistically significant differences by sex of respondent were found on the items “Clemson makes sure that every faculty and staff person knows about its Racial Harassment Policy,” and, “Black Classified Staff at Clemson are given many opportunities to build networks that help working at Clemson be a positive experience” (Figure 4, below).
Men tended to give more favorable ratings to selected services available to them than did women (Figure 5, below). However, there were no statistically significant differences by sex of respondent on these items.
While women tended to agree or strongly agree that women, Classified Black Staff, and Classified Staff should have their own ombuds, there were no statistically significant differences by sex of respondent on these items (Figure 6, below).

![Figure 6. Ombuds Needs, by Sex of Respondent.](image)

Figure 6 (next page) displays reservations about Clemson by sex of respondent. [These items were reverse scored, as indicated on the figure.] Men and women were similar in agreeing that there is a tendency at Clemson to emphasize differences by rank and that supervisors tend to favor whites in raises. Their ratings on the emphasis on diversity also were similar. Women were significantly more likely than were men to agree that minority staff feel that they should not voice their opinions.
REPLICATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF SURVEY

Table 14 (Appendix A) provides the frequency distributions of items that replicated the recent Classified Staff Survey. These items were divided into the categories “general assessment” and “personal assessment.” These items then were analyzed by sex of respondent.
As can be seen in Figure 8 (below), men tended to give more positive responses on the items related to a general assessment of Clemson. Women were significantly more likely to disagree that the executive administration of Clemson sees staff as part of “One Clemson.”

Likewise, men tended to give more positive responses to the personal assessment items (Figure 9, next page). Women were significantly more likely to disagree that they have input in the university’s plans for the future and that they have a fair and impartial person to whom they can go when they have a disagreement with their supervisor. 

![Figure 8. Replicated Staff Survey, General Assessment, by Sex of Respondent](image-url)

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

Means Shown. *p=.01 or lower.
RESPONDENTS’ EXPERIENCES OF CLEMSON AS A WORKPLACE

Table 15 (Appendix A) displays the responses to items that measured respondents’ workplace experiences at Clemson within the last three years. Many reported never experiencing racist or unfair treatment within the last three years. For the whole sample, when such experiences occurred these tended to be racist statements made within the hearing range of the respondents (33.8%), being overlooked for promotion or reclassification (31.5%), not being included in conversations or social events (30.8%), being treated as if their opinions were not welcome (30.0%) and not being told about opportunities to get reclassified or ways to increase their pay (30.8%; Table 16, Appendix A). Frequency of witnessing discrimination or unfair treatment of other black staff is displayed in Table 17 (Appendix A). The forms of treatment witnessed are shown in Table 18, Appendix A.

In terms of experiencing racism, women were significantly more likely to report unfair treatment by a non-minority co-worker, unfair treatment by a non-minority supervisor, harassment by non-minority staff, harassment by non-minority co-worker, harassment by a non-minority supervisor, discrimination by a non-minority faculty, and discrimination by a non-minority co-worker (Figure 10, next page). In terms of the specific treatment experiences, females were significantly more likely to report being overlooked for promotion or reclassification (p=.040) and being treated as if whenever they are talking with other blacks in the workplace, they are just goofing off and not working (p=.029). Narrowly outside the bounds of statistical significance, females were more likely also to report that they had experienced not being told about opportunities to get reclassified or about ways to increase their pay (p=.051; no figure shown).

While on average women reported more (numerically) experiences of an unfair, harassing or discriminatory nature (mean=3.38) than did men (mean=2.24), the differences were not statistically significant.
In terms of witnessing racism, women were significantly more likely to report discrimination by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment by a non-minority co-worker, unfair treatment by non-minority staff, and unfair treatment by non-minority faculty (Figure 11, below). In terms of specific treatment witnessed, females were significantly more likely to report that they witnessed black staff being treated as if they are goofing off or not working when talking with other blacks in the workplace than men were (p=.019; no figure shown).
Additionally, while women (mean=3.01) on average reported witnessing more unfair, discriminatory, or harassing behavior directed toward black staff than men did (mean=1.85), the differences were not statistically significant.

RACISM AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Respondents were asked several questions about racism at Clemson University. As shown in Table 19 (Appendix A), 50.4% of the respondents agreed that there is racism at Clemson. As can be seen in the table below, male and female respondents did not vary significantly in their assessment of whether there is racism at Clemson.

Table 20 (Appendix A) provides the assessment of among whom at Clemson there is racism. Nearly half (45.0%) of the respondents reported that racism is present among non-minority staff; 23.3% reported that racism is present among minority staff.

On a scale ranging from 1=subtle to 5=obvious, the mean rating for the apparentness of racism at Clemson was 2.70.

Women tended to rate the apparentness of racism at Clemson as less subtle, more obvious, than did men.

Respondents were asked to rate the apparentness of racism at Clemson University. The scale range from 1=subtle, present but hard to pinpoint to 5=obvious/easily seen racism. Among the 96 respondents who answered this question, most tended to rate it on the subtle side, with a mean rating of 2.70 (Figure 13, next page; Table 21, Appendix A).

The mean ratings of the apparentness of racism at Clemson were not statistically significant by sex of respondent (Figure 14, next page). However, women tended to rate racism at Clemson as less subtle than did male respondents.
Figure 13. Apparentness of Racism at Clemson. 
(n=96). Percent responding shown.

![Bar chart showing the percent responding for different levels of racism. The scale ranges from 1 (Subtle, present but hard to pinpoint) to 5 (Obvious/Easily Seen). Overall Mean = 2.70.]

Figure 14. Apparentness of Racism at Clemson, by Sex of Respondent. Means Shown.

![Bar chart showing the apparentness of racism by sex. Female (69): Mean = 2.82. Male (23): Mean = 2.39. The scale is the same as in Figure 13. No significant differences.]

Clemson University Black Staff Survey, 2005.
• 83.2% of the respondents indicated that they had received annual performance reviews for the past three years.
• 81.1% of the respondents indicated that the review was an EPMS review.
• 82.9% of the respondents said that they had met with their supervisors to discuss their performance reviews.
• 35.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needs diversity awareness training.
• 44.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needs training in how to fairly evaluate staff performance.
• Women were significantly more likely to agree that their supervisor needed training than were men.

OTHER WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES OR CHALLENGES

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

At Clemson, staff are supposed to be reviewed annually once their probationary period of employment has expired. When asked if they had received a performance review annually for the past three years, 83.2% reported that they had (Table 22, Appendix A). When asked if the annual review was an EPMS - Employment Performance Management System - review, 81.1% reported that it had been (Table 23, Appendix A).

Employees are expected to meet with their supervisors to discuss their performance reviews at Clemson University. Slightly over three-fourths (82.9%) indicated that the review had been an EPMS review (Table 24, Appendix A).

ASSESSMENT OF SUPERVISORS

Respondents were asked five questions about their perceptions of and relationship with their supervisor (Table 25, Appendix A). Slightly under half (36.7%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needs diversity awareness training. 44.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needed training in how to fairly evaluate staff performance. On both of these items, there were statistically significant differences by sex of the respondent, with women more likely to agree to them than men (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Perception of Supervisor Needs, by Sex of Respondent.

Needs diversity training*  
Needs training on fair performance evaluations*  
Female  Male  
1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5  
Scale: 1=Strongly Agree to 5= Strongly Disagree. Means Shown. *p= .001.

Clemson University Black Staff Survey, 2005.
Over two-thirds (72.6%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can freely go to their supervisor to discuss or share problems (Table 25, Appendix A). Under half (40.3%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor had encouraged them to gain more knowledge or skills so that they could increase their salaries or move up at Clemson. Over one-third of the respondents (39.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisors had helped them gain more knowledge or skills so that they could increase their salaries or move up at Clemson (Table 25, Appendix A).

More men than women agreed that they could freely go to their supervisor to discuss or share problems (Figure 16). Women were significantly more likely to disagree that their supervisor had encouraged or helped them to gain more skills and knowledge so that they could increase their salaries or move up at Clemson (Figure 16).

Most (75.8%) of the respondents indicated that their supervisor was not the same race/ethnicity as they, while slightly over half (57.4%) reported that their supervisor was the same sex as they (Table 26, Appendix A). One-third (34.4%) reported that their supervisor was younger than they, while 45.1% reported that their supervisor was older than they (Table 27, Appendix A). A crosstab analysis revealed that there were no statistically significant differences by sex of respondent in relation to race/ethnicity of supervisor, or in having a supervisor of the same or other sex than themselves (figure not shown). And, while more women than men reported having supervisors younger than themselves, more men than women reported having a supervisor older than themselves (figure not shown). Due to a small cell (small number of responses in a category) in this crosstab analysis, the test for differences on age of supervisor and sex of respondent is not usable.
E-MAIL ACCESS, TRAINING AND TRAINING NEEDS

Given that access to e-mail and ability to use it have become indispensable in academic workplaces, and based on discussions with the Commission, a series of questions about e-mail were posed to the respondents.

Access to e-Mail

Most (90.6%) of the respondents reported that they have access to e-mail at Clemson University (Table 28, Appendix A).

Twelve respondents indicated that they can not access e-mail at Clemson. Of these, two were employed in FMO, seven in Housing, and three were off-campus (figure not shown).

Two-thirds (71.9%) of the respondents reported that they could access e-mail at Clemson several times a day (Table 29, Appendix A).

Two-thirds (67.0%) reported that they can access e-mail at Clemson by using their own work computer that is not shared with others. Twenty-two (19.1%) respondents reported that they could access e-mail by using a computer that is shared with others, while 10.4% reported that they access e-mail by going to a different building, a different work site, or some other place removed from their work area to use a computer (Table 30, Appendix A). Overall, 11.6% of the respondents reported that they have to go somewhere away from their work area to access e-mail (Table 31, Appendix A).

E-Mail Training and Training Needs

Slightly over one-half (54.3%) of the respondents reported that they had not received e-mail training while at Clemson University (Table 32, Appendix A). Slightly under one-third (29.7%) of the respondents indicated that they needed e-mail training.
EXPERIENCES WITH COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS AND OFFICES AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Respondents were provided a list of ten Clemson committees, commissions, and offices. They were asked to rate the helpfulness of any of these if they had approached them within the last three years. For any that they had not approached, they were asked to mark “never used.” Table 32 (Appendix A) provides a breakdown of responses for these items. As can be seen, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Access and Equity, were used by more respondents within the past three years, while the Extension Senate, Budget Accountability Committee, National Coalition Building Institute, and the President’s Commission on the Status of Women were used the least.

For most of these committees, commissions, and offices, women tended to have higher rates of not using them within the last three years (Figure 17; see also Table 33, Appendix A). The exceptions to this were the Office of Human Resources (approached by 58.0% of the women respondents) and the Office of Access and Equity (approached by 37.1% of the women respondents).

Figure 17. Percent Male and Female Respondents Not Approaching CU Committees, Commissions & Offices Last Three Years.

![Figure 17: Percent Male and Female Respondents Not Approaching CU Committees, Commissions & Offices Last Three Years.](chart-url)
HELPFULNESS OF COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS AND OFFICES AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of the ten selected Clemson University committees, commissions, and offices. The ratings relied on a scale of 1 = “Not at all Helpful” to 5 = “Very Helpful.” The mean ratings are displayed in tabular form in Table 34 (Appendix A). These mean rating also are displayed in Figure 18, below.

As can be seen, the Office of Human Resources received the highest mean rating of helpfulness (3.61), followed by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (3.43) and the Office of Access and Equity (3.36). The Extension Senate received the lowest helpfulness rating (2.9), followed by the President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff (2.92) and the Budget Accountability Committee (3.1).
The mean ratings of the helpfulness of the ten selected Clemson University committees, commissions, and offices were analyzed by sex of respondent. The results are displayed in Figure 19, below. Men gave higher ratings than women did to the Budget Accountability Committee, the Extension Senate, the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, the Office of Human Resources, and the Office of Access and Equity. Women gave higher helpfulness ratings to the National Coalition Building Institute, the Black Faculty and Staff Association, the President’s Commission on the Status of Black Faculty and Staff, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the Classified Staff Senate.

The ratings of helpfulness of the Office of Access and Equity revealed statistically significant differences by sex of the respondent.
CONCLUSIONS

A “chilly climate” refers to an environment in which an employee or student is treated differently, often subtly so, on the basis of an ascribed characteristic such as race or sex. This treatment can be very subtle, but is real in its impact. As more workplaces - both academic and corporate - place greater attention on workplace diversity, there also has been an increased focus on workplace culture and climate.

The review of previous climate studies revealed that the results from campus studies are similar to those conducted in corporate settings. Men in the majority groups are more satisfied with their jobs, and more positive about their workplaces. They tend to agree that men and women and people of different ethnic/racial backgrounds are treated fairly and have equal opportunities. Women and members of racial/ethnic minorities, however, tend to report more unfair, sexist, or racist treatment, and tend to see the climate of their workplace as less tolerant, more sexist and more racist than do white males. Adding a wrinkle here, staff, though generally happy with their campus work environments, still have very real differences of opinion and experiences than do their faculty counterparts.

The current study focused on assessing Clemson University as a workplace, based on a survey of black staff. Most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Clemson is a good place to work. This is consistent with a recent national survey of science faculty, which found that Clemson is the best place in academe for scientists in the United States (Anderson, 2005). Over half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel that they can succeed at Clemson. Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they feel welcome at Clemson.

Men and women were similar in agreeing that there is a tendency at Clemson to emphasize differences by rank and that supervisors tend to favor whites in raises. Their ratings on the emphasis on diversity also were similar. Women were significantly more likely to agree that minority staff feel that they should not voice their opinions.

In terms of experiencing racism, women were significantly more likely to report unfair treatment by a non-minority coworker, unfair treatment by a non-minority supervisor, harassment by non-minority staff, harassment by a non-minority co-worker, harassment by a non-minority supervisor, discrimination by a non-minority co-worker, and discrimination by a non-minority faculty. In terms of witnessing racism, women were significantly more likely to report witnessing discrimination by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment of other black staff by a non-minority supervisor, unfair treatment of other black staff by non-minority staff and unfair treatment by non-minority faculty. Students did not figure prominently in respondents’ experiences or observations of unfair, harassing, or discriminatory treatment.

Half of the respondents agreed that there is racism at Clemson. Racism was seen as most prevalent among non-minority staff, faculty, and administration, and less prevalent among students and minority staff. Overall, racism at Clemson was rated as more subtle than obvious or easily seen.
In the overall assessment, men tended to rate Clemson more favorably than did women. There were statistically significant differences between male and female respondents on the item, “In general, there is a sense of mutual respect between upper administration and classified black staff.” Females were significantly more likely to disagree that they feel like a valued member of the Clemson “family” and that they are treated fairly by Clemson.

One-third of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needs diversity awareness training. Over one-third of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor needed training in how to fairly evaluate staff performance. On both of these items, there were statistically significant differences by sex of the respondent, with women more likely to agree to them than men.

Within the limitations of this study, it is fair to say that as a workplace, Clemson’s climate holds the same elements that others do. Most minority staff members feel welcome at Clemson and believe that they contribute to the university’s goals, that they can be successful at Clemson, and that Clemson is a good place to work. However, the current study indicates that some black staff members have experienced or witnessed treatment of black staff that is unfair, harassing, or discriminatory. Said another way, within the limitations of this study, Clemson has a situation where minority staff basically like their workplace, but do experience situations that are less than warm or welcoming. This is especially the case for black women staff members. Thus, it appears that more work can be done at the university to ensure that Clemson becomes a warm workplace - that is, inclusive, supportive, and welcoming - for all employees regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the administration at Clemson University carefully review these findings, noting information that can guide decisions about which programs and services to expand or refine, which programs to reduce or eliminate, and which policies to add or revise.

It is suggested that responsible parties evaluate multicultural and diversity training, with an eye toward more offerings to more persons, and more evaluation of short- and long-term effects of the training.

Though perhaps wrought with legal entanglements, it is suggested that Clemson consider policies regarding subtle discrimination along with the more obvious, overt, forms of discrimination currently covered in laws and policies.

It is suggested that Clemson University expressly emphasize social justice in its workplace policies and practices.

It is suggested that Clemson University study the feasibility of incorporating cultural competency training or programs for all staff, faculty and students.

Finally, it is suggested that Clemson University identify one overarching committee, office, or agency that is charged with coordinating all efforts at making Clemson University an academic workplace characterized by tolerance of cultural differences, supportiveness of all employees, and fairness and equity in all employee matters.

Clemson University Black Staff Survey, 2005.
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APPENDIX A

SUMMARY TABLES AND WRITTEN COMMENTS OF THE CLEMSON UNIVERSITY
BLACK STAFF SURVEY, 2005
APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR CLEMSON UNIVERSITY BLACK STAFF SURVEY,
2005
End Page

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