

# Research in BRIEF

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**CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY**

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## 2007 CAMPUS CLIMATE & WORK ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

### Orange Campus

### Executive Summary

(Administered Spring 2007)

Chapman University's Campus Climate and Work Environment Survey, a "home-grown" on-line survey, was developed to assess employees' levels of satisfaction with the university and to gather information about their impressions of their work environment and the campus climate at Chapman University. The survey was administered in Spring 2007 to all Orange Campus full-time employees. On April 11, 2007, 526 staff and administrators received an email invitation from President Doti containing the link to the survey and unique password. The survey remained open for one week. Exactly 270 surveys were completed on-line, resulting in a final response rate of about 51 percent.

### Sample Representation and Demographics

Since all 526 full-time Chapman University employees on the Orange Campus were invited to participate in the survey, the Spring 2007 survey sample accounts for 51% of Chapman University's full-time employees. Of these respondents, data show that 61% identified themselves as staff and 39% reported they were administrators. As can be seen in the table below, the characteristics of the employee survey respondents do *not* match in every instance those of the employee population of Chapman University.

Full-time Staff and Administrators		
	ORANGE CAMPUS	
	Employee Population*	Survey Sample
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	40.7%	36.9%
Female	59.3%	63.1%
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>		
African-American	3.4%	1.5%
Asian-American/Pacific Is.	8.8%	7.0%
White	72.7%	75.2%
Hispanic or Latino	14.9%	10.0%
Native-American/Alaskan	0.2%	1.1%
Other/Unknown	0.0%	5.1%

\*IPEDS 2006-07 Fall Staff Survey

As would be expected given the demographics on the Orange Campus, the survey sample is composed mostly of female and White employees. Chapman employees were asked to specify how many years they worked at Chapman University and if most of their time was spent serving or supporting Orange Campus (OC), University College (CUC), or both OC and CUC equally.

Full-time Staff and Administrators	
	Survey Sample
<b>YEARS OF SERVICE</b>	
Less than 1 year	18.1%
1 to 4 years	37.4%
5 to 10 years	25.9%
11 to 15 years	9.6%
16 to 20 years	4.4%
Over 20 years	4.4%
<b>PRIMARY SUPPORT TO</b>	
Orange Campus (OC)	75.9%
University College (CUC)	5.9%
OC and CUC Equally	18.1%

Findings show that over half of the respondents (55.5%) reported having worked at Chapman University four years or less. Since the survey was administered to employees on the Orange Campus, it is not surprising to find that 76% of the respondents reported that most of their time was spent serving or supporting Orange Campus. Another 18% reported that they supported OC and CUC equally.

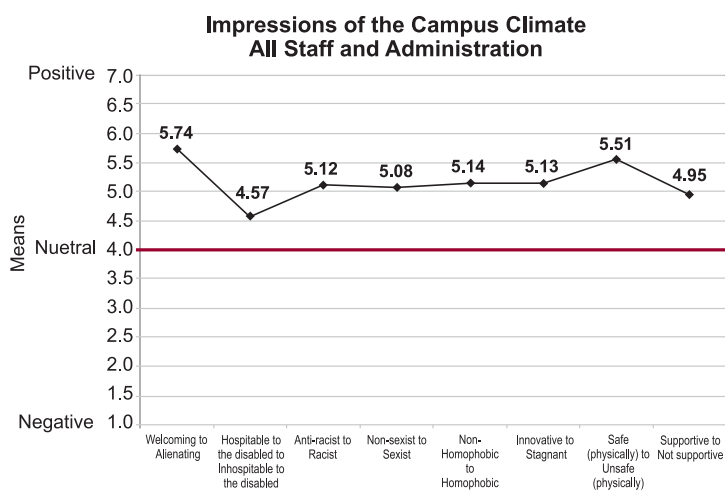
Survey results should be interpreted in the context of the over- and under-sampling of certain campus sub-populations. While the high survey response rate provides a high level of confidence in the findings, generalization of findings beyond the perceptions and attitudes of full-time staff and administrators on the Orange Campus should be made with caution.

## Survey Findings

The Campus Climate and Work Environment Survey questions were separated into three sections: Impressions of the Campus Climate, Impressions of Your Work Life/Environment, and Impressions of the Institutional Leadership and University. Discussed in this report are some of the most salient findings from the survey organized by section. All analyses were conducted by Chapman's Institutional Research Office (CIRO). Frequency distributions and average mean scores were calculated for all questions. In addition, average mean scores were calculated for sub-groups within the employee population. Qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions were also analyzed and are summarized below.

### Impressions of the Campus Climate

Staff and administrators were asked to describe the general climate at Chapman University using a series of bipolar, descriptive adjectives on a seven-point scale (1-Corresponding to a negative description, 4-A neutral description, and 7-Corresponding to a positive description). Specifically, respondents were asked: Based on your experience, how would you describe the general climate of Chapman University?



Findings show that mean scores are all above 4.0 (i.e., Neutral), revealing that overall most staff and administrators have neutral or somewhat favorable perceptions of the general campus climate at Chapman University. While still above the neutral point, the mean score for the “Hospitable to Inhospitable to the disabled” pair was among the lowest for all the descriptors (4.57). Additional analyses reveal that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of staff compared to administrators for this item. Data reveal that administrators (4.32) as a group are less likely to perceive the general climate “Hospitable to the disabled” than staff (4.71).

Significant differences were also found between men and women employees on two other campus descriptors. Data show that when compared to men, women are less likely to perceive the campus as “Non-Sexist” or “Safe.”

### Impression of Your Work Life/Environment

In this section, staff and administrators were asked to agree or disagree to various statements related to their work life and environment using a six-point scale from 1-Disagree Strongly to 6-Agree Strongly. Given the direction of the scale, higher mean scores translate into stronger agreement with the statement.

While data show that most employees seem to be satisfied with the selection of benefits offered to them, findings suggest that Chapman University employees as a group are not satisfied with their compensation. Data show that, on average, staff and administrators “disagreed somewhat” (3.16) with the following statement: “Based on my level of experience, I am fairly compensated.” Additional analyses reveal that staff (2.93) and administrators’ (3.51) attitudes toward fair compensation differed significantly, with staff being more likely to disagree with the statement. Other significant differences between staff and administrators were found in statements related to opportunities for growth and job training. Specifically, findings indicate that administrators were more likely to agree with the following statements:

- In the past year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow professionally. (admin., 4.85; staff, 4.49)
- I have been provided with the training necessary to do my job. (admin., 4.73; staff, 4.31)
- I have been enriched by attending a professional workshop or campus training activity. (admin., 4.69; staff, 4.18)

In other words, data suggest that when compared to administrators, staff employees are not as likely to perceive that they have had or been provided with opportunities for growth and job training.

Findings suggest that inappropriate comments about people who are different are not frequently heard on campus and that most employees know how to officially report racist, sexist, or other offensive behavior. For example, Chapman University staff and administrators disagreed (2.09) with the statement, “I frequently hear coworkers/other employees make inappropriate comments about people who are different than themselves.” Frequency distribution reveals that 76% “agreed”

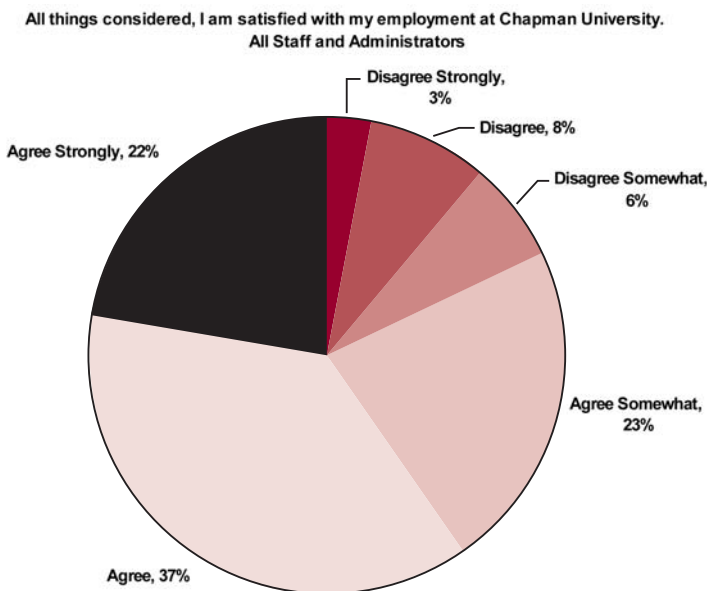
or “agreed strongly” with the following statement: “I know how to report officially any racist, sexist, or other offensive behavior.” Findings indicate that administrators (5.11) were more likely to agree with the statement than staff (4.77). In other words, data suggest that as a group administrators may be more knowledgeable about reporting procedures for this type of insensitive behavior.

The top four statements respondents were most likely to agree with were:

- I am dedicated to supporting the mission of Chapman University. (5.38)
- My supervisor treats me with respect. (5.09)
- I am proud to work at Chapman University. (5.04)
- I see my work as an integral part of the overall mission of educating students at Chapman University. (5.04)

Taken together, these data show that most employees are proud to work at Chapman University and are dedicated to supporting its mission.

Though findings show high agreement with the statement on being treated with respect by a supervisor (5.09), the level of agreement was not as high for the following statement: “I feel appreciated for the work I do by my immediate supervisor” (4.87) and “My opinion/input is valued at Chapman University” (4.00).



While respondents “disagreed somewhat” with the statement—“I would like to stay at Chapman University for the rest of my career” (3.97)—the level of agreement with the following statements suggests that a large proportion of Chapman

University full-time employees are satisfied with their employment: “All things considered, I am satisfied with my employment at Chapman University” (4.49), “I would recommend Chapman University as a good place to work” (4.54), and “My morale is good” (4.54). In addition, employees tended to disagree with the statement: “I have considered leaving Chapman University in the past year” (3.41).

In order to explore factors associated with employees’ satisfaction, additional analyses were conducted on this question. A frequency distribution revealed that 59% of the respondents “agreed strongly,” or “agreed” with the statement: “All things considered, I am satisfied with my employment at Chapman University.”

Correlation coefficients<sup>1</sup> revealed that employees who tended to agree with the statement about being satisfied with their employment also tended to agree with the following statements related to their work life/environment:

- My opinion/input is valued at Chapman University. (r = .651\*\*\*)
- My immediate working environment allows me to be creative and innovative. (r = .599\*\*\*)
- In the past year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow professionally. (r = .549\*\*\*)
- Based on my level of experience, I am fairly compensated. (r = .534\*\*\*)
- I feel appreciated for the work I do by my immediate supervisor. (r = .510\*\*\*)

While a strong correlation or association with satisfaction does not imply causation, these data do suggest some strong relationship between employees’ satisfaction and their perception that their input is valued, their immediate working environment allows them to be creative and innovative, they have had opportunities to learn and grow professionally, they are fairly compensated, and they feel appreciated for the work they do by their supervisor.

### **Impressions of the Institutional Leadership and University**

In this section, staff and administrators were asked to agree or disagree with nine statements related to the university and institutional leadership using a six-point scale from 1-Disagree Strongly to 6-Agree Strongly. Given the direction of the scale, higher mean scores translate into stronger agreement with the statement.

While items focused on harassment/discrimination resulted in the lowest mean scores in this section, disagreement with

these items suggest that overall few respondents had experienced harassment or discrimination on campus because of their gender or sexual orientation. In addition, data also reveal that many staff and administrators believe that sexual harassment is taken seriously at Chapman University.

Impressions of the Institutional Leadership & University	All (n=270)
Senior Staff (president and vice presidents) display behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the institution's stated core values.	4.70
In my opinion, Chapman University is a well-managed university.	4.38
Chapman University does a good job of informing me about university news and events.	4.97
Chapman University is an institution that values treating everyone with civility and respect.	4.67
Chapman University is an institution that values diversity.	4.25
Sexual harassment is taken seriously at Chapman University.	5.07
Chapman University provides adequate accommodations to people with physical disabilities.	3.94
I have been harassed or discriminated against on campus because of my gender.	1.60
I have been harassed or discriminated against on campus because of my sexual orientation.	1.29

Six-point scale: 1-Disagree Strongly, 2-Disagree, 3-Disagree Somewhat, 4-Agree Somewhat, 5-Agree, 6-Agree Strongly

While 85% of the respondents reported some level of agreement (“agree strongly,” “agree,” or “agree somewhat”) with the statement indicating that Chapman University is a place that “values treating everyone with civility and respect,” only 76% agreed that Chapman University is a place that “values diversity.” Consistent with an earlier result which suggests that Chapman University is not as hospitable for people with disabilities, results show over one third of the respondents (34%) reported some level of disagreement (“disagree strongly,” “disagree,” or “disagree somewhat”) with the following statement: “Chapman University provides adequate accommodations to people with physical disabilities.”

With regard to Senior Staff and management of the university, data show that 66.7% of the staff and 70.2% of the administrators “agreed” or “agreed strongly” with the statement, “Senior Staff display behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the institution’s stated core values.” In addition, data show that 51.5% of the staff and 60.4% of the administrators “agreed” or “agreed strongly” with the statement, “In my opinion, Chapman University is a well managed university.”

### Open-Ended Questions

After each section, respondents were provided with the opportunity to elaborate on a specific question or item in each section. The very last question on the survey was also open-ended and respondents were asked: “Do you have any comments/suggestions about improving your working

environment and/or Chapman University’s campus climate?” Forty-five percent of the survey respondents took advantage of the opportunity to comment in at least one of the four sections. Qualitative data from the four questions were examined together. Based on a thorough review of the qualitative data, 12 areas/themes emerged and each comment was grouped into one or more of the following areas:

- Compensation and Benefits
- Support and Appreciation
- Campus Climate for Diversity
- Physical Working Space/Environment
- Policies, Procedures, and Bureaucracy
- CU Pride and Praise
- Accessibility for the Disabled
- CU Leadership and University Management
- CU Values, Vision, and Mission
- Communication
- Safety
- General Comments/Miscellaneous.

Qualitative data supported and/or explained some of the quantitative findings in several areas. For example, qualitative data supported the quantitative findings which indicated that as a group, employees, particularly staff, are not satisfied with their compensation. The *Compensation and Benefits* area contained the most comments (66). While this area encompassed comments related to parking, insurance benefits, paid holidays, work hours, and opportunities for professional development and advancement, the recurring comments had to do with inequitable salaries. Many respondents attributed employee turnover and the inability to attract and hire high-caliber employees to the low/uncompetitive salaries the university offers. Not surprisingly, the *Policies, Procedures, and Bureaucracy* section (31) contained many comments related to hiring, compensation and benefit policies overseen by the Human Resource Office.

The *Support and Appreciation* area had the second highest number of comments (54). Comments in this section focused on individual appreciation, acknowledgement and support for the work that is done, as well as employee remarks focused on having adequate support (e.g., materials, equipment, human resources, information) to do their job and/or to provide the services dictated by their office or position. It is clear that there are some employees who feel over-worked/extended and under appreciated. Some of these comments may help explain why there was not a very strong agreement with the statements which asked if employees felt appreciated for the work they do by their immediate supervisor and if they felt their opinion/input was valued at Chapman University.

The comments in *Campus Climate for Diversity* focused on valuing and supporting diversity, as well remarks about racist, sexist, and homophobic incidents experienced or observed on campus (38). About 23% of the respondents reported some level of disagreement with the statement: “Chapman University is an institution that values diversity.” Comments in this section further elaborate on this issue and present staff and administrators’ desire to have a campus climate more supportive of diversity. More efforts focused on retaining and recruiting a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body, creating a multi-cultural center, and making Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez Days paid holidays were suggested.

The open-ended responses also support the quantitative findings which revealed that employees believe that the university does not provide adequate accommodations to people with disability. The *Accessibility for the Disabled* section contained 23 comments. Many staff and administrators made reference to some of the older/historic buildings such as Memorial, Reeves, Roosevelt, and Wilkinson Hall as being especially inaccessible to the disabled. Heavy doors and recurring elevator malfunctions were also noted as contributing to this problem.

About 25% of the respondents reported some level of disagreement (“disagree strongly,” “disagree,” or “disagree somewhat”) with the following statement: “My physical working space is comfortable.” Comments in the *Physical Working Space/Environment* section (32) provide some reasons why a number of employees feel their space or environment is uncomfortable. Ample office space, newer furniture, windows, complete/solid walls, sufficient air ventilation, and cleaner/nicer restrooms were some of the concerns mentioned by employees. Bhatthal Student Services Center, in particular, was highlighted by a few respondents as an undesirable place to work.

However, not all employee comments were negative. Many employees had positive things to say about Chapman University which were grouped in the *CU Pride and Praise* section (28). Qualitative and quantitative data clearly show that there are many satisfied employees who “love working at Chapman University.”

### **Research on Employee Satisfaction**

Staff employees are among the least studied population on college campuses. While staff work on the front lines and are often “the first point of contact for current students, prospective students, legislative officials, and other constituents,” very little time is devoted in studying this population even though their “attitudes and level of

helpfulness can substantially contribute to the constituents’ perceptions of the campus climate” (Bauer, 2000, p. 87).

Bauer (2000) asserts that employee satisfaction can influence turnover rates as well as affect morale, camaraderie, and performance. According to one study cited by Bauer (2000), “turnover in managerial positions can cost an organization from five to twenty-five times an employee’s monthly salary including but not limited to downtime for training, orientation to campus, knowledge of campus services, as well as costs associated with time to build rapport with colleagues and supervisors” (p. 88). Saari and Judge (2004) also highlight research which has found job satisfaction linked “to absenteeism, other withdrawal behaviors, including lateness, unionization, grievances, drug abuse, and decisions to retire” (p. 339). For these reasons and others, Bauer (2000) calls attention to employee satisfaction as an area that higher education administrators should give high priority, particularly since job satisfaction also has been found to have a positive relationship with employee productivity, and overall institutional effectiveness and performance.

While the literature on employee satisfaction in higher education institutions is sparse, Bauer (2000) provides a good overview of some of the research that has been done. According to Bauer, the following four key factors contribute to employee satisfaction and workforce commitment:

- *Rewards and Recognition* (e.g., higher salaries, good benefits, job security, ability to choose benefits that best fit needs, flexible work schedules, employer-paid pensions, employee assistance programs, demonstration that employees are needed, valued, and appreciated).
- *Issues of Work-Life Balance* (e.g., quality child care, flexible family leave policies)
- *Opportunities for Growth Through Training and Development* (e.g., accessibility of continuing education, opportunities to improve skills)
- *Perceptions of the Work Environment* (e.g., interpersonal relationships with coworkers, positive relationship with supervisor, perceptions of campus multiculturalism, involvement in decision-making, and perception of the physical work environment/space).

### **Discussion of the Results & Implications**

The literature review demonstrates that employee concerns, as revealed by Chapman University 2007 Campus Climate and Work Environment Survey, as well as their suggestions for improvement, are not out of the ordinary and in fact are consistent with research on employee attitudes and satisfaction.



When quantitative and qualitative data are taken together, findings suggest that the areas needing further attention are compensation and benefits, support and appreciation, physical working space, and campus climate for diversity. Findings show that compensation and benefits is the issue that Chapman University employees seemed to be most concerned about—in particular, low salaries were noted frequently by staff. Interestingly, Bauer (2000) reports some research which indicates that while “salary is especially important in attracting persons to the job initially, benefits contribute to the employee’s length of tenure” (p. 89).

High salaries and good benefits alone may not be enough to ensure satisfaction—praise, appreciation and recognition are also necessary, some researchers have noted. Many Chapman University employees feel they are not supported, appreciated, or valued for the work that they do. For some employees, it appears that improving their physical working space can do much to increase their overall satisfaction. According to Bauer (2000), “proper lighting, temperature, air circulation, work-related equipment, and allotted space are related to job satisfaction. As frontline classified employees often come in contact with current and prospective students, it is important that they be given proper equipment and training that enables them to complete job tasks quickly and accurately” (p. 94). Survey findings and the literature also suggest that increasing efforts towards enhancing the campus climate for diversity could also positively influence employee perceptions about the value that Chapman University places on diversity and satisfaction overall.

In addition, the literature and survey results (particularly the findings which revealed strong relationships between overall satisfaction and some aspects of the work/life environment) suggest that overall employee satisfaction may be increased through efforts focused on enhancing compensation and benefits, widening opportunities for training, professional development and innovation, taking into account staff and administrators’ input, and increasing personal praise and appreciation.

Lastly, accessibility for the disabled proved to be an issue that employees felt also needed to be addressed on campus. Findings revealed that Chapman University is perceived to be not a very hospitable climate for the disabled. Comments indicate that inaccessibility to some of the more historic building may be responsible for this perception.

While the survey results help us gain a deeper understanding of what staff and administrators think about Chapman University, it is still unclear in some cases why employees hold some

perceptions or what factors are influencing these perceptions. Continuing to study this population is necessary. Survey results from Chapman University’s 2007 Campus Climate and Work Environment Survey provide a baseline for employee satisfaction, staff and administrator attitudes toward work life, and perceptions of the campus climate at Chapman University. They provide a starting point to assess change over time.

Addressing some of the concerns not only can help increase employee productivity and help with employee retention, but improve life satisfaction and employee psychological well being. According to Saari and Judge (2004), “continuing to take actions to address low job satisfaction is not only important for organizational effectiveness,” but can also help with increasing overall “life satisfaction and well-being” of employees (p. 399). In addition, responding to issues that emerged from the survey may help increase employees’ perceptions that their opinions matter and change perceptions that their “opinion/input is valued at Chapman University.” According to Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2001), “once an organization has captured talented people, its best return on investment (ROI) requires closing the back door to prevent them [staff] from walking out” (p. 6). Survey findings reveal that there are opportunities for growth and improvement.

Even though survey results bring to light some concerns that may warrant further attention, they also identify areas that Chapman University can congratulate itself on. Findings show that most employees are proud to work at Chapman University and dedicated to supporting its mission. Underscoring this point are comments like the following from the *CU Pride and Praise* section:

“Chapman University is the best and finest place I have ever worked.”

“Chapman is a wonderful place to work! Many value added events, lectures, etc. make for an enriching environment...”

“I love being an employee at Chapman and am quite proud of working here.”

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**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Correlation coefficient is a measurement of the strength of the relationship between two variables. They can assume values between +1.0 and -1.0. A value of 0 indicates no relationship; a value of +1.0 indicates a perfect direct relationship; and a value of -1.0 indicates a perfect inverse relationship. (Jaeger, 1990)

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