

Institutional Effectiveness
Analysis of the SRSU Campus Environment Survey

Prepared by

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Executive Summary

The Sul Ross State University Campus Environment Survey was launched on September 14, 2020 and closed on September 25, 2020. The survey items were developed by members of the Guiding Coalition, who began work on this assessment in November 2019. There were 57 multiple choice questions, and one open-response question. The Guiding Coalition developed the questions in five areas: 1) Campus climate; 2) Commitment to students, faculty, and staff; 3) Work-life balance; 4) Administration; 5) Fair treatment/ Absence of discrimination. A total of 623 responses to the survey were collected, representing 22% of the entire SRSU community. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants were from Alpine, and twenty five percent (25%) of the participants were from Rio Grande College.

Responses to key survey items, as listed below, indicate that participants find SRSU to offer a welcoming campus climate. Participants also report a sense that the university is committed to students, faculty, and staff. Overall ratings for a positive work-life balance and fair treatment/absence of discrimination are near sixty percent or higher. Concerns were registered about administration, but those ratings may be influenced by the past. Some of the open-response comments reflected the recent transition to a new University President with statements such as, "Since mid-summer, I have seen real improvements."

Quantitative Summary for All Campuses

Participant Distribution

- 66.8% of participants were students
- 18.1% of participants were staff
- 12.2% of participants were faculty/adjunct faculty
- 2.3% of participants were administrators
- .06% of participants were "other"

Student Responses to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 82.2% of students reported, "I feel welcome on campus."
- 78.0% of students reported, "I would recommend this university to others."
- 74.1% of students responded, "I will likely attend SRSU next year."
(Note: 8.1% stated unlikely due to graduating this year).
- 32.3% of students reported, "I worry that I cannot afford to eat a balanced meal."

Faculty/Staff Responses to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 38.6% of faculty/staff reported, "The University actively seeks faculty and employee input in decision-making regarding campus matters."
- 50.0% of faculty/staff reported, "I would recommend this university to others as a place to work."
- 59.1% of faculty/staff reported, "The University supports a positive work-life balance."
- 49.4% of faculty/staff reported, "The University values its employees."

Combined Responses from All Faculty, Staff, and Students to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 74.5% of all participants reported, “My campus is supportive of people of different races, ethnicities, gender and sexual identities, and/or cultural backgrounds.”
- 64.0% of all participants reported, “The University is committed to my emotional well-being.”
- 69.5% of all participants reported, “The SRSU community cares about each student as a person.”
- 54.1% of all participants reported, “Communication among people across the University is effective.”

Significant Differences between Alpine Responses and Rio Grande College Responses (Noted for items with + or – 5% points differences)

Participant Distribution

- 74% of RGC responses were from students/ 66% of Alpine responses were from students
- 7.0% of RGC responses were from faculty/ 12.2% of Alpine responses were from faculty

Student Responses to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 81.6% of RGC students planned to return the next year; 74.1% of Alpine students planned to return the next year
- 22.4% of RGC students reported food insecurity/ 32.3% of Alpine students reported food insecurity

Faculty/Staff Responses to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 30.3% of RGC faculty/staff reported input in decision-making; 38.6% of Alpine faculty/staff reported input in decision-making.
- 72.7% of RGC faculty/staff reported satisfaction with work-life balance; 55.8% of Alpine faculty/staff reported satisfaction with work-life balance.

Combined Responses from All Faculty, Staff, & Students to Key Survey Items (Agree to Strongly Agree)

- 76.3% of RGC participants reported campus facilities were well-maintained; while 66.0% of Alpine participants reported campus facilities were well-maintained.
- 59.7% of RGC faculty/staff reported communication among people across the University is effective; while 54.1% of Alpine faculty/staff reported communication among people across the University is effective.

Qualitative Summary for All Campuses

There were 199 individual opinions entered in response to the question, “What improvements can you suggest to enhance the overall experience at Sul Ross State University?” Using the software program, Quirkos, researchers identified 299 discrete opinions and classified them into 17 themes. It is noted that 68% of all of the survey participants did not submit any open-ended response, so the 17 themes do not represent all 623 participants. The top five of the 17 themes include:

- Issues with communication (34 comments)
- Issues with facilities (31 comments)
- Issues with diversity (29 comments)
- Administrative issues (28 comments)
- Issues with instructors (26 comments)

Of those top five themes, quantitative data supports opinions expressed for communication, facilities, and administrative issues, but qualitative data does not support the opinions expressed for diversity and issues with instructors. All of the 17 themes will be considered and shared with departments and committees with primary responsibility for those areas.

Analysis of the SRSU Campus Environment Survey

It is important to measure the attitudes of the university constituents about the key areas of 1) campus climate; 2) Commitment to students, faculty, and staff; 3) Work-life balance; 4) Administration; and 5) Fair treatment/Absence of discrimination to assure that the university is offering an inclusive and supportive environment for all. All responses are important to the university. Furthermore, with a new president, it is timely to assess everyone’s thoughts to help shape the best direction for moving forward to enhance the culture of the university and measure progress from this baseline data. The survey was designed to examine a broad range of issues to address the overall environment and guide planning for the future. Making improvement in these five areas will have a great impact on the student experience, faculty and staff productivity, and the institution’s community engagement.

In this report, Section One will highlight key findings in the quantitative results, and Section Two will feature key findings in the qualitative results. Section Three will present conclusions and recommendations.

Section One: Quantitative Results

Multiple Choice Responses: Students

Students from all campuses will be reported as combined, since significant differences between Alpine and RGC have already been identified in the Executive Summary. A total of 416 students responded to the survey. Of those students, 26.8% were freshmen with no previous experience at the university. There were 16.9% sophomores, 27.4% juniors, 18.3% seniors, 9.4% graduate students, and 1.4% classified as “other”. There were 167 students (45.4%) who reported they were first-generation students. The ethnic distribution included 23 Black students, 225 Hispanic students, 97 White students, and 15 students identified as “other”.

The survey was intended to measure satisfaction in five areas: Climate; University support; Work-life balance; Administration; and Fair treatment/Absence of discrimination. Overall, the satisfaction levels are 60% or higher with the exception of student input in decision-making for the University rated at 59.8%. Some of these measures are in contrast to the open-responses that will be discussed in Section Two. For other measures, the open-responses and multiple choice responses were aligned. Students’ thoughts on the five areas are represented by selected questions from the survey.

Area 1: Campus Climate

Overall, 272 /369 (73.7%) of students reported a satisfaction level (agree or strongly agree) with campus climate by their responses to the item: *The campus offers a healthy living and learning environment.*

Area 2: University Commitment to Students

Overall, 246/370 (82.3%) of students reported a perceived sense of university commitment (agree or strongly agree) in this representative item: *Generally, I am welcome on my campus.*

Area 3: Work-Life Balance

Overall, 246/370 (66.5%) of students reported an adequate work-life balance (agree or strongly agree) in their responses to the item: *Faculty respect my need to balance course work with other responsibilities in my life.*

Area 4: Administration

Overall, 220/368 (59.8%) of students reported on input with administration (agree or strongly agree) to the following item: *The University actively seeks students’ input in decisions-making regarding campus matters.*

Area 5: Fair Treatment/Absence of discrimination

Overall, 269/366 (73.5%) of students reported there is fair treatment/ absence of discrimination (agree or strongly agree) as illustrated by responses to the item: *My primary university campus is supportive of people of difference races, ethnicities, gender and sexual identities and/or cultural backgrounds.*

Multiple Choice Responses- Faculty/Staff

Faculty and staff responses from all campuses are combined in this section. Altogether, there were 113 staff and 76 faculty and adjunct faculty who responded. Their combined satisfaction rates ranged from 39% to 69% satisfaction (agree to strongly agree).

Area 1: Campus Climate

Overall, 82/170 (48.2%) of faculty and staff selected agree or strongly agree in response to the item: *I would recommend this university to others as a place to work.*

Area 2: University Commitment to Faculty/staff

Overall 75/171 (49.3%) of faculty and staff rated university commitment as agree to strongly agree for the item: *I feel valued at work.*

Area 3: Work-Life Balance

Overall, 101/171 (59.1%) of faculty and staff rated work-life balance as agree or strongly agree for the item: *The university supports a positive work-life balance.*

Area 4: Administration

Overall, 66/171 (38.6%) of faculty and staff rated their opportunities to provide input to administration as agree or strongly agree for the item: *The University actively seeks faculty and employee input in decision-making regarding campus matters.*

Area 5: Fair Treatment/Absence of Discrimination

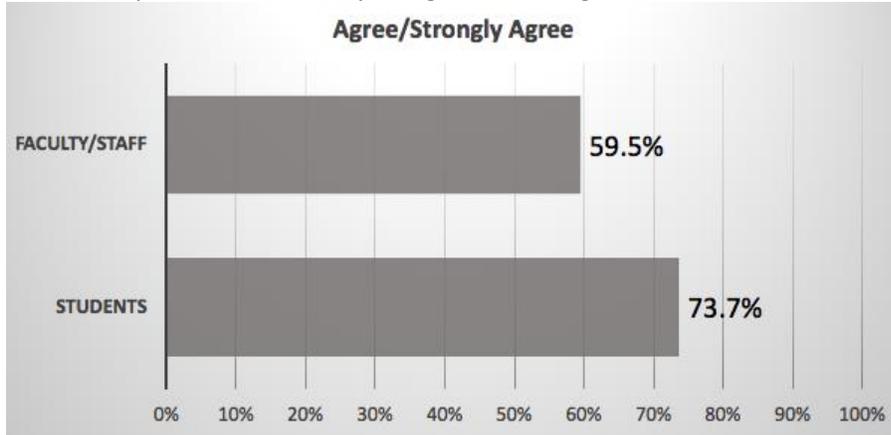
Overall, 133/174 (76.4%) of faculty and staff rated fair treatment and absence of discrimination as agree or strongly agree for the item: *My primary university campus is supportive of people of difference races, ethnicities, gender and sexual identities and/or cultural backgrounds.*

Comparisons of Student, Faculty, and Staff Responses to Selected Multiple Choice Questions

A comparison of student, faculty and staff responses shows that in four of the five areas, students consistently gave higher ratings than faculty and staff. In Area 5: Fair Treatment and Absence of Discrimination, faculty and staff gave slightly higher ratings than students did.

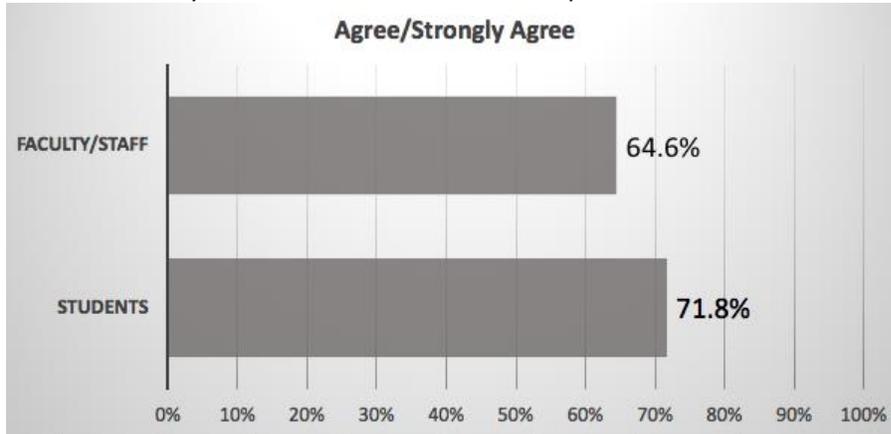
Area 1: Climate

Item: Campus offers a healthy living and learning environment



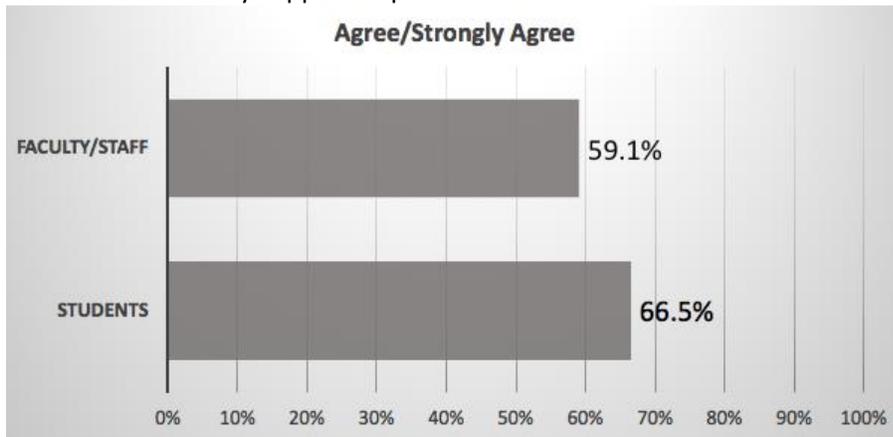
Area 2: Commitment to Students, Faculty, and Staff

Item: University cares about each student as a person



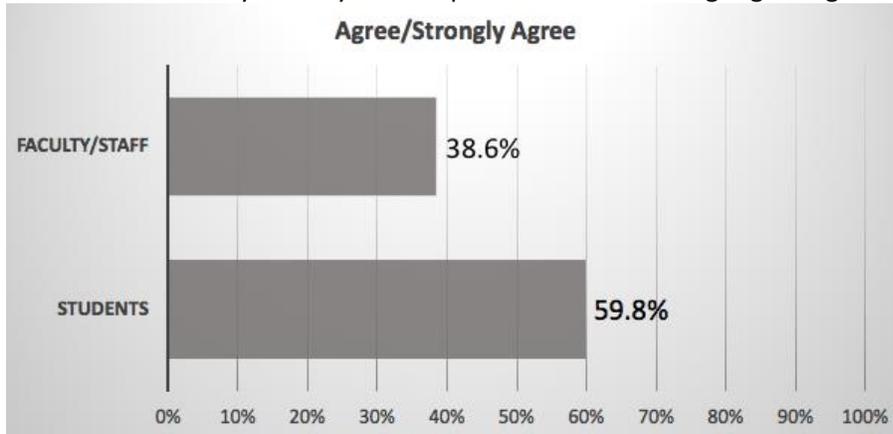
Area 3: Work-Life Balance

Item: The University supports a positive work-life balance



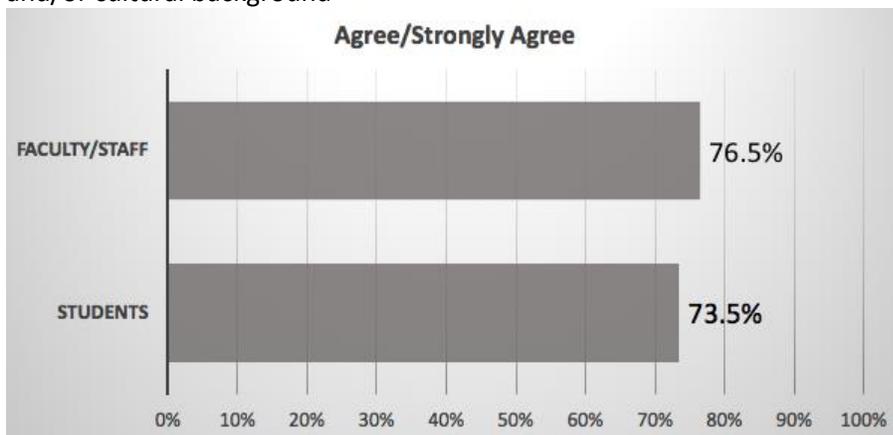
Area 4: Administration

Item: The University actively seeks input in decision-making regarding campus matters



Area 5: Fair Treatment/Absence of discrimination

Item: My campus is supportive of people of different races, ethnicities, gender and sexual identities and/or cultural background



Section Two: Qualitative Responses

There were 199 individual responses of varying lengths to the open-ended question. Within those 199 responses, there were 299 discrete items that were identified. The responses were classified by two independent researchers into 17 categories. The categories include:

Theme	Brief Description	# items
Communication	Concerns with exchanges between students and offices, between departments, and across campuses	34
Facilities	Concerns regarding parking lots, buildings maintenance, and elevators and more staffing for maintenance	31
Diversity	Concerns over divisions between younger and older students, ability to disagree with civility, the Sul Ross statue, and recognizing multiple perspectives	29
Administration	Concerns over inclusion of faculty and staff in decision making, need for transparency, valuing employees, budgets, and concerns regarding work study and graduate students	28
Instructors	Concerns regarding too much homework assigned in online classes, patience with COVID-19 complications, more engaging classes, more availability	26
Technology	Concerns for more LTAC staff, resolving issues with Blackboard	22
Staff/Faculty Wages and Positions	Concerns for more custodial positions and higher salaries. Concerns for more faculty hiring. Request for more professional development	21`
Positive about SRSU	Positive statements such as: "Sul Ross is a great place and I am really enjoying being a part of the community."	19
Cafeteria Food	Concerns over quality of food	14
COVID-19	Some reported satisfaction with SRSU handling and some concerns about enforcement of safety guidelines	14
Student Activities	Requests for more clubs and activities	14
Academic Advising	Need for informed and available advisors	10
Students Feel Neglected	RGC requests comparable student services with Alpine offerings. Concerns from Midland students for equal treatment. Avoid favoritism among student groups.	10
Gains Under the New President	Positive comments such as, "Since mid-summer, I have seen real improvements."	9
RGC Specific	Make RGC as much a priority as Alpine	7
Team Building	Recognition that we are all part of a team	7
Safety	Concerns for safety on campus	4

Section Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The response rate (22%) is a good indicator of engagement by the university community. Overall, student ratings were more positive than faculty and staff ratings. Faculty, staff, and student ratings indicated a level of satisfaction (60% or higher agree to strongly agree) in four of the five areas measured. Ratings were lower in all three groups for the area of administration. Students gave the highest rating to the area of campus climate; while faculty and staff gave the highest ratings to fair treatment/ absence of discrimination.

While reflecting on the Campus Environment Survey results, it is important to consider the context. This survey was administered in September 2020 just three months after the new president assumed his position. Furthermore, the survey was administered during the COVID-19 pandemic that significantly impacted the entire University community. With those considerations, it is remarkable to have such a good participation rate (22%) and such positive results. Looking ahead, it will be important to identify emerging trends over time, as the survey is administered from year to year.

The Campus Environment Survey results do pose challenges and highlight successes for the University to address.

Challenges

- Area 4: Administration multiple choice question responses of agree to strongly agree were lowest for students, faculty and staff.
- The most negative open-response comments were made about communication, which relates to administration.
- 32.3% of all students reported food insecurity.

Successes

- 82.2% of students agree to strongly agree: “I feel welcome on campus.”
- 78.0% of all students agree to strongly agree: “I would recommend this University to others.”
- 64.0% of all students, staff, and employees agree to strongly agree: “The University is committed to my emotional well-being.”

Next Steps

1. Survey results will be widely shared and discussed.
 - On October 14, Data Day was held in Alpine. The Guiding Coalition distributed bookmarks with survey results and ice cream bars for everyone on campus. A Data Day for Rio Grande College is being planned.
 - Institutional Research distributed packets of results to related committees, offices, and individuals for their review and input.
2. Priorities will be identified by participating committees, offices, and individuals.
3. The Guiding Coalition will meet to review the priorities and identify interventions with targets.

4. Monthly updates will be provided by the Guiding Coalition to the university community.
5. The Campus Environment Survey will be administered again in Spring 2021 to be a better measure of the new administration.
6. The Campus Environment Survey will be administered on an annual basis.

RECOGNITION

The university is grateful to the members of the Guiding Coalition for their research and development of this survey and their commitment to all faculty, staff, and students to use the data to continually enhance the campus culture for all.

Name	Position	Campus
Valerie Baca	SGA President	Alpine
Rosemary Briseno	English Professor	Alpine
Jazell Diaz	Administrative Associate	Uvalde
Karlin DeVoll	Director of HR	Alpine
Maria Gear	Education Professor	Eagle Pass
Bibi Gutierrez	Psychology Professor	Alpine
Chris Herrera	Kinesiology & Human Performance Department Chair	Alpine
Dominick Percoco	OIT	Alpine
Dean Wilkinson	Public Relations Officer	Alpine
Savannah Williamson	History Professor	Alpine
Anne VanLoon	Administrative Associate	Alpine
Jeanne Qvarnstrom	Assistant VP for Institutional Effectiveness	Alpine, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Uvalde