Campus Climate Survey 2023 — University-Wide Synthesis

Why We Asked

In Fall 2023, Binghamton University renewed its long-standing commitment to understanding and improving the campus climate, with a focus on fostering belonging, inclusion, safety, free expression, and the lived experiences of students and employees. This effort builds on the 2014 baseline study and reflects the University's ongoing pursuit of a vibrant, inclusive community aligned with the *Road Map to a Diverse and Inclusive Campus Community*.

To gather meaningful insights, the University partnered with **Insight Into Academia** to administer the nationally benchmarked **Viewfinder® Campus Climate Survey**. The instrument includes modules tailored to specific subgroups; therefore, this synthesis highlights results from questions asked of the entire campus community and items with sufficient responses for reliable analysis.

Who Responded?

- **Participation.** A total of **899 employees** (~30% of the 3,043 invited) and 955 students (~5% of the 18,469 invited) completed the survey. Employee participation supports robust interpretation, while student results—though insightful—should be viewed as directional rather than definitive.

- **Employee Profile. -**Respondents represented every school, division and rank across campus: **46% women**, **24% men**, and **2% another gender identity**; **2% military/veteran**, **11% reporting a disability**, **12% LGBTQIA+**, **14% people of color** and **3% international**.
- **Student Profile.** Among student respondents, **73% were undergraduates** and **21% graduate students**, with degree programs spanning **72% bachelor's**, **17% master's** and **10% doctoral**. Student demographics included **37% women**, **19% men** and **4% identifying as another gender; 1% were military-affiliated, 12% reported a disability, 24% identified as LGBTQIA+, 29% were students of color,** and **11% were international students**.

Headline Findings

A climate that is respectful and largely safe—yet uneven in everyday inclusion

- **Respect for beliefs and expression.** Daily interactions are generally respectful of religious and spiritual beliefs. The challenge lies not in interpersonal civility but in infrastructure and representation, i.e., limited multi-faith/prayer space and few formal channels for religious or belief-based perspectives in decision-making.
- **Political climate.** Dialogue around political ideas is courteous but cautious. Comfort levels and perceived respect cluster in the mid-3s (on a 5-point scale), and respondents note limited diversity of political viewpoints in formal governance.
- **Diversity as a leadership priority.** Confidence in the University leadership's commitment to diversity is among the strongest findings across all groups. Yet, everyday cross-cultural engagement—in residence halls, dining areas, co-curricular settings and some work units—remains moderate.
- **Safety.** The community feels secure on campus (ratings above 4.0) but less so off campus (3.0–3.5), particularly among undergraduates and minoritized groups. This gap highlights the

need for coordinated outreach, education and community partnerships that extend beyond campus borders.

- **Student experience and services.** Classrooms stand out as a signature strength—welcoming, inclusive, and academically rigorous. Students are aware of where to find academic help (e.g., tutoring, faculty office hours), but express lower satisfaction with financial support mechanisms, including need-based aid, merit awards, and emergency funding.

- **Employee experience.** Employees describe a collegial, mission-driven environment with strong mentorship and professional development opportunities. Yet concerns about fairness and transparency in hiring, promotion, and budget decisions persist—especially among employees of color, who also report lower recognition for diversity-related contributions.

Areas of Strength

- **Visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.** Campus leadership's dedication to diversity remains among the highest-rated themes, with broad support for mandatory diversity education for all campus roles, including campus police.

- **Safe, inclusive classrooms.** Students rate the classroom experience highly, describing the faculty as welcoming, fair and open to diverse viewpoints. Overall satisfaction with the quality of education and willingness to recommend Binghamton remains strong.

- **Supportive professional culture.** Employees value mentoring, collegiality and professional development. Many describe Binghamton as a place where they "love their job," highlighting a community grounded in shared purpose.

Areas for Improvement

While the overall climate assessment is positive, several structural gaps temper the University's aspirations for full inclusion and belonging.

- **Everyday cross-cultural engagement.** Broaden opportunities for organic and structured interaction across racial, cultural and political lines—particularly in residence life, dining, co-curricular activities and student employment.

- **Equity and transparency in employment.** Strengthen confidence in hiring, promotion and budgeting processes. Recognize diversity-related teaching, research and service in evaluations and advancement.

- **Financial support and advising.** Simplify scholarship and emergency funding processes, ensure transparent communication and offer proactive advising outreach.

- **Religious and political inclusion.** Expand multi-faith and meditation spaces, and formalize representation of diverse faith and political perspectives within advisory and governance structures.

- **Off-campus safety and partnerships.** Bridge the perception gap in off-campus safety through collaborative initiatives with community partners and data-informed prevention strategies.

- **Leadership communication and accountability.** Establish predictable feedback forums, communicate progress transparently, and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups—particularly those of students of color and non-binary students.

Next Steps — Actionable and Enduring

Binghamton University's commitment to inclusion must now be translated into visible, lasting practice. The survey results point to a path forward grounded in steady, structural improvement rather than symbolic gestures.

1. **Broaden support for spiritual life and belief diversity. Action:** Create additional multi-faith and meditation spaces, and include diverse religious and political perspectives in shared governance and advisory groups.

2. **Deepen cross-group engagement. Action:** Incentivize and support intercultural collaboration in residence halls, co-curricular programs, and student employment; recognize departments that foster sustained inclusion and diversity.

3. **Strengthen financial aid and advising. Action:** Enhance accessibility through clear, plain-language communication, proactive outreach, and streamlined scholarship and emergency aid processes.

4. **Advance equity and transparency in employment. Action:** Publish clear promotion and evaluation criteria; value diversity work; and provide equitable professional development funding.

5. **Sustain a campus-wide safety dialogue. Action:** Continue diversity training and representative hiring for campus police; share data and rationale transparently; and strengthen partnerships that enhance off-campus safety.

6. **Enhance leadership communication and accountability. Action:** Create regular, structured opportunities for dialogue, report on progress and ensure that underrepresented perspectives are reflected in institutional decision-making.

How to Read the Results

As with any voluntary survey, response rates shape interpretation. Student participation (≈5%) limits generalizability, and some populations—particularly men and specific racial/ethnic groups—were underrepresented. Certain survey items designed for narrow subpopulations are not included here due to insufficient responses.

Results reflect the *Fall 2023 moment in time* and should be viewed as part of an evolving, ongoing conversation about campus climate.

In Summary

The **2023 Campus Climate Survey** reaffirms Binghamton University's identity as a respectful, safety-conscious and academically strong community with an enduring commitment to diversity and inclusion.

It also points the way forward—toward deeper daily connection, more equitable structures, and a culture where every student and employee truly experiences belonging not only in principle, but in practice.