**Bemidji State University**

**Campus Climate Questions and Responses**

**Information was collected from three specific groups of students, the International Student Organization, the BSU Student Senate, and the Phoenix, which is the LGBTQ student club on the BSU campus.**

1. **What makes you feel valued and connected to Bemidji State University?**
2. The International Student Organization sees multiple parts of campus playing a vital role, with the International Program Center (IPC) as having a key part in helping them feel comfortable at BSU. They also mentioned that their assigned Academic Advisor is helpful at that person helps guide and navigate academic requirements and that the student body is generally welcome to international students. Campus employment also helps promote feelings of inclusivity.
3. The Student Senate states that the professors make the biggest difference. One student senate member said that the professors work hard to make connections with students and take time to learn about each of us.
4. The Phoenix cites the club itself and their club advisor as extremely helpful, supportive, and welcoming. One member said that being a part of the Bemidji Choir has also provided welcome and support. Many students come from small communities and that they experience life here as way better than their life in their home towns. They note that several professors, some departments, and Housing and Residential Life, generally speaking, are supportive.
5. **Campus climate is a measure of the real or perceived quality of interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions on campus. A healthy climate is grounded in respect for others, nurtured by dialogue among differing perspectives and evidenced by civil interactions. Campus climate includes the experience of both individuals and groups on campus.**
   1. **Describe your personal experience with campus climate. (E.g. What makes you feel welcome? What makes you feel safe?)**
      1. The ISO reported no unwelcoming experience within the BSU community. The level of support offered during their application process (with admissions) is a large contributor to why they students feel welcome when deciding to attend BSU. While here, the IPC offers tremendous support, allowing the students to feel as if they are home and safe.
      2. The Student Senate said they have not had experiences where they have felt unsafe or unwelcome at BSU. The culture of “Minnesota Nice” seems to shine through from the Administration all the way down to the student body.
      3. The Phoenix Club mentioned that the relationships with faculty make them feel welcome. They said that staff, for the most part, are also helpful. They noted that the bulk of the problems they experience are student on student. One person noted that they feel greater safety when Public Safety actively patrols. Others contradicted noting experiences where Public Safety has been perceived as less responsive.
   2. **Describe your experience within a group you are part of or groups you are not a part of related to campus climate.**
      1. The Student Senate organization has taken major steps forward to producing a warm and inclusive climate. One individual noted that there is not one time in which he/she felt as if I was an outsider or unwelcome within the organization.
      2. Phoenix Club is the place in which members feel the safest. Others welcoming organizations included the Bemidji Choir, the Amish Club, the Ballroom Dance Club, SAFAC, American Indian Student Council, Students United. Names of specific faculty were provided as either being supportive or nonsupportive.
6. **What strategies have been successful at Bemidji State University to create a safe and inclusive environment?**
   1. Student Senate mentioned that student clubs and organizations provide students with opportunities for connection with others who have similar interests and feelings of safety.
   2. The International Student Organization provided four examples.
      1. Admissions – Support during application and admission process
      2. The International Program Center staff resolve issues that arise from being an international student in the US.
      3. Academic Advisors assist students with academic performance and filing documentation needed to remain enrolled.
      4. There has been talk about developing a multicultural center on campus. BSU is the only state university to not have such a center. The ISO Students and the Student Senate feel it is going to be vital to finish developing this center as soon as possible.
   3. The Phoenix Club also noted that push for a Diversity Center as a positive step forward.In addition, individual faculty efforts to include diversity within the curriculum has been helpful. President Hensrud’s public statements supporting diversity have been perceived as quite positive. There is a sense that staff who exhibit intolerance or who discriminate or harass will be dealt with. The counselors in the Student Center for Health and Counseling were also identified as providing support during the difficult time post-election. They suggested forming a group to talk about sex/gender harassment on campus. One person mentioned that she knows someone who is gender nonconforming who is afraid to take a shower in their own dormitory and goes to another dorm to do so. One thing that they would like BSU to do is regularly test the Blue Emergency phones. One student used one of these phones when she was locked out and no one answered the phone. She wondered whether it was working.
7. **How can the system office better support campuses in this effort?**
   1. The ISO requested assistance understanding the Executive Actions taken by the President of the United States. Some of them reported feeling afraid and they wanted to start receiving more regular updates on these matters. They also asked for assistance understanding the visa program – what is required for them to remain as students and what is required for them to become full time workers after graduation. In addition, the members underscored the importance of funding for their group to ensure its continuing presence. Finally, the lack of adequate public transportation is a challenge for international students. They are unable to obtain a driver’s license and the Bemidji public transportation system is costly and ineffective.
   2. The Student Senate said the system office could offer inclusivity training to identified student leaders so that they can help promote inclusivity on campus.
   3. The Phoenix Club would like all faculty, staff and administrators to receive safe zone ally training. They would also like a greater system-wide push for transgender accommodations in all buildings on campus – classrooms, office, and residence halls. In addition, they would like to see a more intensive push for pronoun usage and an understanding of what that means.