

## **Report of the results of the Campus Climate Survey conducted in Spring, 2008**

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and College Committee on Inclusive Excellence  
Saint Mary's College of California  
November 3, 2008

This report provides an Overall Summary of some of the results of the Climate Survey conducted in Spring, 2008, as well as a comparison of some of these current results with those of the Climate Survey conducted in Spring, 2006. In addition, a selected sample of open-ended responses is provided, chosen to illustrate the general range and tone of the entire set of responses given. For the purposes of this report, no clear conclusions have been drawn, as this is descriptive data at this point. It is the hope the various departments and constituencies on campus will utilize the data here to reflect on their own practices and policies and utilize ongoing surveys as one measure of progress on areas of concern. Various tables of specific comparisons (e.g., gender, ethnicity) are available on the website (<http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/about-smc/institutional-research/reports/>). Any other specific data-analytic requests can be made through the Office of Institutional Research (631-4754).

Any comments or feedback can be communicated to the CCIE (via the co-chairs, Bethami Dobkin and Robert Bulman), through Staff Council (Mel Hunt is the staff representative on CCIE), or, for students, through Randy Menjivar (the student representative on CCIE).

### **Introduction and Background**

In the fall of 2004, as part of the Educational Effectiveness Review, the WASC Visiting Team made a number of observations and recommendations with regard to diversity at Saint Mary's. The team noted issues with respect to the campus climate and offered recommendations for action. Part of that recommendation included conducting a campus climate survey. The first survey was conducted in spring of 2006, and results were shared with the campus community in fall of 2006. A revised version of the survey was again administered in spring, 2008, and is now a regular part of our institutional assessment practice (administered every other year).

The response rate in 2006 was 941 persons from a pool of 500 staff, 550 faculty, and 2400 students, with an approximate overall response rate of 27%. Specifically, the response rates were 24% for students, 45% for staff, and 25% for faculty (54% were tenured, 46% untenured). Though confidentiality was promised to survey respondents, during this survey a number of faculty and staff indicated they were not going to participate in the survey for fear of being identified. They did express willingness to participate in focus group interviews if conducted by a non-campus facilitator.

In 2008, there were 787 responses from a pool of 571 staff, 741 faculty (which included everyone who was on the all.faculty list, whether they are active faculty or not), and 2,983 students (including Graduate Business and School of Education). From an email invitation to participate, there were 196 staff responses (34%), 427 student responses (14%), and 164 faculty responses (22%). The lower response rate in 2008 may have been due to a few factors. There were much larger email lists used in 2008, thus lowering the apparent response rates. That is, because the email invitation went to more people (many of whom have no affiliation with the college any longer), it appears as if the response rate declined from 2006 to 2008 when, in fact, our estimation is that it remained about the same (when the size of the population is adjusted). In addition, the timing at the end of spring semester is more likely to be when people are overwhelmed. There may also have been some overall survey fatigue, as well as some fatigue around diversity issues on campus. This was the time when the WASC report related to

diversity issues was in the public purview and under great discussion by both Saint Mary's community members and the larger community. These factors may have heightened awareness of and sensitivity to issues around diversity and may have affected people's willingness to respond. However, regardless of the differences in response rates, the numbers for 2008 are substantial enough to lend credibility to the data.

## DATA ANALYSES

This report is organized around three general categories related to our own institutional goals and priorities: 1) College Policies and Practices contain items about how business is conducted at St. Mary's and the work experiences of faculty and staff; 2) Building an Inclusive Community, a core principle, includes questions about how we build a healthy, open, welcoming, and inclusive community for all; and 3) the Educational Enterprise category assesses how our goals are manifested in educational processes in and out of the classroom. Items that were commonly asked across the three groups – students, staff, and faculty – are identified as such, while items specific to each group are also noted.

**GENERAL HIGHLIGHTS.** The overall results of the survey clearly indicate that while many may feel Saint Mary's is one community, there are multiple and disparate experiences of this community. These differences need to be acknowledged, further understood, and addressed.

Across the three general topic areas of College Policies and Practices, Building an Inclusive Community, and our Educational Enterprise, there seem to be a few outstanding results:

### COLLEGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES:

- Mission/goal items – there is an increase in people feeling that we are focusing on important things around diversifying faculty, staff, and administration and working to build a more inclusive community. There is a greater agreement that we should place much more emphasis on these goals
- For faculty and staff, there is an overall high level of job satisfaction, however:
  - Workload is a concern in terms of teaching load for faculty and hours worked for staff (working through lunch, etc.) and having jobs that don't match job descriptions
  - Support factors such as salary, office space, and resources for research and professional development for both faculty and staff are of concern, with significant gender and ethnic differences here in perceived level of support ( those groups reporting lower perceptions of support)
  - "Supervisory" issues such as feedback and recognition for meritorious performance (staff) or scholarly achievement (faculty) are of concern. Institutional support factors of sharing of communication and evaluation and grievance processes are of concern to staff and faculty; opportunities for advancement are of concern to staff (esp. for women).

### BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY:

- For faculty, staff, and students, between 85 and 98% felt that there should be some or a great deal of emphasis on the items related to building an open, inclusive community.
- Items related to physical safety and fitting in and feeling comfortable with those around them were of most concern to students, especially students of color

- Communicating openly about sensitive topics, especially around religion, was an area of concern, especially for students, faculty and staff of color
- Observations and experiences of offensive and discriminatory language and behavior were more often reported by women and people of color –significantly higher for students of color compared to majority students.

#### OUR EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE:

- ❖ Faculty generally feel support for curricular initiatives around diversifying their content and teaching methods
- ❖ Students generally report a high level of support from faculty
- ❖ Efforts at teaching about social justice issues of discrimination have had varied levels of success in and out of the classroom.

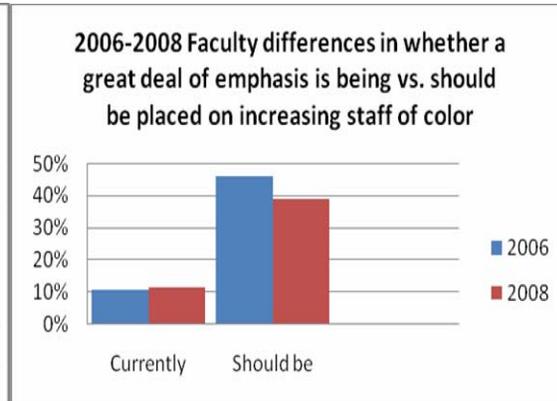
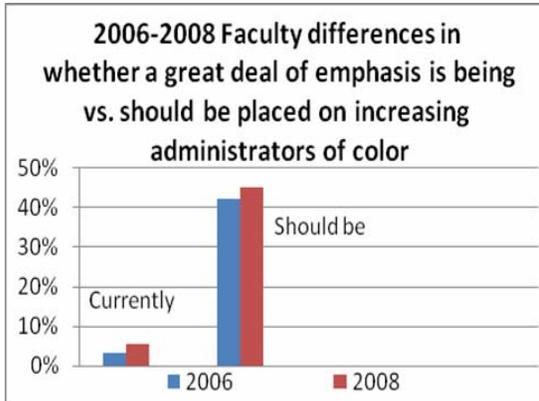
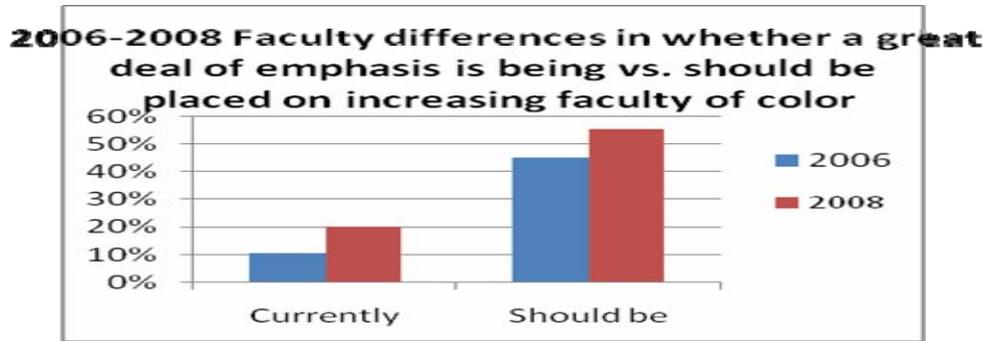
Ideally, the results of a survey such as this, comparing current results with those found in 2006, should be utilized to assess efforts over the past two years, and to direct our efforts in the future to both short-term and immediate interventions (e.g., recognition for meritorious performance and achievement) to address pressing concerns, as well as to direct longer-term efforts at larger, institutional factors (such as compensation) that need broader and more complex planning and implementation. Future surveys can then assist us in evaluating the success of our efforts to make Saint Mary’s an effective and efficient organization in living out its mission.

A NOTE ABOUT STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Where there were statistically significant results (based on Chi-Square analyses) these are noted. In some instances, there are distributions between different groups that would seem to be significantly different, but did not reach statistical significance. This may be due to some small sample size numbers in some of the categories that would affect the confidence of statistical analyses. In addition, we should not rely solely on the statistical significance levels to indicate what items are of most concern or need the most attention. There is an important difference between statistical significance and practical significance, in terms of the impact on numbers of real people that may need to be institutionally addressed, regardless of statistical significance.

#### **COLLEGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

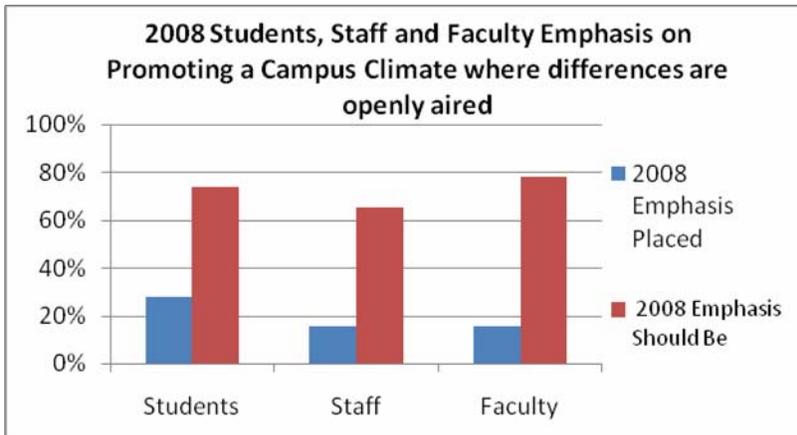
The first section of the Climate Survey asked about the level of emphasis that people believed St Mary’s *currently* places on policies and practices related to diversity and inclusion, while the second section asked what emphasis we *should* be placing on these items. (See Appendix for tables of all items).

Between 2006 and 2008, there generally was an increase in the number of respondents (staff and faculty only, as students were not asked these questions in 2006) who felt that SMC was placing some or a great deal of emphasis on the goals of increasing diversity among faculty, staff, and administration. These results seem to indicate that there is agreement that SMC has increased their efforts towards diversity. In addition, there was a clear increase in the percentage agreeing that that the college should continue to place a priority on increasing the diversity across campus. The graphs below illustrate the changes for the faculty responses on the items about increasing representation of people of color in the faculty, staff, and administration. These same patterns are similar, although somewhat lower, than staff responses on the same items.



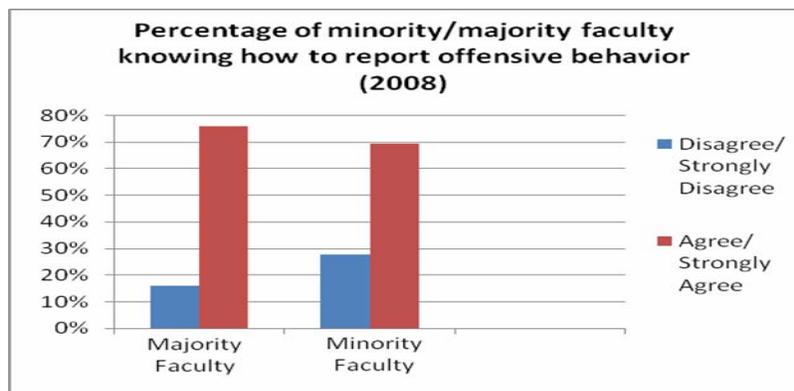
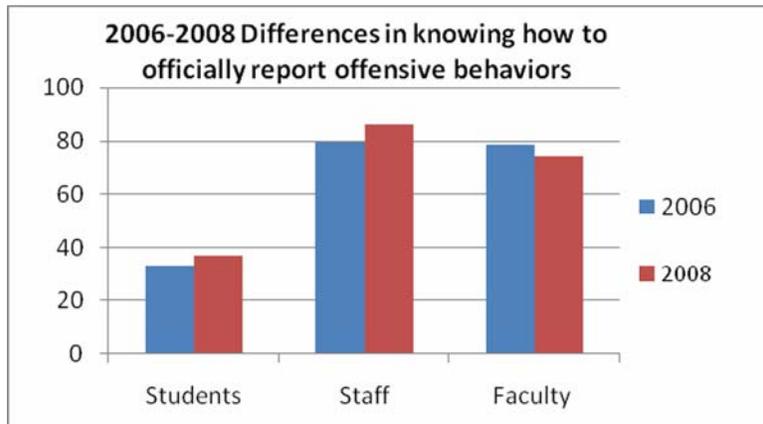
Other items that related to the goals of building an inclusive community, such as “developing a sense of community among students, staff, and faculty,” “developing appreciation for a multicultural society on campus,” “developing an inclusive community,” and “promoting a campus climate where differences of opinion are aired openly and regularly” also show a similar trend – an increase in the percent of people who believe St. Mary’s is placing some or a great deal of emphasis on these goals, but also a much larger percentage who believe we should be placing more emphasis on them.

In 2008, over 75% (and usually closer to 90%) of students, staff, and faculty agree that SMC should be placing some or a great deal of emphasis on all the items in this section of the survey. One of the items mentioned above, promoting a campus climate for airing differences, is illustrated in the graph below, showing the differences in 2008 between what people feel we are doing, and what we should be emphasizing, across the three groups – students, staff, and faculty.



Most members of our community continue to believe that SMC should use its resources to help underprepared students succeed (77% of faculty, 85% of staff, and 72% of students in 2008. [The term “underprepared” was not explicitly defined in this survey.]

**College Policies.** In terms of knowing how to officially report racist, sexist, or other offensive behavior, there were modest increases for students and staff, while the faculty percentage was slightly lower. Faculty of color report less agreement with this (27.6 v. 15.8% -see graph).



One of the biggest changes in responses came in answering the question: “The process by which complaints and grievances against faculty are resolved is fair and equitable.” The percentage of faculty who disagreed with the statement increased from 16.5% in 2006 to 29.9% in 2008. There were also differences in the type of response between men (24.6% of whom agreed the process was fair) and women (of whom 16.9% agreed). In addition, faculty of color were much more likely to disagree with the statement (24.2%) than majority faculty (11.5%).

### **Workplace practices and experiences.**

FACULTY: These items include the subareas of **Departmental support** such as that provided by chairs and colleagues, and **Institutional support** such as that provided by administrators and institutional procedures.

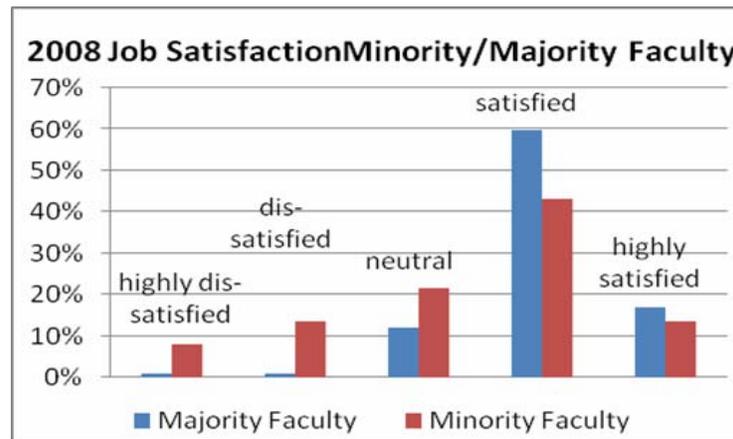
Using the same benchmark as in 2006, those items in which 25% or more indicated a potential area of concern (dissatisfied/very dissatisfied) in 2008 are presented below, along with a statement of any statistically significant gender and/or ethnic differences in responses.

- **Departmental support.** Faculty report dissatisfaction with our teaching load (35.5%, with more female faculty (43.3%) than male faculty (28%) reporting this), with office space (40%, with more male faculty expressing concern), and valuing of research and scholarly work (26.1%, with more male faculty expressing dissatisfaction 31.3 vs. 19.6% of women)
- About one-third of faculty expressed fear of retribution for being openly critical of their department's administration (32.1% of all faculty/38.2% of minority faculty)
- Significantly more faculty of color than majority faculty feel that their department has not made an honest effort to hire faculty of color in the last 5 years (20.6% vs. 11.6% of majority faculty).
- Significantly more faculty of color do not agree that their colleagues are committed to the curtailment of sexual harassment.

**Institutional support.** These questions assess the degree to which faculty feel that they are supported by SMC as an institution.

- Over a third (36.1%) of faculty feel dissatisfied with their opportunities for scholarly and creative pursuits, with more female (42%) than male faculty (28.5%) feeling dissatisfied.
- Similarly, 36.6% of faculty feel dissatisfied with the “quality of students”, with more men (42%) than women (31.4%) expressing this.
- 35.4% of faculty do not feel satisfied with Campus administrative leadership, and significantly more men than women express this. 30.5% of faculty are satisfied.
- 35.2% disagrees that the campus administration willingly shares important information with them, with more women dissatisfied. 32.3% of faculty were satisfied with this.
- 26.5% of faculty think that the rank and tenure process is not fair and equitable, while 40.9% feel it is fair.
- Consistent with the fear of retribution from department supervisors, 41.3% of faculty think that faculty who are openly critical of the College's administration have cause to fear retribution, with 54.6% of faculty of color compared to 37.1% of majority faculty agreeing.
- More than half of faculty disagree that faculty of color are adequately represented on important faculty committees (56.6%), with significantly more faculty of color reporting this.
- Significantly more female faculty than male faculty feel that female faculty do not receive the same level of support as male faculty (45.3% vs. 14.5%). This significant difference in feelings about support of women also holds for faculty of color compared to majority faculty.

- A significant percentage of faculty continue to believe that administrators do not actively support shared governance (41.1%) and significantly more faculty of color feel this way.
- Many faculty feel that special funds and release time to enhance participation in research for professional development are inadequate (58.8%), and the evaluation process for lecturers is not fair and equitable (27.6%)
- Overall job satisfaction – 21.6% of faculty of color expressed dissatisfaction compared to 10.2% of majority faculty [see graph below].

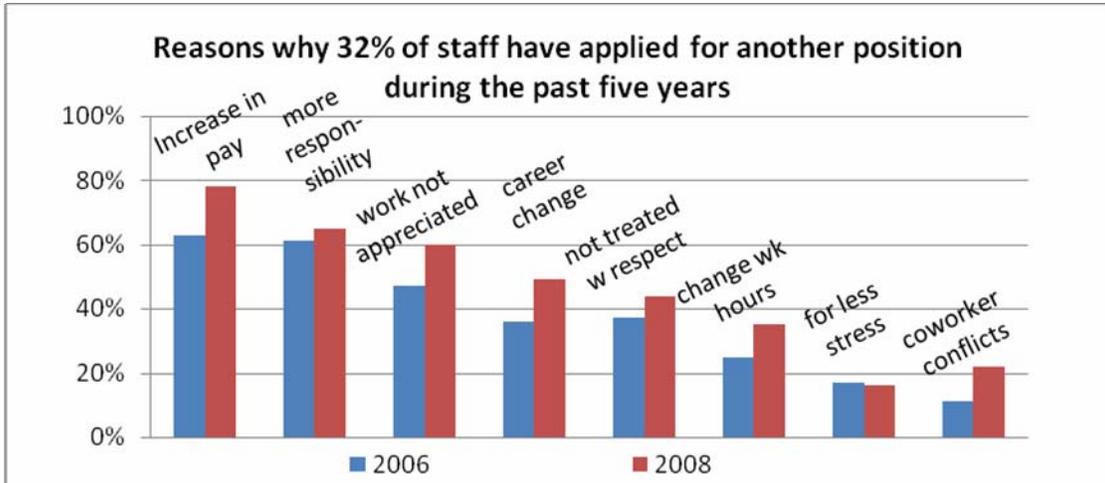


STAFF – For the Policies and Practices section, there were three subsections – **departmental support, supervisory support, and institutional support.**

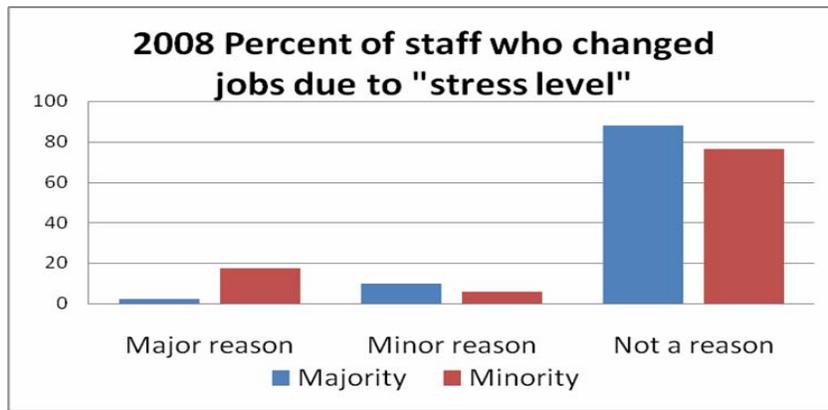
In the area of departmental support, over 80% agree that they:

- Are able to attend campus events/activities during working hours
- Feel their work is an integral part of the overall mission of educating students
- Are satisfied with autonomy and independence and enjoy professional relationships with co-workers.

Staff also reported applying for a different job during the past five years because they were not treated with respect (24.6%) and 26.8% of women and 29.4% of staff of color reported applying for another job (as a major or minor reason) due to being treated in an insensitive/inappropriate manner based on their gender. 32% of staff said that they had applied for another position during the past five (5) years – the same percentage reported in the 2006 survey. Here are their reasons:

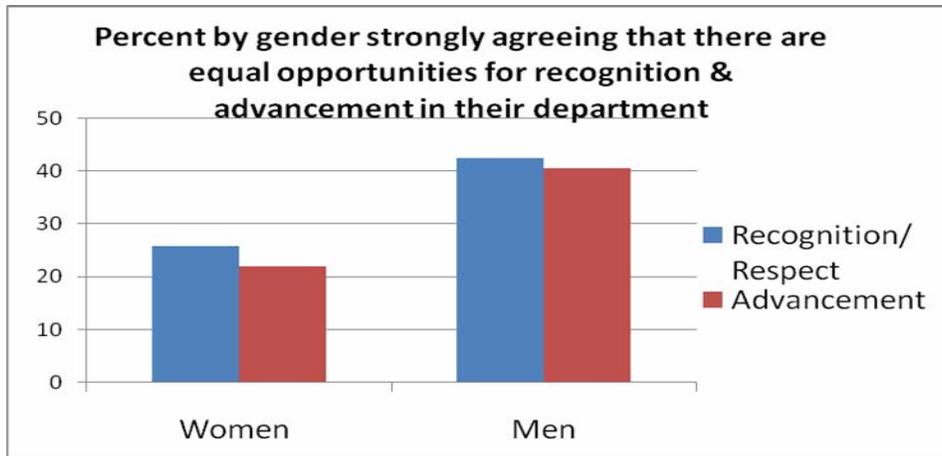


Staff of color cited stress as a major or minor reason for seeking a job change during the past five years – twice the rate of majority staff (24% vs. 12%).

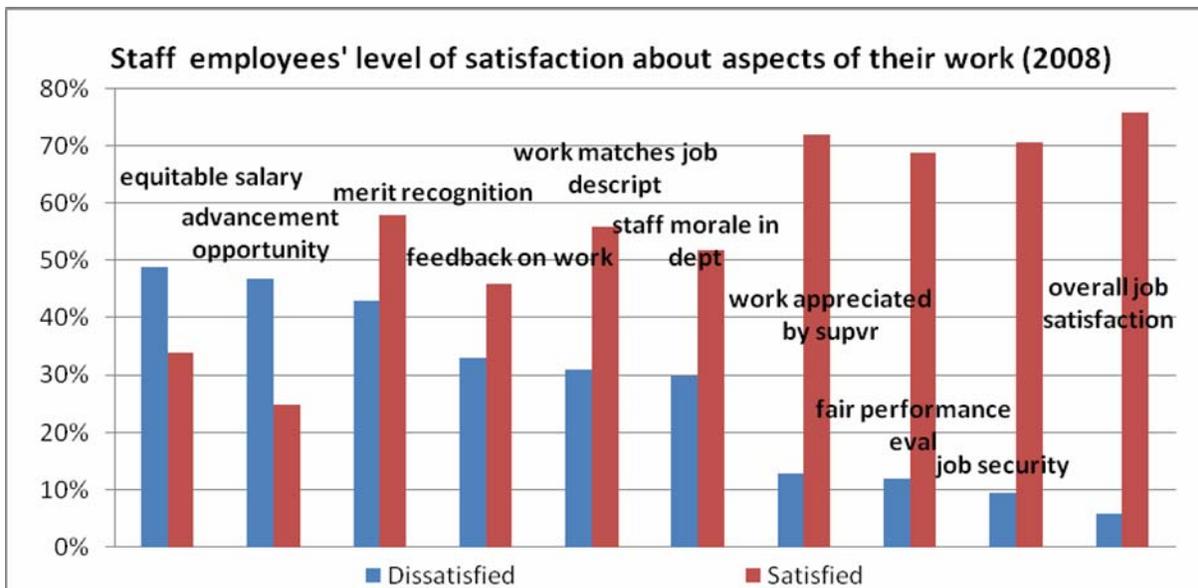


For 95% of those seeking a job change during the past five years, it was *not* because of being treated in an insensitive/inappropriate manner based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability. However, there was a difference perception between female and male staff in terms of equal opportunity for recognition/respect, and for advancement, based on gender.

Significantly more women, compared to men, reported that there were not equal opportunities for advancement, as well as respect and recognition. Over one third felt that there are not sufficient opportunities for advancement within SMC (36.6%); this was also a major increase from 2006 – 17.8%.

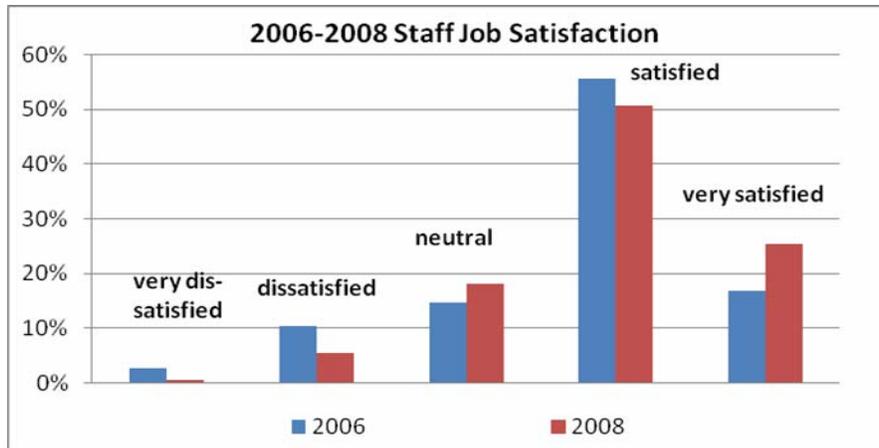


In the area of **Supervisory support**, many staff felt they did not often receive feedback about how they are doing their job (32.6%), or did not receive recognition for meritorious performance (37.7%). Somewhat more men than women report this last item as unsatisfactory and there were significantly more staff who agreed in 2008 than in 2006 – 37.7% vs. 26.9%). Almost half (49.2%) of staff reported that they do not receive an equitable salary in their department or work area; this was a major increase from the 2006 response of 16.6%.,



Staff employees dissatisfied by their jobs in 2006 have shifted toward neutral, and some of those satisfied with their jobs in 2006 are now very satisfied.

While staff employees expressed increased dissatisfaction with a number of questions related to their salaries, a lack of recognition, inadequate job descriptions, and a lack of opportunities for advancement, and a third of staff felt morale was low in their department, overall job satisfaction was high.



In the area of **Institutional support**, there was some dissatisfaction with campus administrative leadership (25.5%) and with the extent to which the campus administration willingly shares information (30.8%), as well as dissatisfaction with integration of the staff in the life of the campus (24.6%). Many staff (59.4%) reported that they have to work through lunch to get their work done.

### **BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY**

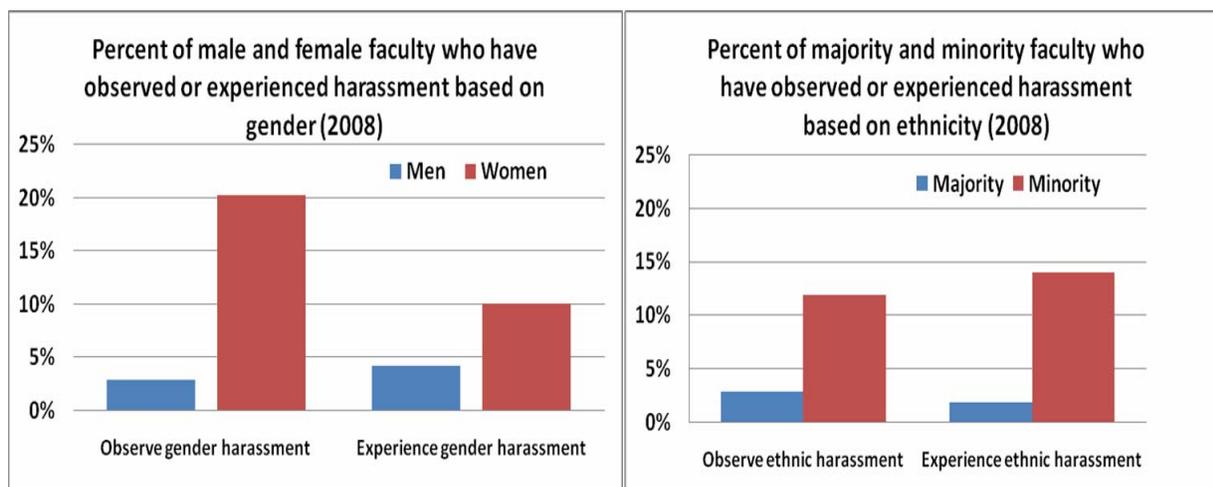
In terms of our stated goals of building an inclusive community, in 2008 80% of all three groups reported that SMC placed some or a great deal of emphasis on developing a sense of community among students, staff, and faculty. Between 53% and 68% of respondents felt there was some or a great deal of emphasis on promoting a campus climate where differences of opinion are regularly aired openly, with staff and students feeling that more strongly than faculty. Between 66% and 78% of the respondents felt there was some or a great deal of emphasis on developing appreciation for a multicultural society on campus, with faculty and staff feeling that more strongly than students. Almost 75% of all three groups also felt there was some or a great deal of emphasis on developing an inclusive community.

Across all of these items, though, when asked what degree of emphasis should be placed on them, between 65 and 78% of respondents felt there should be a *great deal* of emphasis and an additional 23-33% indicated that some emphasis should be placed on this. *Thus, across the two levels of emphasis and all three groups, between 85 and 98% of people felt that there should be some or a great deal of emphasis on these items related to building an open, inclusive community.* These results are consistent with 2006 responses.

**Other institutional practices** are related to the work-based interactions and structural support that people experience in doing their jobs at St. Mary’s that impact their sense of feeling included and valued. The following section summarizes the responses to these items from the climate survey.

**Physical safety.** The percentage of faculty and staff who express fear based on ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation is very low, with fewer than 3% in either group expressing fear. For students, fear based on sexual orientation is higher at 3.9%, and fear based on ethnicity or gender is expressed by 7.6% of students. Women report more observations and experiences of harassment based on gender than men, while ethnic minorities also report statistically

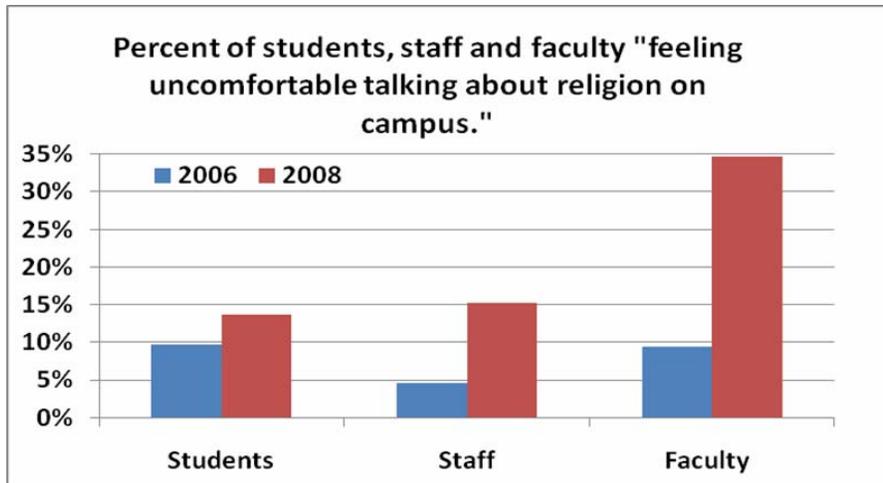
significant higher levels of both observing offensive behavior and comments based on ethnicity, as well as experiencing them directly. The graph below illustrates this for faculty, but the patterns hold for staff and students, as well.



**Community indicators.** In this section, the items reflect the degree to which people feel comfortable at Saint Mary’s, in a variety of ways. For most of the items in this section, there was a shift between 2006 and 2008 from the disagreement categories to the neutral category of “Neither agree/disagree.” These items include: importance of having friends/colleagues that are ethnically similar to oneself; feeling awkward in situations where one is the only person of their ethnic group; and how much a person feels they need to “change some of their personal characteristics to fit in at SMC.” For this last item, there was a large decrease in the percent who disagreed with this item in 2006 (75%) and those who disagreed in 2008 (64.6%). Such a shift may indicate improvement in people’s experiences of feeling uncomfortable, or perhaps it may indicate ambivalence about their experiences in these areas of feeling a part of the community. However, there remains a significant difference in these items between majority and minority faculty, staff, and students, with the latter experiencing more discomfort and awkwardness.

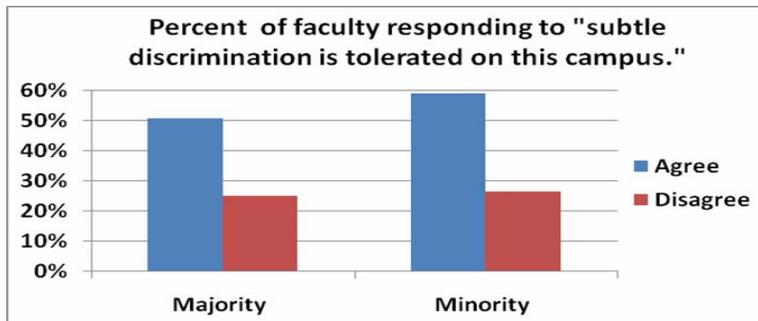
One aspect of a healthy and open and growing community is our ability to talk with others about differences. For the item “I feel uncomfortable discussing racially sensitive topics on campus with members of other races/ethnicities,” there was almost no change from 2006 to 2008 for faculty: about 56% disagreed with this statement, and about 25% agreed with this statement in both years. For staff, there was an interesting decrease in both those who disagreed (51.8 to 44.4%) and those who agreed (25.6 to 21.9%), with a larger increase in those who chose “neither” (18.5 to 33.7%). For students there was a slight increase among those who disagreed (48.2 to 53.0%) and almost no change in those who agreed (29.9 to 28.5%). There was a small decrease in those who chose the “neither” option – 20.6 to 18.4%.

The biggest area of discomfort for faculty, staff, and students emerged in responses to the question about whether they are “comfortable talking about their religion on campus.” Faculty who agreed that they felt uncomfortable increased from 9.4% to 34.7%. For staff, there was a somewhat similar pattern, with those agreeing in 2006 rising from 4.6% to 15.2% in 2008. Among students, the percent who felt uncomfortable discussing their religion increased from 9.7% in 2006 to 13.6% in 2008. The graph below illustrates this.



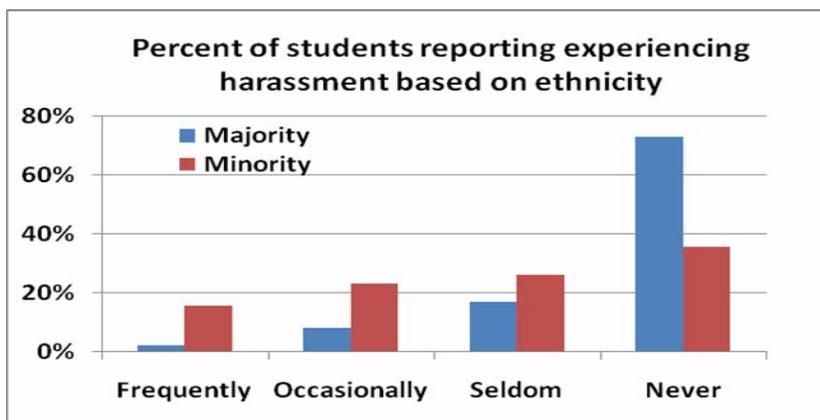
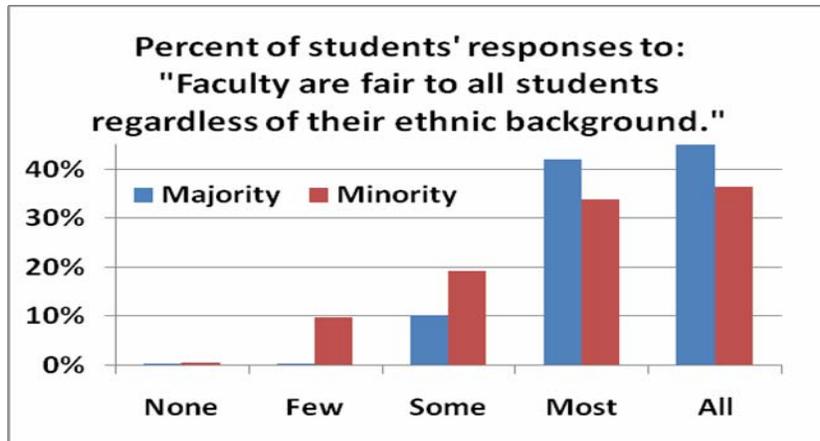
For many community members, religious differences were a source of discomfort and tension. For example, some of the open-ended comments on this topic include: "I dislike the anti-Catholic attitude I find too commonly among faculty members," "I recognize and work with the fact that this is a Catholic College. The climate revolving around interfaith connections is not widespread. As a result the importance of religious affiliation is misunderstood and consequently an issue," "I have had situations occur where I felt out of place because of my religious background as I am not Christian. At orientation we were asked to say grace after we had started eating, and indirectly made to feel like we should know the tradition as if we were all assumed to be Christian/Catholic."

Similar to responses in 2006, 45% disagree that faculty morale is good on campus, while slightly more (28.8% vs. 25.7%) agree that it is good. More faculty of color rate faculty morale as not good (17.6% vs. 9.5%). Similar to 2006, 52.6% of faculty feel that subtle discrimination is tolerated on campus, while 23.7% disagree with that statement. In 2008, more faculty of color (58.8% vs. 50.5%) agree that subtle discrimination is tolerated.



#### COMMUNITY ITEMS FROM STUDENTS – MAJOR FINDINGS

**For students, there is an important set of results, indicating that on almost every single item relating to campus community and feelings of inclusion, students of color rate SMC lower than students of the majority group (This finding is statistically significant, most often at a  $p < .0001$  level). Two graphs below illustrate these significant differences.**



This pattern of difference includes items that reflect **institutional support** such as feeling that the administration and staff are supportive of minority students' needs or that their input is valued, or that resources should be used to help underprepared students succeed. In addition, there were significant differences on items that have to do with feeling personally comfortable and safe at SMC due to their ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

## OUR EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE

In this section, items directly related to our educational enterprise, providing a quality education that also addresses our concern for the poor and social justice, are assessed. Items that ask about the level of support for faculty curricular initiatives in the area of diversity and social justice are included, as are questions about students' classroom experiences, and relationships with faculty around academic issues.

A majority of respondents said that SMC places some or a great deal of emphasis on helping students learn how to bring about positive change in society (between 80 and 92%). Among students, 14% indicated they felt "very little emphasis" was placed here. Between 54 and 65% of respondents felt SMC emphasized recruiting high achieving students. However, 24% of faculty and staff, and 17% of students felt there was "little or no" emphasis placed here. Between 90 and 95% of all three groups agreed that SMC should be placing some or a great deal of emphasis on these goals. The vast majority of faculty (95%), staff (94%), and students (~80%) agreed that a diverse student body enhances the educational experiences of all students

**Curricular support for faculty.** Almost 85% of faculty agreed that their course presentations are designed to accommodate a variety of learning styles, and most faculty feel that their department is supportive of the use of various teaching styles (78% both years). There was some increase in the number of faculty who felt that reexamining the curriculum was being rewarded at the College (47.5 vs. 38.3%). There was consistency across the two years in the percentage of faculty who felt that they were encouraged to incorporate multiple ethnic and gender specific material into their curriculum (@56%) and that there was enough emphasis on incorporating racial/ethnic issues into GE courses (@60%).

**Classroom Experiences of students.** Overall, students report positive experiences with their professors, such as 84% saying that “all or most” of their professors were available outside of class. There was a decrease in “all or most” professors seeking students’ active participation in the learning process, from 72% to 63% over the two years and a decrease in “all” or “most” professors using a learn- by-doing philosophy from 57% to 46%.

**Education about discrimination/social justice issues.** The items in this section assessed the level of learning about various issues such as discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation in and out of the classroom. There was no consistent pattern between 2006 and 2008 across items. So, for example, there was an increase in learning “a great deal” about discrimination based on ethnicity in the classroom (14.1 vs. 10.4%) and a slight decrease in learning “quite a bit” (18.8 vs. 22.3%). There was an increase in learning “a great deal” about discrimination based on sexism in the classroom (13.5 vs. 9.8%) and a slight decrease in learning “quite a bit” (19.8 vs. 23.5%). Overall, those two categories remained at @32% over the two years.

## CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, the results of a survey such as this, administered on a regular basis, and allowing us to compare current results with those found in past surveys, can be used to assess efforts over time to address areas of concern and to direct our efforts in the future to both short-term and immediate interventions. As a learning organization and one which strives to live out our mission across our community in policies, practices, and relationships, this self-assessment is one mechanism for us to examine our successes and continued areas of growth.