

# Research in BRIEF

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## 2009 CAMPUS CLIMATE & WORK ENVIRONMENT SURVEY

### Orange Campus Executive Summary

(Administered Spring 2009)

Chapman University's Campus Climate & Work Environment Survey, a "home-grown" on-line survey, was developed in 2007 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 for the second time in Spring 2009 to all Orange Campus full-time employees. On April 14, 2009, 553 staff and administrators received an email invitation from President Doti containing the link to the survey and unique password. The survey remained open for about one week. Exactly 344 surveys were completed on-line, resulting in a 62.2% response rate.

### Sample Representation and Demographics

Since all 553 full-time Chapman University employees on the Orange Campus were invited to participate in the survey, the Spring 2009 survey sample accounts for 62% of Chapman University's full-time employee population. Data show that 62% of the respondents self-identified as staff and 38% indicated 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.

2009 Full-time Staff and Administrators		
	ORANGE CAMPUS	
	Employee Population	Survey Sample
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	41.4%	35.1%
Female	58.6%	64.9%
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY*</b>		
African-American	3.3%	2.1%
Asian-American/Pacific Is.	10.8%	8.9%
White	71.1%	73.8%
Hispanic or Latino	14.5%	8.0%
Native-American/Alaskan	0.4%	0.3%
Unknown or Multi-Ethnic/Racial	0.0%	6.8%

\*Survey included multi-ethnic/racial category

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

2009 Full-time Staff and Administrators	
	Survey Sample
<b>YEARS OF SERVICE</b>	
Less than 1 year	15.2%
1 to 4 years	41.1%
5 to 10 years	25.1%
11 to 15 years	7.6%
16 to 20 years	5.8%
Over 21 years	5.2%
<b>PRIMARY SUPPORT TO</b>	
Orange Campus (OC)	84.0%
University College (CUC)	1.2%
OC and CUC Equally	14.8%

Findings show that over half of the respondents (56.3%) reported having worked at Chapman University for 4 years or less. Since the survey was administered to employees on the Orange Campus, it is not surprising to find that 84% of the respondents reported that most of their time was spent serving/supporting Orange Campus. Another 14.8% reported that they supported OC and CUC equally.

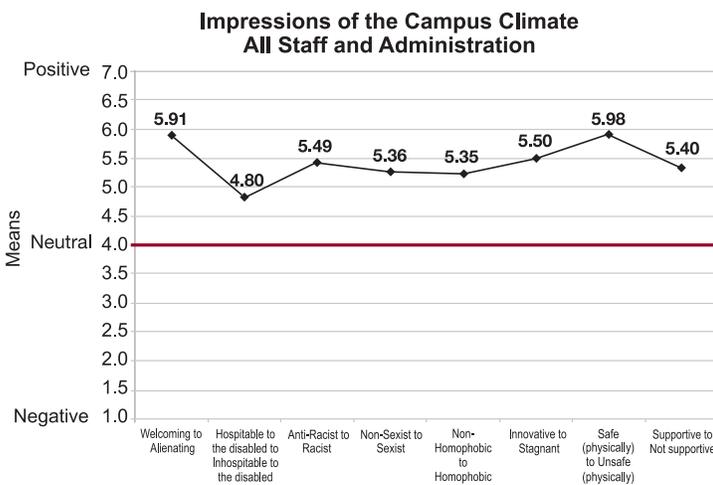
Survey results should be interpreted in the context of the over- and under-sampling of certain campus sub-populations. While the high survey response rate provides a high level of confidence in the findings, generalization of findings beyond the perceptions and attitudes of full-time staff and administrators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

## 2009 Survey Findings

The Campus Climate & 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. 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 are also summarized. Some of the 2009 findings are also compared to the 2007 results.

### 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 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 the disabled” pair was among the lowest for all the descriptors (4.80). Additional analyses reveal that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of staff compared to administrators for this item. Data reveal that administrators (4.38) as a group are less likely to perceive the general climate “Hospitable to the disabled” than staff (5.06).

Significant differences were also found between other groups of employees. Data show that when compared to men, women

are more likely to perceive the campus as “Sexist.” When compared to White employees, Non-white employees were more likely to perceive the campus as “Racist.” Staff and administrators who reported being at Chapman about 4 years or less were more likely to perceive the campus as “Non-sexist” and “Supportive” than those that had been at Chapman longer.

### 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 (4.66), findings suggest that Chapman University employees as a group are not satisfied with their compensation. Data revealed that, on average, staff and administrators “disagreed somewhat” (3.49) with the following statement: “Based on my level of experience, I am fairly compensated.” While staff and administrators’ attitudes toward fair compensation did not differ significantly, other significant differences between staff and administrators were found. Specifically, findings indicate that administrators were more likely to agree with the following statements:

- My department head displays behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the institution’s stated core values. (admin., 5.12; staff, 4.85)
- I have been enriched by attending a professional workshop or campus training activity. (admin., 4.69; staff, 4.27)
- My immediate working environment allows me to be creative and innovative. (admin., 4.76; staff, 4.27)
- I see my work as an integral part of the overall mission of educating students here at Chapman University. (admin., 5.35; staff, 5.07)
- My opinion/input is valued at Chapman University. (admin., 4.58; staff, 4.03)

In other words, data suggest that when compared to administrators, staff employees are not as likely to agree that their department head displays behaviors that are consistent with the institution’s core values, they have been enriched by attending a workshop or campus training, their immediate working environment allows them to be creative and innovative, their work is an integral part of the overall mission of educating students at Chapman University, and that their opinion/input is valued.

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 (1.96) with the statement, “I frequently hear coworkers/other employees make inappropriate comments about people who are different than themselves.” Frequency distribution reveals that 77% of Chapman employees “agreed” or “agreed strongly” with the following statement: “I know how to report officially any racist, sexist, or other offensive behavior.”

The top three statements respondents were most likely to agree with in this section were:

- I am dedicated to supporting the mission of Chapman University. (5.51)
- I am proud to work at Chapman University. (5.33)
- I see my work as an integral part of the overall mission of educating students at Chapman University. (5.18)

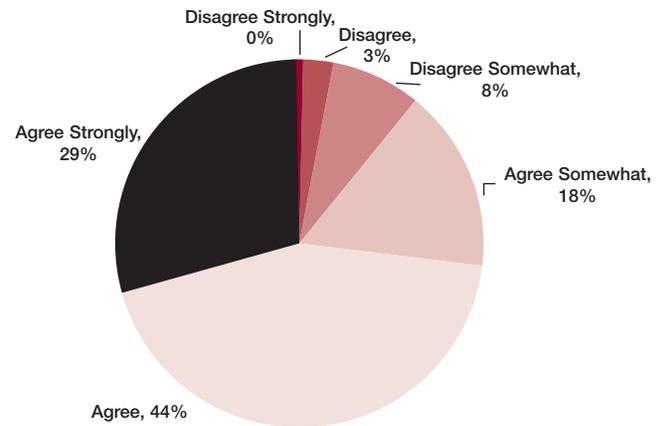
Taken together, these data show that most employees are proud to work at Chapman University and are dedicated to supporting its mission.

Though findings show high agreement with the statement on being treated with respect by a supervisor (5.13), the level of agreement was not as high for the following statement: “I feel appreciated for the work I do by my immediate supervisor” (4.89) and “My opinion/input is valued at Chapman University” (4.24).

The level of agreement with the following statements suggests that a large proportion of Chapman University’s staff and administrators are satisfied with their employment: “I would recommend Chapman University as a good place to work” (4.97), “All things considered, I am satisfied with my employment at Chapman University” (4.88), and “My morale is good” (4.65). In addition, findings show that employees tended to disagree somewhat with the statement: “I have considered leaving Chapman University in the past year” (3.03). When data are disaggregated by years of service at Chapman University, findings show that staff and administrators who have worked at Chapman five years or more are more likely to want to stay the rest of their careers at Chapman.

In order to explore factors associated with employees’ satisfaction, additional analyses were conducted.

All things considered, I am satisfied with my employment at Chapman University.  
All Staff and Administrators



A frequency distribution revealed that 73% 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 = .611\*\*)
- My immediate working environment allows me to be creative and innovative. (r = .515\*\*)
- Based on my level of experience, I am fairly compensated. (r = .477\*\*)
- I have been provided with the training necessary to do my job. (r = .469\*\*)
- I feel appreciated for the work I do by my immediate supervisor. (r = .462\*\*)

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 are fairly compensated, they have been provided the training to do their job, and they feel appreciated for the work they do for 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.

<b>Impressions of the Institutional Leadership &amp; University</b>	<b>All (n=344)</b>
Senior Staff (president, chancellor, and vice presidents/chancellors) display behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the institution's stated core values.	4.98
In my opinion, Chapman University is a well-managed university.	4.83
Chapman University does a good job of informing me about university news and events.	5.21
Chapman University is an institution that values treating everyone with civility and respect.	4.99
Chapman University is an institution that values diversity.	4.54
Sexual harassment is taken seriously at Chapman University.	5.18
Chapman University provides adequate accommodations to people with physical disabilities.	4.17
I have been harassed or discriminated against on campus because of my gender.	1.50
I have been harassed or discriminated against on campus because of my sexual orientation.	1.25

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

Data show that staff and administrators believe that Chapman University does a good job of informing the campus about university news and events. Also, while survey 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 gender or sexual orientation harassment or discrimination on campus. In addition, data also reveal that many staff and administrators believe that sexual harassment is taken seriously at Chapman University.

While 78% 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 61% agreed that Chapman University is a place that “values diversity.” When data are disaggregated by staff and administrators, findings show that administrators are significantly less likely to agree with the statement which asserts Chapman University is a place that values diversity (admin., 4.22; staff, 4.73).

Consistent with an earlier result which suggests that Chapman University is not hospitable for people with disabilities, results show that 31% of the respondents 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.” Findings show that when compared to staff, administrators are significantly less likely to agree with the statement on adequate accommodation for people with physical disabilities (admin., 3.90; staff, 4.33).

With regard to Senior Staff and management of the university, data show that 78% of the staff and 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 69% of all respondents “agreed” or “agreed strongly” with the statement, “In my opinion, Chapman University is a well managed university.”

### Open-Ended Results

After each section, respondents were provided with the opportunity to elaborate on a specific survey item. 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-six percent of the survey respondents took advantage of the opportunity to comment in at least one of the four open-ended sections. Based on a thorough review of all the qualitative data, 14 areas/themes emerged and each comment was grouped into one or more of the following areas:

- Compensation and Benefits
- Support and Appreciation
- CU Pride and Praise
- CU Leadership and University Management
- Physical Working Space/Environment
- Campus Climate for Diversity
- Accessibility for the Disabled
- Communication
- Policies, Procedures, and Bureaucracy
- Professional Advancement/Development
- Safety
- Values, Vision, and Mission
- Job Training
- 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 revealed that many staff and administrators are not satisfied with their compensation. The *Compensation and Benefits* area contained 57 comments and most focused on employee dissatisfaction with salaries. With regards to benefits, employees commented on the 90 day waiting period required by new employees and the 10% salary increase limit when being promoted to a new position within the university.

The *Support and Appreciation* area generated the second highest number of comments (56). Many comments in this section focused on employees desire to be acknowledged, appreciated, supported, and properly compensated for the work that they do. Comments found in this section also help explain why 17% of the staff and administrators tended to disagree (“disagree strongly,” “disagree,” or “disagree somewhat”) with the following statement: “I feel appreciated for the work I do by my supervisor.”

Comments related to leadership issues, management, and supervisor relationships were aggregated into the *CU Leadership and University Management* (49) section. Comments in this section ranged from employees expressing how unhappy they were with their immediate supervisors to remarks praising Chapman’s senior leadership and its management of the university.

About 19% 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 (39) provide some reasons why a number of employees feel their working space or environment is uncomfortable. Bhatthal Student Services Center, in particular, was highlighted by many respondents as an undesirable place to work.

About 19% of the respondents reported some level of disagreement (“disagree strongly,” “disagree,” or “disagree somewhat”) with the statement: “Chapman University is an institution that values diversity.” The comments in *Campus Climate for Diversity* (37) section provide some reasons why some staff and administrators do not believe that Chapman University values diversity and/or provides a climate supportive of diversity.

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 disabilities. The *Accessibility for the Disabled* section contained 31 comments. While a few staff and administrators noted that there had been some improvement in this area, many more made references to the older/historic buildings being inaccessible to the disabled.

Although employees were asked to comment on what could be improved at Chapman, many staff and administrators also took the opportunity to elaborate on what the university was doing right or what they liked about Chapman University. Comments were grouped in the *CU Pride and Praise* section (50). Taken together, qualitative and quantitative data clearly show that there are many satisfied employees who believe Chapman University is “an excellent place to work” and are “proud to be a part of it all.”

### Summary of 2009 Findings

When quantitative and qualitative data are taken together, findings suggest staff and administrators are most concerned with:

- their compensation;
- the perceived lack of support and true appreciation they receive from their immediate supervisor;
- their physical working space;
- the opportunity for professional advancement or development;
- the lack of diversity or value placed on diversity; and
- the accommodations provided to people with disabilities on campus.

While survey results bring to light some concerns that may warrant further attention, they also highlight various strengths. For example, findings show that most employees believe sexual harassment is taken seriously on campus, feel they are well informed about news and events, are satisfied with their employment, are proud to work at Chapman University, and are dedicated to supporting its mission. In general, findings also suggest that employees are satisfied with the senior leadership and overall management of the university.

### Two Year Changes: 2007 to 2009

The Campus Climate & Work Environment Survey was not changed in 2009 to allow for comparison of the survey items over time. The 2007 mean scores were compared to the 2009 mean score results. Discussed below are the differences that were found to be statistically significant.

#### Impressions of the Campus Climate

Statistical differences were found in six of the nine items in this section. All mean scores were higher in 2009 suggesting that employee perceptions about the general campus climate at Chapman University have become more favorable in the last two years.

Impressions of the Campus Climate	2007 All (n=270)	2009 All (n=344)	2-Yr. Mean Change	Sig. Diff.
1=Alienating to 7=Welcoming	5.74	5.91	0.17	*
1=Racist to 7=Anti-racist	5.12	5.49	0.37	**
1=Sexist to 7=Non-sexist	5.08	5.36	0.28	*
1=Stagnant to 7=Innovative	5.13	5.50	0.37	**
1=Unsafe (physically) to 7=Safe (physically)	5.51	5.98	0.47	***
1=Not supportive to 7=Supportive	4.95	5.40	0.45	***

Seven-point Likert scale: 1-Negative, 4-Neutral, 7-Positive  
 \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Findings show that the greatest increase change was in the safe—unsafe and supportive—unsupportive campus descriptors.

#### Impression of Your Work Life/Environment

Findings show that out of the 22 survey items in this section, eight were statistically significant. All of the mean scores increased in 2009 except for one: “I have considered leaving

Chapman University in the past year.” In other words, in 2009, staff and administrators were less likely to indicate that they considered leaving Chapman. In addition, staff and administrators in 2009 were more likely to agree with statements related to fair compensation, their opinion or input being valued, and overall satisfaction with their employment at Chapman University. Findings show that the greatest increase change in the last two years was for the survey item which asked if employees would recommend Chapman University as a good place to work.

Impressions of your Work Life/Environment	2007 All (n=270)	2009 All (n=344)	2-Yr. Mean Change	Sig. Diff.
Based on my level of experience, I am fairly compensated.	3.16	3.49	0.33	*
My opinion/input is valued at Chapman University.	4.00	4.24	0.24	*
I am proud to work at Chapman University.	5.04	5.33	0.29	***
I have considered leaving Chapman University in the past year.	3.41	3.03	-0.38	*
I would like to stay at Chapman University for the rest of my career.	3.97	4.32	0.35	**
I would recommend Chapman University as a good place to work.	4.54	4.97	0.43	***
All things considered, I am satisfied with my employment at Chapman University.	4.49	4.88	0.39	***
I am dedicated to supporting the mission of Chapman University.	5.38	5.51	0.13	*

Six-point Likert scale: 1-Disagree Strongly, 2-Disagree, 3-Disagree Somewhat, 4-Agree Somewhat, 5-Agree, 6-Agree Strongly  
\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

#### Impressions of the Institutional Leadership and University

Findings show that five of the nine items in this section were statistically significant. The greatest increase among these items in the last two years was the question which asked staff and administrators to indicate if they believed Chapman University was a well-managed university. Mean scores for the items focused on valuing diversity and treating everyone with civility and respect also were higher in 2009.

Impressions of the Institutional Leadership & University	2007 All (n=270)	2009 All (n=344)	2-Yr. Mean Change	Sig. Diff.
Senior Staff (president, chancellor, and vice presidents/chancellors) display behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with the institution's stated core values.	4.70	4.98	0.28	**
In my opinion, Chapman University is a well-managed university.	4.38	4.83	0.45	***
Chapman University does a good job of informing me about university news and events.	4.97	5.21	0.24	**
Chapman University is an institution that values treating everyone with civility and respect.	4.67	4.99	0.32	**
Chapman University is an institution that values diversity.	4.25	4.54	0.29	*

Six-point Likert scale: 1-Disagree Strongly, 2-Disagree, 3-Disagree Somewhat, 4-Agree Somewhat, 5-Agree, 6-Agree Strongly  
\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

When the 2009 Campus Climate and Work Environment Survey results are compared to the 2007 findings, data suggest that staff and administrators are more satisfied overall and have more favorable perceptions of Chapman University. All mean scores were higher in 2009 or in the favorable direction suggesting that

staff and administrators perceptions of Chapman University and their work life have improved in the last two years.

## Discussion & Implications

The 2007 Campus Climate & Work Environment Survey results provide a starting point to assess change over time. However, it is important to keep in mind that with two time points it is difficult to state with any certainty if increases or decreases in employee perceptions or satisfaction are due to true perception changes or random variation—especially when dealing with small declines or increases.

In addition, the economic recession may have influenced employee perceptions of their work life at Chapman University. For example, one employee wrote, “My satisfaction with Chapman has not necessarily improved since the last survey. Just my sense of job security... (in this economy).” It may be that other employees are also feeling the same. In other words, it is possible that increases in overall satisfaction, the perceptions that Chapman University is a well-managed university, and that it is a good place to work may have little to do with changes within in the university in the last two years and more to do with changes outside of Chapman University. Future administrations of the Campus Climate & Work Environment Survey will help determine if employee perceptions are improving.

However, literature on employee satisfaction (Bauer, 2000) does suggest that employee concerns, as revealed by the 2007 and 2009 Campus Climate & Work Environment Surveys, as well as their suggestions for improvement, are not out of the ordinary and consistent with research on employee attitudes and satisfaction. Despite the increase, findings show that compensation is the issue that Chapman employees seemed most concerned about in 2007 and 2009. Data suggest that employee satisfaction may be increased through efforts focused on enhancing compensation, widening opportunities for training, professional development and innovation, taking into account employee input, and increasing personal praise and appreciation. Addressing some of the concerns can help increase employee satisfaction, productivity and retention.

#### References:

Bauer, K.W. “The Front Line: Satisfaction of Classified Employees.” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2000, 105, 87-97.

#### Notes:

1 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, *Statistics: A Spectators Sport* Second Edition, London: Sage Publications)

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