Appendix A
Comments Analysis

Out of the 2,194 surveys received from the UW-Platteville climate assessment, 1,794 respondents contributed remarks to the open-ended questions throughout the survey. No respondents answered all open-ended questions. As the first several items were follow-up questions that allowed respondents to provide more detail about their answers to a previous question, the comments provided for those several items were included in the body of the UW-Platteville full report. This section of the report summarizes the comments submitted for five of the open-ended survey questions, and provides examples of those remarks echoed by several respondents.

Suggestions to Improve the Climate
Six hundred forty-one respondents (641) offered suggestions to improve the climate at UW-Platteville. Several respondents felt UW-Platteville offered a welcoming climate and they saw no need for any improvements. Some felt cultural sensitivity and behaviors that foster inclusion (or lack thereof) ought only to be taught “at home.” Others thought the University had over-extended itself in pursuit of “diversity,” and felt UW-Platteville ought to focus on hiring the most qualified employees and accepting more qualified students. Still, several respondents thought the administration ought to become more diverse, visibly support diversity initiatives, and become more transparent and communicative regarding diversity/equity initiatives. Employees wanted opportunities and clear avenues for advancement and salary increases. A number of individuals suggested instituting required women’s studies, ethnic studies, and LGBT studies courses in the curriculum, as well as offering diversity/equity trainings for all employees, and increasing the number of faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds. More than a few respondents wanted to know why there seemed to be more hate incidents in fall semesters than in spring semesters.

- There is really nothing you can do. The problem seems to stem from where the students come from, instead of what they learn at the school.

1 This report provides respondents’ verbatim comments.
Overall, UW-P is the most welcoming employment climate I have ever worked in. The fact that this survey is being conducted raises awareness of climate issues in and of itself.

Bring MERC and BSU to the Student Center. Segregating minority students as a way to give them a space and help them build community is the wrong way to promote diversity.

Create a LGBTQ center independent of the women's center and on the same level as MERC.

Eliminate the "us" vs. "them" attitudes between colleges and departments. There is definitely a "have" and "have not" climate on this campus. We need to work together to make this campus the best it can be.

Advertise cultural (and other) events in the Intercom via e-mail, as had been done in the past. Many events go missed on the main uwplatt.edu site.

Examine why there are apparently more racial incidents in the fall than the spring semester. Is it because people get used to diversity, people just stop talking about racial incidents, intolerant students leave, or for some other reason? But it does seem there's a pattern that should be investigated.

Accountability... Accountability.... Accountability... from the top to the bottom of every department.

Stop pushing so hard for diversity...you make people feel like its being forced down their throats. Let diversity happen naturally, this unhealthy coercion is causing people to cringe at the very mention of the word "diversity."

Make ethnic, women’s studies, AND GLBT classes required...more than just 3 credits please.

I think we need to have more events that try and get everyone involved not just specific groups of people.

As for the last question and requiring diversity training of all search and screen committee members, that's perhaps the WORST possible initiative. I am a diversity advocate for search and screen committees (and rather effective) IN SPITE OF the training. The mandatory training (otherwise titled "Let's Hate All White People") from a few years ago was a step backwards for many (perhaps most) Caucasians on this campus.

As we are a nation of various cultural backgrounds, I think that more courses should be implemented into Gen. Ed. regarding cultural awareness, sexual orientation, gender issues, and socio-economic qualities.

The university needs a rock climbing wall and a better Outdoor program in order to expose more people to outdoor activities.

Have faculty that are more receptive to Christian communities and issues. Many faculty tend to try and push their own non-Christian agendas during class which is offensive to me and my friends.

Focus more on improving the teaching abilities of professors. From what I have seen it appears that much of the racial bias on campus comes from having foreign professors that are not adequate teachers.

Hold more team building events within my job work place.

Treat ALL persons the SAME! Do not 'play favorites'. Choose the best candidate based on qualifications and experience.
• The only way to improve the climate for women, diverse sexual orientations, and other-than-white races is to boost enrollment of those groups.

• Open questions night. One of the dorms has a "questions in the dark" session where men and women can secretly ask any questions they want. Perhaps we could hold "open questions sessions" with an assortment of people from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and disabilities so that people can freely ask any questions of these people, no matter how awkward. It should be kept fun, even though the questions might be serious.

• Require higher standards for admission.

• There are virtually no inclusive measures taken for people who are transgender. Aside from several unisex bathrooms it’s very difficult to express my gender identity (or even feel safe doing so). In particular there's no unisex bathroom at all in the fitness center, meaning I have to use the men's locker-room. Additionally there are no accommodations made with housing and no way to deal with name changes in the campus records.

• By going public with all the racism and vandalism last semester, I thought was a bad idea. When you start exposing these people they will keep doing it for the attention, and friends will try to one up other friends and get their "work" published in the e-mails/paper.

• Offer work schedule flexibility. Provide a clear, structured performance evaluation process (and enforce it). Provide more opportunity for career advancement. The Chancellor needs to represent the needs of faculty/staff to System Administration. He needs to fight for us, not just hand down orders and pay cuts from the administration.

Campus Experiences versus Community Experiences

One of the open-ended items queried, “Are your experiences on campus different than those you experience in the community surrounding campus? If so, how are these experiences different?”

Eight hundred thirty-three (833) people answered the question. Several respondents said their experiences were the same on and off campus. A number of the respondents said they had more positive experiences in Platteville than on the UW-Platteville campus, citing the community atmosphere among local residents and more acceptance of conservative or “traditional” values and diversity of political opinions. Despite the recent incidents of racist graffiti on campus, most respondents who had different experiences on and off campus said that UW-Platteville was more inclusive of and welcoming to students, faculty, and people from underrepresented backgrounds. Some of their comments included:

• Not different at all.
• I have heard a great deal about the racist graffiti and groups on campus, but have made little contact with either.
• Yes, the maturity level on campus is decidedly lower than that of the surrounding community. There are also higher crime rates on campus (i.e. sexual assaults, thefts, graffiti) than in the
community. On the other hand, the campus is a much more diverse place in every way, which I think is a good thing, especially for those whose home community is rather homogeneous, like the surrounding community at UW-Platteville.

- Yes they are much different because on campus is more of a work environment. But off campus everyone can just relax and do what they want or what they need to do.
- Not too different; but I feel our campus community has deeper interactions focused on diversity topics and issues. Being an institute of higher education I feel there is a more tangible appreciation/celebration of differences.
- Seems to be a lot more racism and hate on campus rather than off campus, due mostly in part to diverse university attendance.
- I have heard some minorities say they get stared at in the Piggly Wiggly parking lot, etc. Yet, in a small town, if the locals don't know you they will stare. I am white, I lock my doors, I get stared at in this town because I am not "native" to the area. We cannot ignore, however, the unacceptable racial graffiti and anti-military graffiti that has been out there in the past year.
- Yes... Off campus I am around people who have the same socioeconomic and educational status as I do. In off campus activities I am an equal. On campus at work I am not equal to peers as I do not have a PhD and earn so little I qualify for the WIC program.
- I think there’s a bit of a contemptuous attitude of some of the Town folks toward students, and recently, toward public employees (thanks to Governor Walker for the latter).
- There is more diversity of political opinion in the community surrounding campus than on the campus itself.
- Yes. The campus is very individualistic while the community has more connections to local issues.
- The only difference is that the surrounding community is much less diverse than the campus population. I have not noticed a difference in climate in the surrounding community.
- There is more diversity on campus that in the surrounding community. I appreciate that the campus contributes diversity to the Platteville area, particularly in that my children are exposed to a diverse population of friends.

Additional Thoughts on Campus Climate

Question 86 allowed respondents to elaborate on any of their survey responses, further describe their experiences, or offer additional thoughts about climate issues. About 416 people offered additional comments regarding their experiences and opinions. Some respondents reiterated their satisfaction with UW-Platteville. Others offered specific examples of discrimination or areas in which the university ought to focus attention. Specifically, respondents were concerned with perceived homophobia, racism, and sexism on campus. Several respondents said there was a “good ol’ boys network” at UW-Platteville, that few women were in positions of power at the university, and that women did not feel safe at UW-Platteville. A number of respondents talked about “silos” and the lack of communication between the administration, faculty, and staff. Some staff experienced a lack of respect from other employees and wrote about specific incidents of
“institutional classism.” And, among the myriad of responses, some individuals cautioned UW-Platteville not to go “too far” in addressing diversity and “filling quotas.”

- UW-P has been a bad place for awhile. There are too many people in high positions that intimidate, harass and marginalize anyone who would dare speak up about the injustices that are occurring daily on our campus.
- The overuse of the word “diversity” has caused it to have negative connotations—people are tired of hearing it over and over again.
- If there is gender discrimination, I feel that it is where a female received a promotion over a male. There have been at least two cases where a male had more experience and was better suited for a job, but a female was promoted over him.
- Your employees will be more satisfied if you pay them the going rate and treat them as the educated adults they are. You need to involve them in making decisions instead of dictating new initiatives and moving offices.
- Yes, my responses are quite colored by my own thoughts, and I didn’t attempt to normalize them to eliminate my own influence. I view UWP as a very male campus (engineering is where I spend much of my time), a place where many people don’t wish to be confronted by things (i.e. don’t push yourself on anyone, they will probably not talk to you again), and a fairly straight-forward conservative SW Wisconsin type of place (i.e. drink a fair bit, respect the military, don’t give the government total control of my life).
- There are many, many silos on this campus. Faculty do not know or understand what it is Student Affairs encourages students to do and vice versa. There is no encouragement from administration to bring the two sides together. Within the divisions there are silos between departments. The lack of communication is a huge detriment to UW-Platteville as a whole....
- I think the climate would change if the LTE’s could feel like they counted for more. A new LTE could come in an office and make the same as someone with 20 years experience. Experience means nothing I guess in the eyes of UW-System. It is very degrading at times.
- I feel this campus is men orientated and do not have a healthy respect for business women and what they have to offer to this campus. Women in leadership positions in Dining Services are treated very poorly!
- I feel like women in the engineering field are singled out to a small degree. I have personally felt either picked on or shown off for being a female in some of my engineering courses.
- I knew that coming to a small town college in a rural area would make that student body full of students with more...rural small minded-ness. I did NOT imagine that it would be this bad here and it makes me very embarrassed to tell people I go to UWP because of all the bad things that go on here involving racism, sexism, and the assaults.
- Homophobia seems to be a large problem as well as the general increase in crime (in particular crimes against cars in the residence hall parking lots). I would like to see initiatives to put a stop to both of these.
What I Like Best About UW-Platteville

One thousand five hundred and seventy-two respondents (1,572) offered their comments regarding what they liked best about UW-Platteville. Many people liked the “community feel” of the campus and welcoming atmosphere. Several people said that UW-Platteville was a “big small school” or “small, but with a variety of majors and opportunities.” Many student and faculty respondents commented on the small class sizes, and a number of employees enjoyed their co-workers and the students. People liked getting a University of Wisconsin education at a lower cost than some other locations.

- The small community feel makes me feel like it is my second home.
- It is nice to be able to have opportunities to be involved with a numerous amount of organizations and personal development options.
- Friendly faculty and students.
- Small class sizes and that each of my instructors know me by first name.
- Opportunities for cultural experiences that one wouldn't normally have access to.
- That it is in Wisconsin and part of the UW-System.
- I love working with the students here on campus. Overall, we have a great bunch of kids here that will go above and beyond. It has been a pleasure being able to work with many of athletes on campus.
- Small campus, easy to navigate around, don't feel lost in a sea of people
- I really like my department and the people I work with in that area. I like that I know a lot of people on campus.
- The flexibility of hours to work around my family.
- The cost is low, the Grant County area is beautiful, and the professors are the best in the education system.
- The foreign exchange program and the helpfulness of many of the professors. While not all of my professors have been amazing, there have been several who have already had a lasting impact on me, or made me think in a different way. I have most likely spent more time discussing with my professors outside of class than with the students.
- I like that it is somewhat small but not too small as to limit choices of classes and majors.
- I like that the engineering classes are cheap compared to other Wisconsin schools. I like different people who go here too and the direct teacher to student ratio. I like a number of the professors too. Platteville feels like my home.

What I Like Least About UW-Platteville

Respondents were asked what they liked least about UW-Platteville, and 1,511 respondents offered a myriad of comments. Many respondents wrote about the recent acts of racism, “the rap that UW-Platteville is getting for being racist,” and the male to female ratio among students. A number of employees disliked the administration’s “approach to expand the campus,” salary
freezes, increased workloads, tension in certain departments, and the lack of effort to improve employees’ working conditions. Additionally, limited term employees felt grossly underpaid, while some faculty said they had to “join the administrative ranks to get paid a decent salary.” Some students did not like that UW-Platteville was a commuter school with “nothing to do on the weekends,” and several respondents cited the lack of available parking. A few respondents did not like the attention to diversity and how “some people of different ethnicities always blame the White person.” Some women did not feel safe on campus.

- **Currently the aggressive approach to expand our campus.** We do need to grow, but the expansion appears to be more of a pet project for the Chancellor than really meeting the needs of where our University needs to go. Many key issues are being ignored or disregarded.

- **The Silos between departments and lack of communication.**

- **The male to female ratio.**

- **UW-Platteville and the Platteville community are too homogeneous.**

- **Sense that you are locked into your position with no support or encouragement for advancement or promotion.** We do not develop leaders from within. There are never any funds available even for a minor dollar increase in salary, save for administration who always seem to have increases.

- **I do not like the housing, or food services on campus. I also think that many of the professors here are unable to efficiently teach material to make students understand them, some are intimidating and unapproachable.**

- **The fact that our state is not supporting the University system in a proper fashion.** The constant requirement to do so much more with so much less. The inability to take a breath between huge turmoil at work. The expectations that overtime and donations of time are commonplace.

- **I wish there was more gender diversity.** Many of my engineering classes are 80% or more male.

- **That there isn’t much diversity or overall knowledge about other races, cultures, etc. I think it should be a requirement for all students in their freshmen year to take a diversity class so as a whole we are not ignorant or don’t appear to be ignorant.**

- **I worry that this institute is too resource poor.** That this causes resentment among the various campus groups competing for resources and that it hinders the long-term prospects of this university and ultimately of the community surrounding UWP.

- **I least like being a minority student on a small/predominately white campus with few people whom I can relate.**

- **I think that employees have been expected to do more with less compensation and resources for a long time.** The stagnant salaries and compression are big problems. There seems to be a "loyalty tax" on faculty members who make a long-term commitment to the university. Moreover, it seems that the only way to insure a decent salary increase is to leave the ranks of faculty and become an administrator.
• The fact that there is absolutely nobody here on campus on the weekends and that there is no where to park ever.
• The rap that it's getting for being racist! We are a growing community dealing with issues a growing community deals with. Some people aren't working well with the change, and some people are saying we aren't dealing with issues quickly enough. I think over time our climate will improve.

In addition, a few respondents commented on the survey and process itself. Some applauded the University’s participation in the study and wanted to make certain that the results of the survey were made public and used to better UW-Platteville. Several respondents insisted that UW-Platteville leadership share with its constituents the climate assessment findings and initiatives instituted as a result of the survey.

• I thought it was a good survey.
• Some questions in the survey are not relevant in courses dealing with Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Engineering & Technology.
• I think doing this survey on a more regularly pattern will help students self analysis themselves and their actions on campus and in the surrounding community.
• The survey was charged with questions that could answer themselves without poll.
• This survey is unbelievably huge. No wonder not many are finishing it!
• I am disappointed that this survey did not ask more about my education. It just confirms my beliefs about this school - that it does not care about education.