



Civility

November 1995



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Purpose

The goal of this Penn State Pulse survey was to gather student feedback on six components of a 'civil community' as outlined by Ernest Boyer, editor of **Campus Life: In Search of Community**, published in 1990 by the Carnegie Commission For the Advancement of Teaching.

Highlights

Students were very cooperative in this attempt to clarify the philosophical concept of "civility." They felt that their own actions and attitudes reflected positive and responsible behaviors. They also felt that 'others' in the University community were much less likely to act in a positive, responsible, 'civil' manner. The tendency to negatively stereotype 'others' is an obstacle in building community.

Overall examination of 38 civility items revealed that 15 showed significant differences by gender, 10 by class standing, 5 by ethnicity, 5 by residence and 2 by college of enrollment. This information can be useful in designing discussions to further explore civility within our campus environment.

Participation Rate

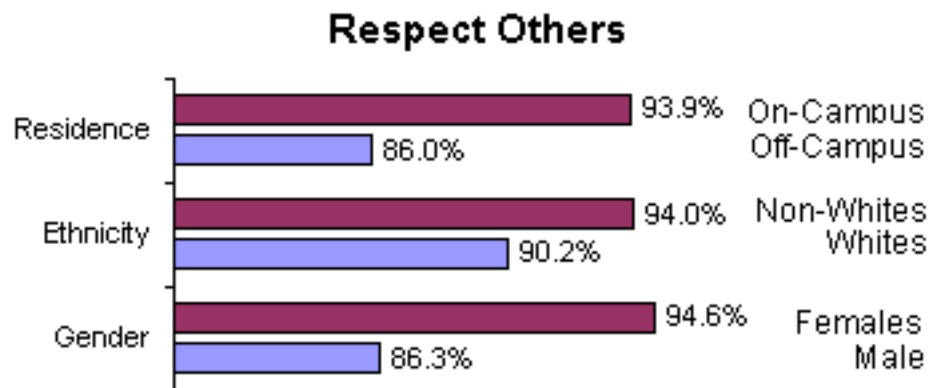
- N = 362 (73.6%) agreed to participate
- N = 130 (27.4%) did not agree to participate



Findings

- Most of the students (90.0%) felt that they had "an obligation to treat others at Penn State in a courteous and civil manner."
- A majority disagreed (83.2%) that they "had been unjustly excluded from some opportunities available on campus."

● Overall, most students (90.3%) stated that they act in ways that show they respect the rights and dignity of others within the Penn State Community. However, significant differences were found by gender, ethnicity, and residence.

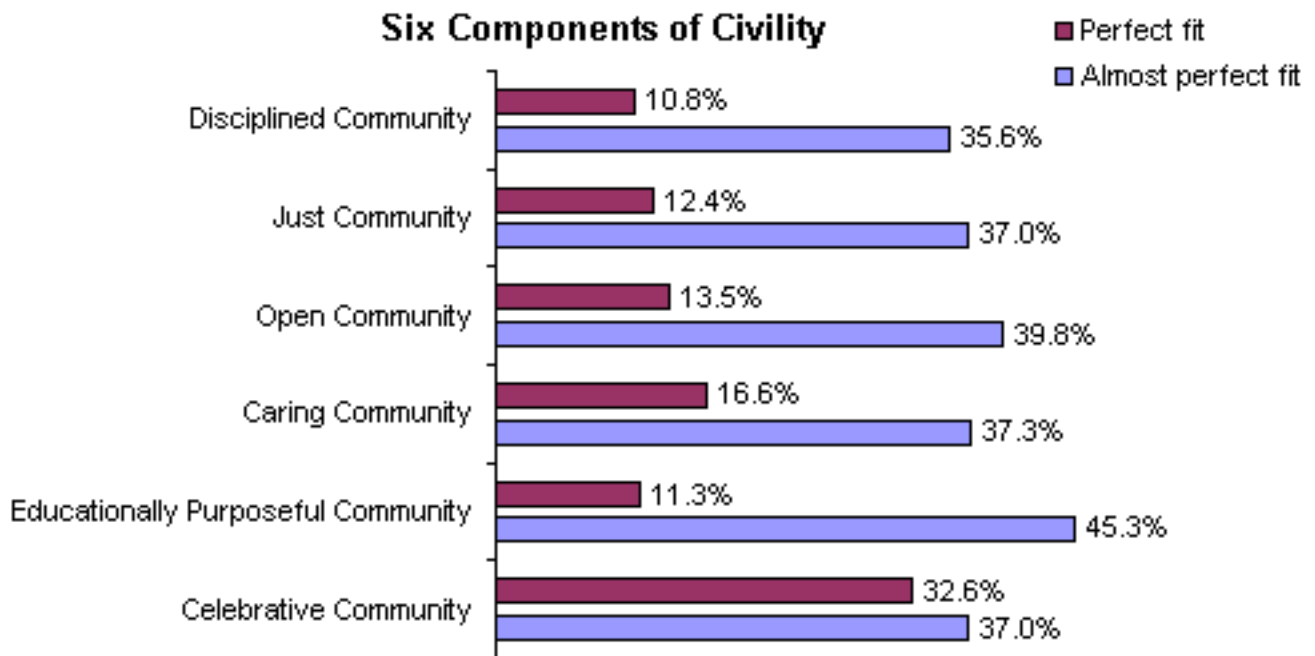


● Underclass students generally rated the Penn State community as more civil and purposeful than did upperclass students.

● Non-white students were significantly more likely than white students to:

- participate in out-of-class intellectual or cultural activities;
- show they respect rights and dignity of others;
- disagree that they had protested the use of language that demeans or hurts others;
- disagree that Penn State is a caring community where service to others is encouraged and the well-being of each individual is important.

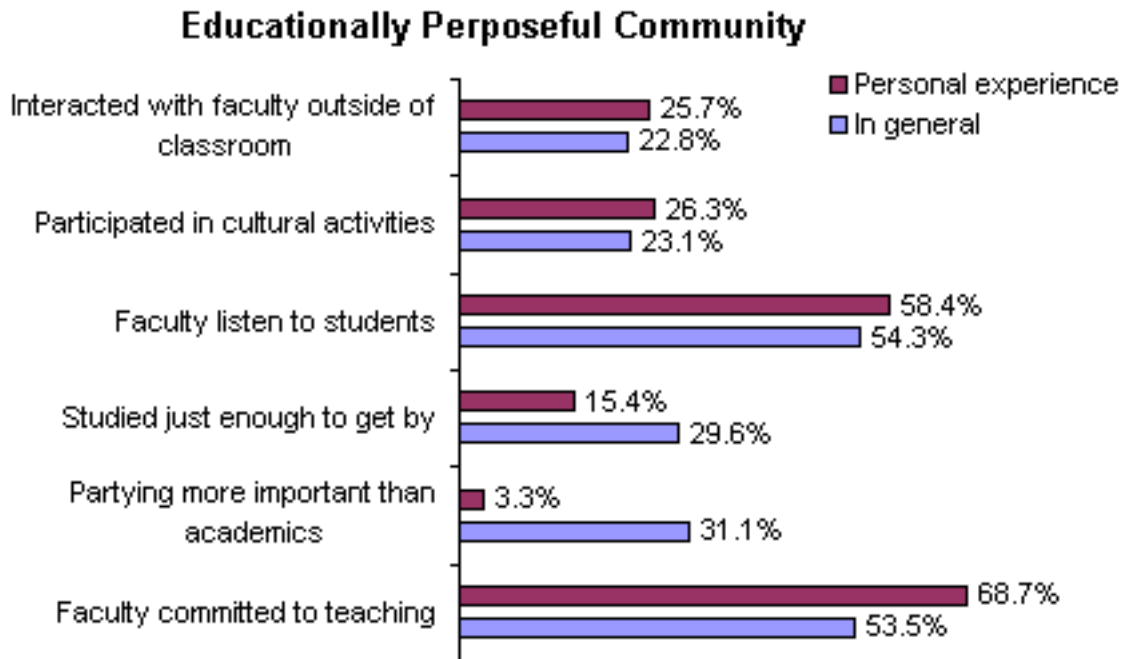
● Students were asked to rate the civility of the Penn State campus on a scale of 1 to 5. Students rated Penn State highly positive as fitting Ernest Boyer's definition of a civil environment.



● Female students were significantly more likely than male students to:

- agree they seek to understand points of view that differ from their own;
- state they had protested use of language that demeans or hurts others;
- act in ways to show they respect the rights and dignity of others within the Penn State community;
- protect the rights and opportunities of others within the community, even those who differ from themselves;
- speak out to oppose actions that are mean-spirited or rude;
- share a sense of belonging to the Penn State community;
- do volunteer work at Penn State;
- agree that Penn State is an educationally purposeful community where faculty and students work together and share academic goals;
- agree that Penn State is a caring community where service to others is encouraged and the well-being of each individual is important;
- disagree that they study just enough to get by;
- disagree that they had violated some community legal or social standards while at Penn State.

- When answering questions about Penn State as an educationally purposeful community, students noted some differences between their experiences and the experience of others.



Revised on 07/17/00
U. Ed. STA 97-298