



## “We Are” - Civility Defined by Students

November 2003

### Purpose

This survey attempted to learn more about behaviors that University Park students feel are important components of a civil campus climate in preparation for a “social norming” campaign Spring semester.

### Implications/Highlights

Students indicated that being treated courteously, being listened to with respect, speaking up to oppose situations that are hurtful to others, and having considerate interactions with their faculty were important components of a civil campus climate.

### Participation Rate

N = 1103

Phone: N = 777 (60% of 1304 contacted)

Web: N = 326 (16% of 2000 contacted)

### Findings

Students rated their own contribution to making Penn State a positive community for all students. Two-fifths thought that they had contributed positively. Almost the same proportion were unsure.

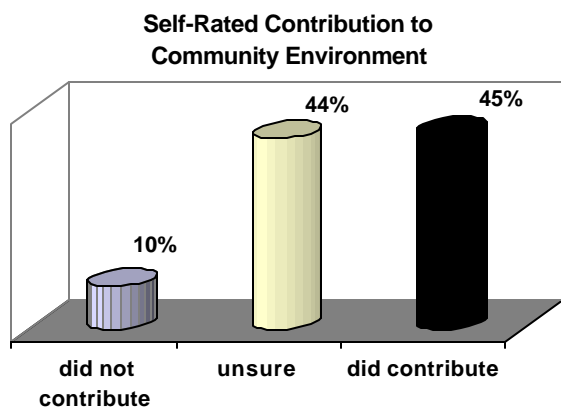


Figure 1. Students rated their own contribution to making Penn State a positive community for all students

More of those who said they were members of an intercollegiate/varsity sports or club sports teams (54%) than of those who did not have athlete status (46%) said they had contributed to a positive community climate for all students.\*

\*Statistically significant at the .05 level

Students were asked about a series of behaviors and how important these were when defining a courteous, civil campus environment.

Almost all respondents felt it was important to be treated courteously by others (96%) and that their point of view be listened to with respect by others (89%). A little over two-thirds (71%) said it was essential to speak out to oppose language or actions that were mean-spirited or hurt others.



Figure 2. Students thought being treated courteously, being listened to respectfully, and speaking up to oppose mean-spirited language or actions was important

Most students felt other components of a positive community environment included: being respected by the professors with whom they work (91%), being able to express their academic and research ideas with their faculty (82%) and being given the opportunity to talk with their professors about their satisfaction with their academic situation (82%).

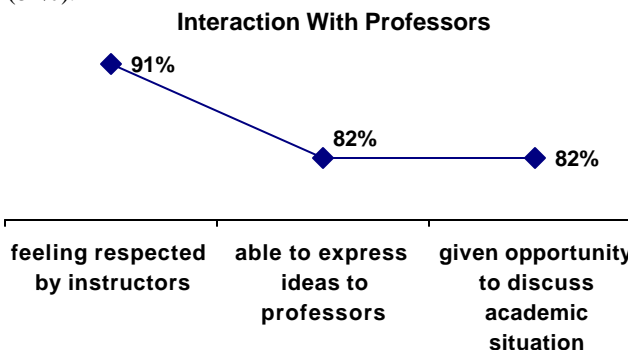


Figure 3. Most students considered respectful interactions with their faculty contributes to the campus environment

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Division of Student Affairs

Feeling safe and unthreatened was viewed by most respondents (93%) as essential to a civil campus environment; eighty percent thought having students balance an 'enthusiastic social life' and educational tasks was important.

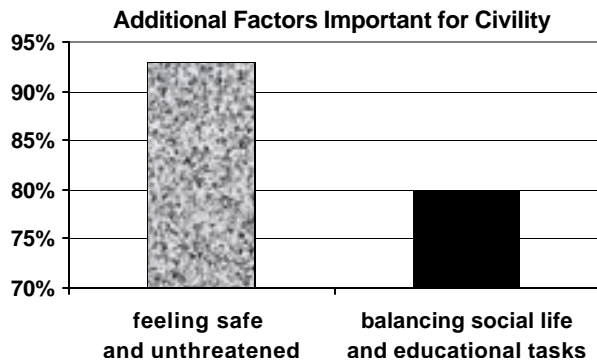


Figure 4. Feeling safe and having students balance social and academic lives impact community

Students rated the importance of other factors that helped define a positive community environment.

- 73% having drivers slow down or stop when they are walking at a pedestrian crossing
- 71% feeling that their elected representatives listen to their needs when making decisions
- 65% seeing trash and newspapers disposed of properly
- 38% being greeted by others when walking across campus or in town

Individual respondents commented on "friendliness" of others who smiled at them as a signal of a civil environment.

**Other Comments**

- good communication is important
- being open to suggestions
- participation in classes so you can hear from others
- feeling unafraid to share your ideas
- honesty and trust

The survey continued with a series of questions about respondent's actual behaviors within the past month.

**Overt Friendliness to Others Within Past Month**

	Frequently
Smiled and said hello while walking on campus	55%
Smiled or talked to a bus driver	52%
Waved or said hello to daycare children on campus	49%
Smiled at or talked to a maintenance worker in a campus building	46%
Actually said hello or good-bye to their instructor	44%
Smiled and said hello while walking off campus	39%
Smiled at or talked to a construction worker on campus	14%

Respondents thought thanking others contributed to a civil environment. Most students said they had tipped wait-staff in restaurants appropriately (88%), had thanked those who served them food (90%) and those who had done something nice for them (96%).

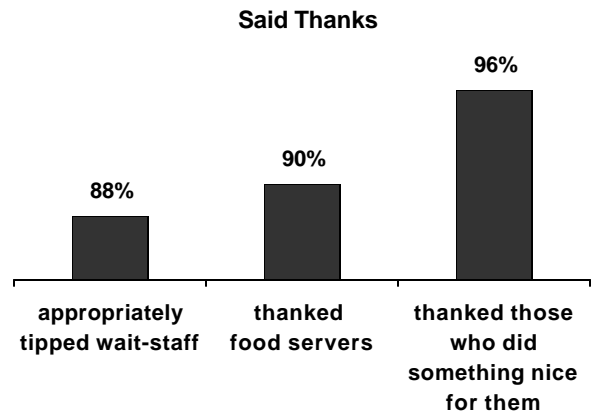


Figure 5. Most students said they thanked others

Students said they frequently held doors and elevators open for other students. A fifth said that they gave up their seat on the bus to other riders.

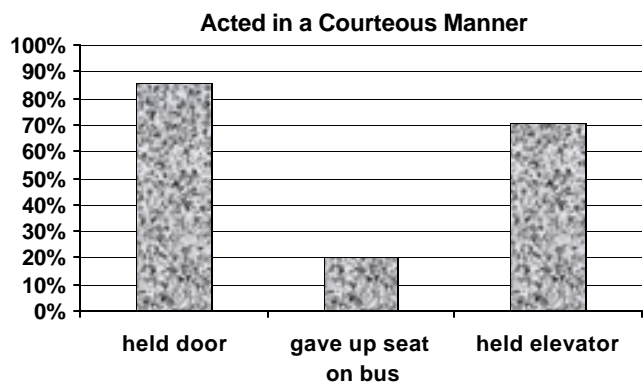


Figure 6. Most students said they held doors open for others

Some students acknowledged less-than-respectful behaviors at athletic events. A small portion of respondents indicated that they had taunted an opposing athletic team, the supporters of an opposing athletic team, as well as booed a Penn State team.

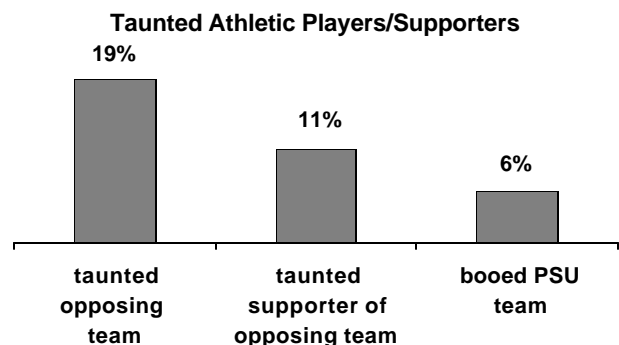


Figure 7. A portion of students acted discourteously in athletic situations

\*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

Few students said they frequently cut in line in front of others (5%), carried on a loud conversation when others were trying to study (4%), copied material from the Web for an assignment (9%), or cheated from someone else on an exam or assigned homework project (1%).

### Few Reported Negative Behaviors

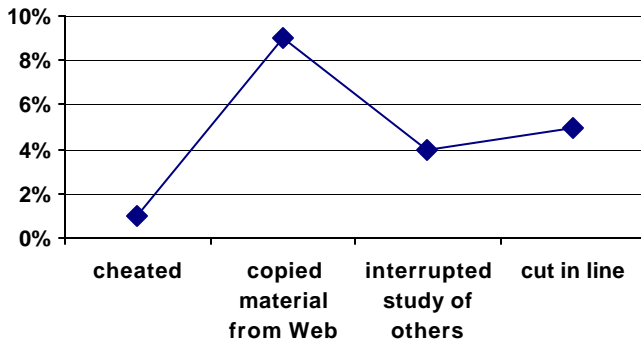


Figure 8. Few reported cheating, copying material from the Web, interrupting others who were studying or cutting in line

- More of the minority students (10%) than of the non-minority students (3%) said they had frequently cut in front of a line of other students. \*
- More of the graduate students (7%) than of the undergraduate students (4%) said they had cut in line. \*

A tenth of respondents said that they had frequently been in a crowd of other very angry students within the past month.

### Been in Crowd of Angry Students Within Past Month

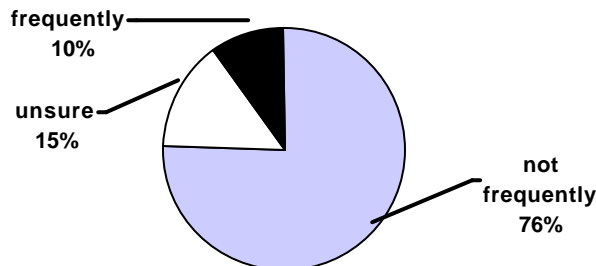


Figure 9. About a tenth of the respondents said that they had frequently been in a crowd of angry students within the past month

Undergraduates were more likely than graduate students to report being in an angry crowd.\*

Ten percent said that they had frequently – within the past month - forgot what they did and where they were because of drinking.

### Forgot What They Did/Where They Were

- more juniors (15%) and seniors (14%) than first year students (9%) or sophomores (5%) \*
- more undergraduate students (11%) than graduate students (1%) \*
- more of those who belong to a social fraternity or sorority (23%) than of those who do not belong (9%)

Students were asked how frequently they had crossed streets not using pedestrian crossings.

### Did Not Use Pedestrian Crossways

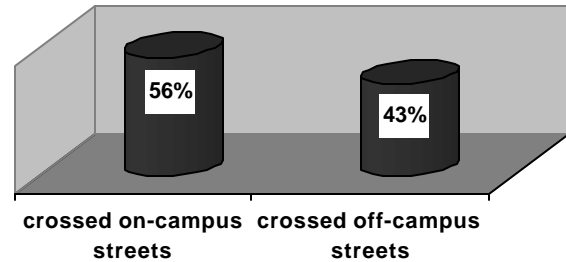


Figure 10. A large number of students crossed streets frequently outside of pedestrian crossings

A majority of students said that they frequently placed newspapers into proper recycling receptacles and food papers/cups etc. into trash receptacles.

### Did Deposit Newspapers and Trash Appropriately

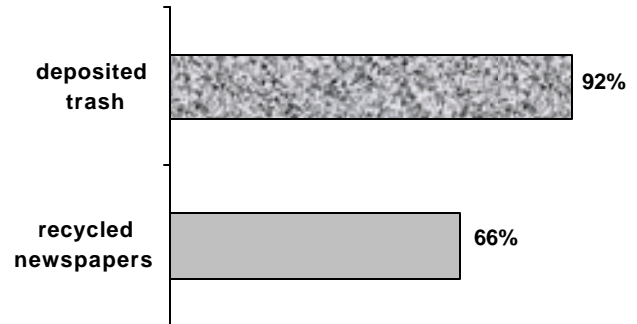


Figure 11. Students said they deposited newspapers and trash appropriately

Some students said they had volunteered in community service (19%) or had read an article focused on community or national leadership (28%).

### Volunteered in Community or Read About Elected Leaders

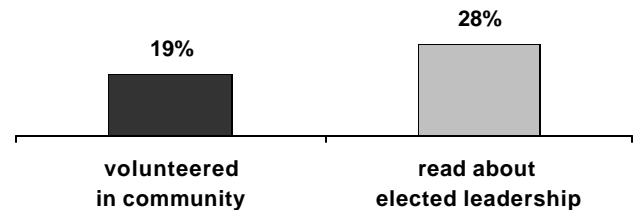


Figure 12. Students mentioned the role of community awareness in maintaining civility

### Volunteered Within Past Month

- more women
- more of those who belonged to fraternities/sororities
- more minority students

### Read Articles About Elected Leadership

- more non-minority students
- more graduate students
- more upperclass juniors and seniors

\*Statistically significant at the .05 level.