



## “WE ARE...Changing Penn State” Campaign

April 2004

### Purpose

The focus of this survey was on students’ awareness of and perceptions about the “WE ARE...” marketing campaign sponsored by the Undergraduate Student Government. The campaign challenges and supports students and other Penn State community members to form a more hospitable and civil community. Survey topics included behaviors and attitudes that define civility, the effectiveness of the campaign, and potential outcomes from the campaign.

### Participation Rate

Total: n = 973  
 Phone: n = 675; 53.8% response rate  
 Web: n = 298; 15.0% response rate<sup>1</sup>

Margin of Error: +/-3.10

### Findings

#### Community and Civility

##### Perceptions of the University

Over half of the respondents perceived Penn State to be a community where freedom of expression is protected, the well-being of each individual is important, and civility is affirmed. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1. Students with Positive Impressions of PSU<sup>2</sup>**

|   | %    |
|---|------|
| freedom of expression is protected                    | 64.1 |
| the well-being of each individual is important        | 56.9 |
| civility is affirmed                                  | 53.2 |
| service to others is encouraged                       | 52.0 |
| diversity is celebrated                               | 51.5 |
| faculty and students work together                    | 50.3 |
| behaviors are regulated for the good of the community | 49.6 |
| each person is honored                                | 32.7 |

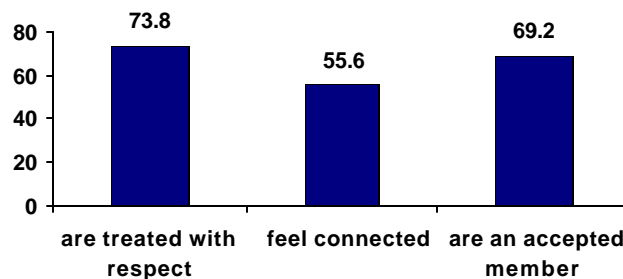
Overwhelmingly, first- and second-year students and on-campus students perceived Penn State to be a more caring and civil community than did juniors and seniors and off-campus students, respectively.

<sup>1</sup> The Web survey administration is utilized in order to account for students for whom local phone information was unavailable.

### Sense of Belonging

Almost three-quarters of students believed that they are treated with respect at Penn State, and 55.6% replied that they are strongly connected at Penn State.<sup>2</sup> (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1. Percent strongly believe that they...**



Similar to their perceptions of the University, first- and second-year students and on-campus residents were significantly more likely to report that they are treated with respect at Penn State, that they feel connected at Penn State, and that they feel like an accepted member of the PSU community than were juniors and seniors and off-campus residents, respectively.

### Personal Behavior

Most students (over 93%) reported that they consistently treat others in a courteous and civil manner and show respect for the rights of others. Students were less likely (67.5%) to support PSU’s efforts to regulate behavior for the good of the community. (See Table 2.)

**Table 2. Extent to which Students Exhibit Behavior Consistent with “Community”<sup>2</sup>**

|  | %    |
|--|------|
| treat others in a courteous & civil manner                               | 93.6 |
| show respect for the rights of others                                    | 93.5 |
| respect the opinions of others   | 85.6 |
| abide by University regulations of behavior                              | 83.5 |
| show compassion for others   | 83.3 |
| stand up for others’ rights when necessary                               | 74.0 |
| go out of their way to help others                                       | 69.6 |
| support PSU’s efforts to regulate behavior for the good of the community | 67.5 |

<sup>2</sup> Percent who responded either “substantially” or “to a great extent.”

Penn State Pulse is a project of Student Affairs Research and Assessment.

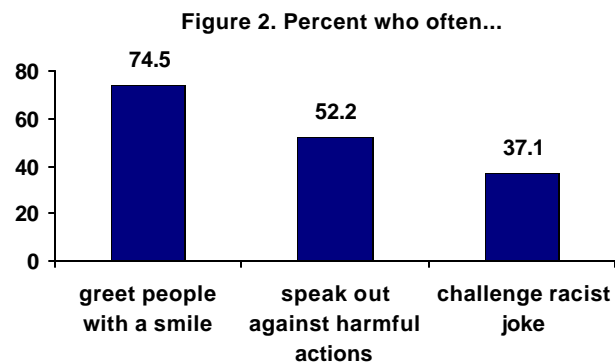
For further information, please contact Dr. Andrea Dowhower.

222 Boucke, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1809, ald101@psu.edu

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In addition, 74.5% indicated that they often greet people with a smile, while 37.1% often challenge someone who makes a racist joke. (See Figure 2.)

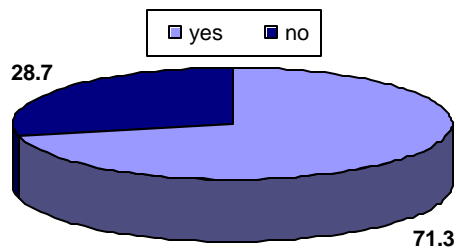


**The “WE ARE...Changing Penn State” Campaign**

***Awareness of the Campaign***

Over 70% of respondents were aware of the “WE ARE...” campaign. (See Figure 3.)

**Figure 3. Are you aware of the campaign?**



While 94.2% had seen the red and black posters (“Are You...Rude, Ugly, Coward, Bigot”), 45.8% reported that they had seen the blue and black posters (Be...Bold, Genuine, Inspired, Open-Minded).<sup>3</sup> (See Table 3.)

**Table 3. Campaign Awareness: Mediums**

| Medium                            | %    |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| red and black posters             | 94.2 |
| <i>Collegian</i> ads              | 54.3 |
| HUB/Osmond banner                 | 50.7 |
| CATA bus posters                  | 48.3 |
| blue and black posters            | 45.8 |
| <i>Centre Daily Times</i> ads     | 12.6 |
| radio ads                         | 10.6 |
| Penn State Network TV commercials | 7.7  |

Moreover, when asked which medium was the most effective, 76.0% responded the campaign posters, 10.4% said the CATA bus posters, and 7.4% said the *Collegian* ads. (Other responses were less than 2%.)

<sup>3</sup> Percentages are of those students who were aware of the campaign.

***Impressions of the Campaign***

When asked to describe their overall impressions of the campaign, an overwhelming majority of students spoke positively about the campaign. Another segment supported the campaign but were skeptical of the impact it would have. Others had a negative reaction to the campaign and talked about it being a waste of time and money.

One student wrote, “The concerted effort to change and refine Penn State is a noble effort. I certainly hope that realism can reaffirm the idealism. If the students take the campaign seriously, it shows great promise.”

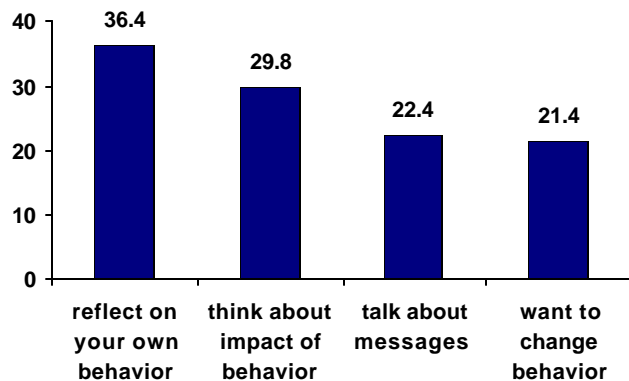
In addition, 75.3% strongly believed that the purpose of the campaign was important, and 60.9% strongly identified with the reasoning behind the campaign. However, while many responded positively to the campaign in general, only 24.7% thought that the campaign was effective.<sup>4</sup>

***Outcomes of the Campaign***

Students who were aware of the campaign were asked a series of questions pertaining to the potential outcomes of the campaign, such as reflecting on their own behavior, talking about the campaign messages, and noticing positive changes in the behavior of others.

In total, 55.1% reported substantial change in at least one of the areas as a result of the campaign.<sup>5</sup> Most frequently, students reported that the campaign made them reflect on their own behavior. (See Figure 4.)

**Figure 4. Percent who Reported a Strong Change as a Result of the Campaign**



One student wrote, “I would say that it has gotten people talking and has gotten me and others to be more aware of our actions.”

<sup>4</sup> Percent who responded either “substantially” or “to a great extent.” In addition, these percentages are of students who were aware of the campaign.

<sup>5</sup> Percent who responded either “substantially” or “to a great extent.”