



# Community Values

## October 2005

### INTRODUCTION

This survey focuses on the community values of Penn State as derived from the Penn State Principles and Ernest Boyer's characteristics of a healthy community (McDonald, 2002). The survey also examines students' awareness of the student-initiated "We Are... *Changing Penn State*" campaign and the outcomes associated with the campaign. This survey, conducted by Student Affairs Research and Assessment, was administered by phone and also by Web.<sup>1</sup> A similar survey was conducted in spring of 2004 (Pulse #123); when applicable comparisons are provided.<sup>2</sup>

In total, 1,089 undergraduate students at University Park responded to the survey. By phone, 605 responded for a 22.5% response rate and, of those contacted, 68.7% participated. By Web, 484 responded for a 20.8% response rate. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.92%.

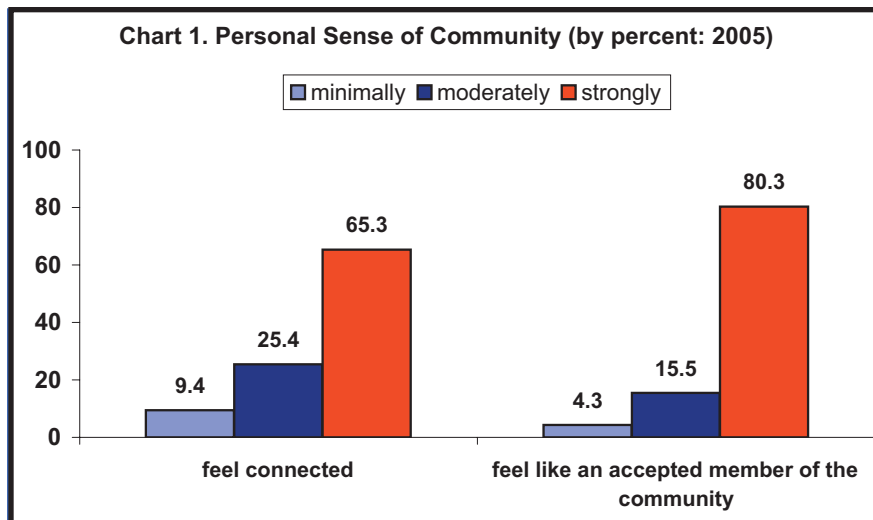
Of the respondents, 56.1% are female; 84% are white/Caucasian; 44.5% are first- or second-year students; and 50.0% reside off campus. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

### FINDINGS

#### Personal Experiences Related to Community Values

Several questions addressed students' personal experiences related to community values at Penn State.

- In 2005, 80.3% reported that they feel like an accepted member of the Penn State community (compared to 70.5% in 2004), and 65.3% responded that they feel connected (compared to 56.7% in 2004; see Chart 1 for 2005 data).



**This survey focuses on the community values of Penn State.**

For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

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

<sup>2</sup> The 2004 survey included graduate students while the 2005 did not. Hence, for comparison purposes graduate students' responses were removed from the 2004 results. In addition, a limitation of the comparisons is the difference between measuring students' opinions in the spring compared to in the fall. These comparisons need to be interpreted with caution.



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

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- In addition, 83.0% reported feeling safe and unthreatened (see Table 1).
- White students and first- and second-year students personally felt a stronger sense of community when compared to students of color and upper class students, respectively (data not shown).

**Table 1: Personal Experiences at Penn State**

To what extent:	Percent <sup>3</sup> SP 2004	Percent <sup>3</sup> FA 2005
Do you feel safe and unthreatened	na	83.0
Are you treated with respect at Penn State	74.0	79.1
Are you respected by others for your differences and similarities	na	74.0

### Perceptions of the Penn State Community

Students were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of Penn State (see Table 2).

- In 2005, 75.2% believed strongly that freedom of expression is protected (compared to 64.4% in 2004).
- While 53.3% perceived Penn State to be a community where diversity is celebrated, 70.6% believed strongly that hateful actions motivated by prejudice or bias are not tolerated.
- White students and first- and second-year students perceived the campus to have a stronger sense of community than did students of color and upper class students, respectively (data not shown).
- Evidence suggests students perceive the campus to be more affirming of civility and more encouraging of service to others in 2005 than in 2004.

**Table 2: Perceptions of Community at Penn State**

To what extent do you believe Penn State is a community where:	Percent <sup>3</sup> SP 2004	Percent <sup>3</sup> FA 2005
Freedom of expression is protected	64.4	75.2
Hateful actions motivated by prejudice / bias are not tolerated	na	70.6
Service to others is encouraged	53.2	70.1
Civility is affirmed	53.3	61.3
Diversity is celebrated	52.3	53.3
Individuals accept their obligations to the Penn State community	na	52.6
Members of the community adhere to a high standard of behavior	na	42.8

### Behaviors Consistent with Penn State's Community Values

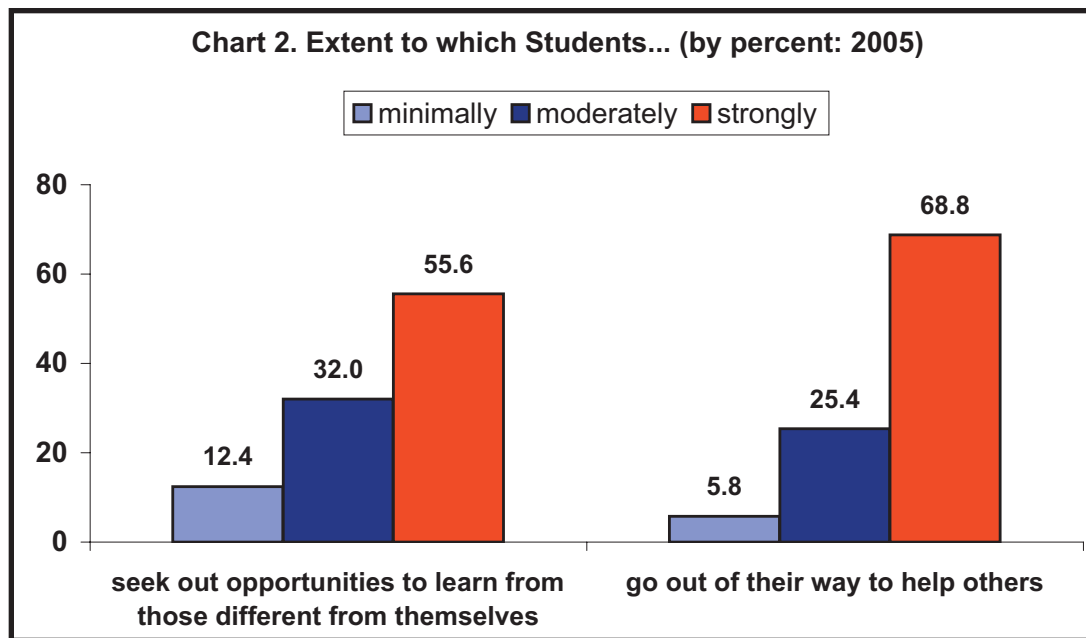
Another important aspect of community is how students' personal actions reflect the values espoused by the community.

- Over 90% of respondents reported that they show respect for others, treat others in a courteous and respectful manner, and take responsibility for their actions (see Table 3).
- However, only 55.6% seek out opportunities to learn from those different from themselves, and 68.8% go out of their way to help others (see Chart 2).
- Women and first- and second-year students reported behavior more consistent with the community values than did men and upper class students, respectively (data not shown).

**Table 3: Personal Behaviors Consistent with Community Values**

To what extent do you:	Percent <sup>3</sup> SP 2004	Percent <sup>3</sup> FA 2005
Show respect for others within the Penn State community	na	92.4
Treat others at Penn State in a courteous and respectful manner	93.9	91.4
Take responsibility for your actions	na	91.2
Make sure your actions / behaviors do not interfere with the rights of others	na	82.5
Stand up for the rights of others when necessary	74.9	75.4

<sup>3</sup> Percents represent those who indicated "substantially" or "extremely."



In addition, students were asked about daily behaviors that reflect community and civility (see Table 4).

**Table 4: Daily Behaviors that Reflect Community**

How frequently do you:	Percent <sup>4</sup> SP 2004	Percent <sup>4</sup> FA 2005
Hold a door open for someone	na	95.1
Greet people with a smile	75.1	82.4
Turn off your cell phone in class	na	79.9
Recycle (cans, bottles, newspapers, etc.)	na	67.0
Speak out against actions that are hurtful to others	51.7	58.4
Challenge someone who makes a racist joke	35.8	38.1
Pick up trash laying on the ground	na	32.8

## The “We Are...*Changing Penn State*” Campaign

### *Campaign Awareness*

Among second-year and upper class students, 52.9% indicated they were aware of the campaign.<sup>5</sup> Students were most likely to have seen the blue and black messages, consistent with the current emphasis of the campaign (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Campaign Awareness: Mediums**

Have you seen the:	Percent <sup>6</sup> FA 2005
Blue and black posters / t-shirts (“Be...Bold, Genuine, Inspired, Open-Minded”)	46.8
Red and black posters / t-shirts (“Are You...Ugly, Rude, Coward, Bigot”)	43.6
“Take Out Your Papers and Trash” mouse pads	35.4

<sup>4</sup> Percents represent those who indicated “often” or “very often.”

<sup>5</sup> Many of the campaign strategies were used in the previous academic year. First-year students had not been exposed to them at the time of the survey.

<sup>6</sup> Percents represent responses of second-year and upper class students.

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## Campaign Effectiveness

Students who had been aware of the campaign were asked several questions that address the potential outcomes of the campaign messages.<sup>7</sup>

- In 2005, approximately 85% of students who were aware of the campaign strongly believed the purpose of the campaign is important (compared to approximately 75% in 2004; data not shown).
- Over half of the students who were aware of the campaign indicated that the campaign at least “moderately” made them reflect on their own behavior and question what it means to be a member of the PSU community (see Table 6).
- While first- and second-year students had less opportunity to be aware of the various aspects of the campaign, they were significantly more likely to believe the campaign was effective than were upper class students (data not shown).

**Table 6: Campaign Effectiveness**

To what extent has the campaign made you:	Percent FA 2005 <sup>8</sup>
Reflect on your own behavior	63.5
Question what it means to be a member of the PSU community	51.7
Change your behavior	44.6
Talk about the messages of the campaign with others	29.4

**“I think it [the campaign] is a great way to get the Penn State community involved in recycling, becoming more tolerant of other people, etc.”**

<sup>7</sup> First-year students were included.

<sup>8</sup> Percents represent those who indicated “moderately,” “substantially,” or “extremely.”

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