



July 25, 2019

Feasibility of Climate Survey Common Questions

Regent Policy R262, *Student Safety* directs the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institutions to conduct a Title IX campus climate survey of students every two years. The policy provides that “although institutions may tailor the climate survey questions to address individual areas of concern, all institutions shall collaborate with the Commissioner’s office to develop common questions for all campuses that may be used to assess the climate of the entire system and among the institutions.”

Although the institutions and Commissioner’s Office have worked to comply with this policy, survey and data scientists have recently concluded that having common questions in differing survey instruments will render the data generally incomparable. They recommend either adopting a system-wide climate survey, modeled after the Association of American Universities (AAU) survey tool, or allowing the institutions to conduct their own survey without requiring common questions.

Because the policy requires common questions but not a common survey, the Board must revisit this issue to determine the direction moving forward. The institutions’ preferences are mixed, with some wanting to conduct their own surveys, others are indifferent, and the rest did not provide feedback.

Commissioner’s Recommendations

Based on expert guidance, the policy as written is not feasible, which therefore requires Board action. As there are benefits and drawbacks to either direction, the Commissioner recommends the Board proceed as it determines is most appropriate.