Background/Introduction

In Spring 2010, the Colorado State University President’s Commission on Women and Gender Equity (CWGE) conducted an informal straw poll (i.e. an unofficial, non-scientific survey of opinion) of campus community members, regarding the climate for academic achievement and work on the Fort Collins Campus. Drawing on the structure of a survey conducted in 1996, the survey attempted to discover if circumstances had improved and what significant concerns should be addressed by the Commission in the coming year(s).

For many of the survey items, a strong effort was made to request information in a manner similar to the 1996 survey. By doing this, a comparison between the two time periods regarding the campus climate and the perceptions of staff members may be established. As is to be expected, some of the constructs, the theories of identity and the language used in 1996 are outdated. Effort was taken, however, to update the language around issues of gender performance, sexual orientation and identity construction.

In both surveys, students and employees were invited to respond to the survey on a voluntary basis. In 2010, emails and notices in various electronic newsletters publicized the opportunity to participate in the online survey. The questions for the 1996 survey were posed with a Likert scale response mechanism indicating the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction; this was converted to enable us to compare the results of the 2010 survey with the original survey. For a graphical breakdown of participants see Figures 1 and 2.

As this survey was voluntary, and some of those who responded did not complete the full process, we offer these results, incomplete though they might be, and will attempt to learn what we can from them and use them to help us make recommendations and guide our future work.

2010 Student Summary

The number of students who responded to the survey is 1,330. Of the 5% of the total CSU student body, 12% of the student participants identified themselves as male, 34% female, and less than 1% as transgender or intergender (Figure 2). The student body encompasses traditional and non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students.

The questions were categorized into two groups: those pertaining to gender equity and those corresponding to the climate of the CSU campus environment. The data collected from the student responses relays an overall satisfaction with both the campus environment and gender equity. Of the 1,330 students that participated in the survey, no more than 12% were dissatisfied.
with the current campus climate and equity among genders (Figures 21 and 24 respectively). The students’ responses reflect a greater than 70% satisfaction with the current settings of the CSU campus, for both climate and gender equity issues. Approximately 20% of students felt neutral about these situations. No question received significant negative responses.

**2010 Staff Summary**

Of the 4,600 staff members at Colorado State University during fall 2009, 23% participated in this survey. Seventy-five percent of the responders were female, 24% male, and less than 1% identified himself or herself as transgender or intergender (Figure 2).

Out of the 1,000 staff participants in this survey, less than 25% were overall dissatisfied in both categories (climate and gender equity), more than 50% were satisfied overall with the current settings and approximately 25% remain neutral (Figures 20 and 23 respectively). The two questions that received more negative feedback than positive asked for the participant’s level of satisfaction with support for balancing family, work, and school commitments and the level of satisfaction with the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries or giving raises. The first question received 2% more dissatisfied responders than satisfied, while the second question received almost 8% more dissatisfied responders.

**2010 Faculty Summary**

Of the 1,500 faculty members at CSU during fall 2009, 28% participated in this survey. And of this 28%, 65% identified themselves as female, 34% as male and less than 1% as transgender or intergender (Figure 2). These responses were separated into two groups: campus climate and gender equity. Faculty response was generally positive, with more than 50% indicating overall satisfaction in both groups (Figure 19). Less than 26% of faculty members were dissatisfied with the current campus setting overall (Figure 22).

A few questions had a significantly higher negative response. When asked to indicate the level of satisfaction with support for balancing family, work, and school commitments, 32% of faculty members responded as dissatisfied. While there was still a 46% satisfaction rate with this issue, the level of dissatisfaction is worth noting. Two other questions received a higher level of dissatisfaction than satisfaction: the first asked about faculty members’ satisfaction on the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries/giving increases; the second asked the satisfaction level of the access to childcare. The first question had a 38% dissatisfaction response and 34% satisfaction, while the second question received 28% and 13% dissatisfaction and satisfaction respectively.

**Comparison – 1996 to 2010**

Several items were selected as key elements from the 1996 campus climate survey and these items were carried forward to the 2010 survey. Responses to each item transferred from the 1996 to the 2010 survey are provided and the comparisons between the 1996 survey and the 2010 survey are captured in a bar graph for each item (Figures 3-18). The employee (faculty and
staff) responses to each question for each time period are positioned side-by-side on the graph in the first two bars and student responses for both time periods are in last two bars. To facilitate the comparison, faculty and staff responses from 2010 are grouped together and the scale used in the 2010 survey is converted to match the original scale used in 1996.

Additionally, general topics and group items are placed together for a more coherent snapshot of the changes in climate as well as to facilitate discussion of the items. The categories are equity, retention and recruitment, work/life balance, freedom of expression, safety, stereotyping based on gender, and stereotyping based on culture. We included the item regarding the number of women in positions of leadership in two of these categories (equity, and retention and recruitment) because this particular item is critical in both categories.

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Equity

Our discussion of equity encompasses the responses to questions about the number of women in positions of leadership, the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries/giving increases, the level of fairness between men and women in assignments, tasks, and services, and the level of fairness in the treatment of men and women.

For all items but one, more than 50% of faculty and staff respondents were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied in 1996, while less than 30% were dissatisfied in 2010. The single exception is the issue of setting salaries and giving raises, where employee dissatisfaction was at 41% in 1996 and 38% in 2010 (Figures 3 – 6).

Forty percent of students expressed dissatisfaction with the number of women in positions of leadership 40% in 1996, as compared to 15% of students in 2010. The faculty and staff dissatisfaction rate fell from 57% in 1996 to 28% in 2010 (Figure 3). Figure 3 shows a decline in dissatisfaction rates for faculty and staff concerning the number of women who serve as role models/mentors as well from 63% in 1996, to 28% in 2010. Dissatisfaction with the level of fairness between men and women in assignments, tasks, and services fell from 1996 to 2010 in both faculty/staff and student categories as well. Faculty/staff dissatisfaction rate fell from 59% to 29% and student dissatisfaction rate fell from 48% to 10% (Figure 5). When asked about the level of fairness in the treatment of men and women, 54% of faculty and staff were dissatisfied in 1996, and 26% were dissatisfied in 2010 (Figure 6).

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Retention and Recruitment

Retention and recruitment of employees and students is impacted by perceptions of dissatisfaction with the number of women who serve as role models/mentors, opportunities for advancement and professional development, and level of support for retention and recruitment.

In 1996, 57% of faculty and staff respondents and 41.5% of student respondents selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied to indicate how they viewed the number of women in positions of leadership. By 2010, 28% of faculty and staff respondents and 15% of student respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the number of women in positions of leadership.
(Figure 3). In 1996, 63% of responding faculty and staff were dissatisfied with the number of women serving as role models/mentors. By 2010, faculty and staff who reported being dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the number of women as role models/mentors was 28%. Student respondents selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied 9% of the time when asked about the number of women serving as role models/mentors in 2010 (Figure 7).

Faculty and staff respondents said they were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with opportunities for advancement and professional development at a rate of 50% in 1996. In 2010, 36% of respondents still reported that they were either dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the state of this issue. This individual item had one of the lower rates of individual change across the two surveys (Figure 8). Students were not asked this question in 1996. We did ask this question in 2010, due to the number of graduate and undergraduate students currently employed on campus. Ten percent of respondents selected that they were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

In 1996, 52% of faculty and staff respondents selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied when asked about the level of support for retention and recruitment, and in 2010, 30% of the respondents picked either dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied (Figure 9).

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Work/Life Balance

Balancing the pressures of family, work, and school commitments is a challenge for both employees and students. We attempted to assess the campus climate on work/life balance by asking how people perceived the available support for balancing family, work, and school commitments and access to child care. This was another item with a lower change rate between the two surveys. In 1996, 52% of the faculty and staff participants responded that they were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied, and in 2010, 32% of the participants selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied. The percentage of students responding with dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with this issue declined from 41.5% in 1996 to 24% in 2010 (Figure 10). Faculty/staff dissatisfaction with access to child care was lower in 2010 (28%) than in 1996 (39%) (Figure 11).

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Freedom of Expression

Freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation stands alone as an item in our analysis of the results. This item might be paired up with a variety of topics including opportunities for advancement, personal safety, or stereotyping based either on gender or culture. Multiple groupings will therefore be impacted by the level of dissatisfaction with this one item.

The percentage of faculty and staff who responded with dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied regarding their freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation fell from 48% in 1996, to 35% in 2010. Student selection of dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation also declined from 35% to 15% (Figure 12).
1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Safety

We posited two items regarding personal physical safety on campus: the level of support concerning your physical safety and the awareness of and access to campus safety resources. Faculty and staff were not queried on this item in 1996, but students were. The percentage of students reporting dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction regarding support concerning physical safety fell from 33.5% in 1996, to 12% in 2010 (Figure 13). Student dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction in relation to awareness of and access to campus safety resources also fell from 33.5% in 1996, to 9% in 2010. Staff dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction in both categories was low in 2010, with 11% for the level of support for safety and 8% for awareness of and access to campus safety resources (Figure 14).

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Stereotyping based on Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of dissatisfaction with three items regarding stereotyping based on gender, including their level of dissatisfaction with the sensitivity to amount of stereotyping of gender. The other two items dealt with frequency of stereotyping incidents, asking how frequently an individual has personally experienced negative stereotyping of gender within the work unit or within the campus community.

Faculty and staff respondents selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied 48% of the time regarding the level of sensitivity to the amount of stereotyping of their gender in 1996, and that percentage of dissatisfaction had dropped to 28% in 2010. The percentage of students selecting dissatisfied or strong dissatisfied dropped as well; from 33.5% in 1996 to 7% in 2010 (Figure 16). Interestingly, while faculty and staff were still dissatisfied with the level of stereotyping, the incident of personal experience of negative stereotyping was significantly lower for this group in 2010. In 1996, 48% of respondents selected frequently or very frequently to indicate how often they experienced stereotyping based on gender, but for the same issue in 2010 only 10% of respondents selected one of these two responses. This is the one item where the drop in student response was less than the drop in faculty/staff response. Student respondents in 1996 selected frequently or very frequently 33.5% of the time in response to the question about how often they experienced stereotyping based on gender, and that number fell to 21% in 2010 (Figure 17).

1996 to 2010 – Responses pertaining to Stereotyping based on Culture

Both surveys also included two queries about cultural stereotypes: 1) How frequently do you experience negative stereotyping of culture within your work unit? and 2) How frequently do you personally experience negative stereotyping of your culture within your campus community. The items regarding negative stereotyping of culture showed decreases in frequency of experience in both populations between the two surveys. Faculty and staff who selected frequently or very frequently in response to these items fell from 48% in 1996 for both items, to 7% for both items in 2010. Student responses in the frequently to very frequently categories fell from 33.5% in 1996, to 15% in 2010 (Figures 17 and 18).

Conclusion
The percentage of people who selected dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied for each survey item declined from 1996 to 2010. Particularly notable was the significant decline in the number of students indicating some level of dissatisfaction in relation to concern for their personal safety and their access to safety resources.

While many items on the survey saw a decline in the level of dissatisfaction of 20% or more, there were three notable exceptions: employee satisfaction with the fairness of salary allocations, opportunities for advancement, and freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation. More specifically, the top lingering issues for staff were support for balancing family, work and school commitments, and the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries or giving raises. As did staff, faculty remain concerned with the level of fairness between genders when setting salaries or giving raises, and faculty also consider access to childcare an ongoing and important issue.

**Recommendations**

The Commission’s members are pleased about the increased satisfaction noticed in the survey results, although we are aware of the limits of these results due to the relatively few numbers of participating students, faculty and staff, and the unofficial set up of the survey itself.

Given, however, the general increased level of satisfaction compared to the 1996 survey, we should pay special attention to the issues that elicited remarkable rates of dissatisfaction in the 2010 survey. Therefore we recommend that Central Administration:

- investigate the reasons, real or perceived, for the belief in unfair outcomes in salary allocations or raises when women are concerned, including the processes for salary allocation or raises, on the part of a substantial number of staff and faculty members;
- communicate to the Commission and the CSU community the progress and/or process for the implementation of the recommendations in the reports of the two recent committees on Work/Life balance;
- conduct a more formal survey that would reveal the scope of the concern expressed by several staff members, in the 2010 survey, on their lack of freedom to express opinions and concerns without fear of retaliation. Commission members find this issue quite troubling.
- establish a regulated schedule to ensure that campus climate surveys take place at minimum every three years. Although overarching campus climate assessments are essential it is suggested to continue administering surveys that address the concerns of targeted groups on campus.