

# Executive Summary

This report presents key findings from the PACE Climate Survey (PACE Survey) conducted at community colleges between fall 2019 and spring 2024. It analyzes trends in key areas, including institutional structure, student focus, supervisory relationships, teamwork, racial climate, and student success. The findings provide valuable insights to community college leaders on navigating post-pandemic challenges and creating a supportive environment for all employees.

## An Overview of Key Trends and Findings

- ***In 2021, the PACE Survey had the highest (i.e., most positive) average scores for both the overall survey and the four climate factors.*** In 2021, the PACE Survey saw its highest score, likely due to actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the Institutional Structure climate factor, employees particularly appreciated the actions of their institutions aligning with their respective missions. However, despite this improvement, Institutional Structure remained the lowest-rated factor across all survey years compared to other climate factors, indicating persistent challenges in areas such as advancement opportunities, clarity in administrative processes, and communication. In 2021, the Student Focus climate factor reached its highest mean score compared to other years, with employees feeling more aligned with the institution's mission. Similarly, Supervisory Relationships and Teamwork climate factors also showed improvement, reflecting stronger support from supervisors and a sense of cooperation within teams.
- ***Significant differences existed in how different employee groups perceived the campus climate during the study period.*** While administrators and part-time employees reported the most positive perceptions of the campus climate, employees of color and employees who identified as nonbinary, gender queer, and preferred to self-describe their gender identities reported less favorable perceptions of the campus climate.
- ***The perceptions of the racial campus climate significantly varied by race and personnel classification during the study period.*** The data revealed significant differences in perceptions of the racial campus climate by race, with employees of color reporting less favorable views on racial representation among faculty, institutional leadership, and staff, as well as the institution's commitment to supporting the educational persistence of diverse students. There were also significant differences in racial climate perceptions among faculty, administrators, and staff, with administrators showing lower levels of agreement on items related to the racial climate.
- ***The perceptions of student success initiatives significantly varied among faculty, administrators, and staff during the study period.*** Faculty perceived student success initiatives more positively than staff and administrators, with more positive perceptions of the clarity of pathways to degree completion, and the institution's use of program completion rates as a measure of program success. Similarly, faculty consistently showed higher satisfaction on both the disaggregation of data to assess program effectiveness and the existence of systematic processes for identifying at-risk students compared to staff and administrators.

The PACE Climate Survey findings from fall 2019 to spring 2024 highlight critical areas of progress and persistent challenges within community colleges. While notable improvements were observed in 2021, key findings demonstrate ongoing issues in institutional structure. Moreover, differences in campus climate perceptions across different employee groups signal the need for continued and more targeted employee support. By addressing these concerns, community colleges can create a more supportive environment that fosters both employee and student success.