



CU-Boulder Graduate Student Social Climate Survey Fall 2014 findings

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Background

In the late fall of 2014 a graduate student-specific campus social climate survey was administered at CU-Boulder. The survey was the culmination of joint efforts by the Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis, the Graduate School, and the United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS). 4,328 graduate students (2,561 doctoral and 1,767 master's level) were invited to participate in the survey. Overall, 1,603 graduate students (962 doctoral, 641 masters) responded yielding an overall 37% response rate (38% doctoral, 36% masters). These response numbers and rates provide reasonably reliable data upon which specific issues can be identified and responses to those issues can be designed and implemented.

In the spring and summer of 2015, the survey data were subjected to a comprehensive analysis. During this analysis phase a broadly representative Graduate Student Climate Task Force was created and was comprised of graduate students (from UGGS and from across campus), faculty, and representatives from the Ombuds office, Housing and Dining Services, the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, the Office of Planning, Budget, and Analysis, and the Graduate School. The task force has been meeting regularly since August and has been engaged in focused discussions to understand and interpret the survey results, to begin to design and implement responses to the results of the survey, and to think about how to improve the campus climate more generally.

Data highlights

Selected summary data – respondents to Graduate Student Social Climate Survey (N=1,603; excludes Law students)

Harassment

- 10% (n=167) of the 1,603 graduate student survey respondents experienced some form of harassment.
- 12% (n=119) of 962 doctoral students reported experiencing some form of harassment; 7% (n=48) of 641 master's students reported experiencing some form of harassment.
- Of the 1,603 graduate student survey respondents, 7% (n=118) reported experiencing more than one form of harassing behavior (11% of women n=83; 4% of men n=35).
- Of the 1,603 graduate student survey respondents, 1-6% reported experiencing each of nine specified types of harassment (0-3% of men; 2-8% of women)

Harassment experienced	% female	N female	% male	N male	% total	N total
Unwanted or threatened physical contact	2%	13	0%	2	1%	15
Unwanted romantic/sexual comments	4%	29	0%	2	2%	31
Verbal hostility (shouting, profanity, excessive criticism)	8%	61	3%	29	6%	90
Hostile electronic communication	5%	34	2%	15	3%	49
Denial of access to resources (information, colleagues, etc.)	4%	30	1%	10	2%	40
Threats to academic status	3%	25	2%	17	3%	42
Undermining or impeding your research or other academic work	2%	14	1%	11	2%	25
Threats to employment status	7%	55	3%	26	5%	81
Talking negatively to others about you	3%	26	1%	11	2%	37
Other (please specify)	5%	40	2%	14	3%	54

Prior information – summer funding, student fees

“Before starting graduate study at CU-Boulder, did you receive accurate information about the availability of funding for you during the summer?”

Response	Graduate Students (omits Law)
No	34%
Yes	47%
Not sure/Didn't think about it	19%

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 1,379 survey respondents who answered the item.

“Before starting graduate study at CU-Boulder, did you receive accurate information about the amount of money you would have to pay for student fees?”

Response	Graduate Students (omits Law)
No	41%
Yes	47%
Not sure/Didn't think about it	12%

NOTE: Percentages are based on the 1,379 survey respondents who answered the item.

- 7% of graduate student respondents reported experiencing more than one form of harassing behavior (7.3% of women, 6.5% of men).
- Over all graduate student respondents, a higher percentage of women than men reported that harassment took the form of “unwanted romantic/sexual comments” (3.9% women vs. 0.2% men), “unwanted or threatened physical contact” (1.7% women vs. 0.2% men), or ‘denial of access to resources (information, colleagues, etc.) (4.0% women vs. 1.2% men).
- A slightly higher percentage of women than men reported that harassment took the form of “undermining or impeding your research or other academic work” (1.9% women vs 1.3% men.).
- The most frequently cited form of harassment was “verbal hostility” (5.6%), and “threats to employment status” (5.1%). Women reported that they experienced these forms of harassment at a higher proportion than men. A higher percentage of women than men also reported experiencing harassment across all nine manifestations of harassment.

Perpetrators of harassment

Graduate students were asked “By whom were you harassed? (Please check all that apply)” with response options reflecting the perpetrator’s campus role, e.g., “faculty (non-advisor),” “fellow graduate student,” “graduate advisor,” “post-doc.”

- The most commonly cited perpetrators of harassment were “faculty (non-advisor)” (4.4%) and “fellow graduate student” (3.8%).
- Higher percentages of women than men reported that the harassment came from “faculty (non-advisor)” (4.8% women vs. 3.5% men) or a “fellow graduate student” (4.2% women vs. 3.1% men).
- Higher percentages of men than women reported that the harassment came from an “administrator (2.6% men vs 1.9% women), “graduate advisor (1.9% men vs. 1.1% women), “post-doc” (0.9% men vs. 0.5% women), or “staff” (4.2% men vs. 3.1% women).

Other

An additional key concern identified in the survey was the lack of clarity in graduate student admission/offer letters with respect to the terms of acceptance and financial support that would be provided to students.

Summary of selected current and planned responses to the survey

Our ultimate goal is to reduce and eliminate any harassment of graduate students, regardless of the source, and to make our graduate students’ experience as positive as possible. To do so, some of the actions we are taking or planning include:

- The Graduate School and UGGS will work with every graduate program to create faculty liaisons for graduate students, positions that will be designed to protect student confidentiality in addressing sensitive faculty-student matters.
- Beginning in the summer of 2016, the Graduate School will, in collaboration with the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, offer workshops focusing on mentorship and department climate best practices.
- The Office of Faculty Affairs has agreed to include a department climate survey as part of the self-study that every department must prepare as part of periodic academic program review.
- The use of a more uniform and transparent offer letter format so that incoming students receive the most accurate and clear information regarding their program acceptance, as well as their levels of support.

- This semester, faculty in each department will meet to discuss the survey results and identify ways to more consistently follow the processes outlined in both the [Professional Rights & Duties of Faculty Members](#) and the [Graduate Student Bill of Rights](#).

Survey data

The results presented below show frequency distributions on selected items from the graduate student version of the University of Colorado Boulder fall 2014 Social Climate Survey. Data are presented for all survey respondents combined and by school/college/A&S division. The results were prepared by Institutional Research. All results exclude the School of Law.

Survey response rates:

- 4,328 graduate students invited
 - 2,561 Doctoral
 - 1,767 Master's
- 1,603 responded
- 37% response rate

Responded to seven or more items:

- 962 doctoral (38%)
- 641 master's (36%)

School/College/Division	Population (N=4328)	Respondents (N=1603)	Response Rate
Arts & Sciences	2029	766	38%
Arts & Humanities	479	178	37%
Natural Sciences	1077	396	37%
Social Sciences	473	192	41%
Business	245	105	43%
Education	310	104	34%
Engineering	1440	535	37%
Journalism	59	24	41%
Music	226	57	25%
Museum	19	12	63%

Abbreviations and notes:

- Arts & Sciences=College of Arts and Sciences
 - The Arts & Sciences results include the Department of Communication, now part of the College of Media, Communication and Information. For each question, Arts & Sciences results are given first for all Arts & Sciences respondents and then by division.
 - Arts and Humanities Division is within the College of Arts and Sciences
 - Natural Sciences Division is within the College of Arts and Sciences
 - Social Sciences Division is within the College of Arts and Sciences. Social Sciences results include the Department of Communication, now part of the College of Media, Communication and Information.
- Business=Leeds School of Business
- Engineering=College of Engineering and Applied Science
- Journalism=Journalism and Mass Communication Program

- The survey took place before the fall 2015 opening of the College of Media, Communication and Information [CMCI]. The previous Journalism and Mass Communication Program is equivalent neither with the College of Media, Communication and Information nor with the current Department of Journalism within CMCI.
- Music=College of Music
- Museum=Museum of Natural History
 - The Museum of Natural History is included in the "All students" number, but not included in the college/school/division results.

Rounding: Due to rounding, some frequency distributions will add up to more than 100%.

During the current semester, have you felt welcome at CU Boulder (like you belong here)?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
All students (N=1598)	1%	3%	6%	19%	48%	23%
Arts & Sciences (N=765)	1%	4%	6%	20%	49%	21%
Business (N=103)	1%	0%	5%	17%	55%	22%
Education (N=104)	1%	4%	11%	24%	40%	20%
Engineering (N=533)	2%	3%	5%	17%	47%	26%
Journalism (N=24)	0%	0%	4%	29%	50%	17%
Music (N=57)	2%	2%	5%	18%	44%	30%
Arts & Humanities (N=178)	1%	4%	6%	22%	47%	20%
Natural Sciences (N=396)	0%	3%	5%	17%	52%	23%
Social Sciences (N=191)	3%	6%	7%	23%	47%	15%

Summary table for question: During the current semester, have you felt welcome at CU Boulder (like you belong here)?

	Strongly agree + Agree + Agree somewhat	Strongly disagree + Disagree + Disagree somewhat
All students (N=1598)	90%	10%
Arts & Sciences (N=765)	90%	10%
Business (N=103)	94%	6%
Education (N=104)	85%	15%
Engineering (N=533)	91%	9%
Journalism (N=24)	96%	4%
Music (N=57)	91%	9%
Arts & Humanities (N=178)	89%	11%
Natural Sciences (N=396)	93%	7%
Social Sciences (N=191)	84%	16%

During the current semester, have you felt welcome in your graduate program (like you belong there)?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
All students (N=1599)	2%	3%	6%	16%	39%	33%
Arts & Sciences (N=764)	2%	5%	7%	14%	37%	36%
Business (N=105)	3%	1%	6%	25%	35%	30%
Education (N=103)	0%	2%	8%	19%	41%	30%
Engineering (N=534)	2%	3%	5%	17%	44%	29%
Journalism (N=24)	0%	0%	8%	33%	21%	38%
Music (N=57)	4%	0%	7%	14%	42%	33%
Arts & Humanities (N=178)	5%	7%	4%	12%	31%	40%
Natural Sciences (N=396)	1%	4%	6%	15%	39%	36%
Social Sciences (N=191)	3%	5%	9%	14%	38%	31%

Summary table for question: During the current semester, have you felt welcome in your graduate program (like you belong there)?

	Strongly agree + Agree + Agree somewhat	Strongly disagree + Disagree + Disagree somewhat
All students (N=1599)	88%	12%
Arts & Sciences (N=764)	86%	14%
Business (N=105)	90%	10%
Education (N=103)	90%	10%
Engineering (N=534)	90%	10%
Journalism (N=24)	92%	8%
Music (N=57)	89%	11%
Arts & Humanities (N=178)	84%	16%
Natural Sciences (N=396)	89%	11%
Social Sciences (N=191)	83%	17%

If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select this same university?

	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not
All students (N=1391)	40%	44%	13%	3%
Arts & Sciences (N=686)	36%	46%	14%	5%
Business (N=84)	31%	49%	19%	1%
Education (N=89)	49%	33%	18%	0%
Engineering (N=449)	45%	44%	8%	3%
Journalism (N=22)	32%	45%	18%	5%
Music (N=50)	34%	44%	18%	4%
Arts & Humanities (N=160)	31%	47%	14%	8%

Natural Sciences (N=346)	43%	44%	11%	2%
Social Sciences (N=180)	28%	47%	19%	6%

Summary table for question: If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select this same university?

	Definitely + Probably	Probably not + Definitely not
All students (N=1391)	84%	16%
Arts & Sciences (N=686)	82%	18%
Business (N=84)	80%	20%
Education (N=89)	82%	18%
Engineering (N=449)	89%	11%
Journalism (N=22)	77%	23%
Music (N=50)	78%	22%
Arts & Humanities (N=160)	78%	22%
Natural Sciences (N=346)	87%	13%
Social Sciences (N=180)	76%	24%

If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select the same field of study?

	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not
All students (N=1392)	55%	34%	10%	2%
Arts & Sciences (N=686)	58%	32%	9%	2%
Business (N=84)	43%	43%	13%	1%
Education (N=89)	54%	38%	6%	2%
Engineering (N=450)	52%	36%	10%	2%
Journalism (N=22)	41%	27%	23%	9%
Music (N=50)	74%	16%	10%	0%
Arts & Humanities (N=160)	59%	31%	9%	1%
Natural Sciences (N=346)	55%	35%	9%	2%
Social Sciences (N=180)	63%	28%	8%	2%

Summary table for question: If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select the same field of study?

	Definitely + Probably	Probably not + Definitely not
All students (N=1392)	89%	11%
Arts & Sciences (N=686)	90%	10%
Business (N=84)	86%	14%
Education (N=89)	92%	8%
Engineering (N=450)	88%	12%
Journalism (N=22)	68%	32%
Music (N=50)	90%	10%
Arts & Humanities (N=160)	89%	11%
Natural Sciences (N=346)	90%	10%

Social Sciences (N=180)	91%	9%
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If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select the same graduate advisor?

	Definitely	Probably	Probably not	Definitely not
All students (N=1384)	46%	36%	12%	7%
Arts & Sciences (N=684)	48%	36%	11%	6%
Business (N=82)	37%	41%	10%	12%
Education (N=88)	50%	31%	14%	6%
Engineering (N=448)	43%	36%	14%	7%
Journalism (N=21)	43%	43%	10%	5%
Music (N=50)	58%	28%	6%	8%
Arts & Humanities (N=159)	50%	35%	11%	4%
Natural Sciences (N=346)	47%	35%	10%	8%
Social Sciences (N=179)	46%	38%	13%	3%

Summary table for question: If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select the same graduate advisor?

	Definitely + Probably	Probably not + Definitely not
All students (N=1384)	81%	19%
Arts & Sciences (N=684)	83%	17%
Business (N=82)	78%	22%
Education (N=88)	81%	19%
Engineering (N=448)	79%	21%
Journalism (N=21)	86%	14%
Music (N=50)	86%	14%
Arts & Humanities (N=159)	86%	14%
Natural Sciences (N=346)	82%	18%
Social Sciences (N=179)	84%	16%

Before starting graduate study at CU Boulder, did you receive accurate information about the availability of funding for you during the summer?

	No	Yes	Not sure/ Didn't think about it
All students (N=1379)	34%	47%	19%
Arts & Sciences (N=678)	34%	51%	15%
Business (N=83)	37%	29%	34%
Education (N=89)	44%	39%	17%
Engineering (N=446)	32%	45%	23%
Journalism (N=22)	50%	36%	14%
Music (N=50)	34%	46%	20%
Arts & Humanities (N=158)	39%	39%	22%
Natural Sciences (N=341)	24%	65%	11%

Social Sciences (N=179)	48%	35%	17%
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Before starting graduate study at CU Boulder, did you receive accurate information about the amount of money you would have to pay for student fees?

	No	Yes	Not sure/ Didn't think about it
All students (N=1379)	41%	47%	12%
Arts & Sciences (N=679)	47%	40%	13%
Business (N=83)	27%	57%	17%
Education (N=89)	40%	52%	8%
Engineering (N=445)	32%	56%	11%
Journalism (N=22)	32%	59%	9%
Music (N=50)	46%	38%	16%
Arts & Humanities (N=158)	43%	45%	12%
Natural Sciences (N=341)	50%	38%	12%
Social Sciences (N=180)	47%	39%	13%

Before starting graduate study at CU Boulder, did you receive accurate information about the availability of training in how to teach classes? (Note: Question was asked of all students, not just students on a teaching appointment.)

	No	Yes	Not sure/ Didn't think about it
All students (N=1379)	31%	46%	23%
Arts & Sciences (N=678)	29%	55%	17%
Business (N=83)	34%	14%	52%
Education (N=89)	37%	30%	33%
Engineering (N=446)	32%	44%	24%
Journalism (N=22)	45%	32%	23%
Music (N=50)	32%	52%	16%
Arts & Humanities (N=158)	26%	65%	9%
Natural Sciences (N=341)	26%	58%	16%
Social Sciences (N=179)	36%	40%	24%

If you had concerns related to student or faculty conduct (e.g., harassment, discrimination) in your graduate program, would you know where to go for help?

	No	Yes	Not sure
All students (N=1314)	16%	58%	26%
Arts & Sciences (N=654)	15%	59%	26%
Business (N=76)	16%	47%	37%
Education (N=83)	29%	43%	28%
Engineering (N=423)	17%	59%	24%
Journalism (N=22)	9%	68%	23%

Music (N=46)	9%	61%	30%
Arts & Humanities (N=152)	14%	59%	28%
Natural Sciences (N=329)	16%	57%	26%
Social Sciences (N=173)	13%	62%	24%

If you had concerns related to student or faculty conduct (e.g., harassment, discrimination) in your graduate program, would you feel comfortable reporting the behavior to officials in the CU Boulder Graduate School?

	No	Yes	Not sure
All students (N=1310)	15%	56%	29%
Arts & Sciences (N=653)	16%	53%	31%
Business (N=75)	15%	56%	29%
Education (N=84)	30%	43%	27%
Engineering (N=420)	12%	62%	26%
Journalism (N=22)	0%	68%	32%
Music (N=46)	11%	74%	15%
Arts & Humanities (N=152)	13%	55%	33%
Natural Sciences (N=328)	15%	53%	32%
Social Sciences (N=173)	20%	51%	29%

If you had concerns related to student or faculty conduct (e.g., harassment, discrimination) in your graduate program, would you feel comfortable reporting the behavior to your program chair?

	No	Yes	Not sure
All students (N=1313)	20%	58%	22%
Arts & Sciences (N=654)	22%	56%	22%
Business (N=75)	16%	60%	24%
Education (N=84)	24%	52%	24%
Engineering (N=422)	17%	60%	23%
Journalism (N=22)	5%	68%	27%
Music (N=46)	13%	70%	17%
Arts & Humanities (N=152)	25%	57%	18%
Natural Sciences (N=329)	17%	59%	24%
Social Sciences (N=173)	30%	48%	22%

If you had concerns related to student or faculty conduct (e.g., harassment, discrimination) in your graduate program, would you feel comfortable reporting the behavior to a unit outside your department that offers assistance to students?

	No	Yes	Not sure
All students (N=1311)	8%	67%	24%
Arts & Sciences (N=653)	10%	66%	25%
Business (N=75)	7%	67%	27%
Education (N=84)	15%	56%	29%
Engineering (N=421)	7%	72%	22%
Journalism (N=22)	0%	68%	32%

Music (N=46)	2%	74%	24%
Arts & Humanities (N=152)	11%	66%	22%
Natural Sciences (N=329)	8%	68%	25%
Social Sciences (N=172)	12%	60%	27%

Have you experienced and/or observed harassment while a graduate student at CU Boulder? (Harassment is behavior that is offensive, intimidating, or hostile and sufficiently serious to interfere with the ability to work or learn.)

	No	Yes	Did not answer
All students (N=1603)	66%	16%	18%
Arts & Sciences (N=766)	63%	22%	15%
Business (N=105)	66%	7%	28%
Education (N=104)	61%	19%	20%
Engineering (N=535)	71%	8%	21%
Journalism (N=24)	83%	8%	8%
Music (N=57)	61%	19%	19%
Arts & Humanities (N=178)	58%	28%	15%
Natural Sciences (N=396)	67%	15%	17%
Social Sciences (N=192)	60%	31%	9%

Of the 256 students reporting any harassment, 38% (N=97) had both experienced harassment while a graduate student at CU Boulder and observed another graduate student being harassed at CU Boulder; 27% (N=70) had experienced harassment but not observed harassment of other graduate students; and 35% (N=89) had observed harassment of others but not personally experienced harassing behavior.

Are you aware that the university has a policy prohibiting research misconduct, which is defined as plagiarism, falsification or fabrication of data, or other serious deviations from accepted research practices?

	No	Partially (I didn't know the full definition of research misconduct)	Yes
All students (N=1326)	5%	17%	78%
Arts & Sciences (N=657)	4%	19%	77%
Business (N=79)	15%	19%	66%
Education (N=85)	4%	12%	85%
Engineering (N=426)	4%	15%	81%
Journalism (N=22)	0%	14%	86%
Music (N=47)	6%	13%	81%
Arts & Humanities (N=153)	5%	25%	69%
Natural Sciences (N=330)	5%	20%	76%
Social Sciences (N=174)	2%	13%	85%

Do you believe that you have encountered research misconduct while a student at CU Boulder?

	No	Possibly	Yes
All students (N=1326)	92%	5%	3%

Arts & Sciences (N=657)	90%	5%	4%
Business (N=79)	96%	1%	3%
Education (N=85)	94%	4%	3%
Engineering (N=426)	93%	5%	2%
Journalism (N=22)	95%	5%	0%
Music (N=47)	89%	6%	4%
Arts & Humanities (N=153)	90%	7%	4%
Natural Sciences (N=330)	91%	6%	4%
Social Sciences (N=174)	90%	4%	6%

If you thought that someone in your lab or graduate program might be engaged in research misconduct, would you know where to report your concern?

	No	Possibly	Yes
All students (N=1326)	31%	36%	33%
Arts & Sciences (N=657)	30%	39%	31%
Business (N=79)	47%	28%	24%
Education (N=85)	42%	35%	22%
Engineering (N=426)	29%	31%	40%
Journalism (N=22)	32%	41%	27%
Music (N=47)	23%	47%	30%
Arts & Humanities (N=153)	35%	39%	27%
Natural Sciences (N=330)	29%	42%	29%
Social Sciences (N=174)	28%	33%	39%

Of the 1,603 doctoral and master's students who submitted a survey, 17% (N=277 or 280) did not answer the research misconduct items.