

# **The Campus Climate for Bucknell University Students: A Multifaceted Analysis**

**presented to**

**President John Bravman**

**by**

**The President's Task Force on Campus Climate**

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# I. Executive Summary

The President's Task Force on Campus Climate was created by President John Bravman in the fall of 2010 in response to concern over negative aspects of the behavior and attitudes of and interactions among Bucknell students. President Bravman charged the task force with assessing the current climate for students at Bucknell and with offering recommendations on how campus climate might be improved.

The task force met throughout the 2010-11 academic year and over the summer of 2011, reviewed data relating to student engagement, demographics, and behavior, invited all concerned members of the Bucknell campus to contact them, met with dozens of faculty and staff members knowledgeable about campus climate issues, and held 17 focus groups and structured interviews with students who represent the range of student experiences at Bucknell. After extensive study, the task force is confident it has identified a number of significant campus climate problems facing Bucknell today. The task force also contemplated strategies for positive change and makes a number of recommendations regarding how best to effect such change while also capitalizing on areas of success.

The most significant problems include:

1. Lack of student intellectual engagement outside the classroom;
2. Fraternity and sorority activities dominate the campus social life, with few students participating in non-Greek social opportunities;
3. Excessive alcohol consumption combined with a party atmosphere, which leads to inappropriate behavior;
4. Lack of social spaces on campus that facilitate non-Greek social activities;
5. Unhealthy and unequal gender dynamics that disempower women students;
6. Sexual assault and ignorance regarding what constitutes and what causes sexual assault;
7. Lack of diversity that leads to students from underrepresented backgrounds having difficulty fitting in to Bucknell.

The Campus Climate Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. Engage, educate, and empower our students so that they can be key catalysts for improving the campus climate;
2. Transform Bucknell's party culture, creating a healthier social environment for our students to develop the ability to interact in productive and mature ways;
3. Reduce the dominance of Greek life at Bucknell, thus establishing a more equitable social environment;

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4. Promote a more intellectually and civically engaged student body;
5. Increase the diversity of our student body, provide support for all students, and foster an environment of respect among all;
6. Improve the gender climate so that female students experience positive interactions with their peers;
7. Increase education regarding sexual misconduct and create a climate of zero-tolerance for sexual assault;
8. Improve and increase social space on campus, so that small and large groups of students have places to meet for intellectual and social activities;
9. Educate and train faculty, staff, and administrators about the campus climate so that they can provide leadership to change the existing dynamics;
10. Demonstrate broad and sustained institutional commitment to change, providing leadership and resources where they will have the greatest impact.

The following report details the task force's methodology, data, findings, and recommendations.

## II. Introduction

### A. Background

Universities and colleges are responsible for creating an educational setting in which students have equal access to education and are treated with respect. A university's educational setting includes formal academic instruction, extra- and co-curricular activities, and residential life. Bucknell's mission statement makes clear that the institution takes this responsibility seriously and is committed to ensuring that the academic instruction, extra- and co-curricular activities, and residential life that students enjoy at Bucknell enhance self-discovery and foster intellectual and ethical development.

#### BUCKNELL MISSION STATEMENT

Bucknell is a unique national university where liberal arts and professional programs complement each other. Bucknell educates men and women for a lifetime of critical thinking and strong leadership characterized by continued intellectual exploration, creativity, and imagination. A Bucknell education enables students to interact daily with faculty who exemplify a passion for learning and a dedication to teaching and scholarship. Bucknell fosters a residential, co-curricular environment in which students develop intellectual maturity, personal conviction and strength of character, informed by a deep understanding of different cultures and diverse perspectives. Bucknell seeks to educate our students to serve the common good and to promote justice in ways sensitive to the moral and ethical dimensions of life.

Bucknell's rich history and heritage will influence its planning for the future. Bucknell's potential as an institution of higher learning extends beyond that of a traditional liberal arts college by virtue of its larger size and expansive programs. The University's broader spectrum of disciplines and courses of study within a diverse and active residential campus community enhance the quality of all aspects of the undergraduate experience, both in and out of the classroom.

Whereas much self-discovery and intellectual and ethical development occurs in Bucknell's educational setting, President Bravman created the President's Task Force on Campus Climate to identify factors at odds with these goals and charged the task force with making recommendations on how best to remove or remediate those factors.

Bucknell offers a particular set of demographics, norms, and social structures that exert a powerful influence on student priorities and behavior. However, in order to effectively assess the state of the campus climate at Bucknell, it is important to recognize that student behaviors are situated within a broader cultural context that includes generational shifts in behaviors and attitudes. To better understand this

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broader context and how it might impact the task force's assessment of campus climate, the task force reviewed a selection of scholarly articles supplied by the Bucknell social science research librarians who conducted a literature review on the broad topic of campus climate. Based on this review of the literature, the task force identified three broad areas of the national culture that need to be accounted for when examining the circumstances that exist at Bucknell. These three areas include: time spent studying; dating and relationships; success and group identity.

For example, studies have shown that there has been a general decline in the number of hours spent studying among all college students. Students at liberal arts colleges tend to spend more hours studying than those at other types of colleges and universities, but the total number of hours they spend studying is also in decline. Scholars have suggested many potential causes for the decline in study time, but have not drawn strong conclusions about these factors (Babcock, 2011; Arum and Roska, 2010).

Moreover, in the last 20 years, college students have shifted away from traditional dating to a "hook-up" culture. Research across multiple disciplines (education, sociology, psychology) indicates that it is common for students on residential campuses to pair together at the end of a night of group partying – often involving the consumption of alcohol – and depart for a sexual encounter that could include anything from kissing to sexual intercourse. The couple may be strangers, acquaintances, or friends. Dating, in which a couple would plan ahead to share activities such as dinner, a concert or a movie, and then perhaps connect sexually, is now a less common activity on campuses than it was for previous generations (Freitas, 2010; Bogle 2007, 2008).

Finally, most current Bucknell students are members of the Millennial generation (born between 1980 and 2000). Distinguishing traits of this generation include being high achieving, sheltered, team oriented, feeling confident and special. Millennials feel pressure to excel in many areas including academics, civic and community engagement, co-curricular activities, and career preparation. They are connected to one another constantly and instantly through social and mobile media, and they have grown up being rewarded for group participation in activities. As a result, Millennials highly value group membership and identity (Howe, 2000).

It is against the background of these characteristics and characteristic behaviors among student populations across the country that the task force presents this report. Section III presents the quantitative and qualitative data collected by the task force. Section IV offers the task force's conclusions, which are then followed in Section V by key recommendations that the task force believes are viable options that can serve as the basis for change at Bucknell. The report closes with a brief conclusion in section VI.



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### B. Context

In the fall of 2010, Bucknell was confronted with a number of dangerous student behavioral events. First, a number of sexual assaults were reported to the Department of Public Safety. One of the reported assaults warranted a “Timely Notification” to be sent to the entire campus community, as per the *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act*, and thus was made public in a way that most reported sexual assaults are not. This increased awareness of and discussion about sexual assault on campus. Second, a violent physical assault, which allegedly involved a number of Bucknell students, was reported to the Department of Public Safety. Third, a spike in alcohol-induced hospitalizations occurred, as did a surge in the number of alcohol-related violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Less dangerous but still troubling and damaging behaviors related to the uncivil comportment of students at academic events. Most salient was when many first-year students behaved in a blatantly rude and childish manner (e.g., texting, talking, and performing orchestrated coughing) during attendance at a required lecture delivered by an academic speaker with an international reputation.

Unfortunately, sexual assault and other forms of violence, heavy alcohol use, and other forms of incivility are not terribly rare on college campuses or in society at large, nor have they been unknown phenomena to Bucknell University in the past. However, the frequency of such occurrences is independent of their acceptability. The cluster and severity of the events of fall semester 2010 merely pressed some already recognized issues, gaining the attention of various parties with different interests in the university. President Bravman recognized the serious and complex nature of the issues and moved quickly to appoint this task force to seek a systematic and thorough assessment of how students treat one another, how the University helps students meet their community responsibilities, and how University policies and practices can best support a civil and positive learning community as outlined in Bucknell’s mission statement.

In October 2010, President Bravman assigned the task force with the following charge:

The President’s Task Force on Campus Climate shall provide the President with a prompt, thorough and informative assessment of how students view and act upon their responsibilities to the University and one another, including their academic, community, social, and interpersonal obligations. The task force shall begin its deliberations broadly, but must seek to identify areas of particular concern, e.g., patterns of student behavior outside of generally accepted norms. It should also evaluate the role of University policies, practices, and programs in influencing student choices and behaviors. The task force should evaluate and recommend for adoption, if appropriate, the best practices at peer institutions in terms of encouraging the most positive student experience. Sources of information for the task force should include, but need not be limited to, currently available campus data about student behavior, including student academic success and public safety reports; interviews with students or student organizations; interviews with relevant faculty and staff; consultation with appropriate University

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committees; review of best practices at peer institutions; and relevant national reports. The task force should aim for its final report to contribute to a sound understanding of contemporary student behavior at Bucknell as well to the University's ongoing efforts to foster a civil and positive residential learning community.

### C. Composition

In consultation with members of the Operations and Management Group and the Faculty Council, President John Bravman selected individuals with diverse perspectives and a range of expertise and backgrounds to serve on the President's Task Force on Campus Climate. The task force includes staff from athletics, communications, religious life, the president's office and student life, and faculty from various academic disciplines:

#### *Co-chairs*

Elizabeth Capaldi Evans, Associate Professor of Biology and Animal Behavior  
George Shields, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

#### *Task Force Members*

Kari Conrad, Associate Dean of Students  
Kim Daubman, Associate Professor of Psychology  
Carol Kennedy, Executive Assistant to the President  
Sheila Lintott, Associate Professor of Philosophy  
David Mitchell, Associate Professor of International Relations  
Todd Newcomb, Associate Director of Athletics  
Molly O'Brien-Foelsch, Associate Director of News and Recruitment Communications  
Mike Toole, Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Amy Wolaver, Associate Professor of Economics  
Reverend Thomasina Yuille, University Chaplain

In addition, Robert Midkiff, Associate Provost, and Tracy Shaynak, Director of the Women's Resource Center, attended a number of the task force meetings at the request of the co-chairs and with the permission of the President.

#### *Student Involvement*

The president chose not to appoint students to serve as members of the task force for multiple reasons, including the weighty time obligation, the fact that much work would occur over holidays and other University breaks, including, as it happened, over the entirety of summer break, and the highly sensitive nature of some of the information. However, although they were not on the committee, students were consulted by the task force and provided essential information, opinions, and insight. Their voices are heard throughout this report.

## III. Assessment

The task force made a systematic and thorough analysis of cultural norms, practices, and perceptions among Bucknell students using multifaceted methodological and theoretical approaches to a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data.

### A. Quantitative Data Sources

#### 1. National Surveys

The President's Task Force on Campus Climate examined the results of several national surveys administered by Bucknell's Office of Planning and Institutional Research, culling and interpreting data related to campus climate. The reports are:

- College Senior Survey (CSS) (survey of seniors from class years 2007, 2009 and 2010, with 853, 836, and 854 students in each respective year)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2008 survey of 549 first year students and 807 upper class students)
- National College Health Assessment (NCHA) (survey of 573 students in 2009, and 294 students in 2007)

These surveys assess various factors related to campus climate, including how students divide their time, how intellectually engaged they are, how much they feel like they are part of the University community, the rate of alcohol and illicit drug use, and the incidence of sexual assault. Task force member Professor Amy Wolaver provided detailed data analysis, helping the task force interpret the results of these assessments.

#### 2. Institutional Data

The task force also examined results from the following institutional data:

- 2007 revised Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) which was administered to 909 female students and 114 male students by Bill Flack, associate professor of psychology, between 2008-2010
- crime statistics as reported in Bucknell University's 2010 Annual Safety, Security and Fire Report (covering 2007, 2008, 2009) compared to those reported by our peer institutions
- demographic data on the diversity of Bucknell's student population
- retention, persistence and outcomes of Bucknell's students and recent graduates

### B. Quantitative Data Analysis

The task force selected and analyzed quantitative data according to major themes that correspond with Bucknell's Mission Statement or with the events that prompted President Bravman to call for a systematic study of campus climate, or they correspond with Bucknell's stated mission.

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## 1. Time Use

The College Senior Survey asks students to estimate the number of hours per week they spend studying or doing homework, socializing, and engaging in co-curricular activities. As illustrated in Table 1, most seniors report that they study or do homework 11 to 15 hours per week or less and only 12% report studying and/or doing homework for 20 or more hours a week. Many seniors (18.3%) report that they spend significant time (more than 20 hours per week) on co-curricular activities (including student government, fraternity and sorority activities, and sports). Well over half (59.7%) report that they spend less than 10 hours per week and well over a third (39.2%) report that they spend less than five hours per week on co-curricular activities. Nearly a quarter (23.6%) of seniors report that they spend more than 20 hours per week relaxing and socializing (including watching TV and partying) and 11% report that they spend more than 30 hours per week relaxing and socializing.

**Table 1: Percent of Bucknell seniors reporting the number of hours per week engaged in each activity (CSS) 2009-2010**

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	>30
Studying	10.1	21.1	22.3	18.8	14.4	7.2	6.0
Co-Curricular	39.2	20.5	12.7	9.3	7.3	2.6	8.4
Socializing	9.6	25.6	26.9	14.3	8.6	4.0	11.0

## 2. Intellectual Engagement Outside of the Classroom

Five questions on the NSSE are particularly relevant to intellectual engagement outside of the classroom. Each question asked students to indicate how often they had engaged in a given activity over the past year (never, sometimes, often, or very often). Table 2 displays the percentage of seniors and first-year students who report that they engaged in each activity often or very often. The data show that seniors and first-year students in learning and living residential college communities are roughly equally engaged intellectually. In contrast, first-year students who are not in a Residential College are significantly less engaged than those who are in a Residential College.

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**Table 2: Percent of Students reporting they often or very often engaged in each activity during the last academic year (NSSE 2008)**

	Seniors	First-years in Residential Colleges	First-years not in Residential Colleges
Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty outside of class	41.9	35.0	24.5
Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members)	60.0	65.6	49.6
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	57.1	59.9	42.4
Had serious conversations with students different from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, personal values	67.0	66.9	55.4
Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theater or other performance	32.7	43.9	22.1

### 3. Feeling Connected to the Bucknell Community

Several questions on the CSS pertain to how much students feel they are a part of the Bucknell community. Whereas Bucknell students in general feel connected, this varies by race. Consistently from 2007 to 2010, about 85% to 95% of White, Hispanic, and Asian students endorse items measuring a sense of belonging to the Bucknell community (I see myself as part of the campus community, I feel I am a member of this campus, and I feel a sense of belonging to this campus). Black students, however, are less likely to endorse these statements, ranging from about 60% to 90% depending on the year and the particular question.

Similarly, based on the 2010 data, Black students are far more likely than any other racial/ethnic group on campus to express being singled out because of their race/ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation (73%), to have heard faculty express stereotypes about racial or ethnic groups in class (47%), and to agree that there is a lot of racial tension on this campus (70%). While these experiences are particularly pronounced among Black students, Hispanic and Asian students also report higher rates of being

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singled out than do White students (44%, 48%, and 11% respectively), in hearing faculty express stereotypes (27%, 29%, and 15% respectively), and in believing that there is a lot of racial tension on campus (32.5%, 23.1%, and 18.5% respectively).

Greek students are more likely to endorse that they “feel a part of the campus community” than do non-Greek students (91.9% versus 82.2%) and non-transfer students are more likely to endorse that they “feel like a member of this campus” than community college transfers and non-community college transfers (96.4%, 81%, and 88.2% respectively).

NSSE asks students about the quality of their relationships with other students, faculty and administrative personnel, and how much Bucknell provides support for them to thrive socially and academically. Combined, these questions measure the degree to which students experience a supportive campus environment. Scores can range from 0 (least supportive) to 100 (most supportive). The task force examined whether seniors from different demographics (gender, athlete status, Greek status, race, and first-generation college) differed on this measure. Only a few statistically significant differences emerged. Females report higher levels of support than males (65 vs. 59). Greek women report higher levels of support than non-Greek women (68 vs. 62) although Greek and non-Greek men do not differ from each other. Finally, athletes report higher levels of support than do non-athletes (65 vs. 61). Although the analysis of differences across racial groups did not reach the customary level of significance, Black seniors rate the campus as less supportive than Whites, Hispanics, and Asians (57 vs. 62-63).

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## 4. Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use

The NCHA survey measures alcohol and illicit drug use. The data presented below are from 2009 and are collapsed over class years. It should be noted that first-year students are over-represented in these samples.

According to the NCHA, binge drinking rates<sup>1</sup> at Bucknell are higher than at our peer institutions.<sup>2</sup> Of Bucknell women, 47% report binge drinking in the prior two weeks, while

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as five drinks or more in one sitting. In some of the literature, there is a gender-specific measure which counts four drinks or more in one sitting for women as a “binge” episode. While there is some controversy in the literature about the validity of this measure, it is highly correlated with problems for the individual student and high rates of binge drinking at the institution is highly correlated with a wide variety of other problems.

<sup>2</sup> Bucknell University's Peer Group: “The institutions listed below comprise the official peer group that Bucknell uses for benchmarking institutional performance, both on quantitative metrics and qualitative measures (e.g., best practices). This peer group was established during the planning process that resulted in the University's 2005 strategic plan, The Plan for Bucknell. It is difficult to find institutions that match Bucknell on all significant characteristics because the University occupies a very distinctive niche in higher education. Salient characteristics of Bucknell include: distinctive size range (approximately 3,500 undergraduates and 200 graduate students), which is larger than most traditional liberal arts colleges and is an important scaling factor for institutional complexity; primary focus on undergraduate education in a residential setting; combination of traditional liberal arts with professional programs in engineering, management, education and music; organizational structure of separate colleges for Arts & Sciences and for Engineering, and plans for a third college in Management; Master's degree programs in a range of disciplines; Division I intercollegiate sports (I-AA in football) and membership in the Patriot League. Each peer institution combines some but not all of these key characteristics. The peer list encompasses institutions of different Carnegie Classification types and different control (College of William & Mary is a public institution), and includes both traditional peers and aspirant institutions.” (Retrieved from <<http://www.bucknell.edu/x62867.xml>>.)

### Peer Institution

1. Colgate University (NY)
2. College of the Holy Cross (MA)
3. College of William and Mary (VA)
4. Davidson College (NC)
5. Dartmouth University (NH)
6. Furman University (SC)
7. Lafayette College (PA)
8. Lehigh University (PA)
9. Middlebury College (VT)
10. Trinity College (CT)
11. University of Richmond (VA)
12. Villanova University (PA)
13. Wake Forest University (NC)

### Carnegie Classification

- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Research Universities (high research activity)
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Research Universities (very high research activity)
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Research Universities (high research activity)
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences
- Master's Colleges & Universities (larger program)
- Research Universities (high research activity)

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65% of Bucknell men do. This is relative to 38% of women and 59% of men at peer institutions. Bucknell men also engage in more frequent episodes of binge drinking: 12% of Bucknell men report binge drinking six or more times in a two-week period compared to 7% of male students at peer institutions. Overall, Bucknell men report consuming 7.35 drinks the last time they “partied” compared to 6.39 drinks reported by their counterparts at peer institutions. Similarly, Bucknell women report drinking more the last time they “partied” (an average of 3.8 drinks) compared to their counterparts (who report an average of 3.3 drinks). Bingers are more likely than non-bingers to be in a fight (9.2% versus 4.0%) and to be verbally threatened (16.6% versus 8.5%).

### a. Volume of Alcohol Consumed

A significant number of Bucknell students drink large volumes of alcohol. One in five Bucknell men report drinking 11 or more drinks in a sitting the last time they partied, and nearly 10% of Bucknell males report drinking 20 or more days in a 30 day period. Over half of Bucknell male drinkers and 44.5% of female drinkers report blacking out,<sup>3</sup> compared to 11.3% of male and 35.7% of female students at peer institutions.

### b. Demographic Differences

Greek students are more likely than non-Greek<sup>4</sup> students to have binged in the past two weeks (67.4% vs. 33.6%) and to have binged four or more times in the past two weeks (23.9% vs. 7.7%). White students (54.2%) are more likely than Black (31.8%) and Asian students (35%) to report binge drinking; the percentage of Hispanic students (37.5%) who report bingeing is also lower, but not significantly different from the percentage of White students.

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<sup>3</sup> Forgetting one’s actions as a result of alcohol consumption.

<sup>4</sup> Only sophomore, junior, and senior students are included in the comparisons between Greek and non-Greek students.



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### c. Drug Use

The self-reported rates of marijuana use at Bucknell are similar or even slightly lower than at peer institutions: 25% of Bucknell men and 11% of Bucknell women report using marijuana in the prior 30 days compared to 31% of the men and 16% of the women at our peer institutions. The picture with respect to illegal use of prescription stimulants is mixed: 16% of Bucknell men and 5% of Bucknell women report using them versus 13% and 8% at peer institutions.

Nearly one in four self-reported binge drinkers also indicate marijuana use in the past thirty days; only 3.7% of non-bingers (which may include drinkers) do so. Greek students are more likely than non-Greek students to have used marijuana in the past 30 days (18.3% vs. 6.5%).

### 5. Sexual Violence

Two instruments provide data on the prevalence of sexual assault on campus: The NCHA and the 2007 revised Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) administered by Professor Bill Flack from Bucknell's Department of Psychology in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

The SES, a standard measure of sexual assault developed by Mary Koss, has been used extensively in research published in psychological journals. (Koss, 1993; Koss et al., 2007; Testa, VanZile-Tamsen, Livingston, and Koss, 2004) One form of the survey asks about sexual assault victimization and the other form asks about sexual assault perpetration.

In comparison to the NCHA data, the SES yields a higher estimate for sexual assault and sexual perpetration. There are several explanations for the differences between these data sources and careful attention to the methodology employed is necessary to understand the validity of both surveys.

To facilitate understanding of the nature of these differences, consider the following research factors as quoted directly from Raphael and Logan (2008):

- “(a) The definition of rape. The definition of rape can actually be extremely diverse depending on the research study with some questions as broad as asking women if they have ever had unwanted sex to asking about forced sexual penetration to asking women if they have been raped.
- (b) The sample. Studies on rape prevalence use many different populations or subpopulations for estimates. Certain groups tend to have higher or lower rates of rape experience, which is another reason estimates can vary.
- (c) The context of the rape. Asking women about specific “forced penetration experiences” is what has been the standard wording of rape questions throughout most of the research on rape. However, one trend that has been relatively recent has been to ask more specifically about forced sexual experiences as well as alcohol or drug facilitated experiences. Including this contextualized question makes the estimates slightly higher.

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- (d) The methods used to ask respondents about rape experiences. Asking respondents about rape experiences by telephone, mail, or through face-to-face surveys can make a difference in prevalence estimates.
- (e) The timeframe within which the rape event was measured. Specifically, asking about lifetime experiences versus past year experiences versus since you entered college will all give different prevalence estimates.
- (f) Reports of prevalence versus incidence. Prevalence refers to the proportion of the population or sample being surveyed that has been raped at least once in a specified time period, while incidence refers to the number of times rapes have occurred within a given time period. Prevalence, then, would underestimate the actual number of rapes given that a woman can be raped more than once in a given time period. It is important to keep in mind the fact that women can and do experience more than one rape in their lifetime (Raphael and Logan, 2008)."

Several of these factors are relevant here. First, different timeframes are used in the two surveys. Bucknell administration of the SES asks students about experiences "since coming to Bucknell," while in contrast, the NCHA asks students about experiences "in the past twelve months." Thus, different prevalence estimates are to be expected.

Second, the two instruments also utilize different questions to measure sexual assault and perpetration. In assessing the rate of nonconsensual sexual touching, for example, the NCHA asks, "were you sexually touched without your consent?" In contrast, nonconsensual sexual touching is indicated on the SES by agreeing to the following statement: "someone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against a private area of my body (lips, chest/breasts, crotch or butt) or removed some of my clothes without my consent." The NCHA assesses the rate of attempted and completed rape by asking the following questions, respectively: "Was sexual penetration (vaginal, anal, oral) attempted without your consent?" and "Were you sexually penetrated without your consent?" In contrast, the SES uses more explicit language.<sup>5</sup> Again, different questions lead to different responses.

Third, although recruitment for participation in the SES and the NCHA are similar<sup>6</sup>, the surveys' descriptions are different. Students are told that the survey containing the SES is about students' sexual attitudes and behaviors whereas students are told that the NCHA is

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<sup>5</sup> Rape is determined by agreement to any of the following statements: Someone had oral sex with me or made me have oral sex with them without my consent; a man put his penis into my vagina, or someone inserted fingers or objects without my consent; or a man put his penis into my butt, or someone inserted fingers or objects without my consent. Attempted rape is determined by agreement with similarly worded statements but modified to indicate that someone tried unsuccessfully to commit the acts. Throughout this report, we use the term "rape" to refer to acts that involve penetration in cases where force or threat of force are employed or when the victim is unable to consent. We use the terms "sexual assault" and "sexual violence" to refer to a range of unwanted sexual behaviors, including, but not limited to, harassment, unwanted touching, and attempted rape and rape. (Kelly 1987, Krug et al., 2002)

<sup>6</sup> A random sample (SES) or the entire population (NCHA) is contacted by email to complete an electronic survey. 26-40% of those contacted to complete the SES and 16% of those contacted to complete the NCHA actually do complete it.

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about student health behavior. It is possible that students who have been sexually assaulted would be particularly likely to agree to participate in a survey about sexual behaviors and attitudes, thereby yielding an over-estimation of sexual assault on the SES. Of course, it is also possible that students who have been assaulted would be more reluctant to complete a survey about sexual behaviors and attitudes. In any case, different prevalence estimates will result from these different recruitment approaches.

### a. Reports of Assault

Based on the 2009 administration of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA), 14.3% of Bucknell women report that they had been touched sexually without their consent, 4.1% report that they were the victim of attempted rape, and 1.7% report that they were raped. Across the three administrations of the SES, the percentage of Bucknell women who report nonconsensual sexual touching ranges from 39% to 51%. The percentage who report attempted rape ranges from 22.5% to 29.8% and the percentage who report rape ranges from 17.5% to 22.7%. The percentage who report one or more form of sexual assault (from nonconsensual sexual touching to rape) ranges from 43% to 59%.

### b. Reported Causes of Assault

The SES also asks respondents to indicate the primary cause of a sexual assault. Approximately one-third of the victims report the primary cause as being “taken advantage of” because they were “too drunk or out of it to stop what was happening.” More than 10% of the victims (ranging from 11% to 11.8% depending on the year) report the use of physical force as the primary cause and approximately 15% report the use of verbal pressure including expressions of anger as the primary cause.

According to the NCHA, binge drinking appears to put women at risk for sexual assault: 19.4% of female students who binge also report being the victim of a rape, attempted rape, and/or being touched sexually without their consent relative to 11.7% of non-binge drinkers.

### c. Risk by Race

NCHA data suggest that women of color are more likely to be victims of sexual assault at Bucknell: 6.6% percent of Black women and 7.1% of Hispanic/Latino women report being penetrated without their consent, compared to 1.8% of White women and 2.1% of Asian women. Similar differences occur in rates of attempted rape: 3.3% of White women, 8.5% of Asian women, 7.1% of Hispanic women<sup>7</sup> and 13.3% of Black women report that penetration was attempted without their consent. Hispanic and White women both report being touched without their consent at a rate of 14%, which is similar to the rate of 17% for Asian women, but significantly less than the rate of 26.7% for Black women.

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<sup>7</sup> The difference between Hispanic and Whites is not statistically significant for this measure.

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### d. Perpetrators

On the SES-Perpetration Form administered to men in 2008 (n=114), 11.7% report that they had been responsible for some form of sexual assault. According to the NCHA data, 3% of Bucknell men versus 1.3% of men at other institutions admit having sexual intercourse with someone without getting their consent “as a consequence of their drinking.”

### e. Locations of Assaults

Janine Glathar, a member of the Library and Instructional Technology staff with expertise using Geographical Information Systems, constructed two maps (one “uphill” and one “downhill”) to spatially represent reported incidents of sexual assault on or around Bucknell’s campus over a five-year period (2006-011). This GIS mapping is based on data from the Sexual Assault Advocates Center, which is independent of Public Safety records. These data show that sexual assaults are reported as occurring in locations all over campus including dormitories, small houses, the Mods, and fraternity houses, as well as in downtown houses.

## 6. Crime Statistics

The following tables display reported offenses, which may under-estimate the frequency of occurrence. Sexual assault, in particular, is a category of criminal offenses that is vastly underreported (RAINN, 2005). According to the National Center for the Victims of Crime, less than 39% of sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement. (Retrieved from <http://www.ncvc.org> August 2011)

**Table 3: Crime statistics for the years 2007, 2008, and 2009 (Bucknell University’s 2010 Annual Safety, Security and Fire Report, pp. 16-17)**

<b>Reported Offenses</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Total 07-09</b>
Forcible Sex Offenses	2	8	4	14
Non-forcible Sex Offenses	0	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	1	4	6	11
Simple Assault	4	3	3	10
Threats—Intimidation	0	1	1	2
Vandalism	77	94	113	284
Hate Crimes with Bodily Injury	0	0	2	2
Arrest -- Liquor Law Violations	65	75	28	168
Arrest - Drug Law Violations	7	6	1	14
Judicial Referrals - Liquor Law Violations	266	227	235	728
Judicial Referrals - Drug Abuse Violations	4	40	8	52

These statistics can be compared to those reported by our peer institutions over the same time period in six categories.

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**Table 4: Frequency of reported offenses per 1000 FTE students between 2007, 2008, 2009 at 14 peer institutions (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, accessible online at <http://ope.ed.gov/security>)**

# of Reported Offenses per 1000 FTE Students	Forcible Sex Offenses	Aggravated Assault	Arrest--Liquor Law	Arrest--Drug Abuse	Judicial Referrals--Liquor Laws	Judicial Referrals--Drug Abuse
1	College A 10.25	<b>Bucknell</b> 2.94	College M 54.60	College K 12.89	College A 474.57	College E 116.67
2	College B 8.35	College A 2.46	College C 53.62	College M 4.72	College F 336.97	College A 94.75
3	College C 4.57	College F 1.36	<b>Bucknell</b> 44.96	College A 4.51	College E 216.07	College D 63.26
4	College D 4.43	College G 1.35	College K 14.27	<b>Bucknell</b> 3.75	College J 206.54	College L 19.37
5	<b>Bucknell</b> 3.75	College J 1.15	College L 10.60	College I 2.92	College L 205.59	College C 15.38
6	College E 3.52	College K 0.92	College I 5.21	College B 2.17	<b>Bucknell</b> 194.81	<b>Bucknell</b> 13.91
7	College F 3.41	College I 0.89	College D 3.63	College L 1.73	College K 194.52	College F 10.23
8	College G 3.38	College L 0.48	College H 1.98	College H 1.27	College H 164.29	College G 9.45
9	College H 2.12	College M 0.29	College E 0.35	College C 1.25	College G 160.03	College K 9.44
10	College I 1.78	College H 0.14	College F 0.00	College E 0.70	College M 122.07	College J 6.88
11	College J 1.72	College E 0.00	College J 0.00	College G 0.34	College C 116.79	College M 6.15
12	College K 1.15	College B 0.00	College B 0.00	College F 0.00	College I 78.49	College H 4.94
13	College L 0.96	College C 0.00	College G 0.00	College J 0.00	College B 39.75	College I 2.67
14	College M 0.57	College D 0.00	College A 0.00	College D 0.00	College D 20.15	College B 0.00

These data indicate that many of our peer institutions have similar crime statistics as those from Bucknell. However, as Bucknell's statistics put the institution in the top six in terms of highest number of incidents reported in each category of offense, they may also show that Bucknell's crime statistics are higher than average when compared with peer institutions. Given the variables involved, e.g., different campus cultures, different policies, different levels of accountability, and different levels of reporting, it is difficult to draw any definite inferences from these data.

## 7. Diversity of the Student Population

Bucknell's student population includes low percentages of students from racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds.

### a. Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds of Current Students

81% White  
3.8% Hispanic or Latino  
3% Asian  
3.1% African American  
1.9% two or more races  
4.1% international (non-resident alien)  
3% unknown

### b. Socioeconomic Backgrounds of Current Students

The student population is socioeconomically divided, with about 38-40% of each class paying the full comprehensive fee (\$54,240 for the 2011-12 academic year) without loans, grants, or work-study. Approximately 50% of each class does not qualify for financial aid from Bucknell. Admissions data gathered by Human Capital Research Corporation show that Bucknell attracts and enrolls three groups of students: 1) those who have a variety of levels of financial need and fall at the lower end of Bucknell's academic criteria (which are still comparatively high within the realm of higher education) 2) those who do not qualify for financial aid (i.e. pay full freight) but fall at the lower end of Bucknell's academic criteria and 3) those who have high academic credentials and receive high levels of need-based aid. This "trifurcation" results in Bucknell having a smaller population of students who fall within the middle- to upper-middle range of Bucknell's academic criteria and whose families are middle and upper middle income.

### c. Geographic Diversity

According to the Office of the Registrar, about 80% of students come from the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions, with about 15% coming from the western, southern, central and north-central U.S. and 5% from outside the U.S.

## 8. Retention, Persistence and Career Outcomes

Three types of data indicate that many students are satisfied with their Bucknell education, are successful in their academic pursuits, and are appealing to employers as young alumni.

### a. High Retention and Graduation Rates

Bucknell's 94-95% retention rate for first-year students who continue to their sophomore year is high compared to the national average of 79% for all private, not-for-profit four-

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year institutions and on a par with retention rates at highly selective four-year colleges and universities (Aud, 2011).

Likewise, Bucknell's four- and six-year graduation rates are high compared to national averages. Our four-year graduation rate has ranged from 85-89% in recent years, and our six-year graduation rate tops 90%. Comparatively, at four-year private, not-for-profit institutions, the overall six-year graduation rate is 65% (Aud, 2011). Our graduation rates are on par with those of our peer institutions.

Career placement and salary rates for Bucknell's young alumni remain high despite the economic downturn and indicate that Bucknell's students are prepared for success after college and that employers view their degrees favorably. For example, 88% of the Class of 2010 was employed, in graduate or professional school or both within nine months of graduation. The mean starting salary for the Class of 2010, with 98% of the class reporting, was \$50,172.

### **b. Reasons for Transfer or Withdrawal**

Upon withdrawal or transfer, students are asked informally by the Office of the Registrar to complete a form indicating their top three reasons for leaving. Twenty-six options are provided on the form; of these, nine refer to aspects of campus climate. The data on reasons for withdrawal or transfer are not comprehensive and have not been consistently tracked. However, records for the classes of 2007-2012 provide data that may be of use.

Of the 327 students withdrawing from the six class years, 31% (102) provided one, two, or three reasons for leaving. The top reasons were:

- "Dissatisfaction with the social climate. Unhappy with the emphasis on the fraternity and sorority system, use of alcohol, etc." (46 students)
- "Size, location and climate. The student feels that Bucknell is too small, too rural and isolated." (45 students)
- "Decides on a program of study not offered at Bucknell, e.g., journalism, nursing, physical therapy." (28 students)
- "Student feels that they do not fit in at Bucknell; they express this by saying, "There's no one here like me."" (22 students)
- "Not receiving financial aid and can no longer afford to return and/or receiving financial aid but unable to come up with the expected family contribution." (17 students)
- "Wants to transfer to what is perceived as a better or more prestigious college." (17 students)
- Athletics. "Cut" from team and/or conflicts with coaching staff or teammates. (15 students)
- "Feels that there is not enough diversity here." (13 students)

## C. Qualitative Data Sources

The President's Task Force on Campus Climate considered qualitative data culled from current undergraduate students and graduate students representing a range of demographics, interests, and organizations; faculty and staff who are involved with programming related to student life, diversity or other issues related to campus climate; concerned faculty and staff members; and administrators leading areas that can influence, be influenced by, and/or provide insight regarding campus climate.

Qualitative data were gathered through:

- student focus groups and structured interviews
- task force meetings with relevant faculty, staff, and administrators
- subcommittee meetings with Bucknell community members (including faculty, staff, administrators, students, and student groups)
- a classroom survey conducted by Professor Beth Duckles in the Department of Sociology
- written input from Bucknell community members (submitted by students, faculty, administrators, and staff to an online anonymous suggestion box or via email)

### 1. Student Focus Groups and Structured Interviews

Because we wanted to ensure diverse representation, as well as confidentiality (a confidentiality which was very important to some groups), we recruited participants via purposeful sampling from specific demographics. The task force held 17 sessions (focus groups and structured interviews) with 66 (of 336 invited) students representing:

- Black Student Union (BSU)
- Bucknell Student Government (BSG)
- CHOICE (Choosing Healthy Options in Community Environments) residents
- Community College Scholars
- Female athletes
- First generation college students
- Fraternity men
- Graduate students who were also Bucknell undergraduates
- International students
- LGBTQ students and allies
- Non-Greek and Non-athlete students
- Posse students
- Residential College students
- Sorority women
- Students with learning or physical disabilities
- Students involved in religious organizations
- Transfer students

A session for male athletes was planned, but the meeting did not occur.



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The task force developed an instrument for collecting data from all 17 focus groups of students. It comprised a standard set of questions covering five categories that cross the multifaceted areas of the student experience that both define and are defined by the campus climate. These areas were:

1. Intellectual climate
2. Fitting in
3. Social scene
4. Romantic and sexual relationships
5. Aspects of Bucknell's climate students would want to change and what aspects they would want to keep

Although not strictly necessary given the nature of this report, the task force submitted a proposal detailing our intended procedures and questions for these sessions for review to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The task force followed the IRB's subsequent advice for improving our procedures and instrument. Every member of the task force received certification from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, an on-line training platform for ensuring human research subjects protections. This is the same training required of IRB members and researchers participating in human subjects research at Bucknell. All participants received and signed copies of an informed consent document that outlined our goals, procedures, and sources of additional information about the project. Participants' identities were not revealed to the facilitators and the focus group transcriptions and other records of the content of the discussions will be destroyed. In addition to the members of the task force, other staff and faculty with expertise in social science research methods participated as co-facilitators in many of the focus groups. The specialists who assisted us were Robert Midkiff, associate provost; Renee Cardone, M.S.W., staff counselor; Chipper Dean, assistant professor of psychology; Hannah Roberts, Psy.D., staff psychologist; and Marie Shaw, Ph.D., staff psychologist. Either two members of the task force or one member of the task force and one of these specialists jointly led each focus group.

### **2. Committee Meetings with Faculty, Administrators, and Staff**

The task force held full committee meetings with 20 faculty and staff who have professional expertise in areas relevant to campus climate:

- Amy Badal, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residential Education and Fraternity and Sorority Affairs
- Bill Flack, Associate Professor of Psychology with research specialization on sexual assault among college students, including studies of Bucknell's students
- Chip Marrara, Assistant Dean of Students
- Coralynn Davis, Director and Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Posse mentor
- Fran McDaniel, Director of LGBT office

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- Jan Knoedler, Professor of Economics, Posse mentor
- Janice Butler, Director of Civic Engagement and Service-Learning, former director of the Women's Resource Center
- Jason Friedberg, Director of Public Safety
- Elaine Hopkins, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, Posse mentor
- John Bravman, President
- Jonathan Lyons, Lecturer, College Core Curriculum, Posse mentor
- Judy Mickanis, Executive Director of Events Management, representative of the Community Judicial Board
- Kurt Thiede, Vice President for Enrollment Management.
- Lynn Pierson, Assistant Director of Community Service, Posse mentor, Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate
- M. Laura Beninati, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Posse mentor
- Marie Shaw, Ph.D., Staff Psychologist with specialization in sexual assault
- Paula Myers, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of International Student Services, Posse Mentor
- Rolando Arroyo-Sucre, Chief Officer for Diversity and Equity
- Tim Raymond, Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering, Posse mentor
- Wayne Bromfield, University General Counsel

### 3. Subcommittee Meetings with Bucknell Community Members

In addition to the focus groups and structured interviews, subsets of the task force met with eight students, two of whom are self-identified survivors of sexual assault, and five student groups (teams and organizations) for open-ended but purposeful conversations. Subsets of the task force also met with twenty additional faculty and staff for open-ended conversations about climate; five of these individuals requested anonymity. Those who did not include: Nina Banks, Associate Professor of Economics; Peg Cronin, Writing and Teaching Consultant in the Writing Center; Beth Duckles, Assistant Professor of Sociology; Kevin Foster, Assistant Director of Residential Education for Fraternity Affairs; Rabbi Serena Fujita, Jewish Chaplain; Jessica Quintana-Hess, Multicultural Student Services Director; John Katunich, Writing and Teaching Consultant in the Writing Center; James Peterson, Associate Professor of English; Jackie Petrucci, Assistant Director of Residential Education for Sorority Affairs; Hannah Roberts, Staff Psychologist; Mary Ann Stanton '89, Senior Regional Director of Leadership Gifts and adviser to Kappa Sigma fraternity; David Surgala, Vice President for Finances and Budget, Lisa Adams-Verge, Training and Organizational Development Consultant, Human Resources.

### 4. Written Input from Bucknell Community Members

The task force received feedback from members of the Bucknell community via an online suggestion box in *myBucknell*, as well as emails and letters. In this correspondence, campus community members, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, shared their ideas, impressions, concerns, and suggestions regarding campus climate. The faculty, staff, and administrators who corresponded non-anonymously with the task force include the

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following nine individuals: Paula Closson Buck, Associate Professor of English; Jordi Comas, Assistant Professor of Management; Richard Crago, Professor of Civil and Environmental engineering; Beth Duckles, Assistant Professor of Sociology; Brian Gockley, Assistant Director of the Teaching and Learning Center; Elaine Hopkins, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences; John Hunter, Associate Professor of Comparative Humanities; Adrian Mulligan, Associate Professor of Geography; and Alf Siewers, Associate Professor of English.

### D. Qualitative Data Analysis

#### 1. Focus Group and Structured Interviews Results

Approximately 20% of the students who were asked to participate in focus groups accepted our invitation. This response raises the question of how representative their perspectives are of the entire Bucknell student body. It is possible that those students who are the most critical of campus climate were most motivated to participate. On the other hand, it is possible that students who feel most connected and positive about their Bucknell experience would be especially likely to make the time to speak with the task force. Despite the difficulty in interpreting the representativeness of student comments during focus group discussions, we feel it is important to give voice to the perspectives these students shared. It is noteworthy that similar themes emerged across quite diverse focus groups and that these same themes are mirrored in comments shared with the task force by students, faculty and staff via the anonymous message center and letters. It is also noteworthy that many of the themes detected regarding sexual violence repeat the findings of the 2009 Sexual Assault Task Force.

To reduce or avoid biases of individual task force members, the task force worked from the transcripts (created from audio recordings) to compose this section and came to unanimous agreement that these quotes represent common themes that ran across focus groups. The following is a summary of those themes quantified by the number of focus groups in which the theme emerged.

##### a. Intellectual Climate

When asked to reflect on Bucknell's intellectual climate outside the classroom, most students began by discussing Bucknell's academic climate – that is, they discussed matters directly related to coursework, workload or level of busyness.

In 13 of the 17 sessions, students said their classes are challenging, and in 11 of 17 sessions, students said that they appreciate the emphasis on academics at Bucknell.

However, in six of the 17 sessions, one or more students expressed the opinion that their classes are *not* academically challenging. Some students remarked that their courses in high school were more challenging than those they've taken at Bucknell:

- “I expected to come in and have a challenge from high school and it's been almost less than what I had in high school.”

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Others reflected the idea that students at Bucknell can do the bare minimum and still get good grades:

- “I think people are able to just skate by doing the bare minimum; [they] just don’t seem really engaged in class and [they] still do well.”

When encouraged by facilitators to reflect on the intellectual climate outside the classroom at Bucknell, students in all 17 of the sessions commented that Bucknell’s intellectual climate can be stimulating and that some students are intellectually curious and engaged. However, in 16 of 17 sessions students also complained that many Bucknell students are not intellectually curious outside of the classroom. For instance:

- “My immediate response to that is ‘What intellectual climate outside the classroom?’ – which is disappointing. When you hear about coming to college you think that it’s going to be like people sitting around discussing ‘What is truth?’ or whatever in your dorm room and that has not happened. I mean that’s what I wanted so I really haven’t had that kind of environment. You can go to lectures and I think it’s great they have them, but a lot of people go to them only for extra credit not because they are interested.”

The theme of lack of intellectual engagement was further discussed in nine of 17 sessions when students asserted that Bucknell students prioritize their social lives over academics. The following are representative comments:

- “A lot of people here take academics seriously, but not as seriously as things like partying.”
- “I think drinking comes first most of the time, especially when people are planning out their class schedule so that they can capitalize on drinking time. When people are scheduling classes and work around drinking, I think that drinking might be the number one priority.”

### **b. Fitting in**

The broad term of “fitting in” was interpreted differently according to the composition of each session; the task force did not provide a definition to the students. In some cases, students described “fitting in” in terms of fashion or program affiliation, and in other cases, students described “fitting in” with regard to race, religion, gender, class, or sexuality. The following themes were common to a significant number of sessions.

In 10 sessions, students told us that there was considerable pressure to conform to Bucknell’s dominant culture, for example to “go Greek, drink, and hook-up.”

In 10 of 17 sessions, one or more students said that Greek life at Bucknell can be exclusive and divisive:

- “I think some people are turned off by that – that Greek life has become so exclusive. Not to say that I think Greek life is bad by any means, I think it’s great, but I think there is a level of exclusiveness here at Bucknell that I haven’t seen elsewhere when

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I visit friends. I think it's a little extreme and makes some people feel uncomfortable. They feel like oh, if I'm not part of this, I don't fit in."

Students in 14 of 17 groups discussed the challenges of fitting in at Bucknell, saying that finding one's place at Bucknell can require compromising or letting go of parts of one's identity. Statements to this effect include:

- "If you want to survive at Bucknell, if you want to be happy here, you have to change who you are."
- "It can be hard to fit in here because it requires reinvention of self."
- "I would say that I've had to go more than halfway to fit in."
- "I came from a very Jewish community where we were by no means a minority. Coming here first semester and not having anyone to go to services with, I didn't go at all. I went maybe once since the beginning of the year. Not to say that I disaffiliated myself from my religion, I still kept it personally, but there was nothing I was doing outwardly to show that I was Jewish. And that really upset me at first honestly because I went to a Jewish high school [and] I'm from a Jewish family; it's a major part of my identity and I felt like I was sort of losing that..."

Groups such as Posse, CHOICE, Black Student Union, Hillel, other religious life organizations, FLAG&BT, and the Residential Colleges were identified as places where students can make meaningful connections with one another. However, though students find these outlets, they are aware that these programs are not at the center of the campus culture and social scene.

Students in the BSG, fraternity men and female athlete groups did not express any personal struggles with fitting in and suggested that there were many ways to fit in at Bucknell. Some members of these groups did speculate that it might be difficult for someone who isn't Greek or an athlete to fit in but that "the situation is what you make of it."

Students in eight sessions discussed how anyone can fit in somewhere at Bucknell provided you are willing to "put yourself out there."

The assertion that there is strong awareness of one's difference resulting in feelings of discomfort, isolation, and alienation was heard in sessions with the following 10 groups: BSU, international students, LGBTQ students and allies, students involved in religious organizations, transfer students, students with learning or physical disabilities, Posse students, CHOICE residents, Community College Scholars, and sorority women. These students spoke passionately of feeling highly aware of their difference from the majority due to their race, nationality, ethnicity, religious background, socio-economic class, or sexual orientation.

- "I kind of realized that, as soon as I came to campus, "This is not home!"

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- “There are some days when I’m on campus and I say to myself, boy, I really feel alone here.”
- “I never really experienced being a minority before coming here.”
- “I think that maybe once a week, I say to myself, it would be so much easier if I was like everybody else. I would have so many more friends. I’d have so much more stuff to do and life would just be so easy. I... think across the board with the outsiders, that’s a common feeling. It would just be easier to be like everyone else. But I think for me conforming to that has been a really big struggle.”
- “I sometimes feel like an outsider looking in here.”

Some LGBTQ and allies students feel the climate is hostile, while others do not:

- “I would describe [the climate] as hostile... In my case, I’m one of the few, out, gay males on campus and I’m not Greek, I’m not a varsity athlete, I don’t have much to identify with aside from being in FLAG&BT which is sort of our GSA [gay-straight alliance] or whatever. I guess it’s hostile in the sense that I feel like I’m hurting myself by not going out to parties and things like that on the weekends if I decide to stay in because I feel so isolated and lonely.”
- “Even [fraternities] being safe spaces doesn’t make it welcoming to LGBT kids especially on a Friday or Saturday night. I mean even I feel very uncomfortable there. I feel like I definitely cannot dance with the person I want to dance with because, 1) guys are watching like you are a personal show for them, which is really gross, 2) I feel unsafe at most of the frats, only one or two of them would I actually dance and be myself at. I think even though FLAG&BT and the office try to make LGBT friendly events, when it’s all said and done, there aren’t many things for LGBT kids to do where they’ll feel welcomed and allowed to be themselves when it comes to partying and the normal college kid things.”
- “Just from a general standpoint, I found Bucknell to be incredibly accepting socially. From the first day I got here, everybody I’ve met was willing to be friends. Not just from an LGBT perspective, everybody here is super friendly. I feel like I can talk to anybody and be accepted. Even if you don’t necessarily become their best friend, it’s not hard to find a group of people who are fun to be around, and you don’t feel like if you go up and talk to a random person they are going to look at you like, ‘why are you talking to me?’”

Students from racial or ethnic minority groups believe they are defined as “different” within the campus culture, and not just among students. In the session with students of color, students commented on how their feelings of frustration and alienation were caused or intensified by experiences with faculty or experiences in the classroom. Students from diverse backgrounds expressed the need for greater learning support. They told us that faculty were often unsupportive and that in general the University did not address the differences that exist in terms of academic preparation.

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- “It’s like you, as a professor, are stereotyping this race... I’m the only African American student in my class and I was already uncomfortable... I had to talk [to the professor] about my writing and, ‘Where did I come from?’ ‘What type of education?’ and they ask me those types of questions. And it makes you feel small... But it’s comments like that, as a professor, you have all these students surrounding you and they hear you say things like that. Then they think it’s okay. And that’s the type of thing that makes it hard.”
- “I’ve been accused of plagiarism. Stuff like that, like I’m not coming up with my own ideas. But I do, because behind closed doors, I get comfortable ...when they tell you, you know ‘Where I got my [ideas]?’ ... stuff like that. But you know they’ll keep asking ‘They’re great. Where you get it from?’ ... They always undermine my ability. That’s been an ongoing struggle since I got here, until now. Like I feel like I never won their respect from any professor, or that they believe that I can come up with the actual product that I produce.”

Some, but not all, students perceive divisions and tensions within the Bucknell community. Students in five sessions discussed strained relations between different groups, for example, race and class relations. Others find evidence of segregation.

- From a student of color: “I walk by a car I hear ‘click, click’ – They’re locking their doors!”
- “I didn’t fit into either the black group or the white group completely... There is such segregation between the black and white communities that I was immediately ostracized from the black community because I identified more with the white community.”
- “If you aren’t physically attractive, thin, [or if you] come from a low socioeconomic status, are a racial minority or have an aggressive personality, you do not fit in here.”

### c. Social Scene

When asked to characterize Bucknell’s social scene, there was 100 percent agreement in 17 of 17 sessions that the social scene at Bucknell is equivalent to the Greek social scene. Students told us that “Socially fitting in at Bucknell automatically means that you have to join some type of Greek organization... If you’re not in a Greek organization, you miss out automatically” and, plainly, that “The Greek system runs the school and social scene.”

Students in 14 of 17 sessions discussed the prevalence of heavy drinking and excessive partying on campus. The following are representative quotes:

- “When the weekend comes around, [students] go crazy. They drink to excess on the weekends in my opinion... Bucknell [students have] no idea what moderation is in terms of drinking. It leads to a lot of problems.”
- “It’s also sad how many stories you hear about people blacking out and that’s perfectly fine with people. For me, that’s ridiculous you have no idea what you are

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doing. People brag about it. They are like, oh, I totally blacked out last night and woke up here and had no idea where I was or how I got there. It was so funny.”

Students in these 14 sessions made clear that partying is not confined to the weekends at Bucknell:

- “I see tons of partying every single day, for me, to go out of my way to find something else to do...”
- “[Party days at] Bucknell [are] Friday, Saturday and Wednesday, which is unique because of classes, and I think sometimes Thursdays as well. Plus, if it’s a nice day outside it doesn’t matter what day of the week it is. I would say the majority of [students party on Thursday, Friday, Saturday]..., but people will cut out Wednesdays if they are loaded with work.”

Students in at least 10 of the 17 groups characterized Bucknell as a “work hard, party hard” school.

An acknowledgment that Bucknell offers lots of opportunities for socializing was made by students in 11 sessions.

- “I think one of the best aspects of the social scene is all the events that ACE (Activities and Campus Events) puts on for the weekends. They usually try to do two per day. All the comedians are really good, especially this year, the movies, Uptown, etc., but it does seem like there are fewer of them.”

However, in most of these sessions, students said that alternative events don’t appeal to or draw large numbers of students.

- “ACE/CAP Center has lots of events, but not many people attend.”
- “Our school tries really hard to give us other opportunities but they’re not catching on.”
- “All the parties I’ve been to have all been Greek and, when a different organization is sponsoring a party, I feel like people don’t go to it because it doesn’t have any Greek labels on it.”

In five sessions the sense was that there are relatively few options of socializing outside the Greek-system.

- “What am I supposed to do on the weekends if I don’t want to go to the library and I don’t want to go to a fraternity party?”

### **d. Romantic and Sexual Relations**

Students in 15 of 17 sessions characterized the romantic and sexual scene in terms of hooking-up. Representative quotes include:



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- “I’d say that the hook-up culture is very dominant. I found it rather difficult to explore more deeper meaningful relationships with people here. I think it’s generally just an expectation here you’ll go out and have fun, you know maybe hook up with somebody, and then move onto the next thing, I guess.”
- “Go to a register, drink alcohol, hook-up, those are the steps to the social scene. That’s what it comes down to – lack of conversation, which to me is very bad.”
- “To me personally, the majority of socializing is done at parties, being part of a Greek association, drinking a lot, the hookup culture, etc. That’s what it is to me.”
- “I feel like the term ‘relationship’ doesn’t really exist – it’s more like, okay, I use you for sex and that’s it. I may say ‘hi’ to you afterwards if you are lucky, but chances are I probably won’t. Once again, you can have a very intimate moment with someone and still be ignored the next day when you see them. It’s been surprising because you think you know somebody really well and you think you’re dating them, but all they want to do is hook up.”

Students in 12 of the 17 sessions were of the clear opinion that heavy drinking and hookup culture are norms that are not unique to Bucknell, but rather are more of a “generational thing” or even part of “a universal trend on college campuses.”

In 14 of 17 sessions, students remarked on unhealthy gender dynamics on campus, explaining that once students enter the Greek system, there are very limited opportunities for interactions between men and women:

- From a male student: “I always had a mixed group of friends going through middle school and high school and freshman year here, and now I find I’m with my fraternity brothers all the time. The only time I might see people of mixed gender is at class or a weekend event. So, I think personally for me, there are a lot of times I really wish I had more opportunities to interact with women. So I wonder if I might not be the only one that feels that way.”
- From a female student: “After first year, the male/female relationship dynamic is very different because they are all in one hall and living together and then the boys rush the frats. They’re all taken to the frats and that’s where they live. I know it was frustrating for people from my first-year hall because they get the frat meal plan. First year hall is often centered on caf meals and everybody is there and then they are forced more to eat at the frat... As far as relationships, I definitely think it might be more like friendships with guys first year but maybe more than that, and then as Greek life enters your life it’s more the hookup culture.”

In seven of 17 sessions, students remarked on gender inequality in the social scene due to the dominance of Greek life:

- “I know there’s this perception that the fraternities own the social scene – because they have the space for it. Not to mention the fact that people who aren’t of legal drinking age can come and still socialize in that scene. I think it’s a real

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disadvantage for women on campus – that they cannot own their own social scene or have one that is under their control. I always thought that was kind of crappy for the girls, since they have to go down to the male-controlled environment.”

In six of the focus groups, students further reflected on the implications of the dominance of the Greek-letter system and associated Greek life at Bucknell with dangerous norms such as unhealthy gender dynamics, gender inequality, and misogyny.

- “[First year men] have to have a group of girls with [them] to enter a fraternity, [which is] a totally terrible message to everyone. The lack of respect for women on this campus is honestly quite shocking. And for both sexes, it’s honestly quite disgusting what happens and what the culture is with that regard. Also, [there is a] lack of campus alternatives to the party scene.”

Although the task force did not in most cases specifically ask students about physical social spaces on campus, in at least seven of the focus groups, students discussed physical social spaces as they relate to the social scene and gender/sexual relationships.

- “There’s one... [fraternity] that I enjoy going to their parties the most because first of all the house isn’t so dark, so you can actually see people. And there aren’t that many people there, so it’s not crowded and sweaty. And you can actually have conversations with people... At least they are not groping you and you’re having a conversation. These aren’t intellectual conversations you’re having, but they’re funny and you’re not being groped. It’s sort of a little nicer.”
- “[At some fraternities] you have to walk and push, you have to walk and push... It’s a lot of walking and pushing and holding your friends hand and running through.”
- “I know that... going to registers, which is where you’re in a basement with tons and tons of people and pretty much everything that was just described [heavy drinking, hooking-up, groping] but... in terms of things like mixers where it’s just a sorority and a fraternity, it is a really good way to meet nice people. Is it necessarily in the most ideal context? Maybe not.”
- “That’s what I’m used to, just going to a house, sitting there playing games, drinking, being social. I know people who love registers and I can’t stand registers. You’re all sweaty in a big frat with people falling over and beer flying everywhere...it’s gross.”
- “In my experience, if you go to a downtown party it’s not like that... it’s more like a social thing where you’re talking, whereas the frats scene is explicitly... a dirty dancing kind of scene.”
- “[Downtown or in bars] it’s a different setting because you’re not in a hot sweaty basement where there’s a DJ playing like pop music and you’re not necessarily... bumping and grinding...whoever is there that you think is hot. It’s a little bit more relaxed. If you see your friends, you talk to the people on a more adult level – it’s a different kind of atmosphere.”

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- “Something that I also think is different about downtown houses: there is a lot more responsibility on the people who host those parties. When you are on campus, you are protected a little bit. Downtown you are responsible to the landlord, the community, the police, etc. You’re not going to have a huge band, or risk getting caught by having underage drinkers present, etc.”

Sexual assault was discussed in at least seven of the 17 sessions with regard to the social scene or gender relations. In five of the sessions, students expressed an awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault perpetrated by men against women at Bucknell. In these sessions, students viewed sexual assault as serious and problematic:

- “I think sexual assault happens multiple times every night. I would go as far as to say that. I think once it happens even if it actually is an extreme case like rape, I think it’s become looked down upon (I don’t know if that’s the right phrase, but) lots of people are afraid to report it. There’s a stigma to being a victim of sexual assault – they don’t want to let themselves be that vulnerable.”
- “I just hate this, but I can be out and see one guy groping this girl and another one will walk by and he gropes her, too... Nobody seems to care... I’m not as shocked now as when I first came in, but I just couldn’t believe it.”

Comments in seven sessions reveal how students think about sexual violence on campus.

- “I haven’t known anyone who has been raped, and I know that’s a big thing that the campus is talking about. But I think that getting in a situation that you aren’t comfortable in, whether it be with a boy, whether it be that you are too drunk to make proper decisions... I think some of these [rapes] are accident-based and some of them are because when you put men, women, and alcohol together there are outcomes that sometimes occur that nobody wants.”
- “There are some women who are dressing provocatively and I don’t want to say they are asking for it – but when you’re trying to draw attention to yourself and wear ‘slutty clothing,’ you’re more likely to be groped by a fraternity man. That’s just what it is.”
- “I mean I know it’s happened on campus, it’s even happened to a couple of my friends, and I am aware. But in every situation I feel like both people were at fault because of the alcohol that was involved, and the amount of it and just the setting of it all. Maybe it started out being playful and fun at first and then just got out of hand. I know it’s there and I know it exists, but I think people are making it bigger than it really is, saying that there is a huge sexual assault issue on this campus. I really don’t think that’s the case. I’ve never...I mean I’ve heard stories, I’ve talked to people about it, but I think they are taking isolated incidents and blowing them out of proportion.”

Of the sessions the task force held with students, an emphasis on women’s responsibility for not becoming victims of sexual assault was voiced in six of 17 focus groups.

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- “If you are smart and responsible about going out and drinking and staying in a group that’s something you would never have to worry about... Sexual assaults would really become a serious problem if that wasn’t the case – if it was still happening...if you were responsible and staying in a group and watching how much you drink.”
- “I’ve never had a bad experience where a guy groped me or touched me and I was uncomfortable with it. That’s never happened – I think part of that [is] I am always responsible about going out and I always stay with my friends and make it a point never to be alone.”
- “I had a huge group of people who were always looking out for me. I have all of my sorority sisters who if they saw that I was heading down a dangerous path they would take me aside and say go home... I think that has allowed me to have that safety net in order to learn. It’s definitely been a good environment for me to do that. However, I’d say that a lot of people fail and have horrible experiences because of that. I think if you don’t have that support system, it can be a horrible...even tragic situation. Often when I’m talking about the social aspect of Bucknell, I’m very hesitant to recommend that females who I know come to Bucknell because I’m afraid that if they don’t have a good head on their shoulders or a good support structure, that they will get themselves into a situation that could be tragic.”

### e. What Students *Would* Change about Bucknell’s Climate

When asked what they would like to see changed at Bucknell, students in 11 of the 17 groups suggested reducing the dominance of and transforming the nature of Greek life at Bucknell to make the Greek life experience more meaningful for participants and the role of Greek life on campus more positive and inclusive:

- “I think [Greek life] would be more effective if it was smaller and more meaningful. Then the people who join those organizations might [have] actually wanted to join them and didn’t just [join] because they felt like they had to do that. I think if that happened, if the Greek system was somewhat smaller and not as central to everything in terms of social life on campus, I think you probably would see a corresponding increase in more meaningful interaction.”
- “I’m torn because I absolutely love being Greek and I love being in a sorority. I’m really glad I rushed, and I love my sisters. But, at the same time, I hate some of what Greek life does to our campus. I hate thinking about getting rid of the Greek system because I know it’s meant a lot to me and I’ve gotten a lot out of it. I don’t know how you would change it, but change how much the Greek system controls social life here.”

In the focus group with fraternity men, students told us that they are not content with the social dominance of Greek life at Bucknell. They spoke of the burden of being responsible for the entire social scene and the unfairness of being held accountable for every problem that erupts in it. They, therefore, also suggest changing the way fraternities function socially on campus:

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- “I would envision a social culture where fraternity men have more options in terms of what we could attend. For instance, what would the school look like if the sororities threw the parties, and we were able to go to different events, or if other organizations did? It’s very limited the way it is right now.”

Students in six sessions requested that the University work on changing the party culture.

- “I wish Bucknell people could be educated in that the way that they are living here is not the way people live in the real world, and by real world standards it’s not okay. It’s not okay if you have a job to be drinking five or six nights a week. If you have a job, it’s not okay to be drinking on the job. I feel like my freshman year House Party was the big thing and people drank in class all through the day on Friday, and that was okay. I feel like there is a House Party syndrome, every weekend is treated like House Party now. If we could find a way to make people realize that what they do here does have consequences.”

Some students in these six sessions specifically stated their desire for viable alternatives to House Party Weekend:

- “I don’t understand why people who don’t want to participate in House Party end up sitting in their rooms. I don’t know if ACE did anything that weekend – I think there was a movie. I think there needs to be more publicity for alternative events especially on weekends where it is most prominent to do whatever everyone else is doing and not go against the grain.”
- “No House Party Weekend... I know we keep it around because the alumni would get [upset] if we didn’t, but it’s really a ridiculous tradition.”

Students in nine sessions suggested that Bucknell should do more to provide social alternatives Greek and alcohol-related events. Students said that both financial and spatial resources would have to be made available for students to be able to regularly host social events that would serve as alternatives to the parties in the Greek-system. In three sessions, a specific request was made for the creation of additional social spaces that would be appropriate for students to utilize for informal socializing on both small and relatively large scales.

In the task force’s discussions with students we often heard students claim that Bucknell is very diverse, but with a little probing we realized that students were speaking of diversity in terms of academic majors selected or opinions expressed. Some students considered Bucknell diverse because students hailed from a variety of states in the northeastern United States. In five of 17 sessions, students noted the lack of diversity at Bucknell. Students in seven sessions commented that Bucknell should work to further increase diversity and better integrate and support diversity. For example:

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- “The diversity component... is huge – even the amount of diverse faculty that can support certain student groups as mentors, counselors, etc. I don’t even know if [diversity] exists [at all] in the administration... Diversity has increased hugely since my freshman year, though. There’s just no funding [to support that] structure. The support isn’t increasing with the diversity.”
- “One thing I would change is, I would bring a lot more diversity to campus, in pretty much all senses of the word. I think a lot of the driving force between the high level of Greek Life and the high level of drinking just comes from the population that Bucknell draws. It’s a little bit self-cycling. Bucknell has this reputation of having a bunch of party-going, upper middle-class white kids and so more party-going, upper middle-class white kids come to Bucknell. I think if diversity among race, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, etc., grew on campus, you’d have more diversity and more options regarding events on campus.”
- “I would like there to be more acceptance by the groups out there. There’s a sign on the bathroom door in support of LGBT yet they’re bashed in the community.”
- “Bucknell needs to put as much support and effort into Black Greek Life as they do the White Greek Life...until Black Greek Life can have mixers with White Greek Life, there’s not going to be any integration. Until the black community feels accepted and they have a space and location on this campus, there’s not going to be that integration. I know a lot, and I heard this today, the black community is almost accused of self-segregating themselves and not reaching out, but I think it’s important the same facilities and social outlets are there because there are absolutely no social outlets for the black community. People who do join Greek Life have to travel to other universities to pledge and go through all these different processes.”

Students in four sessions requested more intensive and more extensive opportunities for education and discussions about healthy sexuality and the prevention of sexual assault.

- “We need to break the silence and create more story telling opportunities.”
- “I think Health Services should be going to every group possible at the beginning of the year and just talking to them [about sex], answering questions. I think people here are afraid to ask questions and I think that people do what they want with information. At least you would know the resource is there.”
- “At least make sure everybody is getting that resource [about sexual assault]... You’re not going to be able to stop sexual relations and I think just from seeing the data... I hope we end up publishing some of this stuff in research articles and people start taking it seriously. It has affected me personally and it has affected friends of mine who have found themselves in situations they didn’t want to be in.”
- “I think in that sense girls don’t realize that what they may be engaging in would be considered sexual assault and so I guess in that way I would define sexual assault – anything a girl is not giving consent to. I think a lot of people are really uneducated as to what defines sexual assault – not just if more males knew then maybe they wouldn’t do it – but being more aware of what it is. I know freshman year we took a

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course on it. I know I learned a lot from that, but I don't necessarily think that everyone was paying attention, so I don't know how that could be regulated."

Many students expressed a desire for greater intellectual engagement and a greater focus on academics, with students in three sessions expressing a specific desire for more follow-up after extra-curricular academic events, in part to change the pattern of students attending them only for extra-credit.

- "I would focus more on an academically-oriented climate, so it's not a 'work hard/play hard' or a 'get it done, play harder' [culture]. I don't think there is enough focus on campus on academics. I think that there needs to be new things outside of class – the extracurricular – for students to grow in other areas. I think students aren't taking advantage of the ability to grow intellectually and become engaged. It's not that I think Bucknell doesn't offer it; it's just that with student/faculty ratios, class size, etc., there should be more of an intellectual climate."

### f. What Students Would *Not* Change about Bucknell's Climate

When asked about what aspects of Bucknell they would not want changed, students in 11 focus groups suggested the academic climate should remain unchanged. In four of these groups, students specifically cited the meaningful relationships with faculty, and opportunities for research. Representative quotes include:

- "I think what we have is really on par. The system really challenges you to think and the students as a whole are driven. It's not necessarily unique to Bucknell, but then again, maybe it is to the type of student who comes here, so it makes that climate very special in a way... I don't know. I just wouldn't replace it."
- "I would keep the academic environment the way it is. I think the classes and things like that serve their purpose in the sense that you learn what you need to and people who are interested in learning more have the opportunity to do that, but I don't think the classes themselves are necessarily competitive to the point where it can be interfering with your emotional wellbeing or anything like that even though it's very difficult at times. I think that's the way it's supposed to be."
- "[I would keep] the focus on academics, the great faculty and the opportunities to become more involved whether it's research or whatever. I think that's really the core of what Bucknell is."
- "Student/faculty relations – I think they can be improved, but in terms of research, office hours, etc. I really, really like that. I think [the faculty] become an integral part of campus. I think they are proud to say they work at Bucknell."
- "I feel so prepared and I think that has to do with what I've learned in the classroom and what my professors are willing to do for me as far as putting in the extra time and resources... They are willing to go the extra distance. I think the students also meet them halfway. It's a really dynamic relationship and in that sense is definitely a strength."

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Students in four of the focus groups said they valued the range of opportunities outside of class, including the number of student-run clubs and student leadership opportunities.

- “...as a freshman I’ve had so many opportunities for leadership and so many different [opportunities] – if you want this club start it – like find an adviser, talk to the student government and you’re done. It’s really cool that you can do that because it provides you with awesome resume material and experiences that you can have in combination with the research and the class work that your professors help you with.”
- “I absolutely love how much of campus is student-run. I think it provides all sorts of opportunities for students to do all sorts of really cool things.”

In four of the focus groups, students cited Bucknell’s close-knit community as one of the features that should not change. They said they value “everyone knowing everyone” and the supportiveness across the whole community, including alumni, students, faculty and staff. One student stated that the friendliness of the climate varies according to how much partying is going on:

- “I know people disagree with me on the existence of this, but I would keep the general climate of friendliness. I honestly feel like walking around Bucknell’s campus, I get lots of smiles and waves and it may be less so on the weekends when everyone is out partying, but I feel like during the weekdays it’s a really pleasant place to be.”

### **2. Results of Committee Meetings, Subcommittee Meetings, and Written Correspondence with Bucknell Community Members**

Sources outside of focus groups and structured interviews express similar views to the common themes that emerged in these sessions. The task force believes that the following remarks signify strongly held opinions among some members of the Bucknell community.



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### a. On Intellectual Climate

From a faculty member:

- “At the events I do attend, I am often troubled by the low rate of student attendance. Moreover, I wonder if most student engagement in the “good” co-curriculum is dominated by a minority of students. In other words, what % of students go to few or no events outside of class when there is no academic requirement or reward? Because a reasonable target to me would be that all students at a minimum attend one event in the “good” co-curriculum per week. I don’t know how we get there, but it might be a measure of change in climate.”

From students:

- “While Bucknell has a reputation for being a prestigious university which fosters intellectual curiosity and development, and its faculty are involved and caring, there is an incredibly large disconnect between the school's message and the attitude of the student body. Students simply care about partying and getting things done as quickly and with as little effort as possible. I have never been at a school where this “I don't care, at the end of the day I am graduating with a Bucknell degree” attitude has been so prevalent. There is little to no student activism and students are overall apathetic towards world issues. A girl in my class was completely unaware of the tragedies in Japan or the revolutions occurring in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt.”
- “As a current Bucknell student, I have heard many professors complain that academics is not the primary focus of students on campus. I have a 3.6 GPA, and can comfortably say that I have only ever been academically challenged in one class at Bucknell... As a member of the Student Philanthropy Group, I have heard numerous faculty complain that students are not academically minded (or some derivative i.e. over committed outside of class to fraternities, jobs, leadership positions). I believe that professors are responsible for holding students to a higher standard. Please consider the frustration felt by many Bucknellian's [sic] as we truly wish for a challenging academic experience. Part of the improvement of the campus climate must include an increased stress on academics. If professors raise expectations for students, I believe we can begin to build a more academic climate.”

Another student explained her reasons for transferring to a different university as follows:

- “I have transferred to [another university] and will not be returning to Bucknell. I value a liberal arts education and was eagerly looking forward to my future at Bucknell as an incoming freshman. Unfortunately, I found that academics were not a priority to a large portion of the students. Several of the courses that I took at Bucknell were enjoyable and interesting, primarily due to the professors... Still, it was very difficult for me to truly engage in my classes, as a good number of my peers were frequently far from interested in the assignments, discussions, or class in general. Discussion based classes are an integral part of higher education therefore it became tedious to sit through class after class when only a handful of students

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would participate. Toward the end of the semester I discussed this dilemma with upper classmen as well as a few professors who understood the issue, but could offer no solution... In addition to the low level of appreciation for academics, I found the social scene on campus to be almost unbearable. Before I came to Bucknell, a college counselor warned me that Bucknell students were 'hard on their liquor;' and after completing one year at Bucknell, I could not say it better myself. While I understand there are programs for dry students, I felt that there was no happy-medium. I learned that lesson the hard way and by spring semester I had abandoned the fraternity scene in its entirety and no longer 'went out' on weekends. ... I had begun to suffer from anxiety, stress and just plain unhappiness during second semester... When I entered Bucknell last fall, I was eager to live, learn and grow in what I thought would be an ideal environment. I found it to be quite the opposite, but I will take with me some valuable life lessons just the same."

### b. On Fitting In and the Social Scene

The task force heard from a number of faculty, staff, and administrators who feel strongly that the present state of Greek life at Bucknell is not conducive to intellectual and ethical engagement and growth. Some requested that Bucknell seriously consider eradicating Greek life, while others said that Bucknell should radically transform Greek life. Comments included:

- "In my humble opinion, many of our problems lie with the Greek system. At best, it demands many hours of service from our better students, some of it to the community, but nonetheless largely to the detriment of their studies. At worse, and this is unfortunately apparently way more common, it promotes an anti-intellectual 'party culture', dumbing everything down and driving some of our better students away, perhaps before they even get here. Type 'Bucknell' into Google and go looking for the sites that our applicants really pay attention to, such as [collegeprowler.com](http://collegeprowler.com) or [collegeconfidential.com](http://collegeconfidential.com) to see what I mean. It seems crazy that there has to be death from drinking on campus, heaven help us wearing a house party wristband, before we seriously tackle the Greek system, while in the meantime we're faced with its implications daily in our classrooms."
- "Before we can assess [the Greek system], I feel like we need to stop trying to tell a story that there are viable alternatives to the Greek system for students... [To combat the negative aspects of the current climate, we could] engage the existing social infrastructure, especially the Greek system in the co-curriculum planning and deployment. A lot of energy and resources go into the Greek system. What if we coupled that to the broader educational aims of the university? For example, what if each Greek organization worked with small sets of faculty and staff to organize themed event series? In other words, if we have X dollars for speakers and such, what if some of that was used by Greek organizations in partnership with other parts of the university? Call it if you can't beat them, make them join you."

On a related note, several staff members expressed serious concern about the extent to which rules and regulations for fraternity parties involving alcohol are blatantly

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disregarded. Mention was made of the risk management and insurance policy regulations that are regularly violated with the complicity of the university; for example, Bucknell's insurance policies clearly state that fraternities are only permitted to host bring-your-own alcoholic events and are explicitly prohibited from purchasing large amounts of alcohol for their guests. We also heard staff members express concern about the amount of drinking that goes on in the residence halls; one said "it is appropriate to ask why Bucknell tolerates any alcohol in dorms at all."

Several students who were not involved in the focus groups or structured interviews confided in members of the task force that they would like to see the end of Greek life at Bucknell, commenting on the negative aspects of Greek life and in particular, on the negative roles that Greek life plays at Bucknell. One woman, a former member of an executive board of a sorority at Bucknell, told us that her time in a sorority was "worthwhile on many levels," but she continued to say that she thinks "Greek life should be banned from Bucknell's campus" because:

- "There are several main areas where I find that the quality of life of students at Bucknell is significantly lowered due to the presence of Greek life on campus. Those are the following: the quality and depth of relationships with peers, the culture of binge drinking, sense of self-worth, and relationships between men and women. "

### c. Diversity

Faculty and staff reported that students from diverse populations feel burdened by the knowledge that they are valuable to the University because of their diversity status.

Staff members with significant and sustained interaction with many minority students characterized the minority student experience like this:

- "They wake up and say to themselves: 'How am I going to be seen as different today?'"
- "Black students at Bucknell aren't just students, [they] have to also take on the role of educators and leaders."

Some of these staff members underscored the extent to which faculty and staff need further training on serving a diverse community:

- "Faculty and staff need training in how to work with a diverse student body and the extent to which flexibility and sensitivity are required by social justice."

One staff member noted that the social transition can be difficult for international and multicultural students because any of them don't understand why parties are about drinking and not dancing and community.

Other faculty and staff expressed concern about the climate for students who identify as religious.

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- Students indicate to us that a perceived normative culture of anti-religious discourse makes them feel that they need to hide cultural identities and traditions of faith on campus... [M]any fear expressing their views in situations in which they perceive they would be directly facing non-religious peers and faculty/staff.

### d. Sexual Violence

One faculty member urged Bucknell to “take the problem of sexual assault seriously, to take a preventative approach, and to have a zero-tolerance policy for assault.” Another wondered aloud, “How safe are the ‘Safe Spaces’ on campus when they aren’t safe for women?” And yet another shared her concerns:

- “I am worried about a ‘false sense of security’ on the part of [sorority] women. They feel they can drink to the ‘black out’ state because one of their girlfriends will always make sure they get home safely. They can articulate that such actions in another place, e.g., studying abroad in France, would not be safe, but they feel like they can engage in these behaviors here.”

A staff member who has a great deal of contact with students and relevant expertise told us the following:

- “[Male students at Bucknell] do not know what consent is. They think kissing is consent... there are intentional perpetrators on campus. Some of them are known and [other students are] warned about [them], but the warnings may not spread outside a social group. There are times when female students downplay when a friend is assaulted... There is a need to strengthen preventative programming.”

The task force was informed that male students sometimes confide in trusted adults, confidentially, and after the fact, if their actions might constitute assault. Additionally, staff members report Bucknell students describing a sexual encounter they had that clearly constitutes sexual assault with no awareness or recognition of it as such.

A senior administrator told the task force of a particular student who decided to transfer after her first year at Bucknell:

- “There are some things about Bucknell that she does not like. Among others, three out of her close circle of ten friends experienced sexual assault . . . She seems to be exactly the kind of girl we want on this campus, and we're losing her because of the social and academic climate. It's tragic.”

Professor Beth Duckles informed the task force of the results of a reading response she assigned in her Introduction to Sociology course in the fall of 2010. Professor Duckles was alarmed at the students’ responses and shared them, with the students’ permission, with the task force. She adds as a strong caveat that her intention was not to engage in social science research, but was rather pedagogical. The question she posed discussion (“Please

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respond to the article or pose a question for the class”) was intentionally vague and designed to prompt and engage students in reflection on the assigned material. Nonetheless, she found the responses she received to be cause for concern.

Thirty one students completed the assignment. The course had 35 students; 5 males, 30 females; 4 students of color, 31 white students; 1 junior, 22 sophomores, 10 first year. Students read A. Ayres Boswell and Joan Z. Spade, “Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why Are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?” in *Gender and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Apr., 1996), pp. 133-147. The article analyzes social spaces for their safety for women and investigates how students interact and behave in different settings, articulating which spaces are safest and which most dangerous for women, in particular which are most conducive to sexual assault (a “rape culture”). The students were asked to respond to the article anonymously before class discussion, noting their general impressions and/or reactions.

Professor Duckles reports that a third of the students remarked that they see evidence of rape culture and dangerous fraternities on Bucknell’s campus. Not prompted to comment on the article in light of Bucknell’s social scene, Duckles reports her students responded as follows:

- 11 students made connections such as the following “Reading this chapter, I kept relating it back to Bucknell’s campus. I feel some men are disrespectful to women when they’re around their guy friends such as with sports and frats. All my friends talk about is hooking up.”
- Five students discussed the risks involved for women matter-of-factly, as in “the fraternity events have a much higher risk than bars because many of them are not monitored as closely. Frat parties can become extremely packed and dangerous.”
- Six students remarked on how the set-up/arrangement of parties factor into the relative risks of sexual assault; for example, “I found it interesting how significant the ratios of males to females at a party increased the likelihood of sexual assault taking place. Frat parties never have equal ratios.”
- Five students commented on the social pressures and social acceptability related to sexual assault: “I feel that rape occurs mostly on college campuses because men feel they can get away with it easier.”
- Five other students were shocked at the descriptions: “Couldn’t believe that men and women excuse rape because ‘Men cannot control their natural urges!’ Interesting how women who were raped were portrayed as faceless victims. Men don’t have to feel guilty about their actions. But how would it change if it was discovered that it was a friend’s sister?”

A letter written to the task force by a group of female students makes similar points:

- ... our campus appears to be a toxic environment at times... It is not only the culture, but the physical setting of campus that encourages disrespectful behavior towards women. In most frats where there is no place to sit, dirty bathrooms, blaring music, and no possible way to hold a conversation, the only solution is to drink or dance, mostly both, creating a scenario that men often take advantage of... [T]he culture on

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campus is one that causes our gender to feel weak and defenseless in certain unavoidable situations.

### IV. Findings

Over the course of 11 months, the President's Task Force on Campus Climate has carefully considered a broad range of data from diverse perspectives in an effort to fully understand the nature of Bucknell's campus climate and to diagnose any serious problems within it. Many of the problems that can negatively impact campus climate are cultural, which makes them challenging to assess and difficult to solve. They are challenging to assess partly because some events under consideration, such as sexual assault and harassment and other acts of bias, are notoriously underreported, cloaked sometimes in shame (Greenfeld, 1997; Rennison, 2002). The problems are also challenging to assess because they are difficult to quantify, involving as they do people's habits, attitudes, and perceptions about their experiences.

Nonetheless, the task force believes that several interrelated areas of particular concern regarding negative and dangerous norms of student attitudes and behavior at Bucknell are now well-documented. In what follows, we present summary remarks about the interrelated problems facing Bucknell's campus.

**Please note:** the following findings are not hierarchically ranked; indeed, ranking them in such a manner is impossible due to the myriad ways in which they intersect and interrelate.

#### A. Lack of Student Engagement

Many Bucknell students reference with pride the oft repeated motto, "work hard, play hard," or more dramatically, "work hard, play harder." Many students successfully pursue excellence in academics, sports, and leadership positions while also leading active social lives. However, too many students seem to prioritize social life over intellectual discourse, sometimes in ways that are at odds with their intellectual development.

While many students say that they generally feel challenged by their course work and enjoy a close connection to Bucknell faculty, other students suggest that they and their fellow classmates are not pushed hard enough by faculty and that they were hoping for greater intellectual challenge. In fact, results from the College Senior Survey indicate that a large majority of seniors study or do homework for less than 20 hours per week. Considering that most students are in class only 12-16 hours per week, it appears that many students are treating their academic life as a part-time job.

In the focus group and structured interviews, many students equated intellectual engagement with the classroom experience and needed to be prodded to address intellectual engagement beyond the classroom and course requirements. NSSE data reveal that many students do talk about what they are learning with faculty, peers, and family, but

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many students told us that they were disappointed by the lack of intellectual discourse on campus and that they longed for more. When intellectual concerns are discussed, they are typically among upper-level students and only among close friends.

Students acknowledge the University's investment in co-curricular programming but report that many fail to take advantage of it. Although the University hosts many prominent speakers, students say that time constraints, often non-academic ones, can keep them from attending. When they do attend these events, they report rarely having conversations about the events with their peers, and sometimes attend them primarily for "extra-credit" and not out of genuine interest. Furthermore, NSSE data reveal that only small numbers of students regularly attend cultural events on campus.

There are many clubs on campus that can enrich students' intellectual lives, yet the majority of students spend less than 10 hours per week in co-curricular activities. This trend is particularly startling because co-curricular activities include fraternity and sorority activities and sports.

The lack of intellectual engagement is a serious problem at Bucknell, but there are a few bright spots, including the Residential College Program, where student engagement appears to be fostered through living-learning communities. There are growing opportunities for engagement among upper-level students through Affinity Housing (small house) programs.

### **B. Dominance of Greek Life**

Greek life dominates the campus social climate. Most students participate in fraternity and sorority recruitment in September of their sophomore year and the majority of them join a fraternity or sorority. In 2010-11, 58% of eligible men (sophomores through seniors) were members of fraternities and 62% of eligible women were members of sororities. The large number of students in fraternities and sororities is especially noteworthy given that varsity athletes are sometimes highly discouraged or prohibited from joining Greek-letter organizations by their coaches.

The Greek social scene extends down to first year students and to others who are not members of these organizations. Some first-year men are informally adopted into fraternities by serving as doormen, bartenders, or as part of the clean-up crew at fraternity events; many first year men are, however, excluded from fraternity events. Many athletes who are not Greek still regularly participate in fraternity parties. Women, regardless of their affiliation or class year, are always able to get into fraternity parties. In contrast, many students of color and LGBTQ students feel unwelcome at fraternity parties.

Many students feel a strong, positive connection to the Greek world and talk about the traditions and feelings attached to these organizations. Women students, in particular, describe the importance of deep-rooted traditions such as the concept of "families" that are created and the pride of being a "big" (big sister), a "grand-big" (big sister's big sister) or a

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“little” (little sister). Data from the College Senior Survey confirm that members of Greek-letter organizations feel especially connected to Bucknell. Statistics indicate that Greek membership impacts individual members, the campus, and the larger community in many positive ways. The Plan for Prominence Assessment indicates that in the last six years, men and women in the Greek system received higher grade-point averages than their non-Greek counterparts. Furthermore, they annually perform in excess of 30,000 hours of community service and over the last six years raised close to \$1,000,000 for philanthropic causes. These are impressive statistics and illustrate positive aspects of membership.

It is noteworthy, however, that students consistently identify Greek life primarily with parties, drinking, and hooking up. During focus groups, structured interviews, and in letters and other correspondence, students rarely mentioned any other aspect of Greek life. They did not talk about Greek philanthropies, Greek service, or the intellectual stimulation of Greek organizations, though they did talk about forming bonds with one another – especially in sororities. Moreover, aside from some passing remarks, students did not have much to say about the importance of their involvement with academic and extra-curricular clubs and activities outside Greek life. Some students speculated that Greek life isn’t just in competition with academics as many faculty members assert, but is also in competition with other extra-curricular activities.

Many individual students identified as problematic the well-defined hierarchy among Greek organizations because it creates competition and breeds bad feelings among students participating in Greek life. Furthermore, specific sororities often partner exclusively with specific fraternities for social events, increasing competitiveness. In addition, competition and bad feelings sometimes exist between those who are members of Greek organizations and those who are not.

There are specific problems related to the dominance of Greek organizations. For example, the time commitment to fraternities and sororities can negatively impact students’ availability for academic group work, club participation, and other social functions. Also, it is very problematic that fraternities host virtually all campus parties. The fraternity monopoly on parties has the effect of disempowering other groups, especially women. This also places an unfair burden on the fraternities. Fraternities are the primary place for socializing on campus, and thus become responsible for all social problems that erupt on campus. Another observation is that some social science research indicates a relationship between the presence of single sex societies and gender-based violence. (Sanday, 1997)

### C. Alcohol Consumption and the Party Culture

When students refer to “playing” or “partying” they are usually talking about drinking, often excessively, and some mention the use of illegal drugs. Some of this partying occurs in campus buildings, in fraternity houses and residence halls, while some of it happens in downtown houses in Lewisburg between South 7th and South 5th Streets; much of the partying is associated with fraternities. Almost all of it takes place in houses rather than in bars or other more public establishments.



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When members of Greek organizations host “registered” parties on campus, the group is supposed to follow University guidelines, such as restrictions on when they can hold events, the number of people they can host, on the amount of alcohol they can serve, and strict prohibitions against underage drinking. However, students fairly comfortably admit (and staff members confirm) that these rules are often not followed and are rarely enforced. The registering of parties without the enforcement of rules may provide students and perhaps their parents a false sense of security. There are also numerous “shadow” houses rented by groups of Greek students and student-athletes in the downtown area that are often the location of weeknight parties that are not limited by rules for social events on University property. Underage drinking is common and expected.

Frequent binge drinking is a problem at Bucknell, especially among men, among white students, and among members of Greek-letter organizations. In fact about half of Bucknell students report that they have blacked out from excessive drinking. Although excessive drinking is endemic on college campuses, the problem at Bucknell is extreme.

Binge drinking has serious consequences both for the students engaging in the behavior and for the community. Students with dangerously high blood alcohol levels are too frequently transported to Evangelical Hospital. Women who are intoxicated are more likely to be victims of sexual assault. Men who are intoxicated are more likely to perpetrate acts of sexual violence, including harassment, assault, and rape, as well as being more likely to commit non-sexual acts of violence. (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, McAuslan, 2001; Abbey 2002; Ullman, Karabatsos, Koss, 1999)

There seems to be an implicit acceptance of excessive drinking at Bucknell, supported by an insistence there is “nothing else to do.” While there are regular mentions of ACE and CAP Center activities, students say these events do not have mainstream appeal and that when they are attended, they are usually only a precursor to attending a Greek-affiliated party later and may be attended after an initial round of drinking. Other students are disgusted by the party scene but also resigned to it. They don’t seem to understand how their choices support and help perpetuate that scene.

### **D. Lack of Social Spaces that Support Positive Behavior**

Bucknell lacks acceptable social space for students. Fraternities can easily dominate the campus culture because they control the spaces in which students come together for parties and other social interactions. Because there is limited space available for events sponsored by groups other than Greek organizations, students find additional motivation to join in the Greek scene.

In addition, in the past decade as the University has coped with housing demands, it has become commonplace to convert lounges and other open spaces in residence halls to student bed space. Lounges and open spaces are essential for informal gatherings where friendships can form and meaningful discussions can occur. The University has made

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attempts to create attractive student spaces (e.g., Uptown, the recently renovated former bookstore space in the ELC). However, it is clear that other social spaces that students can use for parties and other small and large gatherings are needed.

Associate Dean of Students for Housing Services, Dan Remley, and Assistant Director of Residential Education for Fraternity Affairs, Kevin Foster, led member of the task force on tours of campus living and social spaces in January 2011 to help us better grasp how the campus spatial infrastructure might affect the social interactions among our students. The task force visited the following 10 residence halls: Harris, Hunt, Kress, Larison, McDonnell, Roberts, Smith, Swartz, Trax, and Vedder; and the following nine fraternities: Chi Phi, Delta Upsilon, Kappa Sigma, Phi Kappa Psi, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Chi, Sigma Phi Epsilon, Tau Kappa Epsilon, and Theta Chi. The tours were designed by Dan Remley and Kevin Foster to expose task force members to a full range of campus living and social spaces. The task force saw a variety of dormitory rooms and common spaces (lounges, kitchens, recreational rooms). The task force did not visit private rooms in fraternity houses, but rather focused on the public spaces (the social spaces used to host parties or “registers” and dining areas.)

With one exception, the common areas where fraternities host parties or “registers” are underground and dark. Many of these basements were maze-like with few windows and poorly identified emergency exits and rest rooms. The spaces had not been used for parties for at least a month, yet many remained unclean and strewn with litter and abandoned drinks. Of the residence halls that we visited, only two contain social spaces able to accommodate more than a few people. Many spaces or lounges in the residence halls that were originally designed as common areas for group study, informal meetings, or socialization have been re-purposed as additional bed space. Open space is severely limited in all the dorms; there is an extreme limitation on areas available for social events in dorms and across campus at large.

Finally, there are several issues of physical segregation related to spaces on campus. Faculty and staff comment on the lack of adult presence in the students’ lives and a lack of flexible joint-use space. As explained earlier, students also commented on the gender segregation of living and eating arrangements after the first and second years, as the student body splits into Greek letter organizations. Moreover, students comment on how racially segregated the campus seems, especially after their second year when most students become actively and officially involved with Greek life.

### **E. Unhealthy and Unequal Gender Dynamics**

There are also specific problems related to gender dynamics and the dominance of Greek organizations. It is very problematic that fraternities host virtually all campus parties. Because there are few suitable spaces on campus for parties, because fraternities are permitted to host functions with alcohol, and because tradition at Bucknell is for fraternities to host the parties, most campus parties occur in fraternity basements. As indicated earlier, this situation has the dual effect of disempowering women and overburdening fraternities.

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The majority of Bucknell sophomores, juniors, and seniors are members of single-sex Greek-letter organizations. This trend results in gender segregated living and dining arrangements. Sorority women live together in Hunt Hall and eat primarily in the Terrace Room or the Bison. Fraternity men live and eat in fraternity houses. This situation contrasts sharply with the first-year experience where most students live in gender-integrated dorms and eat together in the cafeteria. Several students spoke about how living and dining arrangements impact gender relations, noting that men and women can get to know each other in a more positive (i.e., non-alcohol-infused) way when they live and eat together. These interactions are conducive to cross-gender friendships and may lead to romantic interests. Once students join Greek-letter organizations, however, most cross-gender social interactions take place at parties where loud music, “dirty dancing,” heavy drinking, and hooking up are the norms.

There is a growing literature on the “hookup culture” which reveals that Bucknell is not unique. Hooking up has become the primary way students find intimacy and romance. Many students seem conflicted about the hookup culture. On the one hand, students may enjoy sexual intimacy without the expectations inherent in a relationship. On the other hand, developing a meaningful relationship within the hookup culture can be difficult and many students express a desire for such meaningful relationships. Furthermore, a double standard remains in which men’s reputations are enhanced and women’s reputations are damaged by frequent hookups. Finally, a number of students clearly expressed to us that they did not enjoy participating in the hookup culture; both male and female students shared this sentiment.

### F. Sexual Violence

Sexual assault is a problem on many college campuses (Paludi, 2008), and data suggest that the problem may be greater at Bucknell. Results from the Sexual Experiences Survey and reports from students in the focus groups and structured interviews reveal that women are routinely groped at parties, especially fraternity parties. Results also suggest that rape and attempted rape are real problems on Bucknell’s campus. Women of color are at a statistically higher risk for sexual assault. In addition, the data indicate that same-sex sexual assault also occurs here.

The social scene at Bucknell is controlled by men and fueled by alcohol. These two factors help set the stage for dangerous interactions between men and women while they are socializing at Bucknell (Burt, 1980). The results of the informal survey reported to the task force by Professor Duckles also testify to this. Her students were able to identify dangerous social settings at Bucknell. They readily identified similarities between the social settings deemed in the article to be conducive to a high number of sexual assaults and the social arrangements and social settings they experienced at Bucknell (Boswell and Spade, 1996).

Bucknell students have neither engaged nor been engaged in sustained and honest examination about healthy sexual relationships and the nature, prevalence, and traumatic

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effects of sexual assault. They also lack knowledge of the resources, procedures for reporting, and prosecuting a case of sexual misconduct. When asked about their education about sexual misconduct, most students briefly reference learning about it in their Transition to College course, but then diverge into discussions that are best described as “victim-blaming.” Other students remark how vulnerable a woman is on campus before she learns how to be safe, with the suggestion that it is primarily her responsibility to acquire this information and wholly her responsibility to prevent being victimized. Students do not discuss perpetrators’ behavior critically and often imply that a survivor’s drunkenness or other behavior alleviates a perpetrator’s responsibility.

The differences between Flack’s results obtained via the SES and the NCHA results regarding sexual assault are evidence that students do not fully understand what constitutes sexual assault. Students are more likely to answer in the affirmative when asked whether “someone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against a private area of my body (lips, chest/breasts, crotch or butt) or removed some of my clothes without my consent” than they are when asked “were you sexually touched without your consent?” This difference suggests that students do not necessarily consider being “fondled, kissed, or rubbed” to be “sexual touching.” As we have already discussed, students’ own descriptions of experiences at Bucknell also illustrate this point; female students, sometimes lightheartedly, recount stories such as the following: “I was at a party and this random guy just came up and starting making out with me. I was like, ‘what is going on?’”

Most students allude to the problem of sexual assault without being able to identify what the actual problem is. Students are ignorant of and confused about the law, the student code of conduct, and the rights and responsibilities of parties involved in any interpersonal sexual contact. In fact, many are simply uneducated about healthy sexual conduct.

The prevalence of a victim-blaming mentality on campus is itself a significant hindrance to survivors coming forward to report sexual violence and to prosecute their aggressors. Moreover, students know that social ostracizing results when a survivor speaks out in an attempt to bring his or her perpetrator to justice. A staff member with expertise in sexual assault prevention and education and who also serves as an advocate for survivors emphasized that fear of negative social consequences is the primary reason most survivors at Bucknell do not come forward to report an assault. Students seem to deny the severity of the problem in order to protect the status quo, rather than confront the problem and deal with the uncomfortable and difficult consequences—social and personal—that such confrontation will involve.

The task force finds it remarkable that in the focus groups and structured interviews, students did not discuss men’s responsibilities vis-à-vis sexual assault. We did not hear about what men can do to prevent themselves or their friends from becoming perpetrators of sexual violence. When men’s role in preventing sexual violence was discussed, the emphasis was on how they might “watch out for” their female friends. Many women said they felt safe at fraternities because they knew the brothers and trusted that they wouldn’t let anything happen to them, exposing their apparent ignorance of the fact that the vast majority of sexual assaults are instances of so-called “acquaintance rape.” However, we did

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not hear students discuss the need for men to behave more responsibly by not drinking too much or being aware of the complexities and nuances of any sexual encounter, although women's responsibility for not becoming victims of sexual assault was often mentioned and emphasized.

A damaging connection is also often made between alcohol and sexual violence. Sexual violence is criminal in and of itself, and it should not be tolerated on any campus – or anywhere. By framing sexual violence as primarily an “alcohol-related problem,” even with the best intentions, the message is sent that a student could avoid the assault by not participating in the drinking/party culture, a culture that clearly dominates on our campus, or that sexual assault is more of an honest mistake made by an intoxicated agent than it is a criminal act with long-term and varied mental and physical health implications. Rather than putting the responsibility on the person who actually committed the violation, framing the issue in terms of drinking shifts the blame and alleviates a perpetrator's responsibility. This is not, of course, to deny that alcohol is often a contributing factor in incidents of sexual assault, as we have already discussed.

### **G. Lack of Diversity/Trouble Fitting In**

Results from the College Senior Survey suggest that most Bucknell students feel connected to the Bucknell Community and not “singled out” because they may not fit the norm. However, this is markedly less true of students of color, especially black students. Transfer students and LGBTQ students also feel less connected and welcome at Bucknell. In fact, the theme of finding it difficult to “fit in” emerged in nearly all of the focus groups and structured interviews, with the exceptions of the sessions with the Bucknell Student Government, fraternity men, and female athletes. It is noteworthy that although students had no trouble describing the “typical” Bucknell student, few students saw themselves as typical. In general, students who do not participate in or do not enjoy the Greek-dominated social scene of parties, heavy drinking, and hooking up are at risk of feeling alienated. Student comments in the focus groups and structured interviews suggest that class and socioeconomic status are part of a personal struggle for many students. A more diverse student body would both help to diversify the social scene and enable “non-typical” students more opportunities to find a place to belong.

In task force sessions with students, when the issue of diversity arose, we could often see that students are uninformed about the nature and value of diversity. Students confused diversity with different interests or personalities. One faculty member told us the same: “I was surprised to hear [my] students... express that Bucknell is a very diverse place – they focused on differences in majors, geography, and not on religion, disability, racial, or ethnic diversity.”

For students from underrepresented backgrounds, negative interactions with faculty are particularly harmful in undermining academic support and thereby compound their sense of isolation. Typical negative behavior of faculty, staff and students toward students of color, according to those students of color we spoke with and some faculty of color in whom students confide, include being talked down to, having their academic ability called

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into question, having assumptions made about who they are, being expected to represent their racial or ethnic group when discussing cultural or social issues, and being treated in an overly casual manner.

One way to shift the culture at Bucknell is to enroll a more diverse student population in which students of many backgrounds and experiences can challenge each other, build greater understanding and establish new, healthier norms. Research conducted through the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) and summarized by Wechsler and Nelson (2008) shows that:

A greater racial and ethnic diversity on campus is associated with lower binge drinking rates among the white majority students. Similarly, lower binge drinking rates were observed among male and underage students at colleges that had more female and older students. Students who did not binge drink during high school were more likely to take up binge drinking in college if they attended schools with fewer minority and older students. (p. 5)

However, transforming the campus culture should not be the sole responsibility of students who fit diversity categories.

### H. Organizational and Institutional Effects on Climate

In the last 10 years, Bucknell University has experienced significant administrative turnover: three presidents, three provosts, three deans of students, and multiple changes in both the College of Engineering and the College of Arts and Sciences. In addition, during this period of time, we have seen multiple reorganizations, including the fusion of Student Life and Academic Affairs. Perhaps as a result of the high turnover among the personnel in the University administration, effective long-term operational planning and perspective have been absent or obscure. This history has left some faculty and staff feeling disheartened, especially those who have invested considerable time in on boards, reviews, or committees related to Student Affairs.

The Division of Student Affairs is understaffed relative to the support found for this division at our peer institutions. In recent years, Student Affairs staff members have been expected to do more programming with fewer resources. For example, there are two Assistant Directors of Residential Education for Greek Life: one each for Fraternity Affairs and Sorority Affairs. Compare Bucknell's staff of two, charged with meeting the learning and living needs of the 45% of the Bucknell student population (approximately 1,650 students) who are members of Greek-letter organizations with the six staff members Lehigh University employs for the 33% of their student population (approximately 1,495 students) who are member of Greek-letter organizations. There is also unrealized potential in the merger of Academic and Student Affairs. Historically, Student Affairs has been perceived as the division managing the custodial needs of our students outside of the classroom. However, the division clearly strives to be a viable partner inculcating students with a respect for the life of the mind.

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There have been serious deficits in the University's ability to assess itself because of the difficulties in coordinating institutional research. The task force faced many challenges in collecting and analyzing data relevant to our charge. We found no central hub for relevant data sets, nor did we find clear policies to explain what data sets are available or how to access them. Also, the University's involvement with various university consortia is underutilized. The lack of clarity regarding Bucknell's institutional research strategy and philosophy, as well as the high demands on the small staff of that office, are problematic. Bucknell is not maximizing our ability to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses, and there is a deep and growing need for such data-driven assessments and comparisons with peer institutions.

## V. Recommendations

There are serious and interrelated problems with Bucknell's social climate for students, yet the President's Task Force on Campus Climate offers the following recommendations to President Bravman with cautious optimism. Our recommendations, along with the many other solutions that will emerge as a result of this report, will require significant time, money, and expertise, along with courageous leadership and sustained and strategic commitment by University administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents. Some, but not all, of the recommendations made by the task force require additional resources and the task force recognizes that in the current economic climate, allocating resources to one area will almost certainly involve reducing resources in others. Nonetheless, we firmly believe that the problems discussed herein deserve priority; remediating or at least significantly reducing, these problematic behaviors, habits, and norms is a necessary condition for discharging our most basic responsibilities, namely, to educate students and provide equal access to that education. Students simply cannot be expected to reach their full academic potential if they reside in an unhealthy or unwelcoming climate, regularly participate in dangerous activities, and repeatedly act out damaging norms.

**Please note:** The task force's recommendations are deeply and intricately interrelated, as are the problems they seek to address. The order in which they appear here does not reflect relative importance. Each recommendation identifies an area in which change must occur and offers suggestions for how best to effect that change. The following ten recommendations are interdependent and overlapping:

1. Engage, educate, and empower students
2. Transform Bucknell's party culture
3. Reduce the dominance of Greek life at Bucknell
4. Promote intellectual and civic engagement
5. Increase and support diversity and respect
6. Improve gender climate
7. Create a climate of zero tolerance for sexual assault
8. Improve and increase social spaces on campus
9. Educate and train all faculty, staff, and administrators about climate issues
10. Demonstrate broad and sustained institutional commitment to change

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### Recommendation 1: Engage, educate, and empower students

Students are key catalysts for changing the problematic aspects of Bucknell's campus climate. The Bucknell Statement of Student Responsibility reads as follows:

"Bucknell University is... strongly committed to fostering a sense of social responsibility and nurturing an atmosphere of civility and integrity in all areas of student and community life. The following principles guide Bucknell's expectations of its students at all times: (1) As responsible individuals, students are fully and personally accountable for their actions and the consequences of those actions, both on and off campus; inherent in this accountability is the obligation for knowing the policies, procedures, and rules that govern student conduct. (2) As active participants in an educational community, students are expected to give the highest priority to academic opportunities and commitments; specifically, this expectation includes regular class attendance and participation, as well as the timely, responsible fulfillment of class assignments. (3) As members of a social community, students are expected to respect individual differences and the rights of all others; the Bucknell community does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, or violence against any person. (4) As citizens, students are expected to show respect for the property and physical environment of one another, the University, and the local community. (5) As persons with a duty to protect and promote the health and safety of others as well as themselves, students are expected to be free of substance abuse; alcohol and other drug use is never an excuse for unacceptable behavior."

Students must be held accountable for their behavior and empowered to affect positive change themselves. Thus, in light of and in support of this statement, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Remind students regularly and repeatedly about the University's expectations and educate specifically about the specific duties that follow from their responsibilities.
2. Hold students fully accountable for failures to live up to their responsibilities.
3. Supplement the Transition to College class with additional programming and transform it to allow for more extensive discussion of University expectations and regulations. Extend the conversations about sexual misconduct, healthy relationships, diversity, and alcohol use and abuse. Moreover, develop similar programming for students' subsequent years at Bucknell.
4. Revise the Bucknell Student Handbook for greater clarity and succinctness.

The best place to start encouraging students to take initiative and responsibility is with student leaders. Thus, we offer the following additional suggestions:

5. Gather a diverse group of students to brainstorm about causal and contributing factors behind the problems confronting Bucknell's campus climate and to subsequently offer suggestions on how best to improve it.
6. Require student leaders to work with their membership to identify how their organizations can contribute to the improvement of campus climate in specific ways



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and require them to work toward those goals. For example, organizations should be required to diversify their membership, to adopt zero-tolerance policies for all forms of violence, including sexual violence, and to be inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all students.

7. Call together student leaders in a broad range of student organizations, including (but not limited to) Bucknell Student Government, the Black Student Union, Interfraternity Council, and Panhellenic Council to be informed of their responsibilities and power regarding Bucknell's current and future campus climate, including specific discussion of any relevant Title IX obligations and other relevant initiatives.
8. Inform student leaders in clear and certain terms of the consequences to their organizations to the extent that they perpetuate and/or participate in problematic norms or fail to work towards eradicating those norms.

### Recommendation 2: Transform Bucknell's party culture

Whereas it is important for students to have downtime, to develop social skills, and to generally enjoy college, we must create a healthier environment in which this can occur. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Select and train Residential Assistants for additional leadership skills and increase compensation in order to attract more qualified and mature students who are better able to promote healthier choices.
2. Develop intentional programming for all 1st, 2nd and 3rd year residence halls, fraternities, and downtown houses focused on making healthy and moderate lifestyle choices, as well as the negative consequences of excessive or irresponsible drinking.
3. Develop a peer-mentoring program to encourage dialogue across class years and afford younger students the opportunity to learn from older and wiser peers.
4. Develop methods to transform Greek-letter organizations from their current status as exclusive clubs, restoring them to their service and philanthropic roots.
5. Consider making fraternity houses dry.
6. Make hosting a fraternity party with alcohol a privilege that is earned and directly contingent on responsible behavior and the creation of a welcoming environment.
7. Host university-wide events, both with and without alcohol, more regularly; provide alternatives to Greek parties by promoting greater access to University spaces for different student groups to host parties.
8. Require licensed servers and non-drinking monitors at all campus parties involving Bucknell students and monitor the amount of alcohol present at all parties more deliberately.
9. Strengthen the role, expectations, and involvement of sorority and fraternity advisors and faculty mentors to sports teams.
10. Eliminate or greatly revise House Party Weekend to reduce the amount of drinking and increase the amount of non-alcoholic recreational activities. Consider opening House Party to non-Greek organizations.
11. Fully support the plan to reduce the number of students who live off campus.

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12. Restrict the size of all parties, whether in downtown houses or in campus-approved party spaces. Students granted the privilege of living off-campus should be required to abide by rules that limit the number of guests allowed at parties they host in their residences.

### **Recommendation 3: Reduce the dominance of Greek life at Bucknell**

The present nature and dominance of Greek life at Bucknell contribute to negative aspects of Bucknell's campus climate. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Establish equity in the social scene by requiring fraternities to host their parties involving alcohol in the social spaces that will also be available to other groups and organizations.
2. Find ways to reduce the size and number of Greek organizations.
  - At the very least, do not allow the formation of new fraternities and sororities that do not advance diversity goals.
  - Sanctions for fraternities and sororities for serious infractions should include permanent expulsion of the organization from Bucknell.
  - Consider moving sophomore Greek recruitment to spring semester or to winter or spring break. Notably, if Greek recruitment was moved to a break, it would not interfere with students' academic obligations as much as it presently does.
3. Prohibit all first-year students (men and women) from entering Greek houses or attending Greek events.
4. Radically limit the frequency and size of permitted fraternity parties where alcohol will be available.
5. Recruit and hire more non-Greek Orientation Assistants, Residential Assistants and Tour Guides and train all OAs, RAs and Tour Guides to emphasize non-Greek organizations and activities.
6. Revise substantially the Plan for Prominence to include more intellectual and cultural programming and to incorporate sanctions for violations to the Student Code of Conduct.
7. If *significant* progress to remediate problems associated with the Greek system does not occur within a reasonable time frame, approximately five years, seriously consider eliminating Greek organizations.

### **Recommendation 4: Promote intellectual and civic engagement**

A sustained effort to promote a more intellectually and civically engaged student body is needed and requested by students. Additionally, researchers have found that intellectual and civic engagement can help reduce alcohol consumption. Wechsler and Nelson (2008) summarized the findings:

...the amount of social capital (the social resources, trust, reciprocity, and mutual aid in a social group, measured as the aggregate level of student volunteerism) on a campus is associated with decreased risk for alcohol consumption and alcohol-

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related harms (Weitzman and Chen, 2005; Weitzman and Kawachi, 2000). The reduction in harms was associated with lower consumption. These findings suggest that increasing student involvement in their campus and community through volunteer service may help to limit overall campus alcohol consumption and the harms associated with it. In general, students with more involvement in productive college activities in addition to volunteer service (e.g., studies and special interests) were less likely to be binge drinkers. (p. 5)

At Bucknell, intellectual and civic engagement can take many forms including the efforts listed above under the recommendation to transform Bucknell's party culture, as well as insisting upon academic rigor within courses; promoting more opportunities for students to engage with significant social problems at Bucknell as well as in local, regional and global communities beyond Bucknell; and developing more intentional student development programming that focuses large numbers of students on common intellectual questions. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Support efforts to increase rigor in the curriculum and increase academic rigor when appropriate.
2. Consider the educational implications of grade inflation and devise and employ strategies to combat grade inflation.
3. Fully support the recently passed motions proposed by the Committee to Review Evaluation of Teaching which de-emphasize student evaluations in favor of greater emphasis on other means of evaluating teaching.
4. Create and support more opportunities for transformative experiences (such as the Bucknell Brigade, Katrina Rebuilding Team) that connect students to the world beyond Bucknell and that require them to grapple with vexing social problems.
5. Enhance opportunities for students to engage in intellectual ideas outside of the classroom such as:
  - Hosting small group discussions after prominent speakers.
  - Creating more substantive and intellectually focused hall programming including programs that critique the popular culture, perhaps involving faculty who receive appropriate compensation and other professional staff as mentors.
  - Developing a faculty (or professional staff)-in-residence program in which faculty or staff live in residence halls or Greek houses and are responsible for developing theme-based co-curricular activities.
  - Developing a peer intellectual mentor program for students.
6. Capitalize on current successes. Support and extend current programs that successfully engage students such as the Living-Learning Communities Residential College Program, CHOICE (now called Health and Wellness housing), Common Ground, and the positive effects that seem to be associated with being involved in women's athletics. The University should seek to identify other similarly promising programs and should work to maximize their positive potential and mimic them elsewhere, in ways such as:
  - Adding resources, including additional space and encouraging their growth by making them more visible and attractive to students.

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- Encouraging and supporting further initiatives that promise to disrupt dangerous norms by offering alternative social and living experiences to students.

### **Recommendation 5: Increase and support diversity and respect**

Bucknell must step up efforts to increase and support a diverse student body for many reasons: to fulfill the moral obligation to make a Bucknell education accessible and welcoming to all students, to break the culture of conformity on campus, and to better prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world. It is not enough to simply increase the numbers; rather, it is essential that Bucknell students from diverse backgrounds are supported and fully situated at the center of campus life. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Develop diversity training for faculty and staff so that they are better able to create a climate in which students from diverse backgrounds (including race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, and differential abilities) can thrive academically as well as feel welcome in their classes.
2. Improve the manner in which and increase the frequency with which students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives interact on our campus.
3. Increase the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility of the campus.
4. Create an office to support, assist, and serve as a liaison for students with learning or physical disabilities.
5. Develop learning support programs in order to better serve students from under-resourced high schools.
6. Provide adequate and attractive spaces for all students and any group or organization to host social events; encourage them to do so.
7. Fully support African American Greek letter organizations and fully integrate them into the life of the University. This will require efforts such as the following:
  - Providing housing alternatives that compare to those in predominantly white fraternities
  - Encouraging the growth of the African-American fraternities and sororities that are presently on-campus.
8. Significantly increase the recruitment of promising students from non-white, non-affluent backgrounds, including middle-class students.
9. Hire a senior administrator with expertise in diversity programming to coordinate diversity efforts on campus.
10. Study whether professional staffing in four diversity offices (International Student Services, Multicultural Student Services, Office of LGBT Awareness, and the Women's Resource Center) is adequate to effectively deliver the needed programming.
11. Develop more programming that celebrates diversity and educates the Bucknell community about respect for diversity. Supporting student efforts to create this programming is important, but we should devote more professional staff time to creating this programming rather than relying on and over-taxing a small group of students.

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12. Fully support and encourage student-initiated programs to help all students confront issues of diversity, such as Common Ground, in which students explore issues of race, class, sexual orientation, gender, and other identities.
13. Diversify staff throughout the Division of Student Affairs with an eye toward hiring professionals from varied backgrounds and with expertise on issues of diversity.
14. Increase efforts to make parents and families of students of diverse backgrounds feel welcome at special events such as Family Weekend.
15. Support initiatives to recruit, hire, and retain a more diverse faculty, staff, and administration, especially senior positions.
16. Cultivate a climate supportive of religious and spiritual experience for interested students of diverse faiths while giving opportunities for exploring different religious traditions and perspectives. Encourage respect for different religious beliefs.
17. Reexamine programming, including New Student Orientation, with an eye towards inclusivity and towards recognizing unintended messages that may increase some individuals' awareness of their difference.
18. Develop more public spaces devoted to diversity programming.
19. Investigate and employ subtle ways that Bucknell could be more welcoming to a diverse student body, including (but not limited to) hanging works of art by and/or favorably representing persons from diverse cultural and national backgrounds prominently around campus.

### Recommendation 6: Improve gender climate

The social climate for many female students at Bucknell ranges from chilly to hostile, and the gender dynamics among many students are not healthy. Bucknell must do more to work toward a healthy gender climate. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Create more attractive and welcoming social spaces on campus where students of different genders might casually interact without the presence of alcohol.
2. Support curricular development on gender issues including issues of particular concern to women, issues of gender identity and expression, and masculinity studies.
3. Increase support to and visibility of the Women's and Gender Studies program (WGS).
4. Increase student life programming on gender issues including issues of particular concern to women, issues of gender identity and expression, and masculinity studies.
5. Increase support to and visibility of the Women's Resource Center.
6. Support initiatives to recruit and retain more women in advanced faculty positions and in senior administrative posts.
7. Encourage conversation among women students about opportunities for small group or single sex housing, including the possibility of sorority houses.
8. Investigate subtle ways Bucknell could be more welcoming to women, including hanging works of art by and/or favorably representing women prominently around campus.

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9. There is ample evidence that the hook-up culture at Bucknell is unsatisfactory to many of our students. While recognizing developmentally appropriate sexual exploration, Bucknell must do more to encourage students to be more reflective and intentional about the level and frequency of sexual intimacy that is right for them. To this end, we offer the following suggestions:
  - Develop multi-method programming across the academic calendar and across class years to encourage students to be more thoughtful about their sexual choices. These programs should allow for dialogue within and across genders, sexual orientations, and class years; should actively involve students in planning the programs; and should borrow methods with proven success at other institutions.
  - Encourage faculty to develop courses, especially Integrated Perspectives courses that offer students the opportunity to study and reflect on sexuality, health, wellness, and issues surrounding them.

### **Recommendation 7: Create a climate of zero-tolerance for sexual assault**

Sexual violence in the forms of sexual harassment and sexual assault have become somewhat normalized within Bucknell's student culture.<sup>8</sup> We must commit to eradicating sexual violence on our campus. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Be clear that Bucknell will hold perpetrators accountable by making policies, expectations, and responsibilities clear and widely available.
2. As was recommended in the 2009 Sexual Assault Task Force Report, create and staff a position that would be "responsible for all matters pertaining to sexual assault, including education, prevention and response services."
3. As was recommended in the 2009 Sexual Assault Task Force Report, the University should apply for grant from the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence against Women to secure funding for more and better prevention and education programming.
4. Develop multi-method programming across the academic calendar and across class years aimed at preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault. These programs should sensitize students to the various forms of sexual harassment and assault ranging from cat-calls to groping to rape. Causes and psychological consequences should be explored as well as the inappropriateness of blaming the victim. Discussion of related issues such as HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and sexual coercion should be integrated into these programs. Methods with proven success at other institutions should be incorporated. We particularly recommend:
  - Developing programming specifically designed for men.

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<sup>8</sup> Although not reducible to the alcohol-infused hook-up culture, sexual harassment and assault find fertile ground in such a climate. Therefore, efforts to decrease the "party harder" mentality and to increase more thoughtful choices regarding sexual intimacy will serve to make sexual harassment and assault less likely.

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- Developing programming specifically designed for first-year women. Consider involving trained upper-class year women who can speak with insight about the particularities of the Bucknell social scene.
  - Developing programming specifically designed to engage mixed gender in conversations about sexuality, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and consent.
  - Developing bystander intervention training to give students the tools and practice they need to intervene to prevent or stop sexual harassment and assault.
5. Support sorority women's recent decision to boycott parties with inappropriate themes.
    - Call a university wide meeting of all interested women students to discuss the issue of degrading party themes (e.g., CEOs and Corporate Hoes).
    - Invigorate conversations about misogyny in modern culture.
    - Discuss these and related issues with both men and women students at the beginning of each semester.
  6. Educate fraternities about their Title IX responsibilities to prevent sexual violence, including discrimination, assault, and harassment. Encourage fraternities to adopt *and* enforce a policy prohibiting the derogatory theme parties that are a form of sexual harassment (and often also racial, class, or ethnic harassment). Educate all male students about sexual violence and encourage men to police one another against inappropriate, criminal, and unethical behavior.
  7. Distribute and post information about sexual violence, including harassment and assault more widely throughout campus including information about how to step in to prevent sexual assault, how to avoid becoming a perpetrator, how to respond to and support a survivor, and what to do when harassment or assault occurs.
  8. Ensure that the policies and procedures of the Sexual Assault Judicial Board (SAJB) are in keeping with best practices and aligned with the highest standards of action. Assure that SAJB members are fully and properly trained, including training in trauma and its common symptoms. Consider the appropriateness of including students on the Sexual Assault Judicial Board. Consider hiring an external consultant to adjudicate sexual assault cases.

### **Recommendation 8: Improve and increase social spaces on campus**

More spaces where students can gather in small and large groups are urgently needed. Having cozy places where small groups can gather will encourage the kind of informal discussions necessary for a vibrant intellectual climate. Having larger spaces will allow for parties hosted by groups of students other than fraternities, which will diversify the social scene in many ways. Thus, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Make greater and more creative use of existing spaces such as Uptown, Hunt Formal, Hunt ground floor, the Terrace Room, and the Campus Theatre for student parties.
2. Encourage broader student involvement in planning and hosting social and entertainment events.

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3. Design new social spaces for students in new and existing buildings and include spaces for lounges, recreational rooms, performance spaces, and a space appropriate for larger parties.
4. Challenge engineering and other students to develop creative ways to make better use of existing public social spaces on campus; provide incentives for coming up with ingenious designs.
5. Partner with Lewisburg businesses to create more social opportunities for Bucknell students in the downtown area.

### **Recommendation 9: Educate and train all faculty, staff, and administrators about climate issues**

When confronting campus climate issues, the tendency is to focus on students because the problems result from student behaviors. However, students need leadership in changing the culture, especially since students are only here for four years. We must recognize that administrators, faculty, and staff have significant power, both actual and symbolic, on campus. If persons in these positions of power are appreciative of and knowledgeable about the cultural issues that confront Bucknell, as well as about the long-term consequences of problematic behaviors, they can help effect and reinforce change during their many interactions with students. Moreover, without appropriate training, faculty, staff, and administrators can do tremendous damage during even brief interactions with students. Indeed, when the task force met with Jackson Katz, anti-sexism activist and international expert on preventing gender violence, he emphasized the importance of the full commitment and education of representatives from all factions of the university, especially high level administrators of the university and specifically the leadership of the athletics program. Everyone must be committed to improving Bucknell's campus climate. We suggest:

1. University administrators, faculty, staff as well as Members of Bucknell's Board of Trustees, Parents Board, and parents of current students should be sensitized to the various campus climate problems that confront college students, educated about the nature, extent, and implications of these campus climate problems, and informed about the roles they must play in improving campus climate.
2. Members of Bucknell's Board of Trustees and the Parents Board should be taken on tours of the social and living spaces on campus.

### **Recommendation 10: Demonstrate broad and sustained institutional commitment to change**

Leadership changes at Bucknell, coupled with instances of understaffing and opaque strategies in key offices, have led to skepticism and hopelessness about whether the institution is willing and able to address the current challenges of campus climate. The challenges that confront Bucknell are admittedly not caused by these factors; rather, leadership changes, understaffing, and opaque strategies inadvertently and unintentionally allow problems within the campus climate for Bucknell students to persist and intensify. The current administration has inherited this situation, and we have already seen evidence



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that it will work to change it. Thus, we offer the following suggestions as recommendations. The task force feels that:

1. It is crucial that the present University administration clearly demonstrate its commitment to improving campus climate and proceed with transparency and shared governance as guiding principles.
2. It is crucial that the University as a whole assist and support the Division of Student Affairs including possibly prioritizing staffing in this area of the University over others.
3. It is crucial that the University fully support the Office of Institutional Research through appropriate staffing and strategic direction, and through enhanced communications with the campus community regarding assessment and data.

## VI. Conclusion

Solving problems that involve human behavior, especially group behavior, is incredibly difficult. The issues we see at Bucknell are also cultural issues at large. As the students indicated to us, binge drinking and the hook-up culture have been somewhat normalized. Racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, homophobia, and heterosexism are virtually everywhere in the media; indeed, the current generation of students has been weaned on a media diet of sources that celebrate discriminatory and demeaning ideologies. Sexual assault and gender violence are world-wide problems, and victim-blaming is as ubiquitous as it is entrenched.

In its efforts to understand and improve Bucknell's campus climate, Bucknell will be battling against a deeply engrained culture. Change will not come easily or quickly; backlash and various setbacks are to be expected. Patience and persistence will be required, as well as informed assessment that recognizes the complexities involved in measuring success in effecting cultural changes. For example, a culture's becoming safer for women and less tolerant of sexual violence may be met with an increase in the number of sexual assaults *reported* (RAINN, 2005). With this being said, some cultural change can be affected with the structural changes recommended here. Altering some of the conditions under which students interact socially promises to improve the quality of those interactions.

Despite the challenges that will be involved, the President's Task Force on Campus Climate is cautiously optimistic that change is possible. We are confident that a liberal arts university is an ideal setting for bringing about thoughtful cultural change. More importantly, we are confident that the University's present administration is committed to employing long-term, intentional, and creative measures to improve the campus climate for students at Bucknell. Bucknell's strategic plan testifies to the University's extant commitment to further enhancing the educational opportunities for a diverse group of students. The Plan articulates five goals: strengthen the academic core; deepen the residential learning experience, enhance diversity, build bridges, secure our financial

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future. Thus, the task force offers our recommendations with confidence that the University is already willing to employ the necessary means to achieve those ends.

Finally, there is one aspect of the charge regarding recommendations that the task force did not have the opportunity to investigate: “to evaluate and recommend for adoption, if appropriate, the best practices at peer institutions in terms of encouraging the most positive student experience.” One broad recommendation is that appropriate members of the Bucknell community, specifically in Residential Education, investigate best practices and their effectiveness in improving campus culture. Through Bucknell’s partnership with Dartmouth and 29 other colleges in The Learning Collaborative on High-Risk Drinking, institutions will identify and evaluate common issues related to excessive alcohol consumption and share ideas and propose solutions to problems on and around campuses.

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