The Civility Discourse: Where Do We Stand and How Do We Proceed?

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The President's Symposium and White Paper Project is an interprofessional initiative that engages University of Maryland, Baltimore faculty, staff, and students in a yearlong conversation on a topic that is of interest and importance to the University and its community. The symposium is a joint initiative of the President's Office and the Office of Interprofessional Student Learning & Service Initiatives.

Be civil to all, sociable to many, familiar with few, friend to one, enemy to none.

Benjamin Franklin

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Introduction

The purpose of this engagement is to identify and explore contemporary issues facing the University of Maryland, Baltimore ("UMB") on the topic of civility. Specifically, the President's Fellows were commissioned as part of the 2012-2013 President's Symposium and White Paper Project to answer the following question:

How Can the University Instill Civility as a Core Instructional Value in Educating Health, Human Services, and Legal Professionals?

Our objectives in presenting the findings and recommendations that follow are (1) to define civility in a way that is meaningful to professional educational institutions; (2) to examine the size and scope of the problem of incivility at UM; (3) to identify current and past initiatives that strengthen civility among students, faculty, and staff; and (4) to offer tailored solutions that the University may adopt in order to instill civility as a core instructional value.

Our discussion of this timely topic begins in Section I with a brief treatment on the meanings of civility and incivility, followed by a suggested operational definition of both terms for use in an educational institution context. In Section II, we explore why incivility is a problem for colleges and universities and discuss our findings regarding the size and scope of the problem at UMB. In Section III, we identify current practices at UMB and other institutions that encourage and enhance civility on campus and in the surrounding community. Lastly, in Section IV, we recommend five ways in which the University can instill civility as a core instructional value in educating health, human services, and legal professionals.

What is Civility?

Civility is defined plainly as "civilized conduct; especially: courtesy, politeness," or simply "a polite act or expression" (Civility, 2013). In his bestselling book *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct*, Dr. P.M. Forni (2002) defines civility broadly as a "form of goodness... gracious goodness" (p. 9). Forni explains further that civility "is not just an attitude of benevolent and thoughtful relating to other individuals; it also entails an active interest in the well being of our communities and even concern for the health of the planet on which we live" (p. 9). Dr. Benet Davetian offers a similar anthropological construction of the term in his book *Civility: A Cultural History*. Davetian (2009) defines civility as "the extent to which citizens of a given culture speak and act in ways that demonstrate a caring for the welfare of others, as well as the welfare of the culture they share in common" (p. 9).

Civility is often associated with qualities that are phrased in terms of the virtues and manners of individuals – tolerance, self-restraint, mutual respect, commitment to other people, social concern, involvement, and responsibility (Evers, 2009, p. 241). Because idealized morals and values vary across societies and settings, the definition of civility may also be closely intertwined with other analogous concepts – professionalism, ethics, leadership, compassion, empathy, civicness, etiquette, decorum, and altruism. (Evers, 2009, p. 241-242; Silverman et al., 2012, p. 13; Campbell, 2001, 39-41, 50). Despite scholars' attempts to offer a single comprehensive definition, civility is an expansive term open to subjective interpretation.

Section I
Civility and Incivility Defined

What is Incivility?

Incivility is defined plainly as "the quality or state of being uncivil" or as "a rude or discourteous act" (Incivility, n.d.). Within an academic context, incivility has been defined as "any self-centered behavior that is impolite or boorish or shows a disregard for rights and concerns for others" (Weeks, 2011, p. 7). Widely cited within a workplace context, Andersson and Pearson (1999) have defined incivility as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (p. 457). They further explain that "uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (Andersson and Pearson, 1999, p. 457).

As with civility, the term "incivility" is nebulous and often serves as an analog for related constructs. In an integrative literature review on workplace incivility, Estes and Wang (2008) found, among other things, that incivility "is generally not well understood" and is sometimes referred to as "bullying, emotional abuse, and mobbing" (p. 218). Incivility has also been referred to as "the antithesis of civility" and is often marked by "selfish behavior, indifference towards others, the inability to curb aggression in conflicts, irresponsible behavior, [and/or] a low level of internalization of general moral rule" (Estes and Wang, 2008, p. 241). As Estes and Wang (2008) point out, in order to thoroughly operationalize and understand incivility, it is important to pay close attention to the surrounding context, particularly the immediate organizational context (p. 222).

Working Definitions

The context for our research is distinct from those previously mentioned. Instead of a pure academic or workplace setting, our recommendations below consider UMB's unique position as an interconnected group of professional and graduate schools that not only engage in the education of students but also employ many faculty and staff. In observance of our posture, we seek to define civility and incivility in a way that is meaningful to the University and useful in fulfilling the goal of instilling civility as a core instructional value.

Here, we define civility simply as "niceness to others." In accordance with President Perman's emphasis on "playing nice," we believe that "niceness" may be easily understood by all parties affected. Additionally, the definition may be used broadly to spur discussions on how "nice guys and gals finishing first" and how cordiality and kindness can be tracked across campus to ensure faculty, staff, and students are indeed playing nice. Civility is specifically mentioned in the University's

mission statement; therefore, the two terms may be used synonymously to represent the ideal norm for interpersonal interactions on the UMB campus.

Furthermore, we define incivility as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of university norms for mutual respect." This definition recognizes the contribution of prior research while specifically identifying the University as expounder of prevailing norms. Because incivility is often a precursor or cause of interpersonal aggression and violence, it is important to recognize its existence without requiring the presence of intent to harm. We believe this definition will allow the administration to identify and eliminate incivility before it escalates by establishing a violation of university norms for mutual respect as an appropriately sensitive litmus test for University action.

...we define incivility as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of university norms for mutual respect."

Section II

The State of (In)Civility

Why is Incivility a Problem?

The topic of incivility has gained notoriety in recent years, partially due to highly publicized news stories about related issues such as bullying, workplace violence, and contentious political campaigns. But research suggests that, despite our awareness, the problem may be getting worse. A 2011 survey conducted by Shandwick and Tate found that 65% of respondents believe incivility is a major problem in America today (Shandwick, 2011, p. 9). Another study found that 43% of people have experienced incivility at work and 38% feel that this problem has worsened in the past few years (Shandwick, 2011, p. 9). As we discuss in our Results section below, the majority of students, faculty, and staff at UMB have also experienced incivility of some kind on our campus. The prevalence of incivility in the workplace and at the University is, in itself, a noteworthy matter. But why should UMB and other educational institutions care about encouraging civility on their campuses?

The answer is twofold. Firstly, incivility has severe negative consequences for both organizational integrity and employee satisfaction. Secondly, incivility has far-reaching negative effects on patient and client outcomes. Combined, the effects of incivility stand to influence all aspects of a university campus, including satisfaction and productivity among faculty, staff, and students, and results for patients and clients. As an intervolved workplace, a bastion of higher learning, and an epicenter for patient care, the effects may be magnified at UMB.

Effects of Incivility in the Workplace and Classroom

Within a workplace context, many researchers have studied the effects of incivility on worker satisfaction, organizational integrity, and productivity. Professor Christine Porath at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business summed up the main reason why incivility is on organizations' radar: it costs the American economy billions of dollars every year. For workers, incivility has been linked with decreased job performance and satisfaction, diminished health and well-being, and reported turnover intentions (Laschinger, Finegan & Wilk, 2009, p. 378). On the other hand, a "supportive professional practice environment, low levels of incivility, and an overall sense of workplace empowerment" was shown to diminish new graduates' experience of burnout at work" (Laschinger, Finegan & Wilk, 2009, p. 381). Because graduate school students are likely to see themselves as more than just students—and because many either volunteer, participate in clinical training, or otherwise work for the University—faculty and staff are not the only ones affected by workplace incivility.

For an organization like UMB, the effects of incivility are even more startling. When faced with uncivil situations at work, employees have been shown to intentionally cut back work efforts, steal, sabotage equipment, quit, or even resort to exhibit aggression or violence toward others (Pearson and Porath, 2005, p. 9). That both students and employees in a university setting might engage in similar behavior when frustrated by belittling instigators and ignored requests for help is not a far stretch of the imagination. Due to the complexity of the fast-paced, high-tech, global interactions that occur today, there is less time to be nice; more room for miscommunication; a more casual workplace environment that provides fewer cues for appropriate better selfish attitudes; less respect; and more erosion of mutual commitment (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 7). Therefore, it is even more important that organizations keep their finger on the pulse of civility.

> *Not so uncommonly, students just imbibe the attitude from watching their seniors and batch-mates, and thus the very thought of being nice never crosses their minds.*

Effects of Incivility on Patients and Clients

Given the University's devotion to excellence in research, patient care, and public service, the effects of incivility on patient and client outcomes are also incredibly important. In the context of providing medical care, Silverman et al (2012) explain that "inappropriate behaviors run the risk of violating the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, as they are not typically aimed at promoting the well-being of patients and may even harm patients who are offended by them. Even if no immediate harm or substandard care results from rude behavior...it reveals a lack of respect for patients and may undermine the trust that is necessary to the physician-patient relationship." (p. 17).

In addition, research demonstrates that patients on units with high nurse burnout were significantly less satisfied with their care than those on units with lower levels of burnout (Laschinger, 2009, p. 381). Because uncivil work conditions lead to higher levels of burnout, and because incivility towards patients may critically damage the patient-provider relationship, efforts should be made early in medical training to teach civility so graduates do not carry poor civility habits into the workplace.

Clients of future law and social work students may also be impacted. In the legal field, some argue that decreased civility among attorneys results in an increase in litigation costs, a drain on judicial resources, and the cumulative effect of harming the profession's image in the eyes of the public (Campbell, 2010, p. 8). In addition, Evers (2009) hypothesizes that focusing on civility, as distinct from civicness, could "help to enrich concerns with the quality and overall design of personal services in a civil society" (p. 239). Less abstractly, the delivery of social services might benefit from enhanced discourse on civility. Ultimately, the ones who bear the cost of incivility on a professional services campus are those we serve; thus, ensuring that students and employees of the University are properly trained on how to prevent uncivil interaction is most beneficial to all parties.

Other Considerations Regarding Civility

A few other points about incivility are worth noting. First, incivility has often been shown to trickle from the top, down. Though incivility can also originate from the lower ranks, incivility from leaders tends to create a particularly harsh, self-reinforcing cycle of frustration, silence, and destructive covert behaviors by subordinates (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 11). Studies show that 65% of workers blame the problem of workplace incivility on leaders (Shandwick, 2011). Incivility can also lead to spiraling – when a relationship deteriorates and leads to increased aggression between two parties over time – and cascading – when the target of incivility criticizes the instigator and organization to coworkers, family, and friends (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 12). Both of these phenomena are potentially injurious to an organization's reputation and integrity.

In addition, it should be noted that "the grave danger regarding incivility lurks in the behaviors of habitual instigators" (Pearson & Porath, p. 11, 2005). These individuals often hold more organizational power and therefore are often insulated from organizational action. In considering our recommendations that follow, keep in mind the complex dynamics of how incivility affects organizational goals, as well as the reasons why students, faculty, staff, and clients/patients can benefit by instilling civility as a core instructional value on campus.

Lastly, it is concerning that, among the fields of study at UMB, the persons choosing to enter these professions are thought to be more empathetic than the general population. However, even after schools carefully select incoming students, somewhere along the road to becoming a practitioner in their field, some seem to lose their sense of civility

and empathy. Studies have determined that a student's experience while in graduate school, specifically medical school, may be a determinant of how students practice with civility upon graduation (Viren Kaul, 2008). Viren Kaul (2008) explains that "[it] may partly be because of the heavy course load, the rushed schedules, the uncooperative attitude of the patients, or simply because the setup in countries fosters such callous attitudes" (p. 141). Moreover, Dr. Perman has opined that even faculty and staff behavior can influence learners and that incivility among them in turn can lead to errors and inadequacies in the care of clients/patients. Kaul (2008) supports Dr. Perman's assertions that "[n]ot so uncommonly, students just imbibe the attitude from watching their seniors and batch-mates, and thus the very thought of being nice never crosses their minds" (p. 141).

With these general principles and considerations as a background, we next look at the scope of the problem on campus to help inform the size and scope of the remedy.

What are challenges at UMB?

As Maryland's premier public academic health, human services, and law center, UMB should have a particular interest in civility. As of 2013, UMB encompasses seven professional and graduate schools and houses approximately 6300 students, 2800 faculty, and 5000 staff members. Civil interaction between the multitudes of students, faculty, and staff across professions is key to successfully conducting research, education, and other business. Given the potential ripeness for action at UMB and the profound impact incivility has on all parties concerned,

we set out to determine just how big of a problem incivility is on campus.

Methods and Evidence Synthesis

Our findings and recommendations herein stem from a variety of sources. We were keen to take a holistic approach to the problem of incivility by understanding how the UMB community (including students, faculty, staff, and other key decision-makers) perceive the status of civility on campus using both formal and informal means. We coupled this data-gathering process with an extensive review of available evidence in the literature and of individuals' anecdotal experiences with incivility on our campus and others. To follow are the six sources that we used to develop our findings and recommendations.

First, we conducted a thorough literature review of the available evidence ranging from peer-reviewed articles to textbooks written by thought leaders in the field of civility. This review laid the foundation for our

remaining research and informed the findings and recommendations we propose.

Second, we were honored to interact with a variety of the most renowned speakers on civility during a Civility Speaker Series organized by the University. We had the chance to interact with four strong advocates of civility, including Dr. Jay A. Perman, a pediatric gastroenterologist and President of the University of Maryland, Baltimore; Dr. Benet Davetian, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada and the Director of the Civility Institute; Mr. Ray Williams, a highly sought-after leadership coach and president and founder of his own leadership training company; and Mr. Bernard Schulz, Special Assistant to the Vice President in the Office of Campus Life at American University, where he co-chairs the university's campus-wide Civitas program. Although we did not have the privilege to hear Dr. P.M Forni, a professor

at the Johns Hopkins University and co-founder of the Johns Hopkins Civility Project, speak before this paper was written, we used his books to guide our recommendations and look forward to the talk.

Third, we developed a campus survey in response to our research question. In the survey, we asked students, faculty, and staff to report how they perceive the problem of incivility, how they have dealt with uncivil behavior on campus in the past, and how they would propose to solve the problem. The results are summarized and presented below.

Fourth, we conducted semi-structured interviews with key leaders in each of the seven professional schools at UMB. More specifically, we interviewed deans and school leaders who were knowledgeable of the current status of initiatives in place at each of the respective professional schools. We summarized themes that emerged into concepts which helped frame our view of the nature of the problem and helped to inform us of potential

solutions. We asked the interviewees how they perceive the problem of incivility in their school, what they believe to be the major sources of incivility, and how they would propose to solve the problem.

Fifth, parallel to these efforts, we also conducted an informal environmental scan of the UMB schools' websites to identify potential problems with the visibility of civility initiatives that were not revealed during interviews or from the survey.

Lastly, we identified and assessed what other academic institutions, including peer institutions, are doing with regard to instilling civility on their campuses. We accomplished this by reviewing relevant institutional websites and searching for similar initiatives on civility.

Results: Themes from the Deans

Through our interviews with the deans and other campus leaders, we identified several themes which we incorporated into our recommendations.

Ripeness for Discussion and University Action

As mentioned above, the topic of civility is gaining local and national recognition as a topic of discussion. However, not all the deans agreed that incivility is a problem worth addressing. Some feel that the problem of incivility is not significant and that new initiatives to promote civility on campus are unnecessary. Nevertheless, the majority of interviewees agreed that there is at least some window of opportunity for instilling civility at UM.

Cross-Cultural and Inter-Professional Considerations

Most of the deans who believed that incivility on campus is a problem and needs to be addressed mentioned that cross-culturalism, interprofessionalism, and diversity should be considered when formulating our proposed solutions. Further, they believe that discussions must take into account differences in morals, ethics, and the disparate emphasis on civility between cultures and schools.

The interviewees agreed that there is no single "cookie-cutter" solution that will eliminate incivility. Solutions should focus on relationship dynamics and take into account which dynamics are problematic on campus and at each individual school. Through our interviews, we identified that incivility can take place among faculty members, students, and staff. Uncivil encounters can also occur between students and faculty, faculty and staff, and staff and students.

*Competitiveness as a
Precursor to Incivility*

According to the deans, competition can be a precursor to incivility. Competition between students and student groups, and competitive environments for faculty and staff can result in uncivil behaviors. It was also mentioned that the problem of incivility seems to correlate with the competitiveness of the program—more stereotypically competitive programs tend to experience a higher rate of uncivil behaviors than less stereotypically competitive programs. Further review also showed that competitiveness of a program tended to be correlated with the extent to which civility is included in each program's code of ethics and formal policies.

*Measurement and
Accountability*

The deans agreed that, in order to enhance civility on the campus and eliminate uncivil behaviors, a system should be in place to alert the administration of any problems and to give students, faculty, and staff a voice. This system should provide a remedy for an aggrieved party and means of enforcement for administration. There should be a zero-tolerance approach to incivility, and every individual, including campus leaders, should be held accountable.

*Awareness of
the Problem*

We noted a broader theme of program visibility within our interviews. In order to correct problems associated with incivility, it is necessary to make everyone on campus aware of the topic of civility. Awareness of our own actions and adherence to the Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you—will help to create a more civil environment.

*Trickle-Down
of Incivility*

A couple of deans mentioned, and the literature supports, the concept that incivility trickles from the top, down. Therefore, it is important to stamp out uncivil behavior within the highest ranks while training those in subordinate roles how to handle incivility from leaders.

*Values and
Codes*

To encourage civil behaviors as a matter of principal on campus and in each individual

school, enforceable Codes of Ethics, Bylaws, and Honor Codes must be established. From our observations, programs with the strongest confidence in their civility training have incorporated the word "civility" along with related concepts into their school's mission, values, purposes, strategies, and goals.

Civility on campus and in each individual school can be enhanced through official policies, whereby professionalism and ethics are strictly enforced, as well as unofficial practices, whereby individuals are encouraged to be more civil. Unofficial practices such as open-door policies, informal mentorships, and informal "fun committees" have already been implemented by some schools and proved to be effective in curbing incivility. In addition to thoughts from the deans, we considered ideas from other institutions that have invested time and effort to solve the problem of incivility on campus.

Results: Campus Survey

We attempted to survey all members of the UMB community, including all professional schools, administration, finance and procurement, the Office of Research and Development, Academic Affairs, the Health Sciences and Human Services Library, the University of Maryland Medical Center, police department, human resources, parking and transportation, and many others. We received 1,799 responses to the survey, of which 71% were female. Consistent with the University's overall demographics, more than a third of respondents were in the age range 25–34 years. Around 43% of respondents were students, and a similar percent represented staff. Faculty respondents represented approximately 18% of the sample. About a third of the respondents identified themselves as affiliated to the School of Medicine and around 15% of respondents were affiliated with the School of Nursing, with a similar representation from the School of Pharmacy and School of Social Work.

When asked about how serious the problem of incivility is on campus, more than half of the respondents (55.4%) believed that it is a somewhat serious problem, 18% believed it is a very serious problem, 24.6% thought that it is not a too serious problem, and 1.3% perceived it as not being problematic at all (See Appendix A). When asked about the importance of functioning in a civil environment, 82% of the survey respondents answered that it is very important to function in a civil environment, and 16% answered that it is somewhat important to function in a civil environment.

We also tried to assess the degree to which respondents actually experienced uncivil behavior from faculty, staff, and students. We found that 54% of respondents

reported that they *sometimes* experience uncivil behavior from faculty, 8% of respondents reported that they *often* experience uncivil behavior from faculty, and 38% of respondents reported that they *never* experience uncivil behavior from faculty. A similar pattern was reported for uncivil encounters with staff (sometimes: 49.2%, often: 8.2%, never: 42.6%). For uncivil behavior from students, the percentages were also similar but respondents were less likely to report a frequent uncivil encounter compared to faculty and staff (sometimes: 44.2%, often: 4%, never: 51.9%). As a follow up question, we asked about how respondents resolved the conflict with the instigator. Surprisingly, more than half of the respondents reported that they either did nothing or avoided the instigator. Respondents reported that they were more likely to confront the instigator if the instigator were a student.

We also wrote questions relating to civility training, its importance, and its application. When asked whether they received any form of civility training at UMB, 74% stated that they did not receive any sort of civility training. Additionally, 16.9% of respondents reported that it is *very important* to receive civility training, 33.5% reported it as *somewhat important*, 28% reported it as *not so important*, 12.7% reported that it is *not important at all*, and 8.9% were *indifferent*. In terms of addressing the problem, most of the respondents agree that posters and flyers would not help resolve the problem at all. In addition, most of the respondents reported that greater emphasis during orientation, greater emphasis during class curricula, offering civility-related campus events, and establishing a civility annual award would help with some of the problem. In the comments section, where respondents were asked to provide their thoughtful ideas about how to solve the problem, some themes were evident including leading by example, zero tolerance policies, and sharing personal experiences with others.

Based on these findings, it seems that incivility is, on average, a somewhat problematic issue on campus and that individuals by-and-large use passive approaches to deal with the problem, especially when the instigator is a faculty or a staff member. It also seems that most respondents received no civility training despite reporting that it is important for them to function in a civil environment and somewhat important to receive that training. Potential solutions from respondents were incorporated into our recommendations below.

Section III
Existing Civility Initiatives

Civility Initiatives at UMB

At UMB, several initiatives are already in place to counter and prevent uncivil behavior between members of the campus community:

- School of Medicine's HELPERS-PRO Professionalism Project
- School of Law's Leadership, Ethics, and Democracy (LEAD) Initiative
- School of Social Work's Project Management Class
- The University's President's Symposium and White Paper Project
- The University's Strategic Planning Committee
- Human Resources Services, Diversity Initiatives/EEO/AA

Regarding formal policies, some schools identify civility as one of their core values or have noted it in their strategic plan. We found that, while a few schools have incorporated the word "civility" into their bylaws, codes of ethics, or codes of professional responsibility, most do not mention the word. Some schools also help faculty and staff to gain exposure to civility by encouraging them to attend civility sessions held by expert civility consultants or by requiring them to take civility training every few years. Also, there are some policies in place for students, including a student grievance process in the student handbook, probation periods, forms on which students may report conduct violations, and formal committee reviews for uncivil students.

Regarding indirect or informal policies and initiatives, students have been exposed to civility through professionalism-related courses, such as leadership and ethics courses, in many schools; however, it is unclear whether these courses specifically mention civility as a construct. Additionally, certain schools reported that data collection efforts are in place to identify the problem and act upon it. Some informal practices are also in place in many schools, such as open door policies, "fun committees," and informal mentorships that are used by many faculty members to promote civil behavior on campus.

Civility at Other Educational Institutions

Tackling incivility has become a trend among many institutions of higher learning, especially in the wake of certain high profile and tragic incidents of on-campus bullying (Marklein, 2011). The way these institutions have defined "civility" varies greatly, depending on the needs and demographics of each campus community. For example, some colleges have chosen to focus on community involvement as part of civility while others have instead concentrated on manners, etiquette and cordiality. For example, American University's CIVITAS program has hosted tutorials on dining etiquette as well as created instructional videos on "Civility in the Classroom" (Schulz and Sanchez, 2013). It is apparent that the attention devoted to civility among these institutions varies greatly as well. Many large college campuses have considered civility, but we observed that only a few colleges stand out from the rest as having invested themselves in making civility a priority. We discuss these trends in greater depth below and highlight a few institutions that have taken innovative approaches to civility.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) has addressed the issue of civility on college campuses in a formal statement, asserting that a civil environment is necessary to ensure academic freedom and is key to living in a democratic society (Bowman, 2011).

One notable way that many colleges and universities have instituted civility on campus is to create opportunities for students and faculty to engage in meaningful discourse about current events and hot-button issues. For example, at the University of Alaska, Anchorage two grants from the Ford Foundation's "Difficult Dialogues" initiative funded a series of faculty-development intensives to offer strategies for handling potentially heated discussions (Bowman, 2011). The university partnered with a nearby college, Alaska Pacific University, to create a handbook that offers strategies for faculty to engage difficult dialogues in the classroom (Landis, 2008). At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, student leaders have been key in creating respectful discourse through the organization, Democracy Plaza (Bowman, 2011). The student group participates in two campus events, "Pass the Mic" and "I Heard, I Read, I Saw," where student facilitators guide their peers and other community members through discussions on current events. The group also created a "free speech zone" where thought-provoking questions about current events or hot-button issues are posted weekly on 22 large, two-sided chalkboards. The focus on civility at these institutions and several others has been directed towards fostering respect for people and their ideas (Bowman, 2011). These open discourse initiatives go hand-in-hand with similar

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programs focused on diversity and acceptance.

On other campuses, involvement with the surrounding community has been key in instituting civility. Rutgers University has a very strong civility program and has focused heavily on community service through the Civic Engagement and Service Education Partnership (Rutgers, 2013). This program links students, faculty and local organizations around shared community goals. Similarly, American University thrives on community involvement through its CIVITAS program, where student groups are engaged in "civic engagement activities" that foster a sense of social responsibility through community service (American University, 2013). Similarly, the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh has engaged the broader off-campus community in its community-based Civility Project (Bowman, 2011). This partnership with the community allows the university to provide

good citizenship and enhance the town's efforts at promoting civility and tolerance.

A few civility programs have also incorporated civility into the school's curriculum and guiding principles. For example, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne ("IPFW"), has included civility in the institution's mission statement, curriculum, and student programming. Civility is integrated into IPFW's baccalaureate framework, and faculty members are encouraged to include civility statements in their syllabi. George Mason University has created a course to address civility issues called "Professionalism and Civility" (Jacks, 2010). The course focuses on a range of issues from cultural sensitivity, to table manners, to the importance making eye contact with someone when engaging in conversation.

There appears to be no right or wrong way to pursue the aims of civility on university campuses, but some institutions stand out as models for how to prioritize the initiative. Despite recent transgressions within the school's athletics program, Rutgers University has a very comprehensive and well-organized civility program that began in the fall of 2010 and is currently thriving. The program originally began as a two-year initiative implemented through campus activities centered around diversity, acceptance and compassion. Rutgers found guidance in the work of Dr. P.M. Forni and took the concept of civility to the next level through "a flurry of conversations, symposia, debates, lectures, programs and fireside chats" (Rutgers, 2013). The apparent reason for Rutgers' success in implementing civility on campus appears to be the comprehensive way that they have engaged in "Project Civility." Rutgers has used a variety of outlets (e.g. debates, speakers, campus events) to focus on the variety of topics related to civility (e.g. etiquette, diversity, compassion).

A look at some of UMB's peer institutions reveals a similar interest in civility on campus, especially at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor's Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR) is dedicated to mediating disputes among students, staff, and faculty (Michigan, 2013). The OSCR offers the following services: conflict coaching, facilitated dialogue, social justice mediation, shuttle negotiation, and a restorative justice circle. These varied approaches allow the parties involved to pick the service that best fits their conflict resolution style.

There is much that UMB can potentially realize from adopting a similar approach to any of these institutions, but from this environmental scan it is apparent that the best programs use a variety of approaches geared to a variety of the civility aspects.

Fellows' Recommendations

Section IV

The 2012-2013 President's Fellows offer the following five recommendations for instilling civility as a core instructional value in educating health, human, services, and legal professionals at University of Maryland, Baltimore.

1

Incorporate Civility Into Professional Schools' Bylaws

Explanation

The University's mission statement includes civility as a core value: "We emphasize interdisciplinary education and research in an atmosphere that explicitly values civility, diversity, collaboration, teamwork and accountability." However, an environmental scan of the individual professional schools' websites produced few hits on the term "civility." A brief review of the individual schools' and departments' honor codes, codes of ethics, and bylaws also produced mixed results. Some highlights from the search include

- *School of Pharmacy, Honor Code Section 2.2* – "The school does not tolerate disrespect or lack of civility toward any member of the pharmacy school or campus community."

- *School of Medicine Statement of Ethical Principles Section I.6* – "Professional relations should be characterized by civility."

- *School of Medicine, Department of Anesthesiology Values* – "We will foster an environment that values professionalism, civility, compassion, collegiality, teamwork and collaboration."

Such references to civility are not uniform across the individual professional schools, and in most cases are not included directly on the schools' "About Us" or "Values" sections of their websites. Although a search for "professionalism" produced additional hits, it is important to remember that a violation of civility norms might look very different than a breach of professional responsibility, especially in a hybrid school/workplace setting (Campbell, 2011, p. 50).

Rationale

Based upon our literature review, one of the key ways to contain, correct, and curtail incivility is to maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward uncivil behaviors, repeating the policy regularly in both oral

and written form (Pearson and Porath, 2005, p. 12-16). The need for consistent, enforceable policies and discourse is apparent in contexts outside of the university setting. For example, in the legal field, bar associations in many jurisdictions have implemented civility codes to provide guidance for lawyers regarding how to conduct themselves in dealings with opposing counsel, clients, courts, and third parties (Campbell, 2011, p. 45). Likewise, a civility code at the University could provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding how to conduct themselves in dealings with coworkers, other students, superiors, clients or patients, and third parties.

Research on workplace incivility has shown that, "whereas many organizations create stringent guidelines about how employees should treat customers, fewer seem to articulate how employees should treat one another" (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 13). Likewise at UMB, emphasizing professionalism and the proper ways to treat patients and clients may not necessarily translate into civility between coworkers or students. Indeed, our significant finding that 1 in 6 students has experienced incivility on campus suggests that teaching and enforcing the norms of professionalism alone may not be enough to maintain a civil environment.

Implementation

We recommend the University work to meet its goal by incorporating the term "civility" into each schools' mission statement, bylaws, and/or code of ethics. As in the workplace and law practice settings, this incorporation will provide a clear message to all parties concerned that civility is a high priority, and that incivility will not be tolerated. Operationalizing the term "incivility" may involve monitoring violations of university norms for mutual respect more closely, rewarding those who "play nice" and punishing those who do not. As mentioned above, the effects of incivility on morale, productivity, and organizational integrity are severe. We believe that these widespread impacts, magnified by the response that so many students have experienced incivility here on campus, warrants significant University attention.

However, we recognize that our findings are preliminary, partially anecdotal, and are not completely representative of all target groups (specifically, faculty and staff). Therefore, prior to implementing this recommendation, we encourage the University to further study

- the extent to which "civility" is mentioned in each schools' bylaws, codes of ethics, and honor codes;

- existence and effects of incivility among faculty and staff;

- the mechanisms that are in place at the school and campus levels to enforce civility, including what capacities the University has to implement additional mechanisms if needed.

2 Incorporate Civility Into Professional Schools' Curricula

Explanation

Many of the professional school deans mentioned professionalism and ethics training in their interviews as a current method of instilling civility. Indeed, most of UMB's programs seem to have some sort of professional ethics course requirement. However, as mentioned above, civility is a separate construct from professionalism, and incivility can manifest itself in different ways than unprofessionalism. For example, Pearson and Porath (2005) point out that "incivility and its repercussions generally occur without organizational awareness" and that "[i]ncivility tends to be more difficult to detect and curtail...because it resides in the eyes of the beholder" (p. 9). Because power plays a central role in uncivil interactions, "a target is much more likely to be of lower status than the instructor" (Pearson & Porath, 2005, p. 10). Thus, it is critical that students and low-level faculty and staff learn to recognize and handle incivility from superiors.

Rationale

In their recommendations on how to contain, correct, and curtail incivility in the workplace, Pearson and Porath (2005) note that "training for civility is skill-based," and that "improving individual competencies such as conflict resolution, negotiation, dealing with difficult people, stress management, listening, and coaching can curtail incivility" (p. 14). Borrowing lessons from the workplace, it is easy to see how our professional schools' curricula could accommodate an increased emphasis on civility. A key didactic initiative that we identified is the School of Social Work's Program Management class, which teaches students about leadership styles, negotiation tactics, and conflict resolution techniques. In addition to leveraging UMB's clinical training programs and professional responsibility classes to further the discourse on civility, the University may also want to consider scaling up the Program Management class for use in training new members of the faculty and staff.

Implementation

We recommend, prior to revising the schools' professionalism programs, that UMB survey the various professional responsibility courses across schools to determine if any contain units on civility. Specifically, it is important to note how civility is being taught and defined, how students are learning to deal with uncivil interactions, and whether students are

aware of institutional processes that can help them resolve interpersonal conflicts. We note that some of the UMB's Strategic Plan initiatives involve vetting courses to determine ripeness for interprofessional education and other areas of opportunity—perhaps these same initiatives can also be leveraged to determine ripeness for the infusion of civility training.

In addition, we recommend a survey of new faculty and staff training programs to determine if employees of the University are receiving civility training. We recognize that some new hires may be experienced in the workplace and will scoff at the idea of sitting through a civility training module or an incivility simulation. However, as discussed above, incivility often originates at the top and trickles down, reinforcing a vicious cycle of destructive behavior. Therefore, it is critical that students and employees at all levels of the University understand the origins and effects of incivility, are given skills to combat it, and become aware of how their own uncivil actions may affect others.

3

Measure and Enforce Civility Campus-Wide

Explanation

According to our survey results, the majority of respondents who experienced incivility on campus did not go through an institutional process to resolve their conflict. In fact, some of the professional school deans that were interviewed admitted there is either no process in their school for obtaining redress for an act of incivility, or that the process is largely informal and dramatically underutilized. A few formal grievance procedures and enforcement mechanisms that we identified include

- School of Social Work's "Student Review Committee"

- School of Medicine's "Medical Student Review Committee"

- School of Law's "Honor Board"

Many, if not all, professional schools have some form of process to deal with egregious violations of professional ethics and school bylaws, but it is unclear whether uncivil acts which do not escalate to aggression or violence would be punished under current enforcement standards. In addition, there is no indication that any program rewards students, faculty, and staff who have embodied the civility ideal. Both reward and punishment are critical in successfully instituting organizational change.

Rationale

Three of Pearson and Porath's (2005) recommendations for how to correct workplace incivility are to weed out trouble before it enters your organization, put your ear to the ground and listen carefully, and when incivility occurs, hammer it (pp. 13-14). Taken together, these recommendations speak to the same general point: in order to instill civility and eliminate incivility, an organizational norm of niceness must be enforced. In addition, as Pearson and Porath (2005) note, "[incivility] thrives in environments where input from employees is squelched" (p. 14). Therefore, in order for students, faculty, and staff to feel like the University is a more civil place, they must have a voice and a realistic means of having their complaints heard.

Implementation

We recommend as a complement to Recommendation 1 that the University not only include civility as a requirement in its bylaws, but also enforce civility as a core value. Instilling civility and ending incivility are two sides of the same coin. As mentioned below, the University might consider leveraging existing initiatives and resources to reward civil

behavior and continue the discourse on civility as a way to affirmatively focus on desirable pro-social behaviors. However, research suggests that even a small amount of incivility can have far-reaching impacts (Laschinger, Finegan & Wilk, 2009, p. 382).[1] Therefore, it is important to continue monitoring stakeholders' perceptions of civility and incivility on campus, and to tailor organizational processes to fit the scope of the problem.

As we have identified through our research, incivility is experienced by a significant number of students, faculty and staff on campus. The University may want to study further what methods of enforcement are viable and practical; however, we believe that discouraging incivility through an institutional complaint processes should be the cornerstone of a more civil UMB campus.

[1] *New nurses did not report high levels of workplace incivility or conflict, but their perception of workplace incivility was significantly related to both the extent to which they felt their work environment was supportive of professional practice and their overall feelings of empowerment, both of which were independent significant predictors of burnout.*

4

Leverage Existing Initiatives and Resources

In Section III, we discussed a number of civility initiatives at UMB and other institutions. We recommend that the University leverage those resources to advance effective existing programs while incorporating new worthwhile practices. Particularly, we recommend the following:

- Create an "Annual Civility Award" to be given to faculty, staff, and students who demonstrate commitment to furthering civility on campus.

- Emphasize civility as a core value at the University and individual schools' new student orientations.

- Incorporate a "Civility Skills" module into new faculty training.

- Hold an annual "Civility Week" on campus to engage the broader community in a discussion about civility and incivility.

- Continue the civility speaker series through the President's Student Leadership Institute, with speakers from each of the disciplines represented on campus.

- Utilize the schools' websites, social media outlets, and print publications to make the term "civility" more visible.

- Incorporate a task and goal regarding civility into the Strategic Plan.

Rationale

Our study results suggest that greater emphasis on civility during orientation, greater emphasis on civility in school curricula, civility-related campus events (i.e. training programs and interprofessional workshops), and establishing a Civility Award might all be effective ways to increase civility on campus. In addition, a number of ideas, including the Civility Week initiative, were given substantial audience support during our speaker series. Despite the small turnout for some speakers, the open forum allowed students, faculty, and staff an opportunity to discuss hot-button issues of incivility at UMB, and proved a worthwhile means for giving campus members a voice. This list represents some of the more popular initiatives mentioned, but is in no way exhaustive of all potentially beneficial programs.

Implementation

The main considerations in implementing these initiatives are who will take the lead on organizing and executing them, and what additional resources will the campus need to implement them? We recommend that the University identify key players in existing offices—such as the Interprofessional Student Learning & Service Initiatives, the President's Student Leadership Institute, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the President's Fellowship— that have an interest in leading the charge for civility further. As recommended below, we envision the establishment of a standing Civility Committee that will facilitate further study and support civility initiatives

> *We recommend that the University leverage those resources to advance effective existing programs while incorporating new worthwhile practices.*

5

Appoint a Civility Commission for Further Study

Explanation

All of our recommendations above note areas of opportunity for further study and action. Due to the limited scope of this engagement, we have merely laid the groundwork for transformational civility change on the UMB campus. So that the discourse may continue, and so our recommendations may be realized in full force, we recommend that the University appoint a Civility Commission to study the issue of incivility further and to identify ways to implement the Fellows' suggestions.

Rationale

The Administration identified interprofessional education as a priority, so it commissioned Interprofessional Student Learning and Services Initiatives and the Center for Interprofessional Education. The Administration identified student leadership as a priority, so it commissioned President's Student Leadership Institute, the White Paper Project, and the Student Leadership Reception. Other campuses nationwide have instituted a Civility Project or a Civility Commission to bring attention to their school's emphasis on creating a nicer campus. UMB should likewise continue its support of civility by appointing a multidisciplinary Civility Commission, comprised of students, faculty, and staff, tasked to tackle issues and initiatives relating to civility on campus.

Implementation

We recommend that the University look to existing faculty, staff, and student leaders who are interested in spearheading the Civility Commission. Through our interviews, we identified various programs and individuals that maybe leveraged to build this commission. We hope that the University will continue this project and will reach out to the 2012-2013 President's Fellows for further discussion on the topic. Regardless of how the University chooses to continue this civility discourse, it is clear that this issue deeply affects UMB, its students, faculty, and staff, and the patients and clients it serves.
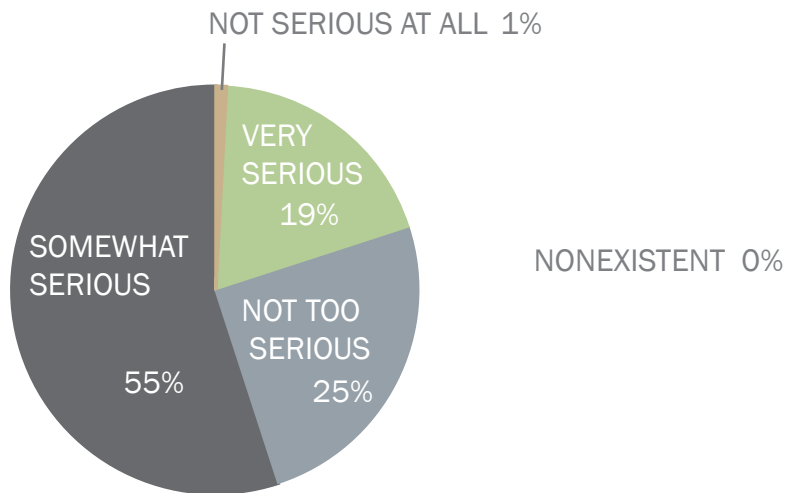
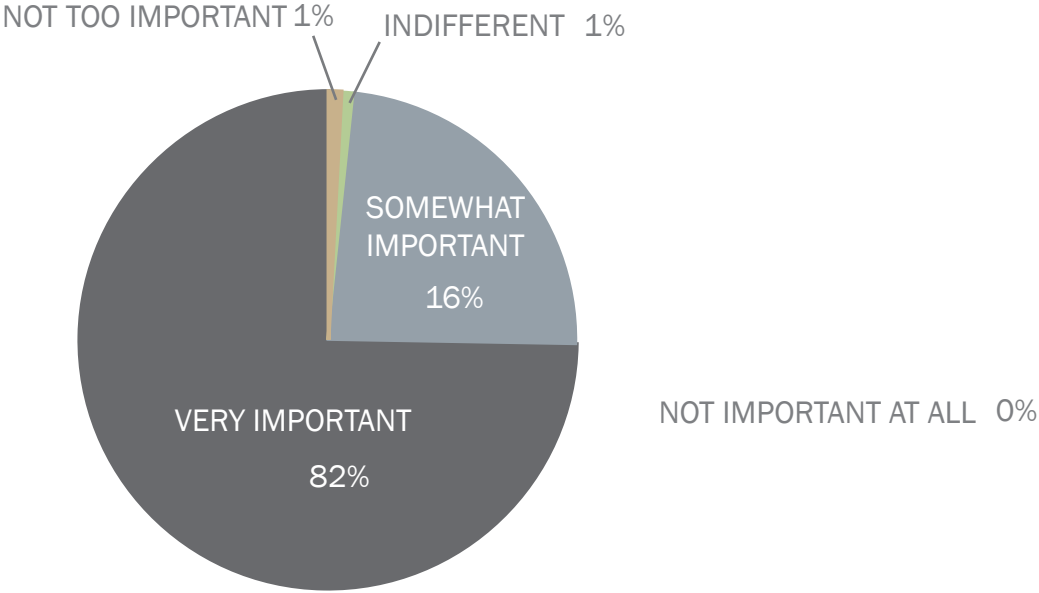*Question 1: Do you believe incivility is a problem on campus?*
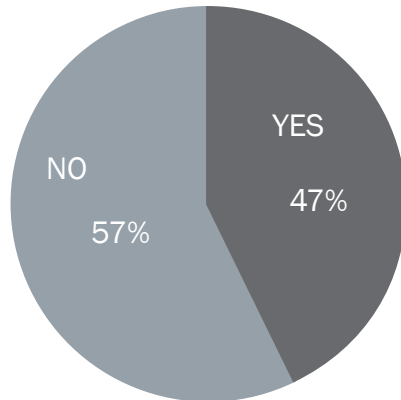
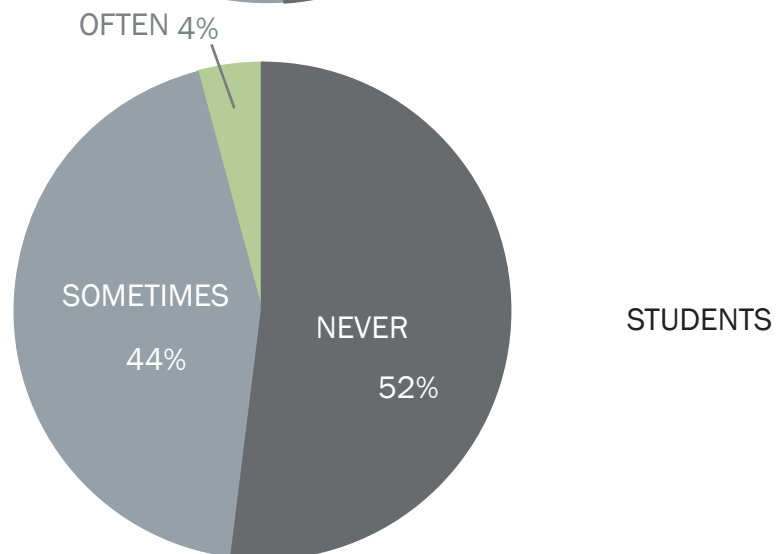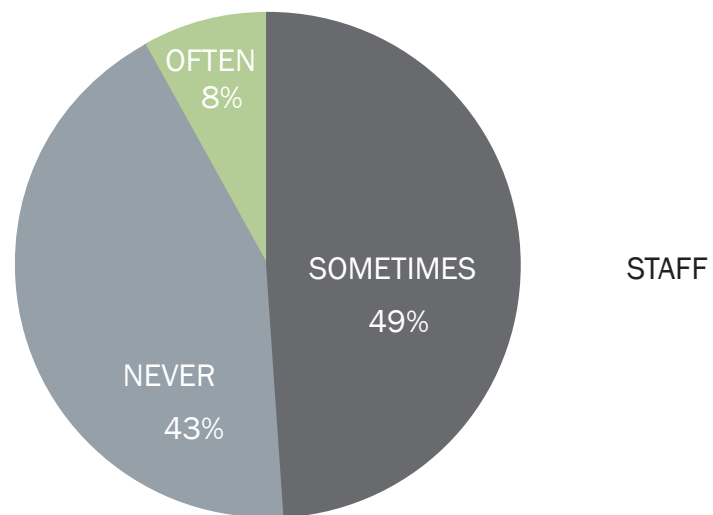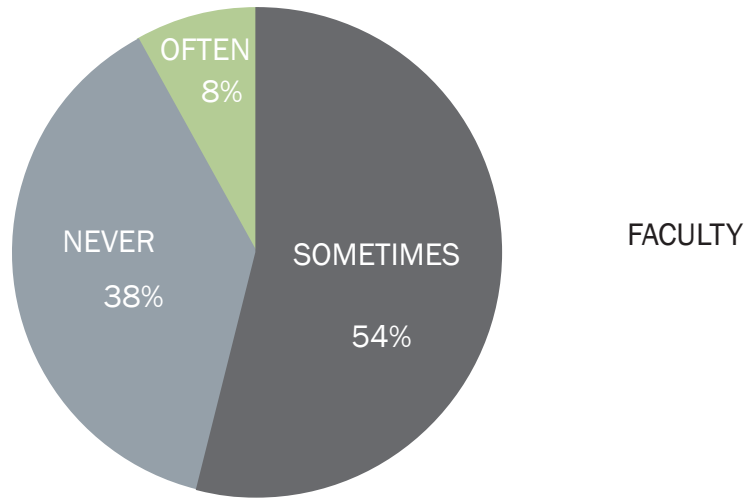*Those who answered yes to question 1 were then asked the following:*

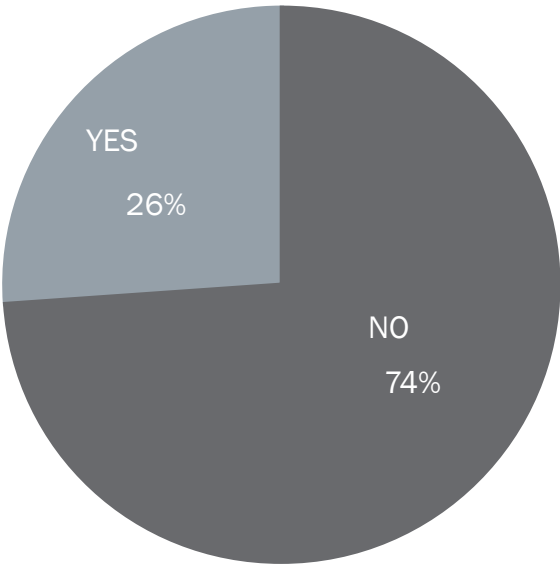*In general, how serious is the problem of incivility on campus?*

*Question 3: How important is it for you to function in a civil environment?*

NOT TOO IMPORTANT 1%   INDIFFERENT 1%

SOMEWHAT
IMPORTANT
16%

VERY IMPORTANT   NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL 0%
82%

Question 4: How often have you experienced uncivil behavior from faculty, staff, and students?

FACULTY

OFTEN 8%

NEVER 38%

SOMETIMES 54%

STAFF

OFTEN 8%

SOMETIMES 49%

NEVER 43%

STUDENTS

OFTEN 4%

SOMETIMES 44%

NEVER 52%

Question 5: Have you received civility training at the University?

Question 6: How important is it for you to receive civility training?
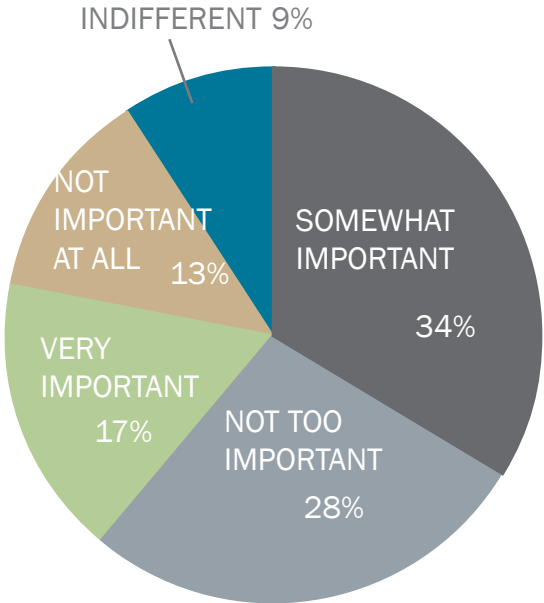
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2012-2013 President's Fellows

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