



NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR LEADERSHIP & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) Institutional Structure Subscale Report

by

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Table of Contents

Page

Institutional Structure Literature Review	1
Table 1. Mission Frequency Distributions	4
Table 2. Leadership Frequency Distributions	5
Table 3. Decision-Making and Influence Frequency Distributions	7
Table 4. Policies and Structural Organization Frequency Distributions	8
Table 5. Teams and Cooperation Frequency Distributions	10
Table 6. Communication and Information Sharing Frequency Distributions	11
Table 7. Mission Item Mean Comparisons	12
Table 8. Leadership Item Mean Comparisons	13
Table 9. Decision-Making and Influence Item Mean Comparisons	14
Table 10. Policies and Structural Organization Item Mean Comparisons	15
Table 11. Teams and Cooperation Item Mean Comparisons	16
Table 12. Communication and Information Sharing Item Mean Comparisons	17
Table 13. Mean Comparisons by Personnel Classification	18
Table 14. Mean Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity	19
Table 15. Mean Comparisons by Employment Status	20
Table 16. Mean Comparisons by Highest Degree Earned	21
Table 17. Mean Comparisons by Gender	22
Table 18. Mean Comparisons by Years at this Institution	23
Table 19. Mean Comparisons by Years in Higher Education	24
Table 20. Mean Comparisons by Age	25

Institutional Structure Literature Review

The Institutional Structure climate factor focuses on the mission, leadership, structural organization, decision-making, and communication within the institution. Supervisory Relationship provides insight into the relationship between employee and their supervisors and employees' ability to be creative and express ideas related to their work. Cooperation and effective coordination within work teams is explored within the Teamwork climate factor. The Student Focus climate factor considers the centrality of students to the actions of the institution as well as the extent to which students are prepared for post-institution endeavors. Together, the unique focus of each climate factor provides a comprehensive picture of campus climate at an institution.

As institutions of higher education seek to improve and meet external demands, issues specifically related to the Institutional Structure climate factor often create challenges. Research suggests that organizations function best when they are effectively coordinated, labor and control is appropriately divided, and structural design adapts to current circumstances (Bolman & Deal, 2013). However, PACE survey data consistently reveals that community colleges have relatively negative perceptions of campus climate related to these areas, which are connected to the Institutional Structure climate factor. The Institutional Structure report is designed to provide insight into employee perceptions of institutional structure climate, specifically related to the institution's mission, leadership, decision-making, organization, and communication. Gaining insight into these areas is particularly helpful considering the unique structural organization found in institutions of higher education.

Mintzberg (1979) described the structure of institutions of higher education as a professional bureaucracy, in which a highly specialized workforce conducts decentralized work according to standards often determined by external bodies. Within a professional bureaucracy, two hierarchies often emerge: one democratic, from the bottom up; and one bureaucratic, from the top down (Mintzberg). As a result of the decentralized structure and highly specialized workforce within a professional bureaucracy, institutions of higher education may face problems of coordination between units and staff, difficulty in innovation due to an inflexible structure, slow change processes, and complex relationships, particularly with regard to authority, decision-making, and control of work.

Institutions of higher education have also been described as loosely coupled organizations (Weick, 1976), where functions and units might be momentarily attached and responsive to one another, but each retains its own identity and is often minimally interdependent. While loosely coupled organizations have benefits such as a lower probability that every environmental change will necessitate a response or greater ability to sense necessary adaptations (Weick), they are not without problems. Institutions of higher education that are loosely coupled may experience difficulty in diffusing new policies or procedures, improving weak or problematic functions, and in streamlining processes so that each autonomous unit is not duplicating the work of other units.

Understanding the climate around institutional structure within a community college is more important now than ever. Over the last decade, community colleges have faced a challenging environment defined by resource constraints, greater demands for services and unprecedented enrollment pressure (Boggs, 2004). Hill and Jones (2001) suggest that organizational renewal and better understanding of an institution's mission and mode of operation might assist community colleges in surviving and overcoming these challenges. Furthermore, Ayers (2002) identified organizational structure, empowerment, interdependence/communication, and shared vision—all components of the Institutional Structure climate factor—as variables which might provide community college leaders with an understanding of how to foster positive campus climate and effectively respond to internal and external challenges.

The National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness recognizes the need to understand more about institutional structure and provides a tool that institutional leaders can use to gain insight into climate around institutional structure at their campus. The collected data will be analyzed using a six-factor framework derived from the current Institutional Structure climate factor and higher education organizational structure literature. The Institutional Structure subscale six-factor framework includes:

- Mission
- Leadership
- Decision-Making and Influence
- Policies and Structural Organization
- Teams and Cooperation
- Communication and Information Sharing.

References

Ayers, D. F. (2002). Developing climates for renewal in the community college: A case study of dissipative self-organization. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* , 26(2), 165-185.

Boggs, G. R. (2004). Community colleges in a perfect storm. *Change*, 36(6), 6-11.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2013). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (5th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Hill, C. W. L., & Jones, G. R. (2001). *Strategic management: An integrated approach* (5th ed.). New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Mintzberg, H. (1979). The professional bureaucracy. In *The Structuring of Organizations* (p. 348-379). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly* , 21(1), 1-19.

Table 1. Mission Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Mission	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
1 employees in this institution share a common definition of its mission	Strongly disagree	7	3%	203	5%
	Disagree somewhat	22	9%	508	12%
	Neither	36	14%	1044	24%
	Agree somewhat	99	38%	1865	44%
	Strongly agree	94	36%	664	15%
	Total	258	100%	4284	100%
2 employees are supportive of the mission of this institution	Strongly disagree	1	0%	116	3%
	Disagree somewhat	9	3%	268	6%
	Neither	35	13%	916	21%
	Agree somewhat	122	47%	2207	51%
	Strongly agree	95	36%	791	18%
	Total	262	100%	4298	100%
3 employees take action to fulfill the mission of this institution	Strongly disagree	26	10%	102	2%
	Disagree somewhat	48	18%	266	6%
	Neither	70	27%	992	23%
	Agree somewhat	87	33%	2138	50%
	Strongly agree	33	13%	787	18%
	Total	264	100%	4285	100%
4 there is consensus among employees about the goals of the institution	Strongly disagree	26	11%	249	6%
	Disagree somewhat	36	15%	578	14%
	Neither	72	30%	1252	29%
	Agree somewhat	74	31%	1627	38%
	Strongly agree	34	14%	571	13%
	Total	242	100%	4277	100%

Table 2. Leadership Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Leadership	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
5 leaders of this institution communicate a clear sense of purpose	Strongly disagree	12	5%	404	9%
	Disagree somewhat	27	10%	611	14%
	Neither	49	19%	950	22%
	Agree somewhat	97	37%	1622	38%
	Strongly agree	76	29%	704	16%
	Total	261	100%	4291	100%
6 leaders of this institution effectively interact with internal constituents	Strongly disagree	12	5%	430	10%
	Disagree somewhat	29	11%	638	15%
	Neither	58	22%	1196	29%
	Agree somewhat	101	39%	1369	33%
	Strongly agree	59	23%	501	12%
	Total	259	100%	4134	100%
7 leaders of this institution effectively interact with external constituents	Strongly disagree	11	4%	276	7%
	Disagree somewhat	23	9%	330	9%
	Neither	47	18%	1240	32%
	Agree somewhat	109	41%	1404	36%
	Strongly agree	74	28%	607	16%
	Total	264	100%	3857	100%
8 leaders of this institution effectively address crises	Strongly disagree	11	4%	401	10%
	Disagree somewhat	23	9%	577	14%
	Neither	36	14%	1035	25%
	Agree somewhat	87	34%	1521	37%
	Strongly agree	101	39%	575	14%
	Total	258	100%	4109	100%

NILIE Tech
compared with:

Leadership (continued)	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
9 leaders of this institution carefully plan resource allocation	Strongly disagree	6	2%	444	11%
	Disagree somewhat	12	5%	592	14%
	Neither	50	20%	1175	29%
	Agree somewhat	120	48%	1362	33%
	Strongly agree	62	25%	539	13%
Total		250	100%	4112	100%

Table 3. Decision-Making and Influence Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Decision-Making and Influence	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
10 leaders use employee feedback to improve this institution	Strongly disagree	7	3%	479	11%
	Disagree somewhat	30	11%	740	18%
	Neither	48	18%	1336	32%
	Agree somewhat	112	42%	1193	28%
	Strongly agree	67	25%	480	11%
	Total	264	100%	4228	100%
11 this institution considers employee feedback in decision-making	Strongly disagree	6	2%	473	11%
	Disagree somewhat	19	8%	746	18%
	Neither	59	24%	1335	32%
	Agree somewhat	119	49%	1201	28%
	Strongly agree	41	17%	473	11%
	Total	244	100%	4228	100%
12 employees participate in decision-making	Strongly disagree	33	12%	452	11%
	Disagree somewhat	65	25%	808	19%
	Neither	54	20%	1256	29%
	Agree somewhat	75	28%	1314	31%
	Strongly agree	38	14%	447	10%
	Total	265	100%	4277	100%
13 employees are made aware of the outcome of decisions	Strongly disagree	5	2%	354	8%
	Disagree somewhat	39	16%	711	16%
	Neither	73	30%	1069	25%
	Agree somewhat	88	37%	1673	39%
	Strongly agree	35	15%	506	12%
	Total	240	100%	4313	100%

Table 4. Policies and Structural Organization Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Policies and Structural Organization	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
14 institutional policies allow for collaboration	Strongly disagree	21	8%	259	6%
	Disagree somewhat	57	21%	451	11%
	Neither	60	23%	1194	28%
	Agree somewhat	73	27%	1727	41%
	Strongly agree	55	21%	572	14%
	Total	266	100%	4203	100%
15 the structure of this institution allows for collaboration	Strongly disagree	11	4%	308	7%
	Disagree somewhat	18	7%	622	15%
	Neither	18	7%	1058	25%
	Agree somewhat	71	27%	1689	40%
	Strongly agree	143	55%	577	14%
	Total	261	100%	4254	100%
16 the structure of this institution fosters innovation	Strongly disagree	1	0%	344	8%
	Disagree somewhat	17	7%	673	16%
	Neither	56	23%	1138	27%
	Agree somewhat	114	46%	1509	36%
	Strongly agree	60	24%	565	13%
	Total	248	100%	4229	100%
17 this institution follows clear processes for recognizing employee achievement	Strongly disagree	11	4%	332	8%
	Disagree somewhat	17	7%	687	16%
	Neither	69	26%	1185	28%
	Agree somewhat	107	41%	1465	35%
	Strongly agree	57	22%	528	13%
	Total	261	100%	4197	100%

NILIE Tech
compared with:

Policies and Structural Organization (Continued)		NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
18 institutional policies govern activities at this institution	Strongly disagree	22	8%	219	5%
	Disagree somewhat	57	22%	334	8%
	Neither	61	23%	1242	30%
	Agree somewhat	80	30%	1798	43%
	Strongly agree	43	16%	596	14%
Total		263	100%	4189	100%

Table 5. Teams and Cooperation Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Teams and Cooperation	Response Option	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
19 there is effective collaboration among employees	Strongly disagree	9	4%	299	7%
	Disagree somewhat	11	4%	609	14%
	Neither	32	13%	1157	27%
	Agree somewhat	118	47%	1707	40%
	Strongly agree	81	32%	497	12%
	Total	251	100%	4269	100%
20 employee expertise is considered when forming teams	Strongly disagree	8	3%	348	9%
	Disagree somewhat	7	3%	615	15%
	Neither	43	16%	1162	29%
	Agree somewhat	115	44%	1442	35%
	Strongly agree	89	34%	508	12%
	Total	262	100%	4075	100%
21 teams utilize expertise to accomplish tasks	Strongly disagree	9	3%	208	5%
	Disagree somewhat	22	9%	379	9%
	Neither	35	14%	1111	27%
	Agree somewhat	102	40%	1817	44%
	Strongly agree	90	35%	599	15%
	Total	258	100%	4114	100%
22 teams accomplish tasks	Strongly disagree	3	1%	165	4%
	Disagree somewhat	13	5%	375	9%
	Neither	58	23%	1117	27%
	Agree somewhat	106	43%	1911	46%
	Strongly agree	67	27%	543	13%
	Total	247	100%	4111	100%

Table 6. Communication and Information Sharing Frequency Distributions

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Communication and Information Sharing		NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase	
		Count	%	Count	%
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
23 there is good communication at this institution	Strongly disagree	9	3%	236	11%
	Disagree somewhat	22	8%	409	19%
	Neither	47	18%	532	25%
	Agree somewhat	90	35%	740	34%
	Strongly agree	92	35%	240	11%
	Total	260	100%	2157	100%
24 campus climate encourages differences of opinion to be aired openly	Strongly disagree	1	0%	507	12%
	Disagree somewhat	5	2%	811	19%
	Neither	14	5%	1135	27%
	Agree somewhat	90	35%	1312	31%
	Strongly agree	150	58%	478	11%
	Total	260	100%	4243	100%
25 the administration at this institution shares information with employees in a timely manner	Strongly disagree	21	8%	423	10%
	Disagree somewhat	41	16%	683	16%
	Neither	63	24%	1073	25%
	Agree somewhat	80	30%	1552	36%
	Strongly agree	58	22%	528	12%
	Total	263	100%	4259	100%
26 the information shared by the administration at this institution is useful	Strongly disagree	2	1%	278	7%
	Disagree somewhat	16	6%	440	10%
	Neither	47	18%	1219	29%
	Agree somewhat	121	47%	1765	42%
	Strongly agree	69	27%	549	13%
	Total	255	100%	4251	100%

Table 7. Mission Item Mean Comparisons

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Mission	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
1 employees in this institution share a common definition of its mission	258	3.973	3.532	***	.424
2 employees are supportive of the mission of this institution	262	4.149	3.765	***	.423
3 employees take action to fulfill the mission of this institution	264	3.201	3.757	***	-.603
4 there is consensus among employees about the goals of the institution	242	3.223	3.396	*	-.162

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 8. Leadership Item Mean Comparisons

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Leadership	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
5 leaders of this institution communicate a clear sense of purpose	261	3.759	3.375	***	.323
6 leaders of this institution effectively interact with internal constituents	259	3.641	3.211	***	.372
7 leaders of this institution effectively interact with external constituents	264	3.803	3.450	***	.327
8 leaders of this institution effectively address crises	258	3.946	3.314	***	.542
9 leaders of this institution carefully plan resource allocation	250	3.880	3.233	***	.557

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 9. Decision-Making and Influence Item Mean

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Decision-Making and Influence	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
10 leaders use employee feedback to improve this institution	264	3.765	3.108	***	.569
11 this institution considers employee feedback in decision-making	244	3.697	3.108	***	.513
12 employees participate in decision-making	265	3.075	3.116		
13 employees are made aware of the outcome of decisions	240	3.454	3.294	*	.144

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 10. Policies and Structural Organization Item Mean

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Policies and Structural Organization	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
14 institutional policies allow for collaboration	266	3.316	3.453	*	-.129
15 the structure of this institution allows for collaboration	261	4.215	3.377	***	.754
16 the structure of this institution fosters innovation	248	3.867	3.302	***	.504
17 this institution follows clear processes for recognizing employee achievement	261	3.697	3.279	***	.376
18 institutional policies govern activities at this institution	263	3.247	3.529	***	-.278

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 11. Teams and Cooperation Item Mean Comparisons

LIE Tech compared wi

Teams and Cooperation	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
19 there is effective collaboration among employees	251	4.000	3.350	***	.605
20 employee expertise is considered when forming teams	262	4.031	3.281	***	.672
21 teams utilize expertise to accomplish tasks	258	3.938	3.540	***	.392
22 teams accomplish tasks	247	3.895	3.558	***	.350

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 12. Communication and Information Sharing Item Mean Comparisons

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Communication and Information Sharing	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
<i>The extent to which...</i>					
23 there is good communication at this institution	260	3.900	3.157	***	.635
24 campus climate encourages differences of opinion to be aired openly	260	4.473	3.104	***	1.171
25 the administration at this institution shares information with employees in a timely manner	263	3.430	3.253	*	.151
26 the information shared by the administration at this institution is useful	255	3.937	3.439	***	.478

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 13. Mean Comparisons by Personnel Classification

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
Faculty	75	3.920	3.343	***	.632
Administrator	41	3.718	3.465		
Staff	147	3.672	3.343	***	.398

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 14. Mean Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Please select the race/ethnicity that best describes you:	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
Hispanic or Latino, of any race	60	3.963	3.368	***	.643
American Indian or Alaska Native, not Hispanic or Latino	0	--			
Asian, not Hispanic or Latino	4	--			
Black, not Hispanic or Latino	31	3.804	3.736		
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, not Hispanic or Latino	0	--			
White, not Hispanic or Latino	146	3.675	3.337	***	.397
Two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino	14	3.610	3.120		

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 15. Mean Comparisons by Employment Status

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

Your status at this institution is:	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
Full-Time	222	3.710	3.298	***	.469
Part-Time	41	3.972	3.578	**	.478

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 16. Mean Comparisons by Highest Degree Earned

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

What is the highest degree you have earned?	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
First Professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., J.D., D.V.M.)	2	--			
Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)	14	3.778	3.256	*	.559
Master's degree	105	3.835	3.346	***	.553
Bachelor's degree	61	3.760	3.364	***	.478
Associate's degree	52	3.617	3.419		
High School diploma or GED	23	3.619	3.492		
No diploma or degree	1	--			

* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 17. Mean Comparisons by Gender

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

What gender are you:	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
Man	48	3.747	3.368	**	.431
Woman	199	3.733	3.427	***	.359
Another gender identity	0	--			
I prefer not to respond	1	--			

* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 18. Mean Comparisons by Years at this Institution

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

How many years have you worked at this institution?	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
5 years or less	110	3.861	3.563	***	.367
6-10 years	53	3.738	3.267	***	.539
11-15 years	39	3.641	3.286	*	.390
16-20 years	19	3.732	3.173	**	.617
21-25 years	16	3.755	3.241	*	.598
26 years or more	14	3.400	3.314		

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 19. Mean Comparisons by Years in Higher Education

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

How many years have you worked in higher education?	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
5 years or less	91	3.951	3.594	***	.452
6-10 years	59	3.696	3.394	**	.361
11-15 years	35	3.506	3.314		
16-20 years	26	3.882	3.211	***	.732
21-25 years	20	3.790	3.254	**	.609
26 years or more	16	3.405	3.289		

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality

Table 20. Mean Comparisons by Age

*NILIE Tech
compared with:*

What is your age?	NILIE Tech		NILIE Normbase		
	N	Mean	Mean	Sig.	Effect size
Overall	266	3.746	3.357	***	.446
29 or younger	5	--			
30 - 39	43	3.864	3.408	***	.523
40 - 49	59	3.964	3.412	***	.618
50 - 59	61	3.667	3.406	*	.299
60 or older	65	3.651	3.381	*	.317

* p <.05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

-- indicates results redacted for confidentiality