

# **Anti-Semitism at St. Cloud State University as Perceived by Selected<sup>1</sup> Jewish and Non- Jewish Faculty, Students and Staff**

**By**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) was invited to conduct a series of interviews regarding anti-Semitism on the St. Cloud State University (SCSU) campus. The study is an attempt to capture the perceptions of individuals who volunteered to be interviewed regarding anti-Semitism on campus. An interview protocol was developed for this study. The study was announced to faculty, staff and students. Some Jewish faculty members were recruited using a phone list provided by a faculty association. Forty-six interviews were conducted, the majority with faculty (n = 26), some with students (n = 10), and former faculty (n = 6). Twenty-eight of the interviewees were not Jewish. Only one Jewish student was interviewed.

The collective interviews suggest an underlying environment of discrimination and bias against Jews at SCSU. Both Jews and non-Jews alike reinforced this. While the general campus environment is positive for most people, most of the time, respondents felt that the picture changes regarding the treatment of minorities. The sentiment is that Jews have been denied opportunities, sometimes without the individual's direct knowledge. Respondents feel unsafe, ill at ease and do not always feel free to express themselves. Further exacerbating the situation, most felt that due process mechanisms meant to allow them to redress grievances do not work, or may even work against them. While the problems are campus-wide, they seem to occur disproportionately in the School of Social Sciences and History Department. Many interviewees suggested that campus discrimination problems might be a reflection of a larger environment of discrimination and bias present in the greater St. Cloud community.

## **Introduction**

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is the second largest university campus in the state of Minnesota. The student population draws heavily from the central and western rural areas of Minnesota. These areas of Minnesota are relatively homogeneous with regard to racial, religious and ethnic heritage. There have been persistent charges of anti-Semitism on campus, which have reached the local, regional, national and even international press. A number of prior investigations have been undertaken to examine the factual basis for these claims. These investigations have not resolved complaints of anti-Semitism on campus nor have they improved the climate on campus toward Jews. These investigations have failed to resolve widespread perceptions that the university's grievance procedures are inadequate and not enforced. The SCSU administration asked the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas (JCRC) to conduct this environmental scan of the climate on the SCSU campus toward Jewish faculty, staff and students.

This is not a quantitative analysis. There has been no attempt to gain any sort of random or scientifically structured sample. The scan does not necessarily represent a cross section of people on campus. We attempted to interview as many Jewish members of the SCSU campus populations as we could. We attempted to use sound social science interviewing techniques and to conduct the interviews with highly skilled and experienced staff.

By definition, the scan will not determine the factual basis for claims of anti-Semitism nor determine the degree of institutional culpability (whether by omission or commission). Rather, it is an attempt to gain a sense of how those individuals who participated in the interviews are thinking and feeling about anti-Semitism on campus. Thus, we make no assertions regarding the factual basis for these perceptions. The reality we are capturing is what the people who participated perceived and related to our interviewers. As a result, we have no way of knowing whether or not the perceptions contained herein are the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

## **Methodology**

The planned methodology was simple and straightforward. There was to be a review of documentation of recent on-campus incident reports of anti-Semitism.<sup>4</sup> Questions for in-depth interviews would be based on the actual incidents that had been reported. In addition, questions would be formulated based on the JCRC's collective knowledge of anti-Semitism. On campus, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews would then be held on a first come first served basis with faculty, staff, and students.

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<sup>4</sup> At our initial meeting with our designated SCSU staff contact, we were told of two large file drawers filled with relevant documents. We were told that these documents were in the possession of the Minnesota Attorney General's office. Eventually we received or were able to look at a few documents relating to three cases reflecting not more than one or two file folders and without many obvious documents pertaining to recent discrimination claims.

The actual process went forward less linearly. The materials that we expected to review were not available during our initial visit to the SCSU campus (March 29, 2001). We discussed many logistical issues at the first meeting. The documents (at least some) we wanted to review were made available to us in piecemeal fashion at later dates. As a result, documentation of recent campus reports of anti-Semitism did not help the questions for this scan.

## Procedures

### Interview Protocol Development

The Center for Evaluation Research developed the questionnaire. The instrument relies on the notion that anti-Semitism is any form of discrimination against a person because that person is Jewish. The unfair treatment of a Jew does not necessarily entail anti-Semitism. It is anti-Semitism only if the reason for the unfair treatment is that the person is Jewish. Thus, perceptions of discriminatory treatment of other minorities are not reflected in this scan.<sup>5</sup> Given the limited time frame and the imprecision with regard to both specific instances of anti-Semitism and the unpredictable response to opportunities to interview, the questionnaire uses a broad set of categories designed to capture all of the major forms of discrimination:

- Housing
- Personal Safety
- Opportunity
- Freedom of Expression
- Due Process
- Climate and Suggestions for Improvement
- Other

The Housing category was meant to include office space, dorm assignments and other kinds of space accommodations. The Personal Safety category was much broader and included physical safety, psychological and social safety and verbal safety. The Opportunity topic area was meant to cover everything from acquiring a new position to travel opportunities. Under Freedom of Expression we were gauging the environment and assessing people's comfort level to practice their religion and question practices that they felt were discriminatory or insensitive. The Due Process section examined perceptions of institutional responses to alleged discriminatory, insensitive or improper conduct. Under the Climate topic area we were hoping to gauge how people were feeling about how these controversies were affecting the mood on campus and what, if anything, should or could be done to address the issues. Finally, the Other category was a general question to garner information, which may not have been included in the earlier part of the interview.

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, the SCSU staff member who reviewed the questionnaire specifically requested that references to treatment of other minorities be excluded, making it more difficult to understand the context for perceptions of anti-Semitism at SCSU. The reviewer explained that other scans relating to non-Jewish minorities were to be conducted and would be the appropriate vehicle to address non-Jewish minorities.

A Tennesen warning was supplied to the project by SCSU (Appendix B<sup>6</sup>). Its purpose is to let respondents know that their answers will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law, but that they may be "required to testify" by a variety of duly empowered bodies.

## **Reviews**

The questionnaire went through reviews by project staff at the Center for Evaluation Research, volunteers at the JCRC (professionals in social science research and related disciplines) and by a representative of the SCSU administration. The final version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The principle strength of the instrument is that it covers the full range of potential forms of discrimination. There were some topics specific to SCSU, which might have been better represented with direct questions (e.g., issues related to the non-retention of several professors). The lack of background materials prevented these questions from being included in the questionnaire.

## **Promotion**

As was agreed upon in our initial meeting with SCSU management, project staff developed an invitation to be sent to prospective participants. The invitation was placed in the Faculty Newsletter and on faculty, staff, and student list-serves. The invitation included information regarding the dates and times of the interviews as well as contact information including e-mail address and phone number of the Principle Investigator. The Jewish Faculty Association supplied a list of Jewish faculty, which was used to publicize the interview opportunities. Some contacts were made via word of mouth and opportunistic contacts (e.g. people walking past the area where interviews were occurring). Also, opportunities to participate in the interviews were disseminated through the two faculty members who advised the Jewish students.

## **Interviewers**

Five people conducted interviews. Their qualifications can be seen in Appendix C. The Principle Investigator (PI) conducted all of the phone interviews.

## **Interview Facilities**

The on-site interviews were conducted in rooms provided to the project by the University. All but one of the rooms used were in a low traffic area on the second floor of the Student Union. An additional room on the first floor was also used. A table was set up in the hallway just outside the interview rooms, which served as a makeshift on-campus headquarters. We posted a sign, which identified us as the JCRC Anti-Semitism Study group. We were able to recruit more survey participants from this location.

Phone interviews were conducted from the offices of the Center for Evaluation Research. They were made by pre-arranged appointment.

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that the appendices are not attached to the official submission of this report. The appendices are available subject to the approval of JCRC.

## Interviews

All interviews began with reading the Tennesen warning to the participants. All on-site interviewees were asked to sign the warning. This, of course, could not be done for the phone interviewees. Most of the one-on-one interviews were recorded on tape. A few individuals objected to this. If they persisted with their objection after listening to our reasons for recording the session, we respected their wishes and did not record. The phone interviews were not recorded. Most of the interviews took the allotted 50 minutes. Only in a few instances people did not show up for their appointments.

## Results

There were a total of 46 interviews given. Forty-one were on-site interviews at St. Cloud State University and 5 were done via telephone. The breakdown of the type of interview is given in Table 1.

<b>Interview Modality</b>	<b>Number of Interviewees</b>
<b>On-site</b>	41
<b>Telephone</b>	5

*Table 1. Number of interviewees by modality.*

The demographic breakdown of the interviewees is provided in Tables 2 - 5. Of the 46 interviewees 28 were not Jewish and 18 were Jewish. The breakdown of the campus role and Jewish status is given in table 2.

	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Former Faculty</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Faculty &amp; Staff</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Jew</b>	12		5	1			18
<b>Non Jew</b>	14	2	1	9	1	1	28
<b>Total</b>	26	2	6	10	1	1	46

*Table 2. Jewish or non-Jewish status by campus role.*

There were 50% more non-Jews than Jews in the sample. Most sample members were faculty and these were split fairly evenly between Jews and non-Jews. According to the Jewish Faculty Association there are 17 or 18 Jewish faculty total. One Jewish faculty member came to the interviews but declined participation because he was being terminated at the end of the school term. There were a fair number of students as well, although the vast majority of students were non-Jews. There was an impressively large number of former faculty most of whom were Jewish.

## Interview Results

We have attempted to capture the most significant themes of respondent sentiments while providing a sense of the range of opinion.

In general answers are grouped by topic area, which were:

- Housing
- Freedom of Expression
- Opportunity
- Safety
- Due Process
- Current Campus Climate
- Suggestions for Improvement
- Knowledge of Jews and Judaism
- Other Comments

The one Jewish student's responses were combined with the Jewish Faculty and Staff and Former Faculty. Within topic areas the answers to questions were sorted into the three groups:

- All Jewish Respondents
- Non - Jewish Faculty and Former Faculty
- Non - Jewish Students

The typed interview notes can be found in Appendix D. In what follows direct quotes from interviewees are placed inside quotation marks. Direct quotes from the notes are placed in insets.

### Housing

Among both Jewish and non-Jewish Faculty and Former Faculty, there were no direct reports of any problems with on-campus housing or space. Some faculty mentioned problems of off-campus housing. For example, one Jewish faculty member was told by a realtor, "In the 50's we couldn't have allowed Jews in this neighborhood." Other faculty thought that housing discrimination extended to people of color in the greater St. Cloud Community. One Asian faculty member was told, "everything had been rented" when apparently everything had not been rented because his Caucasian friend was able to rent for him an apartment in the building.

The most troubling comments came from both Jewish and non-Jewish faculty that on-campus housing was a problem for the few Jewish students on campus. A Jewish student said that she had some conflict with her "born again" Christian roommate who tried to convert her but that once she moved off campus she had no problems. A non-Jewish faculty member related that one of her Jewish students had been "given a hard time in her dorm." The same student reported seeing swastikas on the doors of male students who had befriended her. Most of the non-Jewish



faculty and students had no problems with housing but some recognized that minorities did encounter problems at times.

## **Freedom of Expression**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

There was a strong fear of retaliation or retribution for speaking out, which is not necessarily related to anti-Semitism but contributes to an atmosphere in which, "Those people who are fully promoted and tenured feel that they can speak out about any issue. Those who are not, don't." While there are those who do not feel free to express themselves the dominant attitude is captured by this statement: After "[I] said [that] Christmas decorations in the Department made [me] uncomfortable tremendous problems ensued. No overt anti-Semitism, more subtle." On occasion, some faculty faced openly and pointedly anti-Semitic comments. There was concern expressed over the exclusive Christmas decorations during the winter holiday season.

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

Non-Jewish faculty commented on being "baffled" about what to do for appropriate decorations and discussions during the winter holiday season. Most feel quite comfortable that their college supports open expression but some recognized that some of the other colleges are, "...quite oppressive, tenure makes a huge difference. It's not always about discrimination issues, it's about raw power and control, which sometimes manifests itself in racial, ethnic or gender prejudice." Several felt that the incidents that have occurred on campus, while negative in nature, could be turned into pluses by using them as "teachable moments." There were fewer mentions among the non-Jewish faculty of a repressive atmosphere or of retribution for speaking out.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

There seemed to be two separate and polar groups of opinions here. Some students felt quite free in expressing themselves. Another group expressed concern about their ability to express themselves when presenting minority or controversial issues in an atmosphere free of intimidation and retaliation. According to one student, "Why do some people need to make such a fuss [about people speaking their mind]? [There is] some fear of retaliation in protesting."

## **Opportunity**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

While some faculty feel that they have had all the opportunities that any other faculty would have, others felt that anti-Semitism played a part in their being denied promotion or retention opportunities. Respondents related that at least one current faculty member and one former faculty member have filed discrimination complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and several current and former faculty members filed complaints with the SCSU's Affirmative Action Office.

One professor who hadn't noticed any overt anti-Semitism stated, "it was recently suggested to [me] (by a former administrator) that [I] may have been denied certain opportunities (e.g.

applying for associate dean, dean, director positions) because [I am] Jewish." Virtually all professors thought there was discrimination with regard to opportunity, but not all professors agreed that the major, recent employment discrimination allegations were instances of anti-Semitism. One Jewish student was hired to recruit more Jewish students.

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

Most of the non-Jewish faculty members have not perceived a lack of opportunity for themselves. Nor did they perceive that opportunities have been denied to Jewish faculty because of their religion. Still, a sizable number saw problems in the hiring and retention of Jewish faculty. According to one faculty member:

...[There was] a search for which there was a Jewish candidate who was not being considered. They got the Affirmative Action officer to include this person in the pool but still a lot of reluctance among hiring committee to seriously consider this highly qualified Jewish candidate. Dean ended up overriding committee's decision to hire another candidate and the Jewish person was hired.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly in a current situation:

A Jewish professor was passed over for a position despite high student ratings. After being offered a temporary position he was let go in February. The Jewish professor was wrongfully rated when being dismissed. The Ad Hoc Committee reviewing the release of the Jewish and other professors recommended rehiring the Jewish professor but too late he's leaving.

According to another faculty member and former Dean, "... it is rather unusual on this campus that tenure is denied to anybody for any reason." Yet, "when he [a Jewish professor] was up for promotion, it was denied." Several faculty members felt discouraged by what has been happening in the History Department. A representative comment was "[There is] no mechanism for evaluation of the administration. Internal problems in the Department need to be addressed."

### **Non-Jewish Students**

Most non-Jewish students feel strongly that everyone gets opportunities and "the Human Relations Department is bending over backwards to make sure everyone is treated fairly. Perhaps they are trying too hard." Or according to another student, "Great opportunities! [I'm] going to Cuba this summer... [There are] more opportunities as a minority person." One dissenting voice said, "Foreign students are treated badly."

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<sup>7</sup> Indented paragraphs refer entirely to the interviewer notes, and are not necessarily direct quotations of respondents. Direct quotations are signified by quotation marks.

## **Safety**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

Although there is a diversity of opinion regarding campus safety in a variety of contexts, most agree that there are safety problems. One professor said he saw the campus as

Not being particularly sensitive to Jewish holidays, but is much worse in terms of other cultures – sees this as a central Minnesota problem.

Some faculty felt that they had no problems with their personal safety but recognized that others might have issues. One professor felt oppressed because, "I have never had to feel so Jewish. It's relentless. I always have to be the Jew, I can never just forget about being Jewish." Many of the faculty feel unsafe on campus and more so in the community of St. Cloud. As one put it:

If you scaled the discomfort of Jews on a scale of one to ten, (ten being extreme discomfort) Egypt would be a 10 and very isolating and unsafe, St. Cloud community would be an 8 and the university would be a 6.

Some faculty had multiple safety concerns. For one female the Holocaust denial article made her feel emotionally unsafe. The action of some of the other Jews make her feel unsafe too because they called attention to Jews in an emotionally charged way.

For another faculty member, the lack of accountability leaves her feeling emotionally unsafe. For example, another faculty member had Nazi literature placed on her car and the response from campus security was slow and inadequate. Another accountability topic was expressed by one interviewee, "[The school] should offer an apology to a Jewish professor, who fears for his safety."

Some faculty felt most of the problems are born of "ignorance not hostility." People commonly use terms like "Jewed down." One faculty member says it's as if he's an emissary for all Jews. He feels obligated to continuously defend himself and all Jews. Another faculty member addressed the safety of Jewish students saying, "Students are more isolated. [They are] concerned about [being] reprimand[ed] for participating in interviews."

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

There seem to be two distinct sets of opinions. One faculty member, who said he has "had no issues," best represents one set. He said his department informally discusses diversity issues all the time. "We have a major discrimination episode every year – African American, Jewish, gay and lesbian issues, Hispanics, American Indians, women."

The other set of opinions recognizes that there are safety problems for Jews on the St. Cloud campus. "There is an overall climate here of put-down, which is not directed at people of one group. It is directed at many and it is based on fear and intimidation."

Interestingly, non-Jews recognize the Jewish holidays as a safety issue. For example:

A Jewish organization has been working on recognition of Jewish holidays at SCSU. Other universities she has been at have put Jewish holidays on their [planning] calendars [for university scheduling purposes], and that it seems like that's changing at SCSU now.

Another faculty put it this way: "Mono-culture on campus and no respect for Jewish holidays. Isolation is very clear. Meetings [are] set on High Holy days."

Perhaps of greater import is the sentiment expressed by one non-Jewish faculty member who said that she knew of two Jewish faculty members too fearful to participate in the interviews. This interviewee was observed to be very fearful and anxious herself. Another faculty member felt "emotionally unsafe," and for yet another, participating in the interviews prompted this comment, "It's been hard to be here," because of the fear of reprisal.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

Most of the students have not seen or heard anything disturbing. However, a large minority has heard disparaging remarks. In some cases, "people don't realize what they're saying." Or that, "When asked questions it is curiosity and ignorance and not malice." One student thought that, "there is merit to this [environmental scan] going on. People are so used to certain expressions and think if they are corrected, people are simply trying to be politically correct." This student recognized the threatening nature of terms like, "Jewed down."

## **Due Process**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

There is virtual unanimity that due process is not followed at SCSU, which prompted one professor to state that he suspects many people who have grievances don't file them because the grievance process "takes so long that it simply wastes all of the energy and much of the life of the grievant until some sort of resolution is reached." Those with official responsibilities do not inspire confidence. For example, "Affirmative Action Office choosing not to interview witnesses in Chronicle insert case" was cited as an instance of lack of response from the administration. Or for another faculty member the process was even more flawed:

Dean does not always follow due process. There are problems for students -- there have been problems following procedures. Need [Faculty] Senate action on the process. "There has been anti-Semitism" in the [Faculty] Senate.

Another instance where the Affirmative Action Office was cited for not being helpful (as well as the Union):

Union and Affirmative Action were not helpful in pursuing complaints. There was no place to turn -- felt isolated. "There was no help from the Administration, 'you're the trouble maker.' Adversarial, hostile, unpleasant."

Or even more pointedly:

Affirmative Action Office was "afraid to do its job." It did not take action against individual who made egregious remarks. "You file a complaint and the U protects the perpetrator and gets better treatment than the victims. Affirmative Action Officer is inadequate." A leader of the Inter-Faculty organization has been quashing everything (i.e., no support from faculty association). The system did not work because those in critical roles were either inadequate to the task or were on the wrong side of the issue.

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

The non-Jewish faculty members are almost unanimous in echoing the feelings of the Jewish faculty. According to one professor, he has had experience as an administrator in numerous grievance procedures at SCSU and other institutions. He said processes at SCSU are "more complex than any I've ever seen. It's layer upon layer upon layer... they're deliberately made cumbersome." The issue of due process has been made more complex because according to another professor, problems include frequent change in administration and following a long list of rules that is "a maze." Since the process is so problematical, "People have no faith or trust that their grievance will be treated fairly." And more importantly, "No actions taken against those who perpetrate racism and anti-Semitism. No records of warnings, etc. "It seems that, [you] put something forth to the AA Office and it disappears." There is no communication. The office seems to be a pawn for the President. Due process seems to involve "layers of pain."

### **Non-Jewish Students**

The non-Jewish students had comments mainly of two types. Either they had not had much experience with grievance procedures and thought they were fine, or they echoed the faculty sentiment. One female student who did have a need for support from the system found she was forced to

Jump through hoops. Does not know where to file. State Legislator said to go to student government. "Just a lot of BS. Where do I go when my Student Government doesn't represent me?"

## **Current Campus Climate**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

The Jewish faculty sees the situation as quite serious and complex. One faculty member offered a fairly representative position:

Thinks there is some genuine anti-Semitism in the History Department, as well as "massive" ignorant anti-Semitism on campus and in the community. Colleagues found out that many of the students who say "Jewed down" have no idea of the context of the term. "It creates a climate where Jewish folks are less than happy, but I'm not sure that what's happened this year is healthy. Many of us, Jews and non-Jews, believe that those with the biggest complaints are problematic people independent of the anti-Semitism issue...so how do you separate those issues?"

The climate makes it difficult if not impossible to determine how widespread the problems are or if in some instances the problems are independent of anti-Semitism.

Similarly, another Jewish faculty says:

“Part of the problem is that the University will not and does not accept responsibility for ever doing anything wrong. No one is ever punished for anything.” Nine Jewish faculty members were either forced to leave or chose to leave because of the climate toward Jews at SCSU. The number is staggering because total number of Jews has always been low.

Along a different vein but one that is shared by many others:

“I think that the level of real out and out anti-Semitism is probably fairly low. It doesn't take many people, particularly if they're in positions of some kind of authority, to cause a lot of trouble. But the level of ignorance is staggeringly high.” It is a problem for many, not just Jews. “That very potent combination of ignorance and ill will has been allowed to flourish.”

One individual offered some hope in a difficult situation, which was echoed by others:

On the one side it is positive--anti-Semitism is finally on the table as an issue. There is, however, backlash against any negative publicity.

In other words it is a good thing to have the issue of anti-Semitism being discussed but those who are involved may be subject to retaliation for making the revelations or at the very least face pressure not to comment on the current climate.

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

There was some agreement that there are issues to be dealt with in the current campus climate, but what those issues are varied from individual to individual. For example, one Department Chair expressed surprise that some Jewish faculty were actually experiencing anti-Semitism. Another faculty member felt that the real problems were:

Must get people to see that the actions are not anti-Semitic. “At what point does the college say, ‘we've done everything we can.’?”

One faculty member offered the insight, “[We] need to get people to talk to each other, build a safe environment.” Because as another former faculty says:

Jewish people are in a "fishbowl." They feel on guard all the time. The same is true for the Jewish students. They don't know if there will be retaliation. "Being Jewish means being quiet about it."

But it's not just Jews who are in the "fishbowl" because, as another person put it, broader issues with gender and other discrimination have common threads. Although as another said,

There is strong anti-Jewish sentiment and anti-women.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

There was a wide range of comments regarding climate. The predominant feeling seemed to be that there were few, if any, problems on campus. Regarding the common use of the term "Jewed down" one student suggested that, "I've lived in 20-some odd states and I've heard that everywhere, so I would say it's just typical stuff – not good stuff, but typical." A few students understood the situation as being more uncomfortable for their Jewish peers, suggesting that the climate was tense. Some recognized the positive role of student government in supporting diversity but that a top student leader seemed to act in a contrary manner. However, as one minority student said, it can get scary for minorities because you are accused of "just playing the race card. I don't feel comfortable being a minority student. Despite policies there is not a lot of direct support. We don't know what will happen to us."

### **Suggestions for Improving the Climate**

#### **All Jewish Respondents**

One individual seemed prepared with a list of strong suggestions.

- 1) There needs to be an "educational package that is part of the orientation" of new faculty, administrators, students and staff. Current diversity training does not include religious diversity of any kind. 2) People need to understand "parameters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior." 3) "It shouldn't take years for grievances to go through the system. There should be an ombudsperson to handle discrimination complaints and issues of retaliation. We need to have administrative responsibility at this institution instead of administrative deniability." This individual also commented, "A university needs to make it clear that its environment is open to all kinds of people. Nobody should feel discriminated against at an institution. The administration has to make it clear that this kind of behavior is intolerable at every level and to take the steps to ensure that."

Two former Jewish faculty members called for the dismissal of a dean and suggested that the chair of a Department be replaced as well. As one put it, the climate can't be changed "as long as you have persons in power like [that] dean."

Another comment was:

Educate the professors. Students come as 'empty bowls,' don't know it's okay to question professors. Everyday awareness is needed. There should be no big tests on Jewish holidays. This would help. Anti-Semitism is left out of minority issues [because it seems some feel that] "Jews aren't really a minority."

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

One professor suggested that he did not see much that needed changing but still thought the History Department might be a candidate for change since the History Department seemed "contentious" to him. Another professor was hopeful that open discussions could be held on issues like the selection of graduation day. A former faculty member suggested that there needed to be an impartial person who listens to complaints who is not an employee of the administration, (i.e., an ombudsperson). Finally, another suggested it was "just time to follow Union procedures" in cases of complaints.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

No suggestions.

## **Knowledge of Jews and Judaism**

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

Most of the faculty that responded to this item had fairly strong exposure to Jews and Judaism. Some helped families at holiday time or had close friendships with Jews.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

A large number of students had little or no contact with Jews or Judaism before starting at SCSU. For example one student learned about Judaism from campus rallies, Human Relations courses, and the movie *Schindler's List*.

## **Other Comments**

### **All Jewish Respondents**

Perhaps the most interesting result here relates to the campus Holocaust Center, which is controversial because of the lack of Jewish involvement in its governance.

### **Non-Jewish Faculty, Staff and Former Faculty**

Minnesota culture of not talking about things leaves oppressed people vulnerable. But we need to do something.

### **Non-Jewish Students**

One student observed, "It's okay to be Jewish, but don't act Jewish."

## **Discussion**

In setting the framework for discussing the results, it is important to discuss the sample. The sample was not random nor did it represent any attempt at any type of scientific sampling. Still, the sample ended up with roughly two-thirds of the known Jewish faculty. The non-Jewish



faculty is more problematical because they represent such a small proportion of the total faculty. Nonetheless, they provided a fairly diverse set of answers.

It is of more than passing interest that only one Jewish student chose to participate in the interviews. The lack of Jewish student participation may be due to what many on the faculty have characterized as an atmosphere where reprisal and retaliation are commonly feared as possible outcomes for participation. The targeting of a Jewish student with swastikas on her dormitory room doors speaks to a potentially oppressive atmosphere for Jewish students.

A review of the interviews suggests that there are serious problems facing Jewish faculty and students. There seemed to be fairly high consensus in thinking that there were two kinds of discrimination. One type is born of ignorance. The other, more insidious, rarely takes the form of open hostility. It is manifested in situations like not being offered a promotion or not considering a particular job candidate. It should be noted that what appears to some as the benign form still conveys a threat to the hearer and carries with it a great deal of trauma. Hearing terms like "Jewed down" or having swastikas carved into the door to a room feel very much like an assault to victims. Many on campus simply do not feel safe.

It appears that many of the fears and incidents revolve around the lack of any credible offices on campus to which those having problems can turn. It is only when people speak up about an incident or situation that the deeper problems are uncovered. Whether it is the Affirmative Action Office, Campus Security, Faculty Senate, Deans, Department Chairs, the President's Office or the Union, it is widely perceived that no one at the University seems capable or willing to deal with problems involving discrimination. From the non-Jewish perspective, there were no problems, even though there were major discrimination incidents on campus every year. In other words, since discrimination does not touch their lives directly it is not a problem and is thus allowed to fester. For those who are Jewish, another minority or those who lend them support, there is a strong perception of a process that lacks integrity due to a lack of due process, pressure from the administration to sweep discrimination issues under the carpet and lack of accountability in terms of the conduct of faculty, staff and students.

SCSU seems to want to make a reasonable effort at creating diversity on campus in both the student and faculty populations, yet respondents perceived insufficient institutional support for minority staff and student populations once they are on campus. For example, Jewish faculty should not be put in the position of enforcing campus regulations that prohibit official departmental Christmas displays. Respondents strongly felt that if a regulation is in place then the administration needs to enforce it with the help of department chairs, campus security and other resources it can bring to bear. It is telling that more comments regarding holidays were garnered when asking about safety than when asking about freedom of expression.

Some areas of the campus seem to be the focus of recurring problems. The History Department, and its leadership, and the School of Social Sciences, and its leadership are the focus of many comments. The perception for both the Jewish and non-Jewish faculty and former faculty is that there is something amiss in these areas. Perceptions of the St. Cloud community are unflattering.

Along the same lines but perhaps more subtle is the perception that there is an unusually high turnover of Jewish faculty in relation to the total number of Jewish faculty on campus.

## **Conclusion**

In essence, the scan confirms that there is a strong perception of anti-Semitism on campus. Some faculty members and students perceive a consistent and prevailing sense of discrimination. Many Jewish respondents feel threatened, ill at ease and in some instances unsafe. There is a nearly universal perception that regulations are not being followed and that due process is hopelessly compromised.