

A photograph of the Iowa State Capitol building in Des Moines, Iowa. The building is a large, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central portico supported by columns. Above the portico is a smaller structure with a balcony, and at the very top is a large, ornate dome. An American flag flies on a tall pole in front of the dome. The building is set against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a paved walkway. The text "IOWA" is overlaid in a yellow box at the top center.

IOWA

CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY REPORT 2021

Graduate Students

Survey Administered: March 29-May 28, 2021

Report Published: March 24, 2022



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SPRING 2021

SURVEY ADMINISTERED

4,389 graduate students in Medicine, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, Graduate, and Business

28%

RESPONSE RATE

1,246 graduate students

89%

REPORT A SENSE OF BELONGING IN THEIR PROGRAMS

This remains consistent across various social identities

→ [DIVERSITY.UIOWA.EDU/DATA/CAMPUS-CLIMATE](https://diversity.uiowa.edu/data/campus-climate)

PROCESS OVERVIEW

ADMINISTRATION

The 2021 student surveys were conducted March 29–May 28, 2021 through three key channels:

1. A campus climate survey was developed internally and administered to professional students at the University of Iowa
2. The Student Experience at Research University (SERU) general survey was administered to undergraduate students at national educational research institutions including the University of Iowa
3. The Graduate Student Experience at Research University (gradSERU) general survey was administered to graduate students at national educational research institutions including the University of Iowa

As a whole the survey reached three student population groups: professional, graduate, and undergraduate students.

REPORT RELEASE DATE: March 24, 2022

SURVEY PARTICIPATION - GRADUATE STUDENTS

This report uses questions from the University of Iowa's 2021 Graduate Student Experience in the Research University (gradSERU) survey. The 2021 gradSERU was administered to a total of 4,389 graduate students from March 29 through May 28, 2021.

The overall response was 28% with 1,246 graduate students responding.

The response by college was:

- 62 Carver College of Medicine (28% college response rate)
- 14 College of Dentistry (29% college response rate)
- 173 College of Education (29% college response rate)
- 82 College of Engineering (30% college response rate)
- 523 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (29% college response rate)
- 68 College of Nursing (28% college response rate)
- 13 College of Pharmacy (22% college response rate)
- 109 College of Public Health (32% college response rate)
- 114 Graduate College (32% college response rate)
- 88 Tippie College of Business (22% college response rate)



DATA REVIEW & REPORTING FOCUS

A selected subset of survey questions and associated data was used to home in on two key diversity, equity, and inclusion-focused themes:

1. Perceptions of Belonging Across Campus
2. Equity in Student Achievement

The areas of “perceptions of belonging across campus” and “equity in student achievement” were evaluated via data collected in response to ten questions of direct relevance to these focal themes. Those ten questions and their accompanying responses inform the data analysis found in the *Survey Response Highlights* section of this report.

HIGHLIGHTED SURVEY QUESTIONS:

1. I belong in my graduate/professional program.
2. Students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus.
3. Students of my gender are respected on this campus.
4. Students of my sexual orientation are respected on this campus.
5. Students of my political beliefs are respected on this campus.
6. Students with a physical, psychological, or learning disability like mine are respected on this campus.
7. My advisor respects me as an individual.
8. My advisor has time for me when I need help or advice.
9. Rules and regulations are equitably applied.
10. Faculty encourage expression of diverse viewpoints from their students.

In addition to the ten highlighted questions, we also included data from three other relevant questions in the survey. Though written analysis for those questions is not included in the *Survey Response Highlights*, graphical representation of these survey responses is included in the *Report Data* section of this report as a source of additional insight and information.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS:

1. I am proud to be a student at this campus.
2. I am proud to be a student in my graduate/professional program.
3. Rules and regulations are fair.

ABBREVIATIONS IN SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Due to small sample sizes, some social identities were collapsed for analyses:

LGBQ includes people who identify as asexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian, pansexual, questioning, queer, or self-described

URM (Underrepresented U.S. Minority) includes people who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Black or African American, and Latinx

TGNC includes people who identify as trans woman, trans man, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, or people who selected more than one gender identity



SURVEY RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS - GRADUATE STUDENTS

Question #1: I belong in my graduate/professional program.

Overall, most graduate students (89%) report a sense of belonging in their programs. This sense of belonging remains consistent (ranging from 81-91%) across various social identities.

Questions #2-6: Students of my (____) are respected on this campus.

Students were asked a series of questions about the extent to which they perceive that their social identities and characteristics are respected on campus. The majority of students report that their social identities and characteristics are respected on campus.

Race/ethnicity

Overall, most graduate students (92%) report a sense of respect for their race/ethnicity on campus. However, graduate students who identify as URM (76%), Asian (76%), and multi-racial (79%) are less likely to agree.

Gender

Overall, most graduate students (94%) report a sense of respect for their gender on campus. However, graduate students who identify as TGNC (62%) are less likely to agree.

Sexual orientation

Overall, most graduate students (95%) report a sense of respect for their sexual orientation on campus.

Political beliefs

Most graduate students identifying as liberal (97%) and moderate (83%) report a sense of respect for students holding their political beliefs. However, graduate students identifying as conservative (50%) are less likely to agree that students holding their political beliefs are respected on campus.

Physical, psychological, or learning disabilities

Overall, most graduate students who identify as having a disability (78%) report feeling their ability status is respected on campus. However, students who identify as having a physical disability (66%), learning disability (51%), and neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability (65%) are less likely to agree.

Questions #7-8: My advisor respects me as an individual and My advisor has time for me when I need help or advice.

Overall, most graduate students (97%) report feeling respected by their advisor. This feeling of respect remains consistent across various social identities. Likewise, most graduate students (92%) also report feeling their advisor has time for them when they need help or advice.

Question #9: Rules & regulations are equitably applied.

Overall, most graduate students (85%) report feeling that rules and regulations are equitably applied on campus. However, students who identify as TGNC (66%) are less likely to agree.

Question #10: Faculty encourages expression of diverse viewpoints from the students.

Overall, most graduate students (87%) report feeling that faculty encourage expression of diverse viewpoints. This feeling remains consistent (ranging from 81-92%) across various social identities.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR UI LEADERSHIP

BELONGING & INCLUSION

In a continued effort to cultivate inclusion and progress, University of Iowa leadership and Graduate College staff can consider creating more opportunities to engage in open, ongoing dialogue with students in its graduate programs.

Likewise, on a program-level, faculty and staff might consider creating systems within their programs/units that ensure open, ongoing dialogue between students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds and perspectives.

Any attempts to host ad-hoc or recurring dialogue must also include in their design (and communication to students) how such conversations might lead to considerations of policy change within a program or unit.

Examples of opportunities to extend dialogue:

1. Periodic and thoughtfully scheduled town halls might serve as opportunities to bring together entire program communities to discuss pre-identified themes and to answer student-specific questions and ideas. Town halls can also provide a functional opportunity for appropriate University of Iowa leadership to meet with one or more graduate student program communities at once.
2. Offering structures for smaller affinity group meetings within a program's community might offer students an opportunity to discuss key program climate issues; these meetings might or might not include faculty and staff, pending student preference.
3. Developing a structure to support(*) a student liaison who can serve as a bridge between faculty/staff and students can be a useful approach to maintaining connection and understanding of various perspectives.

(*) Support might be identified as stipends, course credit, or other benefits that acknowledge the commitment by students and staff who serve in such roles above and beyond their typical commitments.

Program Belonging

The survey responses suggest a strong feeling of belonging among graduate students at the University of Iowa. Staff at the Graduate College, in collaboration with faculty and staff working in graduate programs, might consider developing channels and official processes for students to share feedback about the strengths of their programs: *What keeps these students here? What brings them here in the first place?* It is essential to identify the strengths of our various programs—and to maintain and grow those areas of excellence.

Holding Space for a Range of Perspectives

A majority of graduate students report that faculty encourage expression of diverse viewpoints. To maintain—and even improve this level of alignment—faculty might consider a structure for ongoing review of program-wide pedagogy that addresses these questions: *How do we nurture classroom environments that deliver necessary field-based knowledge and critical thinking skills while making space for all voices to be heard with respect?* Furthermore, how can students have a voice in the ongoing pedagogical design?

EQUITY IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Equitable Application of Rules & Regulations

While most graduate students report equitable application of rules and regulations, students identifying as TGNC are less likely to agree. Ongoing policy review is essential for healthy programs. As programs design their review processes, we recommend considering how students' voices will play a role in the review and evolution of program policy.



NEXT STEPS

Following the release of this report, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion staff are immediately engaging representatives at University of Iowa graduate programs to discuss the data from this survey in direct conversation.

Within and beyond the scope of these specific reports, our division's staff are also available to:

1. Address long-term strategies for building inclusive program climates
2. Facilitate training sessions for interested faculty and staff

For further discussion regarding strategic planning please contact:

Elizabeth Tovar
Associate Vice President and Executive Officer
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
elizabeth-tovar@uiowa.edu

For further discussion regarding training opportunities, please contact:

Brianna Marcelo
Director of Inclusive Education & Strategic Initiatives
Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
brianna-marcelo@uiowa.edu

2021 Student Survey Implementation and Analysis Team:

Kimberly Carter | Office of the Executive Vice President & Provost
Bradley Cramer | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Bruce Drummond | University Human Resources
Wayne Jacobson | Office of Assessment
Bria Marcelo | Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Dawn Moore | Information Technology Services
Maurine Neiman | College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Andre Perry | Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Duane Staskal | Information Technology Services
Charlie Taylor | Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Elizabeth Tovar | Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
KaLeigh White | Graduate College

Finally, we encourage participation by all students, faculty, and staff in our next Campus Climate Survey effort which launches on March 29, 2022 and runs through May 28, 2022. (The survey will be administered to undergraduate and graduate students as part of the Student Experience at the Research University survey (SERU, gradSERU) and to faculty, staff, and professional students as a UI-developed Qualtrics survey.)

REPORT DATA & TECHNICAL NOTES

Graphical data visualization is featured on the following pages, preceded by technical notes regarding the data collection and processing.

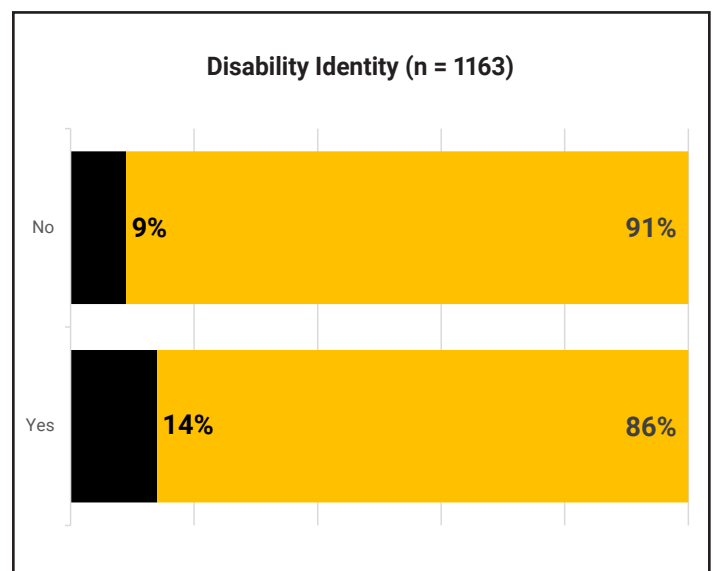
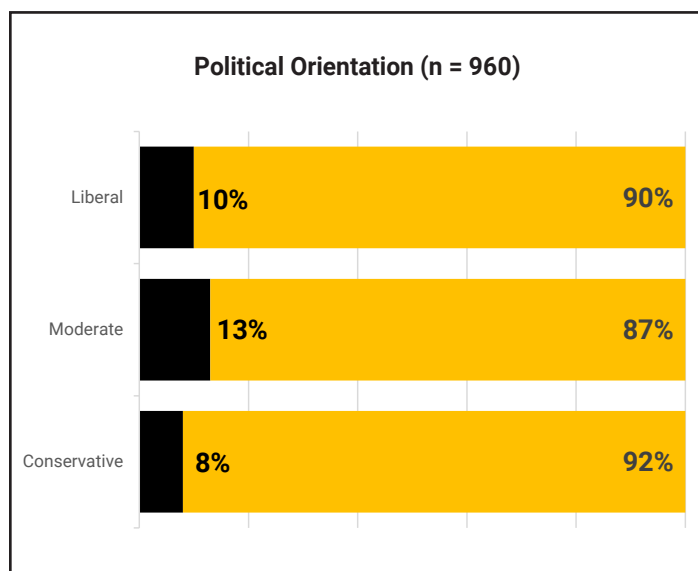
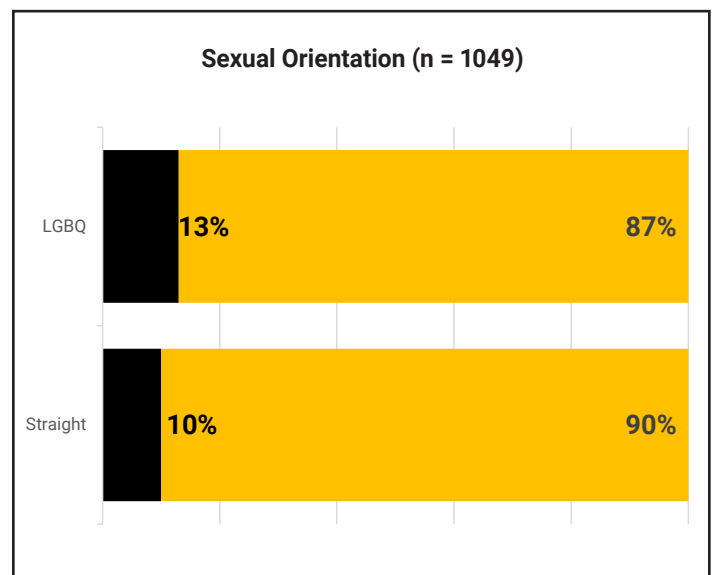
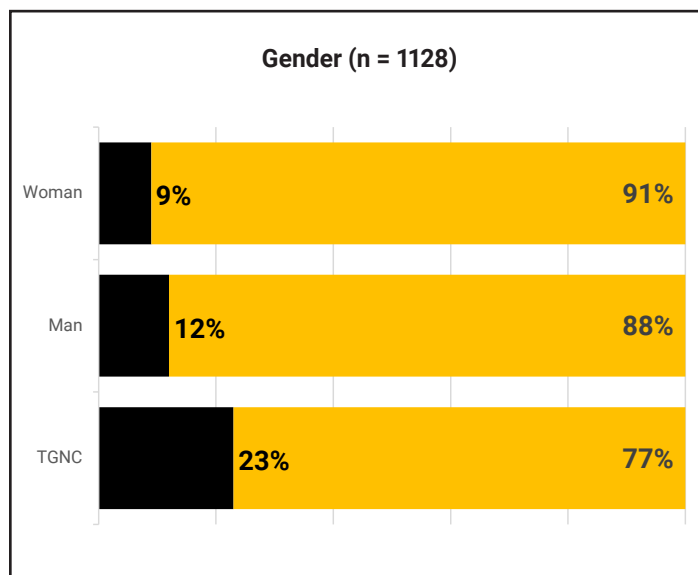
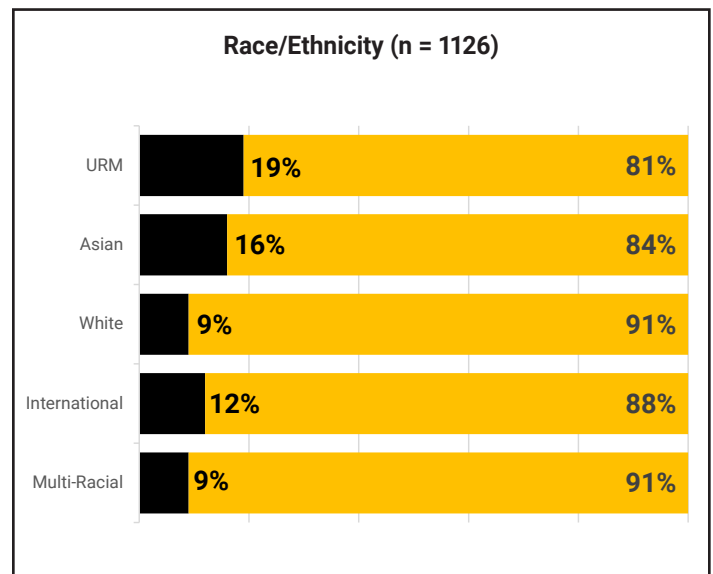
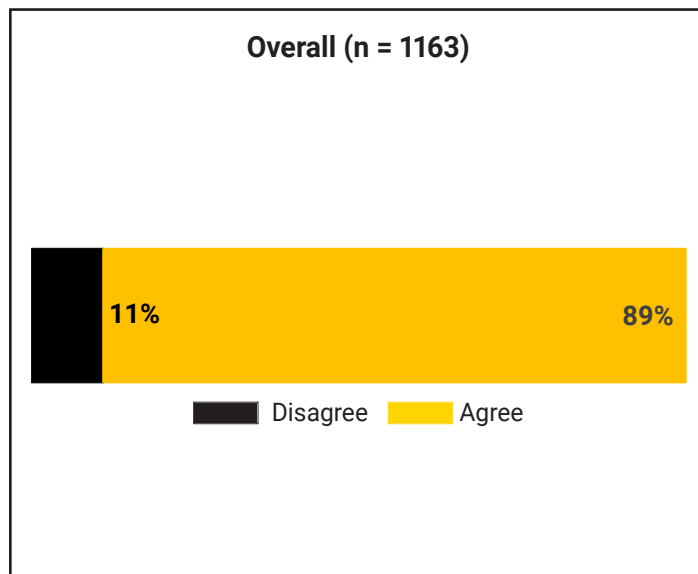
TECHNICAL NOTES REGARDING GRADUATE STUDENT REPORT DATA

1. Each survey item must have ten (10) respondents for percentage data to be displayed for a social identity group. Survey items with fewer than ten respondents do not have data displayed, but those respondents are included in reports for the larger units of which they are members (e.g., overall campus).
2. For the “I am proud to be a student on this campus” survey item and the “Students of my [social identity] are respected on this campus” question set, the “Disagree” response category includes responses of “Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree” and “Agree” represents responses of “Strongly Agree, Agree, and Somewhat Agree”. For all other survey items, the “Disagree” response category represents responses of “Strongly Disagree or Disagree” and “Agree” category represents responses of “Strongly Agree or Agree”
3. Demographics of the survey sample are obtained from University of Iowa administrative records and self-reports of the respondent in the survey.
 - **Racial and Ethnic Identity:** The racial/ethnic identity and international student status of respondents was provided from student administrative records (self-reported at time of admission). The administrative data provided includes 8 options for racial/ethnic identity: Black/African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander/American Indian or Alaskan Native, International, White/Caucasian, Latinx, Multiracial (which is assigned when a student selects more than one racial identity), and not-reported race/ethnicity. Following the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) definitions, international students are grouped into an “international student” category, regardless of race or ethnicity. For the purpose of this report, analyses are shown for the International Students, Asian American, White, Multi-racial, and Underrepresented Racial Minorities (URM) which includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Black or African American, or Latinx
 - **Gender:** The gender identity of respondents is determined based on self-reported responses to the survey questions “What is your current gender identity?” and “Do you consider yourself to be transgender?”. Due to the small number of respondents, respondents who selected “nonbinary”; self-described as “genderqueer”, “genderfluid”, “queer”, “gender non-conforming”, self-described as more than one gender identity; or indicated “yes” to identifying as Trans are reported as Trans and/or Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC).
 - **Sexual Orientation:** Respondents were asked to self-report their sexual orientation in the survey. Due to a small number of respondents in each group, LGBTQ includes respondents who selected “asexual”, “bisexual”, “gay or lesbian”, “pansexual”, “questioning”, “queer”, or self-described. Straight includes respondents who selected “heterosexual or straight”.
 - **Political Orientation:** The survey included a question asking respondents how they characterize their political orientation. The analysis category “Liberal” combines Very Liberal, Liberal, and Slightly Liberal. The analysis category “Conservative” combines Very Conservative, Conservative, and Slightly Conservative. The analysis category “Moderate” includes respondents who selected “moderate or middle of the road”.

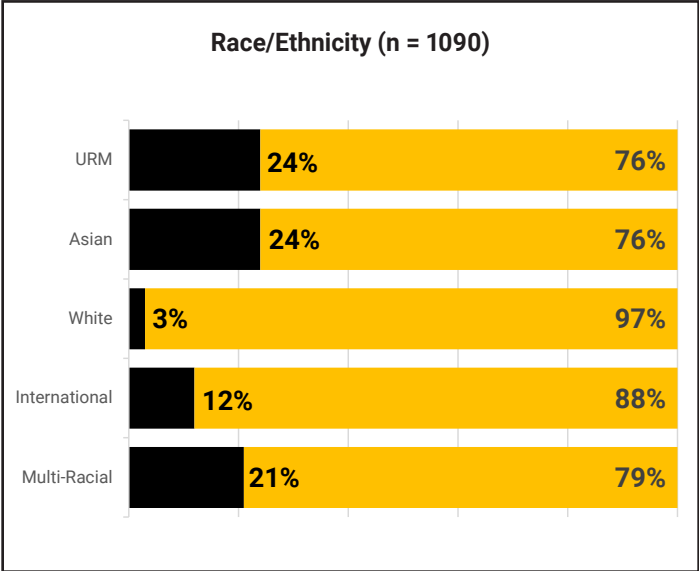
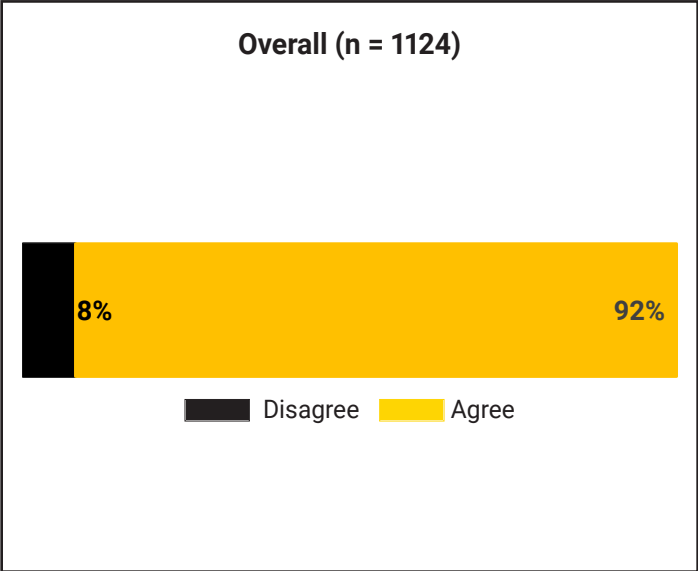


- **Disability Identity:** The survey asked respondents to self-report if they identified with having “any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at the University of Iowa including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access campus.” Respondents were categorized as “yes” to having any disability if they selected at least one of the following: 1) Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition); 2) Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder); 3) Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury); 4) Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder), or some other disability or condition.
- **Specific Disability Identity:** For the question “Students with a physical, psychological, or learning disability like mine are respected on this campus”, the results are reported by *any* disability status and by the type of disability status reported. Respondents are categorized as “yes” for a specific disability type if they indicated “yes” for each of the following respectively:
 - 1) Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition);
 - 2) Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder);
 - 3) Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury);
 - 4) Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder), or
 - 5) Some other disability or condition.

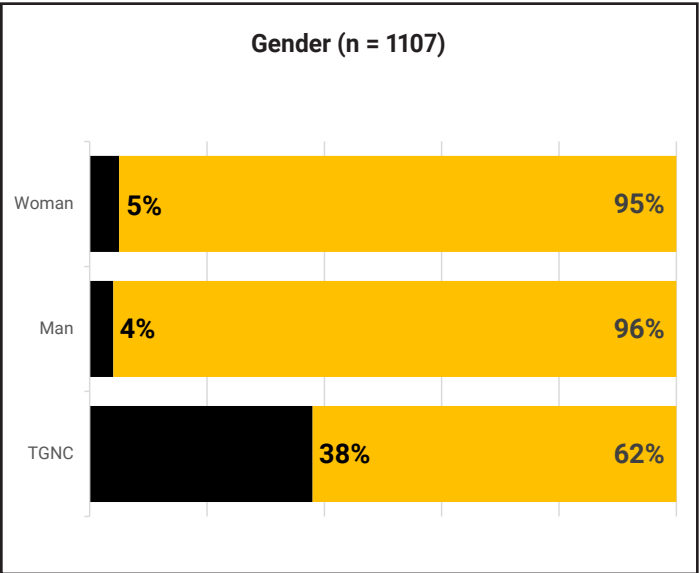
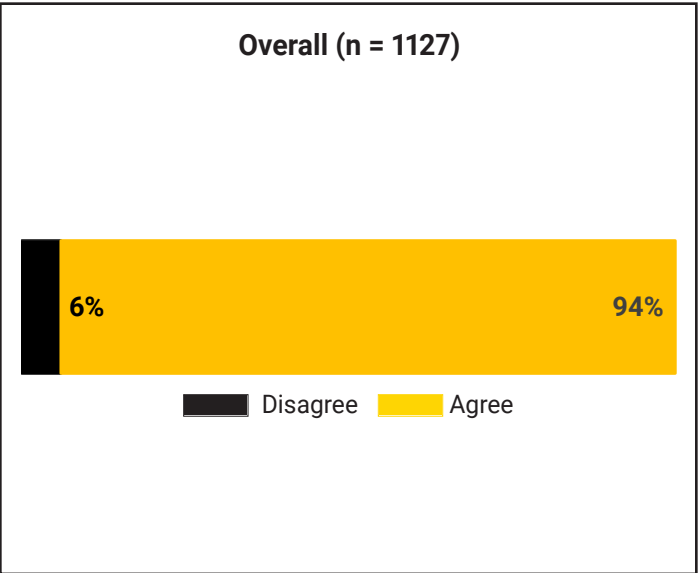
Question 1: I belong in my graduate/professional program.



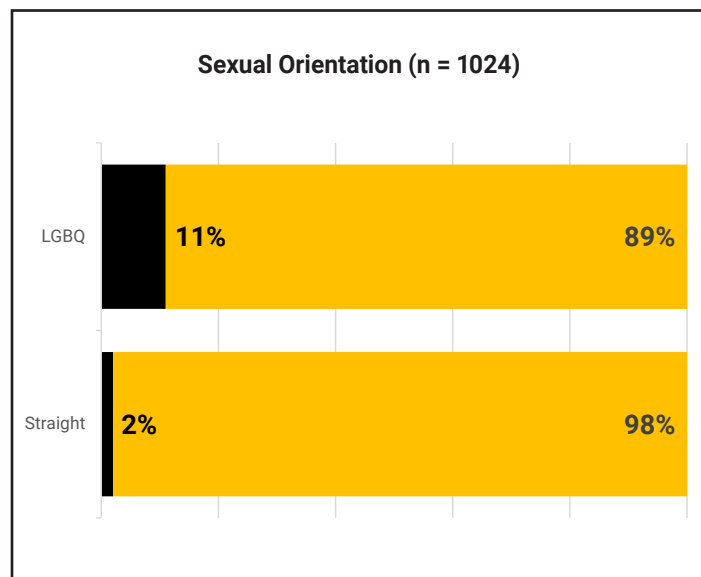
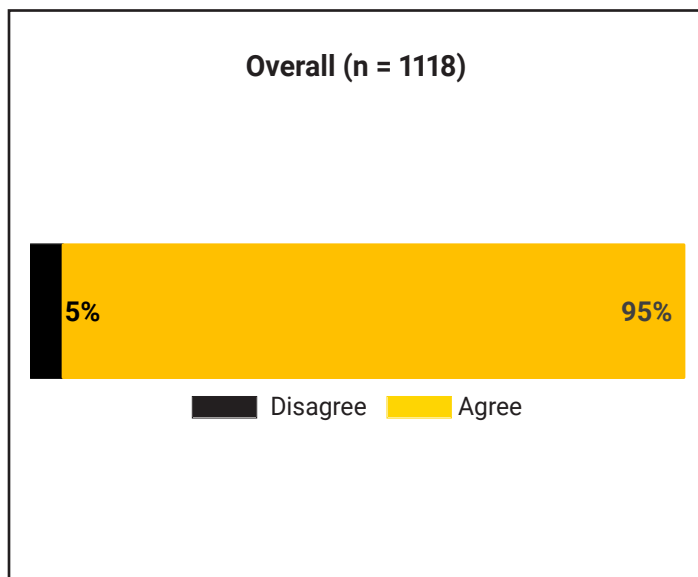
Question 2: Students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus.



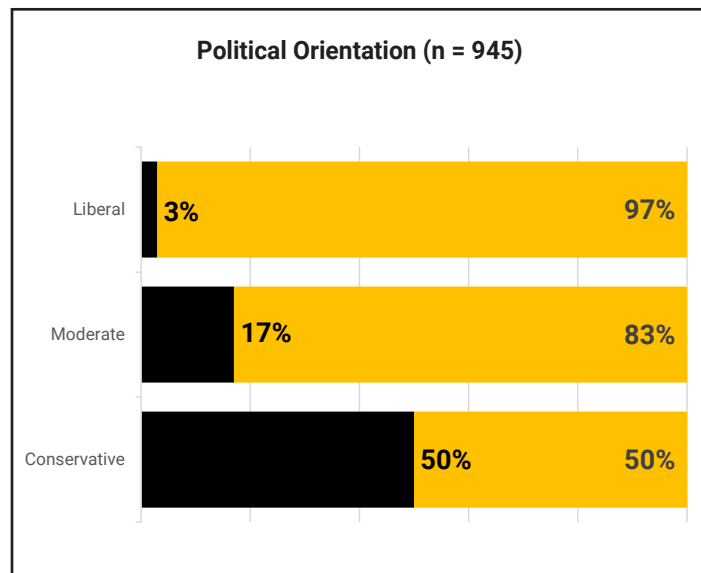
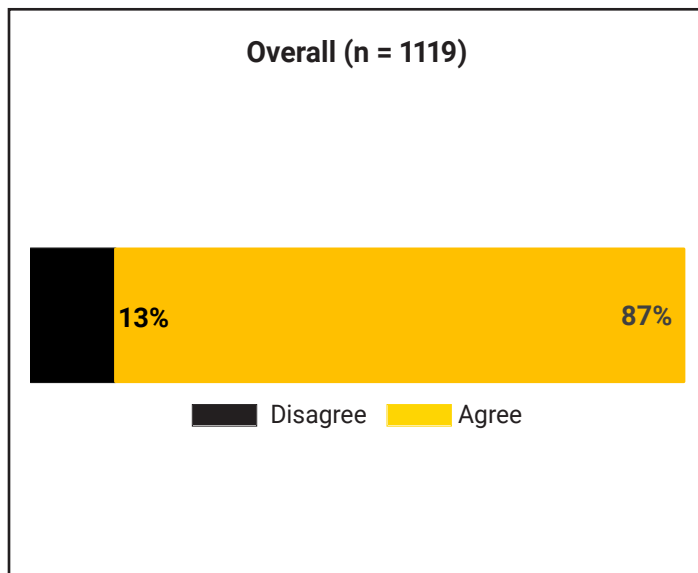
Question 3: Students of my gender are respected on this campus.



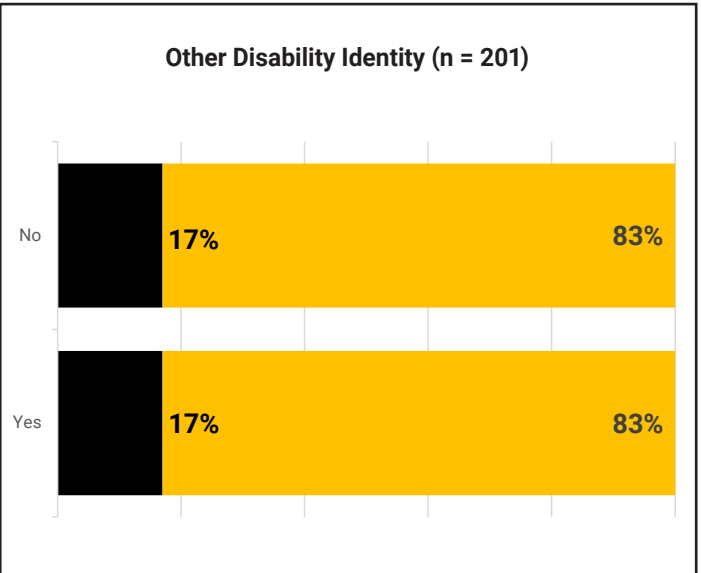
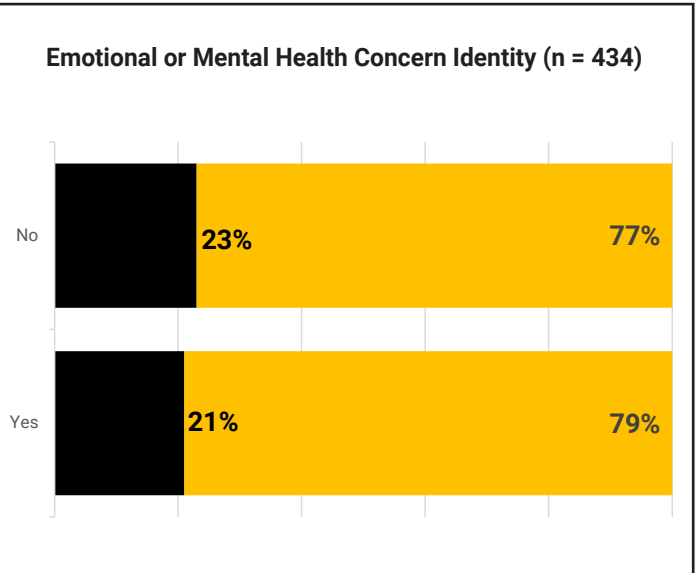
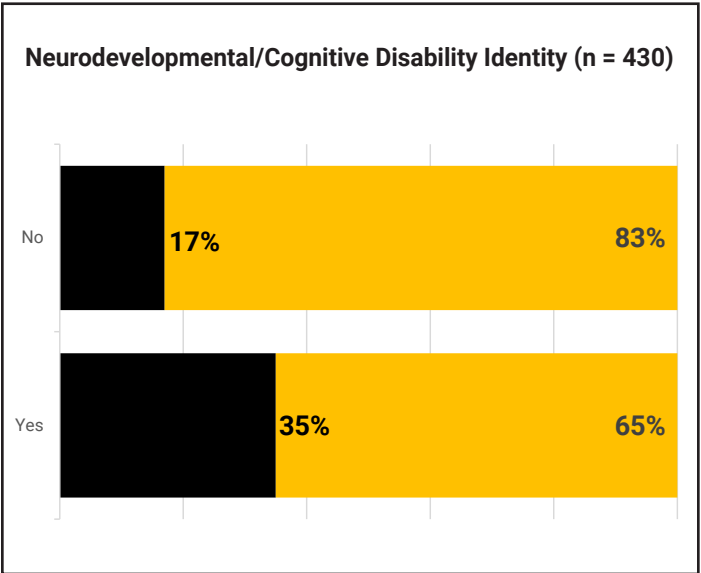
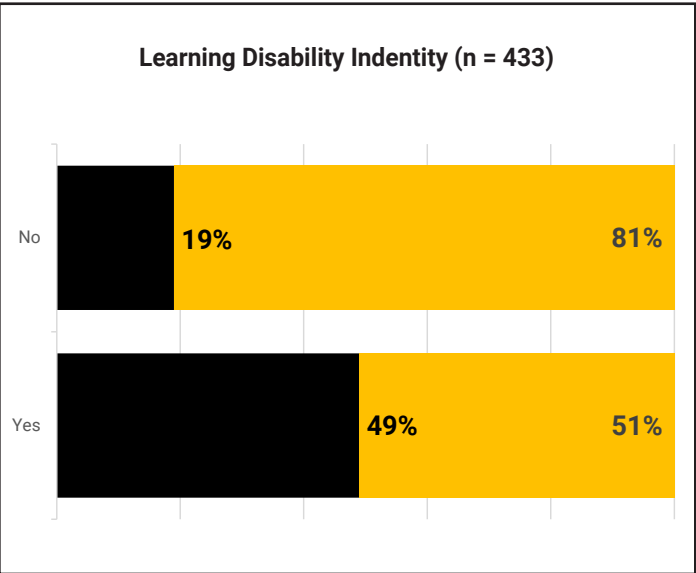
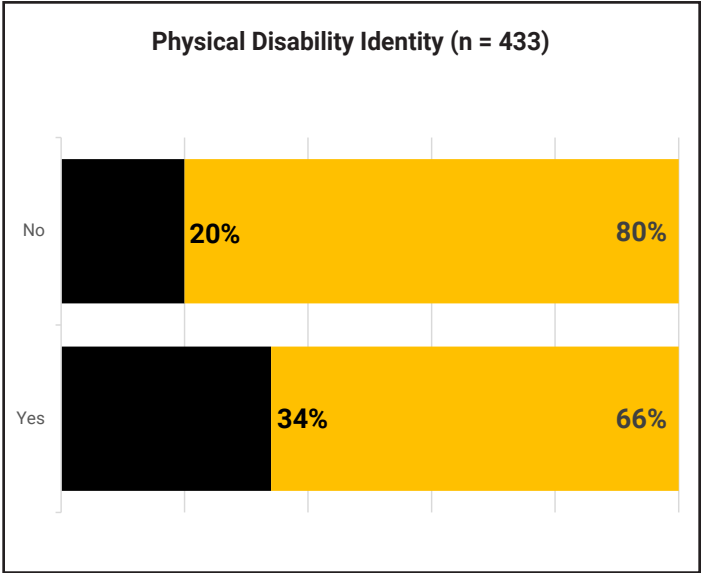
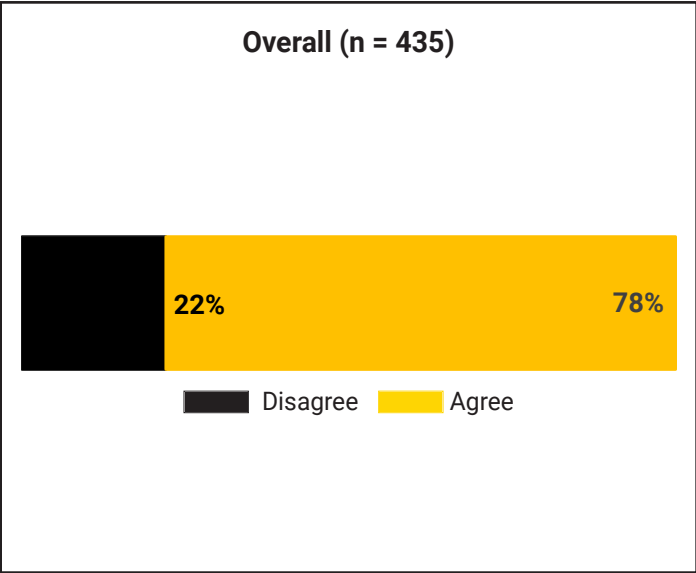
Question 4: Students of my sexual orientation are respected on this campus.



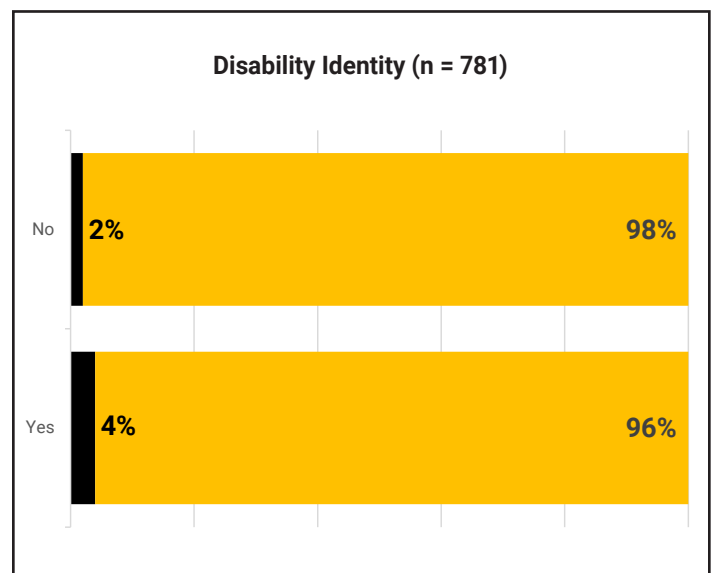
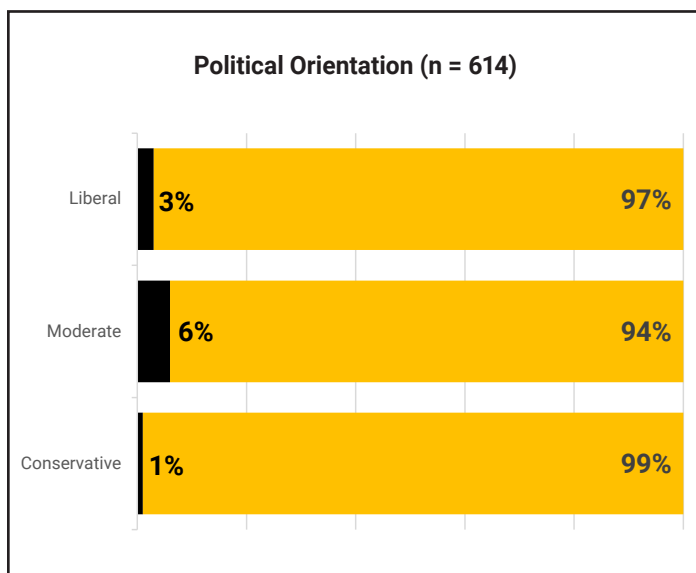
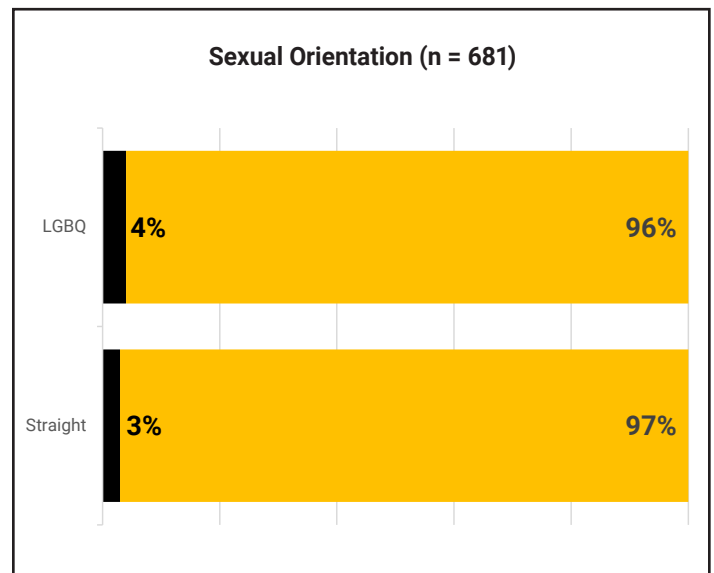
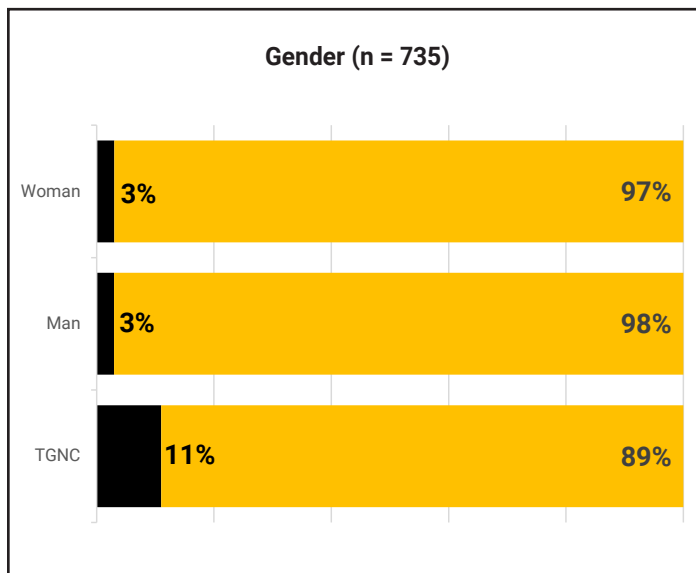
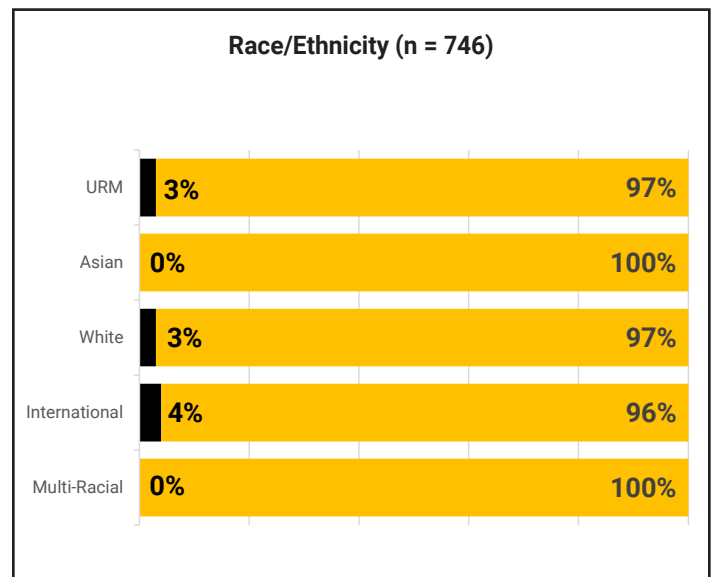
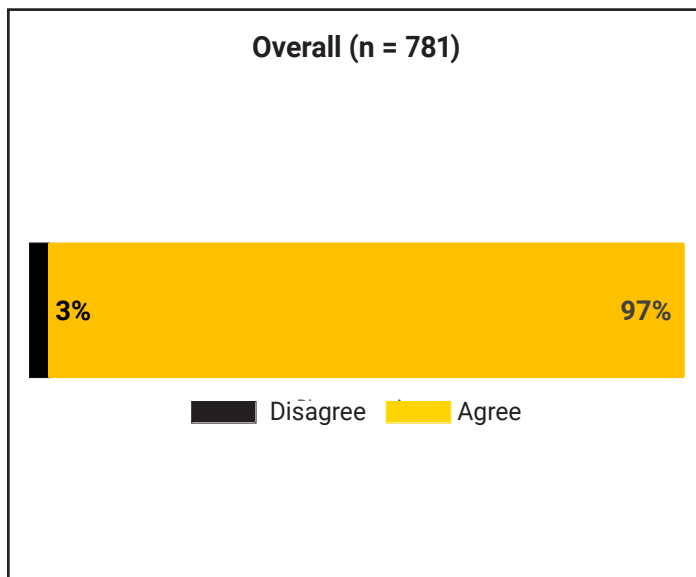
Question 5: Students of my political beliefs are respected on this campus.



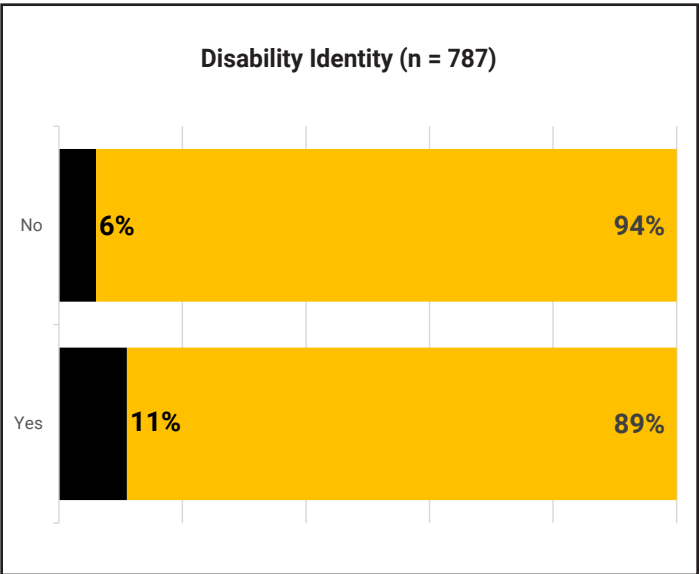
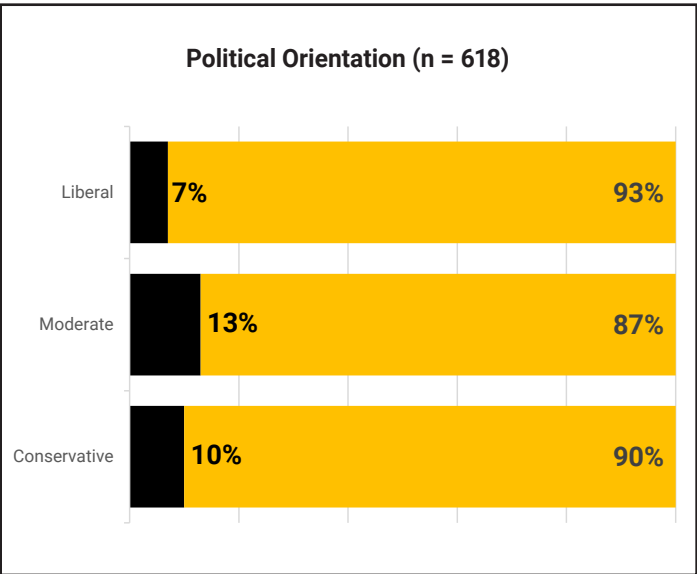
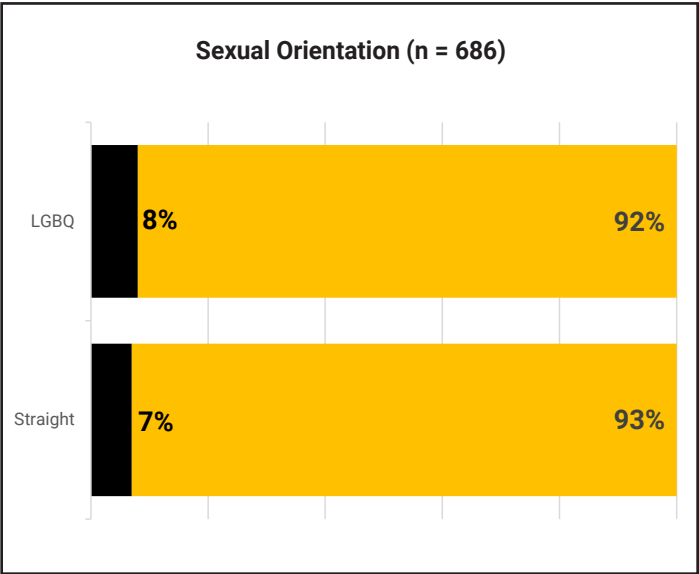
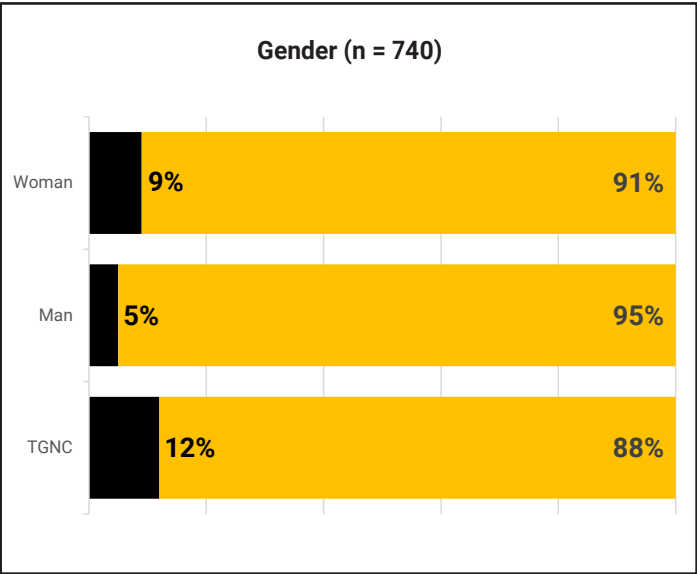
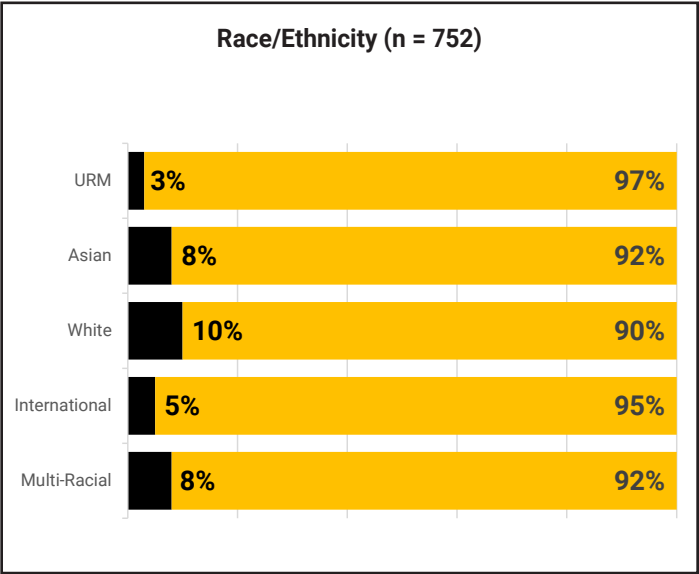
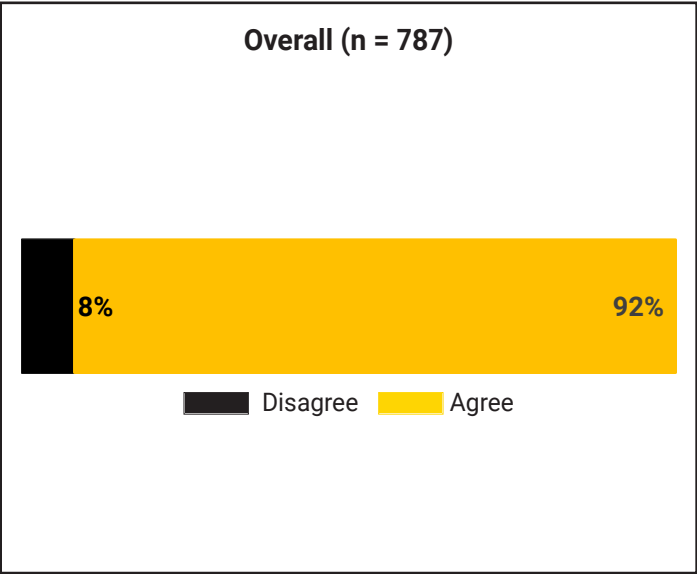
Question 6: Students with a physical, psychological, or learning disability like mine are respected on this campus.



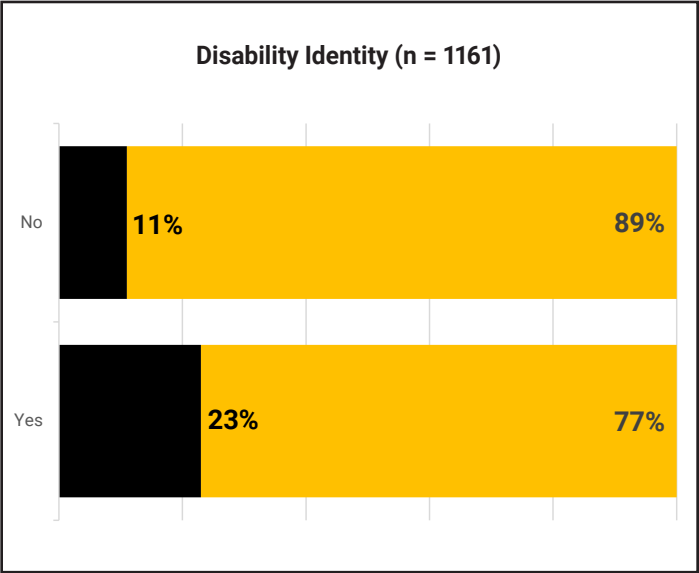
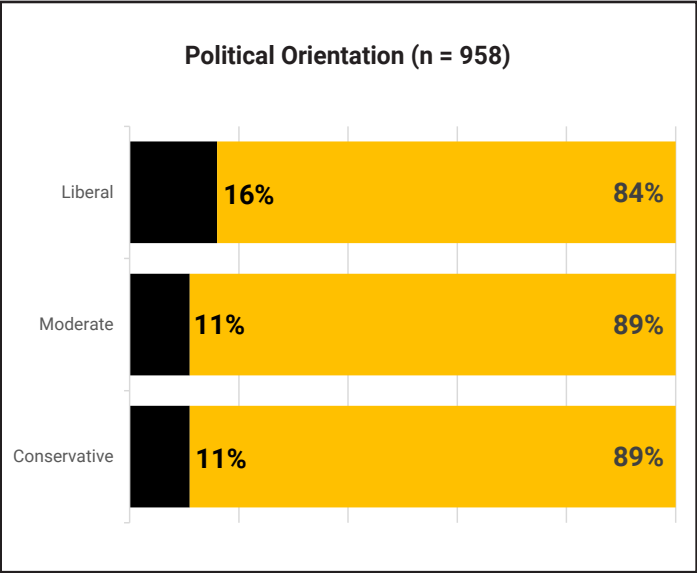
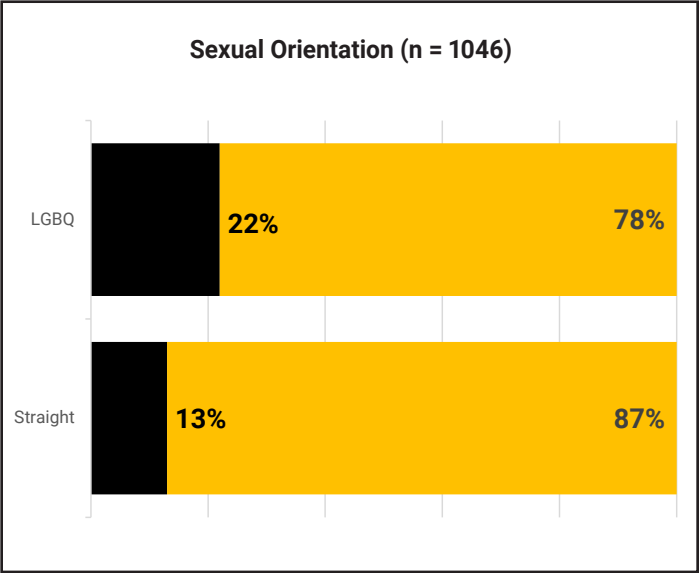
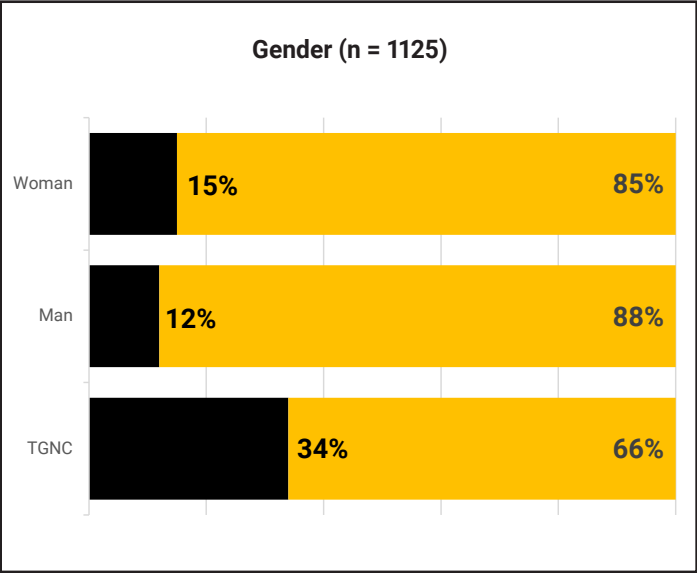
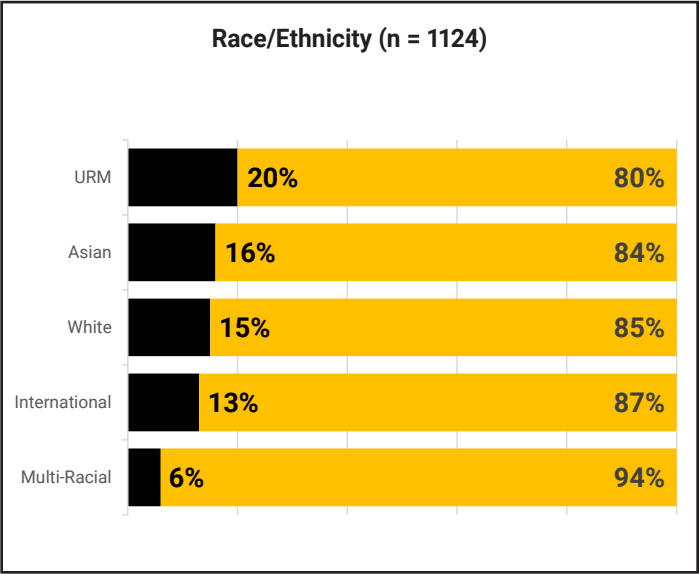
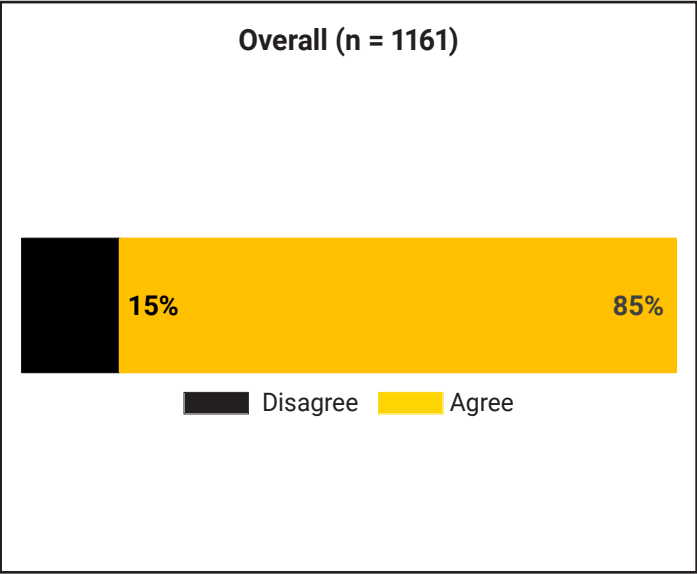
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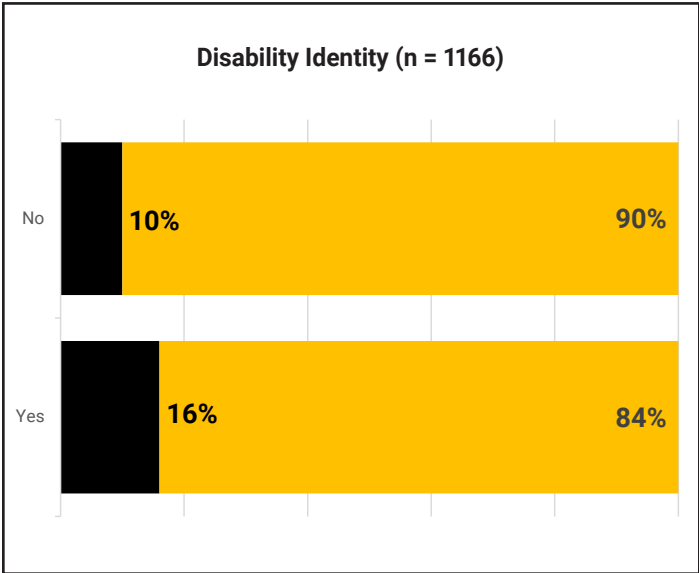
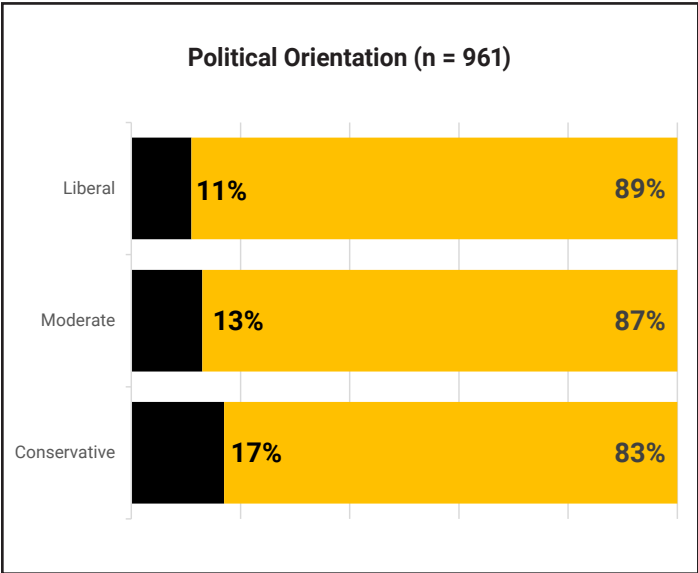
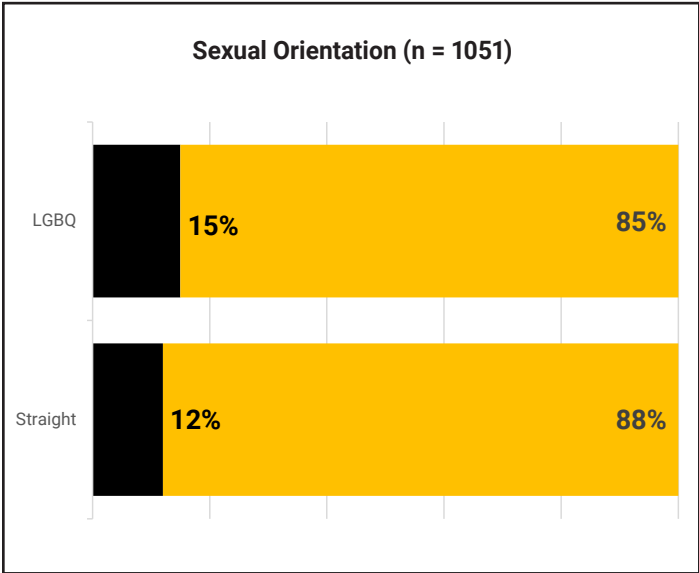
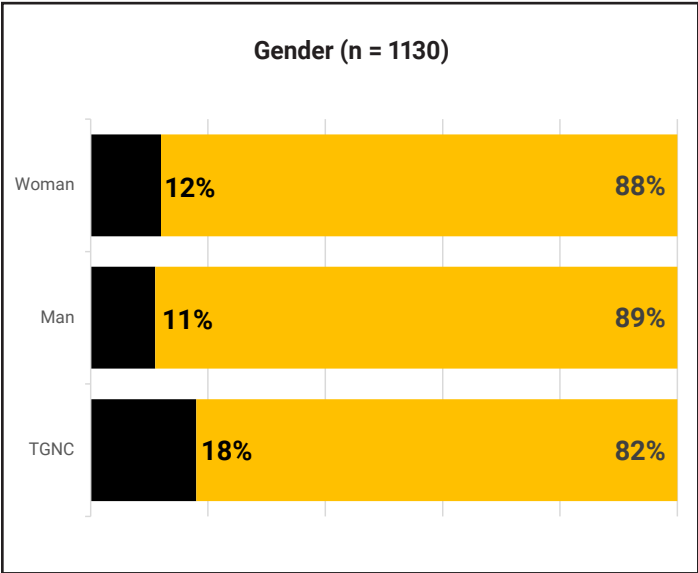
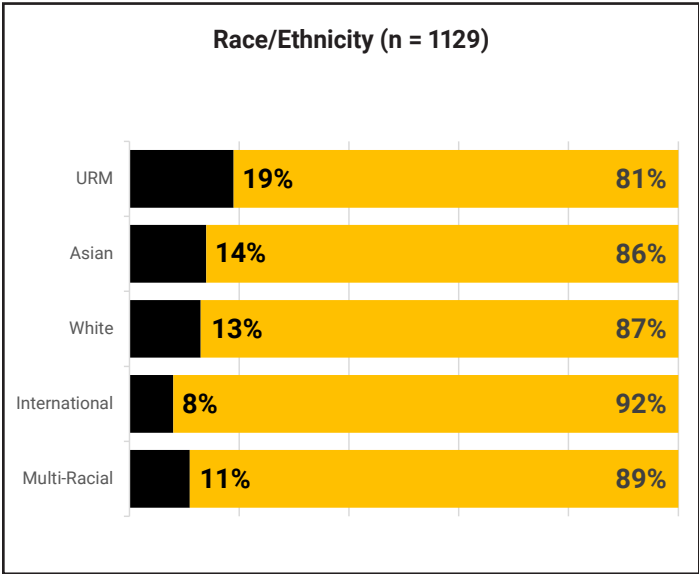
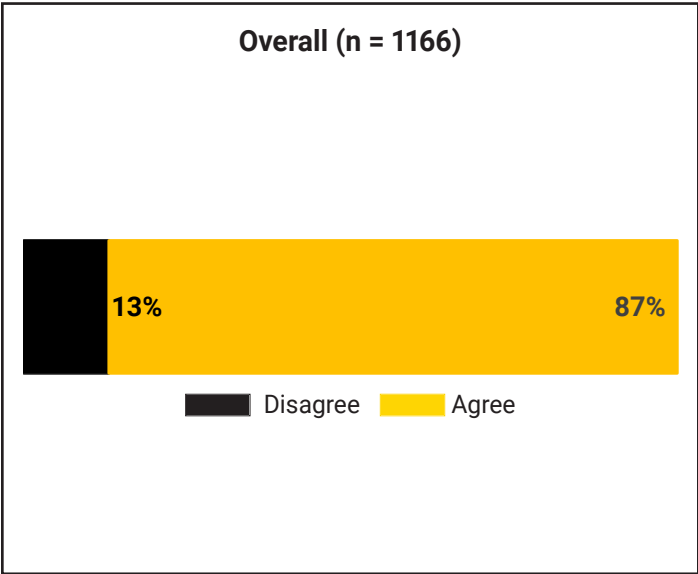
Question 8: My advisor has time for me when I need help or advice.



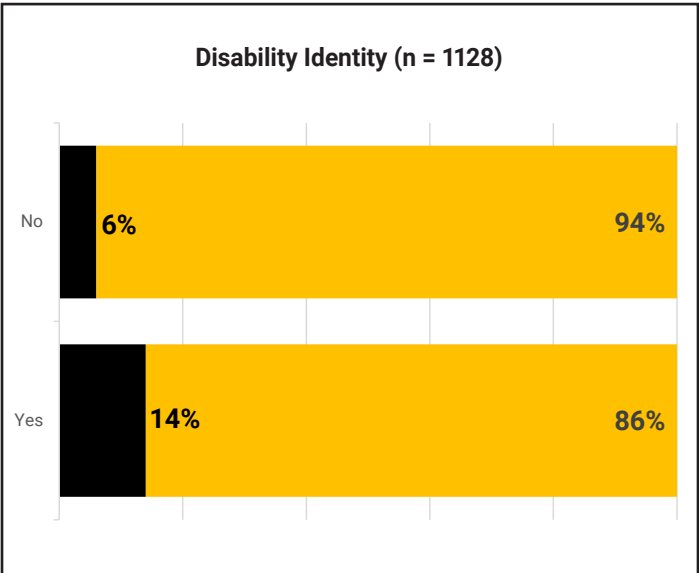
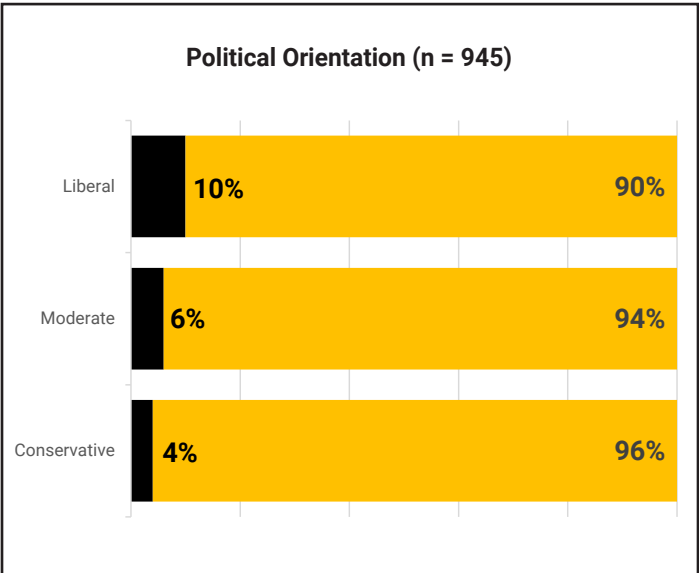
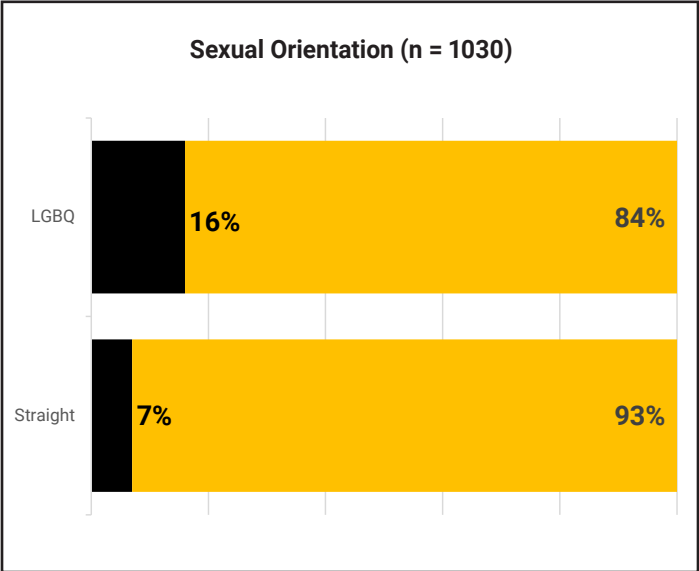
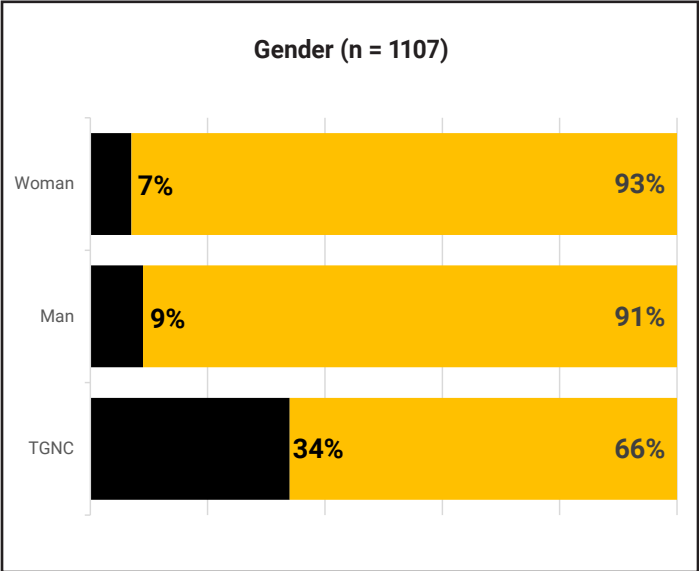
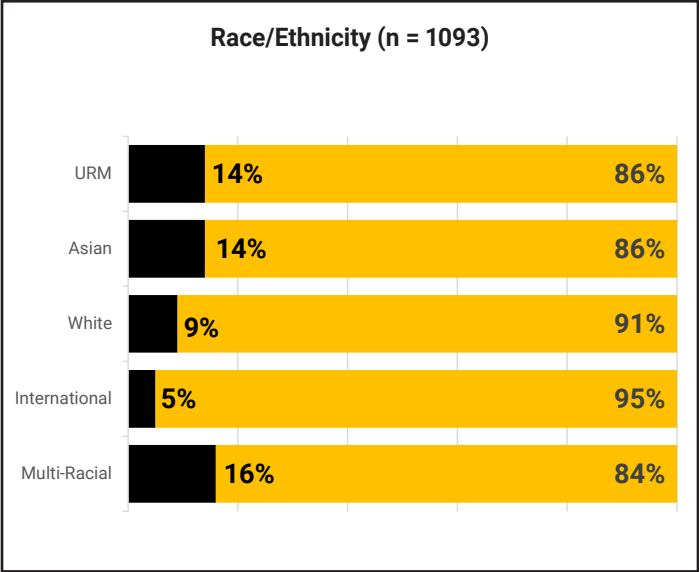
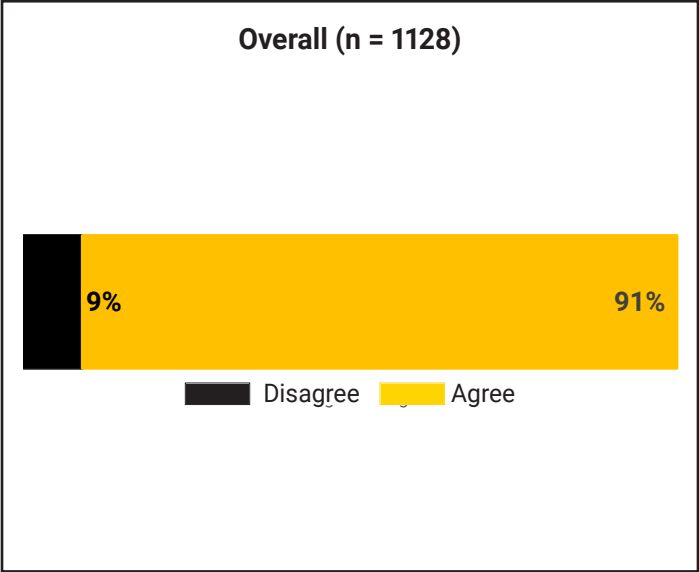
Question 9: Rules and regulations are equitably applied.



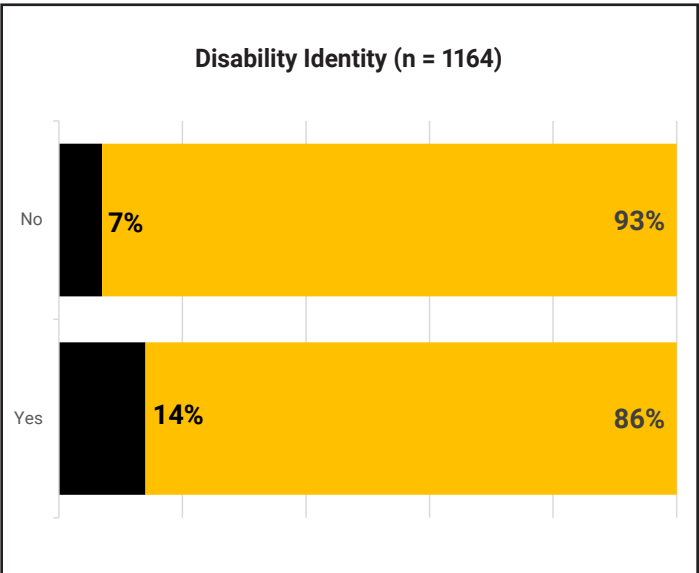
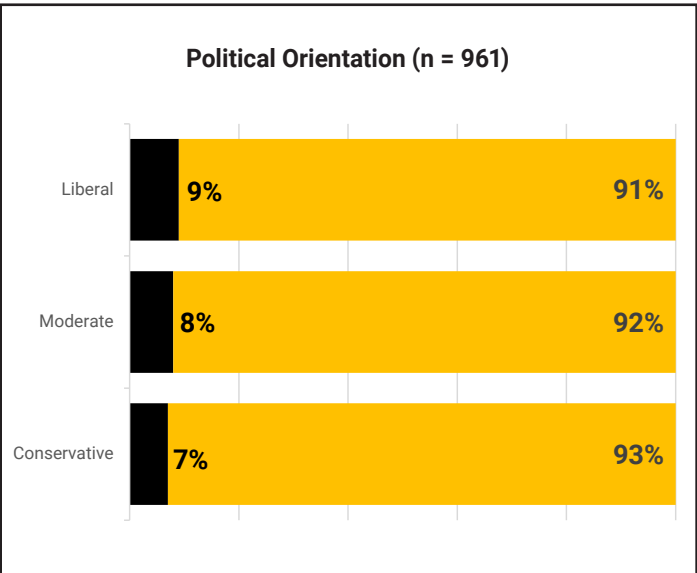
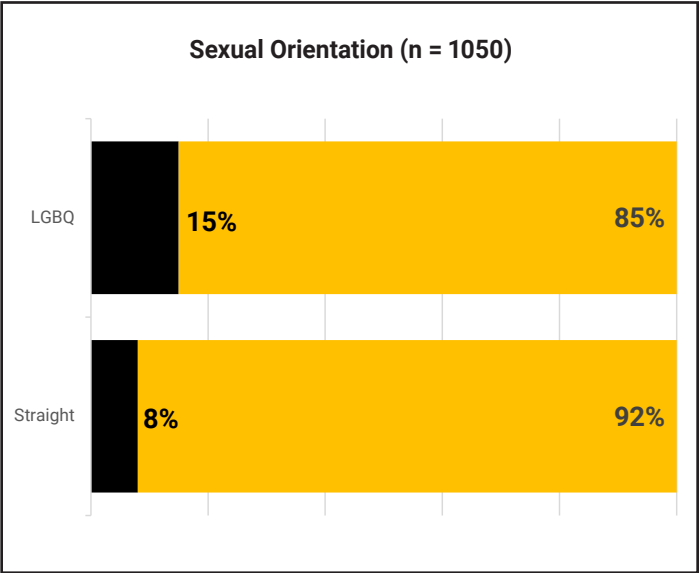
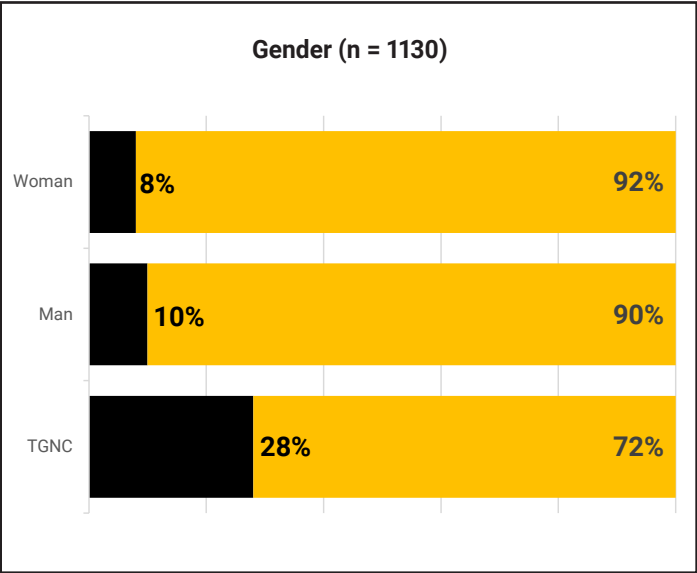
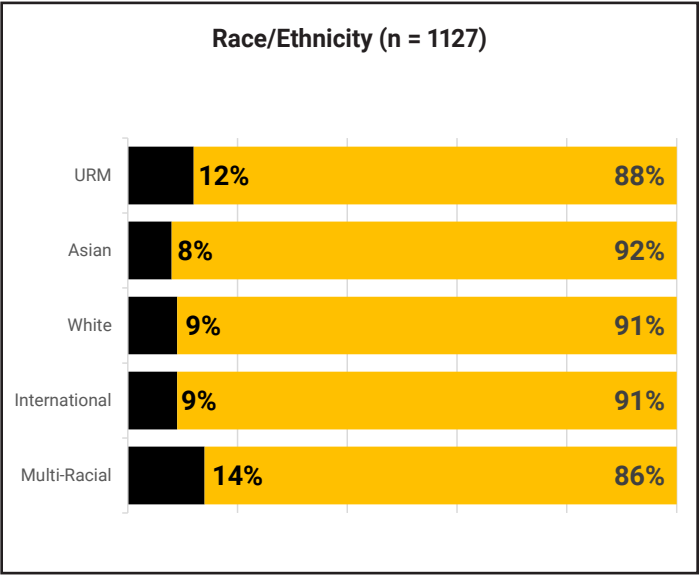
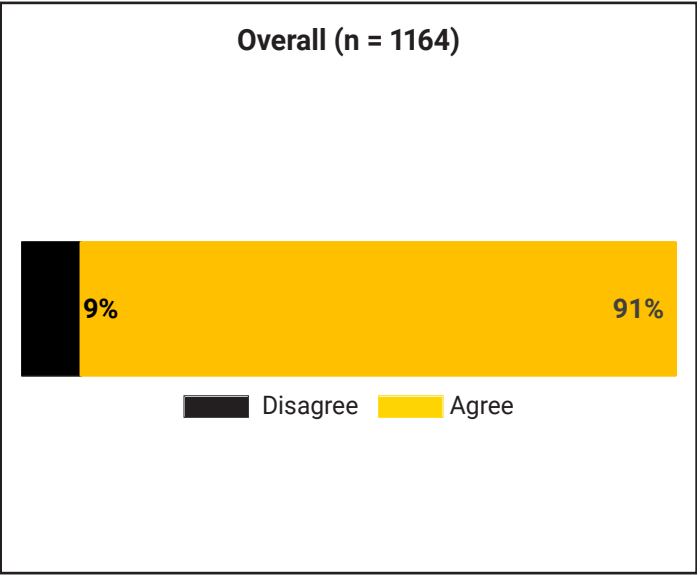
Question 10: Faculty encourage expression of diverse viewpoints from their students.



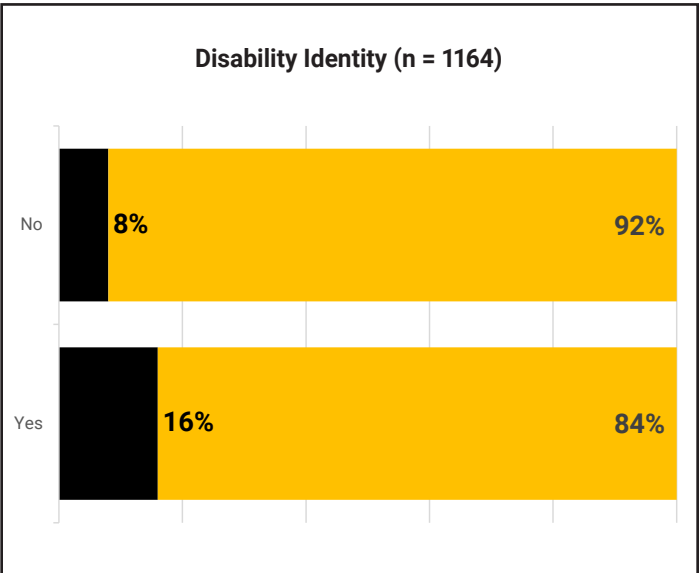
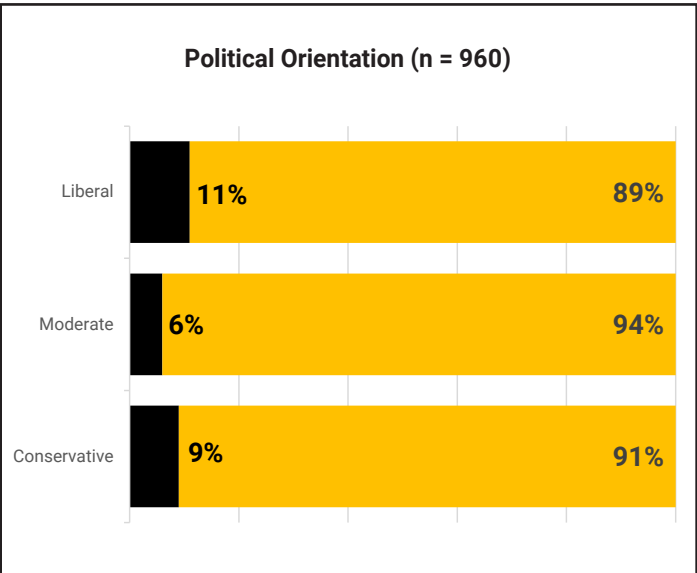
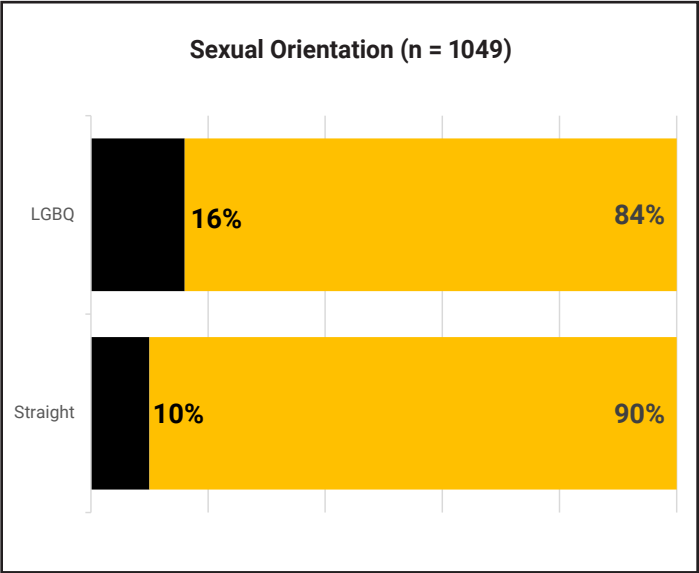
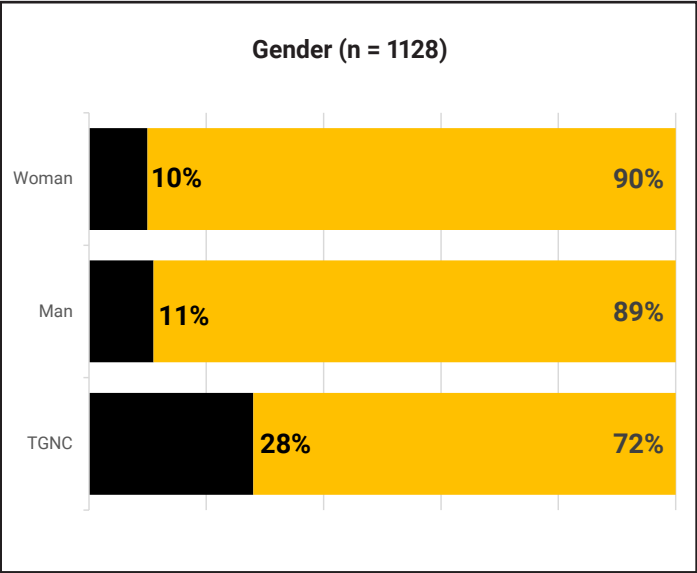
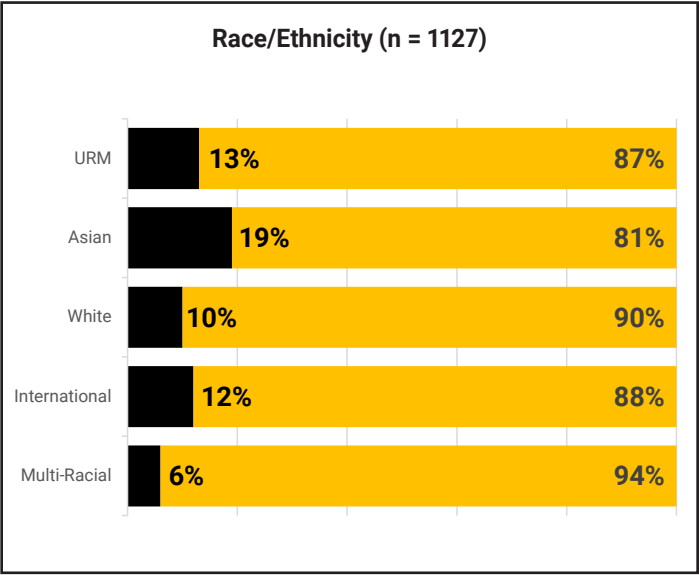
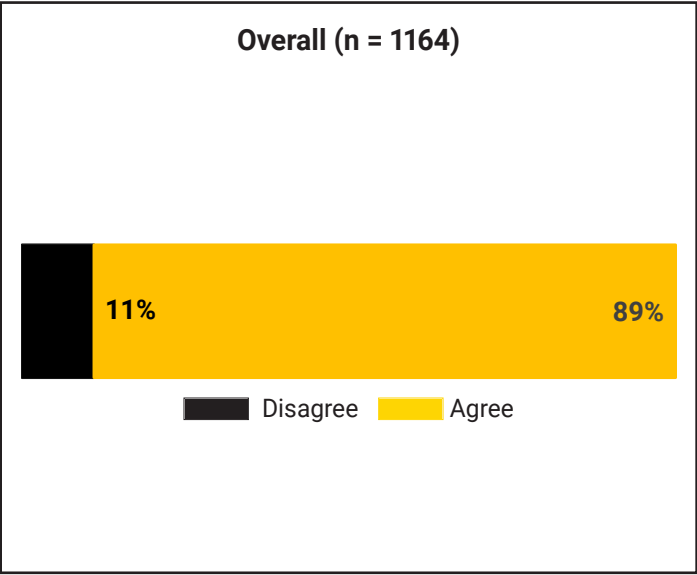
Supplemental Question: I am proud to be a student at this campus.



Supplemental Question: I am proud to be a student in my graduate/professional program.



Supplemental Question: Rules and regulations are fair.



Survey Respondents by Identity

College

	Frequency	Percent
Carver College of Medicine	62	5.0
College of Dentistry	14	1.1
College of Education	173	13.9
College of Engineering	82	6.6
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	523	42.0
College of Nursing	68	5.5
College of Pharmacy	13	1.0
College of Public Health	109	8.7
Graduate College	114	9.1
Tippie College of Business	88	7.1
Total	1246	100.0

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Woman	722	57.9
Man	372	29.9
TGNC	39	3.1
Prefer not to answer	113	9.1
Total	1246	100.0

Political Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
Liberal	682	54.7
Moderate	143	11.5
Conservative	139	11.2
Prefer not to answer	282	22.6
Total	1246	100.0

Race/Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
URM	120	9.6
Asian	40	3.2
White	745	59.8
International	255	20.5
Multi-Racial	39	3.1
Prefer not to answer	47	3.8
Total	1246	100.0

Sexual Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
LGBQ	255	20.5
Straight	799	64.1
Prefer not to answer	192	15.4
Total	1246	100.0

Disability Status

	Frequency	Percent
No	792	63.6
Yes	454	36.4
Total	1246	100.0



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STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSIONS

Elizabeth Tovar at
elizabeth-tovar@uiowa.edu



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Brianna Marcelo at
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