

## Introduction

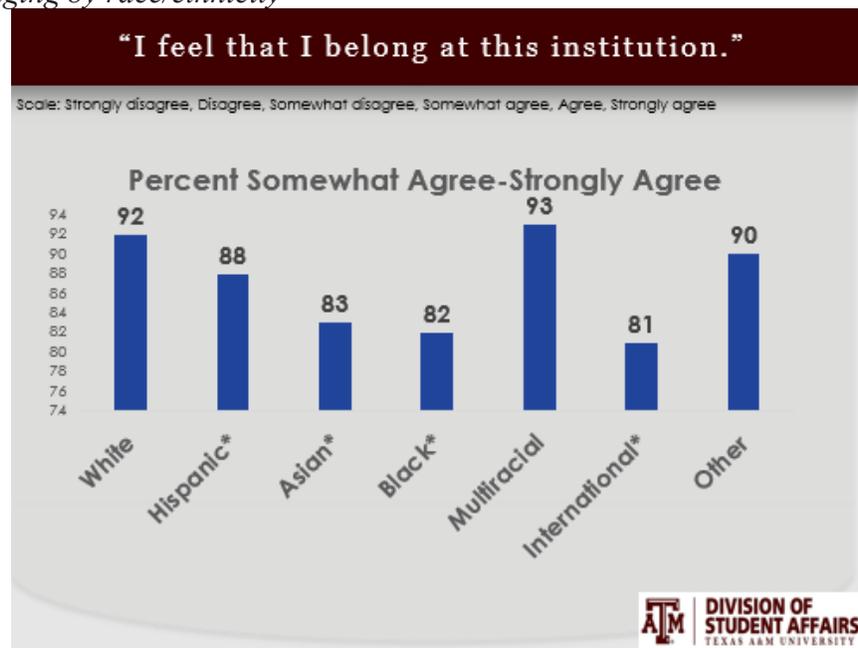
The 2015 undergraduate campus climate assessment used the Student Experience in Research University (SERU) survey data collected in Spring 2015 by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation. SERU is a national survey sent to undergraduate students at research universities.

The 2015 SERU was distributed to all undergraduates at TAMU in spring of 2015. However, this summary only includes respondents from the College Station campus. The overall response rate was 21.6%: 67% of respondents identified as White, 21% as Hispanic or Latinx, 5% as Asian, 3% as Black, 3% as Multiracial, and 1% as International students.

The SERU survey has over 700 questions, including many demographic and campus climate-related items. Staff from the Department of Student Life Studies in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) selected and analyzed campus climate related items from the 2015 SERU. At the April 20, 2017, university-wide, campus climate work session, Dr. C. J. Woods, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, presented the results of the survey.

## Results

Figure 1  
*Sense of belonging by race/ethnicity*



Source: Undergraduate Campus Climate -- Survey results from Student Experience in the Research University (SERU). Presented 04/20/17, Texas A&M University – College Station by Dr. C.J. Woods, Associate Vice President, Division of Student Affairs. Slides 64-79 in [http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Campus-Climate/Presentations/Campus-Climate-04-20-17-FINAL\\_c.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Campus-Climate/Presentations/Campus-Climate-04-20-17-FINAL_c.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US)

### *Sense of Belonging*

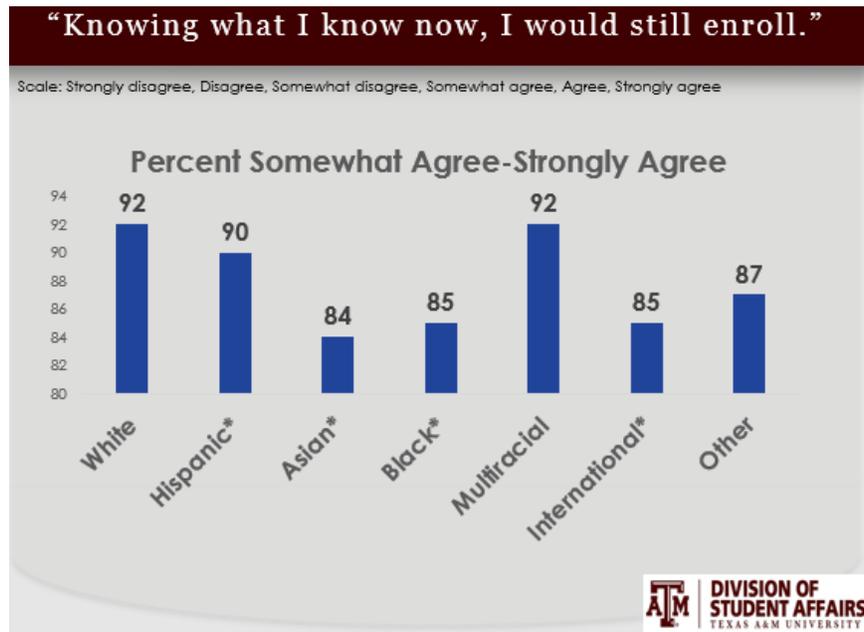
The 2015 SERU quantitative and qualitative data revealed that students from historically underrepresented groups did not think the campus climate was generally inclusive and welcoming for people like them. The results, presented in Figure 1, show that historically underrepresented students reported feeling less of a sense of belonging than White respondents. For example, in response to the item, “I feel that I **belong at this institution**,” 92% of White respondents selected “somewhat agree-strongly agree” compared to 88% of Hispanic respondents, 83% of Asian respondents, 82% of Black respondents, and 81% of International respondents (Figure 1).

Further analysis of the mean scores for the participants’ choices revealed significant differences between the Hispanic, Asian, and Black groups and the White group indicated. These findings (marked with the asterisk “\*” in Figure 1) suggest that, while most respondents seem to feel a sense of belonging at Texas A&M, lower proportions of students of color reported feeling somewhat satisfied or very satisfied.

### *“Would I still enroll...”*

The same scale as in the previous item was used to probe participants’ responses to the item “Knowing what I know now, **I would still enroll**.” The results, presented in Figure 2, revealed that historically underrepresented students reported a lower level of agreement with this statement than their White counterparts. The percentage of White students who said they would choose to enroll again was 92, while the percentage for Asian and Black students was 84. Again, the asterisks indicate that the mean scores on this question were significantly different for white students.

Figure 2.  
 “Would I still enroll” by race/ethnicity

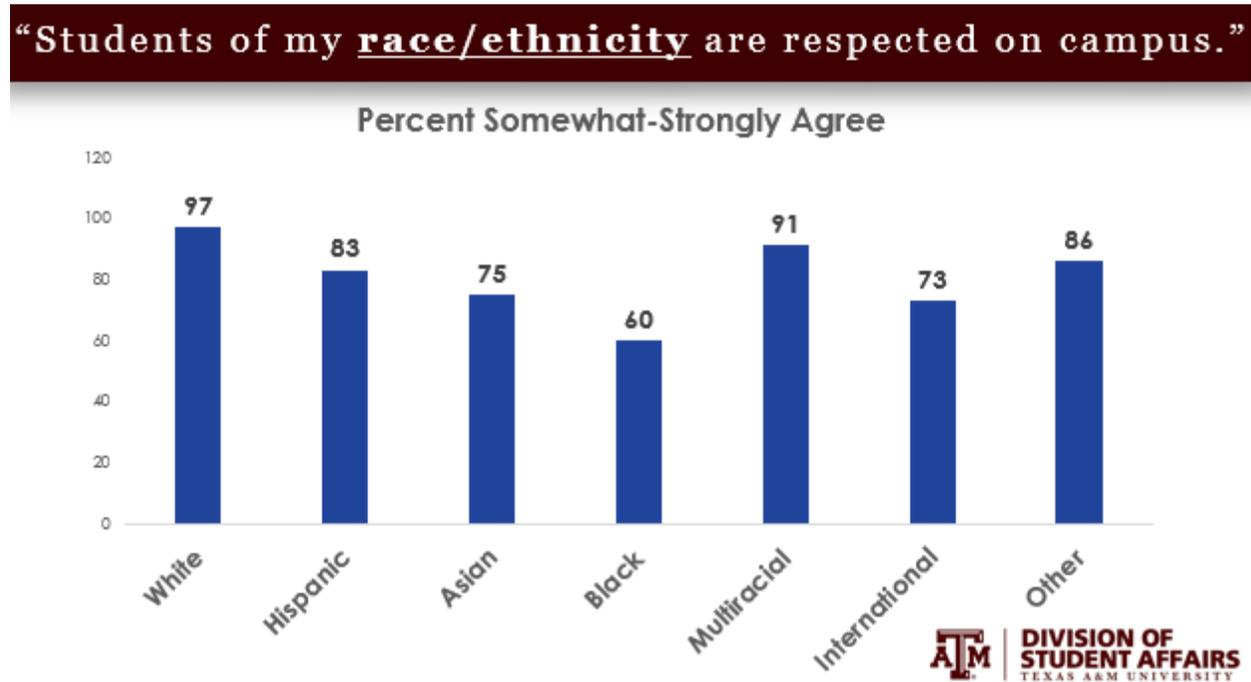


*Respected on Campus*

Students were asked to what extent they agreed that students of their race/ethnicity were respected on campus. The results show that historically underrepresented students reported feeling less respected than majority groups at Texas A&M. For example, 97% of White respondents chose the “somewhat-strongly agree” categories, compared to 83% of Hispanic respondents, 75% of Asian respondents, 60% of Black respondents, and 73% of International respondents. These findings are presented in Figure 3.

Source: Undergraduate Campus Climate -- Survey results from Student Experience in the Research University (SERU). Presented 04/20/17, Texas A&M University – College Station by Dr. C.J. Woods, Associate Vice President, Division of Student Affairs. Slides 64-79 in [http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Campus-Climate/Presentations/Campus-Climate-04-20-17-FINAL\\_c.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Campus-Climate/Presentations/Campus-Climate-04-20-17-FINAL_c.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US)

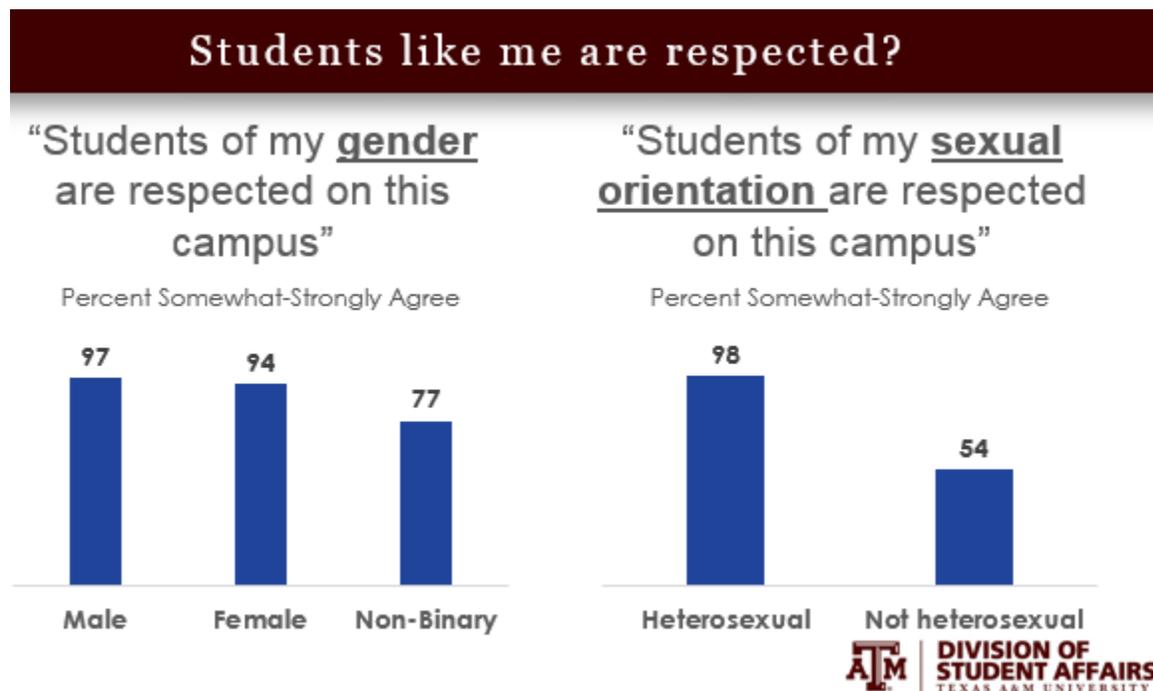
Figure 3.  
*Students of My Race/Ethnicity Are Respected on Campus*



This trend was also seen in the responses to this question in connection with gender and sexual orientation (Figure 4), and political and religious beliefs. For instance, 97% of male respondents chose “somewhat-strongly agree” to the statement “students of my gender are respected on campus” compared to 94% of female respondents and 77% of non-binary gender-identity respondents. Results for the sexual orientation campus respect statement revealed that 98% of heterosexual respondents chose “somewhat-strongly agree;” in contrast, only 54% of the not-heterosexual participants selected these choices.

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Figure 4.  
*Students of My Gender/Sexual Orientation Are Respected on Campus*



The statements with a focus on political and religious beliefs rendered the following results:

- Political beliefs: 97% of conservative respondents chose the “somewhat-strongly agree” categories compared to 84% of moderate respondents and 53% of liberal respondents.
- Religious beliefs: 97% of Christian respondents selected the “somewhat-strongly agree” options compared to 64% of respondents who identified as not Christian.

*Value Diversity*

The results from the 2015 SERU revealed that students from historically underrepresented groups seem to **value diversity** more than students from privileged groups. In response to the item, “Diversity is important to me,” 60% of the White respondents agreed-strongly agreed compared to 86% of the Black respondents, 71% of the Hispanic respondents, and 75% of the Asian respondents. When the data are disaggregated according to gender and sexual orientation, the findings reveal that 53% of the male respondents agreed-strongly agreed with this statement, compared to 72% of the female respondents and 56% of the non-binary respondents, and 63% of the heterosexual respondents agreed-strongly agreed compared to 80% of the respondents who identified as not heterosexual.

The findings presented in the previous sections suggest that the historically underrepresented students that responded to the 2015 SERU perceived and experienced a different climate at Texas A&M than majority students did. These results can be seen across various social identities including race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality, social class, political beliefs, and religious beliefs.

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Additionally, many of the responses to open-ended items such as “What is the single most important thing that your campus could realistically do to create a better undergraduate experience for students like you?” made reference to diversity, inclusion, or climate in some way. The following quotes offer support to this statement:

- *Personally, I have never felt like I truly belonged at TAMU as an Aggie myself. It’s important to me to be able to find groups to socialize and interact with, that have similar backgrounds as mine... If more bilingual advisors were available, such as in the Financial Aid office, I would feel more comfortable approaching them.* – Hispanic Female
- *Have more open forums on the topics of gender equality and racism. Have more open forums in general. Create a culture of open discussion without fear of social retribution.* – Asian Female
- *Strong administrative action ... and greater sensitivity training to reduce the racist, sexist, homo/transphobic attitude that permeates the student and faculty body.* – White Male
- *Unfortunately, I am the norm in College Station. My experience was wonderful, and my beliefs are commonly accepted up here as truth. I am a white, middle class, conservative, Christian heterosexual woman. Texas A&M was built for students “like me.” It is not our undergraduate experience that you must be actively bettering. I advocate for the LGBT community, those that are religiously diverse, as well as ethnically diverse. Texas A&M welcomes those students with open arms, but I would like to see a universally accepting environment for all students. Black, white, green, or blue; they are Aggies and deserve to have a fulfilling experience at the best university that there is. So instead of focusing on a better experience for students “like me,” please focus on the diverse learning and social communities that exist on campus. Focus on unity, equality, and equity for everyone, not just students “like me.”* – White Female
- *Cut off “diversity” programs from official school budget. All they really do is drive up the cost of tuition and drive down the level of intelligent discourse on sensitive matters. Of course, still be open, welcoming, etc. of students; just don't make diversity a goal in and of itself (in the same way you wouldn't pursue a monolithic student body). True, beneficial diversity is a great side effect of impartial performance-based admissions; fake diversity is merely a facade which sows distrust and reaps stereotypes.* – White Male

Persistent challenges from the undergraduate student campus climate assessments include:

- 1) How do we teach majority students to empathize with marginalized groups and value diversity?
- 2) How do we engage in *authentic* inclusivity?
- 3) What can Texas A&M do to support historically underrepresented students?