UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REALITY OR FAÇADE?

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF HUMAN RELATIONS

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2020

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REALITY OR FAÇADE?

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Acknowledgments

The completion of this thesis would have never been made possible without the support and help of many. And so, I would like to take the time to acknowledge those who gave me the strength to complete my Thesis and Masters' degree. Firstly, to the scholars, activists, and change agents from historically marginalized communities presently and through history, who spent a tireless amount of work into educating and raising awareness about structural and institutional inequity in spaces that are not exclusive to higher education and more specifically, the contributions of indigenous and black scholars in decolonial scholarship.

Secondly, I would like to take the time to acknowledge the Department of Human Relations and Dr. George Henderson for providing a space for students like me to engage in critical scholarship. I would not be here without my mentors. Dr.Bert, my committee chair who believed in me from the very first moment we met, inspired me to pursue a graduate degree, always cheered for me and supported me through my entire academic career. Thank you, I do not know what I would do without you. Dr. Long, my committee member and department chair, who provided his unconditional support with 'no questions asked' through my thesis process as well as my graduate assistantship. Thank you for always having my back and trusting in me. Dr. Davidson, my committee member, who also believed in me more than I believed in myself through this process. Thank you for helping me think outside the box and giving me invaluable insights. My former professor and mentor, Sage, who took me under his wing and in turn gave me 'wings' to soar, Thank you. My friends and colleagues, Alex, Mehik, Madison, and Eric, who never stop believing in me, loving me, and supporting me through everything, I love you. I am extremely grateful for the support and love from my entire department, committee, and mentors, thank you for believing in this awkward and ever 'sorry' international student.

Thirdly, I would like to give thanks to and acknowledge my wonderful family and friends. My amma (Praveena) and appa (Suresh), without whom I would not be the person I am today. Thank you for loving me, for always making my dreams your priority and for supporting me through all the hardships. In a culture that does not often give women a chance, you made space for me to become a strong and independent woman and gave me hope. My akka (Varshitha), who inspired me to break cycles and begin the process of questioning and healing, thank you for being there even when I thought I did not need anyone. Thank you to my mummyma and mummypa, my mama, mami, and all my chithas and chithappas, I love you. My wonderful partner, Peter, thank you for all that you do for me , keeping me grounded, giving me your unconditional love (even when I have not had my caffeine) and challenging me to think beyond my lens. My partners' family, Pietra, Cron and Hana for taking me in as their own and loving me and supporting me through my personal and academic life. My best friends, Kara, Owen, Tara, and Omar, I love y'all. Luna, my cat, even though you do not do much and probably do not understand, thank you for existing in my life and being as cute as you are.

Thank you seems too small a gesture to describe the amount of gratitude I have for your support.

Preface

One of my favorite memories from my undergraduate experience in the United States was the first homecoming parade I ever participated in. I, amongst fellow international students, carried our countries' flags proudly and waved them. It felt at that moment like I was home; this was my new family where everyone was loved and respected. But this feeling would soon fade. The first moment that lifted the illusion of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Oklahoma for me was when a video of a group of fraternity brothers singing songs with racial slurs and references to lynching surfaced in early 2015. The University's response to what would be known as the 'S.A.E. incident' was reactionary to the countless marches, protests, and sit-ins by students from the African American community and their allies on campus. The fraternity was disbanded, and a new position for Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion was created. But since then, despite the efforts from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices, 'incidents' of bias and discrimination against historically marginalized and minoritized communities on campus saw little to no change.

In fact, the campus saw more protests, sit-ins, and marches from students frustrated with the lack of responses or the inadequate responses to these 'incidents.' To this day, in 2020, students of color, religious minorities, undocumented students, LGBTQIA+ students, international students, and so on, are still met with bias and discrimination on campus. This is not something unique to just one campus. In fact, it is spread across all Predominantly white institutions across the Midwestern states in the United States and even globally. As I participated in these protests and marches, the feelings of anger, frustration, and disappointment from students echoed in my thoughts. I asked myself, 'why?'. Why isn't anything working? Why does it still feel like historically marginalized students are not welcome in higher education? Why do these students have to continually fight for equity and Inclusion in a space that promised them

such? Are these isolated ‘incidents,’ or is it a symptom of a bigger problem? Am I alone in these thoughts? With this thesis, I set out to explore why it felt like someone used duct tape to fix a failing heart. As I begin this process, I am reminded of Dr.Angela Davis’ words,

“I have a hard time accepting diversity as a synonym for justice. Diversity is a corporate strategy. It’s a strategy designed to ensure that the institution functions in the same way that it functioned before, except now that you now have some black faces and brown faces. It’s a difference that doesn’t make a difference.” (Davis as cited in Eckert, 2015)

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Abstract

In response to the growing demographics in the United States, diversity, equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.) offices and efforts have become a conventional part of higher education institutions in the United States. Despite these efforts, there remains a disconnect in D.E.I. perceptions and the effectiveness of D.E.I. efforts between students from historically marginalized and minoritized communities and the administrations of Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). Using a cross-sectional mixed-methods design, the purpose of the thesis was to explore existing literature and conduct a study to ascertain the prevalence of differing perceptions of the relationship between diversity efforts and campus climate for underrepresented and historically excluded students. There were four key findings. First, students from marginalized and minoritized communities are more likely to feel unsatisfied with D.E.I. efforts. Second, there is a prevalence of bias and discrimination witnessed or experienced by students from sources that included faculty, staff, and administration despite D.E.I. efforts. Third, the experiences prompted negative implications physically and mentally for students. Fourth, university administrators and D.E.I. offices were perceived to intentionally embody mainstream and superficial definitions and practices of D.E.I. This thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of research findings and future directions.

Keywords: Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Colonialism, Higher Education, Pseudo Wokeism

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education: A Reality or a Façade?

The United States of America is home to a mosaic of various cultures and diverse populations from multiple backgrounds and social identities. The current demographic trends, per the U.S census board, show that the post-millennial generation in the U.S is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation, with 52% of the population identifying as non-white Hispanics (Fry & Parker, 2018). Additionally, the oldest post-millennials are enrolling in college at a significantly higher rate than the Millennial generation (Fry & Parker, 2018); and the United States is projected to have larger diversity in religion, sexual orientation, gender identity etc. (Fry & Parker, 2018 & Gates, 2011). With these demographic trends, higher education institutions pride themselves on taking progressive strides to create a microcosm of the demographics in the U.S. Additionally, to abide by the 'Higher Education Act of 1965, Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) have instituted diversity initiatives for the past 50 years (Patton et. al, 2019). As a result, diversity, and inclusion offices on campuses across the United States have become a conventional part of these 'progressive' or 'woke' efforts by university administrations to create inclusive spaces in an attempt to boost admission rates of minoritized students on campuses.

Nevertheless, PWIs see higher attrition rates and targeted discrimination on campus amongst minoritized students as explicit and implicit biases towards these students remain a part of the educational structures created to maintain historically hegemonic standards (Harris et al., 2015). Hegemony can be described as the hierarchical placement, standardization, and centralization of dominant groups in institutional structures that simultaneously marginalize non-dominant groups (Rosamond,2020). In the context of coloniality and higher education in the United States, the hegemony is White, Christian, Cisgender, Heterosexual, Males, Able-bodied and are from an upper socioeconomic class. The campus climate for diversity and Inclusion also

results in negative implications affecting minoritized students on campus, such as their psychological well-being, educational outcomes, success rates, physical well-being, disenfranchisement, and exploitation.

As the mainstream definition of diversity espoused by historically hegemonic populations encompasses practices such as sensitivity training, tokenism in academic contribution and hiring, and cultural programs, diversity and inclusion efforts by these administrations still exclude minoritized students and their experiences on a structural level (Banks, 1988; 'Council on Interracial Books for Children,' 1977; Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988 as cited in Swartz, 2017). Moreover, higher education administrations typically maintain that incidents of explicit and implicit discrimination are isolated incidents rather than a reflection of the current policies on diversity and Inclusion.

This exploratory thesis sought to determine whether there remains a disconnect between the perceptions of the campus climate between minoritized students and administrations of PWIs; redefining 'diversity and inclusion in higher education' through the lens of historically minoritized students. Based on the findings, the thesis concludes by offering constructive solutions in hopes of maximizing diversity and inclusion programs beyond surface-level initiatives. It is the expectation of the author that incorporation of these research-informed practices will benefit minoritized students on university campuses, thereby, leading to substantial progress in attaining educational equity.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

When discussing 'Diversity, Inclusion and, Equity,' it is impossible to separate the critical analysis of higher education spaces without acknowledging the historical and the current application of Colonialism. For the purpose of this thesis, Decolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory, Diversity Ideology, and 'Pseudo-woke' Theory will be used to guide the literature review; subsequently informing the generation of research questions based on extant literature.

***Decolonial and Critical Race Theory*.** The very foundation of higher education in the United States is constructed on the tenets of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness both physically and conceptually (Dancy et. al, 2018; Stein & Andreotti, 2016 & Wilder, 2013). The disenfranchising and appropriation of Indigenous land and peoples, the enslavement of Black Americans, and the intellection of white supremacy is embedded in institutions of higher education (Dancy et. al, 2018; Stein & Andreotti, 2016 & Wilder, 2013). *Decolonial theory* in the context of this paper's theoretical framework will be defined as "critical insights into knowledge from subaltern voices concerned with how the implementation of modern technologies shape colonial structures, inequalities, the daily lives of the colonized, and resistance strategies" (Weiner, 2018, p.1).

Critical Race Theory (C.R.T.) originated as a reaction to critical law theory's failure to acknowledge the implications and role of racism as a systematic and institutional process (Martinez, 2014). C.R.T. pushes back on the notions of *color blindness* and Post-racial society (Martinez, 2014). *Color Blindness* views racism as a point in history and views race as a non-factor in social issues (Delgado, 1995). The conception of C.R.T. in educational spaces can be

examined through five principles that shape the pedagogies, methodologies, and ontology of C.R.T. (Martinez, 2014; Lo et al., 2017 & Solorzano &Yonno, 2001). These principles include "(1) the centrality and *intersectionality* of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice;(4) the importance of experiential knowledge; and (5) the use of interdisciplinary perspectives" (Solorzano & Yonno, 2001, p.596). In addition to C.R.T., this paper will also address the critical theories birthed from C.R.T. to address intersectional identities and shift in narratives that are overlooked in pedagogies that center the racial binary (Black/White). These include *Critical Trans* Theory, Critical Feminist Theory, Latinx Critical Theory, Indigenous Critical Theory,* and so on.

Diversity Ideology Mayorga-Gallo (2019) proposes *diversity ideology* as a theoretical framework to understand the distinction between color-blind racism or symbolic discrimination and the co-option of 'woke' activism through the lens of the white-left wing and progressive identity processes. The four tenets of Diversity ideology include (1) diversity as acceptance; (2) diversity as intent: (3) diversity as a commodity: (4) diversity as a liability (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). Unlike color-blind racism, diversity ideological framework posits that 'Progressives' or 'Liberals' acknowledge the implications of racial inequalities and structural issues that favor whiteness but frames the root of this inequality solely as the product of exclusion and conceptualizes the solution or the key to end inequity as fair representation and visible representation of minoritized individuals (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). Diversity ideology allows for the construction of the benevolence of progressive and liberal identities proliferating tolerance of minoritized individuals in spaces of hegemonic status-quos (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019).

***Pseudo-wokeism*.** The term 'woke' is by no means a new concept. While it covers intersectional aspects of social justice issues stemming from racism, sexism, classism, and so on,

the history of the term ‘woke’ is rooted in Black activism in the United States to bring attention to institutional and systematic issues born out of anti-Blackness and the enslavement of Black Americans (Whiteout, 2018). This term’s popularization in mainstream activism happened in recent years through the ‘Movement for Black Lives’ in 2012 (Whiteout, 2018). However, since then, the term has had a semantic shift after being co-opted by white left-wing and progressive identity processes contingent on the sufferings of historically minoritized peoples (Vis et. al, 2019). The application of the term ‘Woke’ has joined the ranks of ‘Diversity,’ ‘Inclusion,’ and ‘Equity’ as a buzzword synonymous with performative and disingenuous activism (Watson, 2020; Davis et al., 2019 & Vis et al., 2019). The term ‘*pseudo-wokeism’* as proposed in this paper, draws upon decolonial, critical theories and diversity ideologies as a direct reaction to define the intentional process of diversity ideologies from an individual and institutional level.

‘Diversity, Inclusion & Equity’

While the purpose of ‘Diversity’ and ‘Inclusion’ in higher education started as a means to increase the numerical representation of racially minoritized individuals, Harris et al. (2015) & Mayorga-Gallo (2019) argue that the motivation and intention to introduce racially diverse individuals to PWIs, function purely for the benefit of white students to experience cultural exposure. The mainstream definition of *Diversity* and *Inclusion* can be understood as the homogenization of minoritized students to represent numerical and aggregated increases in recruitment of these students (Harris, 2020). As *Diversity* and *Inclusion* are viewed as interchangeable words, mainstream ideas of *Inclusion* can be understood as viewing the identities of minoritized students as physicality in spaces of higher education by expecting cultural and social assimilation to the hegemonic standards (Harris, 2020 & Harris et al., 2015). Joining the ‘trifecta’ of the interchangeability of *Diversity* and *Inclusion, Equity* has become a

mainstream promise by Universities that understands fairness and equality as simply the opportunity to gain access to these spaces (Harris, 2020).

While Universities use these efforts to appear progressive and ‘diverse’ to recruit students and faculty, the burden of educating their peers from dominant groups is placed on these students and faculty as the only scope for success (Harris et. al, 2015). Furthermore, Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (D.E.I.) efforts have intentionally capitalized and commodified the identities of historically marginalized peoples to create an industry solely built to maintain the Façade of progressiveness (Harris et. al, 2015). D.E.I. offices are created to facilitate access to education on a procedural level as opposed to a substantial level without having to address the prevalence and pervasiveness of hegemonic structures (Harris et al., 2015).

D.E.I. efforts in Universities are usually limited to Mission Statements and Bias training that make empty promises of inclusive and equitable space of education (Carnes et al., 2019). These D.E.I. efforts shaped by colorblindness, tolerance, racial triangulation, the model minority myth, symbolic racism/discrimination, patriarchy, gender binary distortion, and extensions of manifest destiny within epistemological frameworks of higher education institutes reinforce systems of imperialism and colonialism, that continue to perpetuate the processes of exclusion and assimilation of minoritized students in spaces of higher education that fundamentally repudiate their identities and invalidate their humanity (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016; Lo et al., 2017; Woodford et al., 2018 & J. A. Banks, 1988; ‘Council on Interracial Books for Children,’ 1977; Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988 as cited in Swartz, 2017). These ideals further marginalization and ‘otherness’ impeding the educational outcomes, success rates, and psychological well-being of students. (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et

al., 2016; Lo et al., 2017; J. A. Banks, 1988; ‘Council on Interracial Books for Children,’ 1977; Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988 as cited in Swartz, 2017).

In addition to the differing perceptions of campus climate between minoritized students and their white cis-gendered and heterosexual peers at PWIs, the following studies highlight the differing perceptions of the definition of diversity and the level of experiential Inclusion for these students (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016 & Lo et al., 2017). As institutions treat incidents of discrimination as isolated incidents and not reflections of the institutions’ inadequate intervention and efforts, minoritized students indicate experiences of not feeling supported on campus and lack of belongingness in higher education (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016 & Lo et al., 2017).

Race and Ethnicity

Lo et al. (2017), in their study “Racial Differences in College Students’ Assessments of Campus Race Relations,” attempt to study the difference in perceptions of racism on campus between Black students and white students. The study focuses on predominantly white institutions (PWI) to study the impact of symbolic racism on campus (Lo et al., 2017). The authors collected their data by conducting a campus-wide survey at the University of Alabama over the Spring 2013 semester with a sample size of 3219 students (Lo et al., 2017). Using principles of critical race theory (C.R.T.), the authors analyzed their data, and the results indicated that there was a strong relationship between perceptions of campus race relations and measures of symbolic racism between Black and white students on campus (Lo et al., 2017). Some limitations of this study included the exclusion of other minoritized students in assessing

race relations on campus and that the sample was collected only over the course of one semester at the University of Alabama (Lo et al., 2017).

Griffin et al. (2016), conduct a similar study in "Defining diversity: Ethnic differences in Black students' perceptions of racial climate" to test the differing perceptions of racial climate on campuses based on differences in ethnicity and nativity among the Black community. In their study, they collect narratives of experiences from 43 Black students enrolled at a Predominantly White Institute (PWI), among whom 15 were Native to the U.S, and 28 were immigrants (Griffin et al., 2016). The finding of the study suggested that race and ethnicity played a factor in the differing perceptions and experiences of racial campus climate between the participants (Griffin et al., 2016). The results also indicated that both second-generation Black students and Native Black students had similar perceptions of the lack of racial diversity and experiences of marginalization on campus where the second-generation Black students experienced more stereotypes on campus and Native students experienced frequent social marginalization from their white peers (Griffin et al., 2016). The study also determines that the efforts in diversity on campus were perceived to focus on surface-level efforts including concepts like tokenism and colorblind policies, etc., rather than structural change and institutional changes (Griffin et al., 2016).

Chan (2019), examines the extent of colorblindness and racial triangulation among Asian Americans in higher education in their study "Does diversity include me? Colorblindness and racial triangulation among Asian Americans on two college campuses." In this study, the author collects and compares narratives of experiences of 26 Asian American students from two campuses, one where they are the majority and one where they are a minoritized in terms of numbers (Chan, 2016). The findings indicated while the numerical representation of these

students using aggregated data to represent diversity on campuses supported the claims of colorblindness, the aggregated data representing the number of these students on campus did not have an impact on their experiences on campus with racial discrimination, stereotypes, prejudice and implications of the model minoritized myth (Chan, 2016). Moreover, these students had similar overwhelming perceptions of feeling excluded from diversity efforts from both institutional and structural levels (Chan, 2016).

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Coulter and Rankin (2017), in their study "College Sexual Assault and Campus Climate for Sexual- and Gender-Minoritized Undergraduate Students," examine the impact of the exclusion and perceptions of sexual and gender minorities on campus concerning their victimization in rape culture on campuses. The study employed cross-sectional surveys completed by sexual and gender-minoritized undergraduate students with a sample size of 1,925 students in higher education institutions across 50 U.S. states in the year 2010 (Coulter & Rankin, 2016). The findings suggested that 5.2% of the sexual and gender minoritized students experienced sexual assault on campus (Coulter & Rankin, 2016). Additionally, after controlling for sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnic and, gender identity, higher rates of perceived Inclusion on campus were associated with significantly lower odds of rape culture victimization, and that the social environment and perceptions of gender and sexual minorities on campus played a significant role in their experiences. (Coulter & Rankin, 2016).

Woodford and colleagues (2018), in their study "LGBTQ policies and resources on campus and the experiences and psychological well-being of sexual minoritized college students: Advancing research on structural inclusion," examine the structural level factors in diversity

efforts and the institutional policies on diversity and Inclusion on campus on the LGBTIA+ community and their experiences on a heteronormative campus. The authors conducted a cross-sectional study by having participants complete an anonymous online survey addressing experiential heterosexism on campus to investigate the association between campus-based structural factors and the experiences and psychological well-being of cisgender LGBQ+ college students with a sample size of 268 students out of which 58%were undergraduates, 25% were students of color and 62% identified as gay or lesbian (Woodford et al., 2018).

Additionally, the authors also documented existing diversity policies (11 policies) on these campuses and available resources for the advocacy, Inclusion, and well-being of sexual and gender minorities by assessing the participants' experiences with heterosexist discrimination (victimization, microaggressions), psychological distress (perceived stress, anxiety) and self-acceptance (self-esteem and pride) (Woodford et al., 2018). The findings of the study suggested the prevalence of psychological distress and gender and sexuality bias towards these students (Woodford et al., 2018). The results of the study also indicated that structural level efforts in policymaking for these students including campus-wide classes on LGBTQ+ community and LGBTQ+ organizations in ratio to the numbers of gender and sexuality minorities had a positive influence on the experiences of these students with heterosexist discrimination, psychological distress, and self-acceptance (Woodford et al., 2018). The results also highlighted the saliency of studying structural initiatives when investigating structural stigma and Inclusion (Woodford et al., 2018).

The literature review provides support to examine the prevalence of the differing perceptions of diversity and Inclusion in higher education. The literature also helps define the levels of diversity efforts and how pseudo-woke policies fail to meet the structural changes in the

psychological and behavioral climate for these students. Additionally, the literature serves as a basis to examine the role of institutions in employing 'pseudo-wokeism' serves as a façade to sustain capitalization of minoritized students while maintaining structures that preserve hegemonic status-quos.

Present Study

Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of Decolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory, and 'Pseudo-woke' Theory as guides, this exploratory study sought to determine whether there remains a disconnect between the perceptions of campus climate between minoritized students and administrations of PWIs through the lens of historically minoritized students. An additional aim was to further deconstruct the disconnect between these perceptions by also assessing the implications of practicing 'mainstream' diversity efforts and adopting 'pseudo-woke' policies. Due to the aggregated nature of the data, the research utilized mixed methodology to remove the possibility of exclusion of experiences. Research questions included: 1) Is there a prevalence of differing perceptions of the relationship between diversity efforts and campus climates for underrepresented and historically excluded students? 2) What are the implications of colonialism in understanding the current diversity efforts in higher education? 3)Does the 'pseudo-woke theory' define the disconnect between perceptions of diversity and Inclusion in higher education? 4) Are Higher Education institutes employing a façade of 'woke' and 'progressive' policies as a colonial technology to impede actual progress and Inclusion of minoritized students and preserve the intellection of white supremacy? 5)Is there a scope for Higher Education Institutes to truly achieve decolonized structures and can 'diversity, inclusion, and equity' move forward from mainstream definitions? Based on the findings from the existing literature, it is hypothesized that there is a disconnect in perceptions of D.E.I. efforts between students and

University administrations and that universities employ pseudo woke policies to sustain hegemonic status-quos.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design was cross-sectional and combined elements of quantitative (concrete) and qualitative (open-ended) items in order to provide a rich foundation of information. Using this mixed-methods approach, the purpose of this descriptive exploratory study was to identify the prevalence of differing perceptions or the disconnect in perceptions of diversity, Inclusion, and equity (D.E.I.) within a four-year midwestern predominantly white institution (PWI). It is important to note that for the purpose of this thesis the exact site of the study will remain anonymous and thus, simply referred to as a midwestern PWI. Informed by extant literature, a survey was created specifically for this thesis, to gather data on demographics and students' perceptions of diversity and inclusion efforts on campus by University leadership and their experiences with bias and discrimination. Recruitment and data collection took place between October 13, 2020 and November 13, 2020. The units of the study included both individuals and groups based on demographic identities. Analyses of descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative data were completed in separate phases addressing each proposed research question. The data analysis and output for this thesis were generated using Qualtrics (2020) software, Version X.M.

Sampling and Recruiting Procedure

The recruitment of participants was done through snowball sampling; a form of convenience sampling (Babbie, 2010). The survey was not targeted towards any students specifically based on their identities. Participants were approached through email, direct contact, and web posting. Eligible participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were

presented with a link to the survey questionnaire on Qualtrics (2020) that included a consent and confidentiality form (see Appendix). Participants were made aware that the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous and that there was no compensation. They were also made aware that if they chose to complete the survey, they could skip any question they did not wish to answer and could terminate participation at any time. Participants were also notified that there were no known risks attached to participation in the study.

Participants

The sample was 52 (N = 52) students from one midwestern PWI over the age of 18 years. Participants were current undergraduate and graduate students as well as alumni and students who dropped out or transferred. Out of the 52 participants, a total of 46 complete responses to demographics were collected. The breakdown of demographics based on student status was 54.35% identified as current students and 45.65% as former students. Current students were represented by 82.14% (n = 23) graduate (in master level and doctoral programs) and 17.86% (n = 5) undergraduate students with senior level classification. Of those who identified themselves as former students, 20.69% (n = 6) reported that they did not complete their degree.

Measure

Perceptions of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Efforts Survey. A 49-item survey questionnaire, including an online consent form, was employed in obtaining information about the students' perceptions of diversity and inclusion efforts on campus by the University leadership and their experiences with bias and discrimination (see Appendix). A list of 17 socio-economic demographic questions, such as age, ethnic/racial background, religious affiliation, gender identity, sexual orientation, perceived socioeconomic status, student classification,

graduation year and so on, were collected within the survey. To supplement demographic items, additional survey questions were built around personal experiences with D.E.I. efforts and the literature studied. The survey consisted of 5 qualitative (open-ended) questions and 44 quantitative questions (including 17 demographic questions and 1 consent form). The general response for scale-based questions ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree; Extremely Satisfied to Extremely Unsatisfied; Very Satisfied to Very Unsatisfied; Extremely Difficult to Extremely Easy and Extremely Likely to Extremely Unlikely.

Results

Phase 1 Analyses: Descriptive Findings

This section provides detailed descriptive statistics of participant responses; thereby forming a reference for the quantitative and qualitative research results. Though a convenience strategy was employed to recruit participants, emphasis was placed on collecting data from a diverse pool of students. With regard to demographic questions, some diversity was achieved. Approximately forty-nine percent (n = 23) of participants identified as in-state residents, 29.28% (n = 10) as out of state students and 29.79% (n = 14) international students. International students included those who full-time, exchange and postgraduate visa types. The gender identity breakdown included 85.11% (n = 40) Cis-gender students, 4.26% (n = 2) Gender-Queer students, 2.13% (n = 1) Non-binary students and 8.50% (n = 4) of students who answered "Other."

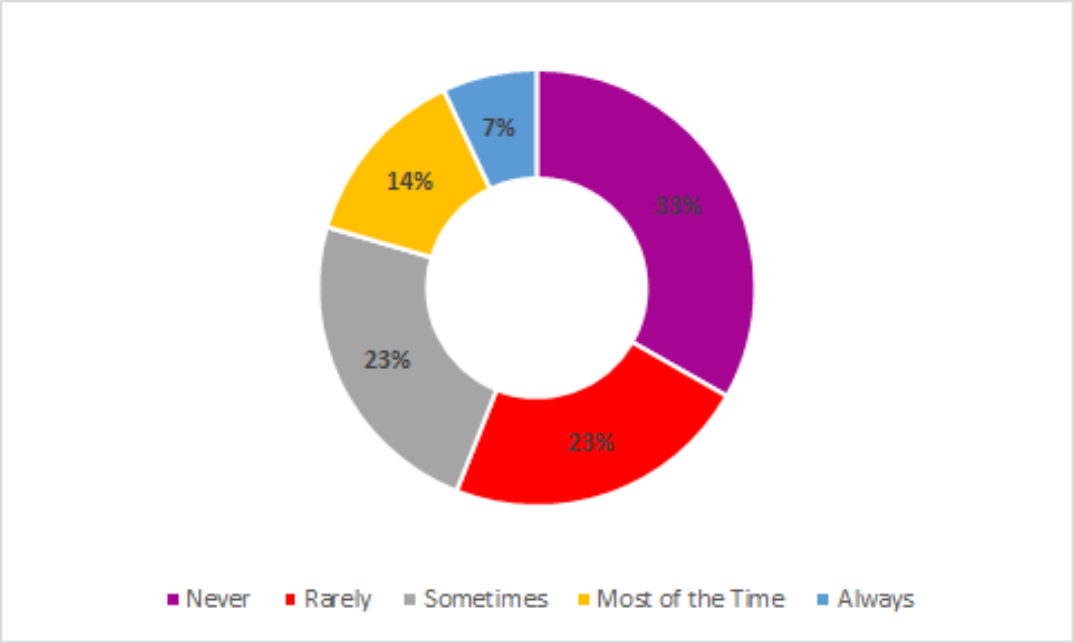
The breakdown of the sexual orientation were 10.64 % (n = 5) who identified as Gay, 4.26 % (n = 2) identifying as Bisexual, 2.13 % (n = 1) Pansexual, 2.13 % (n = 1) Queer, 76.60 % (n = 35) Heterosexual and 4.26% (n = 2) Asexual. The religious identities of students were 43.48% (n = 20) Christian, 15.22% (n = 7) Atheist, 23.91% (n = 11) Agnostic, 4.35% (n = 2) Hindu, 8.70% (n = 4) Muslim, 2.17% (n = 1) Communism, and 2.17% (n = 1) Pagan. Furthermore, the racial/ethnic identities included 45 responses in which 48.89% (n = 22) identified as Caucasian (including Italian, German and Swiss), 15.55% (n = 7) Black (including African- American and African), 22.22% (n = 10) Asian (including South Asian, Middle-eastern, South Asian and Asian American), 6.67% (n = 3) Latinx (including Aymara) and 6.67% (n = 3) Bi-racial (including African American/Caucasian and Native American/ Hispanic). Out

of 47 responses, only 1 (2.13%) student indicated they had some form of a physical disability and 29.79 % (n = 14) of students identified as having some form of an invisible disability.

Phase 2 Analyses: Quantitative Results

Prevalence of incidents of bias and discrimination witnessed by students. Figure 1 presents the frequency of responses provided for reported experiences of witnessing bias and discrimination for the total sample. The results of the prevalence of incidents of bias and discrimination witnessed by students varied from 33% (n = 133) reporting "Never," 23% (n = 91) reporting "Rarely, 23% (n = 94) reporting "Sometimes," 14% (n=54) reporting "Most of the time" and 7% (n=28) reporting "Always." Further analyses revealed that the identity of the respondent influenced responses.

Figure 1. *Frequency of witnessed incidents of bias and discrimination for the total sample. (n=400)*



The comparison of responses from Caucasian students and racial/ethnic minorities on their exposure to witnessing bias and discrimination showed that Caucasian students were more likely to witness incidents of bias and discrimination based on race “Rarely” or “Most of the time” (n=7) and made up for 50% of participants who answered “Never” (n=4) and 100% of participants who indicated “Rarely” (n=4). In comparison, racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to report “Most of the Time” (n =7) and “Sometimes” (n = 8).

In the case of religion-based incidents, Christians, Hindus, Agnostics, and Atheists were the only groups to answer “Never” (n=9) witnessing bias and discrimination while on campus. Additional analyses focusing on bias and discrimination exposure as a function of gender identity found that responses from Cis-gender students were the only group to indicate “Never” (n = 13) and “Rarely” (n = 8); while Non-binary and Transgender students reported “Most of the Time” (n = 2) and “Always” (n = 1).

Experiences of bias and discrimination were also analyzed as a function of students’ sexual orientation and reported disability. Heterosexual students were the only respondents to indicate “Never” being exposed to witnessing bias and discrimination (n =14) and minoritized sexual orientation identities with the exception of one Queer student, responded as “Always” (n = 4) and “Sometimes” (n = 3). Participants who identified as not having any physical disabilities leaned heavily towards reporting “Never” (n = 17) and “Rarely” (n = 10), while the one participant who indicated they had some form of physical disability answered “Most of the time. Lastly, of the 22 students out of 39 responses that indicated as not having a form of invisible/mental disability, 78.58% (n = 22) indicated as “Never” or “Rarely” having witnessed any bias and discrimination based on their mental/invisible disabilities. The responses from

students who identified as having a form of mental/invisible disability varied equally on the scale of "Never" (n = 2) to "Always" (n = 2).

Prevalence of incidents of bias and discrimination experienced by students. Figure 2 presents the frequency of responses provided for reporting personally experienced bias and discrimination for the total sample. The results of the prevalence of incidents of bias and discrimination witnessed by students leaned strongly towards "Never" with 65% (n = 228) reporting "Never," 12% (n = 42) reporting "Rarely," 12% (n = 42) reporting "Sometimes," 9% (n=32) reporting "Most of the time" and 2% (n=8) reporting "Always." Further analyses revealed that the identity of the respondent influenced responses. While the overall responses gravitated towards "Never," students from dominant identities were more likely to respond as never having experienced bias and discrimination while on campus.

Figure 2. *Frequency of personally experienced incidents of bias and discrimination for the total sample (n=352).*

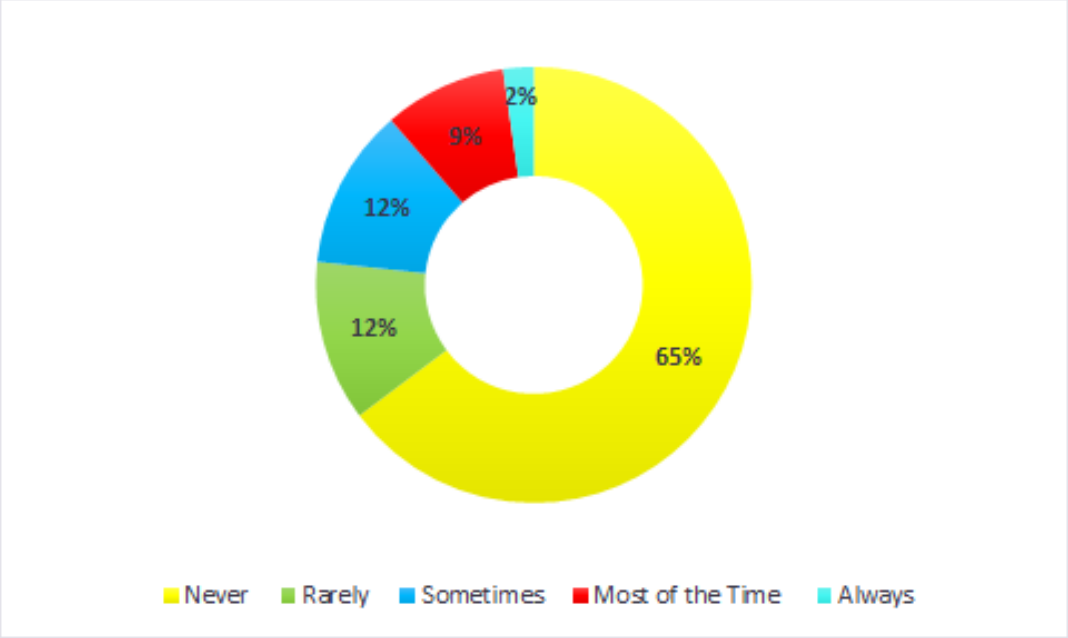
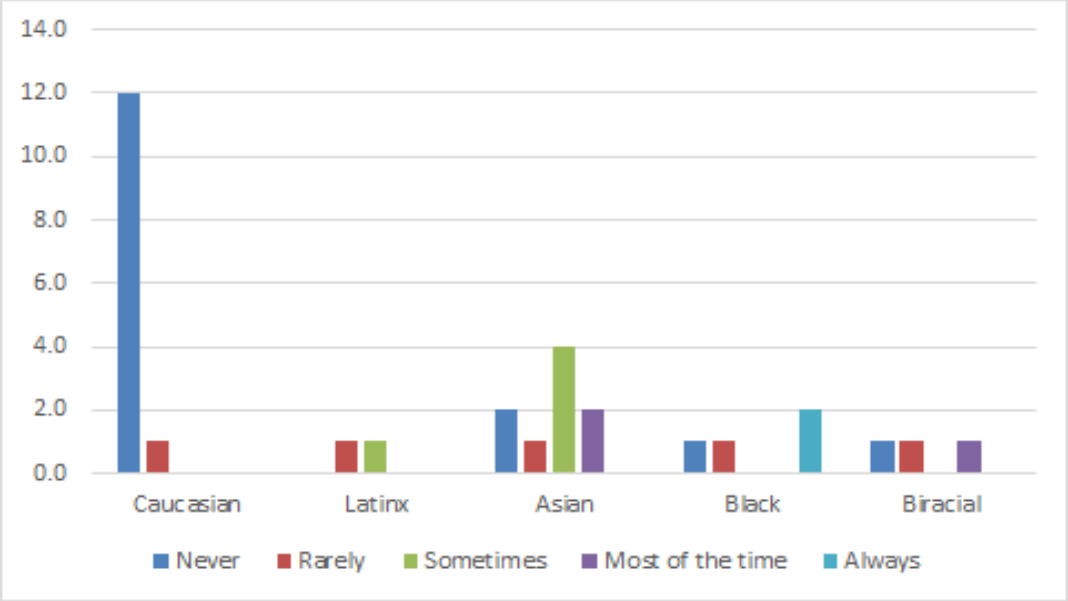


Figure 3 presents responses based on racial/ethnic identities where 92% (n=12) of Caucasian students indicated “Never” having experienced bias and discrimination based on their race/ethnicity while 16.67% (n=3) and 27.78% (n=5) of students from minoritized ethnic/racial identities answered most of the time and sometimes respectively with 11.11% (n=2) of students who were primarily Black students indicated always.

Figure 3. *Response variation among Caucasian and racial and ethnic minorities for personal experiences with bias and discrimination.*



With the results of religion, 44.45% (n=8) of Christian students and 33.33% (n=6) Agnostic students indicated “Never” while 50% (n=2) of the total number of Muslims (n=4) answered “Sometimes.” With gender-based incidents, 76% of cisgender (n=22) students responded “Never” (n=19) and “Rarely” (n=3) and 1 out of 3 gender minority students answered, “Most of the time.” In the case of sexual orientation, 81.81% of heterosexual students responded as “Never” (n=18) and 66.67% of the total sexual orientation minorities indicated as “Sometimes” (n=3), “Most of the time” (n=2) and “Always” (n=1).

In summary, the overall results of personally experienced bias and discrimination suggested that 23% (n=82) of the respondents had experienced some form of bias and discrimination. While 77% (270) of the participants indicated as to "Never" or "Rarely" having personal incidents. But further analysis of the results showed that participants from dominant group identities (i.e., Caucasian, Heterosexual, Cisgender, etc.) trended towards "Never" or "Rarely" having experienced any incidents of bias and discrimination due to their identities and students from minoritized groups were more likely to experience some levels of bias/discrimination.

Types of bias and discrimination reported. Tables 1 and 2 present the results from the forms of bias and discrimination experienced or witnessed indicated that participants had experienced various forms, with the exception of vandalism. While each listed form of bias and discrimination had at least one endorsement, the results indicated that stereotyping (20.99%), microaggressions (13.58%), derogatory jokes (14.81%), lack of accommodation (18.52%) and disrespectful comments (11.11%) were the most experienced (as noted in Table 1). In regard to incidents witnessed, while students reported at least one response for all listed forms of bias/discrimination, stereotyping (16.77%), microaggressions (12.42%), disrespectful gestures/comments (13.66%) and derogatory jokes (13.66%) were the most witnessed (as noted in Table 2).

Table 1. *Response count distribution for types of bias and discrimination incidents witnessed.*

Response	%	Count
Stereotyping	16.77	27
Microaggressions	12.42	20

Slurs	9.94	16
Stares	7.45	12
Vandalism	2.48	4
Disrespectful gestures/comments	13.66	22
Derogatory jokes	13.66	22
Exclusion from social gatherings	6.83	11
Lack of support/accommodation	9.94	16
Harassment	5.59	9
Physical assault	0.62	1
Other	0.62	1
Total	100	161

Table 2. *Response count distribution for types of discrimination and bias personally experienced.*

Response	**%**	**Count**
Stereotyping	20.99	17
Microaggressions	13.58	11
Slurs	4.94	4
Stares	4.94	4
Vandalism	0	0
Disrespectful gestures/comments	11.11	9
Derogatory jokes	14.81	12
Exclusion from social gatherings	4.94	4
Lack of support/accommodation	18.52	15

Harassment	4.94	4
Physical assault	1.23	1
Other	0	0
Total	100	81

Impact of bias and discrimination. Table 3 presents the impact of being exposed to bias and discrimination resulted in discomfort ranging from psychological stress to decreased retention of information in classes. The highest forms of impact that exposure to bias and discrimination reported were discomfort (15.08%), followed by lack of belongingness (12.70%), anxiety (7.14%), emotional distress (7.94%) and lowered self-esteem (7.94%).

Table 3. *Response count distribution for impact of bias and discrimination incidents on respondents (n =126).*

Response	**%**	**Frequency Count**
Discomfort	15.05	19
Psychological Stress	5.56	7
Fear for life/safety	2.28	3
Decreased attention/concentration	4.76	6
Feelings of isolation	6.35	8
Not feeling like you belong	12.70	16
Homesickness	3.97	5
Thoughts about dropping out	3.17	4
Dropping out	0.79	1
Thoughts about switching Universities	3.17	4
Transferring out to a different University	1.59	2

Lower grades in class/assignments	0.79	1
Lack of sleep	3.17	4
Anxiety	7.14	9
Depression	4.76	6
Physical injuries	0.79	1
Emotion exhaustion	7.94	10
Lowered self-esteem	7.94	10
Lowered motivation to do school work	4.76	6
Decreased retention in class	3.17	4
Other	0	0
Total	100	126

Source of bias and discrimination reported. Table 4 presents the various sources of bias and discrimination reported by students. Current and former college students reported that the sources of bias and discrimination on campus were more likely to come from students (46.85%), followed by faculty (24.32%), staff (19.82%) and "Other" (9.01%). Participants who responded "Other" indicated sources including media, members of administration, community members, and college football fans.

Table 4. *Sources of bias and discrimination witnessed and experienced by students (n =111).*

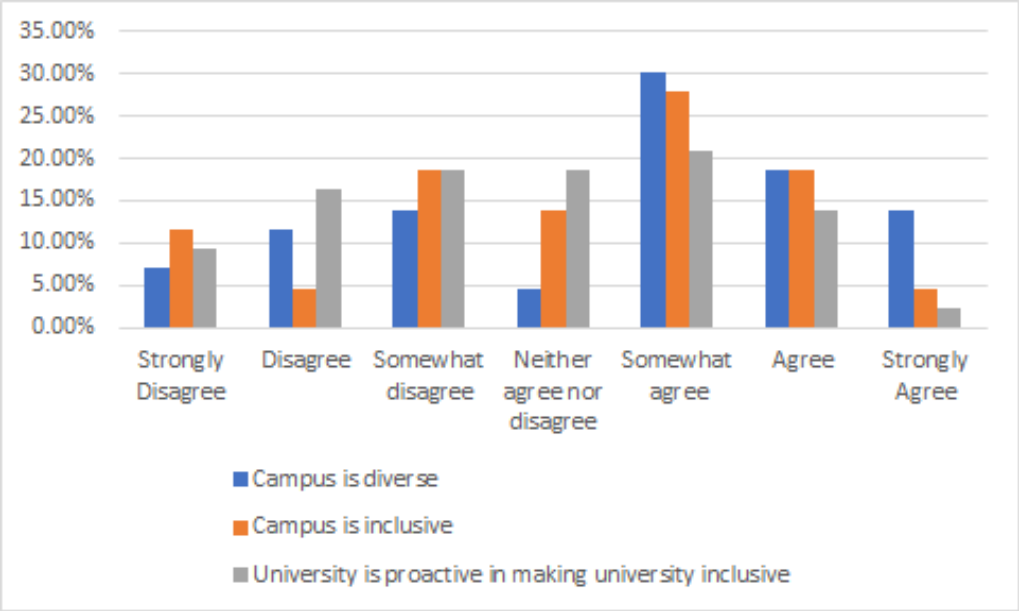
Response	**%**	**Count**
Faculty	24.32	27
Staff	19.82	22
Students	46.85	52
Other	9.01	10

Total	100	111

Note. Other sources reported included media, members of administration, community members and college football fans).

Students' perceptions of current D.E.I. on campus. Figure 4 shows the response percentage of students to three questions to assess their perceptions of current D.E.I. on campus from a scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. While the responses to the individual items varied, the results for each item shows "Somewhat Agree" as the most frequently reported response with 30.23% (n = 43), 27.90% (n = 43) and 20.93% (n = 43) to each item respectively. More specifically, when asked to report on whether the campus was diverse, 32.56% reported some form of disagreement, 4.66% were neutral, and 62.78% reported some form of agreement. When asked to report whether the campus was inclusive, 34.89% reported some form of disagreement, 51.16% reported some form of agreement and 13.95% were neutral. When participants were asked to report whether the University was proactive in making the University inclusive, 44.19% showed some level of disagreement, 37.21% reported some form of agreement and 18.6% were neutral. When collapsing over responses for each of the 3 items assessing students' perceptions of diversity and inclusiveness of the midwestern PWI, approximately an equal number of responses showed some form of disagreement and agreement (42.26% and 45.33% respectively).

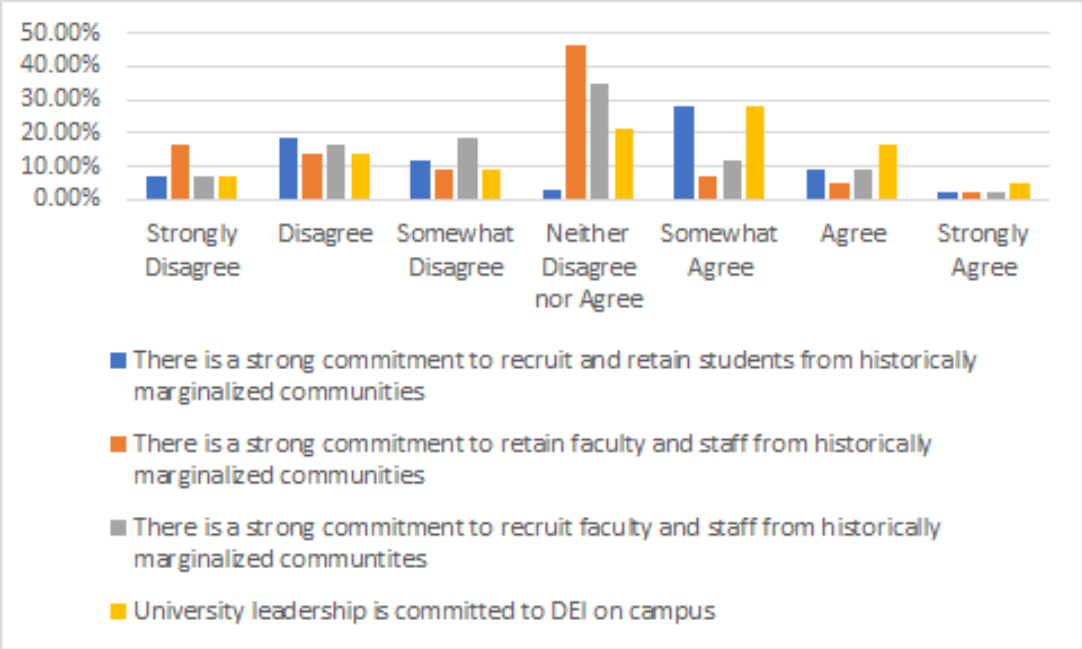
Figure 4. *Students' perceptions of current D.E.I. on campus.*



Students' perceptions of the University's commitment to D.E.I. on campus. Figure 5 shows the response percentage of students to four questions to assess their perceptions of the University's commitment to D.E.I. on campus from a scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. While the responses to the individual items varied, the results for each item lean towards "Somewhat Agree" for the item related to recruiting and retaining marginalized students (n=43) and the item related to university leadership (n=43) and "Neither Disagree nor Agree" for retaining (n = 43) and recruiting (n = 43) marginalized faculty. When asked if the University had a strong commitment to recruit and retain students from historically marginalized communities, 37.21% of the responses show some level of disagreement, 34.89% show some form of agreement and 27.9% were neutral. When asked if there was a strong commitment to retain faculty and staff from historically marginalized communities, 39.53% of the responses indicated some form of disagreement, 13.95% indicated some level of agreement and 46.52% were "neutral". When asked if there was a strong commitment to retain faculty and staff from

historically marginalized communities, 41.86% indicated some level of disagreement, 23.26% indicated some level of agreement and 34.88% were "neutral". Finally, when asked about the University leadership's commitment to D.E.I. on campus, 30.23% exhibited some level of disagreement, 48.84% indicated some form of agreement and 20.93% were "neutral". In terms of students' perceptions of the University's commitment to D.E.I. on the midwestern PWI campus, 30.23% of total responses reported some form of endorsement or agreement and 37.21% of responses reported some form of disagreement with the University's commitment to D.E.I.

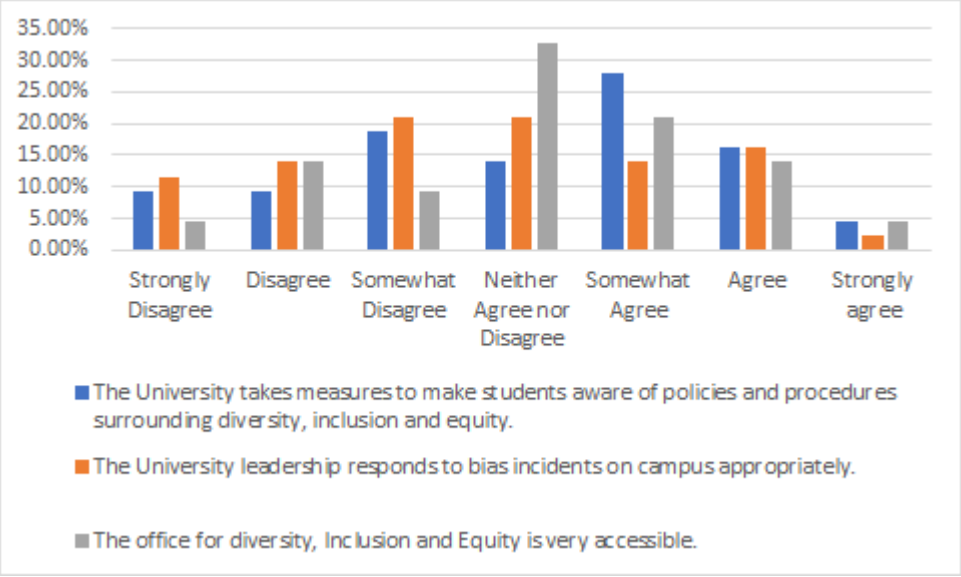
Figure 5. *Students' perceptions of the University's commitment to D.E.I.*



Students' perceptions of University responses and accessibility to D.E.I. Figure 6 shows the response percentage of students to three statements to assess their perceptions of University's response and accessibility to D.E.I. While the responses to the individual statements varied, the results for the individual statements in Figure 6 leaned towards "Somewhat Agree" with 27.91% of the responses to the first statement (n=43), "Somewhat Disagree" with 20.93 %

to the second statement (n=43) and "Neither Agree nor Disagree" with 32.56% (n=43). When asked if the University was perceived to take measures to make students aware of policies and procedures surrounding D.E.I., 37.21% of the responses indicated some level of disagreement, 48.84% indicated some form of agreement and 13.95% were "Neutral." When participants were asked if they thought the University leadership responded to bias incidents on campus appropriately, 46.51% of the participants indicated some level of disagreement, 32.56% exhibited some level of agreement and 20.93% were "Neutral." Finally, when asked if the student thought the office for D.E.I. on campus was accessible, 27.91% responded with some level of disagreement, 39.53% of students exhibited some level of agreement and 32.56% were "Neutral."

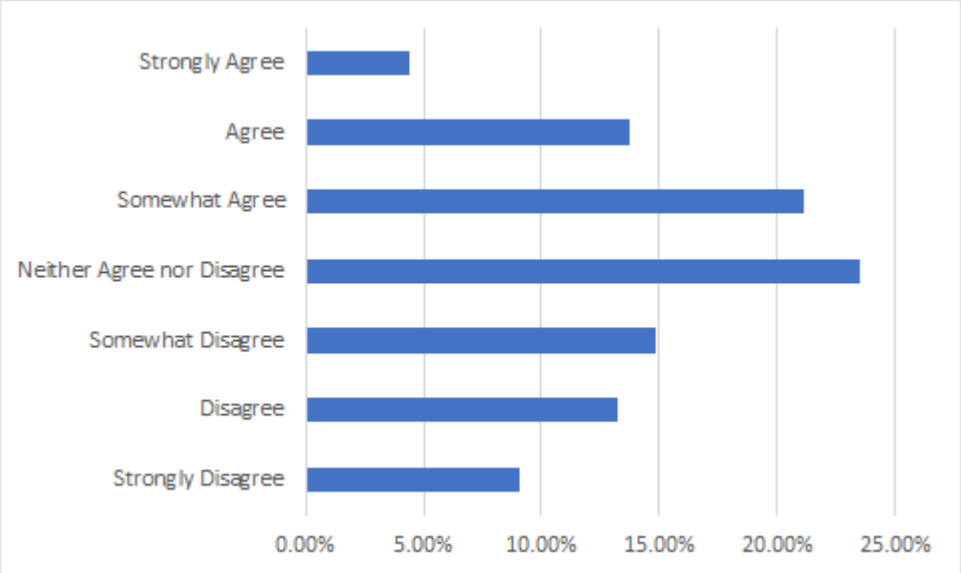
Figure 6. *Students' perceptions of University responses and accessibility to D.E.I.*



Aggregate of response counts to each of items that assessed students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts. Figure 7 presents aggregated response counts to each of the 10 survey items that assessed students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts on a scale ranging from

"Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." While the responses to the ten individual items were relatively spread out, the results for the aggregated responses leaned towards "Neither Agree nor Disagree" with 23.49% of the responses. Responses indicating "Somewhat Agree to Strongly Agree" with 39.3% of the responses, and "Somewhat Disagree to Strongly Disagree" with 37.21% of the responses.

Figure 7. *Aggregated response counts to each of the 10 survey items that assessed students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts.*



While the aggregate for all responses leans towards "Neutral" and "Somewhat Agree," upon further analyses of the data, it can be seen that students from dominant identities were more likely to agree to the statements or show neutrality. More specifically, the comparison between heterosexual students and sexual orientation minorities are presented below.

Response comparison between Hetero-sexual students and Sexual orientation minorities for perceptions of D.E.I. efforts. Figures 8 and 9 present the aggregated response

counts to each of the 10 survey items that assessed Heterosexual and Sexual orientation minorities students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts. As depicted in Figure 8, heterosexual students were more likely to "Agree" with statements endorsing the campus climate and D.E.I. efforts; whereas, as depicted in Figure 9 Sexual minorities were more likely to "Disagree." Similar results were exhibited in comparisons between other dominant identities and minoritized identities such as Caucasian/racial and ethnic minorities as well as comparisons of cisgender /gender identity minorities.

Figure 8. *Aggregated response counts to each of the 10 survey items that assessed heterosexual students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts (n = 340).*

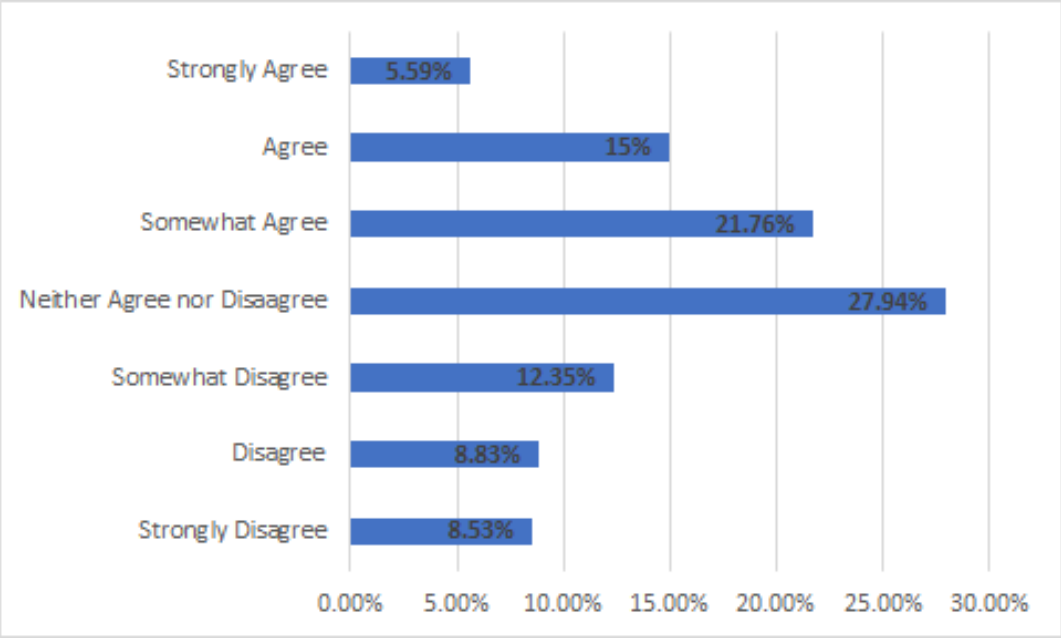
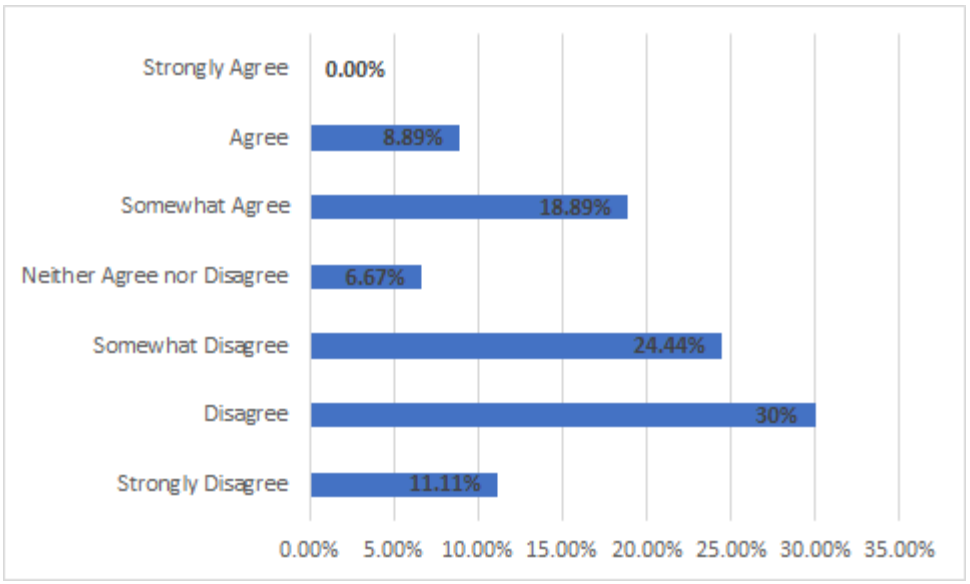


Figure 9. *Aggregated response counts to each of the 10 survey items that assessed sexual orientation minority students' general perceptions of D.E.I. efforts (n = 90).*



Additionally, the findings from the study show that, 87.50% of the students who experienced some form of bias and discrimination indicated that they "Probably" or "Definitely did not" have any actions taken against the perpetrator or to ensure their safety by the University.

Prevalence of bias and discrimination incidents from external sources affecting students' academic careers. Additionally, there was a significant prevalence of external sources of bias and discrimination affecting students' academic career with 37.50% answering "Yes" and 34.38% answering "Maybe." External sources may include any incidents that occur outside the University that may affect the student such as the current cultural and political climate. At least 64.29% students indicated that the University "Did not respond" to the external sources and 60% of the students exhibited "Dissatisfaction" with the University's response (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Satisfaction levels from students regarding University responses to external sources.*

Response	%	Frequency Count
Extremely Satisfied	0	0

Moderately Satisfied	0	0
Slightly Satisfied	5	1
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	35	7
Slightly Dissatisfied	25	5
Moderately Dissatisfied	15	3
Extremely Dissatisfied	20	4
Total	100	20

Overall satisfaction with D.E.I. efforts. The final item of the quantitative portion of the survey asked participants to report their overall satisfaction with diversity, equity and inclusion efforts (see Table 6). Overall, 25% of students indicated satisfaction with D.E.I. efforts in general, whereas, 37.50% of students indicated a "neutral" position.

Table 6. *Overall satisfaction distribution regarding the D.E.I. efforts.*

Response	**%**	**Frequency Count**
Very Satisfied	6.25	2
Satisfied	18.75	6
Neutral	37.50	12
Unsatisfied	21.88	7
Very Unsatisfied	15.63	5
Total	100	32

Phase 3 Analyses: Qualitative Results

To gain a deeper understanding of the types of bias and discrimination students were exposed to while attending a midwestern PWI, as well as their feelings regarding administrations' responses (or lack thereof), participants were asked to provide answers to several open-ended questions. These qualitative questions were deliberately included as contingency or supplemental questions for those who reported experiencing some form of bias and discrimination s. In essence their responses, provided within their *own voice,* helped to clarify, and provide insight into responses provided within the quantitative portion of the survey.

Question: *What were some other sources of bias/discrimination witnessed or experienced?* Responses from participants in regard to other sources of bias and discrimination they were exposed to while attending the midwestern PWI included: witnessing bias/experience from Media, Members of Administration, community members, and fans who visited University for college sports. One response went in depth about sources being microaggressions from students and included an incident where they had "*been asked to "go back to (my) country*" on several occasions on campus "*by students.*"

Question: *If you didn't report the incident, why?* Participants were also asked to provide reasons for not reporting their experiences with bias and discrimination on campus. Responses varied and included general themes of: (1) Not feeling like the matter was significant enough for the University to take action despite the psychological stress, feelings of hopelessness and having no faith in University Administration to respond or protect the individual. An example statement is provided below.

"It felt insignificant, despite the stress it caused. "

"I feel it is useless to report these incidents because they will not do anything about it."

(2) Feelings of not being taken seriously or the matter being brushed off as a joke.

"Fear for being discriminated more, and not being taken seriously."

(3) Lack of knowledge about available resources for students, fear of escalation and retaliation from perpetrator and administration. and the actions being justified legally within University bounds.

"*Didn't know how*."

"Legally justified."

Question: *Comments and thoughts about the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity efforts by campus*? The final open-ended survey item provided participants an opportunity to comment or provide their thoughts on the campus' diversity, Inclusion, and equity efforts. Overall, responses had a general theme of feeling frustrated with efforts and feeling like D.E.I. efforts was not enough.

"More work needs to be done."

Other responses highlighted the pervasiveness of mainstream D.E.I. definitions and practices and the binaries in responses when considering race, gender and sexual orientation and the feeling of exclusion from these efforts. Example statements are provided below.

"Stop treating sexual orientation and gender identity issues as peripheral."

"They are Black and white. And only Black and white. It renders LGBTQ+, LatinX, immigrants/migrants, and Indigenous communities invisible."

"So many people from different backgrounds are still feeling alienated and unsupported."

Furthermore, feelings about D.E.I. highlights the prevalence of a general frustration with efforts to disconnect between promises made by Administration and the actions. Some responses indicated the feeling that D.E.I. efforts were employing a Façade to sustain discrimination. Sample statements include,

"...stop trying to pretend they (the University) *are doing things when they aren't & actually deal with racism, sexism, and other bigotry on campus."*

"...the (University) *protects & promotes discrimination."*

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to establish the prevalence of a disconnect between students' perceptions of D.E.I. and D.E.I. efforts from PWI administrations. The results of the study support the hypothesis that there is a disconnect between current D.E.I. efforts and campus climate experienced by historically marginalized students on campus. The results of the study provide supporting evidence that students from historically marginalized communities were more likely to feel like D.E.I. efforts from PWI administrations employ a façade further impeding real progress in D.E.I. ergo implementing pseudo-woke efforts. There are 4 key findings of the research. First, students from marginalized and minoritized communities are more likely to feel unsatisfied with D.E.I. efforts. Second, there is a prevalence of bias/discrimination witnessed or experienced by students from sources that included faculty, staff, and administration despite D.E.I. efforts. Third, the experiences prompted negative implications physically and mentally for students. Fourth, University administrations and D.E.I. offices were perceived to intentionally embody mainstream and superficial definitions and practices of D.E.I.

In support of this, some of the findings from the qualitative data highlighted the pervasiveness of mainstream D.E.I. definitions and practices and the binaries in D.E.I. efforts. Consistent with the literature, students from minoritized groups experienced or witnessed stereotyping, microaggressions, slurs, stares, vandalism, disrespectful gestures/comments, derogatory jokes, exclusion from social gatherings, lack of support/accommodation, harassment and physical assault from faculty, staff, students, university administration and external sources outside the University grounds including the town's community members, college game visitors and the media (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016 & Lo et al., 2017). The responses from students also suggested that D.E.I. efforts focused solely on binary identities

(Black/white; cis-hetero male/ cis-hetero female and so on) and homogenized experiences of students that furthered the overwhelming sense of exclusion and isolation for students outside those binaries and students with intersecting identities in congruence with literature reviewed (Lo et al. ,2017; Griffin et al. ,2016 ; Chan , 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016 and Woodford et al., 2018).

In consistency with the literatures, students reported to have feelings of Discomfort, Psychological Stress, Fear for life/safety, Decreased attention/concentration, Feelings of isolation, lack of belongingness, Homesickness, Thoughts about dropping out, Dropping out, Thoughts about switching universities, Transferring out to a different university, Lower grades in class/assignments, Lack of sleep, Anxiety, Depression, Physical injuries, Emotional exhaustion, Lowered self-esteem, Lowered motivation to do school work and Decreased retention of information in classes (Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016; Lo et al., 2017; J. A. Banks, 1988; 'Council on Interracial Books for Children,' 1977; Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988 as cited in Swartz, 2017). Students also indicated that the University did not respond adequately to these incidents and were generally dissatisfied with the University's efforts in making the University a diverse, inclusive and equitable space despite promising to value D.E.I. in PWIs. The results drawn from the 10 statements (refer to figure 1) varied between differing identities and students from minority groups leaned towards feeling like the University was diverse but not inclusive and the D.E.I. efforts by universities to retain students and faculty from historically marginalized despite recruiting them was not carried out. Additionally, students felt like the University lacked safe spaces where members of marginalized communities could address and share their concerns. Furthermore, some responses emphasized the lack of centering marginalized students and their needs when executing and implementing D.E.I. policies.

Qualitative data from students exhibited themes of not feeling like their experience was significant enough for the University to take action despite the negative impact on these students. Students experienced psychological stress, feelings of hopelessness, feelings of being alienated, having no faith in University Administration to respond or protect individual, feelings of not being taken seriously or the matter being brushed off as a joke, lack of knowledge about available resources for students, fear of escalation and retaliation from perpetrator and administration, and the actions being justified legally within University bounds. The trends of the results from quantitative data and qualitative data are consistent with existing literature. The differing responses on the scale of Agreement between minoritized students and their peers from historically dominant identities on campus, and the overall dissatisfaction with D.E.I. efforts indicated that there is in fact a prevalence of mainstream D.E.I. efforts dictated by hegemonic standards (Harris, 2020; Harris et al., 2015; Chan, 2016; Coulter & Rankin, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016 & Lo et al., 2017)

There was also an indication of students feeling like the University pretended to care about D.E.I. while ignoring real issues surrounding racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. and that the University intentionally "protects and promotes" discrimination. Therefore, establishing the prevalence of pseudowokeism in D.E.I. efforts. These results substantiate Harris et al. (2015) & Stein & Andreotti (2016) , suggesting that D.E.I. offices are created to facilitate access to education on a procedural level as opposed to a substantial level without having to address the prevalence and pervasiveness of hegemonic structures that are shaped and sustained through colonial technologies.

Strengths and Possible Limitations

This study showed general trends and themes of the prevalence of the disconnect in the perceptions of D.E.I. efforts between students and University administration. Despite time restrictions and small numbers of participants, the study was able to give space for voices from students from historically marginalized communities and gather first person accounts from these students. The study was limited to a survey with only a few open-ended questions and the participants were overwhelmingly from dominant identities and thus the responses from minoritized students were limited but it gave a general understanding of the perceptions of D.E.I efforts amongst students from different backgrounds. To fully understand the disconnect in perceptions, more in-depth qualitative research will need to be conducted. Since the survey was only open for one month and the sample size of the participants was limited, data analyzes did not compare the results from intersectional identities or go into depth with student experiences. The survey was only open to former and current students, and responses were predominantly from graduate students or former students and excluded responses from staff, faculty, D.E.I. offices, and administration members as the study was conducted in only one PWI.

Implications and Future Research

Despite the potential limitations, the results of the present thesis suggested several theoretical and practical implications for future research. While decolonizing D.E.I. efforts and educational structures cannot happen immediately and without the long term and continuous radical social reform, the results from the study offer a tool for PWIs to conduct self-reflection, analysis and examination for their motives to promote D.E.I. so that they can effectively address D.E.I. issues by acknowledging the historical context and the pervasiveness of systematic and

structural levels of discrimination and barriers to marginalized students in higher education. Some of the intervention strategies to alleviate the implications of hegemonic status quos, hierarchies and their pervasiveness in the epistemological, ontological and axiological framework of higher education can start with short term strategies to restructure educational policies and D.E.I. policies, hiring practices, actively engaging in advocacy for marginalized students, increasing funding for decolonial scholarship holistically, establishing spaces for marginalized students to share their experiences without fear of retribution, responding and taking action against discrimination from both internal and external sources, etc.

While the results of this study establish parts of a groundwork to further understand implications of mainstream D.E.I. efforts and the disconnect in perceptions of D.E.I. efforts in PWIs and how colonialism shape these motivations, much work needs to be done to avoid the generalization and homogenization of these experiences across the United States. For future research, the study can be extended to include faculty, staff, members of University administration and D.E.I. offices to compare and analyze responses not just through quantitative methods but also via qualitative methods. Furthermore, the responses to the questions that indicated 'neutrality' could be furthered analyzed to understand why these participants chose to remain neutral in their opinion and if their answers would be any different during a different timeframe. In addition to this, the study needs to include several PWIs as research sites as well as non PWIs(for example HBCUs), community colleges, online programs as well as comparing PWIs from other colonized spaces outside the United States.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Perception of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity efforts.

Start of Block: Consent form

Q1 **Consent to Participate in Research at the University of Oklahoma** [OU-NC IRB Number: 12641 Approval Date: 10/13/2020] You are invited to participate in research about perceptions of diversity and inclusion on OU campus. If you agree to participate, you will **complete this online survey.** There are no risks or benefits. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. After removing all identifiers, we might share your data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional consent from you. Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason. Data are collected via an online survey system that has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. No assurance can be made as to their use of the data you provide. If you have questions about this research, please contact:
Madhunika sai Suresh , Madhunika.s.suresh-1@ou.edu Dr. Shannon S.C Bert, Bert@ou.edu
You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu with questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, or if you don't want to talk to the researcher. *By clicking 'I agree' below, you are indicating that you are:- At least 18 years old- A former/current student at the University of Oklahoma- You have read and understood the consent form and agree to participate in the research.*
Please print this document for your records.

- ○ I Agree (1)
- ○ I do not Agree (2)

End of Block: Consent form

Appendix B

Survey Questions

Q2 Select the option that best describes your student status.

- Former Student (1)
- Current Student (2)

Q3 If you are a current student, what is your current student classification?

- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)
- Graduate Student- Masters (5)
- Graduate Student- Doctoral (6)
- N/A (7)

Q4 If you are a former student, did you graduate from the University of Oklahoma?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- N/A (3)

Q5 If you are a former student who graduated from the University of Oklahoma, what was the year of graduation?

- Before 2015 (1)
- 2015 (2)
- 2016 (3)
- 2017 (4)
- 2018 (5)
- 2019 (6)
- 2020 (7)
- N/A (8)

Q6 If you are a former student who did not graduate from the University of Oklahoma, what was the class year you were admitted into?

- Before 2015 (1)
- 2015 (2)
- 2016 (3)
- 2017 (4)
- 2018 (5)
- 2019 (6)
- 2020 (7)
- N/A (8)

Q7 If you are a former student and did not graduate from OU, what was your highest student classification during your time at the University of Oklahoma?

- ○ Freshman (1)
- ○ Sophomore (2)
- ○ Junior (3)
- ○ Senior (4)
- ○ Graduate student- Masters (5)
- ○ Graduate student- Doctoral (6)

Q8 Which of the following options best describe you?

- ○ In-state student (1)
- ○ Out-of-state student (2)
- ○ International student (F1) (3)
- ○ International student (Exchange) (4)
- ○ International student (OPT) (5)

Q9 What is your ethnicity?

_____

Q10 What is your gender identity?

- ○ Cisgender (1)
- ○ Transgender (2)
- ○ Non-binary (3)
- ○ Gender-queer (4)
- ○ Two-Spirit (5)
- ○ Other not listed here (6) _____

Q11 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ○ Lesbian (1)
- ○ Gay (2)
- ○ Bisexual (3)
- ○ Pansexual (4)
- ○ Questioning (5)
- ○ Queer (6)
- ○ Asexual (7)
- ○ Heterosexual (8)
- ○ Other not listed here (9) _____

Q12 What is your age?

_____

Q13 What is your religious identity? (Including atheism and agnosticism)

_____

Q14 Do you have a physical disability?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q15 Do you have an invisible disability?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q16 How would you best describe your socio-economic status?

- Below poverty/working class (1)
- Lower-middle class (2)
- Upper-middle class (3)
- Rich (4)

Q17 Are your educational expenses (Including tuition, room and board) currently or formerly supported by a parent or guardian financially?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- To some extent/partially (3)

Q18 Are your educational expenses (including tuition, room and board) currently or formerly supported through scholarships, financial aid or student/personal loans ?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- To some extent/partially (3)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: General feelings about the University of Oklahoma's campus climate

Q19 Answer the following statements on the scale of Strongly disagree to Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
1. The campus is diverse. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. The campus is inclusive. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. University leadership is committed to diversity, inclusion and equity on campus. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. The University is proactive in making the campus inclusive. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. The University takes measures to make students aware of policies and procedures surrounding diversity, inclusion and equity. (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. The University leadership responds to bias incidents on campus appropriately. (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. The office for diversity, Inclusion and Equity is very accessible. (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. There is a strong commitment to recruit faculty and staff from historically marginalized communities. (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. There is a strong commitment to retain faculty and staff from historically marginalized communities. (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. There is a strong commitment to recruit and retain students from historically marginalized communities. (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: General feelings about the University of Oklahoma's campus climate

Start of Block: Experience witnessing bias/discrimination

Q20 Have you witnessed or heard of any incidents of bias or discrimination due the following identities during your time at the University of Oklahoma? If yes, how often?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)
Religion (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Race/ethnicity (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Gender identity (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Sexual orientation (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Political affiliation (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Age (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Socio-economic Status (7)	○	○	○	○	○
National origin (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Immigration status (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Disability (Physical & Mental) (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Other (11)	○	○	○	○	○

Q21 What were the sources of these incidents?

- [ ] Faculty (1)
- [ ] Staff (2)
- [ ] Students (3)
- [ ] Other (4) _____

Q22 What forms of bias/discrimination were these incidents?

- [ ] Stereotyping (1)
- [ ] Micro-aggressions (2)
- [ ] Slurs (3)
- [ ] Stares (4)
- [ ] Vandalism (5)
- [ ] Disrespectful gestures/comments (6)
- [ ] Derogatory jokes (7)
- [ ] Exclusion from social gatherings (8)
- [ ] Lack of support/accommodation (9)
- [ ] Harassment (10)
- [ ] Physical assault (11)
- [ ] Other (12) _____

Q23 Did you or the person who witnessed these incidents attempt to report it to a University personnel?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q24 If no, why not?

_____

Q25 If yes, how would you describe the process of reporting the incident?

- ○ Extremely difficult (1)
- ○ Somewhat difficult (2)
- ○ Neutral (3)
- ○ Somewhat easy (4)
- ○ Extremely easy (5)

Q26 What was the role of the person/organization you reported the incident to?

- ☐ Faculty (1)
- ☐ Staff (2)
- ☐ Student supervisor/resident advisor (3)
- ☐ University administration (4)
- ☐ Office of diversity, equity and inclusion (5)
- ☐ Bias hotline (6)

Q27 How would you describe the response of the person you reported the incident to?

- ○ Very responsive (1)
- ○ Somewhat responsive (2)
- ○ Neutral (3)
- ○ Somewhat dismissive (4)
- ○ Very Dismissive (5)

Q28 Were any actions taken to protect the individual who experienced the bias/discrimination or to reprimand the actions of the perpetrator?

- ○ Definitely yes (1)
- ○ Probably yes (2)
- ○ Probably not (3)
- ○ Definitely not (4)

Q29 How satisfied were you with the response?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
- Moderately satisfied (2)
- Slightly satisfied (3)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)
- Slightly dissatisfied (5)
- Moderately dissatisfied (6)
- Extremely dissatisfied (7)

Q30 How likely are you to report future incidents?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Moderately likely (2)
- Slightly likely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly unlikely (5)
- Moderately unlikely (6)
- Extremely unlikely (7)

Q31 Do you have any other comments regarding the incident?

_____

End of Block: Experience witnessing bias/discrimination

Start of Block: Personal experience with bias/discrimination incidents

Q32 Have you personally experienced of any incidents of bias or discrimination due the following identities during your time at the University of Oklahoma? If yes, how often?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)
Religion (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Race/ethnicity (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Gender identity (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Sexual orientation (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Political affiliation (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Age (6)	○	○	○	○	○

Socio-economic Status					
(7) National origin					
(8) Immigration status					
(9) Disability (Physical & Mental) (10)					
Accent/English speaking ability (11)					
Other (12)					

Q33 What were the sources of these incidents?

- [ ] Faculty (1)
- [ ] Staff (2)
- [ ] Students (3)
- [ ] Other (4) _____

Q34 What forms of bias/discrimination were these?

- ☐ Stereotyping (1)
- ☐ Micro-aggressions (2)
- ☐ Slurs (3)
- ☐ Stares (4)
- ☐ Vandalism (5)
- ☐ Disrespectful gestures/comments (6)
- ☐ Derogatory jokes (7)
- ☐ Exclusion from social gatherings (8)
- ☐ Lack of support/accommodation (9)
- ☐ Harassment (10)
- ☐ Physical assault (11)
- ☐ Other (12) _____

Q35 How did the incident impact you?

- [ ] Discomfort (1)
- [ ] Psychological Stress (2)
- [ ] Fear for your life/safety (3)
- [ ] Decreased attention/concentration (4)
- [ ] Feelings of isolation (5)
- [ ] Not feeling like you belong (6)
- [ ] Homesickness (7)
- [ ] Thoughts about dropping out (8)
- [ ] Dropping out (9)
- [ ] Thoughts about switching universities (10)
- [ ] Transferring out to a different university (11)
- [ ] Lower grades in class/assignments (12)
- [ ] Lack of sleep (13)
- [ ] Anxiety (14)
- [ ] Depression (15)
- [ ] Physical injuries (16)
- [ ] Emotional exhaustion (17)

- [ ] Lowered self-esteem (18)
- [ ] Lowered motivation to do school work (19)
- [ ] Decreased retention of information in classes (20)
- [ ] Other (21) _____

Q36 Did you try to report it to a University personnel?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q37 If no, why not?

_____

Q38 If Yes, what was the role of the person/organization you reported the incident to?

- [ ] Faculty (1)
- [ ] Staff (2)
- [ ] Student supervisor/resident advisor (3)
- [ ] University administration (4)
- [ ] Office of diversity, equity and inclusion (5)
- [ ] Bias hotline (6)

Q39 If yes, how would you describe the process of reporting the incident?

- ○ Extremely difficult (1)
- ○ Somewhat difficult (2)
- ○ Neutral (3)
- ○ Somewhat easy (4)
- ○ Extremely easy (5)

Q40 If yes, how was the response of the person you reported the incident to?

- Very responsive (1)
- Somewhat responsive (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Somewhat dismissive (4)
- Very Dismissive (5)

Q41 Were any actions taken to protect the individual who experienced the bias/discrimination or to reprimand the actions of the perpetrator?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Probably not (3)
- Definitely not (4)

Q42 How satisfied were you with the response?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
- Moderately satisfied (2)
- Slightly satisfied (3)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)
- Slightly dissatisfied (5)
- Moderately dissatisfied (6)
- Extremely dissatisfied (7)

Q43 How likely are you to report any future incidents?

- Extremely likely (1)
- Moderately likely (2)
- Slightly likely (3)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- Slightly unlikely (5)
- Moderately unlikely (6)
- Extremely unlikely (7)

Q44 Do you have any other comments regarding the incident?

_____

End of Block: Personal experience with bias/discrimination incidents

Start of Block: Block 6

Q45 Have any external social issues surrounding your identity affected your academic career/personal life at the University of Oklahoma?

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

Q46 Did the university respond to these events?

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

Q47 How satisfied were you with the university's response?

- Extremely satisfied (1)
- Moderately satisfied (2)
- Slightly satisfied (3)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (4)
- Slightly dissatisfied (5)
- Moderately dissatisfied (6)
- Extremely dissatisfied (7)

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 5

Q48 From a scale of very satisfied to very unsatisfied, answer the question below.

	Very Satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Unsatified (4)	Very unsatisfied (5)
How would you rate your experience with the University in terms of "Diversity, Inclusion and Equity" ? (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q49 Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts by the University of Oklahoma?

_____

End of Block: Block 5