



2021 DIVERSITY AND EQUITY SURVEY

*Summary of Methodology, Findings,
and Considerations for Action*

*Northeastern University
March 2022*

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Table of Contents..... | 2 |
| Message from Karl Reid, Chief Inclusion Officer..... | 3 |
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| Methodology | 5 |
| Overall Findings | 10 |
| Summary of Findings and Considerations for Action..... | 35 |
| Next Steps..... | 40 |

Message from Karl Reid, Chief Inclusion Officer

Northeastern University has made a significant commitment to creating a more diverse, welcoming, and inclusive institution where individuals of all identities, backgrounds, and experiences can thrive, have a strong sense of belonging, and achieve academic and professional excellence. Key to fulfilling this ideal is understanding our university climate from the perspectives of our most important assets—our students, faculty, and staff. The 2021 HEDS Diversity and Equity Climate Survey informed us of specific points where Northeastern can have the most impact in creating a sense of inclusion and belonging across the global system.

The university's climate for diversity and inclusion received a high evaluation overall among respondents, and the responses showed we fared better than many other institutions on several metrics. Yet, as tempted as we are to celebrate these results, we must examine them in their entirety.

While most respondents are satisfied with the campus climate, certain members of our community are less comfortable sharing their views and identities and have less of a sense of belonging. Moreover, they are more likely to hear insensitive or disparaging remarks, or experience discrimination or harassment because of their identities or in their roles.

We must drill down to understand and improve the experiences of individuals with these identities. We must also examine the results to determine the most likely sources of insensitivity and discrimination, and proactively build a learning culture to mitigate it.

A critical focus area in the coming year is thus to create a stronger sense of belonging within groups and across the university. In addition to addressing the challenges identified by respondents, future work to be done includes identifying the reasons for a low survey response rate, particularly among students.

Going forward, we will require senior leaders to host discussions about these findings within their divisions, and to develop plans to promote inclusion and belonging that are context specific.

Institutions now generally accept that diversity in the workplace is essential for creativity, innovation, and other indicators of a dynamic organization. Incorporating equity and inclusion along with diversity inspires individuals within organizations to feel valued, and ultimately invested, in doing their best work for their organization. The climate survey results provide a roadmap for continual improvement for the Northeastern global community towards inclusive excellence—fostering belonging, a place where people feel valued and respected. This is our North Star.

Karl W. Reid, Ed.D., CDP

Chief Inclusion Officer

Professor of Practice, Graduate School of Education

Introduction

The 2021 Diversity and Equity Campus Climate survey was the culmination of planning that began in the fall of 2020. President Aoun's message to the Northeastern community in October 2020, an update to his call to action from the previous June, included university-wide accountability as a goal, including the launch of a climate survey on diversity and inclusion. University Decision Support (UDS) followed up with a proposal to the Presidential Council on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) to administer a university-wide campus climate survey (CCS) in the spring of 2021.

The proposal recommended that, under the auspices of the PCDI and with the guidance of an advisory group, UDS would create a campus climate survey as part of the university's commitment to:

- create a diverse and inclusive community
- advance social justice and cultural literacy, and
- help eradicate systemic racism.

The purpose and goals of the CCS were to:

- Examine the university community's experiences related to learning, working, teaching, and living at Northeastern;
- Gauge the experiences that go to the heart of whether students, faculty and staff feel a sense of belonging and whether they can thrive and succeed at Northeastern from a diversity and inclusion perspective;
- Offer an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to reflect on their personal experiences at Northeastern.

Shortly thereafter, the Campus Climate Survey Advisory Group (CCSAG) was formed with representatives from the faculty, staff, and student populations. The CSSAG began meeting to discuss the timing, methodology, and scope of the survey. Although the group considered building a bespoke survey, ultimately the decision was made to look for an appropriate third-party survey. The group settled on the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) survey due to its concentration on higher education, availability of benchmarking data, and the instrument itself, which covers students, faculty and staff. The HEDS survey was a well-tested instrument that had been used for many years, but still allowed Northeastern to add a complementary set of our own questions.

Faculty, staff and students throughout the Northeastern global network were invited to take the survey in the spring of 2021, with marketing efforts via email, physical and electronic signage, and social media. Once the survey was closed to responses in April 2021, HEDS worked to provide the results, which were delivered by mid-summer of 2021. Throughout the rest of the summer and the fall semester, a group of Northeastern faculty, staff and students led by Chief Inclusion Officer Karl Reid and Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Research and Decision Support Rana Glasgal worked on understanding the results and developing a plan to roll the results out to the university community. This report is a major deliverable of that effort.

This report will cover the methodology used in the survey distribution, overall findings, and considerations for future action based on those findings. Next steps are provided at the end of the report to guide future efforts. In addition, a report appendix providing extensive detailed data from the survey is available upon request.

Methodology

In the spring of 2021, all Northeastern enrolled undergraduate and graduate students and all faculty and staff from throughout Northeastern's global network were invited to take the HEDS Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey (CCS) and share their experiences and perceptions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at the university.

The survey was administered by HEDS and utilized their nationally benchmarked survey tool, which ensured the validity of the survey. The survey asked students, faculty, staff, and administrators about their perceptions of Northeastern's climate, opinions about how Northeastern supports diversity and equity, and experiences with discrimination and harassment at Northeastern.

The survey instrument consisted of 20 demographic and social identity questions and 20 questions that were included in the HEDS core instrument in four categories:

- Satisfaction with the Campus Climate for Diversity and Equity
- Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity
- Experiences with Insensitive or Disparaging Remarks at the institution
- Experiences with Discrimination or Harassment at the institution

In addition, Northeastern took the opportunity to add 20 additional questions that were tailored to address the specific needs of Northeastern. The survey also incorporated open-ended questions to gather details about survey participants' campus experiences and suggestions.

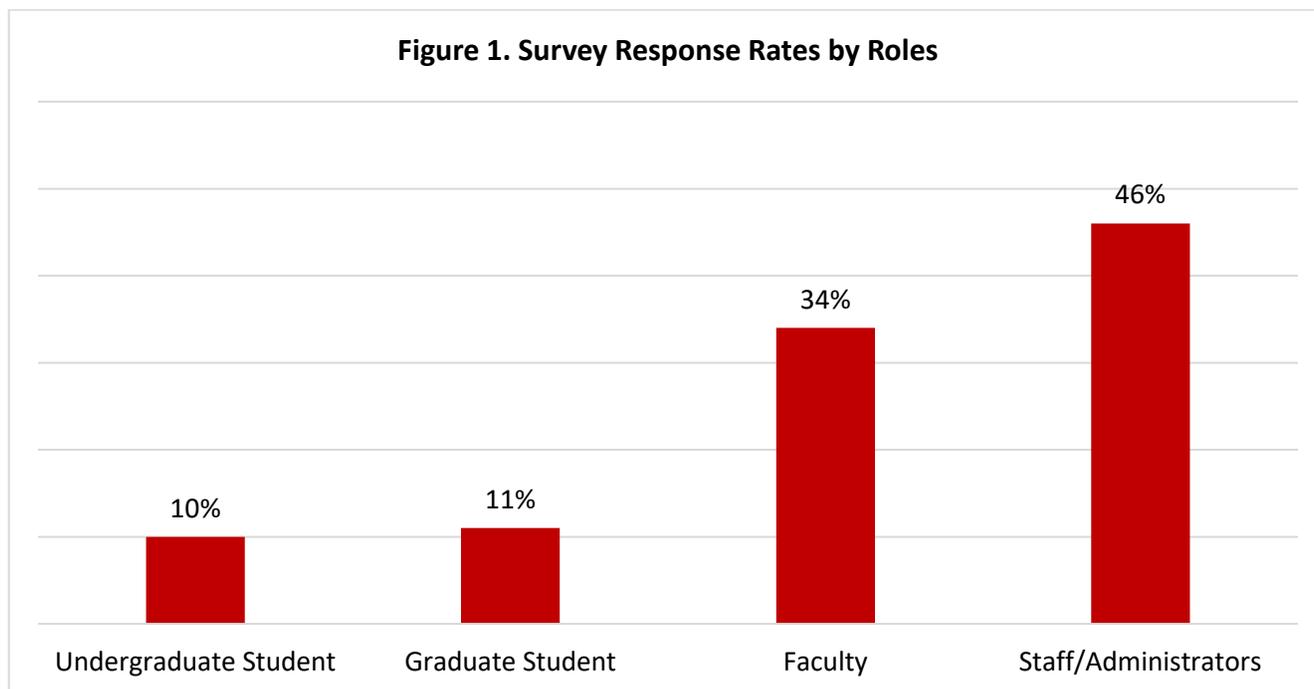
The online survey was disseminated to all groups between March 22 and April 30 through the Qualtrics online survey system. HEDS emailed each participant a survey invitation from Northeastern's Provost David Madigan with a unique link to the survey that could be completed only once. The invitation described the purpose of the survey, explained the data collection process, and assured the respondents of anonymity. Participants were informed that survey data is collected by HEDS, a trusted third party, and will be anonymized before it is shared with Northeastern. Participants were also instructed that they did not have to answer any specific questions and that they could withdraw from the survey at any time before submitting their responses.

No incentives were provided due to the [Northeastern's incentive guidelines](#).

Efforts to maximize survey participation were coordinated with multiple Northeastern offices and included three customized email reminders during the administration period, an extensive advertising campaign on different print and electronic media platforms, and personal outreach by survey ambassadors to the community across the global network.

These rigorous efforts helped the university achieve 15% overall survey response rate (or 6,154 responses) from all four target populations. Response rates differed across all populations. The lowest response rate came from student populations while staff/administrators and faculty demonstrated active participation (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Survey Response Rates by Roles



Given the low overall response rates, particularly from students, it is possible that a response bias may exist; that is, those with strong opinions or knowledge regarding climate issues at Northeastern who self-select to participate may not have the same opinions as those who chose not to respond. Thus, we use the term “respondent” when ascribing the results rather than generalizing our findings to the full Northeastern community.

It is important to note that although the undergraduate student response rate was the lowest of the four groups, undergraduate responses make up the largest percentage of the total responses (35%, or 2,145 responses). This is a large sample of undergraduate students, presenting us with enough responses to confidently analyze the survey results and use those results to guide our future actions.

HEDS [privacy rules](#) conformed with the Northeastern’s [Policy on Confidentiality of University Records and Information](#) and ensured the anonymity of responses and data protection. All responses that could potentially identify participants were removed when shared with Northeastern and small counts were suppressed. This process prevented any raw data or open-ended comment from being identified or directly linked to a participant’s name.

Only submitted responses were included in the final survey data set. Survey data were analyzed to compare the responses of surveyed groups using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and comparison of means were performed for each group by college/unit and by campus location to provide additional information regarding participant responses. Throughout the report, findings were presented using valid percentages that excluded missing values. In addition, inferential statistics such as independent t-test were performed to see the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the perception of the campus climate and discrimination or harassment experiences.

Description of the Sample

Despite the low response rate, undergraduate students comprised the largest number of responses.

Table 1. Response Rates by Roles

| Role | Total received email | Number of survey respondents | % within role | % within respondents |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Undergraduate Student | 22,078 | 2,145 | 10% | 35% |
| Graduate Student | 13,306 | 1,416 | 11% | 23% |
| Faculty | 3,167 | 1,074 | 34% | 18% |
| Staff/Administrators | 3,237 | 1,477 | 46% | 24% |
| Other | NA | 42 | NA | 1% |
| Total | 41,788 | 6,154 | 15% | 100% |

To evaluate potential nonresponse bias, survey sample demographics were compared with the target population in terms of race/ethnicity and gender identity. Despite low response rates, the racial, international and gender identity distribution of the survey sample was similar to the overall makeup of the Northeastern population. It was a close match (3-5% percentage points) nearly in all groups, except for White respondents who had a larger representation in the sample.

Northeastern respondents were diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Nearly one-third of respondents (29%, n=1,777) were people of color (POC). Women were slightly overrepresented in the sample (55%). The majority of respondents were heterosexual (78%, n = 4,680). Twenty two percent were LGBTQ+ (n = 1,309), and two percent of respondents (n = 149) were non-binary and/or transgender (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation

| Respondents by race/ethnicity | Survey sample | | Target population | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| POC | 1,777 | 29% | 11,001 | 26% |
| White | 3,005 | 50% | 17,508 | 42% |
| International | 1,258 | 21% | 10,947 | 26% |
| Unknown* | NA | NA | 2,332 | 6% |
| Respondents by gender | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Women (cisgender) | 3,381 | 55% | 21,562 | 52% |
| Men (cisgender) | 2,622 | 43% | 20,178 | 48% |
| Non-binary and/or transgender | 149 | 2% | 48 | 0.1% |
| Respondents by sexual orientation** | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Heterosexual | 4,680 | 78% | NA | NA |
| LGBTQ+ | 1,309 | 22% | NA | NA |

*As reported in Banner, the university's information system of record in 2021.

**Population data is not stored in Banner.

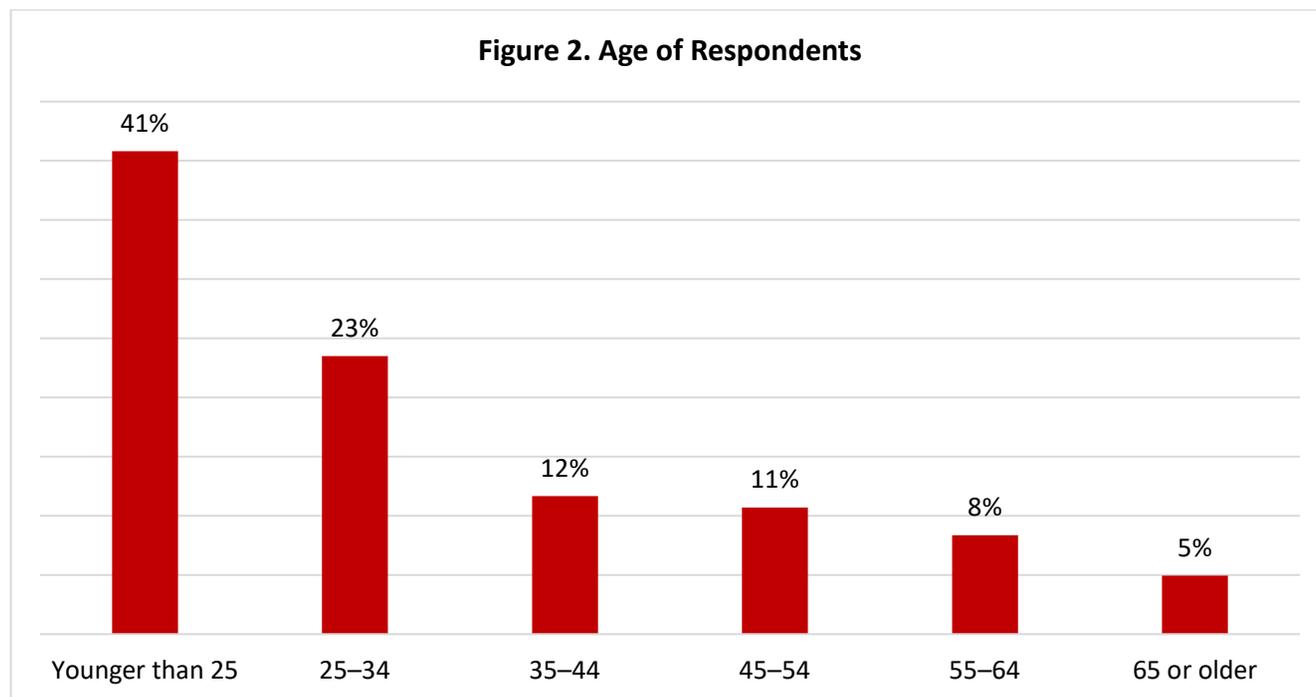
The representation of the respondents by religion, political affiliation, and disability in the sample is presented below. There was no data available for the target population to compare against as such information is not stored in the university's information systems.

Table 3. Respondents by religion, political affiliation, and disability

| | Survey sample | | Target population* | |
|---|---------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Respondents by religion | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Christian | 1,895 | 35% | NA | NA |
| Other religious affiliation | 1,065 | 20% | NA | NA |
| No religious affiliation | 2,456 | 45% | NA | NA |
| Respondents by political affiliation | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Liberal | 3,621 | 62% | NA | NA |
| Middle-of-the-road | 1,819 | 31% | NA | NA |
| Conservative | 408 | 7% | NA | NA |
| Respondents by disability | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Long-term disability | 417 | 7% | NA | NA |
| Temporary disability | 101 | 2% | NA | NA |
| No disability | 5,595 | 92% | NA | NA |

*Population data is not stored in Banner.

The sample was also very diverse in terms of respondents' age (Figure 2).



Responses were received from all Northeastern colleges and schools and administrative units. Below is the distribution of responses for those who provided answers to the related question (Table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of Responses

| College/School/Unit | Count | Percent |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| College of Professional Studies | 661 | 11% |
| College of Engineering | 1,110 | 19% |
| D'Amore-McKim School of Business | 634 | 11% |
| College of Science | 648 | 11% |
| Khoury College of Computer Sciences | 455 | 8% |
| Bouve College of Health Sciences | 435 | 7% |
| College of Social Science & Humanities | 624 | 10% |
| College of Arts, Media & Design | 303 | 5% |
| Office of the Provost (Undergraduate, certificate, and non-degree programs) | 43 | 1% |
| School of Law | 112 | 2% |
| Administrative units* | 857 | 14% |
| Other | 74 | 1% |
| Total | 5,956 | 100% |

*Administrative units are collapsed into one category for the ease of presentation.

Respondents were asked to provide their location in the NU network, including network campuses or online. Below is the distribution of responses for those who provided answers to the location question. Because of the very small number of responses in several locations, results presented with respect to location are rolled up and shown as online/Boston/network locations.

Table 5. Distribution of Responses

| Location | Count | Percent |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Online | 435 | 7.08% |
| Boston, MA | 5344 | 86.92% |
| Burlington, MA | 46 | 0.75% |
| Dedham, MA | 19 | 0.31% |
| Nahant, MA | 20 | 0.33% |
| Seattle, WA | 108 | 1.76% |
| Portland, ME | 39 | 0.63% |
| Charlotte, NC | 29 | 0.47% |
| Silicon Valley, CA | 47 | 0.76% |
| San Francisco, CA | 10 | 0.16% |
| Toronto, ON | 42 | 0.68% |
| Vancouver, BC | 9 | 0.15% |
| Total | 6148 | 100.00% |

Overall Findings

This and the following sections will present data by four main survey themes:

- Overall Campus Climate for Diversity and Equity
- Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity
- Hearing or Being a Target of Disparaging and Insensitive Remarks
- Experiences with Discrimination and/or Harassment

In addition, the current section will present comparative data from all private 4-year institutions that administered the HEDS survey over the past four years (2018 – 2021).

Comparative Demographics

Northeastern respondents are more diverse by national origin (21% of international students versus 4% at other institutions) and sexual orientation (22% LGBTQ+ respondents versus 18%), and more balanced by gender identity than other institutions' respondents (43% Man cisgender and 55% Women cisgender versus 37% and 61% at other institutions, respectively).

Northeastern respondents are more religiously diverse (20% of other religious affiliations versus 6% at other institutions) and politically progressive (62% Liberal affiliation versus 44%) than respondents at other institutions, and similar with respect to disability status.

Campus Climate for Diversity and Equity

Satisfaction with Campus Climate

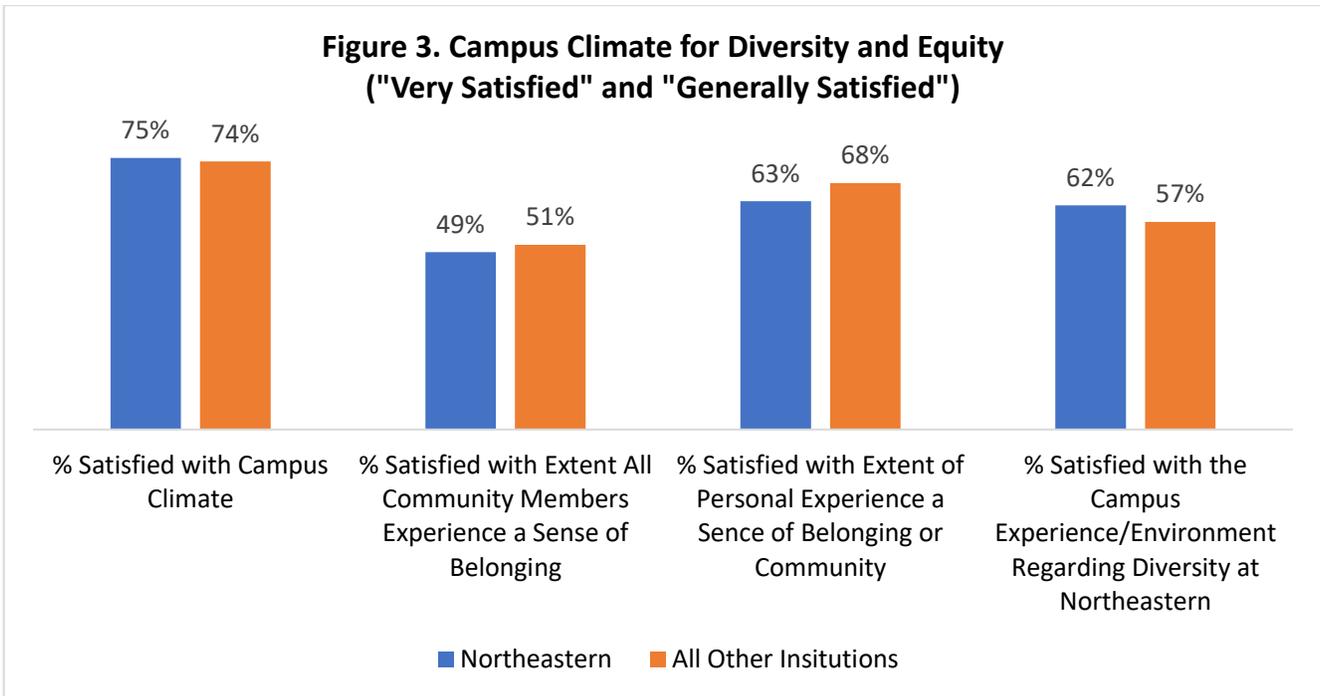
This section presents data that focus on satisfaction with the overall campus climate, the diversity environment, the sense of belonging to the community, and the extent to which other members of the community have a sense of belonging. It also presents comparative data from private institutions.

Questions: **Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following at Northeastern.**

- *Overall campus climate*
- *The campus experience/environment regarding diversity at Northeastern*
- *The extent to which you experience a sense of belonging or community at Northeastern*
- *The extent to which you feel all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at Northeastern*

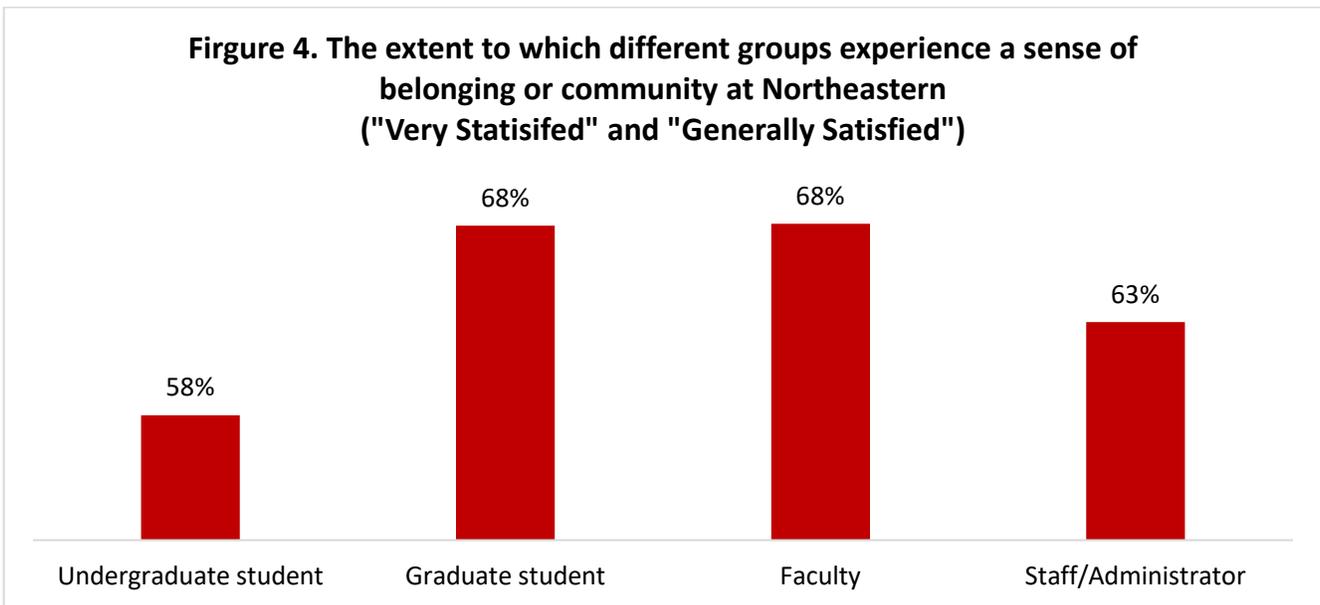
A majority of Northeastern respondents are satisfied with the campus climate (75%) at a rate that is similar to all other institutions (74%), while only about half of NU respondents feel that all community members experience a sense of belonging or community at this institution (49%).

A higher percentage of respondents (63%) personally experience a sense of belonging or community at Northeastern but at a rate lower than at other institutions (68%). Nearly 62% of Northeastern respondents are satisfied with the campus experience/environment regarding diversity at this institution, which is a much higher rate than at other private institutions.



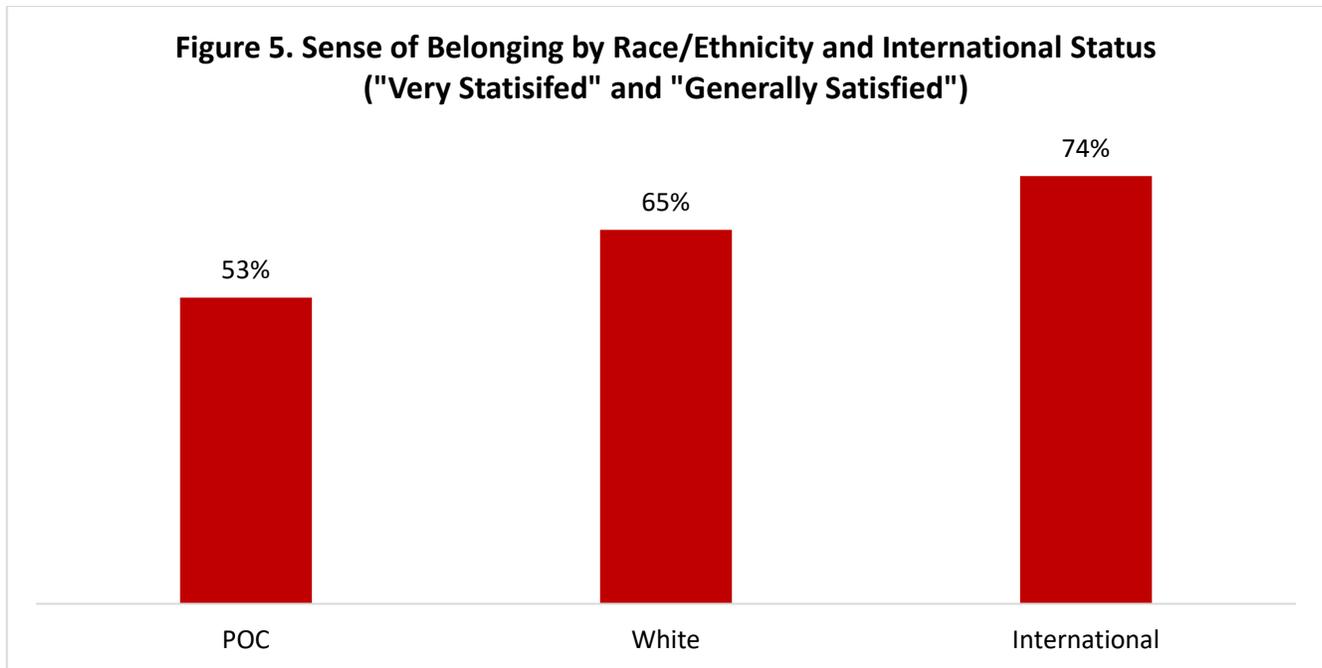
Sense of Belonging

Surveyed groups experienced different levels of satisfaction with the personal experience of a sense of belonging at Northeastern. While graduate students (68%) and faculty (68%) were equally satisfied, fewer undergraduate students (58%) and staff/administrators (63%) feel a sense of belonging or community at the university.¹

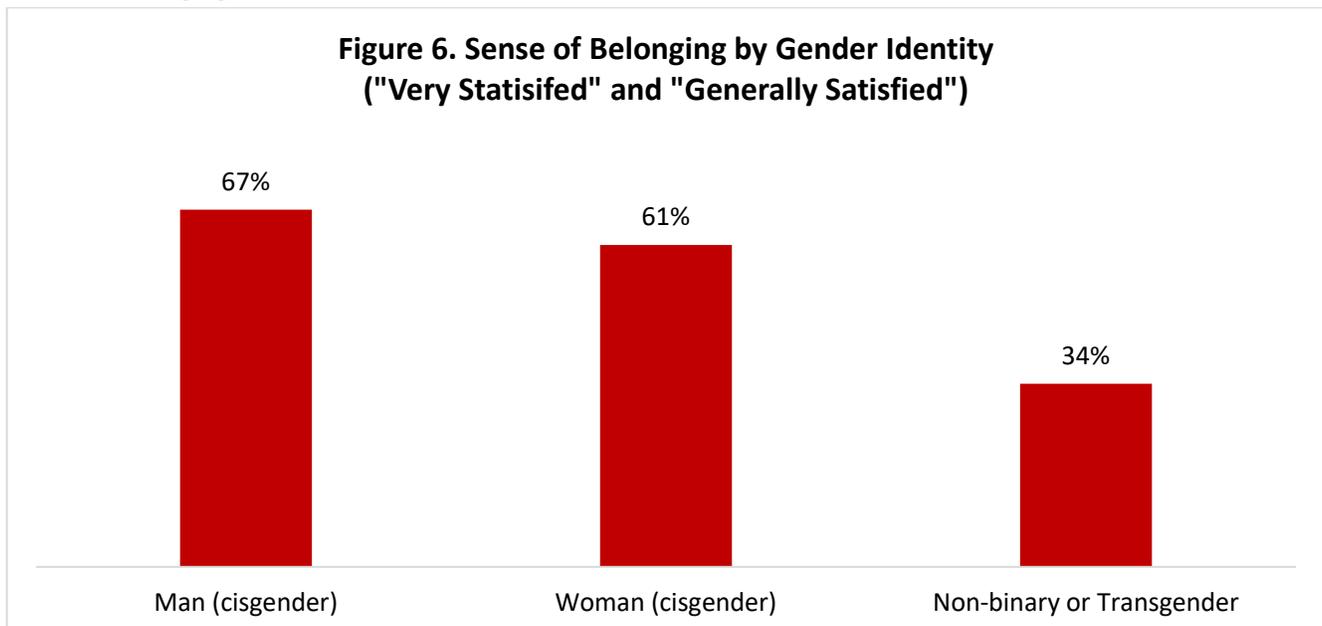


¹ The difference between undergraduate students' satisfaction and that of all other groups of respondents was statistically significant.

The level of satisfaction with the personal experience of a sense of belonging was much lower among people of color (53%) than among white respondents (65%) and international students (74%).²



Non-binary or transgender respondents (34%) were the least satisfied group with the personal experience of a sense of belonging at Northeastern.³

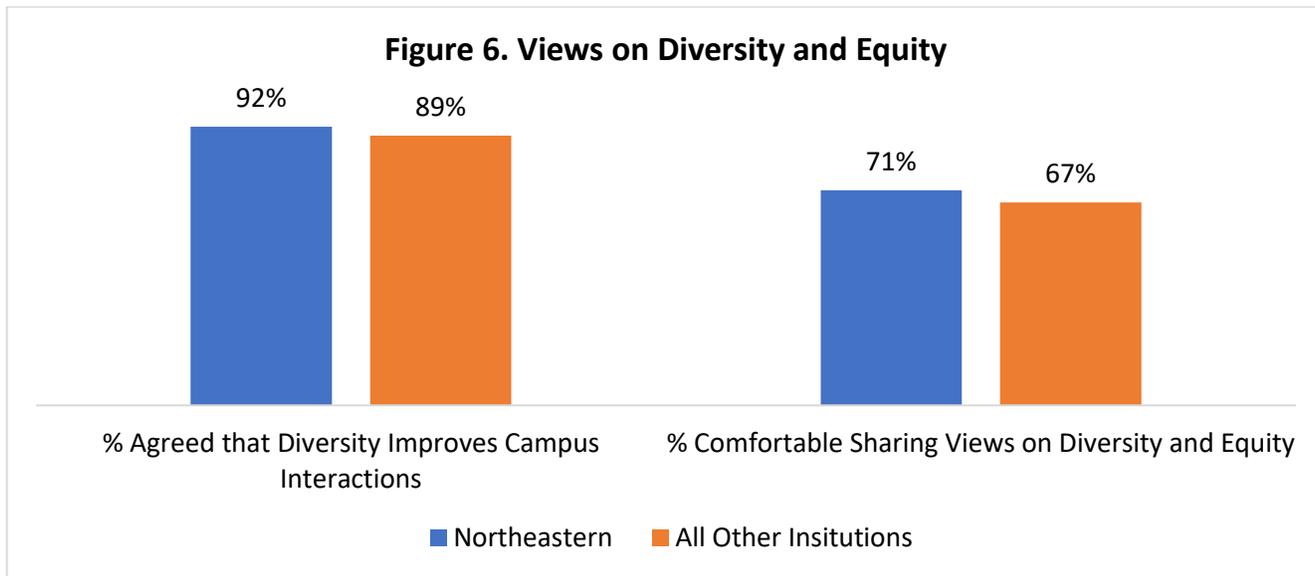


² There were statistically significant differences in the level of satisfaction with the sense of personal belonging between the groups.

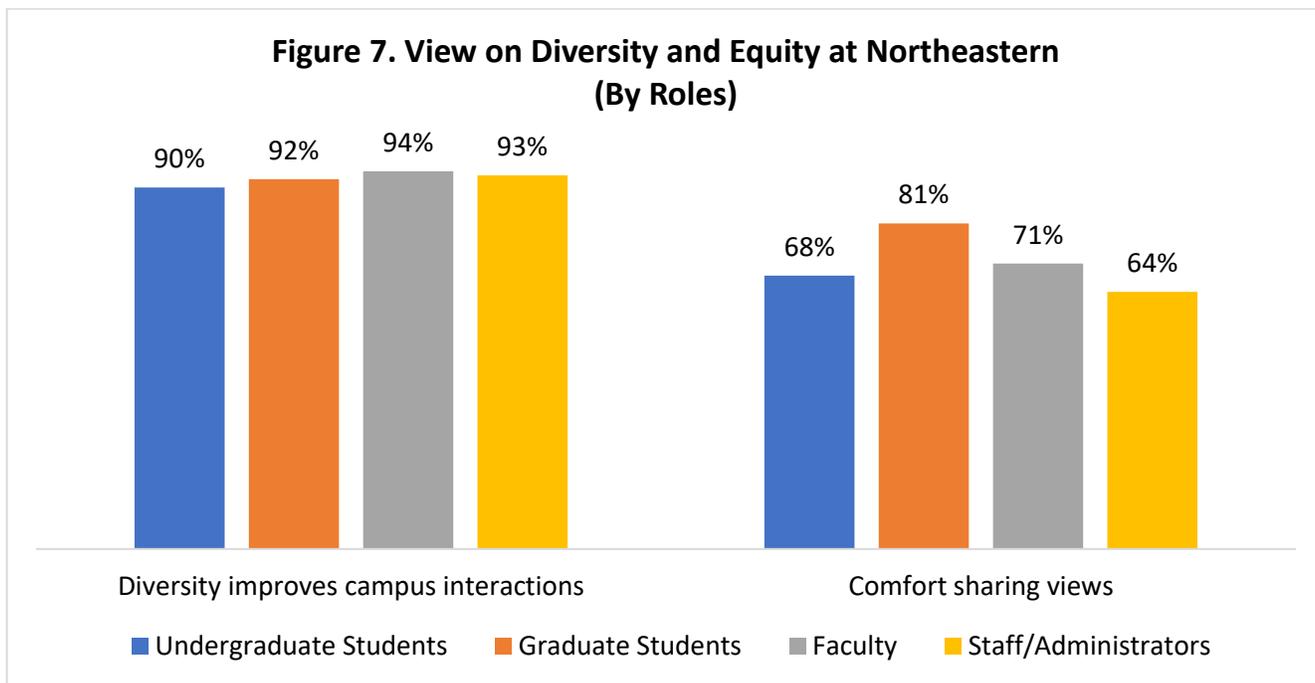
³ There were statistically significant differences in the level of satisfaction with the sense of personal belonging between the groups.

Views on Diversity and Equity

Northeastern students, faculty and staff agreed that diversity improves experiences and interactions within the classroom, the workplace, and the overall community (92%), and were more comfortable sharing their views on diversity and equity (71%) than respondents at other institutions (67%).



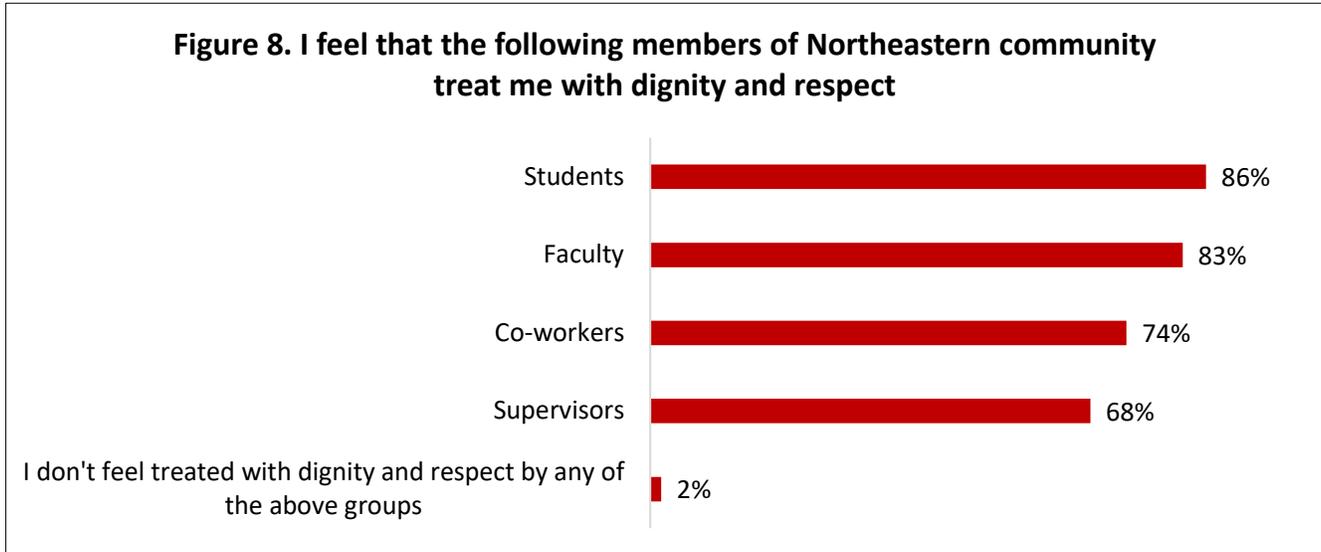
However, staff (64%) and undergraduate students (68%) were least comfortable sharing their views on diversity and equity.⁴



⁴ There were statistically significant differences in the level of comfort of sharing views on diversity and equity between all surveyed groups by roles.

Dignity and Respect⁵

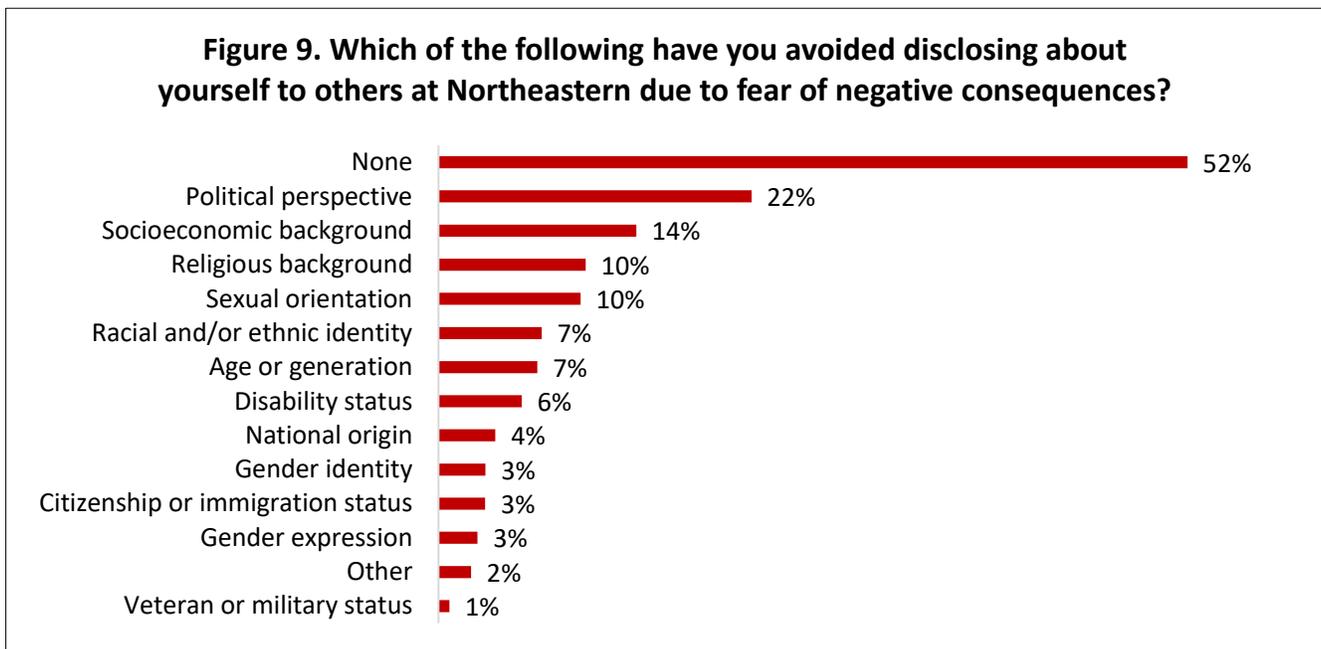
Respondents generally feel that they are treated with dignity and respect by the Northeastern community, though supervisors received the lowest scores (68.5%) followed by co-workers (73.9%).



**Multiple response question*

Fear of Identity Disclosure⁶

Most respondents expressed no fear of disclosing aspects of their identity (52.5%). However, among those who do avoid disclosure, respondents are least comfortable sharing their political perspectives (22%) followed by their socioeconomic (14%) and religious (10%) backgrounds and sexual orientation (10%) for fear of negative consequences.



**Multiple response question*

⁵ Customized survey question added by Northeastern. Comparative data for all other institutions is not available.

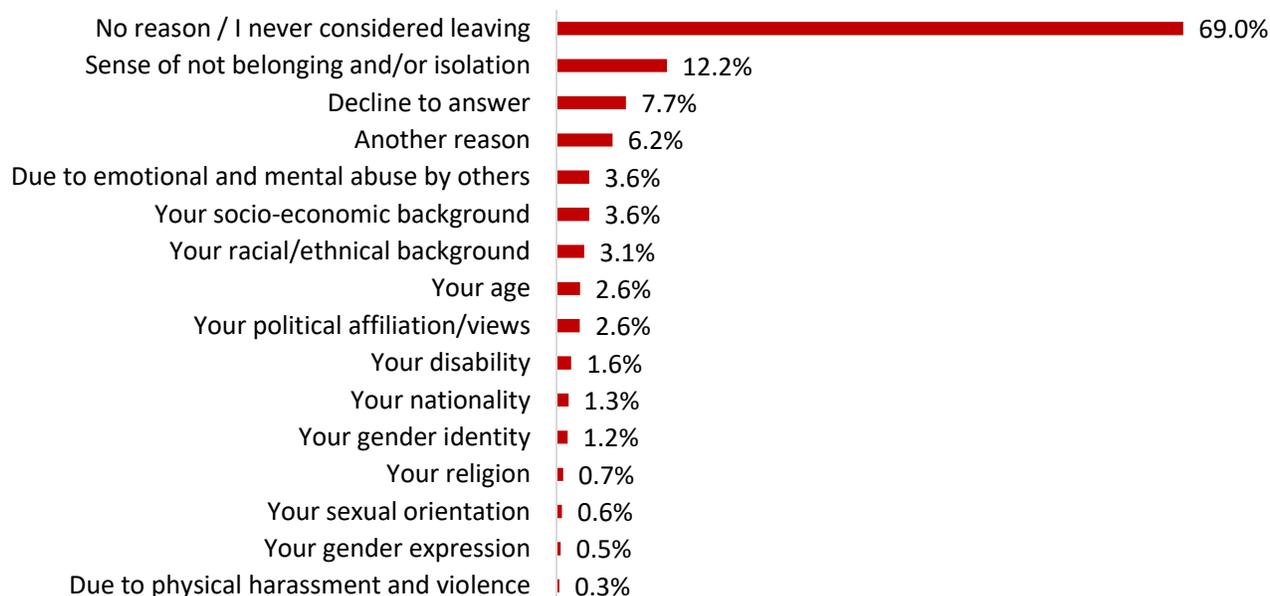
⁶ Customized survey question added by Northeastern. Comparative data for all other institutions is not available.

“Other” category included responses about family/marital/parental and relationship statuses, health/mental health issues, etc. For a complete list of verbatim responses to “Other” category please contact University Decision Support.

Leaving Northeastern⁷

Though the majority of respondents had not considered leaving Northeastern in the past year (69%), a lack of sense of belonging was the most cited reason for considering leaving Northeastern (12%); however, numerous responses associated with various identities were reported as well.

Figure 10. Have you seriously considered leaving Northeastern in the past year because of the following reasons?



**Multiple response question*

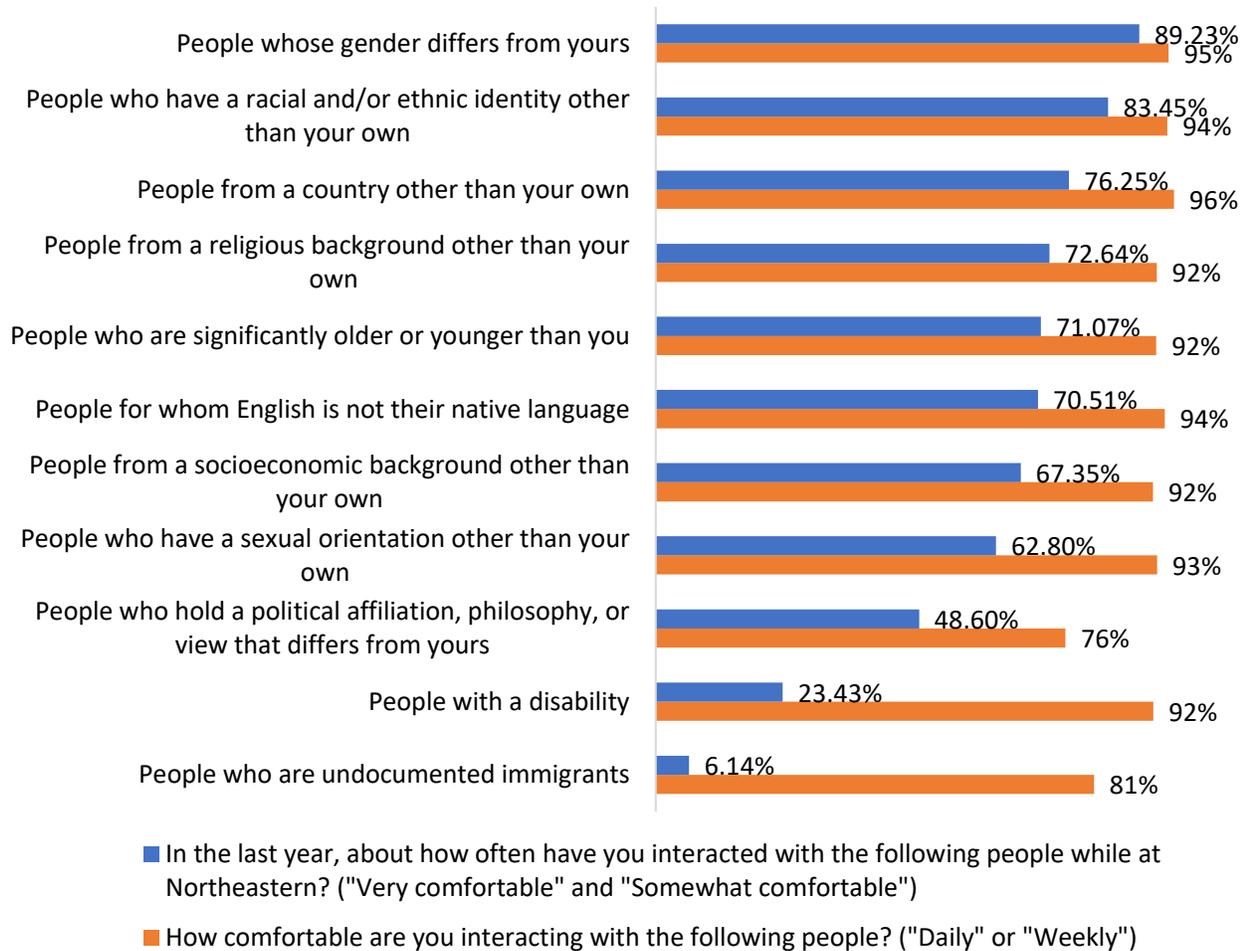
“Another reason” category included responses about dissatisfaction with administration, supervisors and professors, COVID-related stress, mental health, burnout, feeling undervalued, lack of opportunities, etc. For a complete list of verbatim responses to “Another reason” category please contact University Decision Support.

Frequency and Comfort of Interaction with Different Groups of People

Northeastern students, faculty and staff respondents have interacted with others across identities in the past year. The highest interaction was with people of different gender (89%), followed by interaction with people of different racial and/or ethnic identity (83%) and from a different country (76%).

Northeastern students, faculty and staff respondents demonstrated a very high level of comfort interacting with people of different backgrounds and beliefs. Yet, when compared across survey respondent groups, graduate students were generally least comfortable interacting with others of a different identity.

⁷ Customized survey question added by Northeastern. Comparative data for all other institutions is not available.

Figure 11. Frequency and Comfort of Interactions with Others

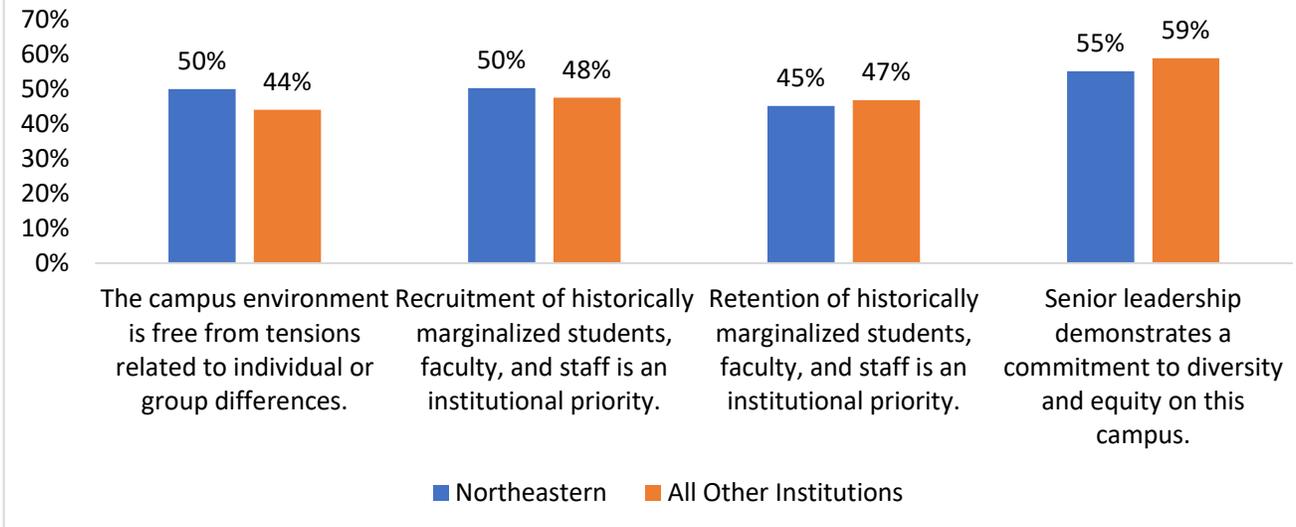
Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity

This section presents data that measure the level of agreement with whether the campus is free from tensions, whether recruitment of historically marginalized people is an institutional priority, whether retention of historically marginalized people is an institutional priority, and whether senior leadership demonstrates commitment to diversity and equity.

Questions: **Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about Northeastern.**

- *The campus environment is free from tensions related to individual or group differences.*
- *Recruitment of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority.*
- *Retention of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority.*
- *Senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to diversity and equity on this campus.*

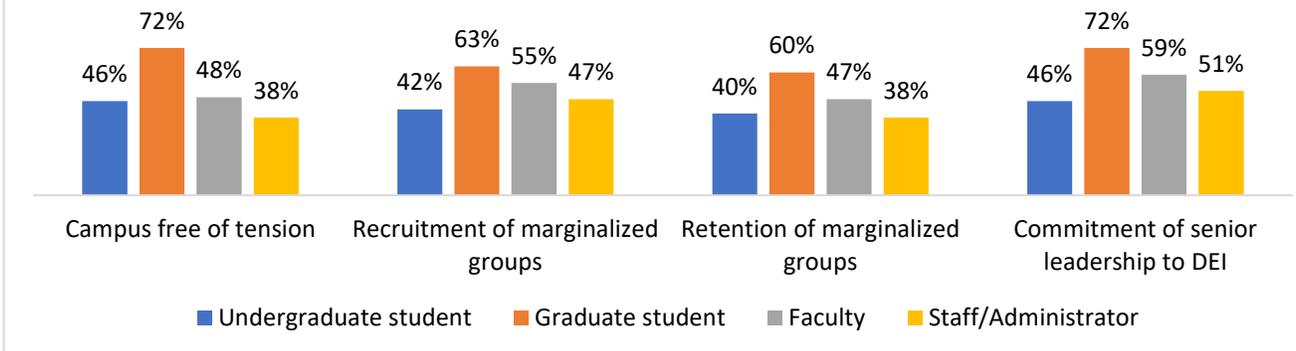
Figure 12. Level of Agreement with Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity ("Strongly Agree" and "Agree")



Northeastern respondents were in accord with the institutional commitment to diversity and equity on campus and more positive about their beliefs that the campus is free from tensions related to individual or group differences (50%) than respondents from other institutions (44%). Half of them (50%) appreciate where the university's priorities lie with respect to recruiting more diverse populations, at a rate similar to all other institutions. Fewer (45%) believe that efforts to retain students, faculty and staff from marginalized groups is an institutional priority. More than half of all respondents (55%) believe that senior leadership demonstrated a commitment to diversity and equity on campus, a rate that is slightly lower than at all other institutions (59%).

Graduate students expressed the most agreement with the statements about institutional support for diversity and equity, while undergraduates and staff/administrators were the least agreed group with those statements.⁸

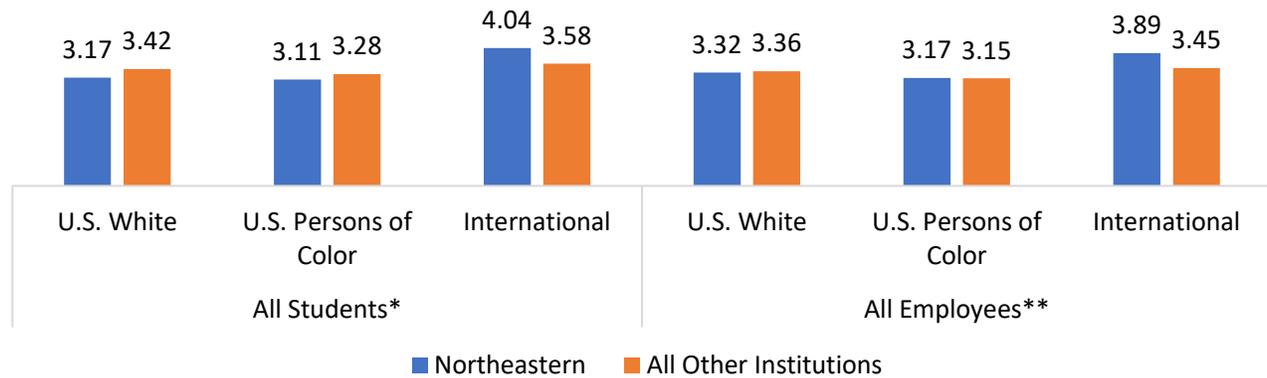
Figure 13. Level of Agreement with Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity by Role ("Strongly Agree" and "Agree")



⁸ There were statistically significant differences in the level of agreement between the groups on all institutional support questions.

Means of responses by roles to all combined survey questions concerning Northeastern’s support for diversity and equity were compared across race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.⁹ International students and employees displayed the highest level of agreement among Northeastern community and all other institutions. Students and employees of color and White students had the lowest levels of agreement.¹⁰

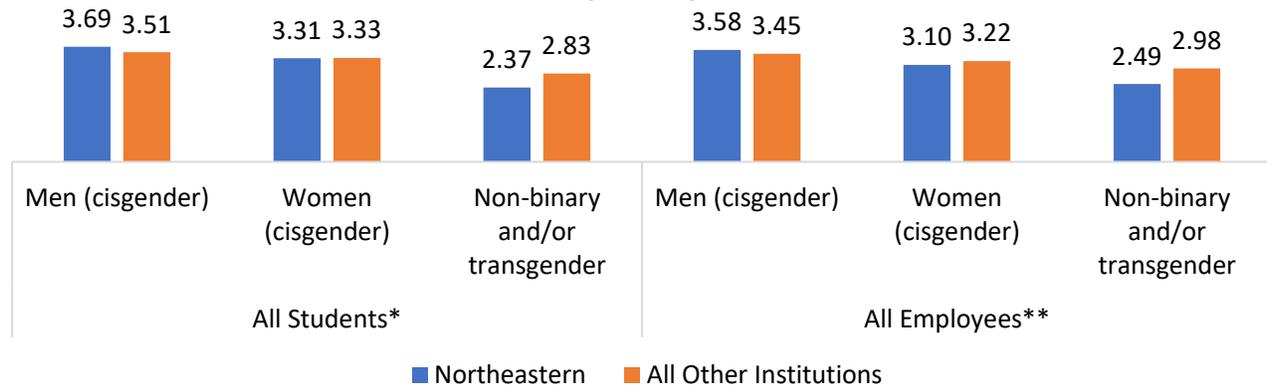
Figure 14. Level of Agreement with Four Elements of Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity by Role and Race/Ethnicity (Means)



***All students* category includes all undergraduate and graduate students*
****All employees* category includes all faculty and staff/administrators*

Non-binary students (2.37) and employees (3.10) displayed the lowest agreement with the questions about institutional support among all Northeastern respondents and all other insitutions.

Figure 15. Level of Agreement with Four Elements of Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity by Role and Gender (Means)

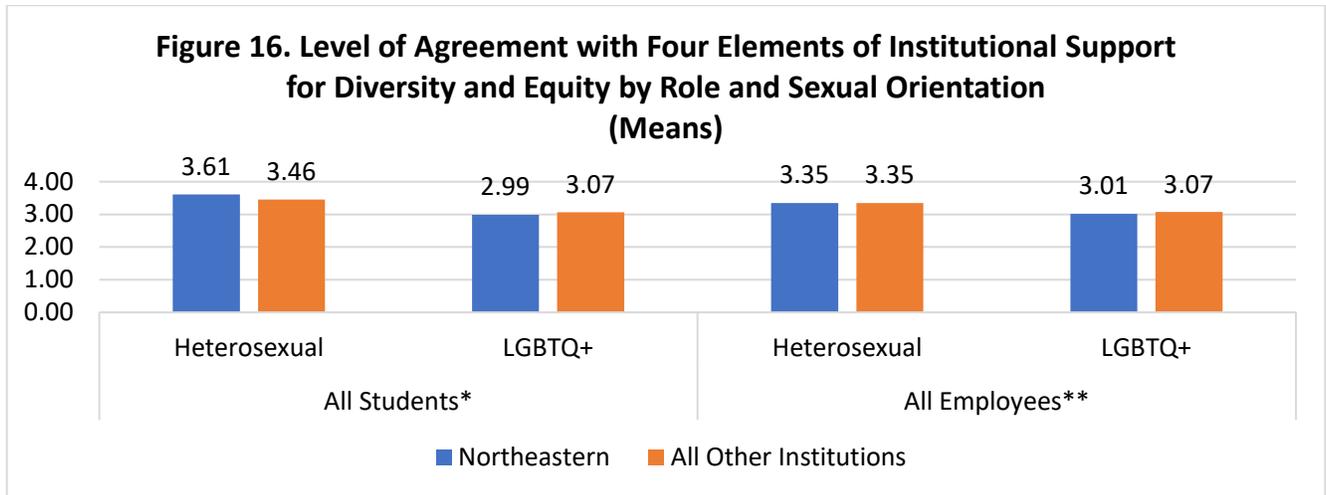


***All students* category includes all undergraduate and graduate students*
****All employees* category includes all faculty and staff/administrators*

⁹ Means were calculated only for groups of five or more people on the scale from 1 to 5 (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree). In order to protect data privacy, data was shared with Northeastern in broader categories.

¹⁰ There were statistically significant differences in the level of agreement between the groups on all institutional support questions.

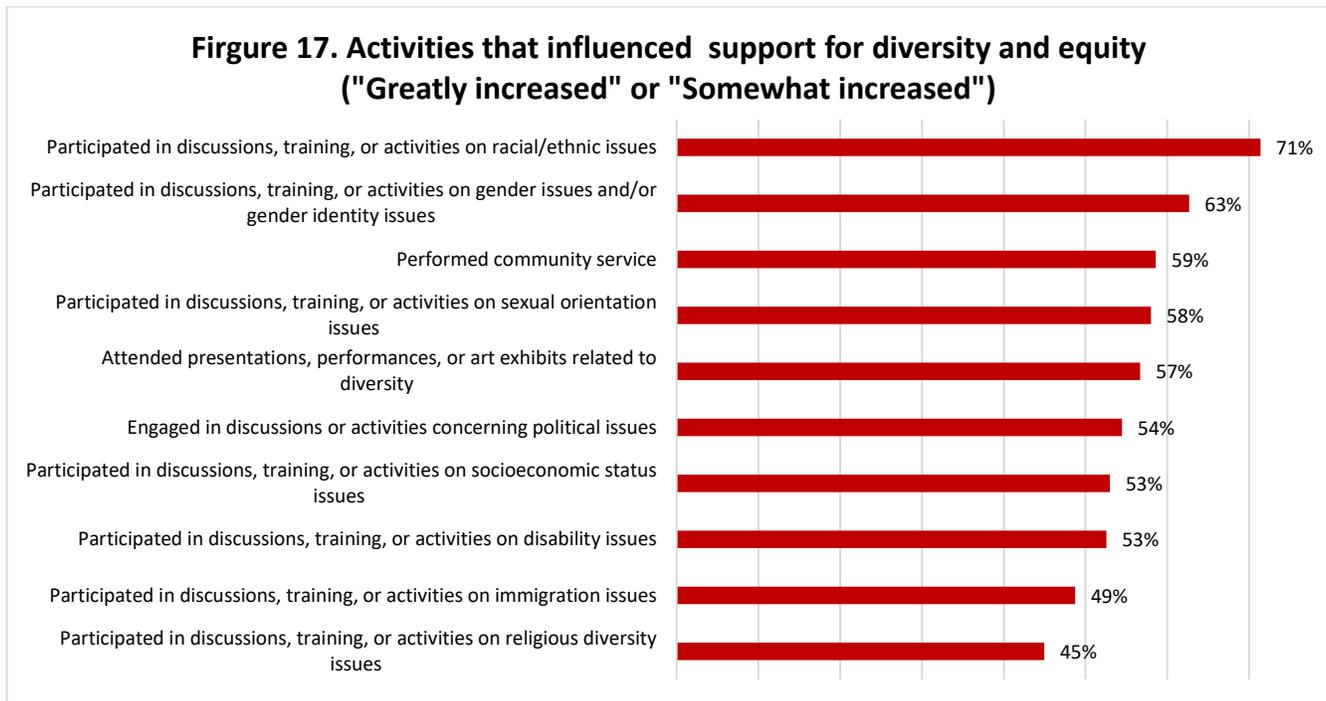
Similarly, LGBTQ+ students (2.99) and employees (3.01) had the lowest level of accord with the institutional commitment to diversity and equity on campus that was the lowest among respondents from Northeastern as well as from all other institutions.¹¹



*"All students" category includes all undergraduate and graduate students
 **"All employees" category includes all faculty and staff/administrators

Activities that influenced support for diversity and equity

Participation in discussions and training on racial/ethnic issues (71%) and gender identity issues (63%) were named among activities that greatly or somewhat influenced participants' support for diversity and equity. Other activities such as performing community service, participation in discussions and training on sexual orientation issues or attending events related to diversity equally important for nearly 60% of respondents.

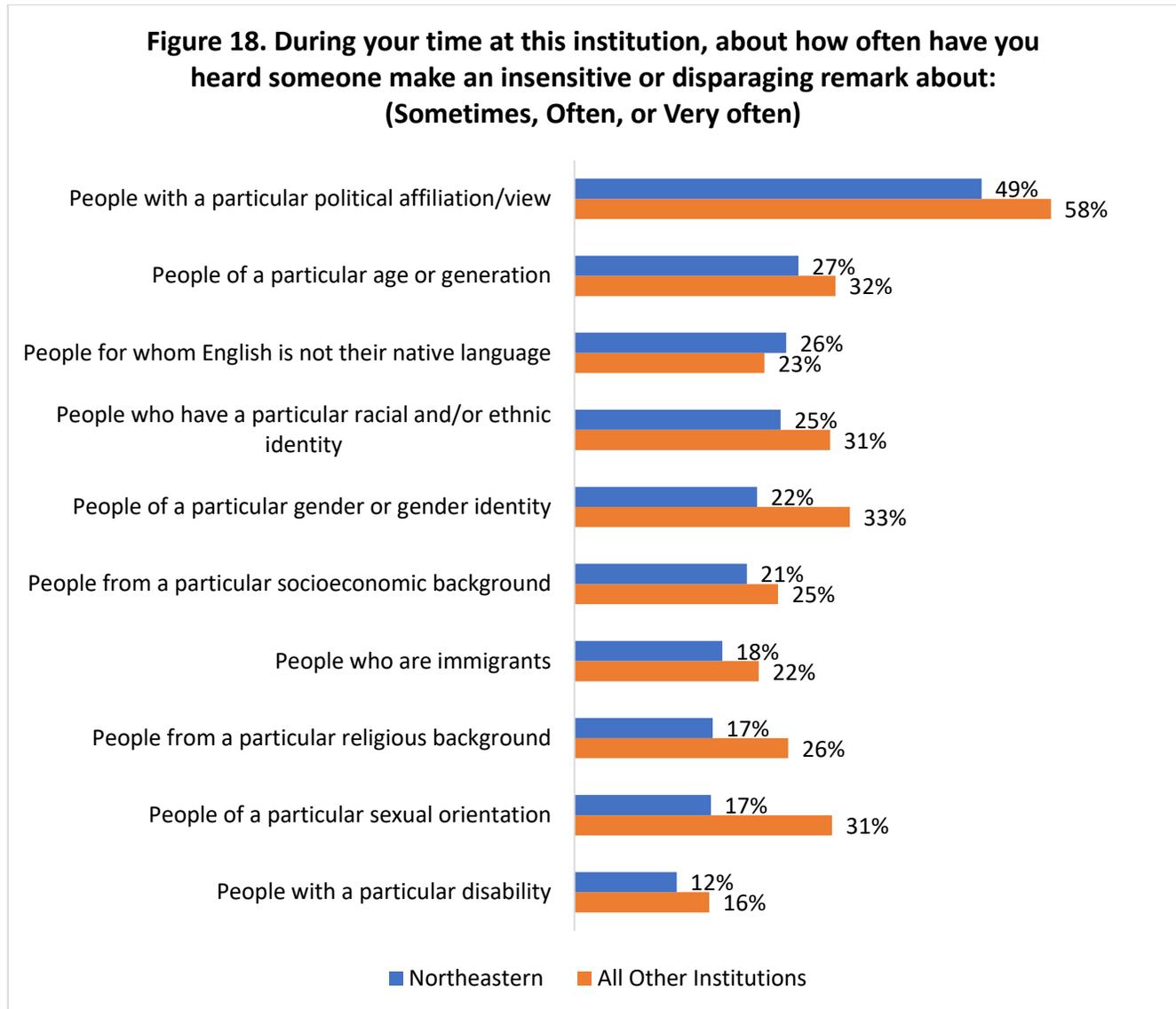


¹¹ There were statistically significant differences in the level of agreement between the groups on all institutional support questions.

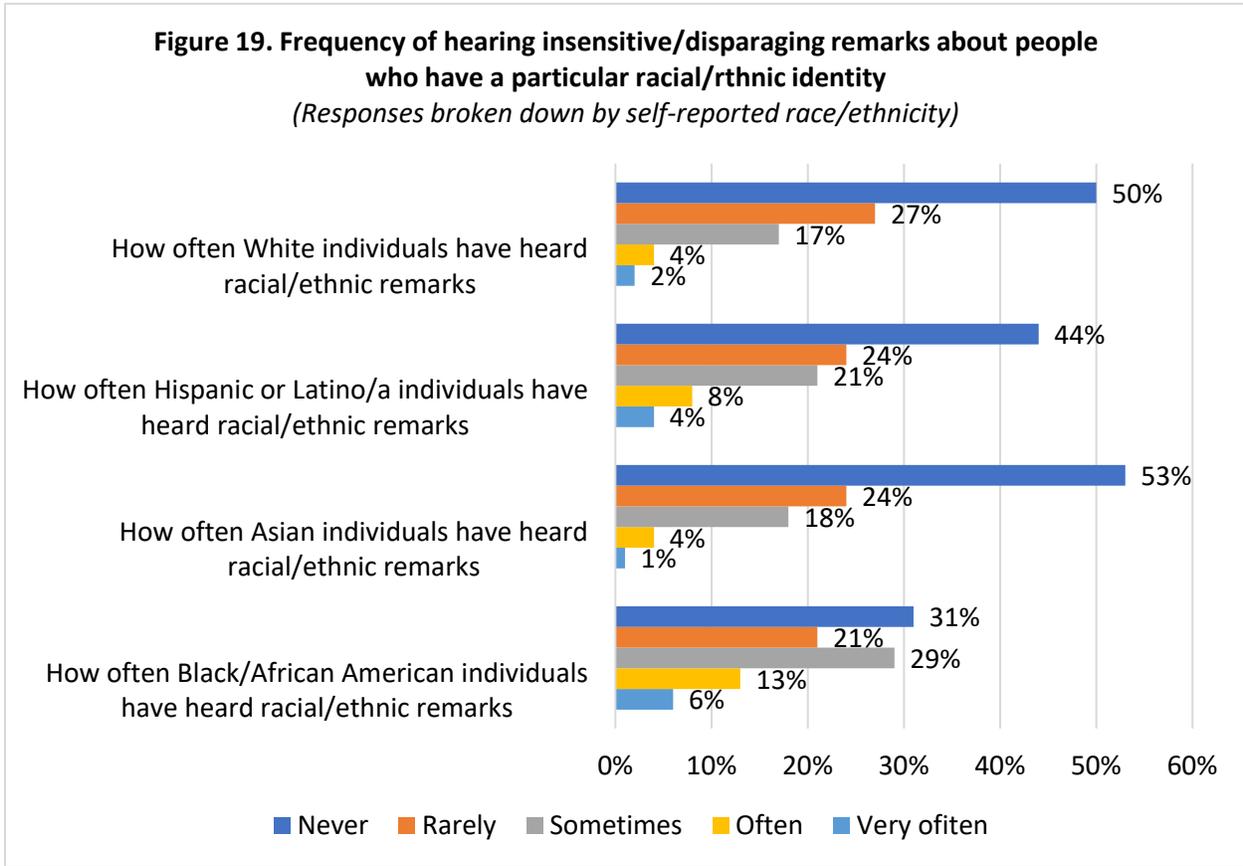
Hearing or Being a Target of Disparaging or Insensitive Remarks

This section presents data that measure how often people hear insensitive or disparaging remarks about different aspects of a person's identity at Northeastern.

The majority of respondents (51%- 87%) never or rarely heard insensitive or disparaging remarks about any aspect of social identity most of the time at favorable rates with all other private institutions. Most of the remarks were received regarding a particular political affiliation/view (49%).

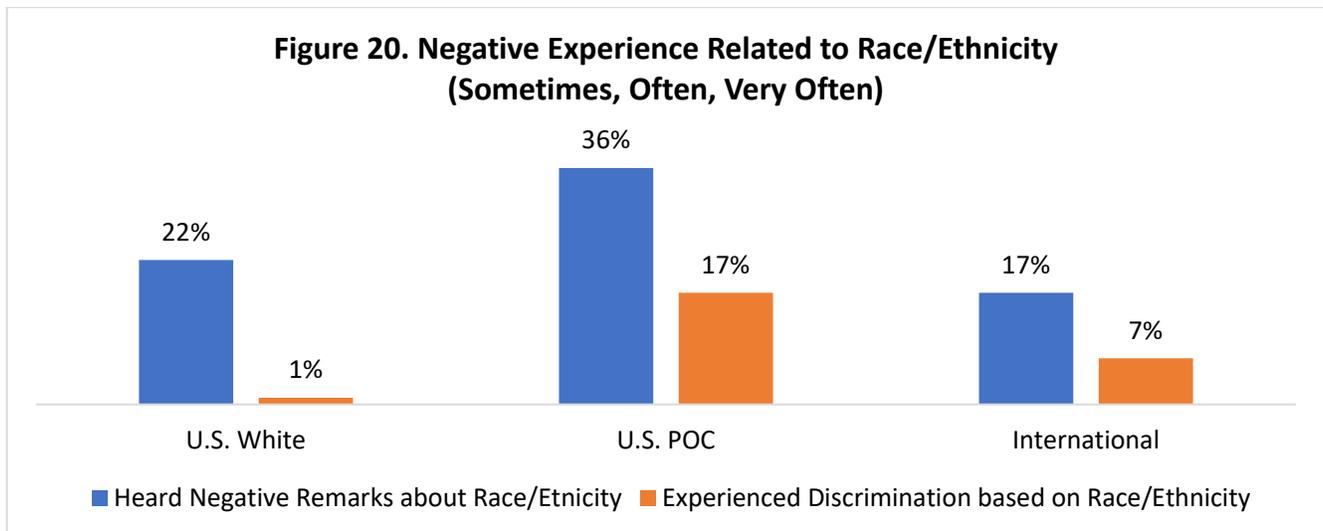


Similarly, when findings were reviewed by race/ethnicity of the respondents, the majority of respondents from all racial categories reported never or rarely hearing insensitive or disparaging remarks about an aspect of their racial/ethnic identity.

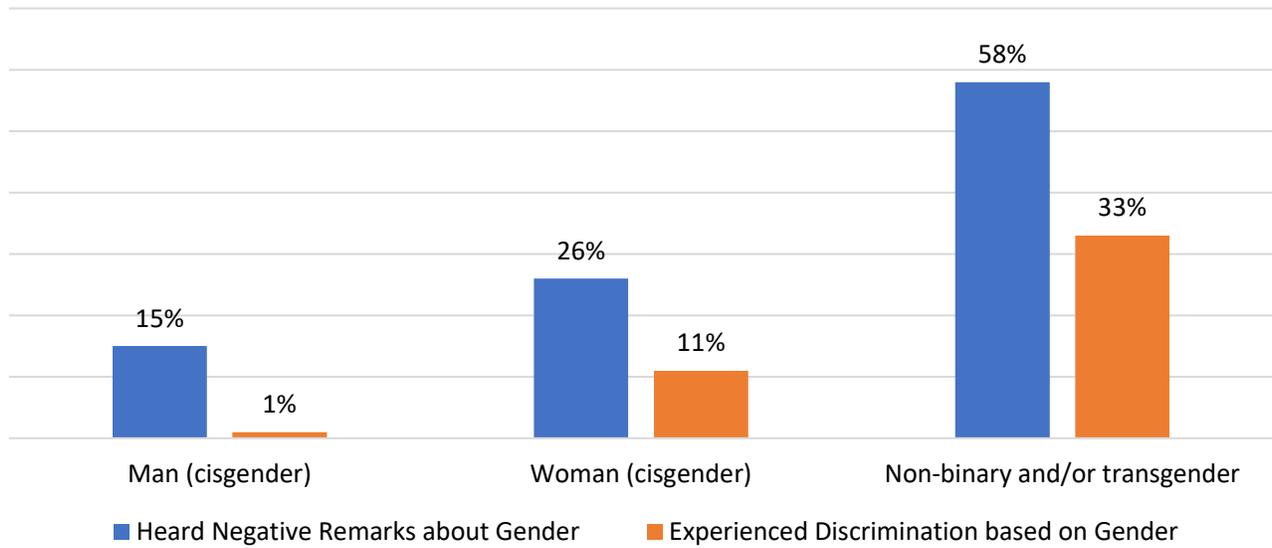


Negative Experiences by Identities at Northeastern

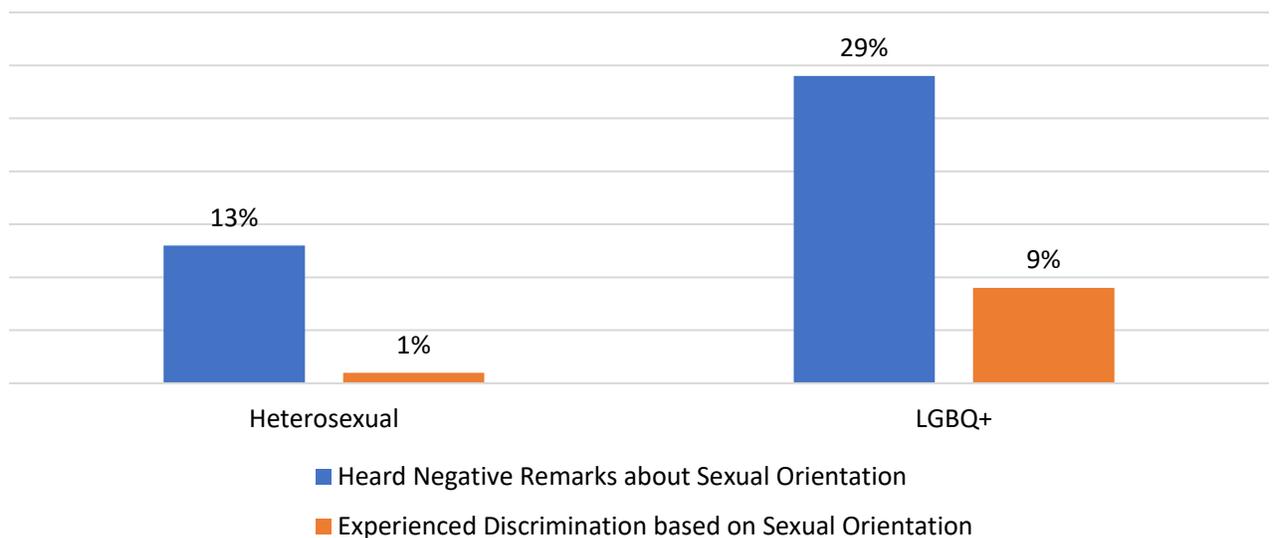
People of color (36%), female (26%), non-binary and/or transgender (58%), and LGBTQ+-identified respondents (29%) were more likely to hear insensitive or disparaging remarks or experience incidents of discrimination or harassment focused on an aspect of their identity than those having different backgrounds and beliefs (See figures 20-22).



**Figure 21. Negative Experience Related to Gender
(Sometimes, Often, Very Often)**

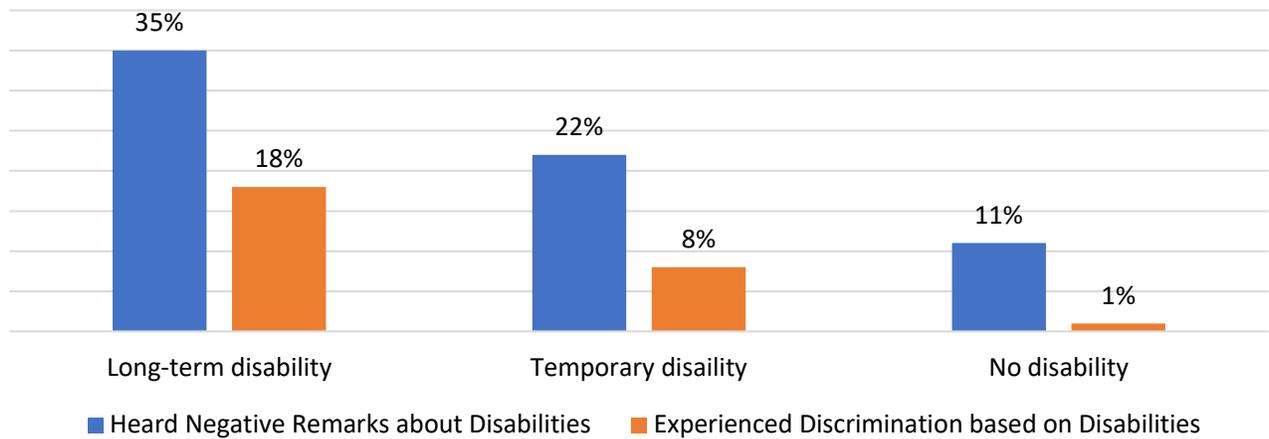


**Figure 22. Negative Experience Related to Sexual Orientation
(Sometimes, Often, Very Often)**



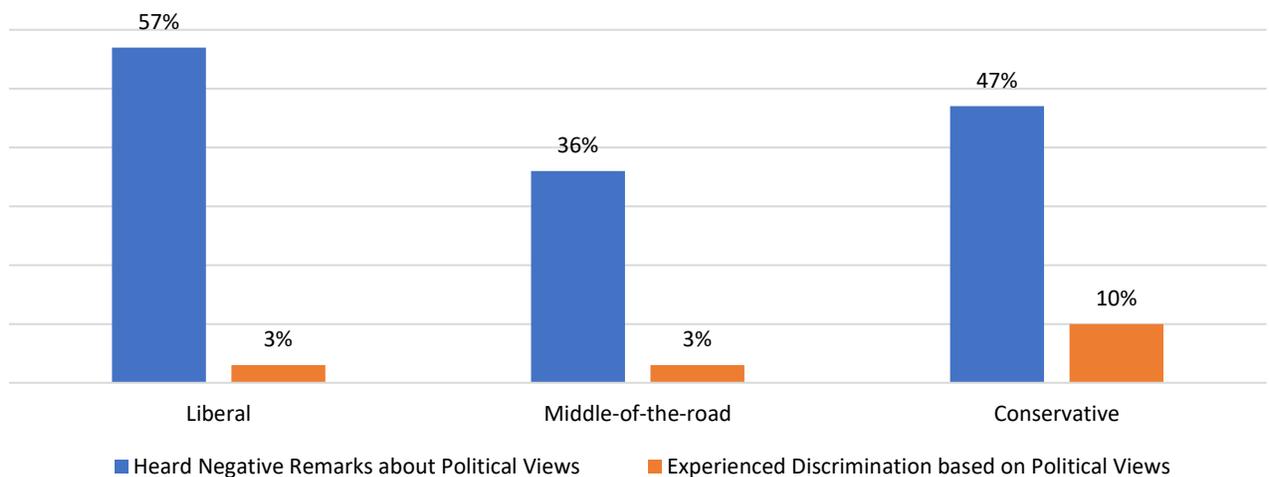
Respondents with long-term (35%) and temporary disabilities (22%) were more likely to hear insensitive or disparaging remarks or experience incidents of discrimination or harassment about their disability than those who report not having a long-term or temporary disability.

**Figure 23. Negative Experience Related to Disabilities
(Sometimes, Often, Very Often)**



Politically conservative respondents experienced incidents of discrimination or harassment at higher rate (10%) than others, though both politically liberal (57%) and conservative (47%) members of Northeastern community heard insensitive or disparaging remarks about their views.

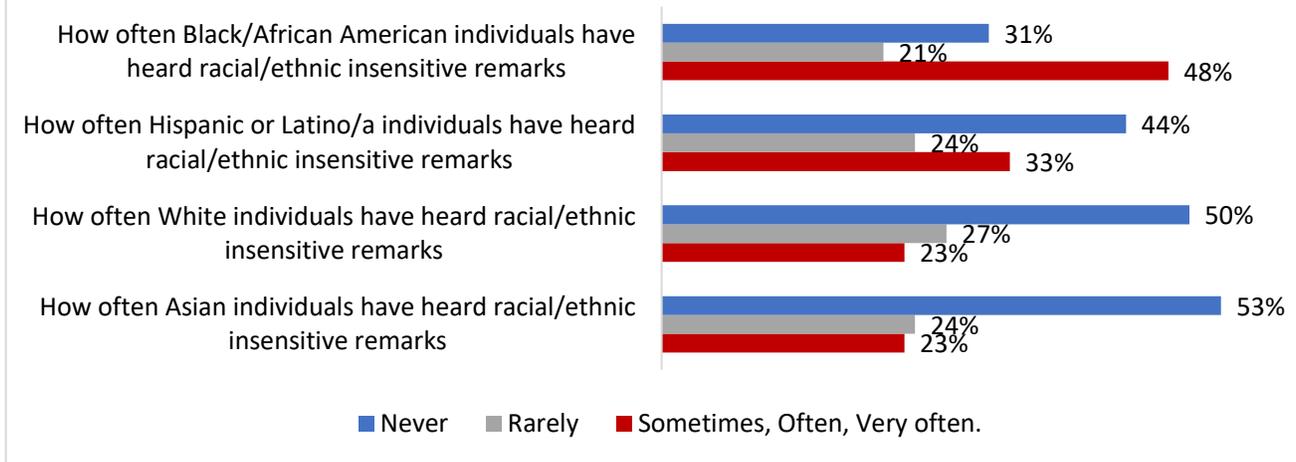
**Figure 24. Negative Experience Related to Political Views
(Sometimes, Often, Very Often)**



Frequency of Insensitive/Disparaging Remarks by Race and Ethnicity

Black/African American respondents were most likely to hear insensitive/disparaging remarks (48%) followed by Hispanic/Latinx respondents (33%), though the majority in all racial categories reported never or rarely hearing them about a particular racial/ethnic identity.

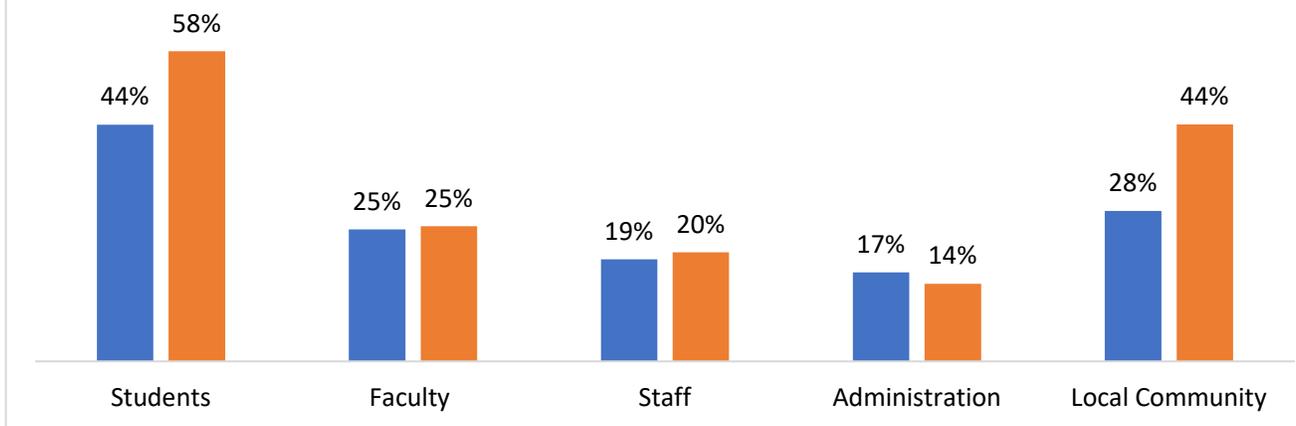
Figure 25. Frequency of hearing insensitive/disparaging remarks about people with a particular racial/ethnic identity by self-reported race/ethnicity. (Sometimes, Often, Very Often)



Sources of Disparaging/Insensitive Remarks

Those at Northeastern who reported hearing disparaging/insensitive remarks were asked about sources of such comments. The remarks most likely came from students (44%) followed by the local community (28%) at a much lower rate than at other private institutions (58% and 44%, respectively).

Figure 26. Source of Disparaging/Insensitive Remarks (% of Respondents who Selected Each Source)

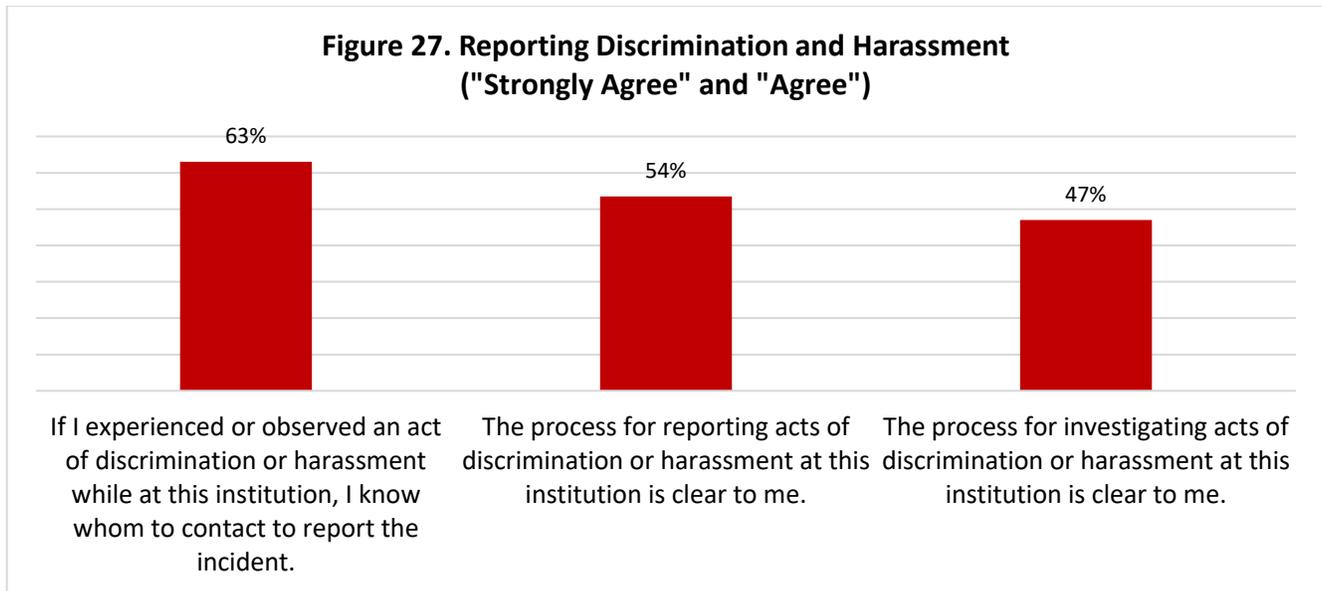


**Multiple response question*

Experiences with Discrimination and/or Harassment

This section presents data that measure whether people had experienced discrimination or harassment directed at a person's identity at Northeastern.

The majority of respondents (63%) know whom to contact to report the incident in case they experience or observe an act of discrimination or harassment at Northeastern. Slightly more than half of respondents (54%) said the act of reporting discrimination and harassment incidents is clear to them while only 47% know how the process of investigating acts takes place.



While a majority (72%) of Northeastern respondents have not experienced discrimination or harassment at Northeastern (equal to other institutions), 52% of those who have experienced incidents of harassment happened in the year prior to the survey year (See figures 28 and 29).

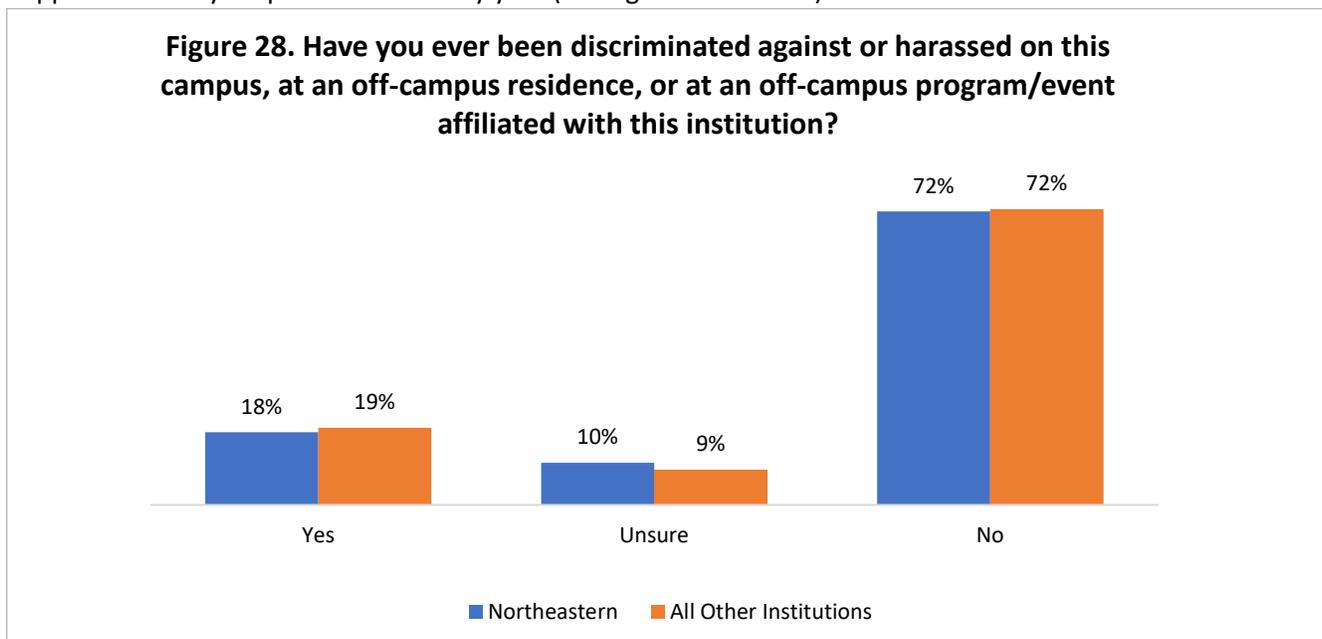
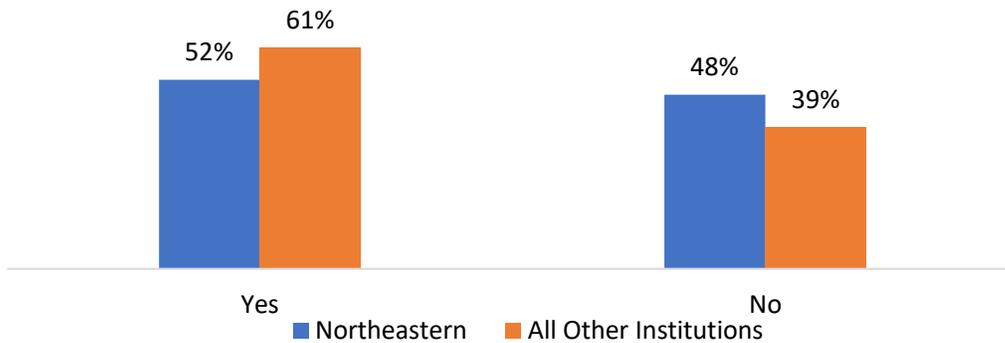
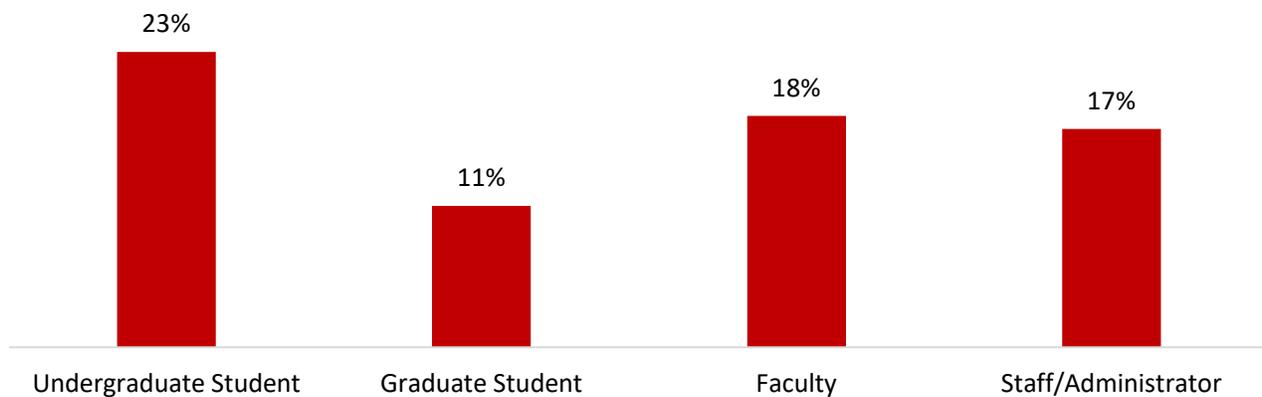


Figure 29. Did any of these incidents of discrimination or harassment at this institution occur in the last year?



When compared across different Northeastern groups, undergraduate respondents (23%) revealed that they experienced discrimination or harassment at higher rates, while graduate student respondents (11%) reported fewer incidences.¹²

Figure 30. Incidents of Discrimination/Harassment by Role

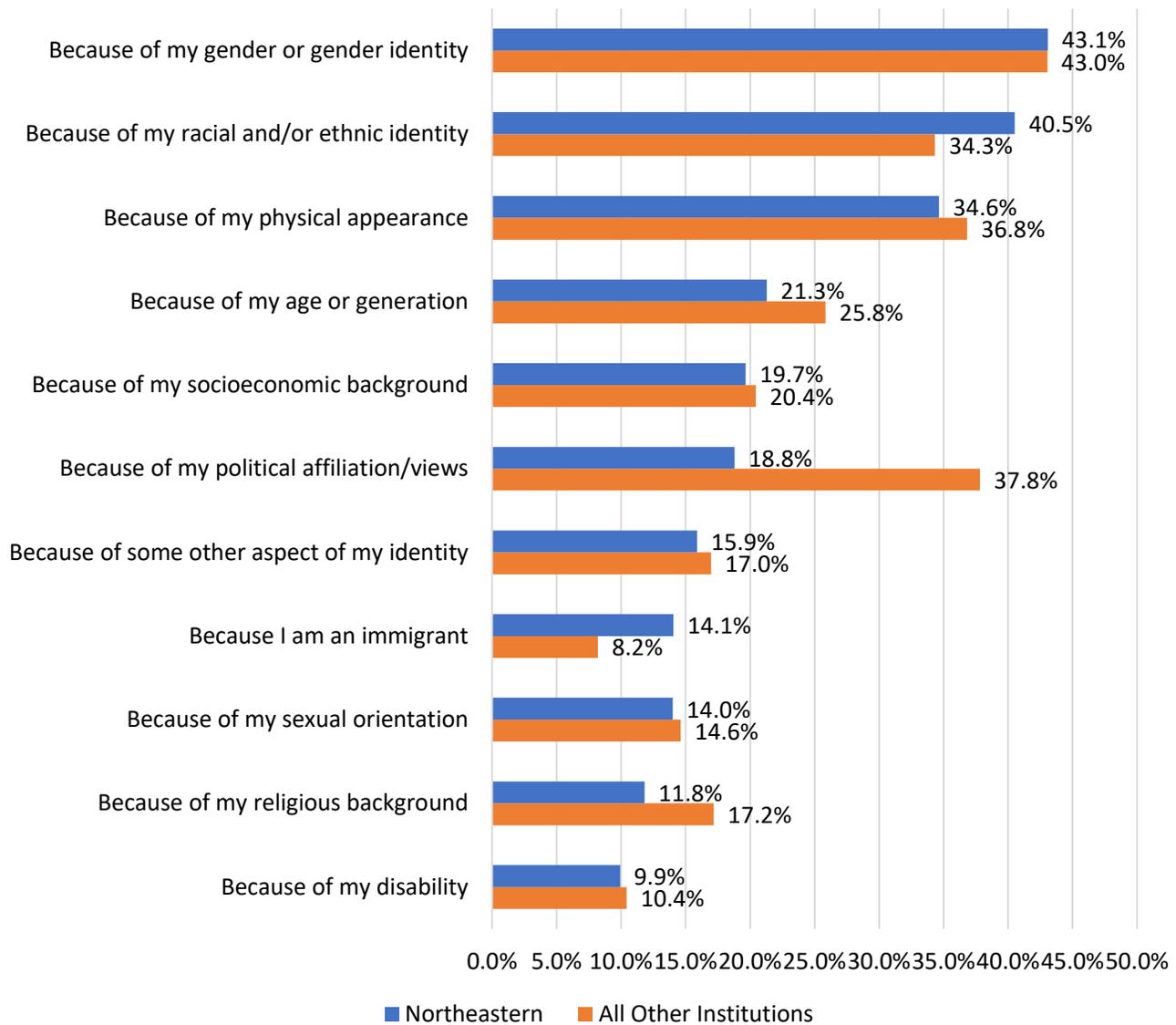


As a follow up to the “Yes” answer to “Have you ever been discriminated against or harassed on this campus” question, respondents were asked how often they have been discriminated against or harassed on the Northeastern campus for any of the identity reasons. The highest response was in related to the gender or gender identity (43.1%), but at a rate comparable with all other institutions (43%). Discrimination or harassment because of racial and/or gender identity for Northeastern respondents (40.5%) was higher than from all other private institutions (34.3%) that participated in the survey. While the number of disparaging remarks received about respondents’ political views or affiliations was high (49%, see Figure 18), the number of respondents who were discriminated or harassed because of their political views was much lower (18.8%), which is a more favorable finding when compared to all other institutions (37.8%).¹³

¹² There were statistically significant differences between some groups that have and have not experience discrimination or harassment based on their role.

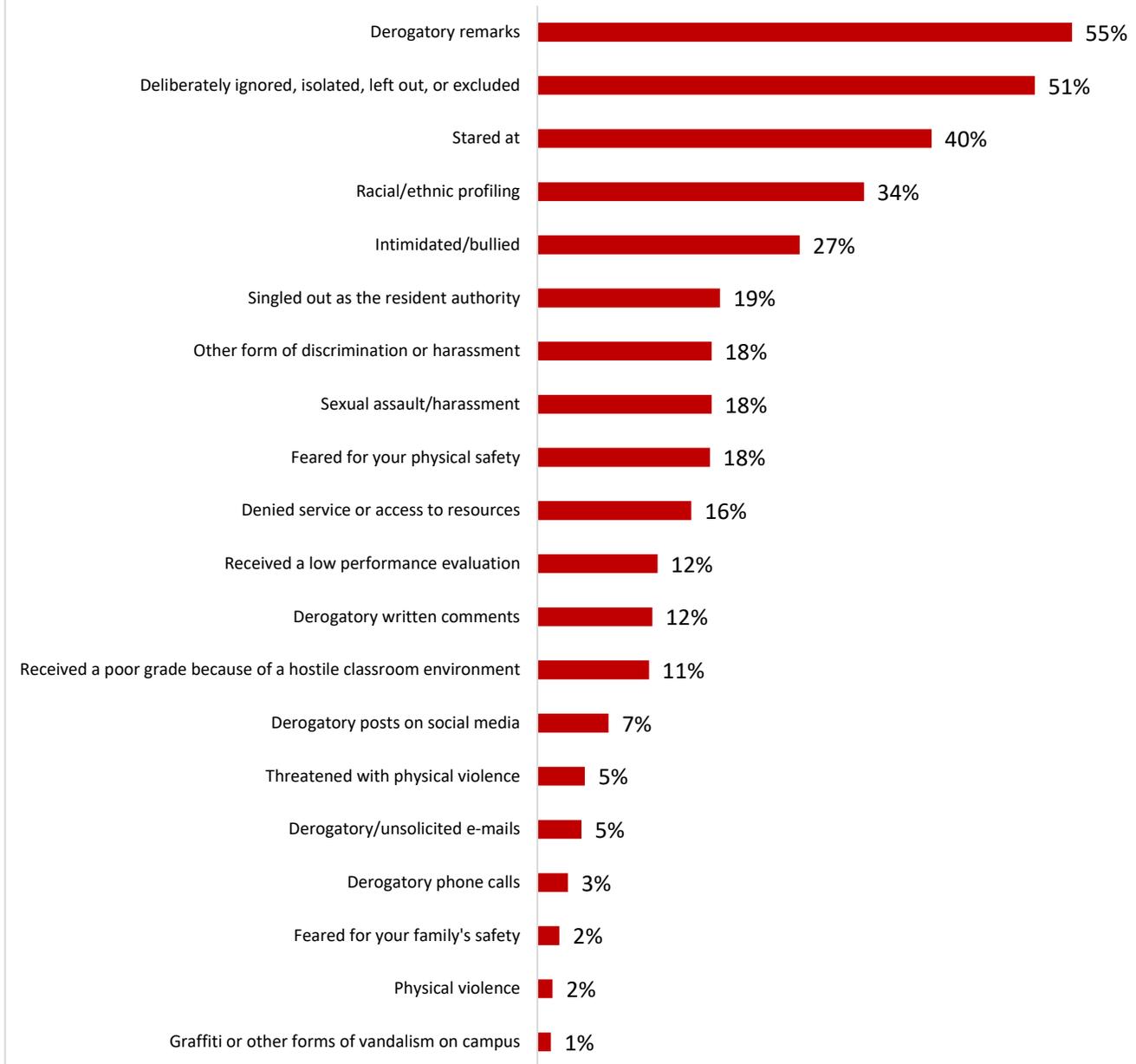
¹³ There were statistically significant differences between the groups that have and have not experience discrimination or harassment based on their race/ethnicity or gender identities, or political affiliation.

Figure 31. How often have you been discriminated against or harassed on the Northeastern campus, at an off-campus residence, or at an off-campus program/event affiliated with Northeastern for the following reasons? (Sometimes, Often, Very often)



Forms of Discrimination/Harassment

As a follow up question, respondents who reported incidents of discrimination/harassment on the survey were asked what form of discrimination/harassment they experienced in the past year. Derogatory remarks (55%) were considered the most common form of discrimination/harassment followed by deliberate ignorance, isolation, or exclusion (51%).

Figure 32. Forms of Discrimination/Harassment

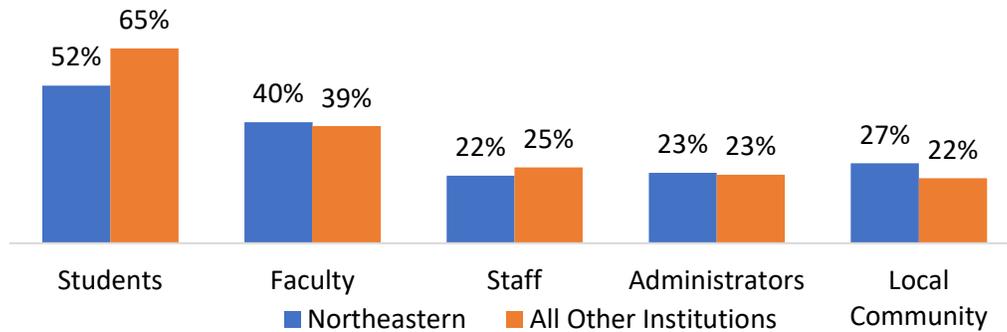
**Multiple response question*

“Other forms of discrimination or harassment” category included aggressive jokes, “catcalling,” microaggressions, retaliations etc. For a complete list of verbatim responses please contact University Decision Support.

Sources of Discrimination/Harassment

Students (52%) and faculty (40%) were reported as the most frequent sources of discrimination or harassment at Northeastern.

**Figure 33. Source of Discrimination/Harassment
(% of Respondents Who Selected Each Source)**



**Multiple response question*

Undergraduate students (77%) reported other students as major source of discrimination and harassment followed by a local community (39%). Graduate students reported faculty (61%) and other students (44%) as highest source of discrimination and harassment. Staff/Administrators are unhappy with the treatment by other staff (73%), administrators (52%), and faculty (29%). Faculty shared that other faculty (67%) and the local community (55%) are the most frequent sources.

Table 6. Sources of Harassment

| | Undergraduate student | Graduate student | Faculty | Staff/Administrator |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Students | 76.7% | 43.8% | 21.1% | 8.7% |
| Faculty | 31.8% | 61.3% | 67.1% | 29.3% |
| Staff | 10.5% | 15.0% | 14.5% | 72.8% |
| Administration | 9.1% | 13.8% | 55.3% | 52.2% |
| Local community | 38.9% | 23.8% | 6.6% | 4.3% |
| Total responses | 296 | 80 | 76 | 92 |

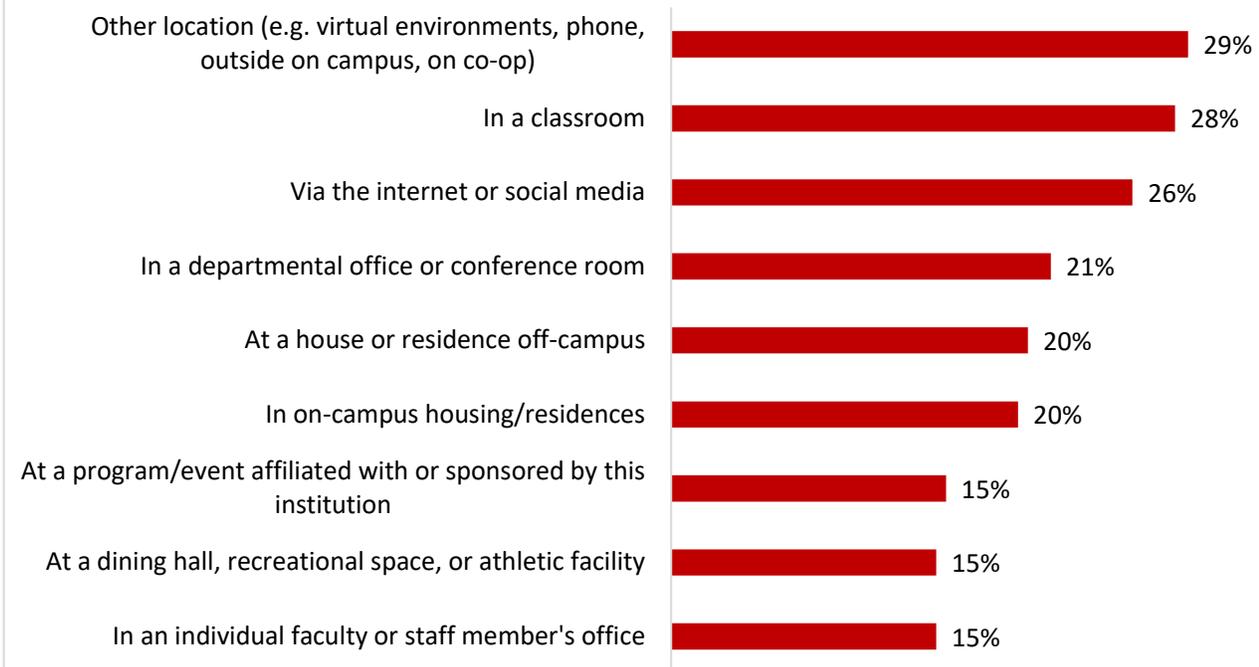
**Multiple response question*

While NU respondents reported hearing fewer insensitive or disparaging remarks than other institutions, this was not the case for administrators as the source of disparaging remarks (17% versus 14%, see Figure 26) and for the local community (27% versus 22%, see Figure 33) as the sources of harassment and discrimination.

Location of incidents

The majority of incidents happened at other locations (29%) that were not listed on the survey. The complete list of verbatim responses available upon request. The classroom (28%) was reported as the second most frequent location. Internet or social media (26%) were also reported among the most frequent location where discrimination/harassment happened.

Figure 34. Did incidents of discrimination or harassment occur in the following locations?

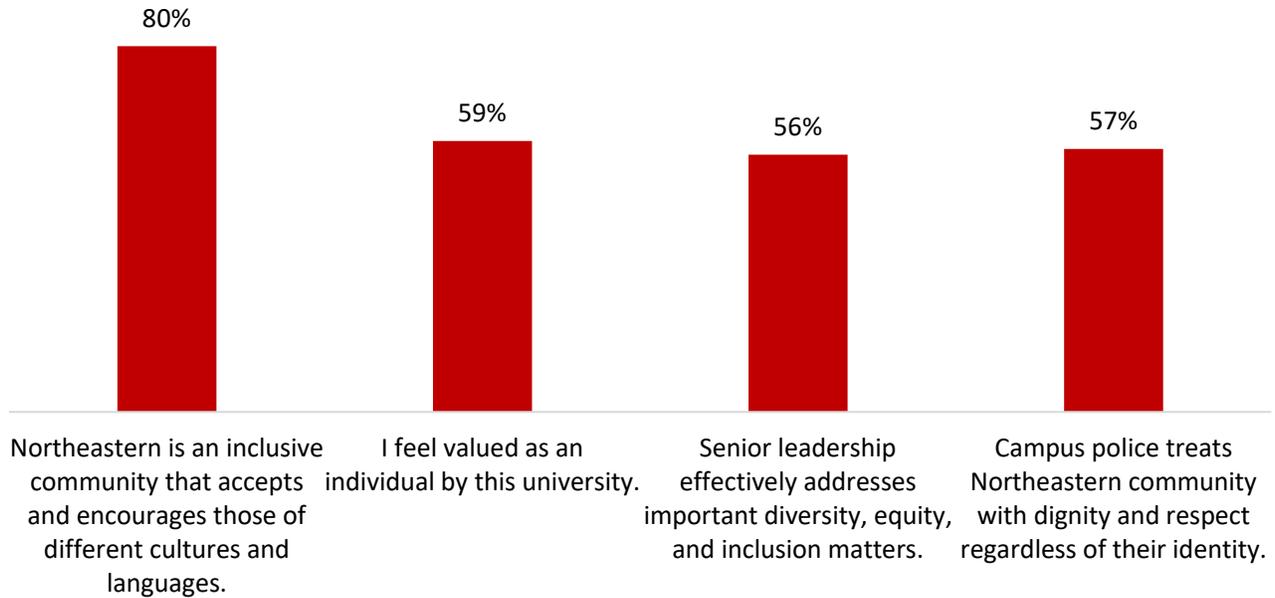


**Multiple response question*

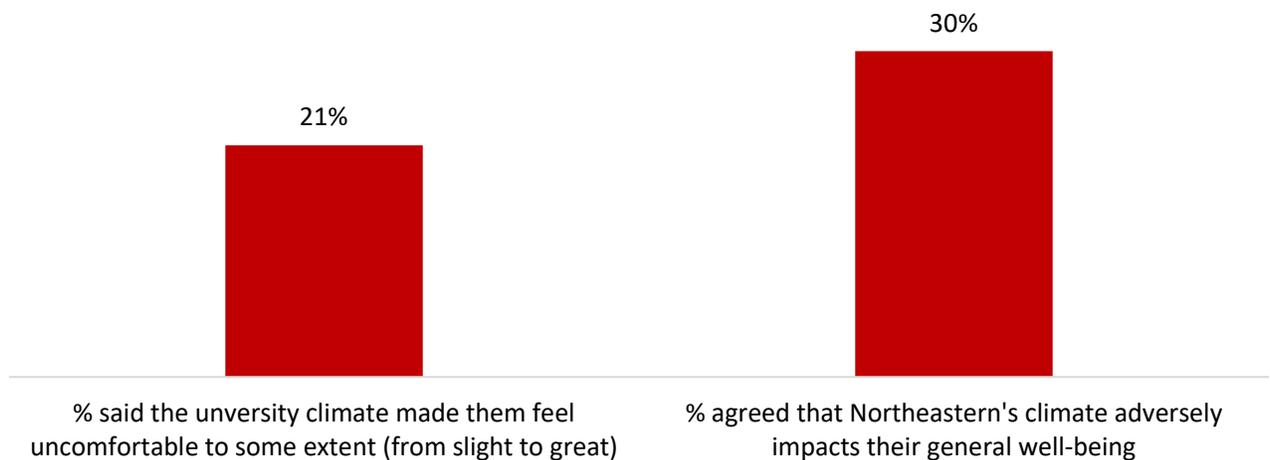
For a complete list of verbatim responses to the “Other location” category please contact University Decision Support.

Northeastern Customized Questions

Nearly 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Northeastern is an inclusive community that accepts and encourages those of different cultures and languages. More than half of the respondents agreed that they feel valued as an individual by Northeastern (59%) and believe that senior leadership effectively addresses important diversity, equity, and inclusion matters (56%). Nearly equal number of respondents (57%) who encountered campus police believe the campus police treats the Northeastern community with dignity and respect regardless of their identity.

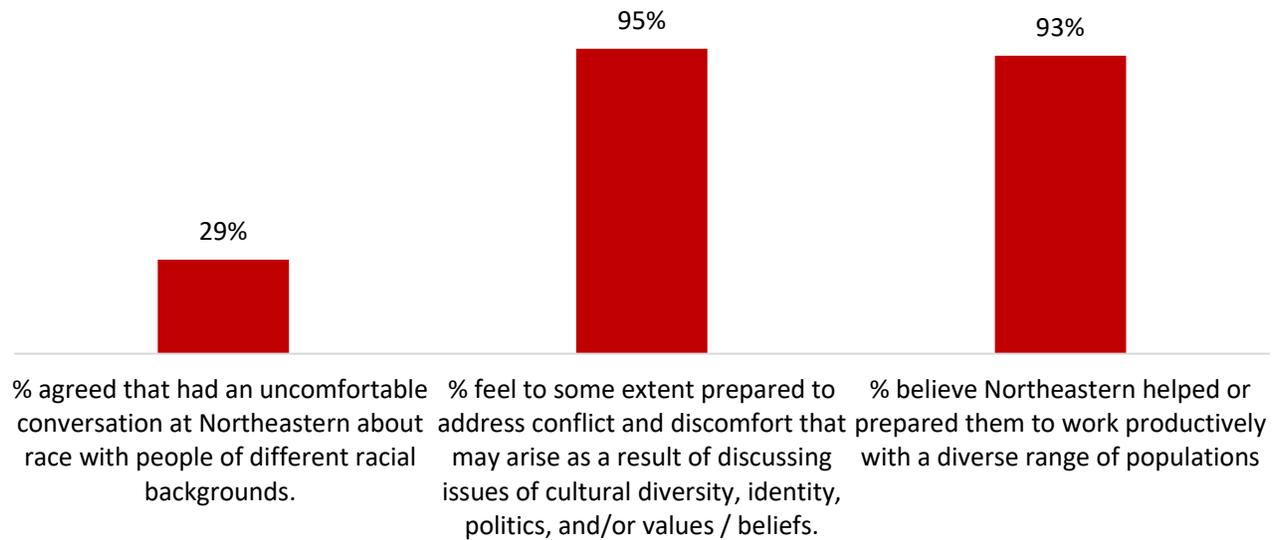
Figure 35. Northeastern Customized Questions

Nevertheless, 30% agreed or strongly agreed that Northeastern's climate adversely impacts their general well-being and 62% shared that the university climate makes them uncomfortable expressing views to at least some extent (from slight to a great extent).

Figure 36. Northeastern Customized Questions (cont.)

Nearly third of responses (29%) had uncomfortable conversations at Northeastern about race with people of different racial backgrounds in the past year. Nearly all respondents (95%) felt prepared to address conflict and discomfort that may arise as a result of discussing issues of cultural diversity, identity, politics, and/or values / beliefs. The majority (93%) agreed that Northeastern helps or prepares them to some extent (somewhat prepared to very well prepared) to work productively with a diverse range of populations.

Figure 37. Northeastern Customized Questions (cont.)



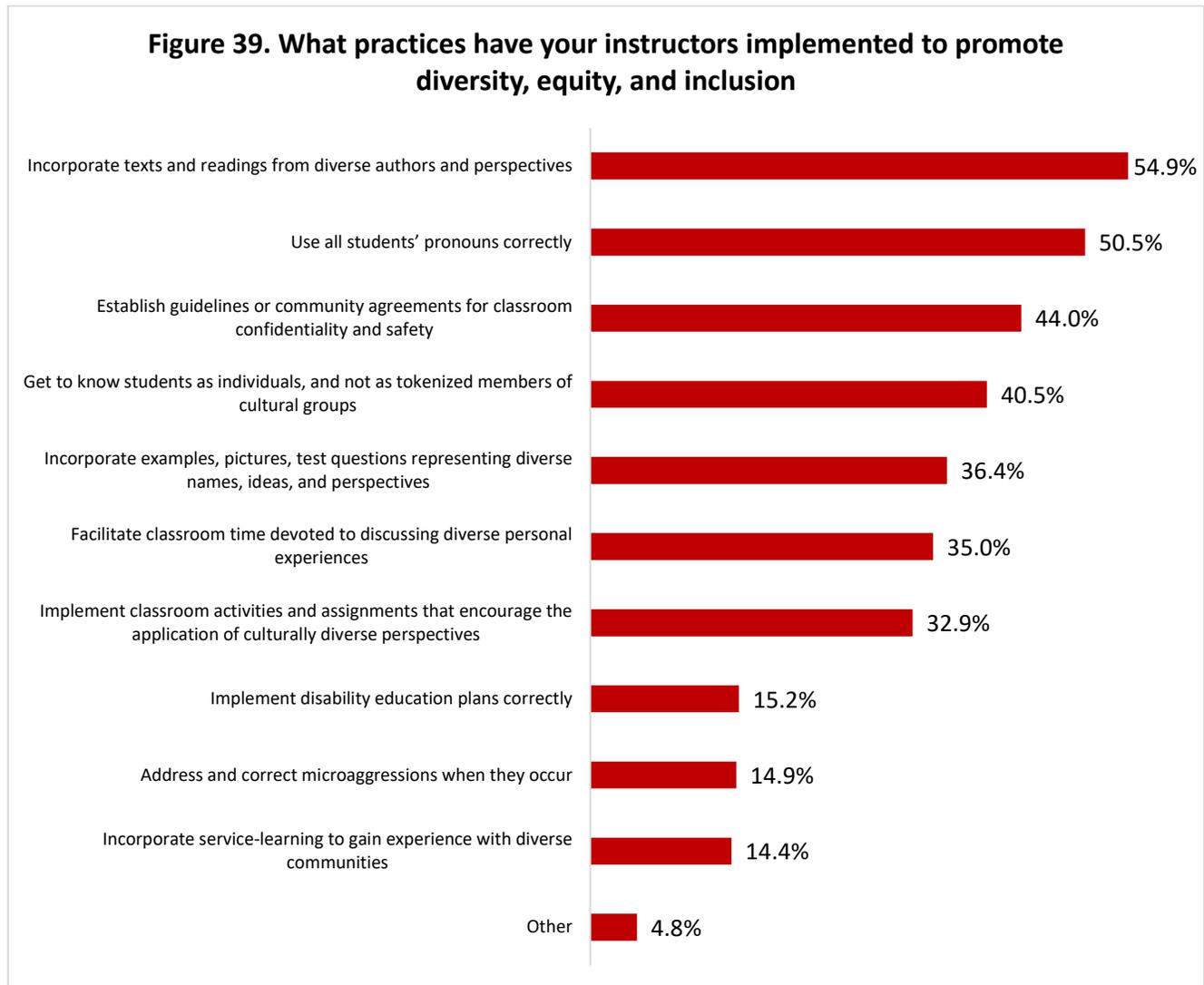
Respondents were asked which educational environments/activities at Northeastern help or prepare them the most and named classes (30%), co-ops (14%), and diversity and inclusion initiatives by college/department (13%) among three most helpful educational environments/activities.

Figure 38. Educational environments/activities at Northeastern that help or prepare the most to work productively with a diverse range of populations?



For a complete list of verbatim responses to “Other environment” category please contact University Decision Support.

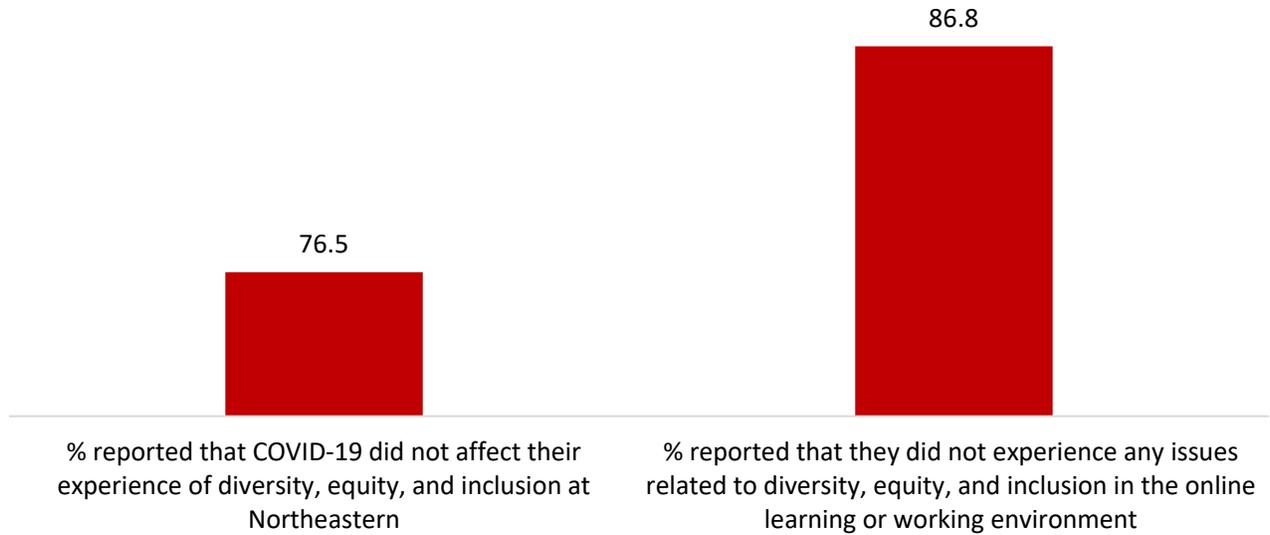
Students pointed out that certain practices implemented by their instructors were helpful in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this question, they were invited to select as many activities on the list as they wanted, so the percentages add up to greater than 100%. Leading the way as effective practices were “Incorporate texts and readings from diverse authors and perspectives,” “Use all students’ pronouns correctly,” and “Establish guidelines or community agreements for classroom confidentiality and safety.” These effective practices, noticed by students, are making a difference in the academic environment.



For a complete list of verbatim responses to “Other” category please contact University Decision Support.

The survey asked whether COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected respondents’ experience of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Northeastern and whether they experience any issue related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the online learning or working environment. Nearly 80% of respondent responded that the pandemic had not adversely affected their experience of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Northeastern. Nearly the majority of respondents (90%) shared that they did not experience any issues while studying or working remotely.

Figure 40. Effects of COVID-19 pandemic and online learning/working environment on diversity, equity, and inclusion experiences



Those who reported adverse effects were asked to provide explanation. For a complete list of verbatim responses to how the pandemic or online learning/working environments affected respondents' experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion, please contact University Decision Support. Additional analyses on how COVID-19 pandemic affected respondents' experiences are also available upon request.

Summary of Findings and Considerations for Action

Our key takeaways from the survey guide us toward the actions necessary to move forward and improve the climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Northeastern. While the responsibility for action rests with organizations throughout the university, ideas are presented in this section to guide those implementing change.

A key point to start with is that there is positive news from the survey. These encouraging findings are:

- Northeastern respondents overall are more diverse than those at other participating institutions with respect to national origin, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation.
- Northeastern respondents have higher levels of satisfaction on most measures of campus climate than those at other participation institutions.
- The university climate for diversity and inclusion receives a high evaluation overall.
- A vast majority of respondents believe Northeastern is an inclusive community that accepts and encourages those of different cultures and languages and that diversity improves campus interactions.
- A majority of respondents personally feel a sense of belonging or community.
- A majority of respondents, including people of color, have never experienced discrimination or harassment or insensitive or disparaging remarks.
- Northeastern respondents are generally comfortable interacting with people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Although there is good news as outlined above, there are opportunities to improve the experience for all groups on campus. Certain groups feel less satisfied with the Diversity and Inclusion climate, are less comfortable sharing their views and identities, have less sense of belonging, hear insensitive/disparaging remarks, or experience discrimination or harassment because of their identities at higher rates than their peers in the network. In addition, the low survey response among students is an indicator of low engagement. In this section, we will make provide considerations for future action based on the survey data.

Campus Climate

This section of the survey focused on satisfaction with the overall campus climate, the diversity environment, the sense of belonging to the community, and the extent to which other members of the community have a sense of belonging.

The campus climate for diversity and inclusion received a high evaluation overall with 75% of respondents expressing satisfaction with the campus climate for diversity and equity. Also, the vast majority of respondents (92%) agreed that diversity improves campus interactions. 63% of respondents personally feel a sense of belonging or community, but these numbers are lower for undergraduates and staff/administrators. Only 49% are satisfied with the extent that *all community members* experience a sense of belonging, and 12% of respondents considered leaving Northeastern due to a sense of not belonging or isolation. We also discovered that 71% of respondents are comfortable sharing their view on diversity and equity. However, staff and undergraduate students are least comfortable in this regard.

The open-ended text comments added to our understanding of the campus climate. Here are some representative comments:

"I feel a strong sense of community at Northeastern, mostly due to the organizations and on-campus jobs I have held."

"I have a sense of community within my classmate[s] and instructors, but overall, the lack of diversity, inclusion and minimal efforts made by the university to combat the systemic racism that is rampant within the university and outside of the university is saddening."

"I love the diversity at Northeastern. I come from a predominantly white town, so meeting people from diverse backgrounds has been really cool and eye-opening."

"We have a very diverse student body, but there isn't a comradery or common interest of the school. Very individualistic"

"I have a strong sense of community among extracurricular groups I have self-selected into; due to co-op and traveling, I don't feel a strong sense of overall community with other undergraduates beyond our shared career ambition."

"Increase funding towards our cultural centers, hire more culturally competent and diverse faculty and staff, and provide more ethnic studies."

A large percentage of respondents (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that Northeastern is **an inclusive community** that accepts and encourages those of different cultures and languages, and nearly 60% feel valued as an individual by the university. These numbers tell us that while we may be doing a good job on diversity and equity, the climate for inclusion has room for improvement.

As we reflect on what we learned from this section of the survey, we can bring forward ideas for future action:

1. Follow-up in the form of **listening sessions or focus groups** with certain communities will help bring forward new ideas and new information. In particular, more information about the campus climate is needed from non-binary and transgendered community, as their assessment was less favorable than other groups. Similarly, more information about the freedom to share views on diversity is needed from staff and administrators, as these populations are much less comfortable speaking openly on this topic.
2. Lifting "stereotype threat" among those from different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds and sexual orientations should be a focus as these groups report being least comfortable disclosing these identities for fear of negative consequences.
3. The results of the survey also point out that training is needed for supervisors to advise them on how to more consistently treat their employees with dignity and respect.
4. Creating opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact with people who have different backgrounds and political and religious beliefs should be a critical focus.

In particular, the groups below told us through the survey that they don't experience as deep a sense of belonging as other groups do. In terms of identities, those groups are:

- People of color
- Non-binary or transgender
- Temporary or long-term disabled
- Female
- LGBTQ+
- Politically conservative and progressive

Throughout Northeastern, developing action plans to understand and improve the experiences of these groups, and others, will help increase their sense of belonging at Northeastern.

Institutional Support for Diversity and Equity

This section of the survey measured respondents' opinions on institutional leadership's support for best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion. In general, these questions revealed a split campus, with about half of respondents approving of the level of institutional support, with the other half neutral or disapproving.

Though it varied from group to group, slightly more than half of respondents (55%) agreed that the institution's senior leadership is committed to diversity and equity. Half of all respondents agreed that Northeastern is free of tensions related to individual or group differences and appreciate where the university's priorities lie with respect to recruiting more diverse populations. Slightly fewer believe that efforts to retain students, faculty and staff from marginalized groups is an institutional priority.

Graduate students are most satisfied with the institutional support for diversity and equity, while undergraduates and staff/administrators are consistently least satisfied with institutional support for diversity and equity.

The open-ended text comments in this section were illustrative of the diverging opinions on institutional support for diversity and equity. Here are some representative comments:

"I have a sense of community within my classmate and instructors, but overall, the lack of diversity, inclusion and minimal efforts made by the university to combat the systemic racism that is rampant within the university and outside of the university is saddening."

"Add more transparency and communication about how decisions are made and how the university is going about achieving its strategic vision. What does the roadmap for the next 5-10 years actually look like from an actionable perspective?"

"I would ask senior leadership to work more directly with the student population; it often feels that what my students want, and need is not reflected in the policies that are put forth by the institution."

"Nurture talent and promote from within to increase visibility and power of people of color at all ranks across the university. Does the representation of people of color in our faculty and senior leadership mirror that of the population? It should."

"Increase educational programming relating to diversity in the classroom setting (specifically regarding racial and socioeconomic issues)."

From these results, it is apparent that more effort is needed to demonstrate institutional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and recruitment and retention of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff. We

must increase our work towards creating a community that eliminates tension related to individual or group differences. Some suggestions for accomplishing these goals are:

1. Improved communication and transparency around Northeastern's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
2. Improved clarity around recent changes, actions, and accomplishments.
3. Northeastern's departments (administrative and academic) and colleges should tie diversity, equity and inclusion commitments to annual employee evaluations and tenure decisions.
4. Communication and transparency can also be improved by:
 - a. Hosting Community Conversations and smaller dialogue circles/listening sessions and provide mechanisms to capture feedback.
 - b. Commit to identifying and sharing best DEI practices across the university community.
 - c. Create a perpetual cycle of data collection, sharing with the community, and gathering feedback.

The survey data also showed us that only about half of respondents are clear on the process for reporting instances of discrimination or harassment or the process for investigating those instances. The majority of respondents (63%) know whom to contact to report the incident in case they experience or observe an act of discrimination or harassment. These numbers show that there is room for improvement around the community's knowledge of reporting and policies/processes for investigations. Investment in communicating discrimination and harassment policies and reporting mechanisms regularly to all constituencies via multiple mechanisms (e.g., email, newsletters, posters) will help achieve those results.

Insensitive or Disparaging Remarks

This section presents data about how often people hear insensitive or disparaging remarks about various aspects of a person's identity.

A majority (range: 52-77%) of respondents from all racial categories report never or rarely hearing insensitive or disparaging remarks about an aspect of their racial/ethnic identity. This is favorable compared to other private colleges and universities in the HEDS comparison group. However, there are some groups who hear insensitive or disparaging remarks more frequently than others. Those groups include:

- Non-binary or transgender
- Politically liberal
- Politically conservative
- People of color
- Respondents with long-term disabilities
- LGBTQ+
- Women (cisgender)

Students are the greatest source of disparaging remarks (44%), followed by the faculty and local community.

While the volume of insensitive or disparaging remarks is low compared to the HEDS comparison group, more education and training is needed within the student population, identified as the group most responsible for these remarks. In addition, we need to understand and remedy the experiences of Black/African American, Latinx, nonbinary, and disabled members of the Northeastern community as they reported higher volume of insensitive or disparaging remarks compared to other groups. Another possible course of action in this area is respectful political discourse, and training managers and supervisors on inclusive leadership.

Discrimination and Harassment

This section presents data that measure whether people had experienced discrimination or harassment directed at a person's identity at Northeastern. *Discrimination* is defined in the survey as the unfavorable treatment of a person based on that person's race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, or political beliefs. *Harassment* is defined in the survey as a form of discrimination consisting of physical or verbal conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, or political beliefs. Harassment occurs when the conduct is sufficiently severe and/or pervasive that it alters the terms or conditions of employment or substantially limits the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the college's educational and/or social programs.

While a majority (72%) of Northeastern respondents have not experienced discrimination or harassment at Northeastern (about equal to other institutions), 52% of those who have experienced incidents of harassment experienced them in the last year. Undergraduates, faculty, and staff/administrator respondents experienced discrimination or harassment at higher rates, while graduate student respondents report fewer incidences. As with insensitive or disparaging remarks, the most common source of discrimination or harassment was students. This was followed by faculty. This pattern is the same as is seen in the HEDS comparison group.

The data suggest that more education is needed within the student and faculty populations, which are identified as the most frequent sources of discrimination or harassment. In addition, more education and training for students is required to ensure that they know whom to contact to report discrimination and harassment.

Recommendations for the Next Survey Administration

To improve the response rate among students, there are several actions to take that would increase students' willingness to take the survey.

- The name of the survey "Campus Climate" caused confusion as some people assumed it was about climate change and sustainability or the annual sexual harassment survey. Although the survey content was clearly stated in introductory and invitation emails, changing the name of the survey so that it clearly states "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" for the next implementation will eliminate any confusion.
- Students had other competing surveys to fill out such as the sexual harassment survey. Better timing to ensure this survey is the only active survey will help with survey fatigue.
- Students distrusted the administration to do anything with the data so they were reluctant to invest their time in filling out the survey. By being transparent about the results and taking action on the findings, Northeastern can build trust with the student community, paving the way for more participation during the next administration.
- Some universities have found success by starting an awareness campaign as early as six months prior to the survey.
- Northeastern should consider a change in the incentive policy for this particular survey, since it is critical to measuring the progress of our DEI efforts and goals.

Next Steps

The work on this survey is an important piece of the overall strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Northeastern. It provides us with baseline data to show us the way forward and measure our improvement in future years.

One of the key takeaways is that there is a good foundation to build on. Northeastern has a generally favorable climate for diversity and inclusion. We discovered that the respondents to this survey were more diverse than at other participating institutions and have consistently higher levels of satisfaction on most measure of university climate. The climate for diversity and inclusion receives a high evaluation overall, and a large majority of respondents believe Northeastern is an inclusive community that accepts and encourages those of different cultures and languages. They also strongly believe that diversity improves campus interactions and outcomes. A majority of respondents personally feel a sense of belonging or community.

A majority of respondents, including people of color, have never experienced discrimination or harassment or insensitive or disparaging remarks.

Northeastern respondents are generally comfortable interacting with people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Despite the solid foundation, there are opportunities to improve experiences for all groups of students, faculty, and staff. Some groups feel less satisfied with the climate at Northeastern for diversity, equity, and inclusion, including less comfort with sharing their views, feeling less like they belong, hearing more insensitive/disparaging remarks, and experiencing more discrimination or harassment.

Although planning and implementation of action items rests with leaders throughout the university, we learned from the survey that focusing on building a greater sense of belonging for marginalized groups should be strongly considered. Potential actions include:

- Hosting Community Conversations within the colleges and administrative units to share the survey findings throughout the university and open feedback channels
- Developing and deploying a feedback mechanism that informs diversity, equity and inclusion action planning and future survey administration
- Conducting a student survey at the university-wide level to focus on issues around belonging
- Developing an action plan to address most salient issues, including:
 - Targeted outreach to marginalized groups (listening sessions, etc.)
 - Customized training programs for students, faculty, and staff to address inclusivity and empathy
 - Increased usage of existing university assets (cultural centers, affinity groups, curriculum, experiential learning opportunities) and building up those assets
 - Improved communication to the Northeastern community on how to report incidents of discrimination or harassment

This survey was an important data point and a step toward improvement. It provides a baseline against which to measure our progress and take the pulse of the Northeastern community. Building upon what we learned in this survey will take time and effort from all our community members as we seek to make Northeastern a welcoming and inclusive place for all.