

Executive Summary: Initial Analyses of the Spring 2021 Campus Climate Survey

Overview and Context

Climate surveys are commonly used tools in higher education to assess how University culture, particularly in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), is experienced by faculty, staff, and students (Harper, 2008; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 1998; Peters & Benitez, Jr., 2017). This data can be used to inform interventions to improve the retention of faculty, staff, and students and support institutions of higher education in achieving their DEI goals (Williams, 2013). In previous years, MSU Denver has relied on Campus Climate surveys created by external organizations (e.g., ModernThink began in 2010), but this past academic year (2020-21) the Campus Climate Cultivation Committee of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Council (DEIC) examined questions from a variety of surveys, including ModernThink for reliability over time, and adapted previous questions to create our own tool to assess MSU Denver's climate using [Insight Viewfinder](#) to implement this survey. In this Executive Summary we present preliminary findings from initial analyses of these data. As detailed in this summary, additional data analyses and dissemination of results are forthcoming.

Methods

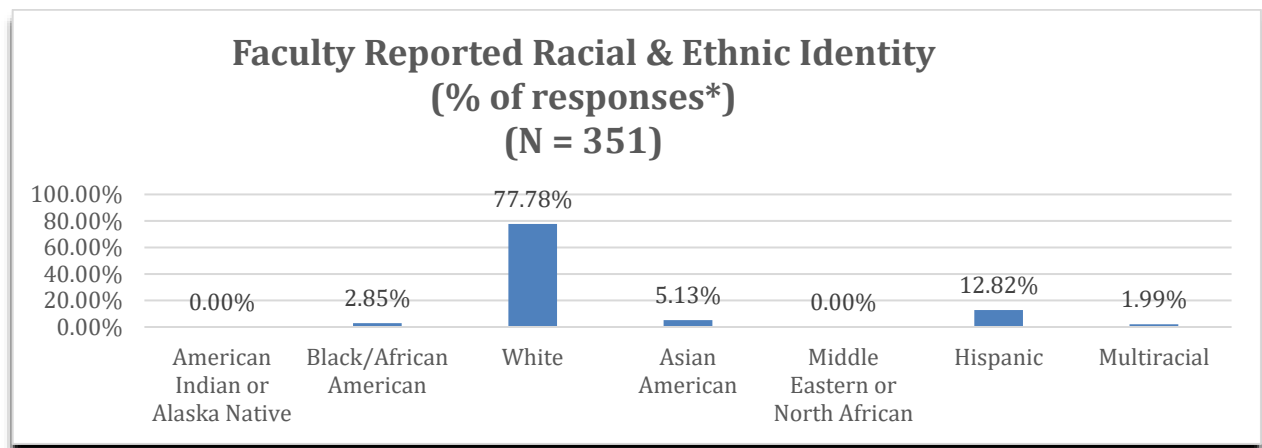
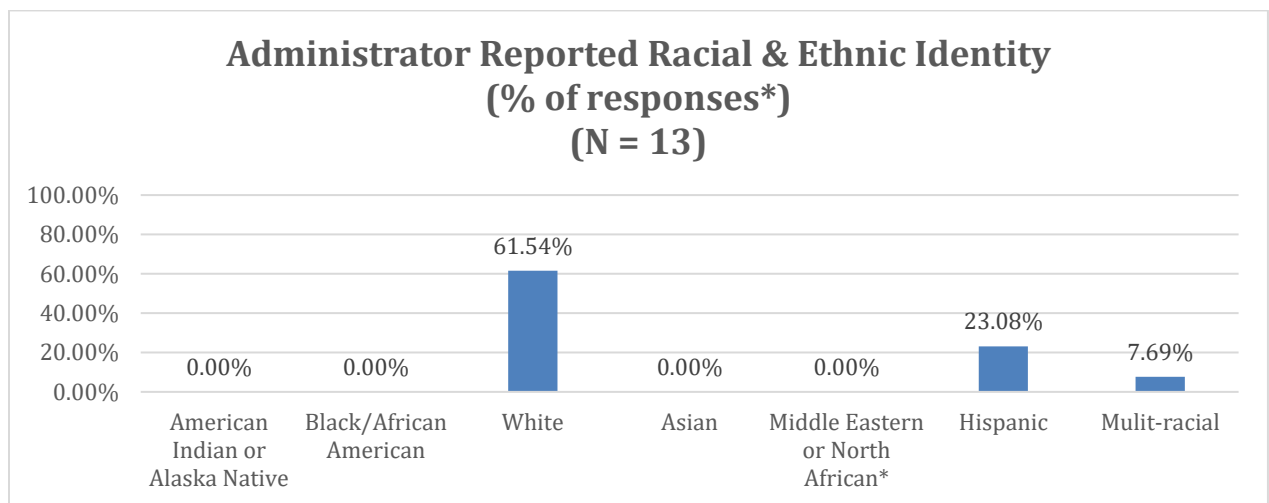
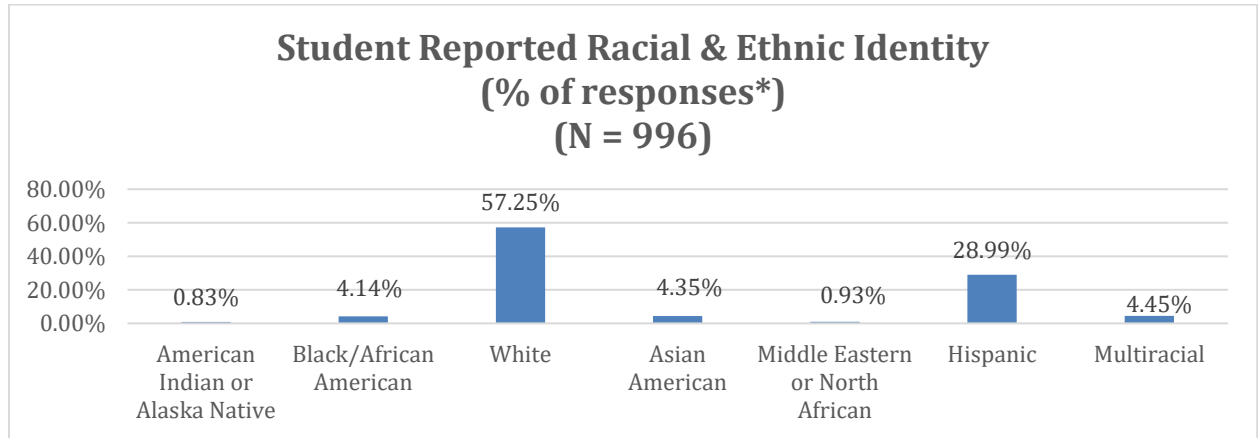
Links to online surveys were sent out to 19,956 MSU Denver stakeholders in the spring of 2021 utilizing professional/student email addresses to four different constituent groups at MSU Denver. Reminders were sent on multiple occasions. *Administrators* consisted of the President, Vice Presidents, the Director of Athletics, and Academic Deans and Associate Deans. *Faculty* included of all categories of faculty such as full-time tenured and tenure track, full-time non-tenure track, and affiliate faculty. *Staff* included all professional and classified staff members. *Students* consisted of all students who were enrolled in at least one credit hour during the spring 2021 semester. Of note, students were also asked to complete the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) during approximately the same time period as this survey, which may have influenced the response rate, and campus wide staff and faculty were asked to complete an employee engagement survey one week prior to this survey going out. Lastly, 13 administrators (61.9% response rate), 412 faculty (25.5% response rate), 387 staff (43.7% response rate) and 1,012 students (5.8% response rate) participated in the survey.

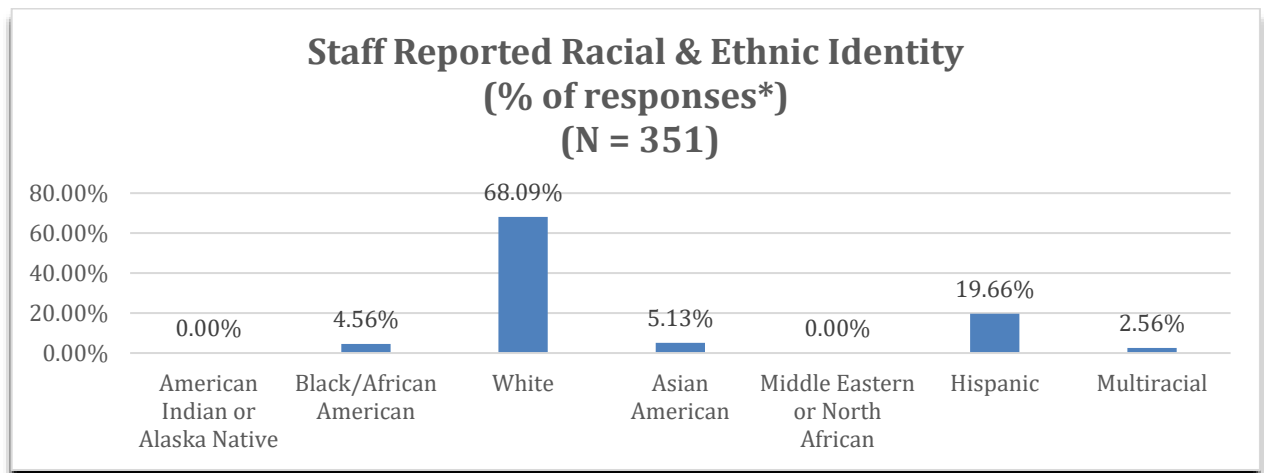
Initial Key Findings

Initial analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicates several key findings regarding how members of different identity groups experience belonging and inclusivity at MSU Denver. Central to these early analyses are the experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, LGBTQAI+ people, people with disabilities, and veterans. We provided limited analyses of administrators in the interest of preserving confidentiality with a small sample size. Please note, initial key findings presented here represent a limited

exploration of these topics using just a few survey items and descriptive statistical analyses. We look forward to presenting more robust analyses in the future.

Summaries of Racial and Ethnic Identities for Four Constituent Groups





* Participants that selected more than one race category were recategorized as multiracial and participants that identified as Hispanic origin were recategorized as Hispanic regardless of racial selection to align with university practice.

Additional demographics:

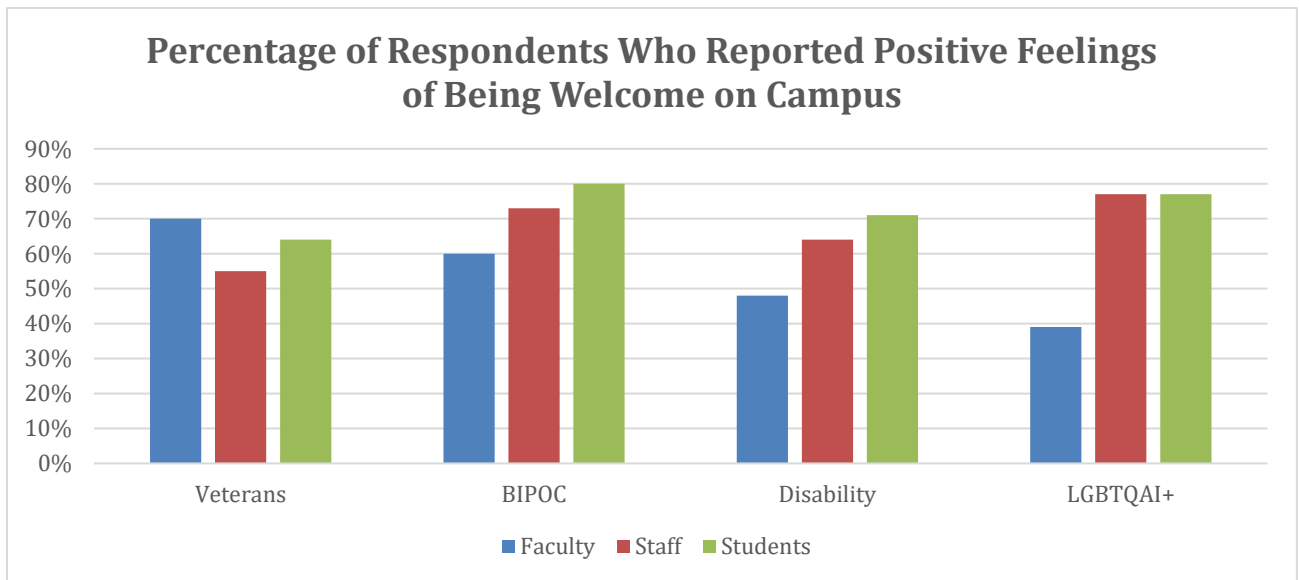
- Eighteen percent of students, 11% of staff, 12% of faculty and 8% of administrators identified as having a disability. Twenty four percent of students, 14% of staff, 14% of faculty and 8% of administrators identified as members of the LGBTQAI+ community. Six percent of students, 3% of staff, 6% of faculty and 8% of administrators identified as veterans.
- Cisgender men represent 48% of the administrators, 33% of faculty, 24% of staff and 23% of students. Cisgender women represent 48% of administration, 48% of faculty, 62% of staff, and 60% of students. A notable number of students, in particular, identified as non-binary (4%), queer (3%), gender fluid (1%), or indicated that their gender identities were not listed (8%).

Findings about belonging and workplace satisfaction:

- **Faculty:** When asked about a sense of belonging on campus based on their identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status), Asian and White faculty indicated the highest rates of positive belonging on campus (61% and 58% respectively), while Hispanic and Black faculty indicated the lowest levels of belonging (40% and 44% respectively). Cisgender women and men responded similarly positively to this question (56% and 53% respectively).
- **Staff:** When asked about a sense of belonging on campus based on their identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status), White staff indicated the highest rates of positive belonging on campus (58%), followed by Black staff (56%), Asian staff members (53%) and lastly, Hispanic staff members (49%). Cisgender men were more likely to indicate a sense of belonging (64% as compared to 53% for cisgender women).
- **Students:** When asked about a sense of belonging on campus based on their identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status), 51% of Black

students, 49% of Hispanic students, 46% of Asian students, and 43% of White students provided favorable responses. Only 40% of cisgender men (as compared to 49% positive responses from cisgender women) responded positively to this question. Students were generally positive about their feelings of belonging on campus, with 80% of BIPOC students, 77% of LGBTQAI+ students, 71% of students with disabilities and 64% of veteran students responding favorably to this question.

- Campus members were also asked to rate their feelings of being welcomed on campus (e.g., positive, neutral, and negative). Their responses are reported below by affinity group:



Findings about leadership and resources to support DEI efforts

- Faculty and staff were asked if they agreed with statements, such as “our Board of Trustees is supportive of campus diversity efforts.” About half of faculty and staff strongly agreed or agreed with this statement (49% and 54% respectively), many had neutral responses (40% and 41%, respectively), and some disagreed with this statement (11% and 5%, respectively).
- Faculty and staff were also asked if they agreed with the statement that “Senior leadership shows a visible commitment to campus diversity.” Seventy-six percent of faculty and 79% of staff responded favorably to this statement, while 10% of faculty and 8% of staff disagreed with this statement. When asked if there was “adequate financial support to drive campus diversity efforts” 43% of faculty and 41% of staff disagreed, while 23% of faculty and staff agreed with this statement.

Findings about job satisfaction

- Additional analyses regarding faculty and staff satisfaction with their jobs, findings indicate that faculty and staff value and appreciate the diversity of our student body and employee representation, the University’s commitment to diversity, working close to home, the surrounding community, and the potential for a healthy work-life

balance. When asked to agree/disagree with the statement “I love my job” 76% of faculty and 64% of staff agreed with this statement.

- In contrast, when asked about reasons they may have considered leaving the institution, inadequate salary and benefits was the number one response from both staff and faculty, followed by “workload too heavy” and “work not appreciated” for faculty, and “no career advancement opportunities” and “workload too heavy” for staff. When asked about their agreement with the statement “I want to quit my job” 14% of faculty and 13% of staff agreed with this statement.
- When asked specifically about workload and pay equity, 55% of faculty and 56% of staff responded that their workload is “too heavy,” and 78% of faculty and 68% of staff agreed that they are “underpaid for the work that I do.” Furthermore, when asked about pay disparities, 66% of faculty and 70% of staff responded in agreement that “there are pay disparities here.”

Important to note is that this survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which undoubtedly shaped these results (in particular) in significant ways. Additionally, two campus wide surveys were administered in close proximity to this survey, which likely impacted response rates. An employ engagement survey was distributed campus wide immediately prior to the campus climate survey, and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was distributed campus wide while the campus climate survey was still open.

Next steps

Further executive summaries addressing the climate survey results for students, staff, and faculty will be forthcoming later this Spring 2022 semester. We will also be conducting more comprehensive analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Participants shared (often extensive) written comments on their surveys that contained rich details about their experiences at MSU Denver. This qualitative data shines some light on questions such as *why* a participant may have had an unwelcoming or problematic experience, as well as *how* MSU Denver can continue to improve our climate. The Campus Climate Survey Committee will inform subsequent analyses of these data, although multiple stakeholders in the MSU Denver community will be consulted to ensure that the analyses are relevant to our stakeholders (e.g., Senior Leadership Team, Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, Student Affairs, Council of Chairs and Directors). During this academic year, we also plan to assess the strengths and limitations of this Campus Climate survey, with an eye toward revising it for the next iteration of the Campus Climate Survey for the 2022-23 academic year.

References

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