MSU Denver
2021 Campus Climate Survey Findings: Students

Presented by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion
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The purpose of this report is to provide information to the campus community about MSU Denver student experiences with the campus climate for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This report expands on initial analyses of the 2021 MSU Denver Campus Climate Survey that were presented in the Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary released in Spring 2022. The current report summarizes key quantitative findings, as well as results from the qualitative data regarding student experience, with a focus on the implications of these data for informing policy and practice interventions.

This report contains specialized analysis of four student populations: Students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other related identities (LGBTQ+) students, students with disabilities, and student veterans. Limitations with the survey limit comparisons [e.g., White (or heterosexual or able bodied) students were not provided with similar questions to enable comparisons between groups of students based on race, sexual orientation, ability status or veteran status]. It is also worth noting that this report utilizes data from a relatively small group of students (Additional information about numbers of respondents are included in each section of this report.) These data are not intended to be interpreted as representative of a majority of student experiences, but rather these data provide helpful context to generate understanding about *how* we can improve the campus climate regarding EDI.

The impact of taking courses online and navigating a global pandemic were prevalent for all student groups examined here. Since the impact of COVID on student experiences is not the primary focus of these analyses and this topic has more limited relevance for implications for improving campus climate, they are included in the data presentation only when the student comment also pertains to their experiences with campus climate or strategies to improve campus climate. For example, one student shared that accessing student services during the pandemic while many faculty and staff were working remotely was a barrier to accessing services. This example was included in this analysis as it relates to student experience of campus services and support, but also highlights the unique challenges of assessing campus climate during the COVID pandemic. An additional common theme among these data were student comments about their experiences with relevant student services on campus. Given that this survey was not designed to evaluate student services, findings that pertain to a specific student services unit were provided directly to relevant leadership to inform relevant policies and practices.

The subsequent sections of this report represent focused analyses of four student populations: Students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other related identities (LGBTQ+) students, students with disabilities and student veterans. Implications are discussed in depth within each section as well as briefly summarized at the beginning of this document.

Key Implications

As the full report illustrates, there are a number of implications stemming from this data.

The following pages briefly summarize key implications that emerge from the qualitative data

from the 2021 Campus Climate Survey.

Recommendations from BIPOC Students
- Increase diversity among faculty and staff
- Create community building opportunities for students of color within Departments, especially those with small numbers of minoritized students (e.g., students of color)
- Provide opportunities for the visibility of, and mentorship with, faculty and staff of color (alongside with intentional workload reductions to support this additional labor)
- Continue to create policies and public statements that affirm and support students of color
- Continue to provide opportunities for students to address racist interactions with faculty, staff, or other students
- Continue to provide trainings and accountability for faculty and staff in regard to racism and microaggressions
- Explore options to better advertise relevant student support services
- Language is important when conducting student surveys (e.g., Campus Climate Survey)

Recommendations from Students with Disabilities
- Ensure that services for students with disabilities meet their needs
- Address physical barriers in the campus environment, such as snow on pathways or desk sizes in classrooms
- Ensure that students know how they can address compliance issues with faculty
- Ensure that all faculty have regular trainings about ADA compliance and other strategies for creating inclusive learning experiences for students with disabilities
- Provide more services on evenings and weekends; Using more technologies to engage with students (e.g., texting)
- Continue to work to dismantle stigmas associated with disabilities to ensure that students (and faculty and staff) can disclose their identities on campus, should they wish

Recommendations from LGBTQ+ Students
- Continue to work to dismantle stigmas associated with disabilities to ensure that students (and faculty and staff) can disclose their identities on campus, should they wish
- Continue to provide community building opportunities for LGBTQ+ students, including more specialized intersectional options (e.g., LGBTQ+ students of color)
- Explore options to better advertise relevant student support services
- Continue to provide opportunities for students to address issues of heterosexism and transphobia, as well as hetero- and cis-normativity as they emerge in interactions with faculty, staff, or other students
- Continue to provide trainings and accountability for faculty and staff in regard to heterosexism and transphobia, as well as hetero- and cis-normativity

- Ensure that faculty have trainings or relevant resources about how to address student names and pronouns in classroom interactions

Recommendations from Veteran Students
- Continue to work to dismantle stigmas associated with military service and veteran status to ensure that students (and faculty and staff) can disclose their identities on campus, should they wish
- Continue to provide trainings and accountability for faculty and staff in regard to understand and supporting military veteran students
- Explore options to better advertise relevant student support services
- Continue to provide community building options for veteran students, including more specialized intersectional opportunities (e.g., LGBTQ+ veterans, veterans of color)

BIPOC Students

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

Students were directly asked if they identified as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC). The term BIPOC was defined on the survey as (Black, indigenous, or a person of color [someone who is not white or of European parentage]). Out of 959 students who responded to the question, 260 identified as BIPOC. Approximately 80% of BIPOC students agreed they felt welcome on campus.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

After utilizing quantitative measures to understand the experiences of BIPOC students, student respondents were then provided with an open-ended text box with the prompt "please provide any other comments on the topics in this section." Responses indicate strengths in supports for BIPOC students, as well as areas for additional growth in supporting BIPOC students. Of the 260 students who affirmed that they identify as BIPOC, 18 students provided qualitative data in response to this prompt. As examined further in this section, it was surprising that so few students responded with qualitative responses in this section, and telling that many responses provided feedback about how wording of the question was confusing. As such, in this section only, we also reviewed qualitative data from an open-ended question "Please provide any other comments on the topics in this section" that followed questions about, "How well does our institution promote racial/cultural interaction between different groups?" and "How important, in your opinion, is diversity and inclusion to the campus leadership?" While these additional 24 responses were not as narrowly focused on race, as with the other affinity group prompts, these data help to flesh out qualitative feedback from BIPOC students. Themes are presented in order of prominence in the data. Data are edited minimally for grammar and comprehension.

Prominent themes include, *belonging and language*, the *broader university climate*, *experiences of racism and microaggressions*, *strengths and opportunities for improvement*, and *problems with diversity*.

Belonging and Language

As alluded to previously, the responses to this question prompt highlighted some confusion that was generated by the way that this question (and this section of questions more broadly) was worded. Several students used this text box to indicate confusion about the way that this question was asked. In particular, students wondered if their race "counted" as BIPOC, or described their race (perhaps to help the researchers understand how they fit with the BIPOC category).

- Am I BIPOC if I am Aztec? But according to my 23 and me I am like 4% African. This is so confusing.

- What do you mean of European parentage? So if my mother is white, I am not considered a BIPOC? Please make this statement on the previous section more clear. It made me uncomfortable and a lot of mixed heritage folx that already do not feel a particular race "enough" by others standards will find this question hard to grapple with. We are "other-ed" by both sides of our heritage.

- I am Native American Indigenous but my father is white of European descent. My mother is Native American and Mexican.

- I am half Native American and half white. I was adopted by my parents when I was an infant and do not have strong cultural ties to my Native American heritage. So although I am Native American, most time in applications I just mark white. As such, I do not have much to comment on in this section.

Given the relatively low number of comments in this section, and the number of comments that pertained to confusions about the question, we hypothesize that this question was not phrased well, providing us with helpful feedback about how to revise this survey for the next iteration. To supplement data for this section about BIPOC student experiences, additional data from 24 BIPOC students are integrated into the remainder of this data analysis section.

Broader University Climate

In addition to highlighting personal or structural injustices, students also highlighted their experiences with the campus more broadly as it relates to diversity. Several students shared that they had a positive experience with campus diversity.

- I fell in love with MSU's culture of inclusivity when I first started working/studying on campus. That feeling hasn't been tarnished by anyone and I don't suspect it will be.

- I've always treated all people equally and I don't know of any issues at MSU. I really like MSU.

- The campus is diverse.

- I really enjoy the diversity on campus.

- All values are respected and diversity is represented on campus.

- All I know is that MSU is diverse and I don't see and haven't experienced discrimination, I would say that the campus is pretty welcoming.

- I have not had any issues when it comes to being an African American women.

While these comments range in positivity, from "not having issues" to falling "in love with MSU's culture of inclusivity", they all highlight the important role that campus diversity and our commitments to cultivating welcoming campus climates for diverse students play in making BIPOC students feel welcomed on campus.

Experiences of Racism and Microaggressions

Two students shared specific, personal examples of ways that they have experienced racism and microaggressions on campus. One student shared, "I feel like my advisor does not treat me the same as my classmates." Another shared, "I have experienced racism in the classroom." While these examples do not provide much detail about these experiences that might help us build tailored interventions, they do emphasize the ways that BIPOC students experience racism in their interactions on campus.

While these first examples are more personal, students also shared more general experiences of ways that the campus climate did not feel inclusive based on race and ethnicity. For instance, one student shared:

> Thanksgiving is celebrated on this campus... that holiday is historically only celebrated by white and black families not ones of native decent. The holiday is akin to the N word for Native Americans yet we still parade around and pretend it isn't a day of sorrow. The history of this celebration and the name of thanksgiving goes back decades with it only ever being celebrated after a militia group committed genocide on a tribe of natives. Celebration of thanksgiving is racism - end of story.

Another student echoed this sentiment, in sharing, "The school needs to do something about how it celebrates indigenous genocide in Nov. every year." Similarly, another student shared that while their experiences up to this point were generally positive (as they alluded to the quantitative questions that preceded this open-ended question), they were uncertain about how campus climate may change. "As an Asian American, this is tricky, as of 2019, these were all true, but I am unsure about what campus will be like post covid-19." As this student shares, national, widespread media coverage of the ways that Asian and Asian Americans were targeted

for violence and harassment amidst the COVID-19 pandemic may shape Asian American student experiences on campus for many years to come.

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Two students shared examples of University practices that positively shaped their experience at MSU Denver. One student noted that they appreciated the University's commitments to supporting DACA students was noticed and appreciated: "Thank you so much for all the support you provide for your DACA students." Another student shared that they value the disciplinary specific opportunities to engage with diverse colleagues, for instance in collaborating with others in their Department in working diversify the workforce in their area of practice. These positive examples, or strengths, represent opportunities to continue to build on in creating inclusive experiences for students of color.

BIPOC students also shared examples of ways the University could improve. Most commonly this sentiment emerged as students commented on the desire for greater racial/ethnic diversity in representation from faculty and staff. For instance, students shared:

- As a [social science] major it's hard to feel accepted and valued in a field that is predominantly white.

- I never feel comfortable in my classes because I'm always either the only Black person in the class or the only person of color in the class. It's hard to connect with other people because I can't identify with them.

- I think Metro is great and the campus itself is great as well. However, I don't see enough diversity in staff and I don't see it in classrooms either, and maybe it's because of the [specific] department being for white people. Sometimes in those classes, I feel unseen and unheard.

- Campus and faculty needs more diversity, more black educators, more black students, more education on the emphasis of black oppression. Courses on black oppression, white power/privilege, and how to deconstruct/dismantle white power and privilege needs to be MANDATORY!

Taken together, these comments illustrate how important it is for students to work with faculty and staff who represent their identities. As these students share, the consequence of this lack of diverse representation is that students may feel "unseen and unheard" and have a difficult time identifying with those teaching their courses. This data also highlights the need to examine student experience with more nuance, for instance in examining Black (as well as Asian and Indigenous) student experiences.

Some students commented with specific suggestions. One student shared that, "I believe that while there are supports on campus they are not well advertised or advocated for and many of them do not interact with one another" indicating that better communication and coordination across units could help students connect to resources that are pertinent to them. Another student shared that while the University itself "is welcoming...there are still a decent amount of non-welcoming students" that have shaped their experiences on campus. Another student shared that, "Our university is quick to tokenize its BIPOC students. But then when BIPOC students ask for something for safety, like defunding the campus police, they quickly turn away from the conversation. (They as in leadership, faculty, staff)." Taken together, these data indicate opportunities to collaborate in program offerings, intervene proactively with students on these topics, and to demonstrate greater commitment and transparency about how we prioritize student feedback in decision making processes.

Problems with Diversity

Two students also highlighted concerns about problematic or undue focus on issues of identity and diversity. For instance one student offered a disproportionately long comment (as compared to other students' qualitative comments) about their observations that diversity trainings are generally ineffective.

> All the diversity training programs I've been through have been unproductive. It's better to foster healthy avenues of communication, forums, classes, etc then being lectured on diversity in a single training. Forcing people to do anything usually has more negative outcomes than positive. As we are in a critical time in US history, I think there are more effective approaches to discuss diversity than in a forced training. I'd rather see those hours that would have been used for a training on perhaps a campus fair that highlights different cultures, religion, etc. that encourages people to come together, discuss, and break down barriers.

A second student shares a similar type of critique of their experience of EDI efforts on the MSU Denver campus.

> Diversity and inclusion is important, however it is way over done and is annoying as hell to see LGBTQXYZ signs all over the place. It is also annoying to see democratic socialism desks on campus where we live in A FREE COUNTRY, that condemns socialism. Inclusion is great, until it effects me negatively to the point where I cannot even be relatively happy on campus. These people do not understand what they are doing and it is frustrating beyond belief that I do not go to a campus that shows what real life is like. In a corporation, inclusion and diversity may be key points of emphasis, however it will not be shoving nonsense down your throat you want to get defensive. Educate the

people about they are doing and why, before allowing it to just to be a part of "Diversity

& Inclusion" plans.

While these comments came only from two students in this broader group of 259 BIPOC

identified students, it is notable that these two student comments were considerably longer and

more involved than other students in this section. This perhaps also illustrates the strength with

which these two students held their concerns about how EDI efforts are implemented. It is

perhaps also notable the dismissive approach the second student adopts in reflecting on the

inclusion of GLBTQ+ students, which they seek to make more ridiculous by adding X, Y, and Z

to, perhaps also indicating that this student does not understand the complexities of

discrimination that members of the LGBTQ+ community face, as well as potentially diversity of

political thought.

Implications

Qualitative data from BIPOC identified students indicate opportunities for potential

practice and policy implications. One critical implication is the importance of language in

surveying students of color about their experiences, and the importance of providing clear

definitions of terminology and acronyms used in surveys such as the Campus Climate Survey. In

general, students appreciated the diverse campus environment and appreciated the University's

commitment to issues of inclusion and diversity. Data also illustrate that racial microaggressions

persist in individual interactions as well as structurally (e.g., celebrating Thanksgiving or

Indigenous People's Day). Taking a proactive approach to how the University would like to

address/celebrate these and other relevant holidays may help students feel belonging as members

of the MSU Denver community. Similarly, transparent policies statements about our

commitments to support diverse student groups (e.g., DACA students) may also promote belonging.

Data indicate that Department specific diversity-oriented student groups may promote student belonging as students connect with faculty, staff and students who are most closely connected to issues they care about. Yet, this may be challenging in Departments or Units that lack diverse faculty or staff representation. Increasing faculty and staff diversity emerged as an important issue for BIPOC students. Students also shared suggestions about coordinating efforts across offices around campus and the importance of ensuring accountability in interactions with other students.

Two students also shared their perspectives that diversity trainings were ineffective or that diversity efforts are too far reaching. This tension fits with our broader national discourse on diversity efforts more broadly. While this feedback came from a very small proportion of students, it may nonetheless indicate that students would potentially benefit from understanding issues of diversity and inclusion from an intersectional lens (that shows how issues of oppression are interconnected). As this student shares, students may also benefit from understanding about *why* these issues are important and *how* these issues are relevant to future workplace and "real world" experiences.

Students with Disabilities

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

Students were also asked if they identified as having a disability. Disability was defined as a diagnosed or known medical condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities; inability to fully access the campus experience due to academic or campus accessibility barriers. Out of 984 students who responded to the question, 172 (17.5%) identified as having a disability. Approximately 71% of students with disabilities agreed they felt welcome on campus.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

After utilizing quantitative measures to understand the experiences of students with disabilities, student respondents were then provided with an open-ended text box with the prompt "please provide any other comments on the topics in this section." Responses indicate strengths in supports for students with disabilities, as well as areas for additional growth in supporting students with disabilities. Thirty-one students (of the 172 total students who identified as having a disability) provided qualitative data in response to this prompt. Themes are presented in order of prominence in the data. Some more robust responses are included in more than one theme, as relevant. Data are edited minimally for grammar and comprehension. Prominent themes include experiences with student services, experiences with faculty, broader university climate, and visibility and disclosure.

Experiences with Student Services

Students shared positive examples of how they have been supported with services for their disabilities, as well as constructive feedback about how services could be extended and improved. The volume of this feedback indicates how central support services are for students

with disabilities. Since the purpose of this survey was not to evaluate or provide suggestions to specific student services units, feedback about positive and negative interactions have been provided directly to the relevant offices on campus.

Experiences with Faculty

Several students shared that faculty have served as a positive support in accommodating their disabilities in classes. One respondent, when describing their overall workload and how this is exacerbated by mental health issues, said that "the teachers are good at understanding that [workload] a lot of the time." Similarly another shared that, "my professors and classmates have been incredibly helpful" and another shared that when they were experiencing a challenging semester, "all my teachers checked up on me." Unfortunately this experience was not universal, and other students described challenges that they experienced with faculty in regard to their disabilities or accommodations.

- I had a professor my freshman year refuse to use my accommodations.
- I have had a few problems with professors not allowing my accommodations or shaming me for using them in front of the class.
- Some faculty have been somewhat hostile with providing accommodations.

Taken together, these data indicate that faculty play important roles in supporting students with disabilities; additional training may support faculty in being even more effective in working with students with disabilities.

Broader University Climate

In addition, students also commented on their experiences with the University more broadly. One student shared a more broad response about their experience at MSU Denver: "I feel really supported and I have been given opportunities at MSU to succeed." Several

participants described the physical space on campus as challenging to navigate for students with disabilities. One student shared that, "I had to drop a semester due to a broken leg. I was able to get onto campus but it was extremely difficult to navigate around due to being in a wheelchair. I physically couldn't make it across campus in the snow in a wheelchair." Another shared, "It is very difficult to get to other levels of buildings, especially in the West Classroom building, and it takes so much more time to get to class. This should definitely be fixed." In addition to navigating the physical space of the campus, students also commented on the spaces in classroom, specifically chairs and desks. As one student shared, "For a campus marketed towards non-traditional students the desks in the classrooms can be comically small." Another student shared that, "Being overweight isn't my official disability but as far as physical accessibility on campus, some classrooms are furnished with small desk-chairs for students and they are highly uncomfortable, embarrassing to maneuver, tear at clothes forced too close to metal pieces under the desks, and an undue strain on mental health like anxiety and depression."

Students also indicated that the timing for events on campus could also be difficult for them. One shared that, "Need more night stuff for the working student." Similarly, another student said that, "Events are almost always held when I have work or internship." One student noted a positive University experience as they experienced a challenging semester and noted that they were supported in receiving a financial reimbursement for the semester, which they experienced as supportive.

Several students who described themselves as online students felt as though these questions did not apply to them, given how they were taking their courses. For instance, one said, "I've only been an online student so far, most of this doesn't apply." Similarly, another student

shared that, "I am in all Online courses so most of the questions do not apply. It is not for lack of wanting to answer, they just simply do not apply to my online schooling."

Visibility and Disclosure

A number of students shared that they do not generally share with others about their disability (or disabilities). As one student shared, "I keep quiet about my disabilities." Another indicated that their quantitative responses were all, "not applicable" because, "I have not told them [campus staff]" presumably about their disability. Yet another student shared that, "Unless I share my identity, no one would know my learning deficits. I have told very few individuals about this so I am not sure my answers surrounding acceptance are an accurate reflection of others experiences who are unable to hide or choose their disclosure." While most did not share about their motivations for disclosing (or not disclosing) about their disabilities, one respondent indicated that, "I don't talk about it because it's not important I don't want sympathy. So most on campus don't know about my disability." Another student said that, "Other students are not aware of my disability and therefore don't treat me differently, but I know some would if they knew" indicating that students with disabilities may not anticipate a welcoming response to disclosing to members of the campus community about their disability.

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Implications

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Qualitative data from students indicate opportunities for potential practice implications to inform support and inclusion for students with disabilities. Student comments indicate that while many interactions with faculty are positive, there are also additional needs for training amongst faculty about how to support students with disabilities. Students also shared more broad suggestions for improving campus accessibility, for instance by having chairs and desks in classrooms that are geared toward adult and larger bodies, providing timely/comprehensive snow

removal across campus, and offering greater diversity in the timing of course offerings. Notably, students shared concerns about sharing about their disability status with others across campus. This indicates an opportunity to create and advertise inclusive spaces for students with disabilities and work to provide more affirming responses when University community members' decide to disclose about their disabilities.

LGBTQ+ Students

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

Nine hundred and sixty six students responded to the question "Do you identify within the LGBTQIA+ community?". Of these respondents, approximately 24% selected "yes", 6% "not sure", 3% "prefer not to say, and 67% did not identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Students who selected any response other than "no" were asked follow-up questions regarding their experiences on campus. Approximately 76% stated agreed they could openly express their gender identity/expression on campus, while 77% agreed they could openly express their sexual identity on campus.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

After utilizing quantitative measures to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ students, student respondents were then provided with an open-ended text box with the prompt "please provide any other comments on the topics in this section." Responses indicate strengths in supports for LGBTQ+ students, as well as areas for additional growth in supporting LGBTQ+ students. Of the 227 students who "identify within the LGBTQ+ community", 29 students provided qualitative data in response to this prompt. Themes are presented in order of prominence in the data. Some more robust responses are included in more than one theme, as relevant. Data are edited minimally for grammar and comprehension. Prominent themes include, experiences with student services, the broader university climate, and experiences with faculty, staff and other students.

Experiences with student services

A number of students (n = 7) describing feeling disconnected from LGBTQ+ services and communities on campus. As one student shared, "I have not noticed a large presence of

[LGBT services] on campus." Another student shared that, "COVID has made accessing services like the LGBTQ+ support offices difficult," indicating the need for services that can be easily accessed virtually. Other students described campus services as affirming, indicating that they, "have really liked the resources available through the school." Although this participant did not specify which services they might be referring to, these comments nonetheless point to the support that this student has experienced on campus vis-à-vis their LGBTQ+ identity.

Some other students shared feedback about their needs for services. Only one student shared that, "I really don't think that it's necessary for the school to provide these resources." In contrast, another student shared that, "There is not nearly enough exposure of these resources on our campus compared to the population of students that would actually use them." This indicates that from this student's perspective there is a need for these services on campus, but that the services could be better advertised. Another student shared that they thought that targeted services to "improve the campus environment for the LGBTQIA and POC communities on campus that really need supported" would be useful. Since the purpose of this survey was not to evaluate or provide suggestions to specific student services units, feedback about positive and negative interactions have been provided directly to the relevant offices on campus.

Broader University Climate

Four students volunteered that they "haven't really had any issues with gender or sexuality at Metro" or similarly, that they "haven't had any issues so far into my experience 'here'." Some students also shared that they generally feel safe on campus: "Being a cis woman of white ethnicity I rarely experience any issues with my [LGBTQ+] identity on campus." One student expanded on this by sharing that, "Neither my gender identity or sexual orientation have really come up in classes. Additionally, I have not taken any on-campus in-person classes, so I

have limited experience to answer these questions." This may indicate that the way students take courses is also likely to shape their experiences with the University.

Student comments about the visibility of their (LGBTQ+) identity, or their investments in disclosure also illuminated their feelings of belonging on campus. Some indicated their general comfort disclosing their identities to others on campus. "As one of the co-creators/board members of the [diversity group in my Department] I feel safe telling everyone that I am a gay hispanic [sic] male". As this student indicates, their involvement in a diversity-oriented student group may have helped to facilitate these feelings of engagement. More frequently though students made comments like:

- N/A because I refuse to speak about it in a public setting due to previous encounters.

- I rarely express sexual identity in public.

- I haven't spoken about my sexual identity within the classroom or with classmates, so these don't apply. I also am taking classes online.

- I feel no need to express myself as gay on campus because I am there to learn, not to express my sexuality, although if I felt the need to I'm sure the campus would be accepting.

Comments such as these indicate that some students may not feel comfortable sharing about their LGBTQ+ identities on campus, or that they may feel as though their identities are relatively irrelevant to their studies on campus.

Interactions with faculty and staff

Interactions with faculty also emerged as a prominent theme (n = 7) in these comments, as students indicated that faculty could be important sources of support, as well as problematic. For instance, one student shared that, "The staff and faculty have always expressed acceptance in

every setting I've ever been in." Similarly, another student shared that, "I don't feel unsafe on campus." After acknowledging the feeling of physical safety they experience on campus, this same student continued by stating: "there have been numerous instances of microaggressions about my gender (cis woman) or my sexuality from faculty. Mostly, it's been due to a focus on cis-het culture instead of acknowledging that there are many other ways that people life their lives. There has also been reinforcement of gender norms and stereotypes in classrooms from faculty." This student's comment eloquently indicates that some of the challenges LGBTQ+ students experiences may be microaggressions, while other infractions may be more related to the ways that cis- and hetero-normativity are woven into our individual and institutional practices (e.g., reinforcement of gender stereotypes). Other students shared similar comments, about concerning interactions with faculty. "I have had at least two run-ins with professors who have pushed back against identities like mine." While there is no additional detail about what exactly this meant for this student, taken together these comments indicate a need for additional understandings about how faculty may demonstrate affirming behaviors toward LGBTQ+ students.

Another topic of discussion within this theme (n = 4) are the ways that faculty (problematically) engage with student's pronouns. As one student shared, "Most of my professors do not ask for or explain pronouns in the first day of class/ introductions. Many staff members do not use my pronouns correctly, even after multiple requests. I often feel that it is my burden to state and explain my pronouns to the class." Similarly, another student shared, "Please revise online etiquette for asynchronous classes to include respecting pronouns. It means nothing if professors can't or won't discipline or at least call out/keep an eye out for misuse and abuse in discussions." Not only is having faculty not ask for, or appropriately use student pronouns a

problem, but so can interactions with peers. As one student shared, "There have been peers in classes who will just flat out ignore my pronouns, even though they are posted on canvas next to my name."

Implications

Student voices in the Campus Climate Survey provides several important potential implications for programming and practice on the MSU Denver campus. Students provided diverse perspectives on the need for additional sources of GLBTQ+ community building opportunities, indicating programmatic successes as well as opportunities to bolster community building through wider or more focused advertisement, or through programming that speaks to specific identity experiences (e.g., BIPOC queer students). Broad issues with hetero- or cis-normativity in classrooms negatively shaped student experiences, indicating an important area for additional training and support. More specifically, faculty's misuse of student pronouns, lack of consistency in pronoun use, and lack of enforcement of pronouns with other students presents an opportunity for improvement in in person and online course delivery. Hetero- and cis-normativity may also contribute to feelings of invisibility (or lack of interest in LGBTQ+ visibility) for LGBTQ+ students.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

Additionally, students were asked if they identified as a U.S. military veteran. Out of 987 students who responded to the question, 56 (5.7%) identified as a veteran. Almost 64% of student veterans agreed they felt welcome on campus.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

After utilizing quantitative measures to understand the experiences of students who are military veterans, student respondents were then provided with an open-ended text box with the prompt "please provide any other comments on the topics in this section." Responses indicate strengths in supports for student veterans, as well as areas for additional growth in supporting students who are veterans. Of the 56 students who affirmed that they are veterans, 18 students provided qualitative data in response to this prompt. Themes are presented in order of prominence in the data. Data are edited minimally for grammar and comprehension. Prominent themes include experiences with student services, visibility and disclosure, and experiences with faculty, staff, and other students.

Experiences with Student Services

Qualitative data from veteran students indicate that they have had both positive and challenging experiences with campus services; some students also indicated a lack of awareness about relevant services. One student suggested that they would benefit from using alternative technologies to make connections on campus (e.g., text or phone) and another suggested that veteran services could use additional space and staff to better support students. These suggestions have fruitful implications for intervention. Since the purpose of this survey was not

to evaluate or provide suggestions to specific student services units, feedback about positive and negative interactions have been provided directly to the relevant offices on campus.

Visibility and Disclosure

As with some of the other identities discussed here, visibility and identity disclosure was a topic brought up by five students. Generally, participants discussed not feeling interested in, or comfortable with sharing about their veteran status with others on campus.

- I never tell any anyone that I am a veteran, I just want to fit in.

- I don't make it known often I was in the army and don't use many resources.

- The subject of my veteran status hasn't really come up.

- I feel afraid to speak up about being the military due to all of the negative talk surrounding veterans.

The issue of folks anticipating negative responses from others was emphasized by another student who shared that, "For claiming to be inclusive, your students sure hate the military." This issue of responses from faculty, staff, and other students shaped how student veterans thought about issues of visibility and disclosure.

Experiences with faculty, staff, and students

Five students responded with comments about their experiences with faculty, staff and students. Their experiences are exemplified by the following quote from one participant: "It's a mixed bag like any other human interaction." While two students described their experiences as more neutral. "I'm rarely singled out as a vet and it rarely comes up in any conversations. In the past, when it has come up it's been a non-issue on campus." A second student shared, "Due to COVID-19 I have never set foot on campus, nor met any faculty or other students in person. My

interactions with them over distance meetings have never indicated knowledge of veteran status or had any impact on their treatment of me."

In contrast, two students (including one who was quoted in the previous section) indicated that they have had more negative experiences with students and faculty. For example, one student shared that:

> Students and professors are often hostile towards me as a veteran. It has been openly
> suggested in the classroom that all veterans struggle with violence and/or mental illness.
> It was implied by a department director in a meeting I attended that most/all veterans are
> racist and homophobic. I would say MSU is only veteran friendly as an outward
> appearance. The reality is very different.

Taken together these findings indicate that some veterans are encountering problematic stereotypes about veterans and veterans' experiences that shape their experiences on campus.

Implications

Qualitative data from veteran students indicate several potentially fruitful domains for intervention. The relative invisibility of veteran services, and disconnection from services, indicate an opportunity to promote visibility and awareness about relevant services. Students also suggest that there may be need for additional support staff, that technology may provide unique strategies for reaching out to students, and that attending to inclusion within veteran serving spaces may also improve student experiences.

The lack of interest in disclosing their veteran status emerged as a prominent theme, especially as it also highlighted the issues that can emerge with students or faculty when students do disclose their identities. Additional education regarding stereotypes about military service members or military experiences may help faculty, staff, and students respond with empathy and

understanding to meet veteran student needs and help create communities of belonging for

veteran students.

For additional questions about the results from the analyses of faculty data from the 2021

Campus Climate Survey, or feedback about the next iteration of this survey please reach out to:

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