

Student Perspectives on Climate in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences

A Report by the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Team

Submitted August 13, 2016

Introduction

This report represents our initial efforts at examining student perspectives on the climate of equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice within the College of Public Health and Human Sciences (CPHHS). As a college, we share in Oregon State University's aim to create "a climate of inclusion, collaboration, and care that appreciates and seeks diversity as a source of enrichment and strength, and is rooted in justice, civility, and respect." Understanding how students currently experience our College's climate is vital to moving toward this shared vision.

Findings included in this report derive from an analysis of the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey* administered at the request of Associate Dean Vicki Ebbeck of the Office of Student Success. Our charge was to develop and administer a student climate survey in order to:

- Describe student experiences surrounding inclusion,
- Quantify the extent to which the current climate of our College is inclusive and equitable from the perspective of students, and
- Suggest recommendations for positive change based on an analysis and interpretation of the survey findings.

We were asked to consider issues of diversity and inclusion from a broad perspective, where student experiences might vary as a function of culture/race/ethnicity, sexual identity, gender, size, disability, social class, geographic location, and international versus domestic status among other statuses and identities. *Climate* was conceptualized in keeping with OSU's definition as:

The type and quality of interactions among and between individuals and groups, the sense of community and belonging, and individual and group perceptions of institutional commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

This report is organized in three sections. We first describe our process in developing, administering and analyzing the student climate survey. We then present a series of headline findings that draw from both quantitative and qualitative results. Finally, we detail a set of recommendations for positive change.

Process

Survey planning and preparation

The CPHHS Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Enhancement (EID) Team developed, administered, and analyzed the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey*. EID Team members included:

- Jeff Bethel
- JoAnne Bunnage
- Jonathan Garcia
- Mario Magana
- Deborah John
- Cynthia Mojica
- David Rothwell
- Stephanie Grutzmacher
- Jangho Yoon
- Kate MacTavish (chair)
- Jamie Jaramillo (student)

Office of Student Success student peer leaders Jalen Ladd and Erin Green assisted in this effort.

The EID Team met with Associate Dean Ebbeck in February of 2016. During Winter Term the EID Team met regularly to develop and refine survey plans. A draft survey was piloted tested in a CPHHS undergraduate research methods course taught by David Rothwell. Students in that course reviewed the survey and during focus group interviews provided feedback, namely on the wording of items and the content of the survey. EID Team members were invited to “test drive” the survey and similarly evaluate the wording and content as well as the functionality of the survey.

In its final form (see Appendix A), the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey* included questions designed to gather student perceptions of:

- The CPHHS climate generally,
- Specific experiences with bias in CPHHS,
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice within the CPHHS,
- Preparation for success in working in diverse settings, and
- Suggestions for positive change to improve our approaches to equity, inclusion, and diversity.

In a final section, participants were asked to provide demographic information identifying their various identities and statuses (race/ethnicity, gender, sexual, (dis)ability, student, and year entered OSU). The participants were not asked to provide their names or other identifying information. This information allowed us to understand how student perceptions and experiences varied across groups, while maintaining their confidentiality.

Survey administration

All undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a major in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, and enrolled at OSU Winter Term 2016, were eligible to participate in the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey*. Using Banner Data Warehouse, the names and contact information for 3,361 undergraduate and graduate students were identified to receive the Climate Survey. The Director of Accreditation and Assessment invited students to participate using Qualtrics Survey Software. Students received an email invitation sent to their Oregon State University ONID accounts on Tuesday, April 5, 2016. Non-respondents received reminder emails on April 12th, April 17th, and April 19th. The survey closed on Wednesday, April 20, 2016. All students who completed the Climate Survey received a thank you email on April 25th.

Several steps were taken to publicize the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey* and to maximize response rates including:

- Sending an email using “PHHS All” announcing the Survey and encouraging wide support,
- Emailing all CPHHS teaching faculty with information and a PowerPoint slide for showing in classes during Weeks 2 and 3 of the term,
- Identifying CPHHS classes with large enrollments (n=18), contacting professors, and visiting classes (n=8) by undergraduate peer leaders Jalen Ladd and Erin Green to rally support for the survey and encourage participation,

- Contacting CPHHS club leaders and the members of both the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Councils and asking for their support, and
- Posting announcement messages and the link to the Climate Survey on CPHHS social media sites and newsletters.

Additionally, all emails sent to students were personalized, and the first reminder message was signed by the respective program coordinators, individuals with names familiar to the students. Finally, as an incentive to participate, students who completed the Climate Survey could sign-up for a random drawing for a Fitbit Flex and other CPHHS items.

Analysis

Our analysis of the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey* drew on both quantitative and open-ended qualitative responses to survey questions. As an initial step, we selected items most relevant to our task of describing student experiences, quantifying the current inclusivity of the College and looking toward recommendations for positive change. Selected survey items fit five broad categories:

- Perceptions of climate
 - Whether personally treated with respect in courses and in advising settings,
 - Whether individuals are treated equitably regardless of gender, age, race/ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation, and
 - Whether in terms of diversity, the CPHHS is inclusive or exclusive.
- Experiences with bias
 - Whether students have witnessed particular kinds of bias (being ignored, silenced, discriminated against, etc.),
 - Whether students have personally experienced bias (again list), and
 - Whether biased treatment is based on particular statuses of identities.
- Perception of commitment
 - Degree to which individuals in the college are aware of EID issues,
 - Degree to which interested EID issues, and
 - Degree to which EID issues are central.
- Perceptions of preparation
 - Degree to which courses cover EID (courses), and
 - Degree to which feel prepared to work in diverse setting.
- Suggestions for positive change
 - Suggested actions (open ended), and
 - Top five actions (ranked).

Because we were interested in how the perceptions and experiences of students from specific identity groups and status varied from the general population within the CPHHS, we ran a bivariate analysis. Specific identities and statuses including race/ethnicity (minority, non-minority), student status (graduate or undergraduate), gender (male, female and other),

(dis)ability (yes, no) and E-campus (yes, no) formed one variable while our selected items formed the other. Chi Square and ANOVA were used to test for significance.¹

The EID Team shared initial findings at our Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Symposium during spring term 2016. Those findings are more thoroughly explored in this report.

Findings

A total of 1,009 student started the survey and 827 of the 3,361 students invited completed the survey for a response rate of 24.6 percent². Respondents demographics are summarized in Table 1.1. In general, respondents matched the general profile of the CPHHS student population. The majority were female (77.4%) and white (66.1%). Representation from students identifying as belonging to racial/ethnic minority populations totaled 28.3%, a rate similar to CPHHS enrollment. The breakdown within specific minority groups somewhat paralleled that of CPHHS. The majority of respondents were undergraduates (80.5%) who enrolled at OSU between 2012 and 2014. Within that undergraduate grouping there were 72 respondents how identified as E-campus students (8.7%). Graduate student responses are overrepresented in the survey results in comparison to their proportional enrollment in the CPHHS.

Table 1.1 Comparative demographics

Identity/status group	CPHHS Climate Survey Sample (N=827)	CPHHS Fall Enrollment ¹ (N=3200)
Gender		
Female/ woman	77.4%	73%
Male/ man	18.5%	27%
Other/ trans/questioning/ nonconforming	6.1%	N/A
Racial/ Ethnic group		
American Indian or Native	1.2%	.8%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	11.4%	7.5%
Black/ African American	.85%	1.7%
Latino/a or Hispanic/ Chicano	8.3%	11.5%
Multi-race/ Ethnicity	6.7%	7.4%
White/ Caucasian	66.1%	67%
Total US Minority	28.3%	29%
Student status		
Graduate	13.7%	7.0%
Undergraduate	80.5%	92.8%
E-campus	8.7%	N/A

¹ Data drawn from OSU Enrollment Summary Fall 2015.

¹ Statistical significance was at the p= .05 level.

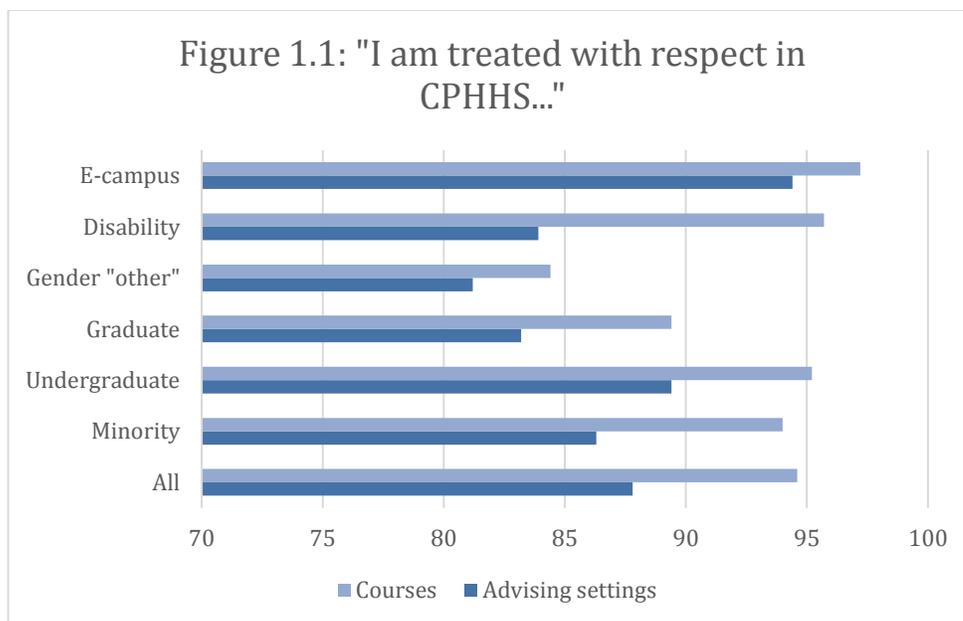
² A survey was considered completed if less than three of the substantive questions were left blank. For example, a respondent who skipped one question would be considered to have completed the survey. A respondent who skipped three or more questions was excluded from this analysis.

Our survey demographics captured additional identities not formally tracked or reported by OSU. About 88% identified as heterosexual and 84% identified as not having a (dis)ability.

The following section presents select findings from our analysis of the *2016 CPHHS Climate Survey*. Appendix B displays full descriptive results for each survey item. In general, survey results indicated that **students have a positive view of the CPHHS climate** and have **generally positive experiences**. These **perceptions and experiences, however, varied among student populations** with minority status and graduate students generally reporting less positive views. Below we explore this pattern of responses across the five main domains of the survey: climate, experiences, commitment, preparation, and suggestions for positive change.

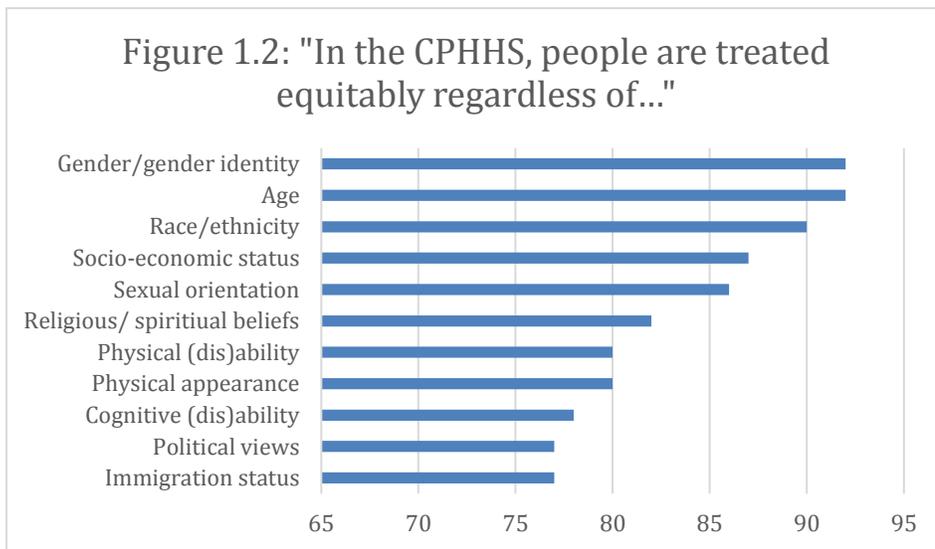
1. Climate: Perceptions of respect, equity and climate are generally positive, but vary by status and identity groups

Respect. A majority of student respondents indicated feeling as if they are personally treated with **respect** in CPHHS **courses** (94.5%) and **advising settings** (87.8%), two settings in which most student engage. Perceptions differed by identity groups (See figure 1.1). Graduate students as compared to undergraduates and those identifying as gender “other” (LGBTQ) as compared to male/female had statistically meaningful differences in their perceptions. Student who identified as E-campus students had decidedly more positive views with 97.2 percent feeling respected in courses and 94.4 percent in advising settings.



Equitable Treatment. The majority of respondents reported that within the CPHHS people are **treated equitably regardless of gender/gender identity** (92%), **age** (91.9%), **race/ethnicity** (90.2%), **socio-economic status** (86.5%), and **sexual orientation** (86.2%). Perceptions were somewhat less positive around equitable treatment regardless of **religious/ spiritual beliefs**

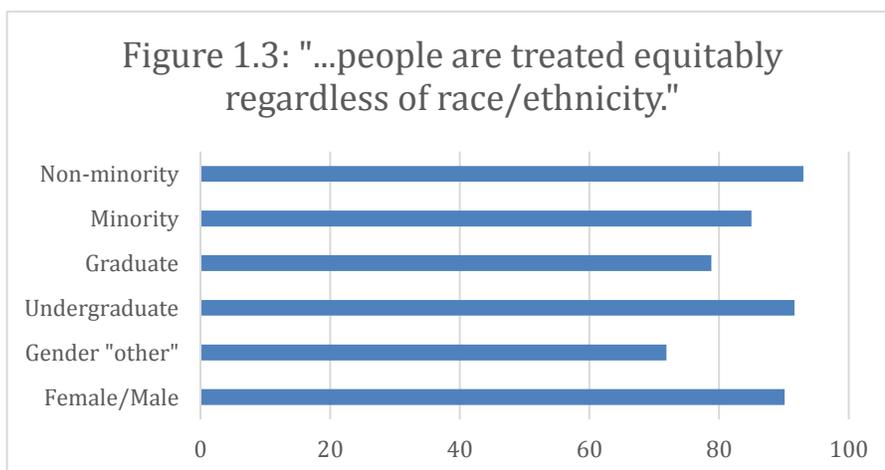
(82%), **physical (dis)ability** (80%), **physical appearance including size** (80%), **cognitive/emotional (dis)ability** (78%), **political views** (77%), and **immigration status** (77%).



While somewhat less positive, most students belonging to identity and status groups agree with this positive assessment of **equitable treatment around race/ethnicity**.

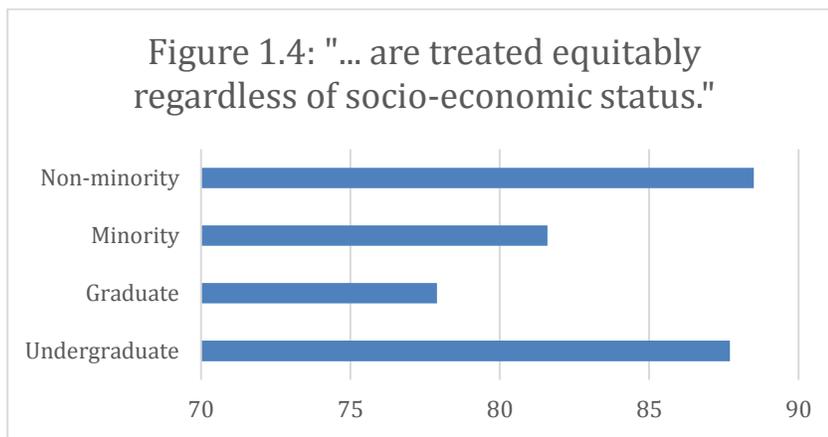
- Among minority students, the percentage of who agreed that individuals receive equitable treatment regardless of race/ethnicity was 85% as compared to 93% among non-minority students.
- A higher percentage of undergraduates (91.6) as compared to graduate students (78.8) agreed that individuals in CPHHS are treated equitably regardless of race/ethnicity.
- Proportionally fewer students identifying as "other" gender (71.9%) versus male (90.9%) or female (90.9%) agreed to equitable treatment regardless of race/ethnicity.

All three within group differences are statistically meaningful.



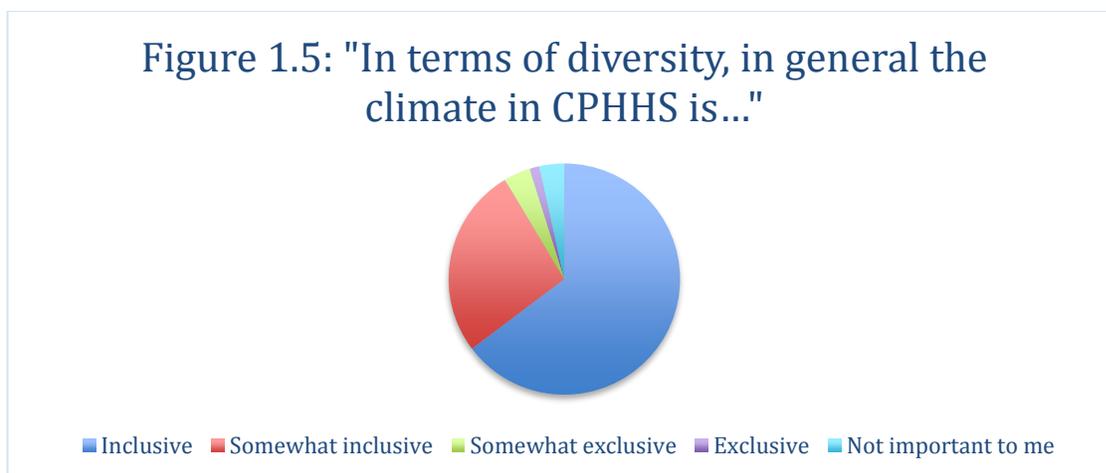
Similar patterns of difference apply to perceptions of **equitable treatment regardless of socioeconomic status** (See Figure 1.4). Results indicated that:

- A lower percentage of minority versus non-minority students agreed that CPHHS is equitable regardless of socioeconomic status (81.6% as compared to 88.5%).
- The difference in agreement between undergraduates and graduates was at about 10 percentage points (87.7% as compared to 77.9%).



Overall, graduate compared to undergraduate students reported significantly lower level of equitable treatment across identity and status categories (gender, age, race/ethnicity, SES and sexual orientation).

Climate. The majority of students indicated that the **general climate** within CPHHS is “inclusive” (64.7%) or “somewhat inclusive” (26.7%). Fewer than 2% of respondents indicated the CPHHS climate as “exclusionary”.



Yet cross tabulations once again show differences between the perceptions of identity and status groups.

- A lower percentage of minority students rated the general climate as “inclusive” (57.3) compared to non-minority students (69.1).
- A lower percentage of graduate students rated the general climate as “inclusive” (50.4) compared to undergraduates (67.2).
- A lower percentage of “other” gender (40.6) as compared to male (64.7) and female (66.1) rated the general climate as “inclusive”.

Again, all differences are statistically meaningful. Perhaps most eye opening, however, were the heightened proportions of graduate students identifying the College as “somewhat exclusionary”.

- Among graduate students, close to one in ten students (9.8%) selected the “somewhat exclusionary” category. Another 4.4% of graduate students saw the college as “exclusionary,” a percentage well above that among undergraduate respondents (.75%).

E-campus students as well seemed to have a less positive view of the College climate. E-campus students rated the climate as “inclusive” in rates similar to on campus students (65.2% versus 64.6%) yet E-campus students were twice as likely to rate the climate as “somewhat exclusionary” (n=5; 6.9% versus n=26; 3.4%) and “exclusionary” (n=2; 2.8% versus n=1; 1.2%) compared to on campus students.

2. Experiences: Substantial numbers of students reported experiences with bias

Additional questions asked students whether they had witnessed or personally experienced biased treatment such as being ignored, silenced, isolated/excluded, discriminated against, harassed/ bullied or some other form of bias treatment.

Witnessing bias. A substantial proportion of students (180 of the 827 or 21.8%) indicated witnessing biased treatment toward others. Among the 216 responses provided by these 180 students, witnessing others being ignored (63.3%) and excluded or isolated (46.7%) were most common.

Minority students, graduate students and students identifying as having a disability reported witnessing acts of bias at rates significantly higher than students in general and their comparison groups.

- More than one-in-four minority students (25.6%) and students with a disability (27.9%) reported witnessing bias.

- About two-in-five graduate students (39.8%) reported witnessing bias.

Far fewer but still a substantial proportion of E-campus students (16.7%), reported witnessing bias.

Personally experiencing bias. Fewer students (114 or 13.8%) indicated personal experiences of bias. Of the students who provided the 114 responses to this question, being ignored (53.5%), excluded or isolated (37.7%), discriminated against (25.4%), and silenced (24.5%) were the most frequently selected forms of bias experienced. Personal experiences of bias were largely perceived as based on race/ethnicity (n=29; 25.4%), age (n=26; 22.8%), gender (n=25; 21.9%), or “Other” (n=28; 24.5%).

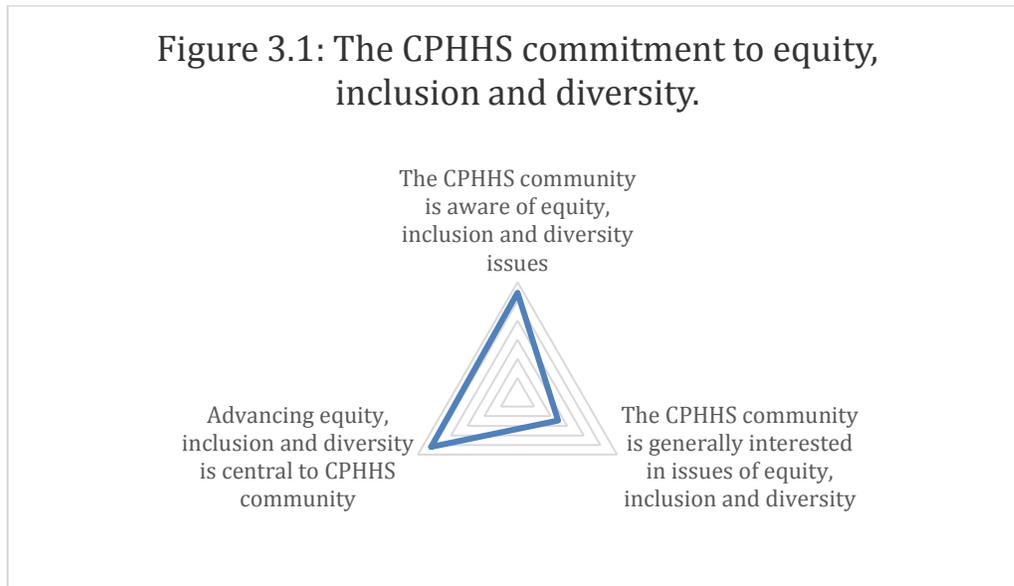
Once again, specific populations of students reported personally experiencing bias at rates significantly higher than their comparators.

- More than one-in-six minority students (17.1%) reported personally experiencing bias.
- Close to one-in-three graduate students (30.1%) reported personally experiencing bias as compared to 12.0% of undergraduates.
- More than one-in-four students (25.4%) who identify as having a disability reported personally experiencing bias.

3. Commitment: Students recognize commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity in CPHHS, but perceptions vary

A series of questions asked students to rate their level of agreement to specific statement about the CPHHS commitment to EID using a sliding scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overall there was a high level of agreement reported that the CPHHS community is **aware** of equity, inclusion and diversity issues (mean = 3.86); generally **interested** in issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity (mean 3.28) and that advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity is **central** to the CPHHS community (mean 3.85).

Figure 3.1: The CPHHS commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity.



Again, there was variation in perceptions among specific populations of students. Students who identified as minority, graduate students, and those of “other” gender rated the CPHHS commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity in ways that significantly varied from their comparators. Meaningful differences in ratings centered on awareness, rather than interest in or centrality of advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity.

- Minority students, graduate students, gender “other” students and students identifying as having a disability all ranked **awareness** of equity, inclusion and diversity issues in the CPHHS lower than did their comparators and students in general.
- Only students identifying as gender “other” ranked the **centrality** of advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity in ways significantly lower (3.4) than their gender counterparts (3.7 for males and 3.9 for females).

4. Preparation: Students generally feel well prepared around issues of equity, inclusion and diversity, but again those perceptions vary.

Coursework preparation. A survey question asked students how adequately CPHHS courses address issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity. From our full sample, a substantial proportion (52.6%) indicated that equity, inclusion, and diversity issues are adequately addressed in all courses. An additionally large percentage of students (43.5%) indicated that these issues are adequately addressed in some courses. A minority (3.8%) indicated that these issues are not adequately addressed in any courses.

Following the pattern of responses to other questions, there were meaningful differences across and within groups.

- A lower percentage of minority students reported that courses adequately address these issues in all courses (45.0% for minorities versus 55.6% for non-minorities).
- A much lower percentage of graduate students reported that all CPHHS courses adequately address issues of equity, inclusion and diversity (29.2% of graduates compared to 56.5% of undergraduates).

Respondents were also asked to identify areas in which they would like to see more EID coverage in courses. The most commonly reported topics were:

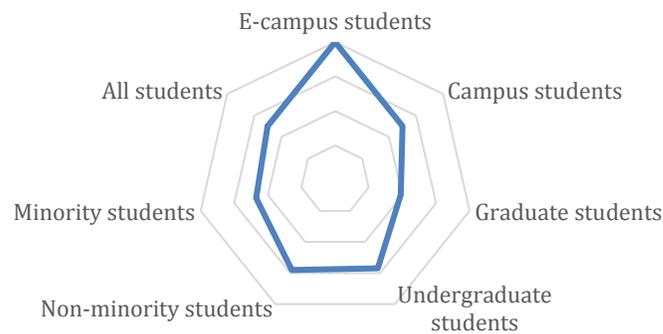
- Cognitive or emotional disability (n=201; 24.3%),
- Race/ethnicity (n=181; 21.9%),
- Physical appearance or size (n=175; 21.2%),
- Physical disability (n=162; 19.6%),
- Immigration status (n=163; 19.7%),
- Religion/spiritual beliefs (n=157; 18.9%),
- Gender/ gender identity (n=148; 17.9%),
- Political views (n=138; 16.7%) and
- Socioeconomic status (n=149; 18%).

Preparation for work. We additionally asked students to rate on a sliding scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) their agreement with the statement, “When I graduate from the CPHHS I will feel prepared to work with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs from my own.” The mean rating of 4.14 indicated that most students agree with this statement.

Again, students who identify as minority students, graduate students or E-campus students reported significantly different ratings than their comparators.

- Minority students reported lower levels of agreement (4.07) compared to non-minority students (4.18).
- Graduate students reported lower levels of agreement (3.99) compared to undergraduates (4.17).
- E-campus students reported high levels of agreement (4.4) compare to campus students (4.1).

Figure 4.1: “When I graduate from the CPHHS I will feel prepared to work with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs from my own”



Student Suggestions for Improvement

A final question asked student to rank the top five ways that the CPHHS could improve the climate for equity, inclusion, and diversity. All of the options garnered a fair amount of positive response. The highest percentages of respondents recommended the following:

- Coursework emphasizing equity, including, diversity and social justice (n=369; 44.6%).
- Employing teaching methods that are inclusive of diverse learners (n=369; 44.6%).
- Encouraging student engagement in research around issues of equity, inclusion diversity and social justice (n=347; 42%).
- Recruiting and retaining faculty from diverse backgrounds (n=262; 31.7%)
- Expanding study abroad opportunities n=328; 39.7%).

We asked students, in an open-ended question, for specific suggestions that would improve equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice in the CPHHS. A total of 136 responses to this question included content. Five common themes emerged across 86 of those responses across these responses including:

- Integration of equity, inclusion and diversity principles in the current curriculum and discussion of EID in the classroom. (n=34; 39.5%)

“As these issues weave through our society, they should be weaved into course material organically. A public health and HDFS course may go into detail on many of these aspects, but just as in real life, they don't arise in an isolated fashion; these

issues should be at least touched on and weaved into our general awareness in any course. It could be a component of every course's competencies, just as writing, reading, public speaking are. I'm sure instructors would benefit from additional training that makes them more aware AND more comfortable and competent to talk about these issues."

"Have professors/instructors engage in fuller conversations regarding different opinions in the class to help reconcile or challenge those beliefs with respectful but insightful discourse, or realize their own bias that may be present from their own experience."

- Efforts to raise general campus awareness of equity, inclusion and diversity issues. (n=15; 17.4%)

"Finding a more active way to create awareness, rather than addressing the situation".

- Creation of specific events and programs emphasizing equity, inclusion and diversity. (n=15; 17.4%)

"Perhaps come up with more community events in which not only all members can be included but students as well, it would give more hands on experience for students and from which they learn in classrooms."

- Professional development for faculty around equity, inclusion and diversity. (n=12; 13.9%)

"Train ALL faculty on these issues. Faculty should also be required to meet each term to talk about these issues and how they are doing. Faculty should ask disadvantaged students how they are being treated and how they are adjusting to living in a town that is not diverse, rather than waiting for one of them to speak up."

- Addressing exclusion or discrimination based on political affiliation. (n=10; 11.6%)

"When approaching class topics regarding politics all political sides should be explored."

In a final open-ended survey question, we asked students: *"Is there anything you would like to add either to amplify your responses above or to address a topic that you feel was not covered?"* There were a total of 146 responses to this question. Of these, 52 had actual content and the remaining 94 had responses that did not entail suggestions (i.e. responses such as "no, N/A, the College doesn't need improvements"). There were no common trends or themes recognized across 18 of the responses. Five common themes were recognized in 34 of the 52 responses that actually contained suggestions including:

- Encouraging Diversity (n=10; 29.4%)

“By making OSU more accessible and supportive of students from all backgrounds and income levels, we can open up the student community to many diverse points of view. The more we encourage and support diversity on our campus, the more open and respectful our students will be to many different world views.”

- Inadequate Staffing and Staff Training (n=8; 23.5%)

“CPHHS should be checking in on staff members making sure that they are treating all students, regardless of size or gender, respectfully. There have been instances where I have witnessed a professor make multiple female students cry in class or after class by calling them out for being overweight in front of an 80-person lecture.”

- Expanded Study Abroad (n=6; 17.6%)

“I believe that expanding study abroad opportunities would be a great thing for students to experience because not only are they learning different cultures, but they're learning more of what is inside the cultures and what people in other countries do differently than in the United States.”

- Better EID Programs and Events (n=5; 14.7%)

“While there are a number of different organization dedicated to specific cultures there are not efforts to bring all cultures together and include students of all color in related events.”

- Inadequate Advising (n=5; 14.7%)

“Advisors need to be looked at more on how they treat students.”

Conclusion and Recommendations for Positive Action

This initial attempt to examine student perspectives on the College climate related to equity, inclusion and diversity provides important direction for change. Overall, students indicate that their experiences in our College have been positive. Yet those experiences, as our finding show, vary by identity and status groups. These differences in perception by identity and status groups might emerge from a heightened awareness or sensitivity to issues of equity, inclusion and diversity among specific populations. However, that minority students, graduate students and students who identify as having a disability or as gender “other” see the college climate in a somewhat less positive light tells us we have room for improvement. Below we provide a set of recommendations, informed by the survey results, that could help move us forward toward our shared aim of a more just and inclusive college.

Recommended Actions for Change:

- **Focus group interviews with graduate students and minority students**, in particular. Greater insights from these students could illuminate what helps/is working to support students and how we could leverage those opportunities to reach more students of all backgrounds. The focus groups might also result in a “base” of students to call upon to further conversations/activities to improve the climate within the CPHHS. The preliminary plan is to conduct focus groups during Winter term 2017 with the assistance of graduate students in a CPHHS qualitative research methods course.
- **Greater integration of equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice content into courses.** As every program within the College focuses on their curricula and new CEPH accreditation standards, this is an opportune time to evaluate learning objectives and competencies. A prior review indicated that outside of International Health, programs across the CPHHS lack attention to issues of equity, inclusion and diversity in their program competencies. Developing competencies might serve as a first step toward weaving themes of equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice through coursework experiences. Such top-down approach would compliment the more bottom-up work currently underway adding more content on difference power and discrimination and principles of equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice are being integrated into H100.

Faculty training through the Difference, Power and Discrimination (DPD) Program also seem pertinent to building our capacity to address the concerns our students voice and the suggestions they offer. A brief accounting of faculty who have completed this training indicated retirements have impacted the proportion of DPD trained faculty across our College. We suggest that program establish goals for the proportion of DPD trained faculty needed to effectively deliver the kinds of learning opportunities in courses that students who responded to the survey indicate are needed.

- **Recruitment and retention of more diverse students, staff, and faculty.** We have strong programs that reach many K-12 students. A more coordinated, College-wide focus on how best to serve students in pre-college, pathway programs, is needed.

We recommend that the CPHHS foster student involvement in high impact learning activities, especially for those groups who have historically not been involved in the past. Actively promoting diverse students for membership and leadership in student clubs, the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Council membership, and the Peer Advisor program would represent a good start. Seeking to have membership in proportion to the general CPHHS student population seems a worthy goal.

Continued and coordinated efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff are also called for in our survey results. The four new hires through the Provost Hiring Initiative on Student Success through the Lens of Diversity provide a good start. We must, however, push to ensure that best practice in the recruitment and hiring of diverse workforce are employed in each hiring situation.

- **Expansion of study abroad and cultural opportunities.** Efforts are being made within the College to expand our efforts related to international programing. Besides “getting the word out,” funding opportunities need to be available so a greater number of students can

participate. Development of cultural exchange opportunities surrounding public health and human sciences should be developed “in our own back yards.”