

# Social Justice and Civic Engagement at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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## **Abstract**

This project was conducted in collaboration with the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and sought to increase faltering participation in social justice and civic engagement programs. A survey of 180 respondents was analyzed to get student opinions, and four interviews were conducted among prominent offices of diversity. We found that students want more programs involving discussion, and cultural awareness workshops. A key component to successful diversity programs at other campuses is student organizations participating in event planning and advertisement.

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# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

Students benefit from a diverse campus in a number of ways, from boosting students' cognitive development (Bowman, 2010), to increasing student satisfaction with their education (Villalpando, 2002). Diversity is an important aspect of a campus that seeks success for all students, but students must engage in these programs to capitalize on their full effects.

There are a number of reasons why students may not engage in diversity programs when provided, but they mainly derive from being uncomfortable or unsure on how to discuss race. Millennials are often afraid of coming across as insensitive or afraid of offending someone, especially when they feel external pressure not to show prejudice (Richeson & Trawalter, 2008). These individuals are what Richeson and Trawalter call high-EM individuals, meaning they have a high level of external motivation from their environment to not show prejudice, as opposed to a high level of internal motivation to not show prejudice.

## **Methods**

The overarching goal of our project was to increase student engagement in diversity issues, by reworking the OMA's offerings to students. We narrowed the wide range of possibilities down to four main objectives:

- **Gain an understanding of student opinions on diversity topics**

We conducted a campus survey focusing on issues pertaining to race and diversity. Our anonymous survey was designed to grasp how students, staff and faculty feel about the issues of diversity and engagement at WPI. The fourteen question survey netted 180 responses, which summarized the feelings and thoughts of a majority of the members in the WPI community.

- **Identify what other schools do differently and incorporate those strategies into the OMA**

In order to grasp how these institutions approach diversity, we interviewed Robert Jones, Associate Director of the Office of Multicultural Education at Holy Cross, Barbara Ruel, the Director of Diversity and Women in Engineering Programs at RPI, Sydne Marrow, the Director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs at Bridgewater State University and Paulette Granberry Russell, Senior Advisor to the President for Diversity, and Director of Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives at Michigan State University.

- **Update the OMA web presence and advertising methods**

We incorporated web presence updates for the OMA website and Facebook page into our recommendations. Encouraging the OMA to utilize social media is a way to boost awareness about their programming, and to increase engagement.

- **Provide a series of recommendations for the OMA moving forward**

Drawing from the student survey, attendance data, diversity literature and our interviews with other diversity program directors, we compiled a list of recommendations for the OMA moving forward. These recommendations are the culmination of our other three objectives and will be our main deliverable to our sponsor, the OMA.

## **Findings**

Our main sources of data for this project were our interviews and our survey. Through our survey, we gained a picture of what some WPI students think about social justice and civic engagement topics. Some key takeaways were:

- White respondents trailed the general population in interest of diversity topics
- Black respondents had the highest interest in discussing racial issues

- Asian and Hispanic/Latino respondents were also interested in discussing these issues at rates significantly higher than white students
- The mean value responses of the Junior year respondents were the highest out of any year surveyed, meaning that they were most comfortable and interested in discussing these topics
- The female population cares significantly more than the male population when it comes to topics regarding diversity

The open response questions were the most telling of opinions and thoughts. The main reasons why members of the community fail to engage are: societal barriers, time constraints, lack of interest, and simply not wanting to engage. Several respondents spoke about the barriers on campus of others being ignorant, differing opinions of those engaging, lack of a public space to do so, the difficulty of the topic at hand, and feeling attacked when sharing opinions or feelings. Many students do not want to offend others by sharing how they feel and many feel like it is a “touchy subject”.

## **Conclusions**

Our team has identified a number of areas in our OMA and in their approach to programming that need improvement. The first set of our conclusions were derived from our student survey. By looking at data from questions 6-9, we found that White students aren't as interested or comfortable talking about racial issues as their peers. A common request from our respondents was for more programs with discussion components, such as open environment forums, debates, and discussions following film screenings. Many respondents also proposed program ideas with specific topics relative to their interests including being a minority, privilege,

and current events regarding targeted racism. While students are making requests for open forums, they are still wary to participate in discussions in their current form.

Through our four interviews we also learned a great deal about successful programming tactics. Holy Cross' Office for Multicultural Education moved away from having several speaking events a year to a discussion and cultural awareness workshop style of programming. From our Michigan State interview, we learned that discomfort can be mitigated by implementing an e-learning course that educates students on how to have conversations about race. The BSU Center for Multicultural Affairs offers a large space to host events, and focuses on facilitating and organizing events in the space that students request. RPI's diversity programming was focused on workplace competency workshops, five of which are developed in conjunction with student affinity groups. RPI also explicitly states the benefits of their programs in their advertisements. From this data we were able to provide a set of recommendations for the OMA.

### **Recommendations**

1. Improve online advertising by revamping the Facebook and website presence, and improve on-campus advertisement to reach all segments of the student population.
2. Focus on collaboration with student affinity groups, coordinate event planning with representatives from these groups.
3. Implement the many-points-of-entry approach to diversity programming, attempt to get as many people in the door as possible, similar to Holy Cross.
4. Try more programs and events that are open forums. These forums need not be large, but their presence can help to break down negative stigma in discussing race.
5. Designate a person to maintain the history of the OMA, and continue updating for future years.
6. Collect feedback and continue collecting attendance data from programs.
7. Develop tactics to target and engage students that are not interested and that do not report high attendance programs and events.
8. Collaborate with Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division (IGSD) to develop a strategic plan to prepare sophomores to enter the international community and to continue expanding the mindset of juniors and seniors when they return from abroad.

9. Electronic learning course about race and diversity similar to Alcohol Edu and risk assessment training in Greek organizations.



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## **List of Symbols & Abbreviations**

WPI- Worcester Polytechnic Institute

IQP- Interactive Qualifying Project

OMA- Office of Multicultural Affairs

UCLA- University of California Los Angeles

RPI- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

EMSEP- Excellence in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Program

NACADA- The National Association of Academic Advisors

REACH- Reinventing Engineering and Creating New Horizons

NSF- National Science Foundation

STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering, Math

GEMS- Girls in Engineering, Math and Science

WIT- Wentworth Institute of Technology

ICEO- Institute Community and Equity Officer

UMMS- University of Massachusetts Medical School

MSU- Michigan State University

BSU- Bridgewater State University

## Introduction

Students benefit from a diverse campus in a number of ways, from boosting students' cognitive development (Bowman, 2010), to increasing student satisfaction with their education (Villalpando, 2002). Many of these benefits have been revealed through the research of Nicolas Bowman, the Director of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education at the University of Iowa. Bowman (2010) investigated the cognitive effects of having experiences involving diversity by performing a quantitative meta-analysis of 17 studies involving such diversity experiences. These studies were selected only if participants were undergraduate students, one independent variable was some form of diversity experience, the dependent variable was cognitive ability, and coefficients of the magnitude of the effects were provided. From his analyses, Bowman found that, "college diversity experiences are significantly and positively related to cognitive development" (p. 20). Bowman explains that this cognitive development is likely caused by the challenging of preconceived notions about various groups, and the subsequent phase of reassessment causing an increase in critical thinking skills (Bowman, 2010). Bowman plays off the idea of a phase model of transitions, a model whose phases Ruble (1994) characterized succinctly. Ruble's three phase model consists of construction of views, consolidation of views, and integration of views. While the specific mechanisms through which the phases shift is a topic of contention, as Ruble (1994) explains, researchers agree that "cognitive growth is promoted by the recognition of cognitive conflicts or contradictions, which lead to a state of uncertainty, instability, and possibly anxiety" (p.171). Furthermore, there are several other benefits to having a diverse education system and community.

Octavio Villalpando (2002) documented one example of these broad academic benefits by looking at student satisfaction with their educational experiences. Villalpando examined 15,600 student responses to a UCLA Research Institute initiative that surveyed students in 1985, and then again in 1989. Looking at levels of college satisfaction, Villalpando(2002) found that “Attending a racial/cultural awareness workshop, there are no differences between the groups. Every group is positively affected... In fact ... for African American and white students ... attending a racial/cultural awareness workshop might have an especially important effect on these groups of students” (p. 137). Villalpando also found a similar effect by simply having a conversation with a person of a different race.

Villalpando (2002) explains further:

“The other diversity measure, socializing with someone of a different race/ethnic group, had a positive effect on satisfaction with college for most groups. This effect was especially clear in the case of Asian American and white students. African Americans were the only group whose reported overall level of satisfaction with college was not positively associated with socializing with someone of a different race/ethnic group”(p.138).

Clearly diversity is an important aspect of a campus that seeks success for all students, but students must engage in these programs to capitalize on their full effects. Perfectly theoretically sound diversity programs could prove ineffectual if students do not participate. If students stay isolated they won't challenge their preconceived notions and will have comparatively underdeveloped critical thinking. The key to success therefore is to understand both the theory behind successful diversity programs, and also the reasons students may not participate in

diversity programs. As we shall see, the reasons for not wanting to participate are many, and can vary by population group.

There are a number of reasons why students may not engage in diversity programs when provided, but they mainly derive from being uncomfortable or unsure on how to discuss race. Race can be an uncomfortable topic for people of all ages, Millennials are no different. They often feel having such conversations is difficult, or risky (David Binder Research, 2014). Millennials are often afraid of coming across as insensitive or afraid of offending someone, especially when they feel external pressure not to show prejudice (Richeson & Trawalter, 2008). These individuals are what Richeson and Trawalter call high-EM individuals, meaning they have a high level of *external motivation* from their environment to not show prejudice, as opposed to a high level of *internal motivation* to not show prejudice. An example of a high-EM individual would be a person that personally sees nothing wrong with being prejudiced, but due to societal pressures conceals these thoughts. This person might hold the view that Black people shouldn't be trusted, but understanding the negative reaction of their peers this individual would hide that belief to avoid ridicule. Conversely a high-IM individual would personally find holding prejudices wrong, and thus would not need to be pressured by society to let go of prejudice. This individual would approach other individuals with an open mind, and need not be fearful of society's scorn should they reveal their thoughts. Richeson and Trawalter (2008) found that for such "high-EM" individuals, mere "exposure to Blacks automatically triggers negative affective reactions, including heightened anxiety"(p. 98). These high-EM individuals fear they will slip and reveal their prejudiced views, and be viewed negatively by their peers. Black faces can trigger a threat response from high-EM individuals, first over attention, and then attention avoidance if presented with those faces for longer durations (Richeson & Trawalter, 2008). It is



therefore understandable to see why these students would feel uncomfortable in such interracial situations, and actively seek to prevent their involvement therein. A lack of understanding in regards to the difficulties many races still face is the other major factor driving this dearth of engagement (David Binder Research, 2014). According to a David Binder Research poll (2014), 72% of millennials believe their generation is less racist than their parents, and 58% believe racism will diminish as millennials move into other leadership roles. Furthermore, 68% of millennials believed that focusing on race prevents the creation of a color blind society, which can be seen as another cause for this lack of engagement (David Binder Research, 2014). The major flaw with this line of thinking is that problems will only persist if we ignore them. Ignoring the disadvantages many minorities face today will not dispel those disadvantages, only through conscious action can the scales be evened. From the Suffragettes of the 1920s, to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, time and time again inequalities have not been dispelled by ignoring them, but have been dispelled by activists highlighting obscene unfairness experienced by women and minorities. Troublingly, the overt sexism and racism of yesterday have morphed into much more insidious forms. Implicit bias is still firmly rooted in our banking system, one example is bankruptcy filings between races. African Americans are steered towards the more expensive chapter 13 bankruptcy by bankruptcy attorneys, rather than chapter 7 bankruptcy, which can offer struggling debtors more relief (Braucher et. al. 2012). Implicit bias also harms women and minorities as they try to enter the workplace, exemplified in both job and tenure decisions in academia. Male candidates are more likely to be hired in academia than identically qualified female candidates, and their past experiences were more positively valued by hiring committees (Anders, Ritzke, and Steinpreis 1999). These biases taking root in academia, where

one would expect the concept of gender bias would be familiar, highlight how pervasive implicit bias is in our society. By ignoring this bias one ensures the status quo will continue.

At WPI, the Office of multicultural affairs is primarily responsible for running programs devoted to diversity and multiculturalism. More broadly, WPI's Office of Multicultural Affairs seeks to foster diversity, to promote multiculturalism awareness, to promote social justice, and to promote equity on campus through a variety of lectures, discussions, and workshops. The overarching problem currently facing the department of Office of Multicultural Affairs is a lack of student engagement in social issues and events pertaining to them. One example provided was a discussion in the wake of the Ferguson ruling, where the attendance was 18 faculty and two students, one of which was from a sponsoring organization. Additionally at the second "Can We Talk" discussion, of the 25 seats available, only 10 spots were filled, and only 3 spots were filled by students. From dialogues on recent high-profile topics, to other workshops, attendance in their programs has been lacking across the board. When events are created by student organizations, it is often only at the behest of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The goal of the IQP will be to identify the reasons students do not feel the need to participate in these events, and to rectify these issues to achieve engagement by altering the programming or methodology of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

## **Background**

### **Importance of Having Diversity Programs on Campus**

In order to understand the benefits of diversity programs, we must first understand the theoretical underpinnings of these programs. One influential piece of theory is Gordon Allport's "Contact Theory". Allport (1954) noted the prejudice reduction effects that occur through intergroup contact, and articulated a set of conditions to be met to maximize this prejudice reduction. Allport's (1954) conditions were, "a sense of equality in social status, should occur in ordinary purposeful pursuits, avoid artificiality, and if possible enjoy the sanction of the community in which they occur" (p.489). Allport based his findings on some early research of interracial community events and intercultural teaching practices. In the 60 years since Allport first detailed his contact theory however, there have been hundreds of studies investigating Contact Theory. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of this multitude of literature by focusing on studies that tested one or more of Allport's conditions. The results overwhelmingly supported Contact theory. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that in 94% of studies face-face contact led to a decrease in prejudice. Furthermore, Pettigrew and Tropp tested if Allport's conditions correlated with increased prejudice reduction compared to contact that didn't follow Allport's recommendations. Again Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found compelling evidence of the efficacy of Allport's program, explaining "the structured program indicator of Allport's conditions remains a significant predictor of contact-prejudice effects (.099,  $p < .03$ ) even when entered with these methodological moderators" (p.11). Clearly Allport's recommendations are effective in reducing prejudice, and are still relevant to diversity programs today.

Another reason diversity programs can be an integral part of the college experience revolves around the Symbolic Politics Theory. This theory was first created by three researchers in 1986, Sears, Huddy, and Shaffer. This theory attempts to explain the formation of political dispositions, including those involving ethnicity and race. The strength of these dispositions varies from “symbolic predispositions” to “non-attitudes” (Sidanius et al. 2008). This theory involves the topic of lifelong attitude acquisition, which it describes as a learning curve over time. This curve eventually reaches an asymptote as the attitude becomes fully developed. There are two subset models of Symbolic Politics Theory, that of the Impressionable Minds Theorem, and that of the Persistence Model. The Impressionable Minds Theorem asserts that at the onset of college, students have not fully formed their political and racial views. The college experience provides the impetus to crystallize these viewpoints to adult levels (Sidanius et al., 2008). A high degree of crystallization can be seen through the evening out of the strength of a held belief. These highly crystallized viewpoints tend to be both internally consistent and hard to change (Sidanius et al., 2008). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found a similar effect in youth, by conducting a comprehensive meta-analysis of all literature on Allport’s Contact Theory Hypothesis. While they were focused on testing the prejudice reduction effects from intergroup contact, they did find discrepancies in the size of the reduction based on age of participants. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) explain, “At the same time, effects for children are marginally stronger,  $QB(1)=3.59, p=.06$ , and effects for college students are significantly stronger,  $QB(1)=5.49, p=.05$ , than are those obtained for adults (mean  $r=-.197$ )” (p.14). In contrast, the Persistence model argues that some beliefs acquired early on in life will hold steadfast well into adulthood. Sidanius et al. (2008) found support for this model through a study of UCLA students from 1996-2001. Through surveys and phone interviews featuring 200 questions, Sidanius et al.

gained insightful data into the development of their students' ideas and opinions before college, and every year thereafter. Sidanius et al. (2008) found "There were only modest increases in the crystallization of political conservatism, which had already been close to typical adult levels at college entry. More telling advances occurred in symbolic racism, even though it too had initially approached typical adult levels" (p.134). Clearly adolescents and young adults still have not fully formed their adult belief system at the onset of college. While the degree of malleability is contended, diversity programs and intergroup interactions in college are a critical component to crystallizing more tolerant worldviews in these students.

### **Types of Diversity Programs**

Social psychology has crafted a number of different schools of thought when it comes to harmonizing intergroup relations. The first is that of *deategorization*, also known as *differentiation*. This school of thought focuses on identifying how members of a social group are still unique and distinct. By noting these differences, intra-group variability is perceived to be greater. This in turn allows members of such social groups to more quickly be judged as individuals rather than be judged based on their group membership (Ensari & Miller 2001). Ensari and Miller (2001) conducted a study examining ingroup, partial ingroup and outgroup partnerships in a 2x2 experimental setting. The experimenters altered how work teams were formed from these groups, switching between category memberships of participants, and personalized preferences of participants. Based on the participants evaluative judgments of other participants after the groups worked on various tasks,

Ensari and Miller (2001) found that:

“A key aspect of our obtained results is that despite the presence of this personalized interaction, intergroup differentiation and bias remained intact under conditions wherein the rule for assignment to teams made category distinctions salient. By contrast, bias was eradicated when, in this same context of personalized interaction the rule for assignment of persons to team drew attention to unique attributes” (p.209).

This is strong evidence that at least in some situations decategorization is effective at reducing intergroup bias, and that focusing on group differences can impede the goal of bias reduction. Examples programs from this school of thought include alphabetical seating assignments, or individual advising for new students as opposed to monolithic group advising. The second model is that of *recategorization*. Gaertner et al.(1993) dictate the underlying hypothesis of the model, that “If members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves as a single group rather than two completely separate groups, attitudes toward former outgroup members will become more positive through processes involving pro-ingroup bias”(p.6). This model takes advantage of our natural tendencies to categorize persons and objects into groups, and tries to prompt the merging of the two sub categories into one superordinate group through common tasks (Gaertner et al. 1993). By drawing members of the former outgroup into the new ingroup, these ingroup biases can be generalized to the entire outgroup population (Gaertner et al. 1993). Examples of programs from this model include the creation of a sports team, or a focus on school spirit to hone a supergroup identity.

Unlike the former programs, the next two types of programs don't seek to diminish group distinctions. *Intragroup Solidarity* focuses instead on forging strong ties within groups through the shared understanding of the hardships and inequalities that group faces. Tajfel (1974) developed the theory behind this program by examining consensually inferior and consensually

superior groups in the context of conditions that were either conducive to staying or conducive to leaving those social groups. *Intragroup Solidarity* was born by looking at conditions conducive to making individuals stay in the consensually inferior group. Such conditions arrive when it is difficult or impossible to change groups, and when individuals fear the social reprisal from leaving their group (Tajfel, 1974). One solution Tajfel (1974) provides for the social identity problem the inferior group faces is “To reinterpret the existing inferior characteristics of the group, so that they do not appear as inferior but acquire a positively valued distinctiveness from the superior group” (p.82). Through this solution, the inferior group creates a new distinctiveness from the superior group by reinterpreting old characteristics to now be separate but equal or superior to those of the superior group. The second solution that Tajfel (1974) proposes is “to create, through social action and/or diffusion of new ‘ideologies’ new group characteristics which have a positively valued distinctiveness from the superior group” (p.82). This solution is focused around forging new bonds within the group, and is often seen during the creation of new nations. Examples of programs from this model would be a group space where members can discuss experiences and manage the stresses of being a minority on campus. A fourth method that bridges the gap between the three is called *Intergroup dialogue*, where students explore group identities (including their own) of fellow students under a facilitating teacher (Gurin & Nagba, 2006). Examples of such a program could include “Difficult Dialogue” type discussions, or academic seminars examining various cultures.

### **Brief History of the Office of Multicultural Affairs**

The history of what is currently the Office of Multicultural Affairs stems from the creation of a comprehensive program titled “Diversity at WPI” in the 1990s. This program aimed to “identify, encourage, and support underrepresented minorities who have the talent and

potential to prepare for successful careers in engineering and science” (Library Archives 1991). The founding of the multicultural offices on campus was partially funded from a United Technologies Corp. grant of \$125,000, as well as a \$30,000 GTE Focus grant (Library Archives 1991).

The first program initiated on campus was the Frontiers program, which focused on “students learning current laboratory techniques and exploring unsolved problems across a wide spectrum of engineering, mathematics, science, and robotics disciplines”. In addition to the academic experience there were workshops developed to focus on humanities and arts in areas such as writing, art, music, and theatre (WPI Public Relations Staff n.d.). Following Frontiers, Strive was established in 1991 with seed money from United Technologies Corp. to identify motivated and academically talented African-American, Latino and Native American students (WPI Public Relations Staff 2001). The first spark of engaging the community in minority affairs began in 1991 with the appointment of Ronald Macon, the former director of community planning at the United Way of Central Massachusetts (Library Archives 1991). As special assistant to the provost for multicultural affairs, his mission was to support Goal 1 of the Institute’s Strategic Plan, which called for “enhancing the level of excellence in undergraduate education in part by increasing cultural and geographical diversity at WPI” (Library Archives 1991).

In light of this strategic plan goal, WPI appointed Blanche Pringle as Director of Minority Affairs and Outreach Programs at WPI (WPI Public Relations Staff 1995). Pringle “oversaw the recruitment and retention of students of color. When Pringle started that position in 1993, there were 16 students of color at WPI. By the time she left, the number had risen to over 120, with a 90 percent retention rate” (Engelbert 1998). In 1993, she established a program



called Excellence in Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Program (EMSEP), which is now called Connections. She also founded the Strive summer program which was “aimed toward African-American, Latino and Native American students entering the 9th through 12th grades. Students explore areas of science and technology, including physics, biotechnology and electrical engineering through interactive activities” (WPI Public Relations Staff 2003). The EMSEP Program created a network of resources for minority students that alleviated the transition from high school to college. It was designed to promote community, academic excellence and leadership – skills that were deemed necessary to succeed in college. Francesca Escoto, Class of 1997 and a participant of the EMSEP program, said “Blanche Pringle, founder of EMSEP, was influential and supportive of the students she mentored; she helped them with their personal life, financial issues, and challenges of being a minority” (WPI Public Relations Staff 2014).

Blanche Pringle--whose title had shifted to director of Minority Affairs and Outreach Programs-- strived to improve the quality of life in the students she encountered. In 1995, the program received an Outstanding Institutional Advising Award from the National Academic Advising Association as one of nine outstanding academic advising programs for students in the nation (WPI Public Relations Staff 1995). In 1996, the Multicultural Affairs and Minority Student Affairs were consolidated into the Minority Affairs Office (WPI Public Relations Staff 1996). Vice President of student affairs at the time explained that, "Through the consolidation of these offices," says Bernard H. Brown, "WPI will be able to expand current services and to dramatically change the efficiency and the quality of our services and programs for students. Pringle continued to coordinate programs and events that recruited and retained underrepresented students of color.”

In addition to programming and expansion of the diversity offices, Pringle introduced a scholarship program that included the Thurgood Marshall, Cesar Chavez, and Russell Means scholarships. These scholarships recognize the achievements of Black, Latino, and Native American students based on their high school performance (Office of Undergraduate Admission 2010). Blanche Pringle also directed a program called Camp REACH (Reinventing Engineering and Creating New Horizons), which received a \$73,165 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1997. This program was run by the Minority Affairs and Outreach Programs Office and targeted 7th graders in Worcester County Schools. It aimed to promote engineering, math and science. "It will stress that engineering is a collaborative, problem-solving process that is used every day to help people. Campers will spend much of their time on design projects for customers in the Worcester community," says Denise Nicoletti, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, who is coordinating the program with Chrysanthé Demetry, assistant professor of mechanical engineering (WPI Public Relations Staff 1997).

In 1998, Anthony Wayne Hopson of Worcester was appointed assistant director of Minority Student Affairs and Outreach Programs. He completed a comprehensive fellowship that "engaged in community outreach efforts to inform targeted students and their families about the requirements for college matriculation and graduation, advised them about appropriate college-based services, and helped to develop educational plans for these students" (WPI Public Relations Staff 1998).

In 2000, WPI's Office of Diversity and Women's Programs was founded. Their mission was to increase the number of diverse students while promoting and cultivating a climate of inclusiveness. Stephanie Blaisdell was the director at the time and her main priority was to increase outreach and the number of summer programs (WPI Public Relations Staff 2000).

Among other responsibilities, she also worked closely with WPI's research administration on garnering funding from the federal government and industry (WPI Public Relations Staff 2001).

Stephanie Blaisdell started National Engineers Week in 2001 within one month of being hired.

The Strive Jr. and GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math and Science) programs were two programs started by the fledgling office. They included three days of exploring the importance of engineering, math and science. "The goal of Strive Jr. and GEMS is to open seventh- through ninth-graders' eyes to the excitement of engineering," says Janelle Smith of Jefferson, Mass., then a junior majoring in mathematics. She coordinated the program and trained the WPI students who assisted WPI professors with their lessons. By working in teams, the students would experience the impact of engineering math and science to solve problems. Strive Jr. was co-sponsored by WPI's Office of Diversity and Women's Programs and the EcoTarium (WPI Public Relations Staff 2000). Strive Jr., which was also sponsored by an Intel grant, was aimed towards African American, Hispanic, and Native American high school students. Those students were able to explore science, math, and engineering. GEMS Jr. had the same goal but was geared only towards female students in STEM (WPI Public Relations Staff 2001).

In 2002, Frontiers, a two-week, residential program for high school juniors and seniors reached its 20th year. Frontiers coupled academic coursework with diverse social activities, communication workshops, team-building exercises and field trips. Participants from public and private high schools were able to choose a study and work with WPI faculty to complete projects (WPI Public Relations Staff 2001).

Additionally, in 2002, to motivate under-represented high school students in business and industrial applications of mathematics, GE funded a Math Excellence initiative. This grant

cultivated female and minority interest in engineering, information technology, and quantitative business disciplines. Then WPI President Parrish explained the benefits of this initiative, "The Mathematics in Industry Institute will provide teachers with the information, knowledge and tools needed for motivating students and increasing their interest in mathematics and quantitative careers" (WPI Public Relations Staff 2002). He continued to say that, "We'll work with school districts like Worcester and Lawrence, with a high percentage of Hispanic and African-American students, 84 percent of the students in Lawrence, and 40 percent of the students in Worcester are Hispanic or African-American, as compared with about 18 percent statewide" (WPI Public Relations Staff 2002).

In 2003, Calvin R. Hill was hired as the director of Minority Affairs in the university's Office of Minority Affairs. His focus was on both the retention of underrepresented students and their quality of life at WPI. He directed the EMSEP program, then in its tenth year. Additionally in 2003, the Women in Engineering Programs & Advocates Network, a national nonprofit organization of over 600 individuals representing nearly 200 engineering schools, Fortune 500 corporations, and nonprofit organizations, bestowed its Women in Engineering Program Award on Camp REACH. In 2006, Camp REACH celebrated its 10th anniversary with a total of 270 female participants, completing projects such as "how to create an accessible trail and bridge for Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, how to best beautify the landscape at the Friendly House emergency shelter, and how to create a playground appropriate for the clients of Sherry's House/Why Me, which provides support for families dealing with childhood cancer" (WPI's Camp Reach 2006).

In 2009, underrepresented students from Boston, Worcester, were recruited for a robotics, science, engineering, and mathematics programs for the first time called the ExxonMobil

Bernard Harris Science Summer Camp. Nicole Bradford, then WPI's director of diversity programs reported that "WPI is honored to be selected this year as one of 11 new institutions to provide this program to students who may not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in such an intensive academic camp that encourages participants to pursue technical and science careers." She continued saying, "we look forward to inspiring, motivating, and encouraging our participants in hopes of laying the foundation for future careers that are focused on science, technology, engineering, and math" (WPI Public Relations Staff 2009).

In 2011 Camp REACH ran the program for their 15th year anniversary. What made this special was the data that showed the impact of this program. The study showed that "almost 18% of Camp Reach participants intended on pursuing an engineering major in college, compared with 2.9% in the control group and a national average of 2.5% for women. Additionally, 47% of Camp Reach participants have chosen to major in a STEM discipline in college, as compared with 29% in the control group" (WPI Public Relations Staff 2011).

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring recognized Camp REACH. President Obama honored the recipients of the program at the White House and gave a \$25,000 grant from the National Science Foundation. "Through their commitment to education and innovation, these individuals and organizations are playing a crucial role in the development of our 21st century workforce," President Obama said. "Our Nation owes them a debt of gratitude for helping ensure that America remains the global leader in science and engineering for years to come" (WPI Public Relations Staff 2011).

In 2010, NaTonia Trammell became the Director of Diversity. She was a trained Diversity and Inclusion practitioner who received a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice/Sociology from Clark Atlanta University and a Master's degree in Psychological Studies

from Cambridge College (WPI Public Relations 2010). In 2011, the Office of Diversity and Women's Programs which is currently called the Office of Multicultural Affairs, moved from the Campus Center to the O.A.S.I.S. House located on 20 Schussler Street. Their program continued to expand as well as the number of students participating in minority programs at WPI (Trammell 2011).

In 2012, WPI established a STEM Education Center to improve K-12 STEM Education. The goal was to increase the number of STEM-trained teachers in elementary and secondary classrooms. The institute hoped to use this program to solve the problem that only 4 percent of minority students graduating from high school had the requisite math and science courses they need to study engineering (WPI Public Relations Staff 2012).

In 2013, Bonnie Walker, the director of Multicultural Affairs spoke about the 48 students selected to participate in the ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp. "WPI has great pride in partnering with the Harris Foundation and ExxonMobil in carrying out the mission to serve underserved students with aspirations in STEM disciplines," said Bonnie Walker. "Hosting the Harris Foundation's Camp allows us to provide outreach in a very tangible, meaningful way that will impact students' future academic and career choices, but also build their self-esteem in a way that will positively impact the rest of their lives." A Harris Foundation study of camp alumni who are currently enrolled in college, found that 96 percent of those past participants of the program credit the program with influencing their decision to pursue higher education (WPI Public Relations Staff 2013).

## **How Racially Diverse is WPI and How Does WPI Compare to Various Other Schools?**

According to the 2014-2015 enrollment data, the WPI full-time undergraduate population is 32.5% female, and 67.5% male (WPI, 2015). The breakdown of the female population was 60.6% white, 8.62% Hispanic/Latino, 5.25% Asian, 2.40% Black, 3.75% two or more races, and 12.5% international students of all races (WPI, 2015). For the male full-time undergraduate students, the makeup was 61.8% white, 7.39% Hispanic/Latino, 4.67% Asian, 2.14% Black, 2.75% two or more races, and 13.6% international students of all races (WPI, 2015). Therefore, for the combined male and female racial breakdown, the full time undergraduate population is 61.4% White, 7.79% Hispanic/Latino, 4.86% Asian, 2.22% Black, 3.08% two or more races, 13.3% international students of all races.

In 2014 our rival Rochester Polytechnic Institute had a larger undergraduate population, with 5,556 students compared to WPI's 4096 (RPI, 2014). Their gender breakdown was 69% male and 31% female (RPI, 2014). As for their racial breakdown, 65% of undergraduates were white, followed by 10% Asian, 7% Hispanic, 3% Black, 7% two or more races, and 9% were international students (RPI, 2014).

The College of the Holy Cross is a local liberal arts school with a very active Office of Multicultural Education. Holy Cross has a smaller undergraduate population than WPI, with 2937 students in the 2015-2016 schoolyear (Collegedata, 2015a). Their undergraduate population is 50.4% male, and 49.6% female. The racial breakdown of their population is 69.9% White, 10.98% Hispanic/Latino, 4.9% Asian, 3.8% Black/African American, 3.5% multi-race, and 6.8%

unknown(College data, 2015a). In addition, 1.4% of their undergraduate population are international students, from 16 different countries (College data, 2015a).

Another leader in diversity programming is Bridgewater State University. Bridgewater State University's undergraduate population is more than twice the size of WPI's, with 9,628 undergraduates in the 2015-2016 schoolyear (Collegedata, 2015b). Their undergraduate population is 41.1% male, and 58.9% female. The racial breakdown of their population is 78.1% White, 6.0% Hispanic/Latino, 2.0% Asian, 9.0% Black/African American, 2.8% multi-race, and 1.8% unknown(College data, 2015b). In addition, 0.4% of their undergraduate population are international students, from 22 different countries (College data, 2015b).

Michigan State University is another leader in diversity programming. They have a massive undergraduate population, with 38,786 undergraduates. Their gender split is 50% male and 50% female. 68% of their undergraduate students are White, while 7% are Black, 4% are Hispanic/Latino, and 4% are Asian. They also host a large percentage of international students, comprising 14% of their total undergraduate population.



## Methodology

The overarching goal of our IQP was to increase student engagement in diversity issues, by reworking the OMA's offerings to students. Clearly this was a broad goal, as there are hosts of ways we could attempt to rework those programs. We narrowed the wide range of possibilities down to four main choices: a program consultation, experimenting with hosting a renowned speaker on diversity, creating an area for faculty to discuss racial topics and disseminate information to their students, and creating a consortium event in order to promote networking among a diverse student population. Each method would also involve a survey to gauge student opinions. Specifics of each plan are located in Table 1 below:

*Table 1: The Four Project Paths Presented to our Sponsor*

<b>Idea</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.Program Consultation	This idea focuses around analyzing the OMA's current programming and conceiving alternatives based on a broad literature review and on the practices of other institutions. This literature review would provide us recommendations to maximize the efficacy of the OMA's programming. To gain an understanding of how other schools approach diversity programs, we would conduct several interviews with faculty from these programs. We would also identify means to improve the OMA's advertising and outreach.
Experiment with a renowned speaker (Tedx Talk)	This idea would revolve around hosting a high priority TEDx talk related to race/ multiculturalism on campus. The TEDx talk would be the focal point of the plan, hoping to pique student interest in these issues. One way to drum up student interest (perhaps even WPI interest) would be to open the event to the consortium, so that WPI students would be curious as to what big event was going on. We would host several ancillary events related to the topics, both before and after the presentation. The success or failure of this plan would be clear immediately, based on the attendance before the TEDx talk and afterward. Environmental Justice is an issue that envelops both diversity and environmental problems. Sustainability is strongly believed in on WPI's campus. This would just be another way to talk about racial issues on campus by tying them into issues that students already feel interested in. This idea is important because it could be a vibrant and explosive way to boost student engagement on racial issues almost overnight.
A place for faculty to talk about racial issues, disseminate information	This idea would involve the creation of a space for faculty to discuss racial issues. Professor Pfeifer has said there is faculty interest in these discussions, but opportunities are lacking to actually have the discussions.

to students	With faculty talking about racial issues they could embed their discussions into their classrooms, and create a “trickle down” engagement with our general student body. Additionally we could try to host workshops for teachers who are not comfortable talking about diversity or racial issues, in order to foster that competency.
Consortium event	WPI students would have the opportunity to network with students outside of the campus. They would experience something different by being surrounded by new people. If the event is relevant to college culture it could promote a positive response from our students and other students like. This would influence discussion on our campus surrounding racial issues, and give people a comfortable place to open up and hear what others have to say. Events such as the ALANA BBQ promote networking among diverse students, but often only target diverse students. An event that is open to all people and seems welcoming to all students would create a collaborative environment among colleges.

Our sponsor chose the program consultation approach, telling us to focus both on diversity programs of other schools in the area, as well as diversity programs in other engineering schools. With this approach in mind we created several objectives for our project:

1. Gain an understanding of student opinions on diversity topics.
2. Identify what other schools do differently and incorporate those strategies into the OMA.
3. Update the OMA web presence and advertising methods.
4. Provide a series of recommendations for the OMA moving forward.

### **Objective 1: Gain an Understanding of Student Opinions on Diversity Topics**

We conducted a campus survey focusing on issues pertaining to race and diversity. Our anonymous survey was designed to grasp how students, staff and faculty feel about the issues of diversity and engagement at WPI. We dispersed the 14-question survey to various affinity and professional clubs on campus, table sat in the Campus Center with incentive to win a raffle, and posted the survey in WPI Class of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Facebook groups. 180 responses

summarized the feelings and thoughts of a majority of the members in the WPI community. We had three parts in our survey; multiple choice, 0-10 scale, and open responses.

In the first part of the survey, we designed a set of questions that classified members of the WPI community by demographics including class year: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior as well as title: graduate, faculty, staff or other, which included Mass Academy students. We asked members of the community to classify their race, Caucasian, African-American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander and other. We asked them to classify their gender: male, female and other. We asked them what age group they fit into, 18-22 (generally undergraduate), 22-25 (generally graduate), 25-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, 70-80 and 80+. Finally, we asked them if they were an international student, faculty, staff, etc.

After the demographic section, we asked participants how interested they were in discussing contemporary racial issues, how comfortable they were and if they ultimately thought it was important to have these discussions. We also asked them if they thought it was important to have a diverse campus population. The answers to these questions were on a 1-10 scale, with 10 being extremely interested or comfortable, and 0 being not at all interested or comfortable.

In the third part, we asked members of the community five open response questions:

- Are any barriers on campus preventing you from having discussions about contemporary racial issues?
- Have you attended any events on campus discussing contemporary racial issues or diversity (in class, sororities, fraternities, clubs/organizations)? Please explain why you have or have not attended any such events.

- Have you attended any programs run by the Office of Multicultural Affairs? If so, which programs? If not, why have you not attended any?
- Are there any programs you would like to see the Office of Multicultural Affairs offer in the future?
- Do you feel like you have a safe place on campus to express yourself and your opinions? If so, where?

The full survey questions are included in the Appendix. We have also examined other surveys to see how trends in WPI's students compare to other youth.

## **Objective 2: Identify What Other Schools do Differently and Incorporate Those Strategies into the OMA.**

Our sponsor requested we examine the diversity programs at the College of the Holy Cross, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Bridgewater State University and Michigan State University. In order to grasp how these institutions approach diversity, we interviewed Robert Jones, Associate Director of the Office of Multicultural Education at Holy Cross, Barbara Ruel, the Director of Diversity and Women in Engineering Programs at RPI, and Sydne Marrow, the Director of the Center for Multicultural Affairs at Bridgewater State University, and Paulette Granberry Russel, the Senior Advisor to the president on diversity and director of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives. The interviews were held in person, in a written form, and over the phone. These interviews allowed us a behind the scenes look at the challenges and successes of other diversity programs, and proved a vital trove of ideas for improving the OMA. Some sample interview questions include:

*Table 2: Sample Interview Questions*

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the process you go through when designing programs that your office runs?</li> <li>• What programs have proved the greatest successes? Which programs have</li> </ul> |
|--|

underperformed?

- What is the history of your office, and what conditions caused the formation of your office?

### **Objective 3: Update the OMA Web Presence and Advertising Methods.**

We incorporated web presence updates into our recommendations targeting the OMA website and Facebook page. Currently the OMA website lacks recent news or any mention of events the office will be holding in the future. Having an up to date website is increasingly important with our ever more online focused student body. Another important component to a modern web presence is a Facebook page. The OMA currently has such a page, but it is infrequently used. We will recommend an overhaul of this Facebook page to be an important method to inform students, and plan to hold raffles to spur students to like the page. This would cause all the OMA programs to appear on the students' timelines and events calendars, greatly increasing OMA exposure. Additionally we investigated the feasibility of other means to advertise OMA programs, through emails or through the addition of OMA events into the SGA daily and weekly event reminders.

### **Objective 4: Provide a series of recommendations for the OMA moving forward.**

Drawing from the student survey, attendance data, diversity literature and our interviews with other diversity program directors, we compiled a list of nine recommendations for the OMA moving forward. These recommendations are the culmination of our other three objectives and will be our main deliverable to our sponsor the OMA.

## Results and Analysis

Our main sources of data for this project were our interviews and our survey. Through our survey, we gained a picture of what some WPI students think about social justice and civic engagement topics. Our main takeaways from survey, were racial divide between barriers to speaking, and the discrepancy between people being interested and having no barriers to attending but still not going. Our interviews allowed us a glimpse into the practices of other colleges and universities. This glimpse revealed Holy Cross' successful "many points of entry" approach to event programming, and revealed both BSU and RPI's emphasis on student group collaboration. We also witnessed the advertising methods of the other institutions, noting that they advertised in as many ways as possible.

### Student Survey

The first section of our survey were demographic questions aimed to understand the identities of our respondents. Below are three figures depicting the breakdown of our respondents.

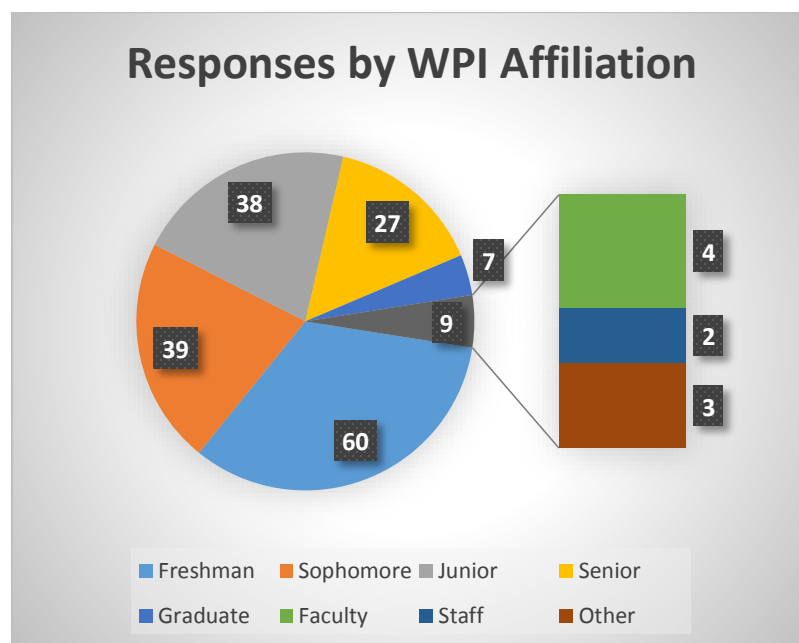


Figure 1: Number of Responses by WPI Affiliation

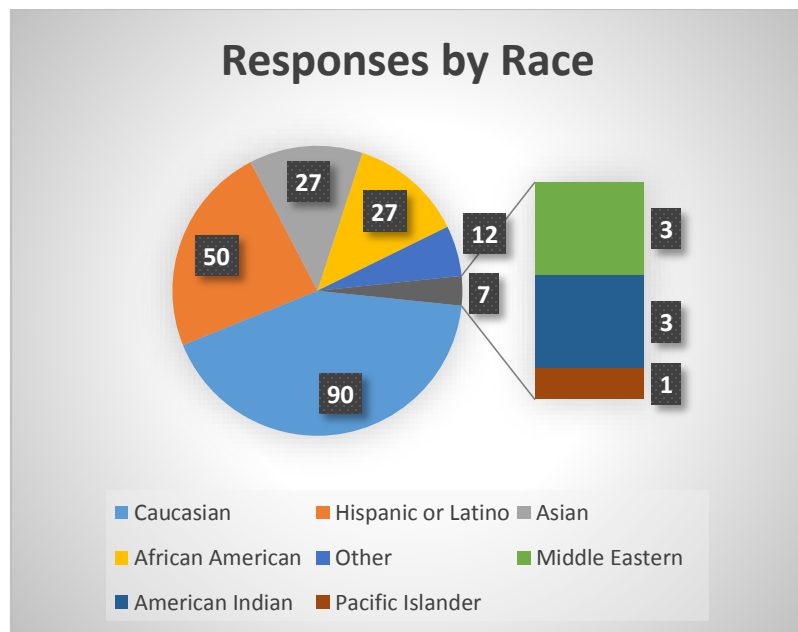


Figure 2: Number of Responses by Race

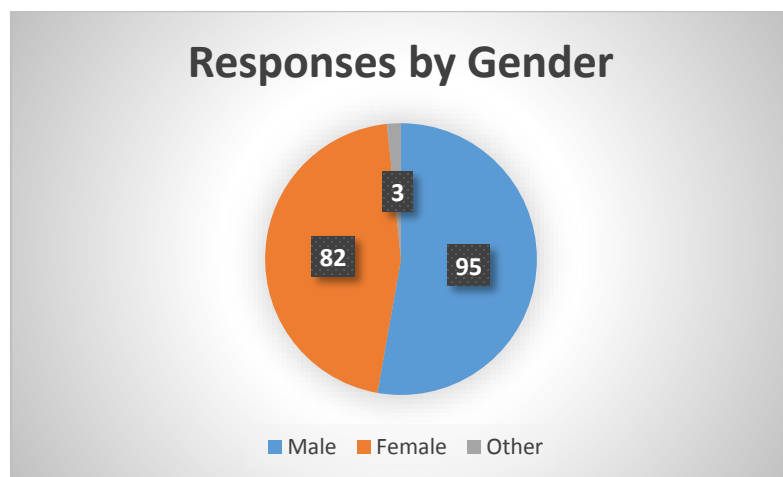


Figure 3: Number of Responses by Gender

The second section of our survey consisted of the 0-10 scale questions on interest, comfort, and importance of racial discussions and diversity on campus. The mean value responses by population group are seen in Table 2, and will be further analyzed below.

Table 3: Mean Value Responses by Population Groups

Groups	Q6 means	Q7 means	Q8 means	Q9 means
Gen pop	6.21	6.91	8.11	7.98
Male pop	5.73	6.79	7.56	7.39
Female pop	6.63	7.10	8.68	8.71
White pop	5.94	6.64	7.74	7.27
Black pop	6.81	7.45	8.45	8.45
Asian pop	6.47	7.05	8.63	8.84
Hispanic/Latino	6.27	7.1	8.3	9.1
Freshmen	6.07	6.96	8.43	7.91
Sophomore	5.92	6.45	7.61	7.58
Juniors	7.00	7.43	8.46	8.51
Seniors	5.33	6.37	7.22	7.81

**Question 6: How interested are you in discussing contemporary racial issues, such as those that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri this past year on a zero to ten scale, zero being not at all interested, and 10 being extremely interested?**

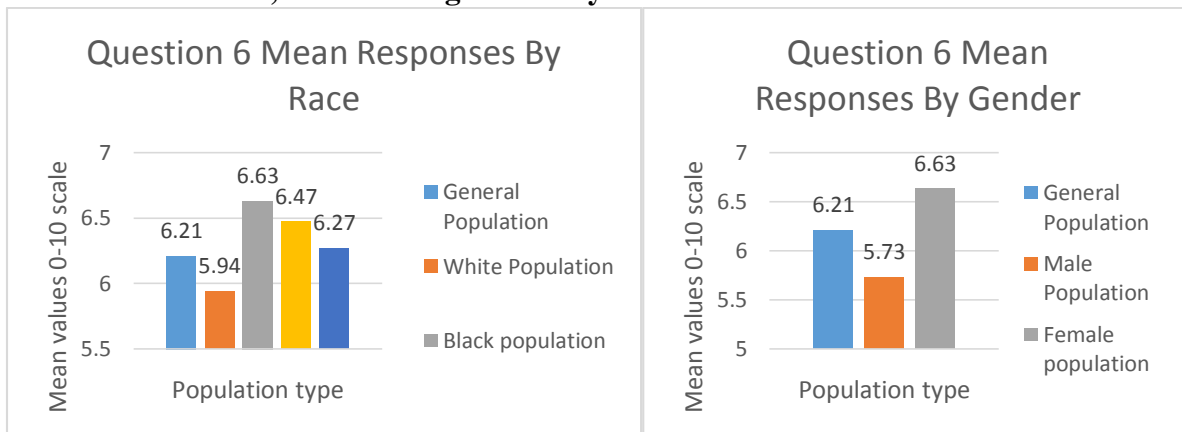
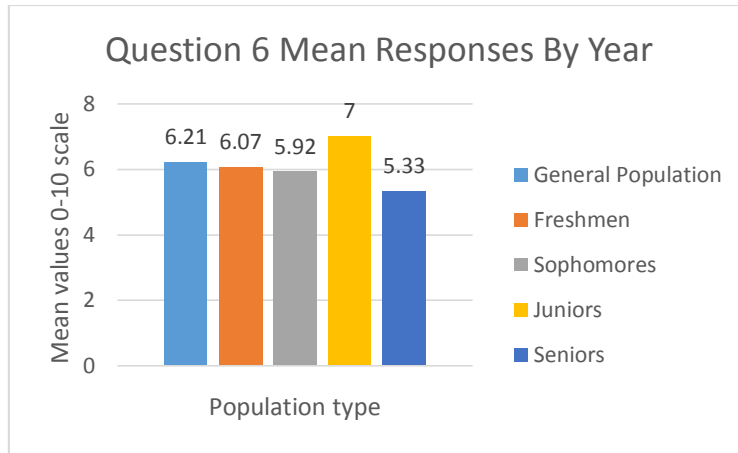


Figure 4: Question 6 Mean Responses by Race

Figure 5: Question 6 Mean Responses by Gender





*Figure 6: Question 6 Mean Responses by Class Year*

Three interesting trends appear after looking at the breakdown of responses for question 6. First, as seen in Figure 4, the White population mean interest trailed the general population mean interest by 0.27 points. Black respondents had the highest interest in discussing these issues, which makes sense as they are the racial group most affected. Asian and Hispanic/Latino respondents were also interested in discussing these issues at rates higher than the general population, although Hispanics/Latinos marginally so. The second trend is seen in Figure 6, is a 0.9 difference in the mean values between male and female respondents. This large difference in mean values show female respondents are significantly more interested in discussing contemporary racial issues than male respondents. The third trend of interest is an outlier in the broad decrease in interest in these discussions by year as seen in. The mean value of the Junior year respondents was the highest out of any year surveyed. One possible cause for this uptick in interest is the Junior year IQP experience. Through the IQP experience, many students are forced to look outward in attempts to solve problems in communities around the world. By examining the problems facing other communities, the problems in US communities can become more apparent. It is interesting to note however, that by Senior year this uptick reverts to the former decreasing trajectory, highlighting the fickle nature of this increased interest.

**Question 7: How comfortable do you feel in discussing contemporary racial issues on a zero to ten scale, zero being not at all comfortable, and 10 being extremely comfortable?**

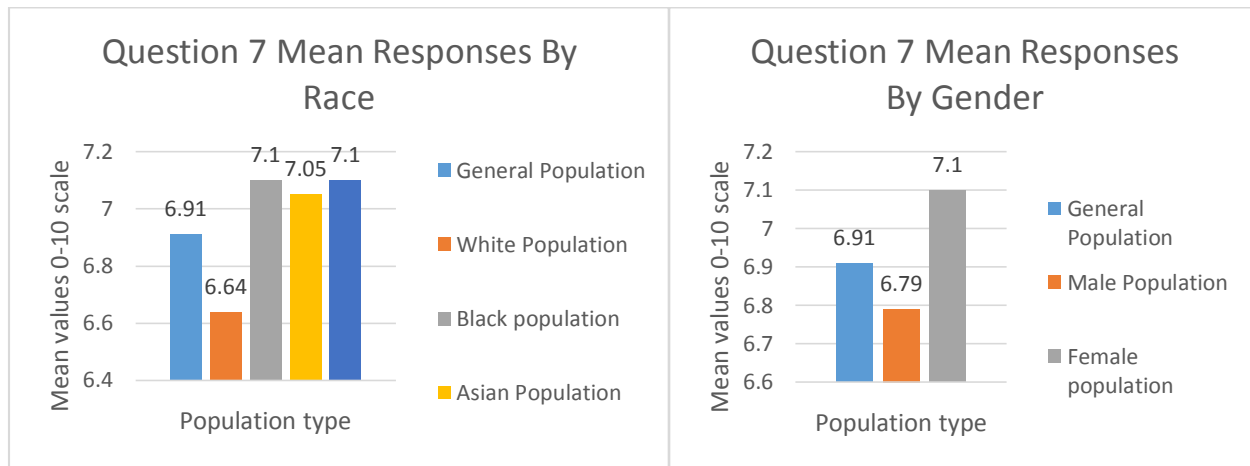


Figure 7: Question 7 Mean Responses by Race

Figure 8: Question 7 Mean Responses by Gender

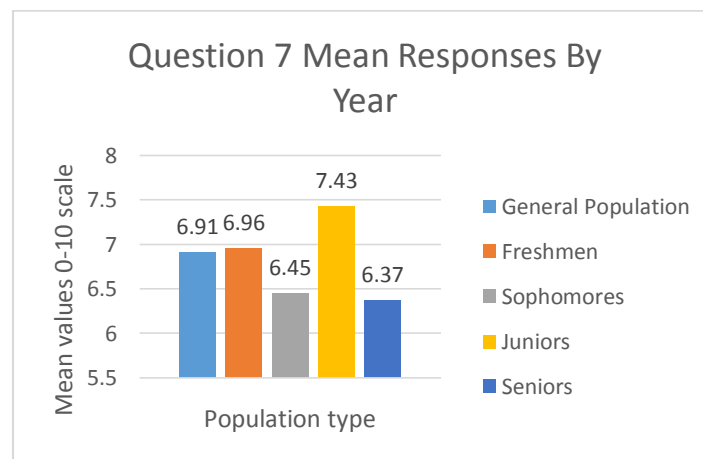


Figure 9: Question 6 Mean Responses by Race

The three trends from question 6 largely persist in question 7. First, the White population mean comfort values trailed the general population mean interest by the same 0.27 points as seen in Figure 7. Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian respondents all had very similar values of mean comfort discussing racial issues, nearly half a point higher than their white counterparts. The second trend is a 0.31 difference in the mean values of comfort between male and female respondents as seen in Figure 9. While this discrepancy is still notable, it is much less than the 0.90 difference in mean interest between male and female respondents. The trend of Juniors

being outliers when it came to comfort persisted, as did the slump in comfort in the Seniors shown in Figure 9. It is interesting that the Freshmen respondents had a half point lead in comfort levels compared to the Sophomores and Seniors. The uptick in Juniors comfort is again likely caused by IQP exposure. The Freshman being more comfortable than Sophomores and Seniors could be caused by naiveté, having not yet tried to have such a discussion on campus and assuming they would be comfortable.

**Question 8: Do you think discussing contemporary racial issues is important, on a zero to ten scale, zero being not at all important, and 10 being extremely important?**

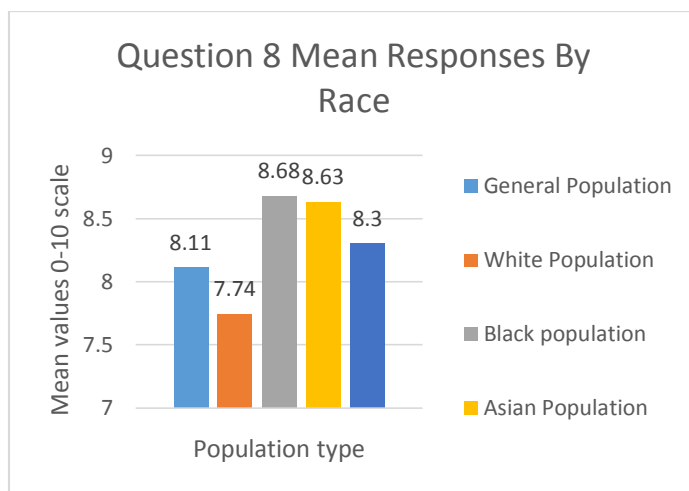


Figure 10: Question 8 Mean Responses by Race

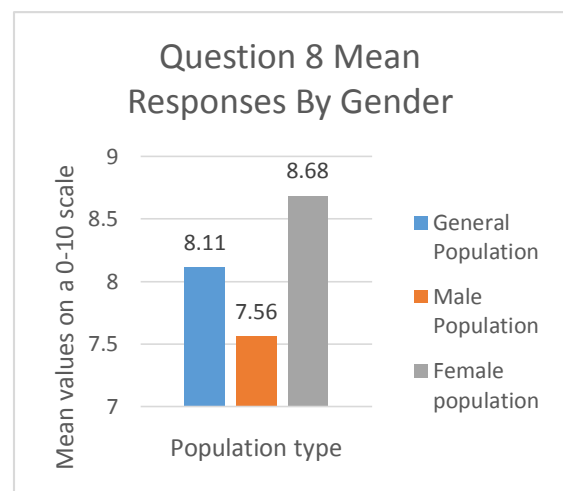
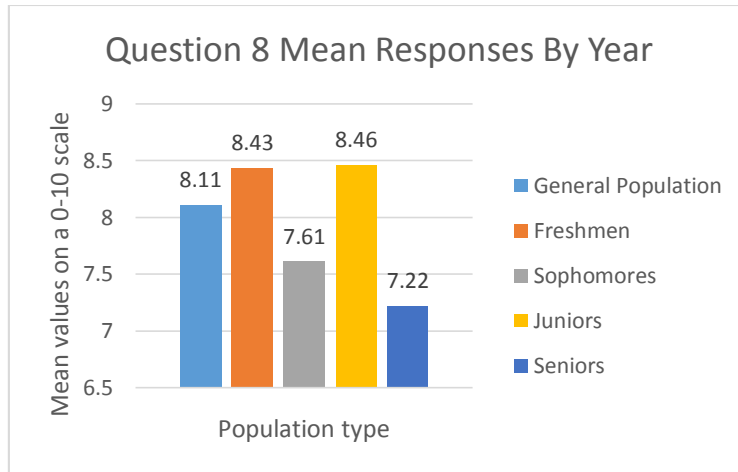


Figure 11: Question 8 Mean Responses by Gender



*Figure 12: Question 8 Mean Responses by Year*

The three trends from questions 6 and 7 largely persist in question 8. First, the White population mean importance values trailed the general population mean interest by a larger 0.37 points Figure 10. Black, and Asian respondents had similar mean values of importance nearly a point higher than their white peers, while the Hispanic/Latino respondents had mean values of importance closer to half a point higher than their white peers. This time the gap between male and female mean values of importance grew to 1.12. The trend of Juniors being outliers when it came to comfort persisted in Figure 12, as did the slump in comfort in the Seniors. It is interesting that the Freshmen respondents matched the Juniors' mean values of importance. The uptick in Juniors importance is again likely caused by IQP exposure. The Freshman viewing these issues as more important than Sophomores and Seniors do could be caused by Freshman having less workload and responsibilities to attend to.

**Question 9: Do you think it is important to have a campus whose population is diverse in terms of racial and gender identities, sexual orientations, and ideologies, on a zero to ten scale, zero being not at all important, and 10 being extremely important?**

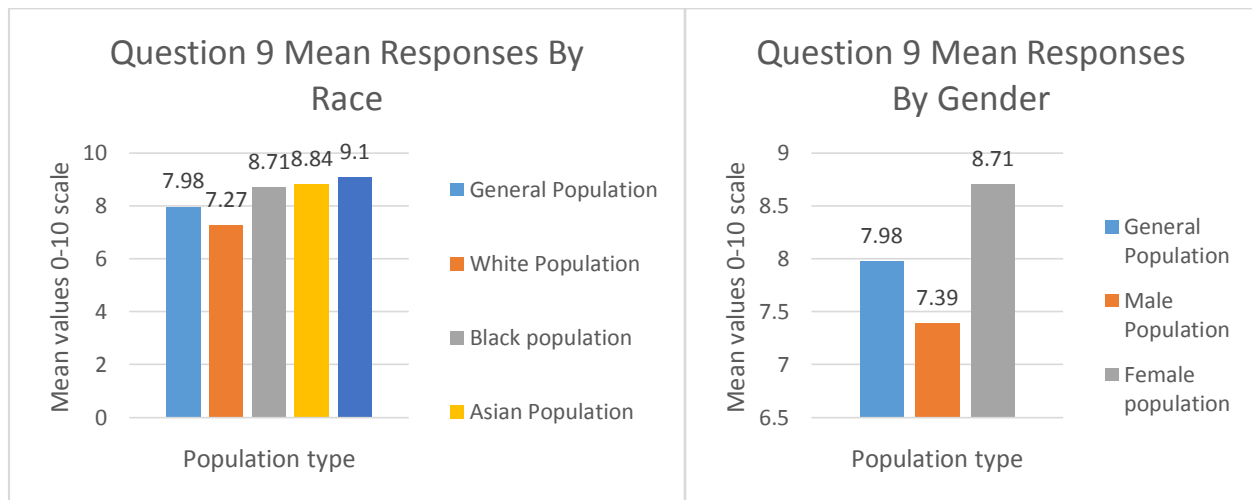


Figure 13: Question 9 Mean Responses by Race

Figure 14: Question 9 Mean Responses by Gender

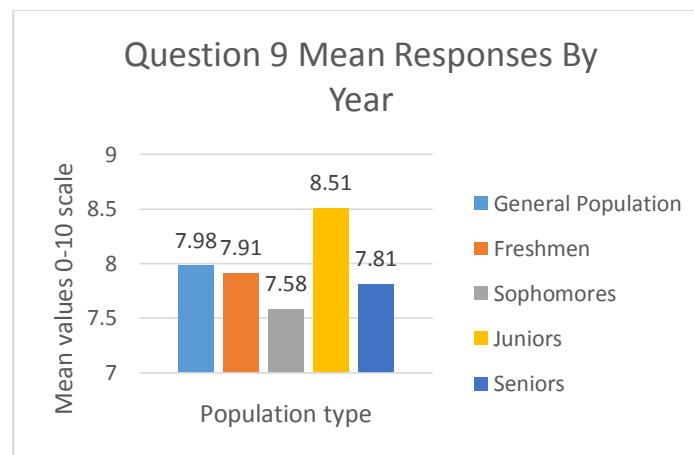


Figure 15: Question 9 Mean Responses by Year

The three trends from questions 6, 7 and 8 are largely persistent in question 9. First, Figure 13 shows the White population mean interest trailed the general population mean interest by a larger 0.71 points. Black, Asian and Hispanic/Latino respondents had similar mean values of importance over a point and a half higher than their white peers. This time the gap between male and female mean values of importance grew to 1.22. Figure 15 highlights the trend of

Juniors being outliers when it came to comfort persisted, having mean values of importance a point to half point higher than the other class years. This time the Senior mean values were higher than the sophomore mean values, perhaps indicating a lasting appreciation for diversity after IQP.

Overall these four questions paint an interesting picture of where different groups stand on social issues and diversity. The white population respondents were less interested, felt less comfortable talking about racial issues, thought they were less important to discuss, and thought that diversity was less important than the general student population. White respondents are likely less affected by contemporary racial issues than Black respondents are, since many of these current issues surround police brutality against Blacks. Being benefactors of White privilege, these respondents may be unaware how big a factor race still plays in many areas of life. As Francis Kendall mentions in her article “Understanding White Privilege”, “For those of us who are white, one of our privileges is that we see ourselves as individuals, ‘just people,’ part of the human race”(p. 1). In this way white respondents may see race, and the problems that accompany it, as something for other people to deal with. This lack of awareness would lead these respondents to be less interested in talking about racial issues, and would cause these respondents to see these issues as less important. Cultural awareness workshops focusing on white privilege could be one method of getting White students more involved in these issues. These workshops could show White students that race fundamentally affects their experience in the world. White respondents may also feel pressure not to look prejudiced, which would also drive down their comfort levels in discussing such issues. The split between genders had similar effects, with women having mean values almost a point higher than their male peers in three out of the four questions. The third significant trend is that Juniors had the highest mean values for

all four questions. We speculate Juniors have these high values because of their IQP work, where they examine problems facing other communities. This outward facing mentality is unique to Juniors, and is a break from the mainly inward focus of other class-years. Again we return to the idea of the WPI bubble. Undergraduates furiously racing to complete their work on time to pass a class, or run a club, or prepare for an interview, leaving little time or interest for social issues. Upon reaching Junior year however, these students must now investigate a challenge another community is facing. This investigation period can open the eyes of the oft-cloistered WPI student.

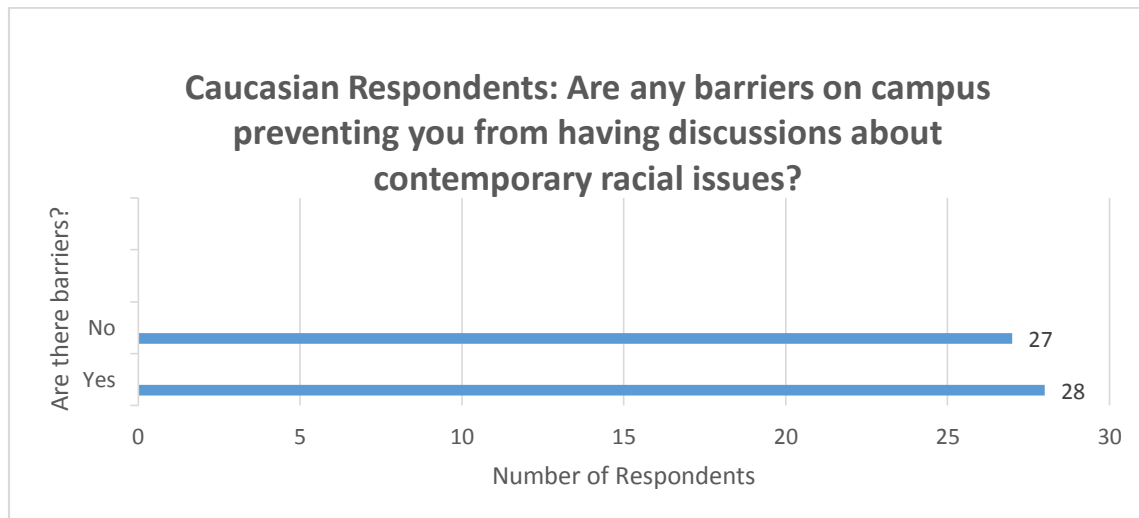
### **Open Response Questions**

The open response questions were the most telling of opinions and thoughts. The main reasons why members of the community fail to engage are: societal barriers, time constraints, lack of interest, and simply not wanting to engage. Several respondents spoke about the barriers on campus of others being ignorant, differing opinions of those engaging, lack of a public space to do so, the difficulty of the topic at hand, and feeling attacked when sharing opinions or feelings. Many students do not want to offend others by sharing how they feel and many feel like it is a “touchy subject.” As students feel it is easier to not engage and remain in the “WPI bubble” it’s troubling for those who feel passionately about diversity and want to have that conversation. One quote from a student was that “it’s difficult to speak to someone who doesn’t identify with your race or culture or lifestyle as not all are empathetic towards your situation or that your race faces; they sometimes don’t understand where you’re coming from. Many people don’t care once they or their race aren’t being affected so it’s like talking to a wall sometimes.” Students fear public backlash and sometimes do not feel there is enough diversity on campus to feel welcome in expressing the issues they want to discuss. Overall, the anonymous open responses are very revealing; showing the honest and truthful reasons for why students do not

engage, the barriers they face, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs can improve on to fit student needs.

**Question 10: Are any barriers on campus preventing you from having discussions about contemporary racial issues?**

**Caucasian respondents: 55 responses**



*Figure 16: Barriers for Caucasian respondents*

This question was aimed to discuss the barriers on campus that members of the community may face when engaging in contemporary racial discussions on campus. Almost every respondent mentioned that the barriers were faced by others and not themselves; meaning that they felt individually that they were not the problem. They do not want to feel like they do not engage, and it is easier to not admit that they face barriers themselves. Instead they project their shortcomings onto someone else. This claim is supported by the 27 Caucasian respondents said there are no barriers and 28 respondents said there are in fact barriers. The barriers that many Caucasian respondents spoke of were due to traditional or conservative “American” ways of thinking, hesitation to engage with others, lack of time due to course work, and their own personal barriers. Many respondents wrote that many topics that are discussed on campus are too controversial and when discussed, their views can offend others. Many respondents felt like they



cannot contribute due to lack of understanding, experience and privilege. Caucasian respondents feel that no one is encouraging them to speak up, and there are few opportunities for them to engage; they often do not know who to talk to and do not want to feel uncomfortable when they do have the opportunity. One student even responded with “I’m white so no one wants to listen to me.” Few respondents mentioned that they just do not have the passion to drive these conversations and are not open-minded to discuss them. A few other respondents wrote that they are unaware of these events and they do not keep up with current events. One student mentioned that they don’t see themselves as having a race, and that they are afraid of being labeled as a racist. Though some do not feel these issues affect them directly, about half of the 55 respondents said there are no barriers for them.

*Table 4: Quotes on barriers for Caucasian respondents*

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

“The fact that having a differing opinion from people will lead to incredible public backlash, especially differing from the media narrative or even saying anything relatively disparaging towards something like #BlackLivesMatter. The fact that I cannot in good faith express my opinions to the contrary, nor can anyone else on campus, without feeling like we will be personally attacked is a huge issue.”

“Typically, people who are passionate about certain issues are more vocal and defensive of their views. I have strong opinions on most things, but wouldn't necessarily call myself passionate about them. Sometimes these opinions are contrary to those of the population which is most vocal. It's difficult to want to express these opinions knowing that those who disagree are so vocal; I anticipate an "attack" on my views because of this. One does not have to respect other people's views, but they should respect others' right to having their own opinions.”

### African-American respondents: 16 responses

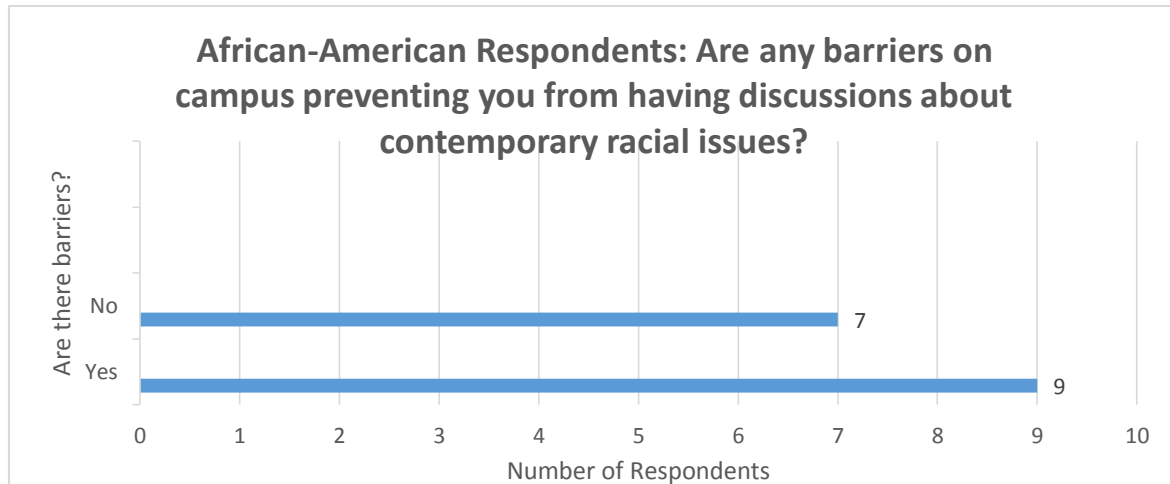


Figure 17: Barriers for African American respondents

This group of 16 total respondents had 7 respond that there are no barriers and 9 respond that there are barriers. The barriers that the African-American respondents spoke about were that they feel uncomfortable or out of place when discussing race or would rather keep their opinions to themselves. They mentioned that others often cannot relate and that people of different race do not understand racial issues. African-American students feel that there is a lack of interest from others who are not African-American and these same people often do not like to face conflict. The respondents also mentioned that some people are just ignorant or do not even know these problems exist. The final barrier were that there a lack of people of color on campus and this makes it more challenging to have these conversations.

Table 5: Quotes on barriers for African American respondents

#### Sample Quotes from Survey:

“Yes, there is a lack of people of color on campus. The school is not designed for people of color”

“Yes. One is that it's difficult to speak to someone who doesn't identify with your race or

culture or lifestyle as not all are empathetic towards you situations that your race faces; they sometimes don't understand where you're coming from. Many people don't care once they or their race aren't being affected so it's like talking to a wall sometimes.”

### Asian Respondents: 17 responses

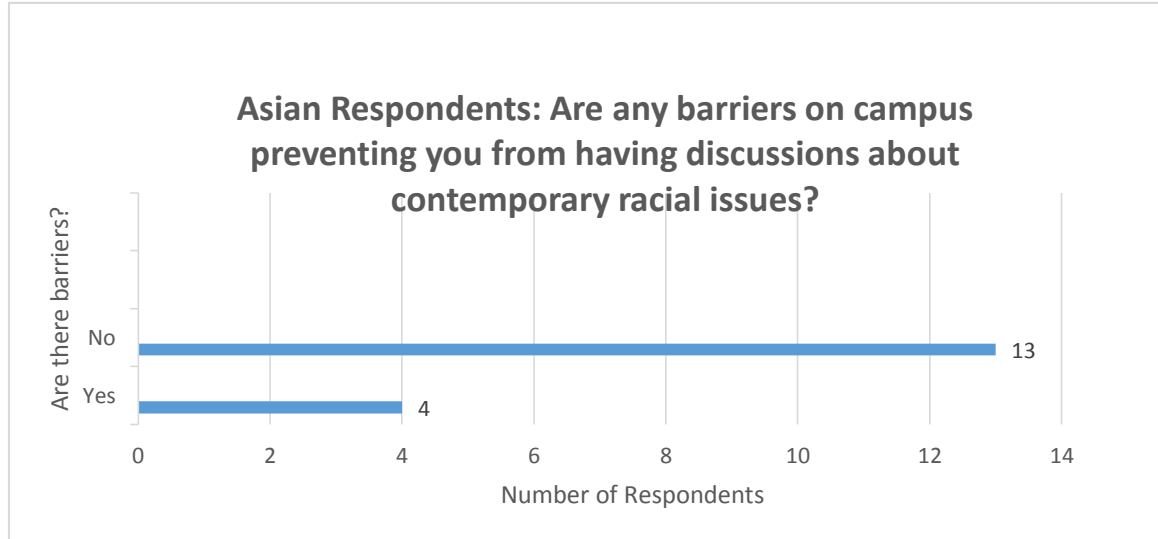


Figure 18: Barriers for Asian respondents

The Asian group of respondents were 17 in total, 13 responded that there were no barriers and 4 responded that there were barriers. The barriers that these respondents spoke of were the lack of advertising and awareness for these events, that people do not understand the impacts of racism and are often opinionated, that there are no open platforms or environments to have these conversations, and finally that there is a lack of distinction between Asian and Asian-American students on campus.

Table 6. Quotes on barriers from Asian respondents

### Sample Quotes from Survey:

“People might not always be comfortable talking about their views in front of other people who may have different views in fear of being looked at weird.”

“Very opinionated people on campus, hard to feel as if there is a truly open environment where you don’t fear any backlash.”

### Hispanic Respondents: 25 responses

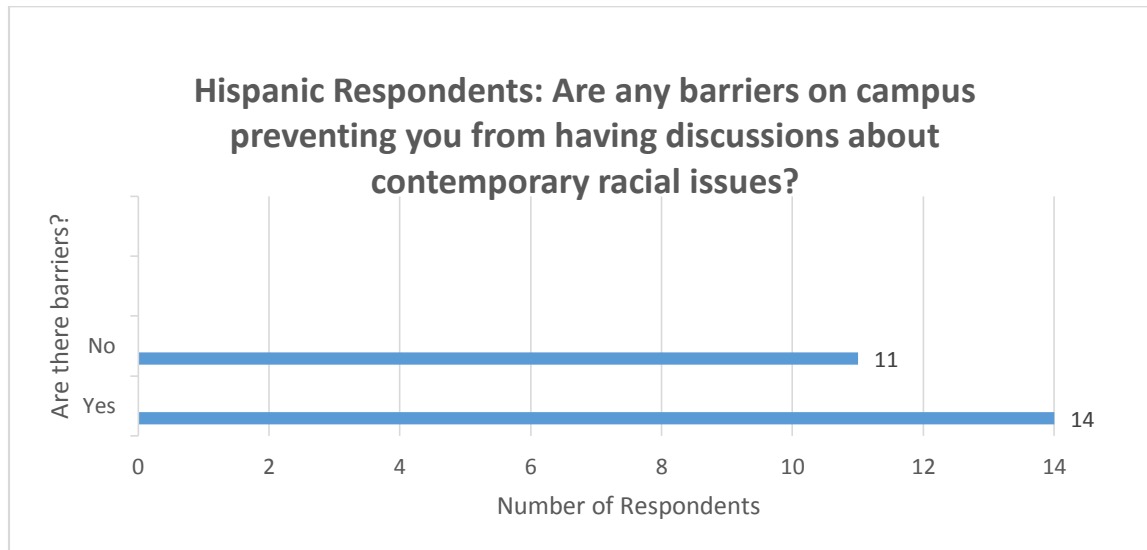


Figure 19: Barriers for Hispanic/Latino respondents

The Hispanic/Latino group of 25 respondents answered with 11 respondents proclaiming no barriers and 14 respondents proclaiming that there are in fact barriers. The barriers that they spoke of were that there are very few or not any campus wide forums and that there is no safe or open environment to feel comfortable discussing these issues. These respondents spoke of the negative stigma towards racial discussions; that it is not a pleasant topic, people often feel offended, or not interested. Many respondents spoke about others being judgmental, biased towards themselves, or are sometimes too shy or scared to speak up. A few respondents answered that it is just easier not to talk about it.

Table 7: Quotes from Hispanic/Latino respondents

### Sample Quotes from Survey:

“I wish there were more discussions not only within the "minority" population but campus wide. I know the OMA is pushing for more discussions and bringing in different people; they are doing a great job. I just wish the majority of the school population would not have that negative "scared" stigma.”

“White kids don't want to discuss racism or admit that racism and white privilege are still significant parts of society today. They act defensive and tell non-white people what's racist or not, or when they can't feel offended. The non-white population here is too low for me to feel comfortable discussing race and privilege with just anybody in general.”

“Yes, I highly believe that there is a barrier among the WPI population that discussing contemporary racial issues are a difficult topic and that we should just ignore and it makes me sad that this is the reality of this campus that promotes itself to be a diverse campus. I believe that it is caused by the fact that people believe that the discussion will cause tensions among students and they want to avoid this as much as possible”

### Mixed Race Respondents (Two or more races): 25 responses

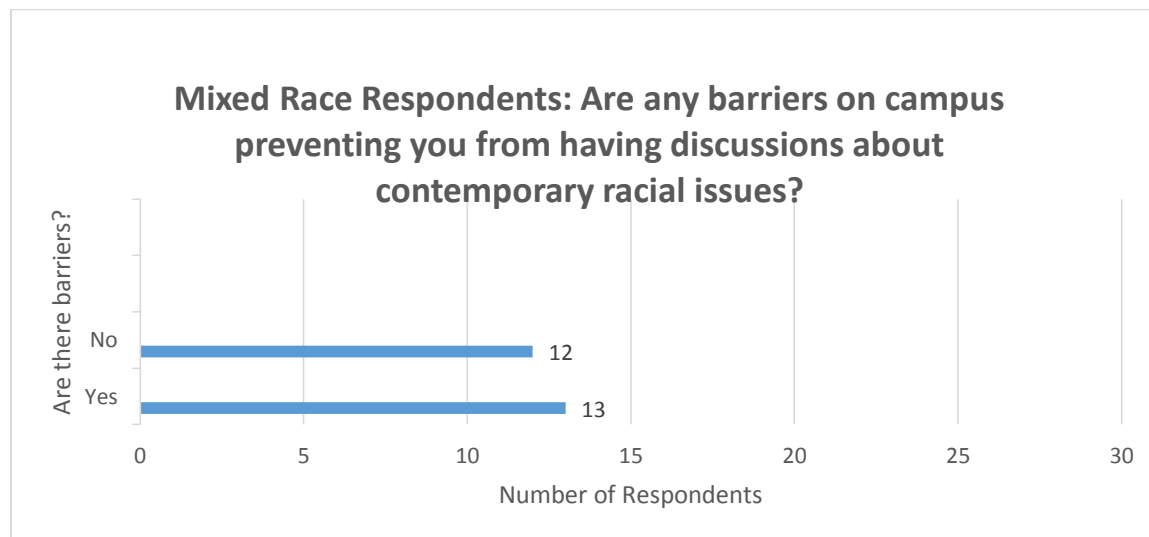


Figure 20: Barriers for mixed-race respondents

The mixed race respondents were 25 in total. 12 respondents claimed there were no barriers and the remaining 13 respondents said there were barriers. The barriers that this group of

respondents spoke of were that other students are only focused on class, or are not interested in the topics. They claimed that there are not enough people that approach the subject and not enough diversity. They also spoke of people having too diverse opinions that may make others upset, that it is not a pleasant topic, and that there is an overall atmosphere of racism, ignorance, and compliance.

*Table 8: Quotes from mixed-race respondents*

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

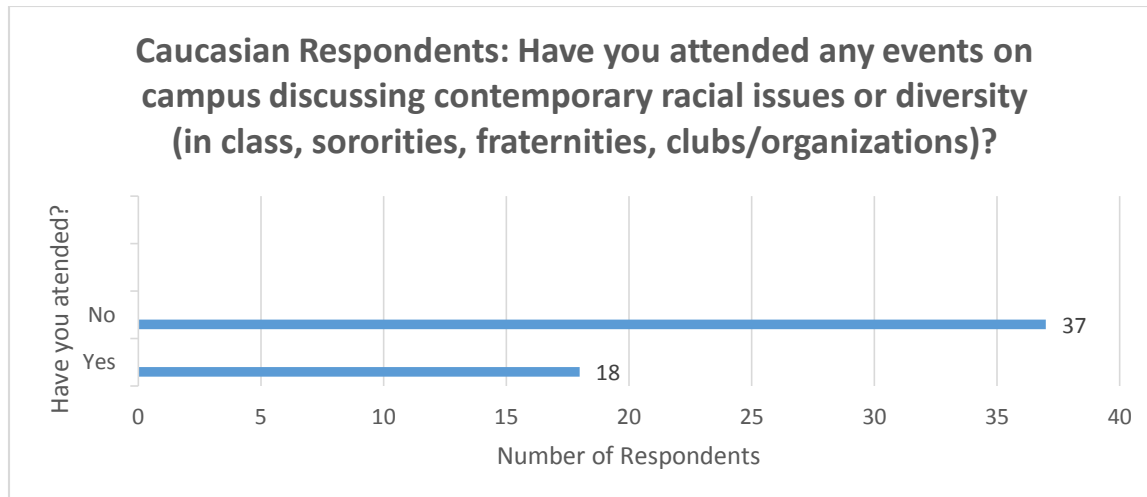
“Not pertaining specifically to campus but I feel most people miss the point of discussing such issues and instead focus on little things turning everything into some form of racism and I believe that's a barrier to having meaningful and productive dialogue about racial issues.”

“When the opportunities do actually arise, people are more concerned with including and making white folks feeling comfortable, so it gets difficult to say anything that contradicts that idea and people don't like to consider it. Its too hard I think, to come to terms with the reality of how brutal, oppressive and often times violent many of these issues can be.”

“The campus is less than 5% black/African american and has other small minority populations. This makes it hard to talk about race when most people are white/ have white privilege and do not see the injustices minorities do.”

**Question 11: Have you attended any events on campus discussing contemporary racial issues or diversity (in class, sororities, fraternities, clubs/organizations)? Please explain why you have or have not attended any such events.**

**Caucasian respondents: 55 responses**



*Figure 21: Racial issue and diversity attendance for Caucasian respondents*

This question was aimed to gauge the attendance in events that discuss racial issues or diversity. In total there were 55 Caucasian respondents. Overwhelmingly, 37 respondents have not attended any of these events and only 18 of these respondents have attended. The reasons that respondents did not attend these events were because they were either too busy, don't know when these events are taking place, or are simply not interested in the topics. Some respondents do not think attending these events is a priority, they do not care enough and they claimed they had better things to do with their time. Other respondents said they do not like talking to others, and past experiences from high school proved that their opinions are not welcomed, or they feel they do not fit in. One respondent said it was stupid, they do not see how it would help, and others are oversensitive when discussing these topics. A few respondents claimed that these events only cater to internationals or minorities.

On the contrary, the 18 respondents that have attended these events said the reasons behind attendance, whether it be in class, sororities or fraternities or clubs and organizations, were mostly due to academic discussions. The class discussions that took place were in Great Problems Seminar (GPS), history class, psychology, American public policy, and IMGD 2000. One respondent mentioned that they had discussion within their fraternity. A few others said they discussed gender/diversity issues in Gender Equality Club and Diversity in Games Club (DiG). Another respondent said they discussed diversity issues in Global Humanitarian Alliance (GHA). One event that someone mentioned was “Miss Representation.” One respondent mentioned that these events were a learning opportunity for them.

*Table 9: Quotes on racial issue and diversity attendance for Caucasian respondents*

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

“As stated above, I have not attended any events because the fact that having a differing opinion from people will lead to incredible public backlash, especially differing from the media narrative or even saying anything relatively disparaging towards something like #BlackLivesMatter. The fact that I cannot in good faith express my opinions to the contrary, nor can anyone else on campus, without feeling like we will be personally attacked is a huge issue.”



**African-American respondents: 14 responses**

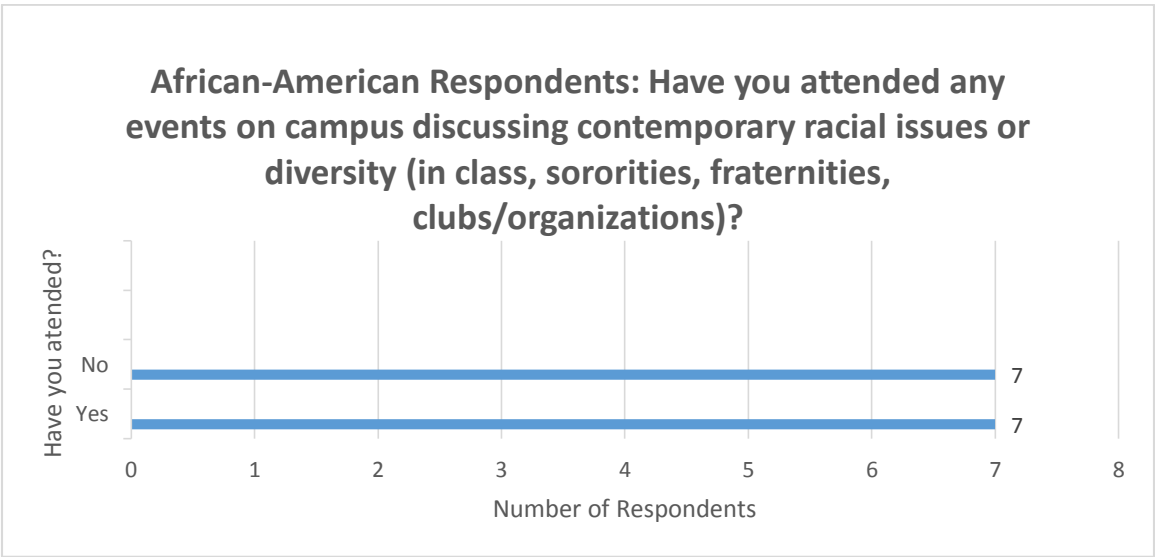


Figure 22: Racial issue and diversity attendance for African American respondents

When African-American respondents answered whether they have attended events on campus regarding racial issues and diversity, the 14 respondents were split. Seven respondents have attended on campus discussions and seven respondents have not attended. The reasons respondents gave for not attending these events were due to them being uninformed, did not have the time to attend them, or simply for not seeking out the opportunities. A few respondents wrote that they prefer to have these types of conversations with friends and teachers. The reason that they did attend these events were due to responses such as “it’s important to know other people’s views on racial issues” and that they “find racial dynamics in in the USA very interesting.” A few respondents attended these discussions with the Black Student Union and National Society of Black Engineers. Overall, the respondents that do attend like to discuss issues that are related to them.

Table 10: Quotes on racial issue and diversity attendance for African-American respondents

<b>Sample Quotes from Survey:</b>
“Yes, in BSU. To find out other people's views on racial issues occurring locally, nationally

and internationally and to see whether they have experienced similar issues in terms of problems arising due to racial diversity.”

“I have not so far. I haven't really attended because I feel like we are bringing years of negative repressed energies up , and it's sad but I don't want to be one of those people who are stuck in the past or dwell on things that happened now or in the past. I hopefully thought that one day that all these racial tensions and problems will dissipate in the coming years.I also believe people won't listen to a person of color talk about racial issues but would rather listen to someone of another race. Those are part of the reasons I haven't attended any clubs or organizations.”

#### Asian respondents: 17 responses

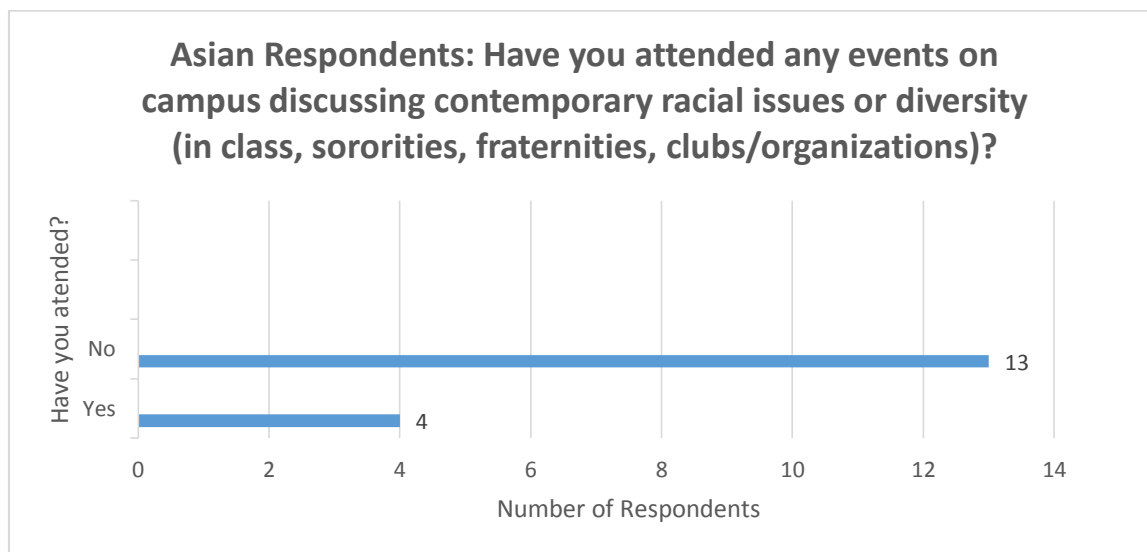


Figure 23: Racial issue and diversity attendance for Asian respondents

The group of Asian respondents were a total of 17. The disparity in their attendance was quite notable. 13 respondents have not attended on campus events discussing racial issues or diversity and only 4 respondents have attended. The reasons behind not attending were due to lack of information and advertisement of events, or they were too busy and could not attend the times that there were events. The reasons that they did attend the discussions were because they felt it was important. They have had these conversations in class in a Sociology class, SOC 1202, and have attended multicultural dinners and a club called Diversity in Games.

Table 11: Quotes on racial issue and diversity attendance for Asian respondents

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

“I don't think so. I don't recall seeing one that I had time to go to, I tend to have a lot of schedule conflicts with these kinds of events.”

“No such event ever happened.”

**Hispanic respondents: 25 responses**

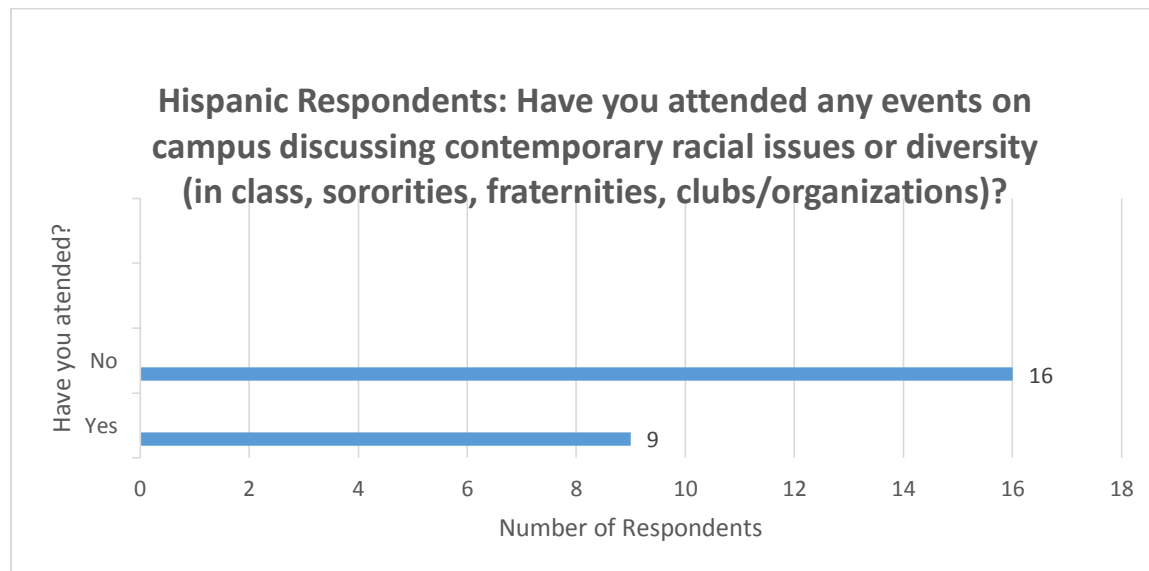


Figure 24: Racial issue and diversity attendance for Hispanic/Latino respondents

The Hispanic group of students had a total of 25 respondents. 16 have not attended campus events related to race and diversity and 9 have attended these events. The non-attendees claimed that these events just have not cross their path or they do not actively seek them out. One respondent mentioned that they did not like these events and did not find them interesting; another mentioned that it does not pertain to their social group. A few respondents listed that they were either not aware of these events happening, it did not fit into their schedule, and that there were no advertisements or emails sent their way. The organizations that prompted the attendees to take part in these discussions were BeAware from the Global Humanitarian Alliance (GHA), the Connections Program, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), the

Office of Multicultural Affairs. In the classroom, they had these discussions in the Great Problems Seminar (GPS). A few programs that they did attend were from Students Preventing Assault and Rape (SPARC), International Orientation, a Salsa Social, and the Hispanic Heritage Month Dinner. Respondents attended these events as active supporters of diversifying campus, and to understand differences in cultures. They also attended because the discussions were interesting and realize that it is important to understand these issues.

*Table 12: Quotes on racial issue and diversity attendance for Hispanic/Latino respondents*

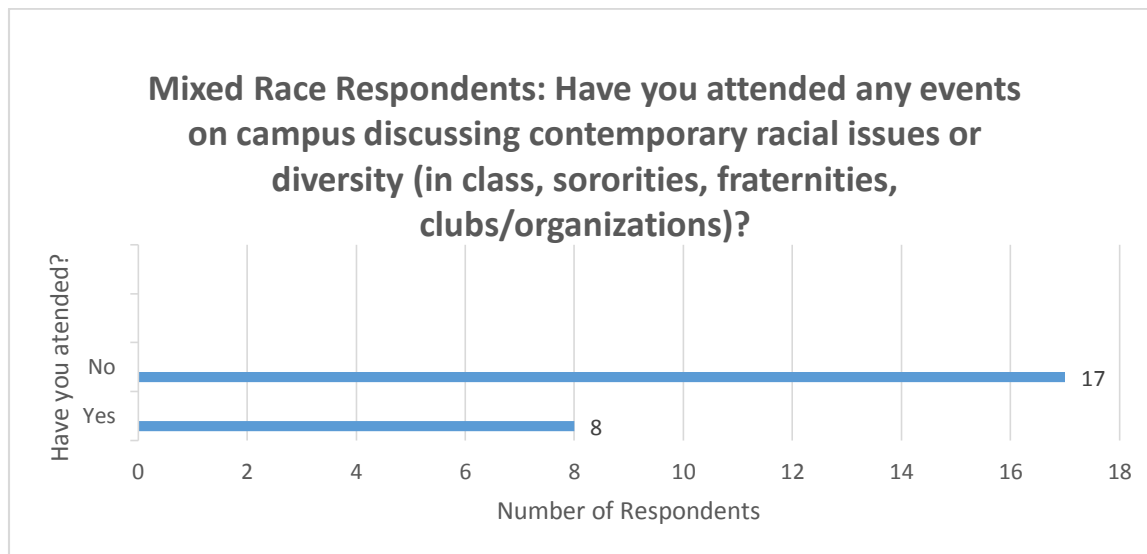
**Samples Quotes from Survey:**

“Yes, I am an active supporter of diversifying the campus as well as keeping the community up to date on our societies issues. I find it important to see if these events are convey the "right" message, which is to present unbiased facts and then let the attendees place their well-thought out opinions on the floor for discussion.”

“I haven't found the time. I also haven't had the courage to ask a friend to come with me because I am afraid they will think of me differently for showing interest in such an event.”

“Even though I am not African-American, I am still in the Black Student Union. Within BSU we discuss contemporary racial issues/diversity because it is something that is still going on if it will not stop unless we discuss the reasons behind why it is happening and how we, young adults, can approach this issue. I attend these meeting because I have witness and experience racial discrimination and I strongly believe that every "minority" race (according to the United States; I do not see how not being of a and excuse me for not writing a more specific term, but a "white" background makes you a "minority") has experience discrimination so I'm more inclination to be interested in these topics because I take it on a personal level.”

**Mixed Race (Two or more races): respondents: 25 responses**



*Figure 25: Racial issue and diversity attendance for mixed-race respondents*

The mixed race group of students were a total of 25; 17 respondents have not attended campus events discussing race and diversity, and 8 respondents have attended these events. The non-attendees claimed that they have not heard about any racially focused events, and that they did not have time or it did not fit in their schedule. One respondent mentioned that it is not a priority, and another mentioned that these events were just not appealing. A few of the respondents wrote that they “feel out of place” and “don’t know what they would get out of it.”

The respondents that have attended these events were due to programs run by the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Black Student Union (BSU), and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). One respondent mentioned that they attend Alliance meetings because “they are interested in queer issues and political activism.” Others attend because they happened to be in class or because they can relate to these discussions.

Table 13: Quotes on racial issue and diversity attendance for mixed-race respondents

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

“No, for the most part they did not work in my schedule. I am on the Connections email list, as I am Hispanic, but I am Caucasian (my family being from Spain rather than South or Central America) so I do not attend meetings as I feel out of place”

**Question 12: Have you attended any programs run by the Office of Multicultural Affairs? If so, which programs? If not, why have you not attended any?**

**Caucasian respondents: 55 responses**

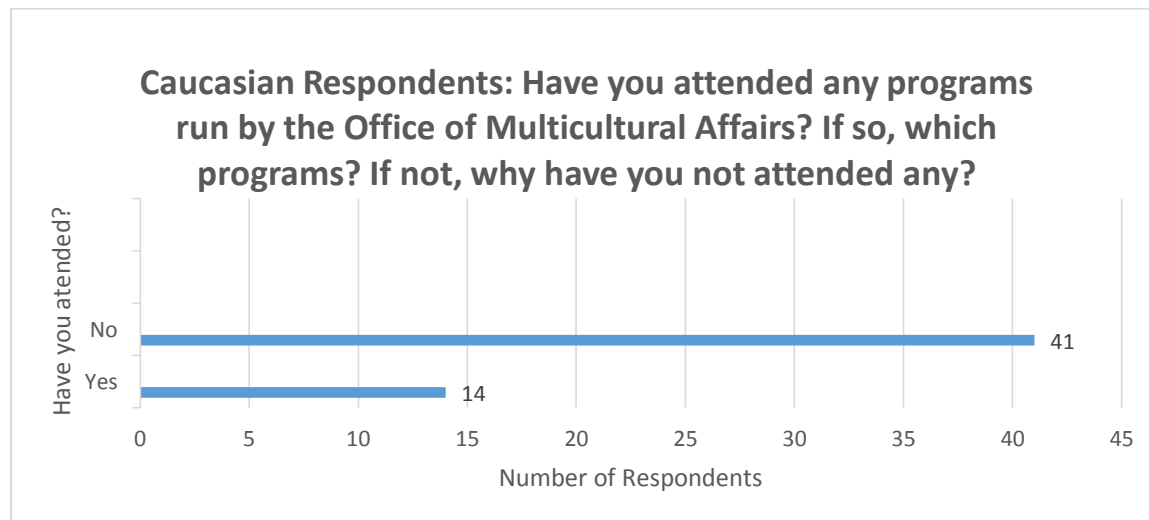


Figure 26: OMA event attendance for Caucasian respondents

This question was aimed to gauge the attendance in events or programs run by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The survey answers represent and explain what prevents or entices respondents of all race to either attend or not attend. For this group, there was a total of 55 Caucasian respondents. Overwhelmingly, 41 respondents have not attended any of these events and only 14 of these respondents have attended. The reasons that respondents gave for not attending were that they do not hear about the events or see advertisements, they were too busy or tending to other commitments, they were not interested or it was not a priority. A few respondents admitted that they just delete the emails, one respondent wrote that they did not know there was an Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). The reasons for attending these programs were due to a Black Student Union (BSU) barbecue which is not actually an OMA

program and International Night which is also not an OMA program. One respondent wrote that someone came to their Great Problems Seminar (GPS) class, and another mentioned that they have attended events to discuss gender stereotypes. A few other respondents said they attend because of free food or food at OASIS house events. One respondent attended “Hispanic History Month Dinner” and “Oman’s night.”

Table 14: Quotes on OMA program attendance for Caucasian respondents

**Sample Quotes from Survey:**

“No, I wasn't particularly interested. College is busy, it's hard to go to things that aren't your greatest interests!”

“No, I didn't know that there was an Office of Multicultural Affairs”

**African-American respondents: 14 responses**

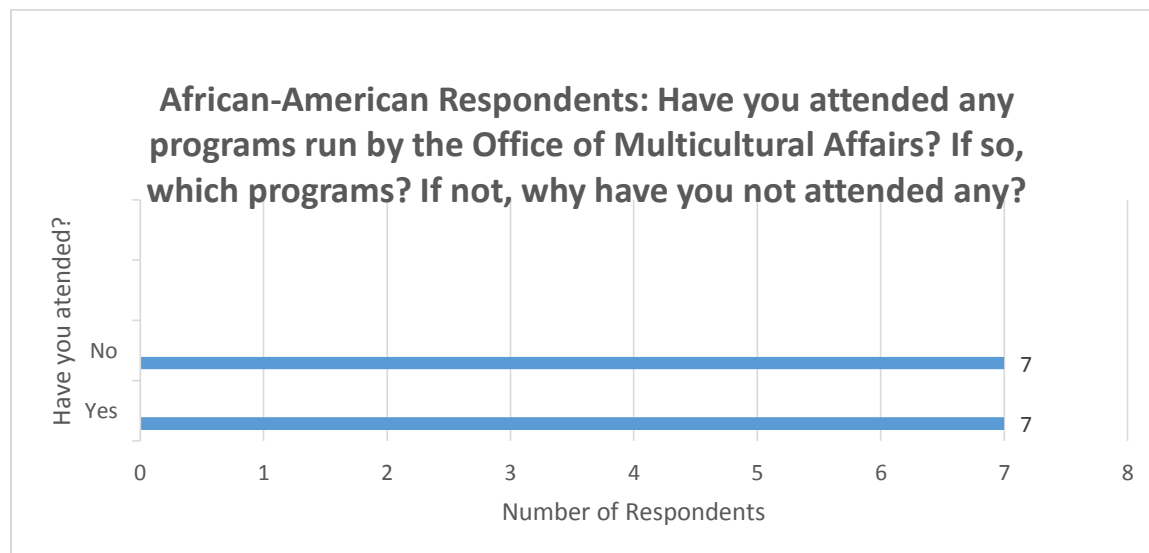
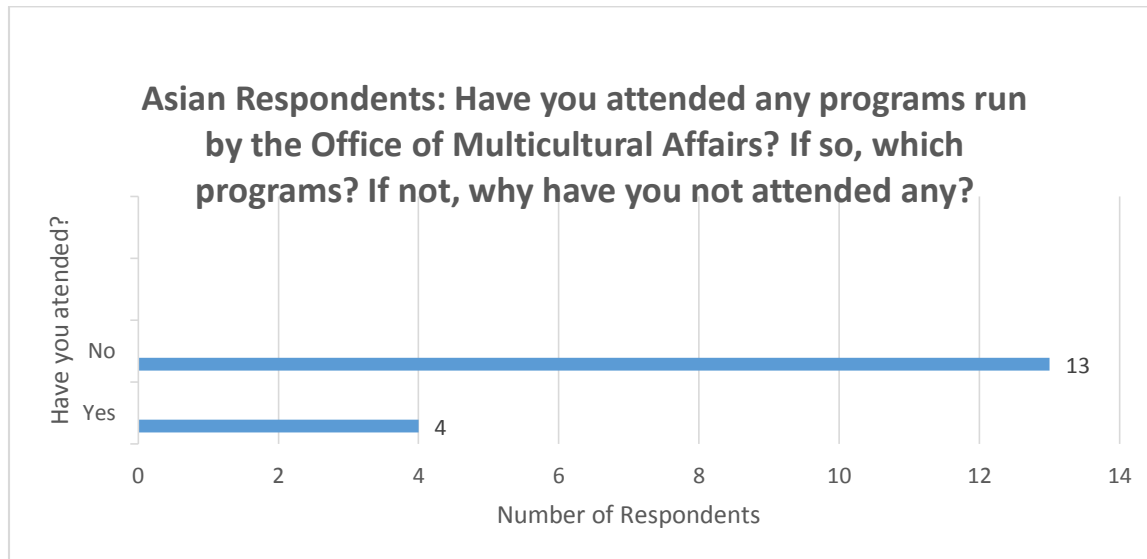


Figure 27: OMA event attendance for African-American respondents

The total respondents that were African-American were 14. They were split in attendance; 7 had attended Office of Multicultural Affairs programs and 7 had not attended. The reasons for not attending were due to respondents not being informed, not being available at the times of the programs or having too much course work to complete. One respondent admitted

that they just have not paid attention. The programs that the respondents did attend were the Difficult Talk Series, the Connections Program or other events held at the OASIS house.

**Asian respondents: 17 responses**



*Figure 28: OMA event attendance for Asian respondents*

The Asian respondents were a total of 17; 4 having attended programs sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and 13 which have not attended. The reasons that these respondents have not attended were due to lack of interest, too many commitments, not having enough time in the day, ignoring the emails, not being aware these programs are taking place, and forgetting about the programs. The few respondents that have attended, went to Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) events in the OASIS house and other OASIS house midnight breakfasts.



### Hispanic respondents: 25 responses

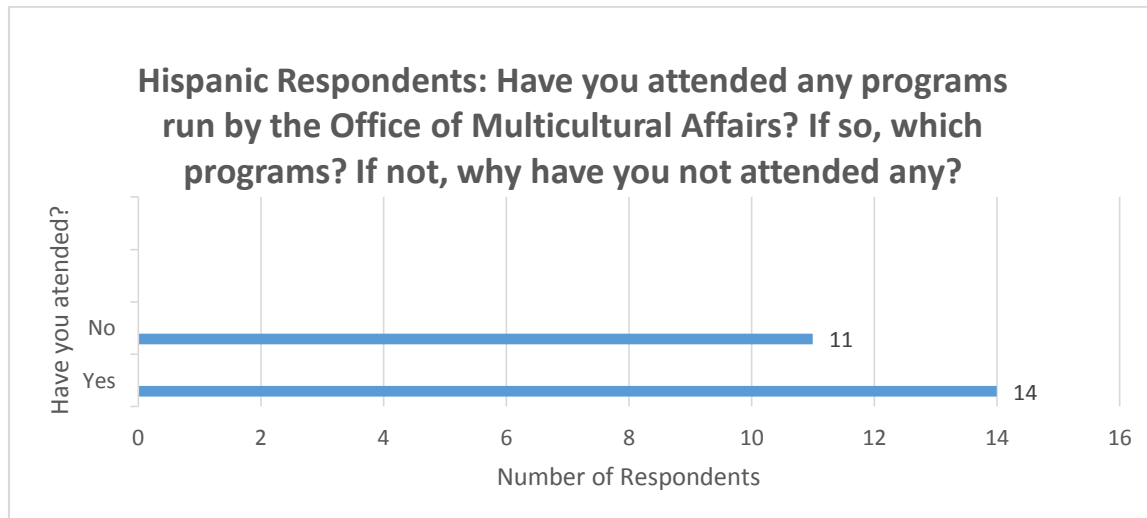


Figure 29: OMA event attendance for Hispanic/Latino respondents

The group of Hispanic respondents were 25 in total; 11 that have not attended programs sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and 14 that have attended. The respondents that did not attend explained that they were either not interested, too busy, unavailable or conflicts in their schedule did not allow them to go. The programs that respondents did attend were the Connections Program and meetings, the Can We Talk? Series, the Hispanic Heritage Month Dinner, additional workshops which were not listed, and “programs with food.”

### Mixed Race (Two or more races) respondents: 25 responses

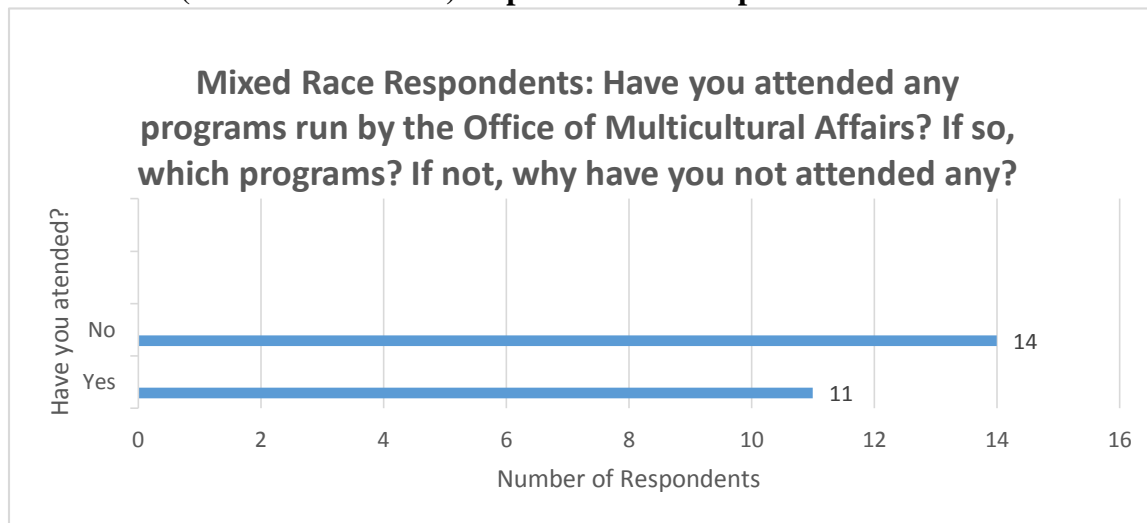
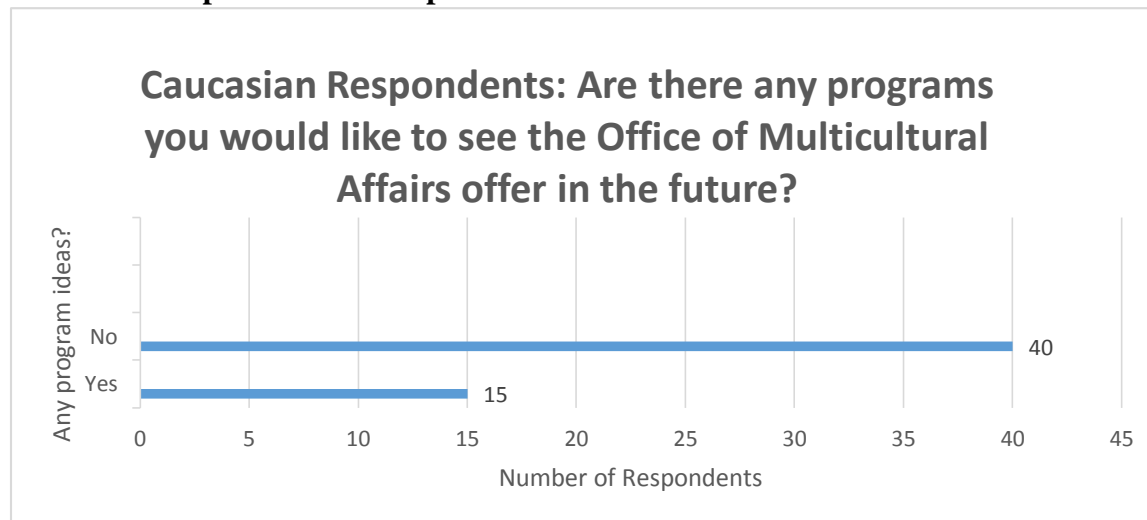


Figure 30: OMA event attendance for mixed-race respondents

The mixed race group of respondents were 25 in total; 14 have not attended programs sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, 11 have attended. The reasons why respondents have not attended were due to lack of interest, other commitments, and the lack of advertising. Additional respondents claimed that it did not fit in their schedule, they did not feel comfortable or these events only catered to students. The reasons that respondents do attend these events sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs are due to being involved with the Connections Program or simply because they see the benefits of taking part in this discussion. Other events that these respondents are the ALANA barbecue, the Hispanic Heritage Month Dinner, and a discussion about racism and protests proceeding the Freddie Gray incident in Ferguson, Missouri.

**Question 13: Are there any programs you would like to see the Office of Multicultural Affairs offer in the future?**

**Caucasian respondents: 55 responses**



*Figure 31: Program requests by Caucasian respondents*

The Caucasian group of respondents were a total of 55. Only 15 respondents had ideas for programs, and a whopping 40 did not have any ideas. Some ideas that these respondents had were quoted as followed:

*Table 15: Quotes of program requests by Caucasian respondents*

**Sample Quotes from survey:**

“Honestly, I think the entire school should get a stay work movement going. I would 10/10 participate.”

“I think that documentaries followed by safe panel discussions are an excellent way to get discussions happening.”

“I would like to see open events where topics like this can be DEBATED rather than having events where we are forced to listen to speakers.”

“A committee to keep surveying or raising awareness for modern issues.”

“more free food or sports”

“More social events”

“some type of movie and discussion during the day.”

“Open discussion/debate nights or something in regards to contemporary issues.”

“Maybe an open, civil debate/talk about various issues.”

“I don't know enough about their current programs to have any specific opinion as far as topics go. However, if they held an event in the Wedge, regardless of what it was about, it might give students (mostly freshmen) more of a chance to interact with their programs. I haven't really

been to one of their events because it always seemed out of the way. I've been handed flyers about them from various other events, but it's much more interesting (and therefore memorable) to attend an event than get handed a flyer about an event that will happen at a different time/place.”

“More free food”

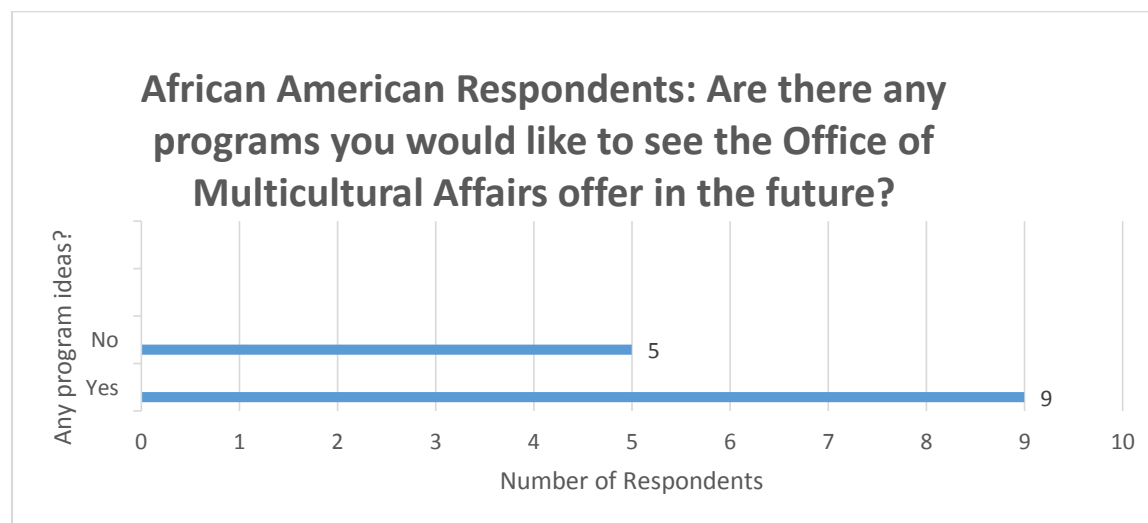
“I would like to see more programs that educate us about other races and the perspective of their lives”

“Anything to benefit thee students of WPI.”

“Perhaps some discussions about the things this survey asks about.”

“A workshop about privilege, what it is, who has different kinds, how to understand it, etc.”

### **African-American respondents: 14 responses**



*Figure 32: Program requests by African-American respondents*

The African-American group of respondents were a total of 14; 9 respondents had ideas for programs, and 5 did not have any ideas. Some ideas that these respondents had were quoted as followed:

*Table 16: Quotes of program requests by African-American respondents*

### **Sample Quotes from survey:**

“Cultural sensitivity workshops”

“Maybe it has been offered but programs on breaking stereotypes, learning how to be tolerant, and probably a program where a multicultural group of people gather and discuss their views towards the different cultures apart from their own so that if there are any wrong perceptions people can learn of them and become more culturally aware”

“the minority male in todays society”

“Maybe like open talks about race and sexism.”

“Race relations”

“Ones that relate to more people (not just controversial race issues because that only relates to a small percentage of the community).”

“Race relations”

“Ones that relate to more people (not just controversial race issues because that only relates to a small percentage of the community).”

### Asian respondents: 17 responses

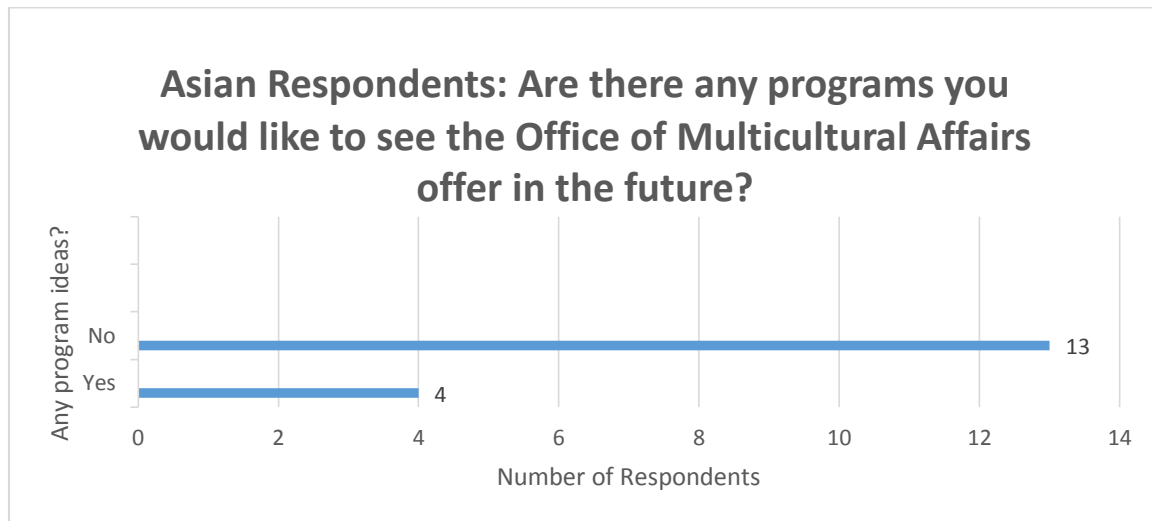


Figure 33: Program requests by Asian respondents

The Asian group of respondents were a total of 17; 4 respondents had ideas for programs, and 13 did not have any ideas. Some ideas that these respondents had were quoted as followed:

Table 17: Quotes of program requests by Asian respondents

### Sample Quotes from survey:

“Same Standard for all races.”

“Programs about hyphenated Americans”

“Racial Issues Discrimination issues Gender equality”

“Community building events”

### Hispanic respondents: 23 responses

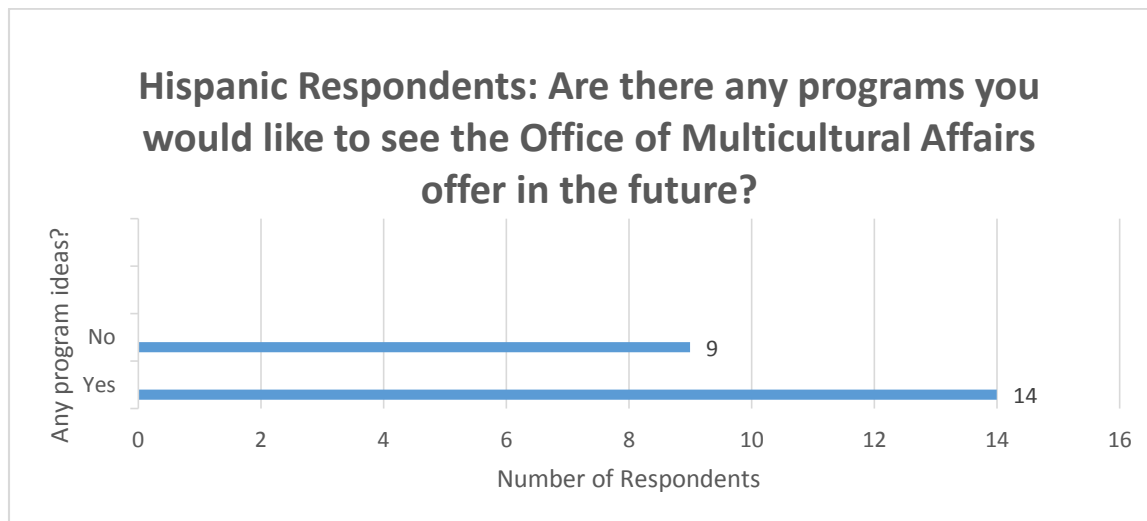


Figure 34: Program requests by Hispanic/Latino respondents

The Hispanic group of respondents were a total of 23; 14 respondents had ideas for programs, and 9 did not have any ideas. Some ideas that these respondents had were quoted as followed:

Table 18: Quotes of program requests by Hispanic/Latino respondents

#### Sample Quotes from survey:

“There should be a renewal of the M.A.S.T.E.R program that used to exist before 2012. Contact Bonnie for more information”

“1. Interracial individuals 2. Being a Hispanic and how different your world is once you step outside your door compared to being around your family 3. Being characterized as a minority and how that makes people feel”

“Soccer games.”

“Different culture presentations”

“Anything involving Brazilian food”

“Discussion forums, panels, or debates”

“More to do with Gender as well as more to do with Brazilian things.”

“A more welcoming open discussion of racial prejudices and ways we can deal with it when we face it. More defense against racism and less complaining about racism.”

“More discussions about movies; I really wanted to attend the "Dear White People," but I was busy that afternoon”

“More opportunities for minorities to discuss issues they are facing on campus/in life.”

### Mixed Race (Two or more races) respondents: 25 responses

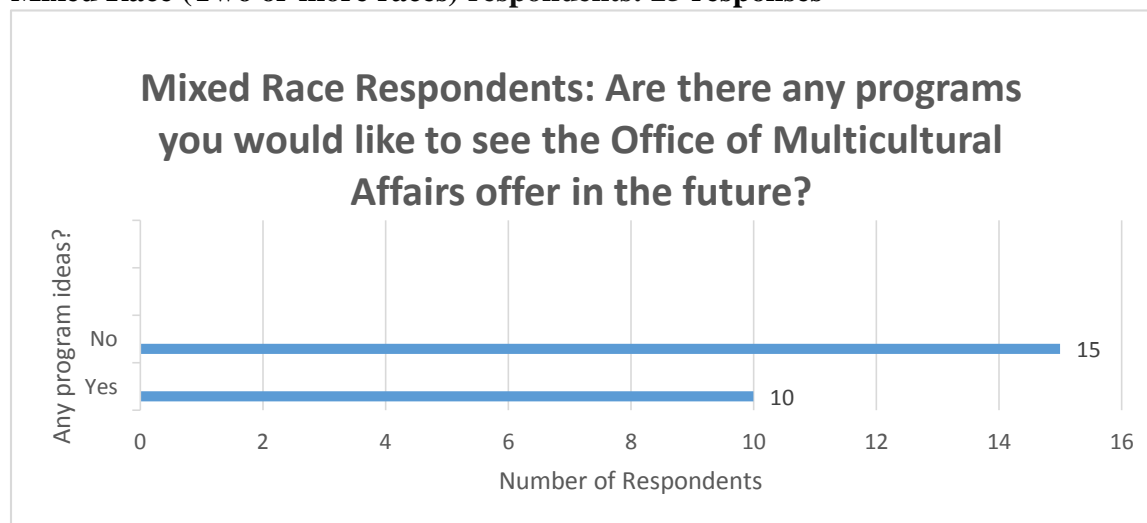


Figure 35: Program requests by mixed-race respondents

The Mixed Race group of respondents were a total of 25; 10 respondents had ideas for programs, and 15 did not have any ideas. Some ideas that these respondents had were quoted as followed:

Table 19: Quotes of program requests by mixed-race respondents

#### Sample Quotes from survey:

“Diversity sensitivity training for students, staff, and faculty”  
“more guest speakers”  
“Yes. More event tailored to International Students.”  
“Possible moral discussion regarding these topics.”  
“How to Talk About Race,” and/or something that discusses how much anti-LGBTQ discrimination still exists in the USA. (Like it being legal to fire people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, that sort of thing.)”  
“Public race discussions”  
“Addressing religious topics, as well as, race and gender diversity. I would like to also see an approach to the economic class issue.”  
“International Food Night/Day/Week”

### Interview Findings

We noted three major differences between WPI and Holy cross from our interview with Robert Jones, the first of which being their “Many points of entry” programming style. The

“many point of entry” approach to diversity programming utilized at Holy Cross focuses on having as many small events and discussions as possible. Robert Jones articulates the benefits of this approach, explaining:

“I find that having smaller venues, but a lot of them, offering them to people, that people can enter here, enter here, enter here, and not just have two major programs, because it reminds me of being in high school or middle school with the assemblies, you go to the assembly and a day after, "Hey what was the assembly about?" "Oh I don't know, I don't remember" ...But, engaging people and having people talk in smaller groups where they feel a little bit more comfortable and a little less judgement, I think that's what we've been trying to do and it's been working”. (Jones, interview)

According to Jones this approach offers increased student engagement in discussion topics, and makes students feel more comfortable participating in discussion. Like all colleges, Holy Cross has a large number of busy students, and so the varied program times can more easily fit into tight schedules. This approach runs counter to many of the initiatives here at WPI. The OMA does run programs that include discussion elements (i.e. “Can we talk?”), but these programs are held once or twice a term in quick succession. More open ended forums, like President Leshin’s two racial discussions, are successful at fostering discussion here at WPI, but oftentimes students do not feel comfortable participating if their views are unpopular (Survey results). These discussions are also irregular and a one time slot event, limiting access. One weakness of this approach is a lack of depth of the programs offered. Social justice issues tend to be vast, widespread problems that can be difficult to adequately condense into the small timespan of a program. On top of the time constraint, in order to attract as wide an audience as possible, the discussions must remain open to those at all levels of understanding of the discussion topic. As



Jones explains, “You’ve got to get people in the door first, and right now there's not a lot of people entering the door. But once they get in the door, then you can go deeper” (Jones, Interview). In this sense the OMA is facing a similar problem, having trouble getting students to take interest in social justice topics, let alone having deep discussions.

The second major difference between WPI and Holy Cross’ multicultural centers is the staff. While both center have four employees on staff, Robert Jones is an outstanding associate director for the Office of Multicultural Education. As Associate director, Jones single-handedly changed the philosophy of the office. Gone was the focus on guest speakers, replaced with discussion series and agenda free programs. Jones abounds with energy, facilitating discussions and competency training. Furthermore he is very outgoing on campus, meeting and getting to know huge swaths of the Holy Cross population. These relationships can then act as additional means of advertising for the Office’s events, and serve to relax those students who attend those events by seeing a friendly face. Having the OMA be off campus hinders the amount of interactions its’ staff has with the student body, creating an echo chamber where interested students are seen, while the rest are not. Also, because the OMA is responsible for so much on our campus, the staff may not have equitable time to spend interacting with the student body or to spend facilitating discussions.

The third major takeaway from the Robert Jones interview was the success of programs without agendas. Oftentimes diversity programs are designed to have certain discussions, with topics selected well in advance. The “Can We Talk” series the OMA conducts is reflective of this idea, where the topic for the term is sometimes decided months in advance. The programs are then structured for the duration of the talk, rarely allowing participants to talk about things not on the agenda. Jones found that at Holy Cross, “students felt they were too programmed, they

just wanted to come in and talk, and just no agenda or anything”(Jones, Interview). Jones implemented this student feedback by starting a lunch discussion group. Students bring their own lunch and go to a classroom, and are free to discuss anything they desire. There is no agenda or structure. One of the Office of Multicultural Education’s other light-agenda programs is called the “The Coming Together Dialogue Series”. The program takes place in the library and participants are expected to bring their own lunch. It is targeted towards people who would never go to a traditional diversity event or workshop. This series starts with a guest speaker for about ten minutes, then allows for the remaining 90 minutes to be spent on questions and open dialogue. This style of programming taps into students’ underlying desire for discussion, a sentiment we saw reflected in our student survey, but tempered with issues of discomfort and unawareness.

Another common trait that both Holy Cross and BSU shared was their diversity programming for faculty and staff. At Holy Cross, faculty, staff and students are welcome at all of the Office of Multicultural Education events. Jones has lobbied for his Lunch and Learn programs to be considered professional development, allowing the staff with hour long lunch breaks to attend the 90 minute programs. Faculty and staff are also included in community service opportunities. At BSU, a committee from Student Affairs hosts monthly meetings over a lunch hour called “Supporting Students of...”. These meetings are only open to faculty and administrators. Marrow mentions that a number of successful programs have been spawned out of these meetings, the “Not in my Name” program to support Muslim students is one example. Including faculty/administration/staff in programming can act as a signal boost for programs being held, and can help those interested in diversity and social justice to join forces. Having

faculty pass along word of events to their students, or even offering incentives to attend can tremendously impact the number of people participating in discussion.

Despite the similarities in targeting faculty and administrators, the core methods of Holy Cross' Office of Multicultural Education and BSU's Center for Multicultural Affairs are vastly different. The BSU approach to diversity programming, and to a lesser extent the RPI approach, focused on collaboration with other departments and student organizations. The key to the BSU approach was in having the center for multicultural affairs act as a facilitator and host for diversity/cultural awareness programming. Unlike our OMA or Holy Cross' OME, the BSU Center has a large facility to host events and programs. To spread the word about the center, Marrow enlists a series of diverse student ambassadors. These ambassadors help create the programs the center hosts, and help to advertise these programs to their peers. Marrow makes sure that these ambassadors are from all races, to help dispel the myth that the Center is only for students of color. Utilizing the Center's space, they host monthly cultural celebrations, aided by students groups and the Office of International Engagement. These programs often mirror monthly programming topics of our OMA, like Black or Latino history months.

Often the Center's most successful programs are those conducted with another organization. One Example is the Diwali Holiday celebration. Marrow explains, "Like our Diwali, that's always really well attended. That might be because of the collaboration with the office of international engagement. We have a pretty good population of exchange students. Asian Lunar New Year is the same, it's easy to get those two events to fill up because of the collaboration with other departments cross divisionally". This quote highlights the wide variety of institutions at BSU devoted to diversity and cultural awareness. At WPI, the OMA is the primary institution involved in such programming, and so they hold a responsibility to meet the

needs of our varied student body. At BSU each of these organizations can focus all their efforts on their smaller tasks, targeting specific populations and creating programs tailored to their needs. In some respects this is like Jones' many point of entry approach applied to the administrative side of the equation. Rather than having a monolithic entity in charge of meeting the needs of all students, this entity has been broken up at BSU into a number of smaller institutions. In doing so BSU provides a number of different carefully crafted entry points into their diversity programming. It is also important to note that the BSU Center has only two employees, whereas the OMA has four.

The most successful program that Marrow facilitated was the screening and *discussion* of the film Selma. Part of the success of the discussion was the inclusion of BSU's Social Justice Institute and social work professors, which further speak to the benefits of cross organization collaboration. It is interesting to note in light of the Holy Cross over-programming feedback, that the most attended event included free form discussion. This may hint at a broad student desire to engage in discussions that is currently being unmet at many campuses. How the two schools attempt to tackle these needs is notably different however. Whereas Jones strives to create programs to draw new students into social justice discussions, Marrow puts on programs requested by interested students and student organizations. For programs she does decide to host without request, the student ambassadors or other student groups influence the event planning. BSU has diversity and cultural awareness programming spread over a number of organizations, while these programs are primarily handled by the OME at Holy Cross. BSU's larger number of organizations dealing with these issues could be related to BSU's student population being triple that of Holy Cross.

At RPI, the mantle of diversity programming has been spread between Student Life and the Engineering Education Outreach and Diversity Center. The Center has two employees, both of which are at least partially involved in outreach, including the director for Diversity and Women's Programming at RPI. In this way RPI's Center differs drastically from the other offices and centers we examined. The OMA isn't nearly as focused on outreach, nor is the Office of Multicultural Education or the Center for Multicultural Affairs. Outreach at WPI is primarily conducted by the STEM education center. Furthermore, the diversity programs that the Center does run are very focused on the workplace. Ruel explains:

"I work closely with groups that are underrepresented in engineering to develop workshops that address professional competencies that prepare students to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. We examine the skills that recruiters seek in college graduates and determine where students need improvement. The students and I work closely with practicing professionals to deliver workshops open to the entire campus that help students develop those critical skills"(Ruel, interview).

These workshops are developed in collaboration with five student organizations, Rensselaer's Center for Career and Professional Development, and the Archer Center for Student Leadership. This strong focus on input from a variety of other groups is similar to the BSU approach to diversity programming, and unlike Holy Cross' individual driven program planning. Here student organizations have a direct hand in creating the programs their members will likely attend. Similar workshops exist at WPI, but they are often created by affected affinity groups, like the Society of Women Engineers, or the National Society of Black Engineers. RPI's institutional focus on workplace success is a noted difference from the OMA's cultural awareness/social issue focus. Ruel's focus is similar to the focus of our Career Development

Center, except directed towards underrepresented students of all ages. Ruel is also more pragmatic in her advertisements of her programs. In the emails she sends to students, she will explicitly state what students will get out of the programs. Our OMA does not put such clear cut labels in their advertising, leaving the benefits to be inferred. Whether or not one agrees with such commoditization of diversity programs, this approach can help students see benefits they had not considered. Another point to note in regards to advertising is that at BSU, RPI, and Holy Cross, the offices and centers had means to email/notify all students on campus of their programming. WPI's new restriction on mass emailing creates a unique advertising challenge for the OMA, which is why retooling alternative means of advertising for the OMA is so important.

Michigan State University's Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives is similar to BSU's Center for Multicultural Affairs, and to a lesser extent Ruel's programming at RPI. Specifically, MSU has a tremendous focus on getting student organizations involved in event planning. Students help plan events like the King Day celebrations, or Native American pow-wow events, where attendance can reach over 1000 people. Through this involvement in the creation of these events, students become deeply invested in the success of the events. That drive for success unleashes students desire to advertise the event through their networks. Tapping these student advertising resources offers an incredibly powerful tool to reach new segments of the student body. Another focus of the Office for Inclusion Initiatives is the creation of a diversity related e-learning course. In a similar vein to alcohol.edu and the sexual harassment training here on WPI's campus, this e-learning course will be mandatory for all students. This e-learning course also had input from student focus groups. These focus groups were designed to find out what it would take for students to feel that MSU was an inclusive campus. An additional program MSU runs is a difficult dialogues type program. Where this program differs from

similar programs conducted by our OMA, the MSU program takes place in residence halls. This is an interesting strategy to get people in the door to these discussions, making the door as close to students as possible.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Our team has identified a number of areas in our OMA and in their approach to programming that need improvement. In this chapter we will present a list of these areas, and other approaches being used by different schools. We will also be presenting a series of recommendations to ameliorate some of the problems we identified. Additionally we will be providing areas for future IQP groups to consider.

### **Conclusions**

The first set of our conclusions were derived from our student survey. By looking at data from Questions 6-9, we found that White students aren't as interested or comfortable talking about racial issues as their peers. Those White respondents also don't see social justice topics, or diversity on campus as being as important as their peers do. Male students have a similar trend to white respondents when compared to their female peers, answering lower on all four questions. A third important trend is that Juniors were the class year most interested in social justice issues. This receptiveness fades by senior year however. Looking at the open response questions, we see that the OMA is primarily reaching African American students with their advertising. Three quarters of White and Asian students haven't attended an OMA program, and many students hadn't heard of the OMA before our survey. A common request from our respondents was for more programs with discussion components such as open environment forums, debates, and discussions following film screenings. Many respondents also proposed program ideas with specific topics relative to their interests including being a minority, privilege, and current events regarding targeted racism. While students are making requests for open forums, they still feel wary to participate in discussions in their current form. As we saw in Question 10 (barriers preventing discussion), students would like to feel more comfortable



without fearing they will be judged for what they have to say. Minority students often feel uncomfortable talking to white students about race, and some white students felt their opinions wouldn't be respected at discussions. From our Michigan State interview, we learned that this discomfort can be mitigated by implementing an e-learning course that educates students on how to have conversations about race.

Through our four interviews we also learned a great deal about successful programming tactics. Holy Cross' Officer for Multicultural Education moved away from having several speaking events a year to a discussion and cultural awareness workshop style of programming. Their focus is also on getting people in the door, specifically targeting individuals who would not typically attend a diversity program. The BSU Center for Multicultural Affairs offers a large space to host events, and focuses on facilitating and organizing events in the space that students request. Their Center does a tremendous amount of collaboration with student affinity groups as well as other departments. This collaboration acts to enrich their programs and help the Center reach wide swaths of the student body. RPI's diversity programming was focused on workplace competency workshops, five of which are developed in conjunction with student affinity groups. RPI also explicitly states the benefits of their programs in their advertisements. Michigan State had a similar focus to RPI and BSU involving incorporating student groups into their program planning, and more importantly, their program advertising. Michigan State also now requires all students to complete an online course about diversity and race.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. Improve online advertising by revamping the Facebook and website presence, and improve on-campus advertisement to reach all segments of the student population.**

One of the differences between our OMA and the other centers and offices we looked at was in the extent of advertising. Our OMA does advertise programs, but primarily through the CONNECTIONS program, through student affinity groups, and through the new “represented” alias. Recently they have been adding their events to Techsync, which is a step in the right direction to reach a broader audience. Our OMA has largely been ignoring their social media presence, with their Twitter and Facebook accounts dormant. Adding events to Facebook would be another important way to target a broader audience. By having a number of students RSVP over Facebook, other students would receive notifications that a number of their friends are going to an event near them. These social media advertising duties could be given to an OMA intern, or be given to representatives from affinity groups to advertise programs they are collaborating on. Additionally as seen at RPI, the OMA should consider listing the benefits of attending their programs in their advertisements. These lists of benefits could be tailored to each target audience to maximize turnout from various populations.

- 2. Focus on collaboration with student affinity groups, coordinate event planning with representatives from these groups.**

The OMA used to significantly more collaboration with student affinity groups campus. They worked with affinity groups to host the Black History Month and Latin American History Month dinners among other events. Eventually the student participation trailed off, leaving the OMA in full control of the diversity program

planning process. RPI, BSU, and Michigan State University all utilize collaboration with student affinity groups to great success. As Paulette Granberry Russell explained, having students work on the programs from start to finish makes them more invested in the programs, and their input can be valuable in making sure the programs appeal to students. Having students invested in the advertising part of program planning is a way to tap existing social media networks for easy advertising. Specifically representatives from student affinity groups are even better suited for advertising assistance, as they will have access to their group alias to quickly spread the word to their fellow members. The OMA could stipulate that in order to receive funding for events student groups would be required to help run a certain number of programs a year, or the OMA could propose changes to the charters of the organizations.

**3. Implement the many-points-of-entry approach to diversity programming, attempt to get as many people in the door as possible, similar to Holy Cross.**

In our interview with Robert Jones, he discussed this style of programming and three main benefits of this approach: flexibility, continuity, and comfort. By having a larger number of smaller events, these events could be distributed throughout the days of the week and times of day. This wider range of program times would allow busy students to better be able to fit an OMA program into their hectic schedules. According to Mr. Jones, the problem with large speaker style events, is that the discussions about the speaker topics will fade. By having smaller programs distributed throughout the term, these discussions would keep happening. Students may start to forget about the subject, but the next program would rope them back in. Question 10 (barriers preventing discussion) from our survey further suggests that this style of programming would make

students more comfortable in attending OMA events. A number of students feared they would be attacked for their views; with a smaller group, there will be fewer potential threats. Having a more close-knit discussion group in the smaller programs of the many-point-of-entry-approach would help to ease that anxiety. Part of students' anxiety could be caused by a high level of external motivation not to show prejudice as Richeson and Trawalter (2008) investigated in their research on prejudice.

**4. Try more programs and events that are open forums. These forums need not be large, but their presence can help to break down negative stigma in discussing race.**

As we saw in our survey results, both African American and Caucasian students requested programs featuring discussion portions, or entirely devoted to discussion. Considering that Caucasian students were some of the most likely students to never have attended an OMA program before, providing these programs could be an excellent way to get more White students in the door. WPI did break ground on this front since we started our IQP, putting forward two open forum discussions about race. These programs were well attended, and the OMA should do its best to continue having these discussions. As we mentioned however, large discussions can intimidate those who are shy, or don't hold popular views. Ensuring that there is a mix to the size of these conversations is another important way involve more students.

**5. Designate a person to maintain the history of the OMA, and continue updating for future years.**

In order to improve the services and quality for diversity efforts on campus, we recommend future students to continue updating the progress that has been made thus far. As

the first attempt to create a real timeline and history of events from the very beginning of the founding of the diversity offices on campus to today's events, was started during this project, it would be beneficial to designate a person to maintain the history of the Office Multicultural Affairs.

## **6. Collect feedback and continue collecting attendance data from programs.**

An initiative that many other campuses use to gauge student events is feedback. We recommend collecting feedback directly after events that the Office of Multicultural Affairs sponsors or collaborates on. This would mean collecting a few questions and thoughts from students and faculty that are attending. A section where students could write their open and anonymous thoughts proves to be a way they can honestly and thoroughly vocalize how they feel events were organized and implemented. Additionally, continuing to track attendance is important in determining what programs to keep running, what programs to get rid of, and finally what programs that would have increased attendance and success. In analyzing attendance data from the previous year shows that an average of 10-30 attendees for discussions and small events was the norm; however, during this project attendance has increased to about 20-50 for discussions and events. This may be due to having fewer programs but more relative topics to what students want. Tracking attendance for events is important, as well as creating event posters.

## **7. Develop tactics to target and engage students that are not interested and that do not report high attendance programs and events.**

Developing tactics to target and engage students that are not generally interested in diversity topics is one of the most important recommendations of this project. The two racial

groups that produce the lowest attendance are Caucasian and Asian students. Caucasian students wrote in the anonymous survey that they feel they have nothing to contribute to these topics, or are judged for their opinion. Caucasian respondents within the survey mentioned overall that programs they would like to see are documentaries or movies followed by safe panel discussions, open event discussions and debates, a committee to raise awareness on modern issues, educational programs about race, social events and mixers, better advertising and more flyers. Overall this group of students would feel comfortable if they were trained on how to approach other races and what other races go through. What could be beneficial for these students is if they had to walk in the shoes of a minority who deals with struggles that they themselves do not face. Asian respondents claimed they do not attend events because they are not informed. They had few program ideas but mentioned four ideas for programming: same standard for all races, programs about hyphenated Americans, racial issues, discrimination issues, gender equality and community building events. Overall, the barriers that this group faces are they do not feel as comfortable expressing themselves aloud and want to be educated on these topics that they do not necessarily feel confident about. Our interviews revealed that student organization collaborations provide some of the most successful events. Therefore pushing for sororities and fraternities (where 1 in every 3 WPI students are members and are all mostly white students) to educate their members about more than just alcohol and rape prevention could be a milestone for this campus. Student organizations have a lot of influence on campus and starting with diversity trainings for leaders and organizations could increase engagement for diversity issues.

**8. Collaborate with Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division (IGSD) to develop a strategic plan to prepare sophomores to enter the international community and to continue expanding the mindset of juniors and seniors when they return from abroad.**

The final recommendation is allowing for a plan for IGSD to promote global competency in terms of diversity. Asking juniors that return from the Interactive Qualifying Projects (IQP) to present how their mindset changed when being exposed to other communities around the world could show how race really does matter outside of the “WPI bubble.” Collaborating with this office to prepare sophomores for this experience could increase their engagement in diversity issues. In addition to this, seniors who eventually fall off the grid with engagement need to be reminded of the importance of diversity which they will be exposed to them once they enter the workforce. Preparing the majority of these students for experiences or situations they may face in the future is something that has not been done on this campus. Strategically planning events that are relative to students’ needs and targeting the time during college where their opinions are always changing, it is important to educate all grade levels to prepare them for the future.

**9. Electronic learning course about race and diversity similar to Alcohol Edu and risk assessment training in Greek organizations.**

As we saw in our survey results of Question 10 (barriers preventing discussion), many students do not feel comfortable or prepared for discussing racial issues. During this IQP, there have been discussions about adding diversity training during New Student Orientation with a similar program to Alcohol Edu and the mandatory training for the prevention of rape and sexual harassment. As Paulette Granberry Russell explained in our Michigan State interview, the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives have begun to create an e-learning program to educate

all of their 38,786 undergraduate students. In creating this program, they are consulting student focus groups in order to explore what measures MSU should take to become more inclusive.

Targeting freshmen when they arrive to WPI can help to change their views when they are most malleable, according to Sears, Huddy, and Shaffer's Symbolic Politics Theory.



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## Appendix A

### Survey Questions

#### Demographic Questions

1. What year are you at WPI?
2. How would you classify your race?
3. What is your gender?
4. Are you an international student? If yes, where are you from?

These questions will have a 1-10 scale and an “I’m not sure” option.

We will be defining contemporary racial issues to be flare ups of racial tension both in the United States and around the World.

1. How **interested** are you in discussing contemporary racial issues, such as those that occurred in Ferguson, Missouri this past year?

*Not interested at all 0-10 Extremely Interested*

2. How **comfortable** do you feel in discussing contemporary racial issues?

*Not comfortable at all 0-10 Extremely comfortable*

3. Do you think discussing contemporary racial issues is **important**?

*Not important at all 0-10 Extremely important*

4. Do you think it is **important** to have a campus whose population is diverse in terms of racial and gender identities, sexual orientations, and ideologies?

*Not important at all 0-10 Extremely important*

#### Open Response Questions:

1. Are any barriers on campus preventing you from having discussions about contemporary racial issues?

2. Have you attended any events on campus discussing contemporary racial issues or diversity (in class, sororities, fraternities, clubs/organizations)? Please explain why you have or have not attended any such events.

3. Have you attended any programs run by the Office of Multicultural Affairs? If so, which programs? If not, why have you not attended any?

4. Are there any programs you would like to see the Office of Multicultural Affairs offer in the future?

5. Do you feel like you have a safe place on campus to express yourself and your opinions? If so, where?

Interview Transcriptions

### **College of the Holy Cross**

0:12 Keith: So Mr. Jones, you are the Associate Director for the Office of Multicultural Education. Can you run us through some of your duties and responsibilities as associate director?

0:19 Mr. Jones: As associate director, I'm in charge of program development and training, and a little bit of assessment but the assistant director does more of the assessment stuff. I'm also the point person for, sort of like point person liaison with the academic side of the house, being that we are housed in student affairs.

0:46 Alyssa: How would you characterize the level of civic engagement on campus?

0:50 Mr. Jones: At Holy Cross, I mean you know Civic Engagement is a broad term. I would break it down to say that we, the majority of our students do what I call direct service, meaning working in the soup kitchens, tutoring, working at the Boy's and Girl's Club, the YMCA, the YWCA, but mainly most of it is in direct service. We do have a



couple of organizations that students belong to that engage in some sort of a political process, college democrats, college republicans; we don't have the anarchists yet but I can see that becoming a group. But like I said when you talk about civic engagement, engaging with the city of Worcester, I think we have a lot of students doing it but it's mainly on the level of direct service and not so much policy review, sort of looking at the root causes of things. So we are working on that, doing that more.

1:59 Alyssa: Just a follow up to that, how do you guys plan for those kind of events, do students just sign up, or is there a process for that?

2:05 Mr. Jones: Well, we do have the Donelan Center for Community Based Learning (CBL) so we are adding more every year to courses that have a community learning component where students are taking a particular class, poly-sci or economics, sociology or anthropology. As part of that they have to work with a community based organization. So that works. And then also we have a Student Programs for Urban Development (SPUD), and we have close to 700-800 students every year and that's where a lot of tutoring, I know that we are at every single high school, every single middle school, we have that. This year, what we initiated was what we called, one day programs of service, because you know your academics are number one, you want to be involved but you don't really have the time, especially if you have labs and all that, so what we have started doing this year out of our office of government and community relations is giving opportunities for not only students, but also staff and faculty, to participate in sort of like one day things that happen so we solicit those from all the community agencies in

Worcester, and they tell us next Saturday we are doing this, or Wednesday evening we are doing this and then people can sign up. They can still be engaged and it's not taking up a commitment over a time. It's a one and done kind of thing.

3:42 Alyssa: That's actually a perfect idea, because I feel like at WPI, students are always rushing, they feel like they never have enough time. We're on 7-week terms, and time becomes a constraint for students and people that would want to be involved don't want to make a commitment of once a week or once a month, they want to be able to just do it whenever they want, so I think that's a really good idea.

4:09 Keith: How would you characterize the interest in social justice topics on campus? What issues are most important to your students?

4:15 Mr. Jones: I think a majority of our students, I would say about upwards to about 85-90% of our students are very much interested in social justice. Now, what that translates into is an interest, wanting to do more, but like you said earlier before, time constraints, academic constraints, and there is also sort of the "I wanna care but I can't care too much," Part of our motto is men and women in service for and with others. Being a Jesuit, Catholic University/College, so often I have to make choices. I would say some of the, when talking about just on campus, what some of the issues are, one of the main things, in actually a group that I direct, the multicultural peer educators, we're gonna have a fishbowl later this month on segregation on campus, and when we talk about segregation, we are not just taking racial, we are talking about students not

interacting with each other. And so, the title of it is called: "Segregation: Forced by Choice or by Indifference" and I use the example, we are a heavy sport's school also as well as highly academic. The teams are totally isolated from everyone else, I mean we have the crew, the swimming, the hockey, the basketball, the football, the volleyball, whatever team; they eat together, they live in the residence halls together, and there is very little action - there is a lack of interaction. But you are also separated and segregated by major. We are a liberal arts school but our science majors are totally segregated because once you get into your junior or senior year, you're half lab, half class. You don't see them - you see them coming and going and that's it. And then you have the friend groups and unfortunately and of course at WPI, it's very similar. People who have five friends and they don't want to get to know anybody else. I would say Holy Cross is about 60% loners, meaning students that go to class, go to the academic buildings, eat and then they go home, they go to the library and then they watch netflix. It's sort of a like a disconnect. I think that's the major thing on it. The other is, the sort of lack of involvement on a meaningful level and even though, like I said, we are in high schools, we are in community agencies, it's almost as though people are building a resume. So in other words, I can go to a middle school or I can work with a refugee organization and tutor the refugee kids but God-forbid I want to find out where they are from, how did they get here. And then students don't really want to talk about that, because in a way it's a little sad and depressing, it's about widening your experience, and not just like "Oh yeah, I tutored 6th graders in biology or science." So those are the two major ones, I also think in terms of social justice I look at well-being as being a part of social justice and the culture and the pressure to do alcohol is just extremely looming. So my advice to students

is "Hey if you didn't drink before you got here, continue." Because a lot of students come and they are like "Ooh, I'm a college student, we're supposed to drink." Those are the ones that end up getting medically transported and getting drunk because they are not used to it. Those would be the top three, I think."

8:28 Alyssa: What do you think are the stigmas related to discussing civic engagement, since it is such a touchy subject?

8:38 Mr. Jones: I think judgement, I call it the J-word. People don't want to be judged. And it's also - I believe this happens a lot on campus - I would say on every campus that I have ever been, the sort of pressure to conform. If you have a differing point of view, or a differing experience, depending on where you are at, you'll either be embraced or shunned. I think institutes of higher learning, especially at Holy Cross, you know we are a liberal arts college, we should be able to talk about any and all topics without judgement. More so, from the aspect - and this is the educator in me talking - from the aspect of trying to understand the "other", whatever the other is because you already know what you know. Unfortunately, for a lot of people, their motto is "I know what I know, don't confuse me with the facts." That's why I think folks don't engage on it. Matter of fact, my multicultural peer educators are embarking on a project where they are going to have a couple of drop boxes where people can anonymously can just put in questions they'd like to ask the "other" whatever the "other" might be - whether it's racial and ethnic, or whether it's socioeconomic, which is another thing, we found a surge in people doing what we call "class passing" - people not wanting, more so people that are

poor and not wanting people to know they are poor but it also happens on the other end, where people don't want people to know they are wealthy, because of the stigma associated with "Oh, you didn't earn it" well nobody earned it we are products of our parents, we're not in a position, yet, to be on our own. Most of us don't choose our family, that you're in born into. But I see it on both ends, and how it's just very difficult because there's so much baggage associated with socioeconomic class and how people try to pass.

10:58 Keith: Have you attempted to change the way students view civic engagement issues? If so, in what ways have you attempted to make that change?

11:08 Mr. Jones: We try to make, personally in my position in the Office of Multicultural Education, try to do as much programming as possible, so the way that I look at it is to try to have a lot of entry points for people to enter into the dialogue for people to feel comfortable to just kind of walk in and so I do a plethora of programs and matter of fact some people have said to me: "Oh, Rob, you do too much" and my thing is like, no we don't do enough because having a speaker come and there's 700 people in the auditorium or something, in the ballroom area is great. But I find that having smaller venues, but a lot of them, offering them to people, that people can enter here, enter here, enter here, and not just have two major programs, because it reminds me of being in high school or middle school with the assemblies, you go to the assembly and a day after, "Hey what was the assembly about?" "Oh I don't know, I don't remember" ...But, engaging people and having people talk in smaller groups where they feel a little bit more comfortable and a little less judgement, I think that's what we've been trying to do and it's been working.

But there are those that say "Oh, you know you shouldn't do more, you should go deeper" and I say "Yeah, but you gotta get people in the door first, and right now there's not a lot of people entering the door." But once they get in the door, then you can go deeper. I just try to give a lot of different opportunities, and so a lot of my programs I'm not looking to get 50-75 people. I'm doing a program next week on "Power of Storytelling: Using Your Story to Transform and Inspire People." I sent the notice out yesterday and already I got 7 people; if I can keep it to 15, it'll be great. If I get 30, eh. Smaller size classrooms, you get a lot of people, then everybody is not going to get an opportunity to talk. Part of me doing that program is getting people to understand, that if you tell your story, you never can under-estimate how you can inspire another person. And we get rid of the stigma of terminal uniqueness, which I think a lot of people suffer from, like "What I'm going through, what I've experienced, only me. I'm the only one and nobody could ever understand." I've had a lot of success in people going "Wow, your story is like my story," and they look totally different and they grew up in different parts of the country. But it's the same. I always refer to Maya Angelou's poem "We're more alike than unlike". That's really the truth of it. I try to do as many things as possible to reach people where they're at but also to give them a lot of opportunities especially those who, you know most people are shy, and we don't always sit in a circle, which I've found is like 'Oh my god we're sitting in a circle and now I have to talk, Everybody's looking at me! Aaaaah!'

14:41 Alyssa: Does Holy Cross have a diversity plan?

14:45 Jones: [We're] developing it. We just recently-- I work in the office of multicultural education and we just recently established an office of diversity and

inclusion that is on the academic side and we have a chief div officer and they're mainly, their goal for the next couple years is looking about adding more diversity to our faculty and staff and reviewing the tenure process and things like that. In our office, we just started thinking about sort of what is our 3-5 year plan going to look like, and I've only been at the college since 2009, but as a fulltime associate director since 2012, so I'm just now finishing my 4th year there. I was a consultant prior to, so I got to know all aspects of the college coming into student affairs. We currently don't have a comprehensive plan, and I've been really pushing for us to do that, because you need to establish benchmarks and figure out what you're doing instead of programming against a vacuum and throwing things at a wall to hope it sticks.

16:07 Keith Could you tell us more about the programs your office runs? I know you've mentioned some already, Lunch and Learn was one I saw mentioned on your website.

16:11 Jones: Yes, I established that three years ago, a Lunch and Learn Program and it was a way to get-- and by the way, all the programs that we do out of our office are open to students faculty AND staff, and we work very hard to make sure that staff for instance at a lunch they're 90 minutes. Well most hourly staff support staff, secretaries, administrative assistants, they get like one hour at certain times. We really lobby, at Holy Cross supervisors have to allow the administrative staff because it's part of professional development. We started doing those because we wanted to get folks who would never go to a diversity program. They just wouldn't go. We started out with the programs around class, gender, sort of the top 7 social identity identifiers and then we started

moving more into LGBTQ stuff, we started doing more stuff about well-being. A complement to that program, now at that program we do provide lunch. I also do another program called “The Coming Together Dialogue Series” and what that is are for people who still wouldn’t go to a diversity program. What I did was do the same type of programming but it’s a brown bag lunch, its in the library in one of our conference rooms in the library, you bring your own lunch. It’s not as structured as a workshop or things like that, that’s the Power of Storytelling, is going to be under that, the dialogue I did prior to that was “The Art of Having Difficult Conversations”, where we talk about the same kind of issues, but just we approach them differently. Usually what I’ll have is a guest speaker or someone and they’ll talk for like 10 minutes, then the rest of the 90 minutes is open dialogue where you can ask questions, and talk. Those are two of our anchor programs. We also do every year a weekend workshop on social justice, and this year it’s going to be the first year we’re actually opening it up to consortium schools, So we’re looking at having 5-10 students from WPI, WSU, Clark, Quinsigamond, Becker, Nichols, we’re going to open it up to see if folks are interested. We also have an ALANA support network where all the multicultural offices meet once a month. That’s been a big thing on campus, on our campus, and we want to expand it and eventually make it regional. It’s a Friday night to Sunday afternoon. Most retreats are one night. I insist on two nights because one night you hardly get to know people, but that second night is when bonding takes place. We also do a guest speaker series, and this year we did a courageous conversation series on BLM, and so that’s the topic and so we did one on black male youth, we did one on black women, we’re doing another one on the black community, we call it “black and blue”, the black community and law enforcement.



That's something we don't do every year, but it's something that was kind of timely and so we've been having that conversation. The other staple program we have is my multicultural peer educators do a program where we have a student teach in. We allow students and that's what the fishbowl is a part of, on segregation, and the one we did prior to two weeks ago was on violence against women because October is domestic violence month, where we give students the opportunity to do 20 minute presentations. Counter to that, we also do a faculty teach-in and it's going to be November, we do 2 per semester and we already did one. The first one was on October. The second one coming up, we're doing social justice movements of the 20th and 1st century, the good the bad and the ugly. On the tenth, I'm actually doing one on the civil rights movement and talking about the good things that came out of the civil rights movement was several key pieces of legislation, but also a philosophy of nonviolence called King-ian nonviolence, which I'm a master trainer in, the bad was the fact that it was pretty misogynist and homophobic movement in terms of Ella Baker, who was the advisor to the Student nonviolence coordinating committee she was kind of left out of everything, but she was the one who inspired the young people to form the SNCC. Another was a black man named Bayard Rustin, who was an out gay black male, that they threatened, the civil rights movement, Dr. King at the southern Baptist Leadership conference to disavow, sever ties with him or money was going to stop flowing in, and they did, they did it. But then they had to call him back because without him they could have organized the march on Washington. Rustin was a master organizer and grass roots person and Dr. King had to personally apologize. Like I said the good the bad and the ugly, it was something that was really good, but it was misogynist. Women were totally put in the back. Then we're going to do

on Tiananmen square, I have a prof. doing one on that, and then I have a professor doing one on the indigenous peoples fight in central America and south America. Those are great. Those are our staple programs. We also do the ALANA banquet for the consortium schools. We also have an ALANA banquet for all our students of color graduates and we are also, I'm also the advisor to all the multicultural organizations. There's a couple that I'm the official advisor but our office is a resource for all the student organizations, but especially the multicultural ones, and gender ones.

23:28 Alyssa: So what are those organizations and clubs?

23:30 Jones: The Latin American student organization, we have the Caribbean and African assemblage, we have the Black Student Union, we have MECHA, which is a Mexican American organization, we have the women's forum, we have the male involvement coalition, we have PRIDE which is our LGBTW group, we also have ASIA, which is mainly Chinese, Japanese, we also have DAICY, which is more southeast Asia, India Pakistan, also Bangladesh. We also have a new one, ECHO, the European culture organization, students had approached me. I had a couple students who weren't international students, they were first generation Portuguese and Italian in this country. They were like "we want to have a club because they still have their grandmother that only speaks Italian or Russian and there was a lot of pushback from people, like "isn't that just a white peoples club?". Then we're like, "No, because it's a difference if you're like 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generation, and your 1st gen European, it's a huge difference. We have the club, I'm trying to push them to do stuff. It takes a lot to be a club, they had to get a constitution, and they did it, and I'm like what do you want to do now?

25:11 Alyssa: Have you dropped any programs in recent programs, because I know you've added a lot. Were there any that weren't successful or that you did away with?

25:23 Jones: Believe it or not, but prior to me getting there, the office didn't do a lot. Given my background as a trainer, as a facilitator, I kicked it up a lot. Maybe because I have adult ADHD, so I have to do stuff, be busy. Prior to that the office did a couple of guest speakers, and that was kind of about it. We're still in the process of adding, because I still think we're not full yet. We are like I said, in the adding phase, because they really didn't have a lot of stuff, they weren't doing a lot other than guest speakers, sort of traditional stuff. I did more like let's do some training, let's do some skill building, let's do some experiential education stuff. I always make sure my programs do not look like a class, because you're already in class, it has to be a little different. What we're also experimenting with is doing no program and just-- students have given me feedback and we did an assessment a couple ago and it's like students felt they were too programmed, they just wanted to come in and talk, and just no agenda or anything. I always start the second semester, we have something called the 7 Cs model for social change, and so I use the 7Cs. Congruence, compliment the 7 c words. We call it the 7cs of dialogue. We started it a year before last, in 2014, and it worked. We didn't even reserve rooms or anything, we just took over the game room that nobody uses on campus and we host said every Tuesday from 6-7:30, and it's right next to where you can come in and get food. Whatever you want to talk about. We talk about everything from A-Z. We're not yet dropping anything even though the edict from the university is if you want to do

something new you need to drop something. Most of the programs that we do have no cost, I'm there fulltime, so you don't have to pay me extra. I'm also trying to debunk that myth that students only go to things that have food. I'm like that's a slap in the food to students. What are you like animals? Pets? Students are coming, students will bring their food. They have dining dollars.

28:27: Keith: Have there been any programs that you wanted to run, but haven't been able to run?

28:31 Jones: Yes. I've been working on this for a couple years. I wanted to establish a social justice institute. Actually I wanted to establish, and I'm still in my vision to have a center for nonviolence and social justice. It would be a, we didn't want to make it a concentration, but it could be a certificate program, that you could achieve as a student at Holy Cross, and so I did everything from having, there would only be 2 mandatory courses you had to take, and then morals and ethics, and then 3 electives, so you could already have a major and concentration. You always have electives, so instead of taking Bolognese dance or something, or art, you would take one of these other three courses that when I did the research, intersects with many different concentrations. So it's like you're going to take these two anyway, so why not just take these other 2 courses. The you would also have to do a 1 week retreat. You would have to do-- this is over the course of 2 years. Then you would have to take an immersion, where you go to another country. An immersion trip, we were going to piggyback on the immersion trips we already have building and painting a fence for an orphanage, you would if you were in this program,

you would meet with the people in that town, city, or village, and engage them in a process to come up with the top 3 major issues that they're facing. Then come back here to the states and figure out if we'd have to fundraise to get them computers or things like that. You can do google chats and after you do the trip, every three weeks you'd have a conversation with them, where they would do the work, so it's not direct service, but we have resources and different processes in place. We facilitate them empowering themselves. Only thing about a program like that is that it costs about 130,000 \$ a year to be able to pay for them to go on the trip. To have the week retreat and all of that. It costs a lot. I've been searching for a rich alumni to endow it or something. I think it would be an excellent program. The goal would be to expand it to the consortium schools, so that folks could be a part of it. At least be a part of the retreat, and maybe the immersion trips.

31:50 Alyssa: So we have about 10 minutes left is there any questions we want to ask?

32:00 Keith: One question that might be interesting is do you collect any feedback about your programs? Is there some way students can...?

32:11 Jones Oh yeah, we are, as a whole, is really obsessed with assessment. We use campus labs, they're a national org, I really like them, they help you develop evaluation questions, and more than just, it's really hard evaluating the programs I do because basically, it's like "did you like it", "did you not like it?", so I add things like "what are 3 things you learned? What are two things you can use, what's one question you still have, then I ask them sort of 2, if someone was to ask you what the experience was like, you can write that stuff and put it on brochures. We do it, and this year what I'm doing is, because you have to evaluate whether or not the program worked or not, and that's very nebulous, it's like how do you tell? What we're talking about, you can't go to 1 workshop

on class and discrimination and change your views. One thing I forgot to mention that we're trying to bring to WPI. I purchased this thing called a poverty simulation, where people go through a month in the shoes of a poor family. You as a family member in that family. A week is like 15-20 minutes, and you do it back to back to back. Afterwards we have dinner and have that discussion. We did 2. That's going to be a regular thing. We're getting ready to do it for student affairs, they have a division, if it really works out we're going to make all our student leaders go through it, for a first year experience. But evaluation is good because you need to know if you're hitting the mark or not. Besides just I liked it and I had a good time. I try to tell them unless we're going to do a long-term every three months we interview the same people we aren't going to really know if it's works. That's the thing with doing social justice and civic engagement. How do you know? You hope but we also we plant seeds. Sometimes they come to fruition sometimes it can be like 5 years from now. Someone goes 'Oh yeah I remember when I was a Sophomore at...' but we do and campus labs is great because once they help you set up the questions everything is done online, and they take it and put it into any type of graph you want.

35:02: Alyssa All the attendance to these events and programs and stuff. Is it advertised through your office, to aliases etc.?

35:14 Jones: We do posters on campus, we do mass emails, and we know students don't even look at emails, so we do a lot of Facebook events. We have the Instagram account. I don't do that, but the assistant does that, and she's really good at it and everything.

Everything we do we send out over social media, and I just realized, students finally told me, rob you sent something with the bitly web address, we aren't going to type that in. I was like "oooh". When I send emails I have a click hear, and they'll say we'll do that. But when you put it in a poster they won't type it. Students tell me they don't even use QR codes. I asked, and they were like nobody's going to use that. I just learned how to use it on my phone. They said more Instagram and more, not even twitter, it's more like, oh and texts messages. My correspondence with students is just text messages, even if it's just to say check your email. You know you get 900 a day, we also put balloons up with the cards on them, we also have windows in our student center where you can put message sup.

37:02 Jones One thing I can say is in my capacity as associate director, I have had a Fulbright scholar for the past 3 years. I've mentored, which is really great. And all three were students that I encouraged, I was like have you considered going for a Fulbright, and they were like I'd never thought about it. And they got it. Because it's not just grades, it's also the type of project that you like to do. Even though all of them had good grades, I have the eye I also mentored the second female first black student association co-president, she graduated this year. It was funny because when I met her as a first year student, she was like 'I pick you to be my mentor', and I was like 'who are you?', and we started talking and she was like 'I'm going to be the SGA president', and she did! I met with her once a week, sometimes several times a week, and she did it. She played track, a star athlete, and did everything.

38:33 Alyssa: It seems like you've had a lot of influence on the students there.

3847: Jones: That's why I love my job. For those that want to be influences, then there's those I can't met. I would say even faculty and staff, I know the most students on campus, other than the athletes because I don't have a lot of access to them. When it comes to general student population, I know the most students, I would put that up against anybody. I randomly talk to students and my key thing is to 'wow so you go to holy cross? Can I see your ID?' and they'll be like '...yeah' and I'll just start talking "I'm kidding..." and you get to know people. I try to model that because most people are shy, people aren't going to walk up to people. It doesn't have to be a big huge hoopla, you just talk to people. We have an elevator in our student center and it's really funny. I'm on the elevator and I say 'I can't take it anymore, who's in the elevator with me? The silence is killing me. People laugh and joke, and I get to know them, and when I see them on campus I say hi.

### **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**

*So Ms. Ruel you are the Director of Diversity and Women in Engineering Programs at RPI. Can you run us through some of your duties and responsibilities as director?*

My primary responsibility is to recruit and retain a diverse population of undergraduates and graduate students for Rensselaer's School of Engineering. I work with colleagues from within the Institute and outside of Rensselaer to partner on programs that increase the number of K-12 children interested in STEM fields. I also partner with faculty, professional staff, and students on strategies that encourage students to enroll at Rensselaer.

### **Life at RPI**

*How would you characterize the level of civic engagement on campus?*



Rensselaer students are actively engaged in philanthropic, community service projects, and K-12 outreach activities across campus. Whenever we have a program or project that needs student volunteers to engage with the immediate community or to volunteer to support outreach or other efforts, our students are eager to help. Rensselaer is a university member of Project Pericles and our students may earn a Certificate of Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement. See <http://cesr.rpi.edu/about-the-cesr/>

*How would you characterize the interest in social justice topics on campus? What are the issues that are most important to your students?*

*Why do you think students are not civically engaged (barriers, stigmas)?*

*Have you attempted to change the way students view these issues? If so, in what ways?*

You may want to ask these questions of the folks in Student Life, particularly, Louis Trzepacz, Associate Dean for Student Retention at [trzeplj@rpi.edu](mailto:trzeplj@rpi.edu). I believe their office annually surveys entering first year undergraduates and graduating students to collect and analyze data on students' views regarding these and other topics. In my role, I work closely with groups that are underrepresented in engineering to develop workshops that address professional competencies that prepare students to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. We examine the skills that recruiters seek in college graduates and determine where students need improvement. The students and I work closely with practicing professionals to deliver workshops open to the entire campus that help students develop those critical skills. This year, we are offering 11 workshops and among them is a workshop on developing cultural competency. This is an important

topic in the Engineering field which is culturally diverse. Technologic innovation drives global economies and that means that global teams must be able to communicate effectively for companies to succeed culturally and financially. By openly discussing stereotype biases and breaking down cultural barriers, teams continually work to improve their communication and performance.

### **Diversity Programs/Events**

*Does RPI have a diversity plan?*

Diversity is incorporated as part of the overall campus Performance Plan and each Department has its own diversity initiatives and goals. In Engineering, we compare ourselves against national diversity data as reported by the ASEE (American Society for Engineering Education).

*Could you tell us more about the programs you oversee? How do you determine what programs to run?*

Like any business or organization, it's important to develop a mission statement and goals to measure your effectiveness. The President's Office at Rensselaer has developed a 10-year plan called the Rensselaer Plan 2024 which establishes overarching goals for the Institute. The various academic and Student Life units create their own Performance Plans that map to the vision and plan for the Institute. The programs developed by each unit are designed with the intent to meet their stated goals and objectives. If the goals are met, then a program usually continues. Where a program fails to meet its objectives, it's necessary to examine the reasons why the program failed

and to consider new strategies or programs. It's also important to stay informed about what's happening in the world and in your field and to collaborate inside and outside of your organization to keep programs fresh and relevant for the populations they serve.

I direct an **outreach program called Exploring Engineering Day** for children in grades 3 to 6 to learn firsthand about engineering and what engineers do. I meet weekly with 2 undergraduates from the Society of Women Engineers who serve as co-Event Chairs and together we plan, organize, and deliver the program with assistance from approximately 260 student volunteers. Students from Engineering, Physics, and Computer Science lead hands-on activities for the children and parents participate in a parallel program. We invite local companies and a local museum to engage with our guests and in April, we take 6 to 8 activities to the museum to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

I also direct a **recruitment program targeting tenth and eleventh grade high school girls called Design Your Future Day**. Like, Exploring Engineering Day, I work with the Women at Rensselaer Mentor Program executive Board to develop and deliver this one-day program that invites high school girls from within a 3-hour radius of campus to participate in hands-on activities that help them to learn about academic degree programs and career pathways in STEM fields. The activities are led by faculty, graduate students, alumni, and other practicing professionals. We also offer a parallel program for parents that answers common questions about how their daughters can thrive on a campus whose student population is dominated by men. This program is highly successful in enrolling females to Rensselaer, largely because of the exposure to female student role models who have already chosen to pursue STEM careers.

I also direct **three peer mentor programs for incoming students**: one for all first year women at Rensselaer called the Women at Rensselaer Mentor Program; a program for first year Asian undergraduates in STEM fields offered through the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers, and a third peer mentor program for first year Hispanic undergraduates in STEM fields offered through the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. All of the programs share a similar process for recruiting and training its peer mentors and for recruiting first year students who would like to be matched with a peer mentor. They each offer different kinds of social activities but the critical objective common across all three programs is bringing together like-minded students who have a common bond in their gender or ethnicity/race. Research has demonstrated that where underrepresented groups find community they will persist to the completion of their academic degrees.

I also work closely with **5 student organizations to develop a series of professional development workshops** open to the entire campus community. Representatives from the Women at Rensselaer Mentor Program, the Society of Women Engineers, the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers work together to choose topics important to them and their membership and critical to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace. In 2015-2016, eleven workshops were developed with involvement from Rensselaer's Center for Career and Professional Development, the Archer Center for Student Leadership, and with support from companies who are interested in hiring Rensselaer graduates.

I also work with our faculty to **distribute a variety of corporate scholarships** for undergraduates.

*Have you added or dropped any programs in recent years?*

We have not dropped any programs, but we added the SASE and SHPE peer mentor programs in the last three years and the professional development workshops in the past two years.

*Are there any programs you wish to run but haven't been able to?*

Not for profit universities depend on external funding in the form of grants and gifts to support many of their programs. When the economy is in a downturn securing funding becomes more challenging, so it helps to be aware of where funding exists and ensure that your program's mission aligns with that of the funder.

*Who facilitates the diversity programs? Are they trained to discuss diversity issues?*

I direct the programs that I've described to you previously. I've developed a broad set of competencies over many years through earning a degree in Education and two foreign languages, training in a public school system whose student population was largely underrepresented minorities, working with underrepresented college students on a daily basis, and reading current literature on diversity topics that I share and discuss with my students.

*Which programs tend to be the best attended, and which the least attended?*

All of our programs are well attended.

*What is the size of the typical program/event?*

The size of the event is dependent on the capacity of the venue where the event is to be held, the program objectives, and the budget.

*Who are these programs targeted to, and do they focus on problems experienced by any particular racial group?*

Please see earlier program descriptions. In the SASE mentor program, the students are exploring specific needs of various Asian populations. Where specific needs are identified, the students will develop strategies for addressing those needs.

*Does your office coordinate with other departments and student groups for programs/events/workshops?*

Yes, this has been explained above.

*What other resources can students utilize if they are interested in diversity?*

To answer this question, I would need to know more about the specific topic of interest. Diversity covers a broad spectrum of topics. There are many periodicals and scholarly articles on diversity issues in STEM and other fields.

*Do you collect feedback about your programs?*

Yes, we do. This is an important piece to measuring impact and evaluating whether you're meeting your objectives.

*How do you advertise your programs? What means for advertising do you find most effective?*

How we advertise our programs is dependent on the population we're targeting and the benefits of the program that we're pitching to that population. What's important to your target audience and how will you meet their needs through your program offerings?

If we're marketing a high school program, we mail directly to the high schools and ask for their help in getting the program information to the students we're trying to reach. If we're pitching an outreach program for elementary schools, we pitch to Superintendents and ask that they share the info with the parents. If I have a program for enrolled undergrads or grads, I write personal emails directly to the students making sure to point out how the program benefits them.

**Bridgewater State University**

0:01-0:17 Keith: So Mrs Marrow you are the director for the center of multicultural affairs at BSU, can you run us through some of your duties and responsibilities as director?

0:23 Marrow: Can I tell you a little about the center, that might help?

0:24 Keith: Sure.

0:27 It's a center that was formally a part of the division of the student affairs and so we just recently, September 1st, actually became a new department in the division of student success and diversity, and I say that in exhalation because right now we're revamping our

focus and our activities because we belong to this new division and it hasn't really been fully established. [The division] doesn't even have a clean mission statement yet. But we are sort of reprogramming the center for multicultural affairs to address student success. Prior to that it was more about cultural awareness, so we're doing things a little differently because we got a new president in June. We found out about this new division in Mid-august and it changed over in September, so I'm probably going to sound vague, but I don't mean to be.

At any rate, the center itself is a two person staff, myself and an administrative assistant, we don't have an associate or assistant director for the program and we work with of course all students, but primarily with students of color in that we provide the space, it's a very large space the center, so it's a space for them to meet and have different activities that are of their choosing. My assistant and I provide programming and cultural awareness opportunities geared towards assisting students and helping them navigate the campus and all of its resources. So like I said we've always been about student success, but we've gone about it differently. We have a group of students that serve as ambassadors and they provide programming to draw their entire community together and sort of highlight the center itself. So that [all] student feel that they can come in here, because prior to my becoming director it really was a center geared towards primarily people of color, and we rarely saw other students in here and I wanted to dispel that, I wanted to be much more inclusive. My staff is very diverse, my work study staff because my students man the front desk and help with activities and planning and stuff that, I have a work study force of about 14-16 students, some of them serving as ambassadors, so I oversee plus my admin, my admin pretty much oversees and



coordinates my student staff, but we work together to promote like I said, we have a program called Lunch and Learn where we invite administrators from various offices across campus to have lunch with students and just sort of its- like a meet and greet- to help them become familiar with people on campus that they may eventually need. Sort of lessens that anxiety and intimidation when they have to go ask for help.

Then we have monthly cultural celebrations, so say September and October we'll celebrate Hispanic heritage, November we'll celebrate native American history, we try to do something during the holidays, a kwanza or Christmas celebration, we host a Diwali celebration in November, the Hindu celebration, and in spring we always have some sort- whether it's a panel presentation or an event, or a guest speaker, maybe a guest speaker will do something for black history month but it's always a little different. Then we have Asian lunar New Year which we try to host and late in the spring we do Asian Pacific Islander heritage month and women's history.

I also started a program called the pre-collegiate institute. That's where I have students come in a few days early, they move on campus before the official move in date and we have a very extended orientation with them. I also again utilize various administrators to come talk to them about the academic achievement center, study abroad opportunities, financial aid, community service, and we do a... have you ever heard of strength's quest?

6:50: Keith and Alyssa: No

6:51: Marrow: Strength's quest is a tool that assesses talents and themes of individuals, it's developed by Gallup, and so students identify their top five talents and I work with them, I work with each cohort the whole year to help them become familiarized with their talents, and hopefully develop them to be strengths. I just had my second cohort this past august, so now I have a total of about 32 students between the first and second cohort. I monitor them academically, personally, and emotionally. I try to meet with them one-on-one twice a semester, just as check-ins. We have group meetings as well, last year we did a book club. This year we focused on strengths and another little book called for women's and how they related.

8:19 Alyssa: So how would you characterize the level of civic engagement on campus?

8:28 Marrow: It's strong. We have a really great community service department within [the] division -it just got established a few years ago-of social justice institute, so I try to partner with the community service department as often as I can in order to increase awareness, I'm a big proponent of collaboration, because our students are very different. I'm sorry I meant to tell you, that pre-collegiate institute I talked about, students fall under 4 categories: low-income, academically at risk, students of color, and first generation. That's important, the first generation piece is really huge. It's what I'm getting ready to say with the collaboration. The more we collaborate and make the best of our human and financial resources, because our students are really busy. We have a campus with 1/3 of our students are residents. The 2/3 who commute they are traditional age students, but a lot of them work, and some of them work a couple jobs, so it's really hard to get them involved, so the more we collaborate, across the divisions the better we are at getting the attention of our students, and the better audience we'll get. For instance,

community service, they provide opportunities for a lot of the student groups, we have 180 student clubs and organization here, and they all try to do a community service piece, and so multicultural student clubs--which are not under my direction-- sort of gather here because they were born out of the center, most of them. So they gather here and they do a lot of community service. So it's really good for me to work with our community service center to provide and create that awareness and to keep them from moving on and keep that relationship building. So their engagement mostly falls through those types of events and activities. Like they'll going to actually work with us for our kwanza celebration, like they're doing a piece for our kwanza celebration to benefit awareness of the principles through peace and community engagement.

11:26 Keith: So next question: How would you characterize the interest in social justice topics on campus? What are the initiatives that are most important to your students?

11:42 Marrow: Well right about now a lot of it has to do with BlackLivesMatter being of importance and we have like I said I think we tend to have a lot of open forums and a lot of talkins, where conversation and dialogue happens, we haven't had any protests. But we have quite a few large open forums on campus. Again it's our students are just a little bit different, we're in a very predominately white campus in a small urban area in the southeastern portion of MA and it's swanky little college town and so our campus is surrounded by this town. Like I said our students work a lot so they tend not to get involved in a lot of protests and things like that unless something really, really bad happens like right on campus and it's been pretty quiet here. It depends on who you ask, if you ask my vice president of student affairs he thinks our students are very complacent

and they don't protest enough. Other people feel that they do because you see these pockets of conversations happening a lot in open forums and things like that, so it all depends on who you ask.

13:26 Alyssa: So have you attempted to change the way students view these issues? If so, in what ways?

13:38 Marrow: Let's see. We have a really strong social work dept. and a really strong office of institutional diversity, so I think between the two of them and a few student groups that sort of bring up these topics. They work together to try to create the open forums and back in sept we watched the movie Selma in the auditorium and had a really great discussion with the social justice institute and social work professors. It was very well attended, it was one of the best attended events I've seen in a while and then in class they will discuss current events and from those discussions you'll see sometimes student organizations rally. That's how open forums happen a lot and they might have a whole half day on an issue like BLM, in the fall we had Selma in the spring we had BLM. There will be another BLM upcoming that's being handled through social work a couple of student organizations on the schedule for the end of February. I had brought defamation the play to campus back in October and a lot of our social work and criminal justice classes attended the events as well as the students who frequent the center and some of the multicultural clubs and organizations.

15:43 Keith: Does BSU have a diversity plan?

15:50 Marrow: Well because of the newly constructed division, we had an office of institutional diversity and they had a director and administrative assistant that ran it, and now that same director is now the VP of this new division of student success and diversity. They are currently looking for a new director for the office of institutional diversity, which is a dept. within the division. So I know they're working on a plan, but I don't know if they've actually cemented it yet. I know they are working on it though with the new president.

16:32 Alyssa: How do you determine which diversity programs to run?

16:36 Marrow: I don't know because I'm not privy to what they're doing right now because they're not really sure what they're doing. I wouldn't really be a good person to ask that, I'm sure they're doing something but exactly what is I couldn't tell you.

17:03 Keith: Then how about the center for multicultural affairs? How do you determine which programs to run and how create programs for the specific months, like you mentioned the pacific month?

17:15 marrow: That's been pretty traditional, but we do is like I said once again I collaborate and I will call in different colleagues from like the middle east studies dept., the chair of that dept. and I work together to address ME student concerns and events, so we'll collaborate with each other do like a "satyr". We usually try to do Ramadan or an Ede in the fall depending on when it falls in the calendar. And then we have a dinner, we try to work with the Muslim student organization to put that on and that's usually very

well received. We actually just had and I didn't help, I helped just minimally do a "not in my name" event, a few days ago. We had some speakers and different faculty members came and spoke as well a couple vice presidents come to our Muslim students, and some Muslim students spoke just to address, and show support from the whole community to the what we're finding is that our Muslim students are moving off campus and some of them are commuting and not spending as much time as they used to-- not that we had a huge population-- but we had a few and we see them less and less lately, and we just decided as admins that we were concerned about that so we put together a panel presentation that lasted a couple hours and it was pretty well received, there was a good number of people in the room, students, faculty and administrators. That was Tuesday. Oh I should probably mention through the division of student affairs they have a committee of student affairs admins that put on maybe every month or every other month they put on an event called "supporting students of ....". It could be commuting students or Muslim students. Multicultural students, trans students and so it's sort of open to the public, not the public actually because it's for faculty and administrators, and we'll just come together maybe during a lunch hour, and talk about ways we can support students and usually there's a person that facilitates the conversation is sort of that in house expert on whatever the subject matter is. "In my name" sort of came up because we got together about 2-3 weeks ago about supporting Muslim students because like I said we're starting to see them less and less.

20:26 Alyssa: Have there been programs that you wish to run, but haven't been able to? Or maybe some ideas that you have about diversity programming?

20:39 Marrow: At this point I would love to extend this precollegiate institute so it's a full summer bridge program with academic courses tied to it so they could have some credits in a shopping cart because our first gen students tend to have a more difficult time navigating academics and scheduling and time management, financial resources, they're hard for everybody. I would love to do that. But like I said, I have just myself and an administrative assistant and not a huge budget and we are a state school so you know also feeling the tides of state budgets being cut too so as you know that makes it difficult. I think being more of a support to adjust student success issues right now is where I'm starting to focus, and getting a little bit away from the cultural awareness because that seems to be a lot easier to do, because I have the support of the student groups, because when they want to do something, they have no problem coming and saying we want to have an open forum about blah blah blah, or this is going on and we want to address it. Or such and such holiday is coming up, can we have your help to run a program and then that's sort of easier for me to do, because I can just sort of oversee it. So I really don't think we're lacking in that area. The academic student success piece is a little different we're heading in a different direction because that also entails a lot of collection of data so sort of looking at how we're going to do that too with our small staff is interesting, it's an interesting challenge

23:01 Alyssa I have to go, etc.

23:24 Keith: What programs are the best attended, and which programs tend to be the least attended in your experience?

23:45 Marrow: Sometimes speakers, when we actually have national speakers, or just speakers in general, they tend to be the ones that are least attended. The Lunch and Learns seem to go fairly well I can get anywhere from 15 to 25 students in a room for that. I guess I want to say when we have a speaker that's harder. When it's a movie and discussion they seem to come out in droves. And cultural events it really depends if you can get enough interest from a number of different student groups they're well attended. Like our Diwali, that's always really well attended. That might be because of the collaboration with the office of international engagement. We have a pretty good population of exchange students. Asian Lunar New year is the same, it's easy to get those two events to fill up because of the collaboration with other dept. cross divisionally. The more collaboration, the better the attendance.

25:15 Keith: Do you collect feedback about the programs you run, or help collaborate with?

25:29 Marrow: We try to. We don't always get great results. So some of them we don't. Like a Kwanza event, I wouldn't ask for feedback on that. If it's something educational we try to, because we pretty much want to gauge whether there is interest, whether we should continue doing them. Sometimes it might be just focus groups. We'll have focus groups to see what students think.

26:04 Keith: How do you advertise your programs?



26:10 Marrow: Well we have an in-house multimedia dept. in student affairs that does really professional looking fliers and then they have a social network called BSU life. That we use. We have student announcements that go out daily, we have community announcements that go out daily. Student announcements go out only to students, while community announcements go out to every faculty, staff, and students and alumni, and then we have a Facebook page, and a twitter account (that's what my department does), and they have an internal facing website.

26:58 Keith: Is there any means of advertising you find most effective? Or is it equally spread?

27:00 Marrow: It's pretty equal. I don't think any one thing works better to be honest with you.

## **Michigan State University**

0:25 Alyssa: we wanted to hear about your duties and responsibilities as senior advisor to the president for diversity and also as the director for the office for inclusion and intercultural initiatives.

0:38: Russel: I'm going to encourage you to, did you know, the access to our office website that'll also give you my short file. My role here includes responsibilities for coordination of to the extent that one can, with a university the size of Michigan state, coordination of diversity efforts. Hold on, I'm find something I can read from quickly.

[break]

1:57 Russel: The position advises, collaborates with the President, Provost, Executive Vice president, and other universities senior executives regarding the development , communication, and implementation of MSU equity, diversity and inclusion, vision, and plans. In my role I work closely with academic deans, other campus leadership, faculty, staff students, external stakeholders like alums and donors, and broader community members and organizations. we're responsible for bringing the leadership that will advance diversity and inclusion at Michigan State. So I lead the office for inclusion, I'm senior adviser to the president, we provide active oversight, coordination assessment of programs and policies related to diversity, equity, access, strong relationships with those offices that I referred to. strategic assistants to admissions, graduate school, other professional degree programs here. We do work and lead efforts related to campus climate, one of those surveys quantitative and qualitative. We coordinate over sea campus life university training initiatives and leadership programs, we also support compliance with state federal nondiscrimination laws and the university's anti-discrimination policy.

4:00 Keith How would you characterize the level of civic engagement on your campus?

4:10 Russel: I would characterize it as, I don't know if I would say high med or low, but if I were to I think we have a significant level of civic engagement at Michigan State. We have a unit on campus that's our university outreach and engagement. We also have within that a service learning unit that provides learning experiences and opportunities for our students. That function is supervised by both an associate provost as well as the vice

president of student affairs. They are involved in a range of what might refer to as social justice topics as you identified here.

5:18 Alyssa what would you say are the issues that are most important to your students?

5:20 Russel: I think it is particularly campus, well obviously the academics of course. You have to provide the --of the course, they want programs that are consistent with what their interests are in the future. They're also looking for academic support. If I step outside that, I think there are other issues of importance to our students in the range of social justice. Is that more aligned with what you're hoping to get at. I think for our students it's how we create a campus climate that is welcoming, supportive, inclusive, respectful, and for us, so that's the student perspective. From the perspective of the institution, it's ways in which we can create opportunities for students to engage across cultures.

6:49 Keith Why do you think that some students might not be civically engaged on campus? Do you think there are any barriers, stigmas from preventing them from that engagement, or in participation from social justice topics?

7:05 Russel: That's an interesting question, I guess it depends on the group with which one identifies. If we think intersectionality sometimes that, I may identify African women, who is heterosexual, but if I were an African American who identified as lesbian, that's going to present some other issues. I think students that may not be civically engaged I don't know that it is necessarily stigma, although I think people's values and

beliefs around civic engagement and social justice, some regard it as a waste of time and something they're not particularly interested in. For other it may be that the opportunities for engagement aren't presented based on a particular interest that they have. It could be that it's inconvenient, I know that sometimes that the stresses with engaging on some of these topics. Some students are more activist, and as a result it doesn't matter what others might perceive as barriers, they're going to charge on. Others if it's just an inconvenient time for them to engage, that may determine how actively they get involved. I think the issues= us sometimes, if you think about the things that have gone on in the last year or so, and so certainly, if I think back on recent history, November, around whether it's BLM, and things that were going on different campuses, racial tensions, I think towards this period of time are of more of a concern for students.

9:16 Alyssa Have you or anyone in your office, have you attempted to change the way students view these issues? If so, in what ways?

9:30 Russel: Yes. MSU we have like a number of campuses across the country, we are having to deal with some of the tensions around race. I think that the diversity that is represented on our campus brings with it different kinds of challenges because students have different values and beliefs etc. One of the things we're doing currently is responding to one of the issues students put on a cable this winter around creating learning opportunities for incoming students particularly on what it means to be a member of a diverse campus community. Just as one example we're developing a required e-learning for students. Other ways that we engage in particularly in the

residence halls, dialogue opportunities for students to engage and what we might otherwise call difficult dialogues. We have what's called an M rule, MRULE, multi-racial unity living experience. We have a number of things we're doing here that try to address the issues of this being a diverse and hopefully more inclusive campus. We're working on curricular also, and we're doing faculty and staff training on implicit bias and microaggressions. We're doing institutes for faculty on how to create more inclusive learning environments. We're engaging in creating in the case of service learning, ways in which we can introduce students differently to diverse communities and the needs of those diverse communities. It's probably is, there's no way I could even articulate all the different things that we're doing. It's quite a bit we're doing.

11:56 Keith Does Michigan State have a diversity plan? If so, when was it released?

12:00 Russel: Nope. We don't have a diversity plan in the way that you are probably thinking about a plan. We did have in the early 90s what we call, what you might regard as a diversity plan. It was in 92 and 93 and it was called, we called MSU IDEA1 and 2. Basically stood for institutional diversity excellence and action. It outlined 50 initiatives and around issues of leadership instruction, climate, access, curriculum, and embedded in each of those categories were a range of things that were to be done. Much that of that work took place in the early 90s. What we've been doing since that time is building on those efforts. But no we don't have a plan. We have a framework, but we don't have a plan.

13:15 Alyssa: Could you tell us more about the programs that your office runs?

13:22 Russel: Sure. I'll run through quickly for you but we have at least currently 3 major focus areas. The first is education development. That's an area that is engaged in providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, but we also provide opportunities for students to learn more about diversity in the broad, general sense. We have a catalogue of offerings related to that from diversity awareness 101 to more sophisticated spring institutes, I referenced one earlier, inclusive learning environments, we have a diversity research network, we have a diversity e-learning that I referenced. We've got interactive theater. Then the second focus area is community outreach. The community outreach function includes a number of university wide programs. We have what we call project 50/50, it's conversation around civil and human rights. We create as well as other, both on campus and off campus ways in which students can engage in dialogues on relevant and current civil and human right issues. We have a university wide King celebration, a Caesar Chavez, we have excellence in diversity awards program. Those are the sorts of things we do under outreach, including ways in which create opportunities for diverse suppliers, so minority owned businesses, women owned businesses, etc. We've several advisory committees that our office works with through outreach. Then we have the third area, we call it research, assessment and grants. That focus area is responsible for the university's affirmative action efforts, we do some quantitative research, surveys, qualitative work here, I mentioned earlier, diversity research network that's geared towards faculty, we're currently in that area doing a

student campus climate survey. Then we administer creating inclusive excellence grants.

That's it in a broad brush way, some of the work that we do

16:00 Keith: I know you mentioned one already, with the resident's hall council discussions, but are any of your programs open-forums or offer time for open discussions?

16:12 Russel: I think what I described was the project 50/50. It really is very open in the sense that it's not a town-hall forum necessarily, but it is intended to generate conversations around civil and human rights issues. That can include issues of immigration, race educational equity, LGBTQ, human trafficking, etc. So that might be one example, is that the sort of thing you're talking about? Or do you mean host? Right now we're doing student focus groups on the diversity e-learning. The goal there is to gain from the perspective of students what they believe it would take for MSU to be regarded as an inclusive campus. We've done, we're doing town-halls on bias reporting. The resident's residential hospitality services, they've had a town hall forum, or a forum, that is going to be this Friday, that is intended to gain student input on ways in which that particular unit can be more supportive of diversity. Particularly with respect to the student experience. Are those the sorts of things you're teaching about?

17:46 Alyssa: Has your office added or dropped any programs that were either unsuccessful, or added programs that you thought would be successful in the last few years?

18:02 Russel: I can't think of any, but I'm one office. I think if you were to ask student affairs, their answer might be a little different.

19:00 Alyssa: Do you collaborate with student organizations during the program planning phase?

19:15 Russel: Yes. We have hundreds of registered student organizations. The ones that we partner with generally are those, we call them, it's kind of an umbrella, it's called CORES and COPS, council of racial ethnic students, council of progressive students. We also partner with the student governance, which is the ASMSU. We also partner with the council of graduate students. Within each of those, we partner with the inter fraternity council, the divine 9. A lot of it depends on the issues. Right as we're developing the e-learning, we're partnering quite a bit with the leadership in COPS. We also bring into these conversations, certainly the LGBTQ, Jewish students, Muslim students, international students, and representatives from those various organizations, so yes we do.

20:10 Keith: What challenges would you say your office faces?

20:25 Russel: Too much work, not enough people. Probably more in line what you're hoping to get out of this is that sometimes it's difficult to get students to stay engaged. Yeah you raise the issue, you make sure that we hear you, and then when it's time for the follow through, where are you. And so, for some of us, it's probably been, we also understand that you're students first, but I think particularly now, with I think, legitimate issues around campus climate, students have this opportunity, you've gotten the attention



of higher Ed. I think you have a responsibility to see it through. I think there is good reason for the institutions to take a harder look at the things that we're doing. We need the students to stay engaged. Not to necessarily be the antagonist in a negative, hostile way, although I understand that sometimes happens and that's part of the process also. But it's and I think also being receptive and open to the fact that you may not get everything today. You know the potentially the answer to what is being requested or in the case students identify them as demands, sometimes the answer's going to be no. That doesn't mean there isn't room to compromise on some other things.

22:30 Alyssa: Who facilitates the diversity programs and are they trained to discuss these diversity issues?

22:38 Russel: Yes. They are trained. For the most part. We would not have individuals facilitating programs or training and workshops if they haven't been properly trained. That includes, if I use the example of the multi-racial unity living experience, they're very skilled at it. We have peer educators on whether its issues around relationship violence and sexual assault or sexual misconduct, we have if I think about intergroup dialogue, the goal would be before anyone could sit down and attempt to engage students or anyone else on these matters you've got to be trained. Otherwise you blow it and we're going to have another town hall forum. So yes, we do train.

22:36 Keith: Which programs tend to be the best attended, and which the least attended?

23:50 Russel: again it will depend on the topic. I think some things the least attended are those symposiums and forums that are embedded in college or department that may not be well marketed. I think some of those that are well attended, I think to the extent that we've engaged students in the process, and the students themselves are out there advocating for the program, and getting their colleagues and peers there, those can be some of the more well attended. If you have a high profile speaker, that's going to generate some excitement, and we've done a good job marketing that particular event, that may be well attended also. So it just depends. For us, our experience has been if we think about the King memorial celebration, we have a university wide planning committee, but within that we have a student leadership conference, that is mostly students who are designing a student focused, student centered, student led conference. Students are responsible, we basically tell them "we're going to do this, but it's your responsibility to get your peers there." And they do a flawless job. I think to the extent that you led students lead the effort, they'll get their peers here.

25:30 Alyssa: I'm not sure you know the exact numbers, or an approximation, what you say the size of these programs and events are?

25:35 Russel: Well if I think of the Martin Luther King commemorative celebration that's university wide, we can have you know, for community dinner we had 400 people, for the student march you can have 300-400. For town hall forums where folks are upset about something you can have standing room only. We had Cornell west here last Thursday, we had 1000 individuals, that includes faculty, staff and students and

community members. Again I think back if I just use King event as one example, because it is a very diverse group of students that lead it, and I mean it's without question African American students tend to dominate the planning not because we design it that way but I think it's because others say that King he's an African American man and therefore this is a black thing as opposed to what King actually stood for, but when you look at the march and who participates in the march, it's very diverse. When you look at the community dinner, it's very diverse. When you look at some of the events that are hosted right around that time, they're very diverse. The students do what we hope they will do which is draw from the various populations and identity groups and get them there. And they do. It's all in the marketing. If you build as an expectation "look this is what you say us to do. Then you go support it." You have a hand in crafting the event itself, our student organizations host, we've got a powwow that has over 1500 people that actually attend, and we don't even begin to have that many students here. It's our Native American Indian student organization. It has a long tradition here. They have people coming from across the country that participate in the powwow, they get sponsorships from just about everybody on campus because everybody wants to be associated with it. But it's a student led activity. I could name several others that are like that. Dei de la murher. It's one of those events where you have advisors that provide support, and you have staff that help guide, but the students themselves, this is their thing, this is their event. They've taken the ball and run with it.

29:20 Keith: Do you collect feedback about your programs, and if so, how do you collect that feedback? Y

29:27 Russel: Yes we do, although I will acknowledge that we're not always as consistent as we should be. We always, and let's go back to any of the main events that I've identified that come out of our office, we always have an evaluation of the program. Getting the responses can be somewhat challenging, we build as an expectation of assessment, so that we get the sense whether or not students have gained from their participation in the program.

30:03 Alyssa: Just for the final question, how do you advertise these events for your office, and what means of advertising do you find are the most effective?

30:13 Russel: We do everything. Social media, to email, to fliers, to educational campaigns if we've got to deliver a message on something that we really need student participation in if it's a campus climate survey. We have a website obviously. We're in the process of revamping the website so that it's a little more engaging. We use students to deliver the word through their organizations. We try to be, we're trying to be a little more consistent in our messaging on this office, and some students don't know we exist. They know that the Martin Luther King Day exists, but they don't know who's responsible for it. They know that there's a campus climate survey out there, but don't know that our office is one of the sponsors for that, and it goes on. My view is that as long as we teach there, and as long as you're enjoying it, then I guess I'll try to figure out how I can make sure you know who's leading it. There's just, you know we all use media to try to get the word out.

