Summary of the
2023 Climate Survey

Department of Biostatistics at the University of Washington, Seattle

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Minh Vo, Biostatistics Associate Director of Student Services | minhtvo@uw.edu
Alejandro Hernandez, Biostatistics EDI TA | alejh@uw.edu

Background

In November 2023, the *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* (EDI) Committee released a survey to current faculty, staff, and students to **assess social climate** and review perspectives regarding EDI within the department, and to **direct priorities of the committee**.

The survey was composed of 10 questions, with answers ranging from **Strongly Agree** to **Strongly Disagree**. We offered an optional question to collect more detailed responses. **Proportions (for each category) were evaluated.**

An additional question about ranking the priorities for the EDI committee was also included.

Background

The survey was open for one week and was sent to all 100 faculty (including affiliate, adjunct, emeritus), 89 staff and 84 current students.

We gathered 69 anonymous responses (**10**/100 faculty, **21**/89 staff, **38**/84 students). Response rates were 10% for faculty, 24% for staff and 45% for students.

A major limitation with the results is that we did not get a strong representative sample from the subgroups of interest.

Survey Questions

1. I feel a sense of belonging within the department.
2. I feel comfortable talking about social issues with my peers.
3. I have <u>not</u> observed instances of bias or discrimination based on gender, race, ability, ethnicity, or other factors within our department.
4. I have <u>not</u> felt isolated, excluded, or embarrassed by conduct within our department.
5. I know who to speak with in the department if I experience sexual or verbal harassment, microaggressions, or other inappropriate behavior.
6. I know at least one person in the department I can speak with about personal challenges and worries.
7. The department actively recruits/hires individuals from all backgrounds and communities. (*3 is Neutral/Uncertain/Undecided/Not Applicable*)
8. Professional responsibilities of department employees are distributed and assigned fairly. (*3 is Neutral/Uncertain/Undecided/Not Applicable*)
9. I feel comfortable expressing my concerns and opinions to my supervisors/advisors/mentors.
10. I am satisfied with the overall culture and climate of our department regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.
11. Finally, please rank the following priorities of the EDI Committee according to personal preference. (*Most important at top, least important at bottom*).
    (*Optional*) Please share any additional priorities you have that are not listed above.

	Q1 Sense of Belonging	Q2 Social Issue Talk	Q3 Negative Instance	Q4 Exclusion	Q5 Administrator	Q6 Personal Talk	Q7 Diverse Hiring	Q8 Fair Work	Q9 Supervisor Talk	Q10 Overall Satisfaction
FACULTY (n = 10)										
Negative	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Central	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	1	1
Positive	8	5	6	7	7	8	8	7	8	9
STAFF (n = 21)										
Negative	4	3	6	3	6	4	4	4	5	4
Central	4	8	2	4	1	1	8	8	2	5
Positive	13	10	13	14	14	16	9	9	14	12
STUDENT (n = 38)										
Negative	5	6	6	5	8	1	5	3	4	4
Central	3	5	7	3	8	2	14	19	6	7
Positive	30	27	25	30	22	35	19	16	28	27

Table 1. Response Counts, Grouped by Attitude

	Q1 Sense of Belonging	Q2 Social Issue Talk	Q3 Negative Instance	Q4 Exclusion	Q5 Administrator	Q6 Personal Talk	Q7 Diverse Hiring	Q8 Fair Work	Q9 Supervisor Talk	Q10 Overall Satisfaction
FACULTY										
Negative	0.10	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00
Central	0.10	0.30	0.30	0.20	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.30	0.10	0.10
Positive	0.80	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.70	0.80	0.90
STAFF										
Negative	0.19	0.14	0.29	0.14	0.29	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.24	0.19
Central	0.19	0.38	0.10	0.19	0.05	0.05	0.38	0.38	0.10	0.24
Positive	0.62	0.48	0.62	0.67	0.67	0.76	0.43	0.43	0.67	0.57
STUDENT										
Negative	0.13	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.21	0.03	0.13	0.08	0.11	0.11
Central	0.08	0.13	0.18	0.08	0.21	0.05	0.37	0.50	0.16	0.18
Positive	0.79	0.71	0.66	0.79	0.58	0.92	0.50	0.42	0.74	0.71

Table 2. Response Proportions, Grouped by Attitude

Executive Summary

Overall satisfaction with **culture and social climate** is strongly positive among faculty, positive among students, and moderate among staff.

- Faculty report high satisfaction with employee diversity, work fairness, and comfort with supervisors.
- Students report closeness among peers but describe a **divide between domestic and international students**.
- Staff report moderate satisfaction and more concerns with **work fairness and diverse hiring than other areas.**
- There is a general impression that while the department is interested in EDI, there is still a long path ahead, and **we invite your help**.

Positive Responses

- Overall, faculty report the best experience within the department. Faculty report highest satisfaction with **employee diversity**, **work fairness**, and **comfort with supervisors**.

- Students report strong **comfort in speaking openly** about personal challenges and social issues with their peers. They agree the most strongly that they do not experience exclusion or embarrassment from department members. Students were approximately as satisfied as they were unfamiliar/undecided on employment conditions but indicated a positive relationship with supervisors/mentors.

- Most individuals (~80%) are not aware of or have not witnessed an **instance of bias/discrimination** within the department. Those who have are more prevalent among staff (~30%) and similar between faculty and students (<20%).

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Concerning Responses

Many did not report familiarity with a department member regarding **reporting of harassment/inappropriate behavior**.

o   Unfamiliarity is most prevalent among staff (~30%) and least among faculty (~10) and students (~20%).

Multiple students report a **divide between domestic and international students** across multiple areas of department life.

o   A student described a racial divide across workstations on the HRC 3rd floor.
o   Three students describe an imbalanced demographic among department TAs.

Staff report concerning experience within the department with **work fairness** and the **ability to openly express concerns** to supervisors.

o   One staff respondent described alarming, hostile work conditions in their unit.

Additional considerations

Selection bias: Our sample (10/100 faculty, 21/89 staff, 38/84 students) may not be representative. How should we improve the response rate in future surveys?

Outliers and scope of interest/ability: A few members of the department raised major concerns in the write-in, and we must diligently address them regardless of the majority of positive responses.   How may the department respond to concerns made by anonymous community members?

EDI Priority Rankings

Respondents ranked EDI priorities to focus committee attention and initiatives. Ranked in order of importance:

Group	1st	2nd	3rd
Faculty	**International student resources**	**Education on global/domestic social issues**	**Mental health assistance** and **EDI workshops**
Staff	**Mental health assistance**	**EDI workshops**	**International student resources**
Students	**Mental health assistance**	**International student resources**	**EDI workshops**

New EDI Subcommittees

Following department survey responses, we've formed two subgroups:

o **Mental Health Resources Subgroup** for assisting students into mental health services, lead by Kevin Lin (kzlin@uw.edu).

o **EDI Education and Workshop Subgroup** for developing EDI workshops to educate the department on local, domestic, and global social issues, lead by Minh Vo (minhtvo@uw.edu).

An **International Student Resource repository** will be organized by EDI TAs Dhruv Mehta (dhruv17@uw.edu) and Alejandro Hernandez (alejh@uw.edu).

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Thank you, please contact us for all requests/concerns.

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