Undergraduate Diversity Survey (2021)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Department of Psychology
University of Victoria
In 2019, the Department of Psychology Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee developed a survey regarding diversity issues (e.g., needs assessment for student members of underrepresented minority groups; student views on diversity training). Consistent with Strand 3 of the SOSC Indigenous plan, we hope that this survey and the associated report contributes to addressing three specific aims.

- **Aim 1:** Administer the survey to students each semester to track how the Department is doing in terms of recognizing, celebrating, and supporting diverse students, as well as incorporating Indigenous knowledge, history, realities and ways of knowing into our courses and into the Department overall.

- **Aim 2:** Consolidate students’ suggestions for creating a welcoming environment within the Department. Create summaries of results, as well as student recommendations for increasing diversity, to share with faculty and students, as well as to encourage faculty and sessional instructors to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, history, realities and ways of knowing into our courses.

- **Aim 3:** Develop an open-source repository and recommended guidelines to facilitate administration of the survey across other departments at the University of Victoria and beyond. An email flyer based on the survey, report, and the open source repository will be circulated to other departments across the University. The EDI Committee will be available to answer inquiries and support efforts to administer the survey in other departments.

We hope that this initiative will contribute most specifically to Strand 3 of the SOSC Indigenous plan. Namely, continued development and administration of the Undergraduate Diversity Survey will provide quantitative and qualitative data to track how well faculty and sessional instructors are incorporating appropriate content into courses pertaining to indigenous knowledge, history, realities and ways of knowing, as well as emphasize areas for improvement. We hope to administer the survey twice annually, and subsequently summarize and share results with the Department of Psychology once per year. We hope that the survey will increase awareness regarding the importance of proficiency in matters of diversity for all members of the Department (i.e., students, faculty, sessional instructors), highlight recommendations for increasing diversity and Indigenization of curricula within the department, and encourage instructor commitment to incorporating Indigenous principles into their teaching pedagogy. In the long-term, we hope that the survey will be shared across the university and beyond, so that other departments can identify limitations, track progress, and encourage Indigenization of curricula.
Method

The data described in this report were collected by the EDI Committee from February-April 2021, as part of a survey designed to assess student perceptions of:

- Diversity climate in the department
- Diversity training in the department
- COVID-19 impacts on physical/mental health
- COVID-19 impacts on academic work

This marks the 3rd survey conducted by the EDI Committee to assess student perceptions of diversity in the Psychology Department. The first was run in Spring 2019 ($N = 151$), and the second was run in Spring 2020 ($N = 130$).

The current survey was administered online via LimeSurvey. Participants included 619 UVic undergraduates recruited via SONA and from various Psychology classes held at the time of data collection. SONA participants received bonus course credits for their participation, and psychology class participants were entered into a draw for a $25 gift certificate for the UVic bookstore. After excluding 119 respondents who did not complete the survey, our final sample included 500 students (482 recruited from SONA, 18 from psychology classes). A copy of the survey, along with anonymized data files and scripts used to generate the figures in this report are available on our [OSF](https://osf.io). This report contains only the quantitative survey results. We are applying thematic analyses to the qualitative data collected through this survey, which will be reported separately.

Because this survey is conducted annually, we asked students if they had participated in previous versions of the survey. The vast majority were confident they had not, while a small proportion was unsure if they had or had not. No students indicated they had participated before.
Sample Characteristics

The students sampled for our survey were roughly distributed across year of degree. First-, second-, and third-year students each represented about a quarter of the survey sample, while a fifth of the sample were students in their fourth year. Five percent of students surveyed were in their fifth year of study or beyond.

- 67% of participants were Psychology majors, while 33% were not.
- Of all participants, 9% had previously taken PSYC 205 (Psychology of Diversity).
Identification with Diverse Groups

Recognizing that diversity can mean different things to different people, we asked students to indicate whether they identify with one or more diverse groups. Students could also indicate if they preferred not to share this information. The majority of our sample (71.4%) identified with one or more diverse groups, while 26.8% did not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification with Diversity Groups</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>357 (71.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>134 (26.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>9 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We further examined the breakdown of identification with diverse groups by year of study. Results were consistent across all years of study, with the majority of students identifying with at least one diverse group (67-75%) and a quarter to a third of participants identifying with no diverse groups (24%-33%).
We asked participants to indicate the diversity groups they identify with. Participants were able to select as few or as many options as desired. Because social identities often have fuzzy boundaries, people may have trouble identifying with specific identity terms or may not feel that these terms fully represent them. Thus, we asked students to indicate whether they identified with a diversity group, rather than a specific label (i.e., "sexual orientation" rather than lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity Group</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>162 (32.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body size</td>
<td>107 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body functioning and structure</td>
<td>60 (12.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td>111 (22.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>150 (30.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>140 (28.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant background</td>
<td>105 (21.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td>175 (35.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>120 (24.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigeneity</td>
<td>34 (6.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships to lands</td>
<td>26 (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurodiversity</td>
<td>62 (12.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>242 (48.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>130 (26.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recognizing that people identify with many diverse groups, we also report here the descriptive statistics associated with diverse group identification. In the full sample, participants identified with an average of 3.25 diverse groups. However, when excluding those who did not identify with any diverse groups, this increases to 3.97.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Diversity Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range (Min.-Max.)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Including no diverse identification</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>14 (0-14)</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse group identifiers only</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>13 (1-14)</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intersectionality

We further assessed the co-occurrence of identification with diverse groups. The size of the circle associated with each diversity group corresponds with the number of participants who identified with the group. The darkness of connecting lines corresponds with the probability of those identity groups co-occurring in our sample.

It is worth noting that all identities had many co-occurrences, demonstrating the importance of considering intersectionality in diversity work. Mental health status was the most endorsed diversity group, and perhaps unsurprisingly had the highest co-occurrences with other groups, namely age, sexual orientation, social class, gender identity, religion, and body size.
Perceived Importance of Diversity Issues

Students were asked to indicate the extent to which they view diversity issues as personally important.

The large majority of participants (84%) felt that diversity issues are important or very important, while 15% rated these issues as somewhat important. Very few students (1%) expressed the belief that diversity issues were not important to them. While these data may suggest that most undergraduate students in the Department care about diversity issues, it is important to consider that self-selection bias may also be a factor. Students who care more about diversity issues may have been more likely to sign up for and complete our survey than students who view diversity issues as less important.
Sample Representativeness

Finally, we examined the demographic information that students provide when signing up for the SONA research participation system to assess the representativeness of our survey sample. We compared the SONA-provided demographic variables of our survey sample to the entire pool of SONA participants.

Altogether, our survey sample skewed slightly younger than the SONA pool as a whole, and included proportionally more self-identified females than the SONA pool. The ethnicities reported by participants in our sample are proportionally equivalent to the larger SONA population.
Diversity Climate

We asked participants a series of questions to get a sense of whether and how the Department of Psychology promotes respect for diversity.

The majority of students rated the Department positively for being welcoming, and for recognizing and celebrating diversity among its members. Very few students reported that the Department as not welcoming.

A large proportion of students (39%) saw diversity as being somewhat recognized & celebrated, while few (8%) thought it was very well recognized. The Department may wish to pursue further efforts to highlight and celebrate diversity among its members.
Comfort with Sharing Views Related to Diversity

We asked participants the extent to which they feel comfortable expressing their views about diversity. Over half of participants indicated that they are comfortable or very comfortable expressing their views on diversity in daily life. A sizeable portion of students (38%) indicated that they are usually somewhat comfortable. Only 7% of students indicated they are not comfortable with sharing their views related to diversity issues in daily life.

Students’ reflections on their comfort in daily life served as a useful comparison point for several further questions about the diversity climate within the Department. We next asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt comfortable, relative to their daily life, sharing views about diversity in class, with faculty, and with staff.
When compared to their comfort in daily life, about a third of participants reported feeling comfortable with expressing their views on diversity in class, with faculty, and with staff. The majority of students felt somewhat comfortable, while about a quarter of students reported feeling not comfortable or not at all comfortable expressing their views in class, with faculty, or with staff.
Treatment of Diverse Students

We asked participants to indicate whether they had been treated negatively due to their diverse identities, on a Likert-type scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always). Students were asked whether they have been treated negatively by a faculty member, a supervisor, graduate student, TA, staff member or another undergraduate student.

The large majority of participants reported that they had never been treated negatively because of some aspect of their diverse identities. A small but meaningful number of students reported they had sometimes been mistreated by faculty (8%), TAs (7%), and staff (5%). Negative treatment by undergraduate student peers was more frequently reported (16% sometimes, 6% often) which may be reflective of the more frequent contact students have with one another. This may be an area for follow-up in the Department.
Students also indicated whether they had been treated positively by a faculty member, a supervisor, graduate student, TA, staff member or another undergraduate student because of some aspect of their diverse identities. Ratings were again made on a Likert-type scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always).

It is important to consider that there is a range of what may be considered “positive” treatment due to diversity status that this question does not reflect or parse apart. Accommodations provided to students based on religious observances or mental health needs are examples of positive treatment that foster inclusion by removing barriers. Furthermore, positive treatment should promote equity and prevent tokenism and discrimination. In future iterations of this survey, it may be helpful to ask more specifically about whether diverse students feel supported in various needs for accommodation.
Awareness of Supports and Resources

Students were asked to rate their awareness of the campus resources and supports that are available to students belonging to diverse groups. Results on this item suggest a normal distribution, with the largest proportion of students (38%) being somewhat aware of resources available. While 27% said they were aware and 7% said they were very aware of campus supports, nearly a third of students were not aware (22%) or not at all aware (7%).

Increased promotion of existing clubs, campus supports, and broader resources related to inclusion and diversity is one area for action by the EDI Committee. Regular communication and reminders of resources not only recognizes diversity and fosters inclusion, but also ensures that students who experience differential treatment are cognizant of the supportive networks available to them.

How aware are you of campus supports and/or other resources available to students belonging to diverse groups?

- Not at all aware: 7%
- Not aware: 22%
- Somewhat aware: 38%
- Aware: 27%
- Very aware: 6%
Learning About Diversity Issues

We asked participants a series of questions to better understand student perceptions of training and instruction on matters of diversity in the Department of Psychology.

Courses

We first asked participants about the extent to which diversity issues have been covered in their classes. While a third of participants reported the amount of coverage as adequate, a sizeable majority (61%) indicated that the integration of diversity issues was lacking in their classes.
Further, we assessed students’ perceptions of the degree to which integration of diversity issues in Psychology courses has changed. We asked them to rate the covering of diversity topics in the present academic year when compared to years previous.

While one fifth of students thought there had been no change, over half of the sample felt there had been some degree of change, with a further fifth of students sharing there had been quite a bit of change.

Overall, students reported that changes in the integration of diversity topics were for the better (52%) or much better (5%). Very few students believed changes had been worse (4%). A sizeable portion of the sample perceived that the effect of class content on diversity had stayed the same (39%). Providing support for instructors and materials on diversity content may be welcomed by instructors and students alike.
Instructors

Students were also asked to rate the extent to which their instructors have helped them engage with issues of diversity, and the extent to which they perceived instructors as representing diverse backgrounds and identities.

Over a quarter of participants felt their instructors had not helped them engage with diversity issues in a meaningful way. Nearly half of participants felt instructors had helped somewhat, while a quarter of participants thought instructors had been helpful. Providing instructors with supports for facilitating meaningful engagement with diversity issues may be particularly beneficial in this area.

When considering the representation of diverse groups among instructors in the department, over a third of students were largely neutral (39%). About a fifth of participants perceived a lack of representation among instructors, while 40% thought that instructors in the department do represent diverse groups.
Professional Development

We asked students to share the extent to which they perceived their educational experiences in the Department of Psychology prepared them for diverse work environments. Nearly half of participants felt somewhat prepared, while a third felt prepared by their experiences.

Note that students’ perceptions of their preparedness may not be the same as their actual preparedness, especially as it is often difficult for trainees to anticipate future workforce demands. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that the majority of students think that outside experts should be the primary sources for diversity training in the Department. Relationships with outside experts should be established and maintained, with regular funding allocated for this purpose.

We also asked students to share who they believed should be providing diversity training in the Department. A quarter indicated this training could be provided by faculty, while more than half preferred outside experts.

Undergraduate Diversity Survey 2021
Impacts of COVID-19

This survey was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, we were interested in understanding the ways in which students in our department were being affected by the pandemic and associated public health measures (e.g., shift to online learning, minimal in-person socialization outside of one’s household). We were also interested in exploring the extent to which the pandemic effects were felt differently (or not) by students from diverse groups.

While a small proportion of students in our sample felt that there were some positive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in their lives, the resounding majority indicated that effects of the pandemic were largely negative.
Mental and Physical Health

Participants rated whether their mental and physical health had worsened, stayed the same, or improved when compared to their mental and physical health before the pandemic.

Two-thirds of students reported their mental health had worsened, while close to half of students reported that their physical health had worsened.

We were interested in exploring whether there were any differences in this pattern among students who identified with diverse groups versus those who did not. Responses on the mental health item were consistent regardless of diversity status, however there was a subtle shift on the physical health item. A higher proportion of students from diverse groups reported their physical health had worsened than students who did not identify with any diverse groups. Furthermore, a higher proportion of students with no diversity identification reported their physical health had improved.
Participants reported the extent to which they experienced negative emotions including loneliness, nervousness or anxiety, and sadness or depression. We first asked participants to rate whether they experienced these negative emotions more, less, or about the same since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The large majority of students indicated that they experienced greater loneliness, nervousness, and sadness since the start of the pandemic.

When broken down by identification with diversity groups, it is evident that all students (regardless of whether they identified with diverse groups or not) reported relatively similar increases in negative emotions due to COVID-19.
We also asked participants to reflect on their experiences in the month before taking the survey. Students reported the extent to which they felt the same negative emotions (loneliness, nervousness, sadness) within the last month. Most of the sample indicated they had felt lonely (73% agree or strongly agree), nervous or anxious (88% agree or strongly agree) and sad or depressed (77% agree or strongly agree).

We examined this breakdown once again by identification with diverse groups. Those who identified with diverse groups had more “strongly agree” ratings than did students who do not identify with diverse groups. However the same combined rates (agree and strongly agree) are present regardless of diversity identification.
Using correlation coefficients, we examined the association between identifying as diverse based on mental health and negative experiences due to living in pandemic conditions. Individuals who identified as being diverse based on mental health were significantly more likely to endorse that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their life ($r = .10, p = .028$). These individuals were also more likely to report higher levels of feeling nervous, anxious or on edge ($r = .25, p < .001$), sad or depressed ($r = .19, p < .001$), and lonely ($r = 0.14, p = .002$) in the last month.
Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Academic Work

Students also indicated the extent to which their academic work had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Less than a fifth of students reported they were spending less time on coursework than they did before the pandemic. The large majority of students reported spending more (29%) or extremely more (28%) time on their studies. This is consistent with findings of other surveys conducted by the University of Victoria in a similar time period.

In addition to reporting spending more time on their studies, the majority of students reported that they found it more difficult (47%) or much more difficult (27%) to devote time to their schoolwork during the pandemic.
Influence of Internet Access on Academic Work

We also asked students to indicate the extent to which participants had adequate internet connection to work from home during the pandemic. While 80% of students reported that their internet was sufficient, 17% reported having inadequate internet service.

When examining the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students’ academic work, students reported disproportionate impacts based on the quality of their internet connection. Compared to those who reported having adequate internet service, those with insufficient internet more often reported that they spent “extremely more” time on course work.
Finally, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which the pandemic disruptions had affected their ability to work in diverse environments. While just over half of respondents reported no impact in this area, the results skewed towards negative effects (35%) compared to positive effects (11%).

Pandemic Disruptions to Diverse Learning Environments

How has COVID-19 impacted your ability to effectively work in diverse environments?

Internet quality also affected students’ difficulty devoting time to schoolwork. Nearly half of those with insufficient internet reported they had “extremely more” difficulty spending time on their academic work (compared to a quarter of students with adequate internet).
Summary

The results of our survey demonstrate the social diversity of undergraduate students in Psychology, and further emphasize the importance of approaching diversity work through an intersectional lens. Students in our sample who identified as diverse, identified with an average of four diverse groups.

Overall, students’ responses reflected a climate in the Department of Psychology that respects and promotes diversity, with some integration of diversity-related material in Psychology courses. Training and course content related to diversity issues is highly desired by students, and although students recognized positive changes in these areas, results from this survey point to continued room for improvement.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students reported spending increased time on academic work. Furthermore, students reported worsened mental and physical health due to the pandemic. Notably, those who reported being diverse based on mental health status reported being more adversely affected by the pandemic and experienced significantly higher rates of negative emotions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide regular reminders of supports and resources available to students.
- Provide resources and materials to instructors to facilitate engagement with diversity issues in-class or in other academic settings.
- Organize and adequately fund training opportunities for students, as well as faculty and staff, on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and decolonization.
  - Such training opportunities should involve or be provided by outside experts whenever possible.
- Review and revise Departmental policies that may disproportionately affect students with mental health concerns (e.g., requirement of doctor’s notes for extensions or make-up examinations).
APPENDIX A

RESOURCES
Resources For UVic Students

Campus supports and resources for students belonging to diverse groups:

- UVSS - BIPOC Support Hub: https://uvss.ca/bipoc-support-hub/
- UVic Native Students Union: https://www.uvicnsu.ca
- UVic Pride: https://sites.google.com/prideuvic.com/uvic-pride/
- Mental Health Resource Hub: https://www.uvic.ca/student-wellness/wellness-resources/mental-health/
- Elders in Residence: https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/elders/index.php
- Men’s Circle (UVic Anti-Violence Project): https://www.antiviolenceproject.org/mens-circle/
- A variety of clubs for students of diverse cultural backgrounds can be found on the UVSS website: https://uvss.ca/clubs-course-unions/ (see list of active clubs)
- UVic Office of Equity and Human Rights: https://www.uvic.ca/equity/
- UVic Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement: https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/

Community supports and resources for students belonging to diverse groups:

- Victoria Sexual Assault Centre: http://vsac.ca/
- Victoria Disability Resource Centre: https://drcvictoria.com
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre: https://www.vnfc.ca
- Vancouver Island Queer Resource Collective: https://viqueercollective.com
- Here2Talk: https://here2talk.ca/
- Men’s Therapy Centre: http://www.menstrauma.com
- MosaicBC — Supports for International Students: https://www.mosaicbc.org/services/settlement/students/
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): https://www.icavictoria.org

**Anti-oppression training and workshops for students:**

- Bringing in the Bystander, UVic’s Bystander Intervention Training: https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/initiatives/bystander-intervention/
- Tools for Change, Preventing Sexualized Violence at UVic: https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/events/tools/
- Understanding Consent Culture (Workshop): https://www.antiviolencepject.org/consent-training/
- Supporting a Survivor (Workshop): https://www.antiviolencepject.org/support-training/
- UVic Anti-Racism Education Program: https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/anti-racism/training/
- UVSS ReThink Mental Health (offers various workshops): https://uvss.ca/advocacy/campaigns/rethink/

**Educational resources for students:**

- UVic Libraries’ Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression repository: https://libguides.uvic.ca/antiracism
- UVic Libraries’ Every Child Matters Repository: https://libguides.uvic.ca/missingchildren
- UVic EQHR hub for trans inclusion, “Be an Ally”: https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/transinclusion/ally/
- UVic 5 Days of Action (annual, campus-wide programming to attend and participate): https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/5-days-action/
- Indigenous Canada, Massive Open Online Course at the University of Alberta: https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html
- Mental Health 101, Canadian Association for Mental Health: https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-101
- Challenging Racist BC: https://www.challengeracistbc.ca
Resources For UVic Instructors

Anti-oppression training and workshops for instructors, faculty and staff:

- Preventing and Responding to Sexualized Violence at UVic, Training for Staff and Faculty: https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/events/
- UVic Indigenous Cultural Acumen Training: https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/facultystaff/icat/
- UVic Anti-Racism Education Program: https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/anti-racism/training/
- UVic Mental Health Literacy Training: https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/training/mental-health/

Educational resources for instructors and faculty:

In addition to the educational resources provided for students above, here are some places to find resources specific to incorporating diversity issues in teaching:

- BC Black History Awareness Society — Learning Centre: https://bcblackhistory.ca/learning-centre/
- Challenging Racist BC — Teacher’s Corner: https://www.challengeracistbc.ca/teachers-corner.html
- Ok2BeMe Resources for Schools and Classrooms (LGBTQ+ topics): https://ok2bme.ca/resources/parents-educators/resources-for-schools-and-classrooms/
Resources for Departmental EDI Committees

Here are some additional resources that Departmental EDI Committees may find useful for their activities and initiatives:

- List and dates of religious observances: https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/
- UBC Tracking Progress and Learning from your EDI Initiatives: https://equity3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/05/Tracking-Progress-and-Learning-from-your-EDI-Initiatives.pdf