

DIVERSITY STUDY
Final Report
2005

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Diversity Study Final Report – 2005

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Diversity Study Final Report 2005

Introduction

This report presents the results of a survey designed to assess the level of acceptance and sense of community being experienced by students, faculty, and staff at GVSU and to measure their perception of GVSU's commitment to diversity. The findings from the survey will be used to identify diversity issues that need to be addressed by the University in developing a vibrant and equitable climate that supports all members of the GVSU community. This study follows previous assessments, the Women's Climate Study, conducted in 1993 and 1999 by Dr. Ursula Delworth of the University of Iowa.

Survey Design

The survey instrument focused on four areas – the climate of acceptance and sense of belonging, the prevalence of disparaging or insensitive remarks, personal experiences of negative treatment because of personal traits or beliefs, and perception of GVSU's commitment to diversity. Although most questions were the same for students, faculty, and staff, two questions from the previous climate study were added to the faculty and staff questionnaires (related to having colleagues to discuss work-related issues and availability of mentors) and three questions from the previous study were added to the student questionnaire (related to participation in student organizations and multicultural events on campus, and comfort in expressing opinions in class).

The questionnaire was made available on a secure website, and invitations to participate were e-mailed to students, faculty, and staff on March 15, 2005, from the Office of the President. The survey was also provided in a paper version to Aramark employees working on campus.

After 6,568 visits to the website, surveys were completed by 3,937 students, 451 faculty, and 654 staff. Incomplete surveys (N = 496) were not analyzed. (An incomplete survey was defined as any survey in which the respondent did not click the "submit" button on the last page.) A paper version of the survey was offered to 73 Aramark food service employees, and 24 completed the survey. Their responses are included with the analysis of staff responses.

Respondent Profile

Student Respondent Profile

Responses were analyzed for 3,937 students, representing nearly 19% of those enrolled for winter 2005. Nearly 78% (3,064) of the student respondents were full-time undergraduates, 6% (236) were part-time undergraduates, 5% (188) were full-time graduate students, 9% (344) were part-time graduate students, and 2% (90) were not seeking a degree. Eighty-three percent of the student respondents were pursuing bachelor's degrees; 14% were pursuing master's degrees. Sixty-one percent lived in on-campus housing. Seventy-one percent spent most of their time on the Allendale campus; 25% in Grand Rapids and the others in Holland, Traverse City, and Muskegon. Table 1 below shows student status of respondents compared to the actual population of students in winter 2005.

Table 1. Comparison of student respondents to student population (Winter 2005)

Student Status	Survey Respondents		Total Student Population	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Full-time undergraduates	3,064	78	14,574	69
Part-time undergraduates	236	6	2,663	13
Full-time graduates	188	5	789	4
Part-time graduates	344	9	3,004	14
Non-degree seeking/Other	90	2		
Did not provide info on status	15	.4		
Live in on-campus housing	2,397	61	5,005	24

Respondents were also asked to identify themselves on a number of demographic variables, including gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, spiritual beliefs/practices, and political views. Table 2 below provides a demographic profile of student respondents and, where possible, compares them to the demographics of the 21,030 students enrolled in winter semester 2005.

Table 2. Demographic profile of student respondents*

	Students			
	Survey Respondents		Total Student Population (W'05)	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
<i>Gender:</i>				
Female	2,626	66.7	12,908	61.4
Male	1,286	32.7	8,042	38.2
Did not provide info	25	.6	80	.4

Table 2. Demographic profile of student respondents* - continued

	Students			
	Survey Respondents		Total Student Population (W'05)	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
<i>Age:</i>				
<18-29 years	3,470	88.1	17,937	85.3
30-39 years	263	6.7	1,764	8.4
40-49 years	140	3.6	960	4.6
50 or more years	54	1.4	365	1.7
Did not provide info	10	.3	4	.02
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>				
African-American/Black	245	6.2	935	4.5
American Indian	24	.6	128	.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	153	3.9	483	2.3
Hispanic/Latino(a)	114	2.9	561	2.7
Middle Eastern	19	.5	-	-
Multiracial	70	1.8	-	-
White/Caucasian	3,247	82.5	18,453	87.7
Other	54	1.4	470	2.2
Did not provide info	11	.3	0	0
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>				
GLBT	142	3.6	-	-
Heterosexual	3,765	95.6	-	-
Did not provide info	30	.8	-	-
<i>Disability:</i>				
Hearing	9	.2	-	-
Learning	52	1.3	-	-
Mobility	20	.5	-	-
Visual	16	.4	-	-
Other	29	.7	-	-
<i>Spiritual Practices/Beliefs:</i>				
Atheist/Agnostic/Humanist	438	11.4	-	-
Buddhist	46	1.2	-	-
Christian	3,111	79.0	-	-
Hindu	17	.4	-	-
Jewish	15	.4	-	-
Muslim	18	.5	-	-
Other	265	6.7	-	-
Did not provide info	27	.7	-	-

Table 2. Demographic profile of student respondents* - continued

	N	Percent
<i>Political Views:</i>		
Conservative	1,202	30.5
Green	55	1.4
Liberal	1,256	31.9
Libertarian	57	1.4
Moderate	826	21.0
Socialist/Leftist	80	2.0
None of the above	436	11.1
Did not provide info	25	.6

*based on winter 2005 enrollment of 21,030 students.

Faculty Respondent Profile

A total of 451 faculty responses were analyzed, for a response rate of 50%. Of the faculty respondents, 17% were from full professors/senior librarians, 26% were associate professors/librarians, 33% were assistant professors/librarians, 2% were instructors, 11% were affiliates, 10% were visiting faculty, and 1% were adjunct/part-timers. Each college was represented in the survey, with 58% of the respondents being from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Sixty-six percent work primarily at the Allendale campus, 32% in Grand Rapids, and 2% in Holland or Traverse City. Forty-seven percent have worked at GVSU for five years or less, 26% from 6-10 years, and 27% for 11 years or longer.

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of faculty respondents based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spiritual practices/beliefs, and political views. Based on workforce data at the beginning of fall semester, GVSU faculty consisted of 14.8% minorities (compared to survey respondent population of 19.8%) and 42.8% females (compared to survey respondent population of 45.7%). Other directly comparable demographic data for staff were not available.

Table 3. Demographic profile of faculty respondents

	Faculty	
	N	Percent
<i>Gender:</i>		
Female	206	45.7
Male	236	52.3
Did not provide info	9	2.0
<i>Age:</i>		
18-29 years	10	2.2
30-39 years	105	23.3
40-49 years	145	32.2
50-59 years	129	28.6
60 or more years	55	12.2
Did not provide info	7	1.6

Table 3. Demographic profile of faculty respondents - continued

	N	Percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>		
African-American/Black	20	4.4
American Indian	2	.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	31	6.9
Hispanic/Latino(a)	13	2.9
Middle Eastern	5	1.1
Multi-racial	5	1.1
White/Caucasian	356	78.9
Other	13	2.9
Did not provide info	6	1.3
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		
GLBT	28	6.2
Heterosexual	399	88.5
Did not provide info	24	5.3
<i>Disability:</i>		
Hearing	2	.4
Learning	1	.2
Mobility	8	1.8
Visual	3	.7
Other	7	1.6
<i>Spiritual Practices/Beliefs</i>		
Atheist/Agnostic/Humanist	118	26.2
Buddhist	6	1.3
Christian	247	54.8
Hindu	12	2.7
Jewish	10	2.2
Muslim	6	1.3
Other	37	8.2
Did not provide info	15	3.3
<i>Political Views</i>		
Conservative	59	13.1
Green	20	4.4
Liberal	181	40.1
Libertarian	14	2.4
Moderate	118	26.2
Socialist/Leftist	9	4.2
None of the above	31	6.9
Did not provide info	12	2.7

Staff Respondent Profile

A total of 678 staff surveys were analyzed, representing approximately 51% of those employed in March 2005. Staff responses consisted of five employee groups and Aramark food service employees working on campus. Of the staff respondents, 62% were executive, administrative, professional (EAP); 28% were clerical, office, technical (COT); 4% were maintenance, grounds, service; 1% were public safety; 4% were Aramark employees; and 2% did not identify their employee group. The percentage response from EAP staff was higher than their percentage in the staff population as of March 30, 2005 (see Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of staff respondents to staff population* (March 2005)

Staff Employment Groups	Survey Respondents		Total Staff Population	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Executive, administrative, professional (EAP)	419	62	582	47
Clerical, office, technical (COT)	192	28	485	39
Maintenance and Grounds	26	4	111	11
Public Safety	7	1	31	3
Aramark employees	24	4	85	8
Did not provide info	10	2	-	-

*includes part-time and temporary employees

Fifty-three percent of the staff respondents have worked at GVSU for five years or less; 22% for 6-10 years, and 25% for 11 years or more. Sixty-four percent worked at the Allendale campus; 30% in Grand Rapids; 5% in Muskegon, Holland or Traverse City.

Table 5 shows the demographic profile of staff respondents based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spiritual practices/beliefs, and political views. Based on workforce data at the beginning of fall semester 2004, GVSU staff was comprised of 12.1% minorities (compared to survey respondent population of 14.2%) and 62.3% females (compared to survey respondent population of 62.5%). Other directly comparable demographic data for staff were not available.

Table 5. Demographic profile of staff respondents

	Staff	
	Number	Percent
Gender:		
Female	424	62.5
Male	245	36.1
Did not provide info	9	1.3
Age:		
18-29 years	96	14.2
30-39 years	147	21.7
40-49 years	194	28.6
50-59 years	193	28.5
60 or more years	44	6.5
Did not provide info	4	.6

Table 5. Demographic profile of staff respondents - continued

<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>		
African-American/Black	47	6.9
American Indian	5	7
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	1.5
Hispanic/Latino(a)	12	1.8
Middle Eastern	2	3
Multi-racial	9	1.3
White/Caucasian	582	85.8
Other	6	9
Did not provide info	5	7
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>		
GLBT	31	4.6
Heterosexual	633	95.4
Did not provide info	14	2.1
<i>Disability:</i>		
Hearing	5	7
Learning	4	6
Mobility	12	1.8
Visual	1	1
Other	5	7
<i>Spiritual Practices/Beliefs:</i>		
Atheist/Agnostic/Humanist	71	10.5
Buddhist	6	9
Christian	533	78.6
Hindu	1	1
Jewish	5	7
Muslim	4	6
Other	39	5.8
Did not provide info	19	2.8
<i>Political Views:</i>		
Conservative	204	30.1
Green	12	1.8
Liberal	207	30.5
Libertarian	5	7
Moderate	163	24.0
Socialist/Leftist	14	2.1
None of the above	62	9.1
Did not provide info	11	1.6

Findings

Four areas were examined in the study – the climate of acceptance and sense of community, the prevalence of disparaging or insensitive remarks based on a person's personal traits, personal experiences of negative treatment, and perception of GVSU's commitment to diversity.

While total responses are quite positive about the environment and experiences of respondents, disaggregation of responses by various demographic groups reveals some striking differences. Both overall responses and disaggregated results are reported below.

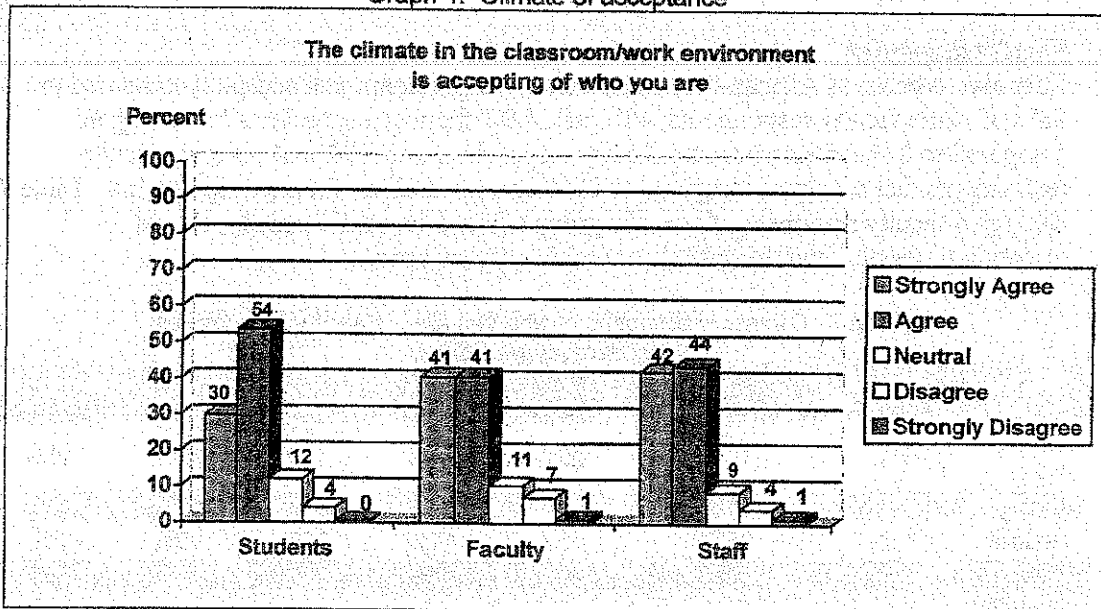
Part I. Climate of Acceptance and Sense of Community

Several questions explored the issue of acceptance and sense of community at GVSU. The results for each question are shown below.

Climate of Acceptance

Most of the campus community feels accepted for who they are. Specifically, 83% of student respondents, 81% of faculty respondents, and 86% of staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the climate in the classroom or work environment was accepting of them.

Graph 1. Climate of acceptance



Due to rounding, numbers in the table are slightly different from aggregated totals; e.g. faculty responses are 40.6% for strongly agree and 40.6% for agree and 81.2% when combined.

While most respondents find that the environment is accepting of them, those who do not are disproportionately people of difference from the majority. Specifically, African-American and GLBT respondents in all three groups (student, faculty and staff) and

disabled faculty respondents were less likely than other groups to feel accepted in the environment.

Student Responses

Fifty-three percent of African-American student respondents feel accepted compared to 87% of white student respondents; 53% of GLBT student respondents feel accepted compared to 85% of heterosexual student respondents. Table 6 compares student responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) to total student responses.

Table 6. Climate is accepting of who you are... **Student Responses**
by demographic group

	Total	African-American/Black	Asian	Hispanic	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
Strongly Agree	30%	12%	26%	23%	23%	9%	30%	29%
Agree	54%	41%	45%	54%	52%	44%	54%	50%
Neutral	12%	29%	23%	18%	18%	26%	12%	16%
Disagree	4%	15%	5%	5%	8%	20%	4%	5%
Strongly Disagree	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%

**All other race/ethnic groups are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Faculty Responses

Fifty-five percent of African-American faculty respondents feel accepted compared to 83% of white faculty respondents; 48% of GLBT faculty respondents feel accepted compared to 84% of heterosexual faculty respondents; and 58% of disabled faculty respondents feel accepted compared to 82% of non-disabled faculty respondents. Table 7 compares faculty responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) to total faculty responses.

Table 7. Climate is accepting of who you are... **Faculty Responses**
by demographic group

	Total	African-American/Black	Asian	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
Strongly Agree	41%	10%	26%	33%	11%	32%	16%
Agree	41%	45%	58%	39%	37%	48%	42%
Neutral	11%	35%	10%	11%	22%	10%	5%
Disagree	7%	5%	7%	17%	22%	9%	32%
Strongly Disagree	1%	5%	0%	0%	7%	2%	5%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Staff Responses

Seventy-one percent of African-American staff respondents felt accepted compared to 88% of white/Caucasian staff respondents; 67% of the GLBT staff respondents felt accepted compared to 87% of heterosexual staff respondents. Table 8 compares staff responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) to total staff responses.

Table 8. Climate is accepting of who you are... Staff Responses by demographic group

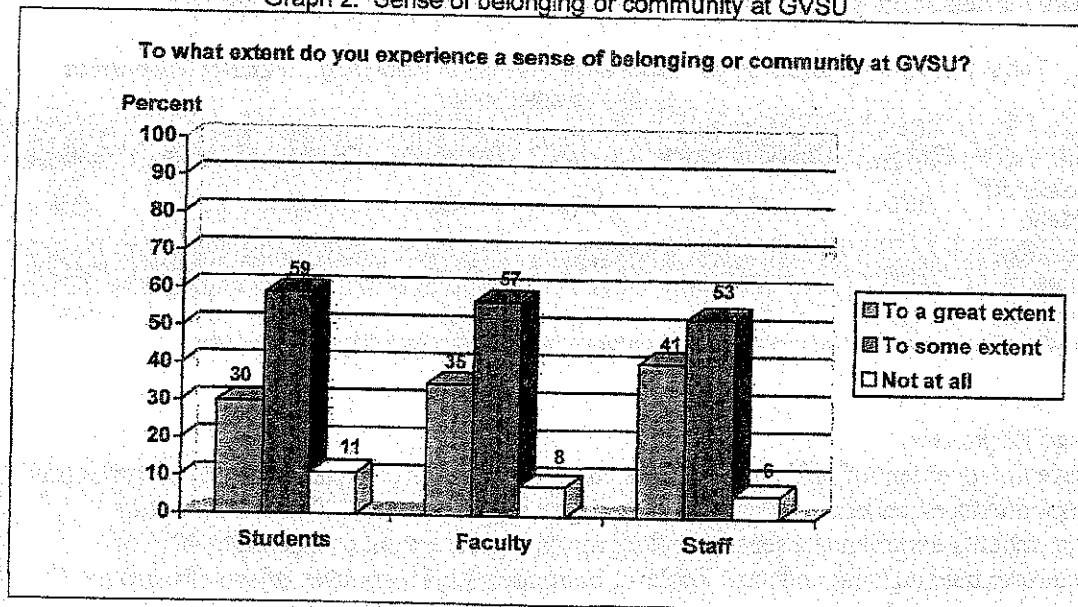
	Total	African-American/Black	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
Strongly Agree	42%	20%	18%	19%	40%	33%
Agree	44%	51%	59%	48%	46%	58%
Neutral	9%	18%	16%	19%	9%	8%
Disagree	4%	11%	5%	7%	4%	0%
Strongly Disagree	1%	0%	2%	7%	1%	0%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Sense of Belonging or Community at GVSU

Most respondents feel a sense of belonging or community at GVSU. However, 11% of student respondents, 8% of faculty respondents, and 6% of staff respondents do not feel a sense of belonging at all. Those who do not feel a sense of belonging are disproportionately people of color and GLBT respondents.

Graph 2. Sense of belonging or community at GVSU



Student Responses

Sixteen percent of African-American student respondents compared to 32% of white student respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent; 13% of GLBT student respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent compared to 31% of heterosexual student respondents. Table 9 compares student responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) to total student responses.

Table 9. To what extent do you experience a sense of belonging.... **Student Responses**
by demographic group

	Total	African-American/Black	Asian	Hispanic	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
To a great extent	30%	16%	26%	29%	31%	13%	30%	31%
To some extent	59%	71%	65%	61%	55%	62%	59%	51%
Not at all	11%	13%	10%	10%	14%	25%	10%	18%

**All other race/ethnic groups are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Faculty Responses

Fifteen percent of African-American faculty respondents compared to 38% of white faculty respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent; 11% of GLBT faculty respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent compared to 37% of heterosexual student respondents; and 26% of disabled faculty respondents compared to 35% of non-disabled faculty respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent. Table 10 shows faculty responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) compared to total faculty responses.

Table 10. To what extent do you experience a sense of belonging.... **Faculty Responses**
by demographic group

	Total	African-American/Black	Asian	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
To a great extent	35%	15%	39%	14%	11%	35%	26%
To some extent	57%	75%	55%	81%	74%	56%	58%
Not at all	8%	10%	7%	5%	15%	8%	16%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Staff Responses

Seventeen percent of African-American staff respondents compared to 44% of white staff respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent; 26% of GLBT staff respondents experience a sense of belonging to a great extent compared to 42% of heterosexual staff respondents. Table 11 compares staff responses of specific groups (based on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability) to total staff responses.

Table 11. To what extent do you experience a sense of belonging**Staff Responses**
by demographic group

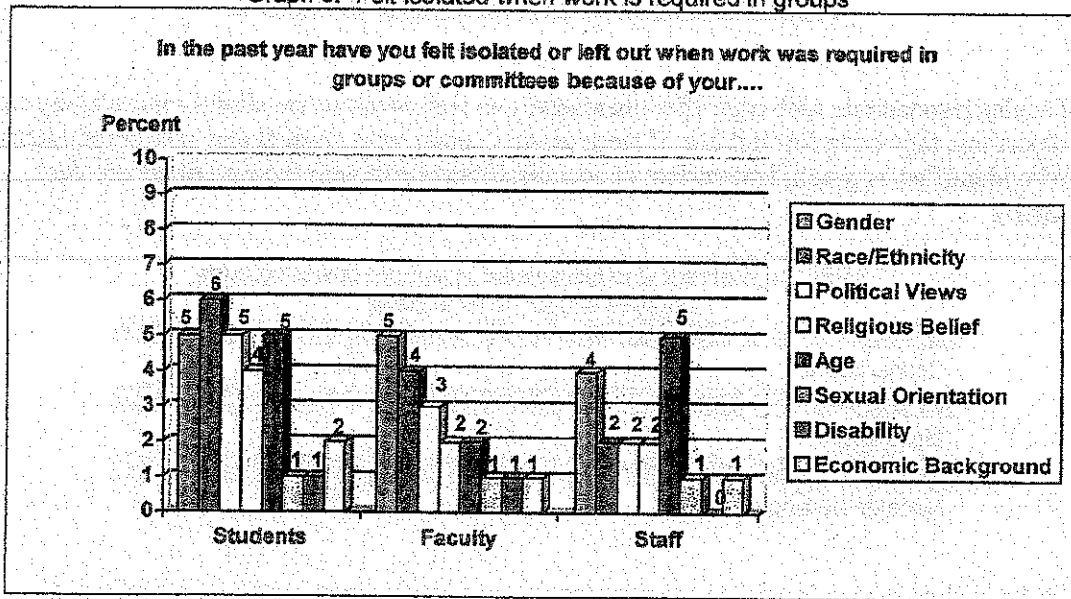
	Total	African-American/Black	Others**	GLBT	Female	Disabled
To a great extent	41%	17%	30%	26%	38%	38%
To some extent	53%	70%	66%	58%	55%	54%
Not at all	6%	13%	5%	16%	7%	8%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasians.

Isolation from Work Groups

The survey asked if the respondent had felt isolated or left out because of a personal trait or belief when work was required in groups or committees. Most respondents have not felt isolated. (Note: Due to the small numbers, the vertical scale in the graph below is based on 10 percent and not 100 percent.)

Graph 3. Felt isolated when work is required in groups



Further examination of these variables reveals striking differences by race/ethnicity, with people of color disproportionately experiencing isolation from work groups. Forty-six percent of African-American students report feeling left out because of their race.

Table 12. Percent who felt isolated or left out of work groups because of their race/ethnicity

	Students	Faculty	Staff
African-American/Black	46%	25%	22%
Asian	29%	16%	
Others	15%	11%	5%
White/Caucasian	1%	0%	1%

*Asians are included in the "Others" category because there are < 20 in the group.

Gender differences are notable for faculty respondents, with 8% of female faculty feeling isolated or left out of work groups because of their gender, compared to 2% of male faculty.

Table 13. Percent who felt isolated or left out of work groups because of their gender

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Female	6%	8%	4%
Male	4%	2%	3%

Faculty respondents who identified themselves as conservative are slightly more likely to report that they have felt left out of work groups, along with student and staff respondents who identified as green, libertarian, or socialist/leftist (although their numbers are very small).

Table 14. Percent who felt isolated or left out of work groups because of their political views

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Conservative	5%	7%	2%
Liberal	6%	3%	1%
Moderate	5%	1%	2%
Green/Libertarian/Socialist/Leftist	15%	4%	7%
None of the above	4%	3%	0%

Older student respondents and younger faculty and staff respondents report feeling left out of work groups because of their age.

Table 15. Percent who felt isolated or left out of work groups because of their age

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Under 30 years of age	4%	10%	21%
30 - 39 years of age	16%	5%	2%
40 - 49 years of age	16%	1%	2%
50 or more	15%	2%	3%

Respondents in all three groups (student, faculty, staff) who identified as other than Christian are more likely to feel left out of work groups because of their religion.

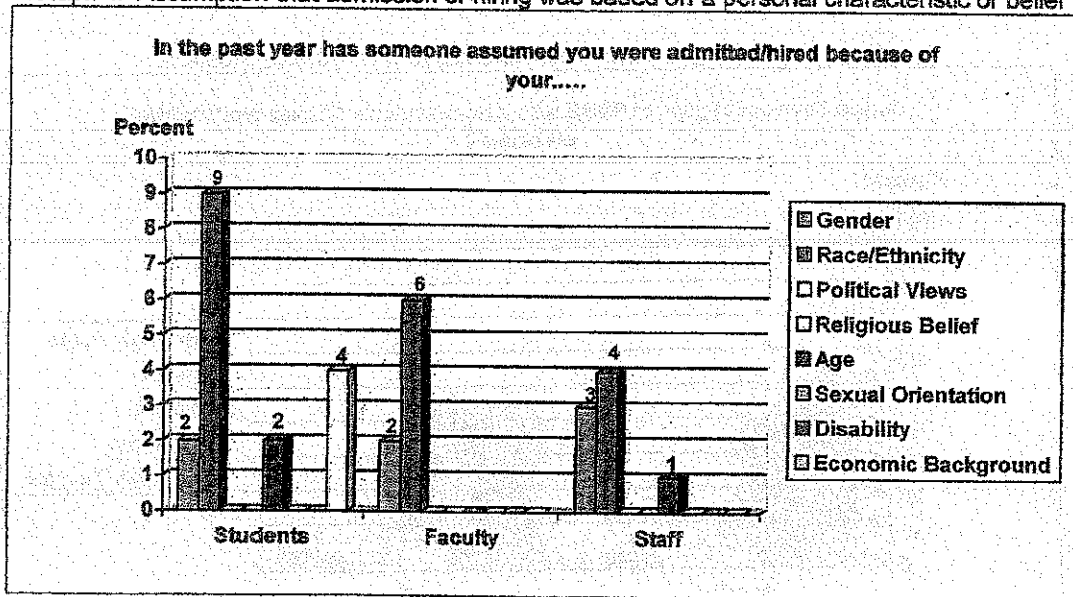
Table 16. Percent who felt isolated or left out of work groups because of their religious beliefs

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Christian	3%	2%	1%
Non-Christian	8%	6%	19%
Humanist/Atheist/Agnostic	10%	2%	2%
Other	8%	5%	5%

Assumption about One's Hiring/Admission

Some respondents reported that someone had assumed they were admitted or hired because of a personal trait or belief, most often because of race/ethnicity (9% of students, 6% of faculty, and 4% of staff). Economic background was cited by 4% of student respondents, possibly related to qualifying for scholarships. (Note: Due to the small numbers, the vertical scale in the graph below is based on 10 percent and not 100 percent.)

Graph 4. Assumption that admission or hiring was based on a personal characteristic or belief



Closer examination shows that people of color are far more likely to have had this experience. At least half of African-American, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino student respondents felt that someone had assumed they were admitted because of their race/ethnicity. Fifty-five percent of African-American faculty and 33% of African-American staff also reported this experience.

Table 17. Percent who felt that someone assumed they were admitted/hired because of their race/ethnicity

	Students	Faculty	Staff
African-American/Black	53%	55%	33%
Asian	50%	16%	*
Hispanic/Latino	58%	*	*
Others	21%	22%	21%
White/Caucasian	1%	0%	1%

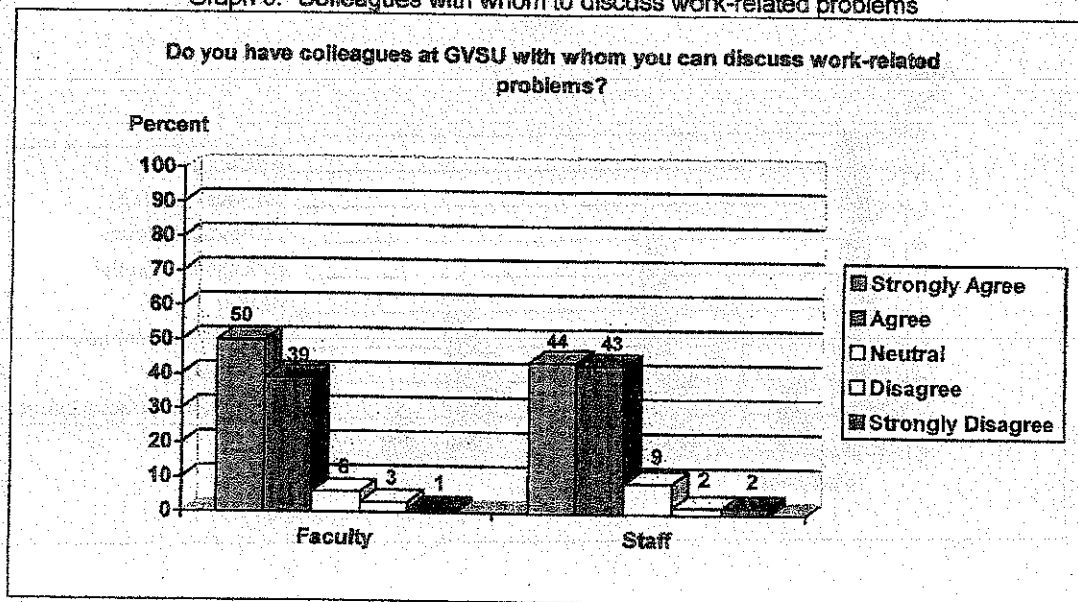
*Responses are included in the "others" category because there are < 20 in the group.

Colleagues with Whom to Discuss Work-related Problems

As in the previous climate studies, faculty and staff were asked if they have colleagues with whom they can discuss work-related problems.

Eight-nine percent of faculty respondents and 87% of staff respondents agreed that they did have a colleague with whom they could discuss work-related problems.

Graph 5. Colleagues with whom to discuss work-related problems



Faculty Responses

There were no differences by gender for faculty respondents. This result is similar to the response in the 1999 climate study when 90% of male faculty and 88% of female faculty agreed that they had colleagues with whom to discuss work-related problems..

There are differences by race/ethnicity, with 67% of African-American faculty respondents (compared to 90% of white faculty and 88% of all other faculty) agreeing that they have colleagues with whom to discuss work-related problems.

Staff Responses

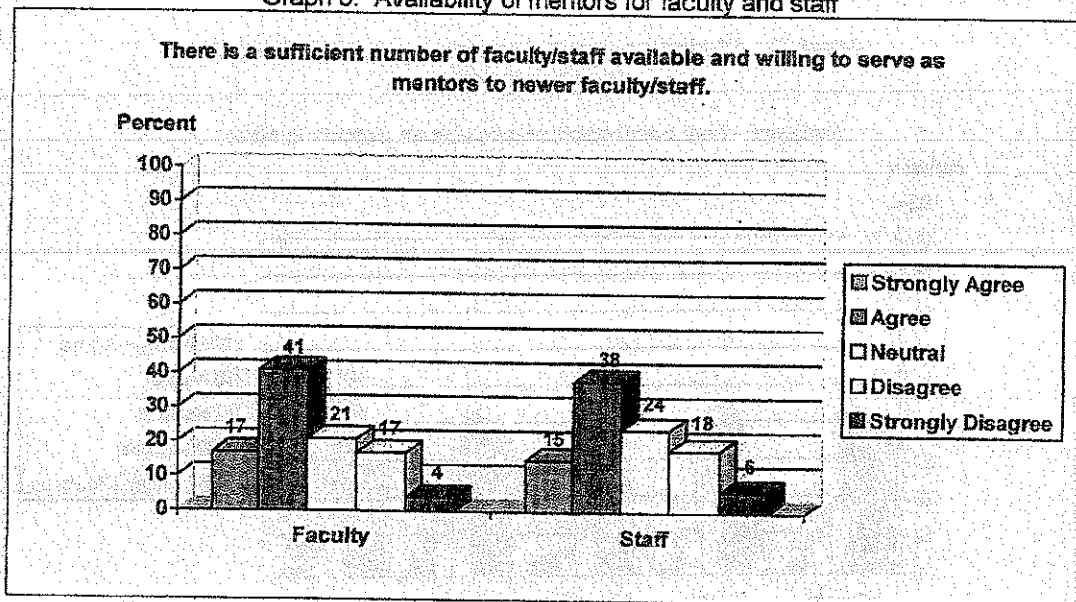
For staff respondents, 89% of men and 86% of women agreed that they had colleagues with whom to discuss work-related problems. This result compares to 88% of men and 82% of women in the 1999 climate study.

There are differences by race/ethnicity, with 66% of African-American staff respondents (compared to 90% of white staff respondents and 80% of all other staff respondents) reporting that they have a colleague with whom to discuss work-related problems.

Availability of Mentors for New Faculty and Staff

Over half of the respondents agreed that there are enough colleagues willing to serve as mentors to newer faculty and staff.

Graph 6. Availability of mentors for faculty and staff



Faculty Responses

Fifty-seven percent of faculty respondents agreed that there are enough colleagues willing to serve as mentors to newer faculty and staff. The results differ by gender and race. Sixty-four percent of men and 50% of women (compared to 58% of men and 46% of women in the 1999 climate study) believed that there are enough colleagues willing to serve as mentors. Fewer African-American faculty respondents (42%) agreed that there are enough mentors compared to white faculty respondents (58%).

Staff Responses

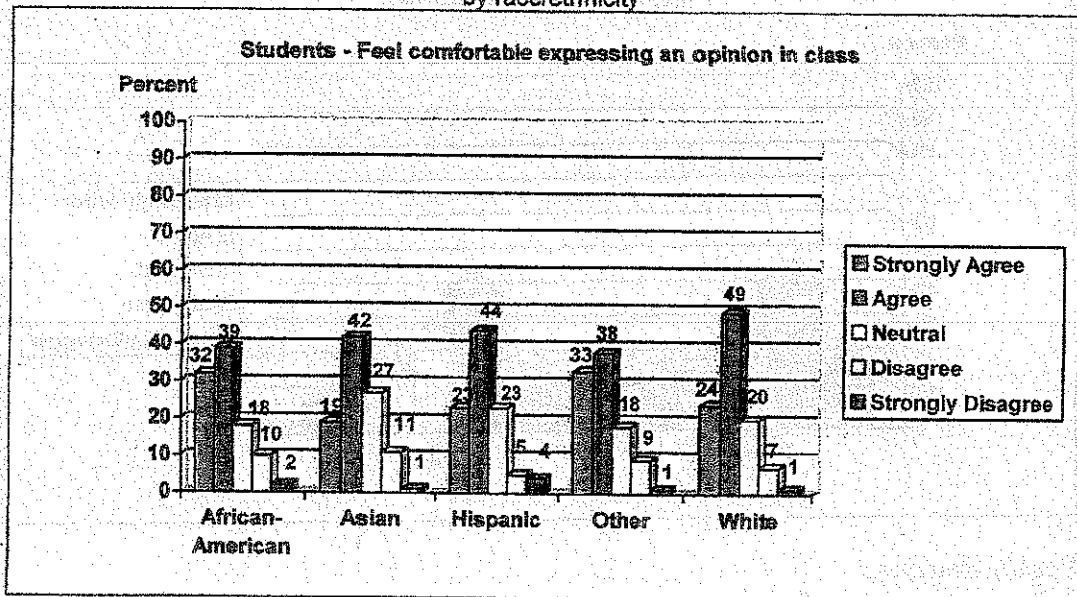
Fifty-three staff respondents agreed that there are enough colleagues willing to serve as mentors. By gender, 56% of men and 51% of women (compared to 46% of men and 34% of women in the 1999 climate study) believed that there are enough colleagues willing to serve as mentors. Thirty-two percent of African-American staff respondents agreed that there are enough mentors compared to 54% of white staff respondents.

Student Comfort in Expressing Opinions in Class

As in the previous climate study, students were asked if they feel comfortable expressing opinions in class. Most (72%) student respondents felt comfortable expressing their opinion in class; 20% were neutral, and 8% were not comfortable. Graduate students and non-degree seeking students were more likely to be comfortable expressing their opinions than undergraduate students.

A slightly smaller percentage of students of color reported not feeling comfortable in expressing their opinion in class compared to white students. Graph 7 shows the responses by race/ethnicity.

Graph 7. Students comfort in expressing opinions in class by race/ethnicity



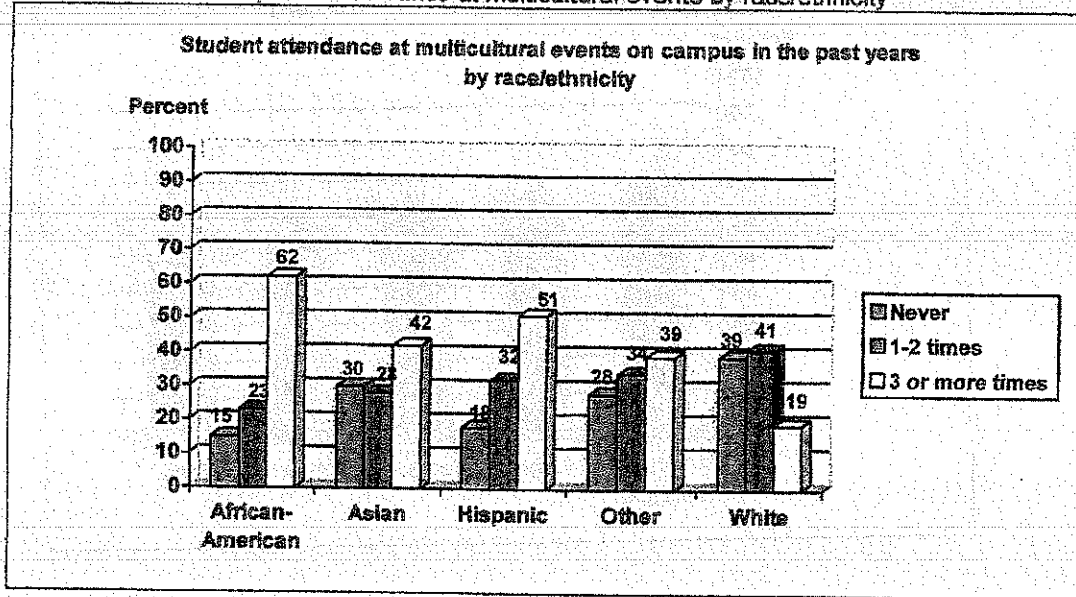
Student Attendance at Multicultural Events

Sixty-four percent of student respondents have attended at least one multicultural event at GVSU in the past year. Those who do not attend are disproportionately older, non-degree seeking or part-time, live in off-campus housing and spend more time at campuses other

than Allendale. In fact, 68% of part-time graduate student respondents and 42% of full-time graduate student respondents have never attended a multicultural event on campus compared to 30% of full-time undergraduates and 58% of part-time undergraduates.

As shown in Graph 8, a larger percentage of students of color participated more often in multicultural events than white students.

Graph 8. Attendance at multicultural events by race/ethnicity



Student Involvement in Campus Organizations

Slightly more than half of student respondents reported that they were involved in one or more student organization on campus in the past year. In the 1999 climate study, 30% of students said they were involved in one or more student organization on campus.

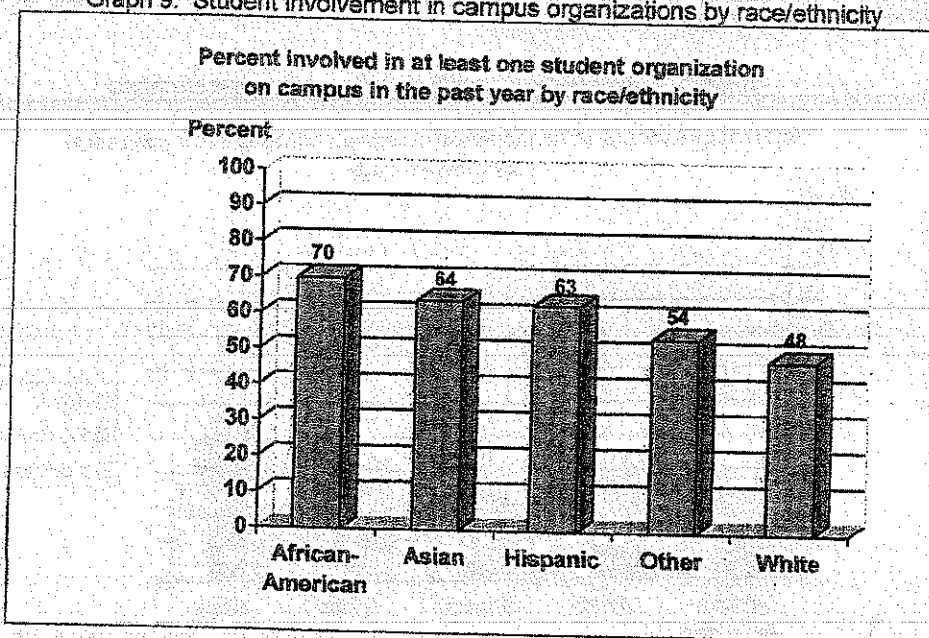
As would be expected, full-time students were more likely to be involved in student organizations than part-time students.

Table 18. Percent involved in one or more student organization on campus by student status

Students	Percent
Full-time undergraduates	58%
Full-time graduates	51%
Part-time undergraduates	23%
Part-time graduates	10%

African-American students were involved in student organizations at a higher rate than other racial/ethnic groups, as shown in Graph 9.

Graph 9. Student involvement in campus organizations by race/ethnicity



Part II. Prevalence of Disparaging or Insensitive Comments

Another series of questions asked respondents how many times in the past year they had heard another student, faculty member, or staff member make a disparaging or insensitive comment about another's belief or personal characteristic. Additional questions asked where the remarks most often occurred.

Respondents were most likely to report that they had heard disparaging remarks by students. Such insensitive remarks were most likely to be heard in informal conversation or in a classroom.

The results below are based on reports of hearing at least three insensitive or disparaging remarks in the past year.

Disparaging Comments Students Have Heard

Half of the student respondents reported that they heard other students make disparaging comments about someone's political viewpoint; 38% had heard disparaging comments about someone's sexual orientation; 25% had heard disparaging comments about someone's race or ethnicity. Far fewer reported hearing disparaging comments made by faculty or staff.

Table 19. Percent of students who heard disparaging or insensitive comments by topic of remark

	Heard 3+ comments by Students	Heard 3+ comments by Faculty	Heard 3+ comments by Staff
Political viewpoint	50%	12%	6%
Sexual orientation	38%	2%	2%
Race/ethnicity	25%	2%	2%
Gender	23%	3%	2%
English-speaking skill	23%	2%	2%
Religious beliefs	21%	5%	2%
Economic background	12%	2%	1%
Disability	11%	1%	1%
Age	10%	2%	1%

Disparaging Comments Faculty Have Heard

Forty-one percent of faculty heard at least three student comments about someone's political viewpoint, 24% heard student comments about someone's English speaking skill, 24% heard student comments about someone's sexual orientation, and 22% heard comments related to religious beliefs.

Table 20. Percent of faculty who heard disparaging or insensitive comments by topic of remark

	Heard 3+ comments by Students	Heard 3+ comments by Faculty	Heard 3+ comments by Staff
Political viewpoint	41%	30%	12%
Sexual Orientation	24%	9%	5%
English-speaking skill	24%	6%	5%
Religious beliefs	22%	15%	7%
Gender	17%	10%	4%
Race/ethnicity	14%	7%	4%
Economic background	11%	3%	2%
Age	10%	5%	3%
Disability	5%	2%	2%

Disparaging Comments Staff Have Heard

Nearly one third of staff respondents reported that they had heard three or more disparaging comments by students regarding someone's political viewpoint; 22% had heard three or more student comments about someone's sexual orientation.

Table 21. Percent of staff who heard disparaging or insensitive comments by topic of remark

	Heard 3+ comments by Students	Heard 3+ comments by Faculty	Heard 3+ comments by Staff
Political viewpoint	30%	17%	21%
Sexual orientation	22%	5%	12%
Race/ethnicity	11%	5%	11%
Gender	14%	5%	9%
English-speaking skill	19%	4%	8%
Religious beliefs	13%	6%	10%
Economic background	8%	3%	4%
Age	7%	3%	4%
Disability	4%	1%	3%

Part III. Negative Treatment or Experience

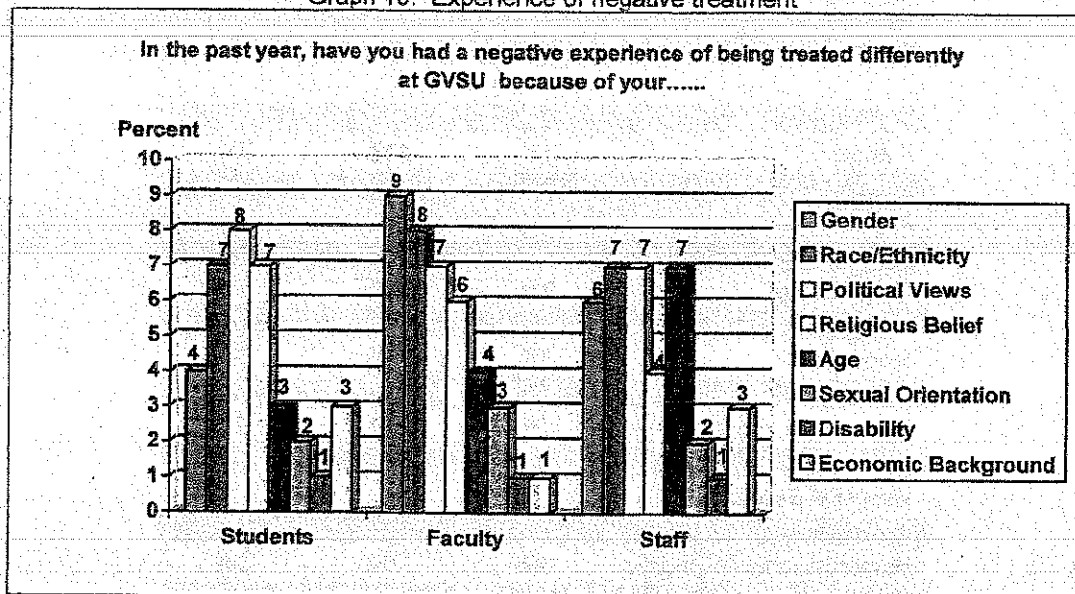
The survey asked if respondents had experienced negative treatment, harassment, concerns about their physical safety, or whether they had felt unwelcome at a GVSU-sponsored event because of a personal characteristic or belief. The survey also asked if respondents had felt required to represent a viewpoint different from the majority because of a personal trait or belief. While most of the campus community had not experienced a negative incident, there was variation by demographic groups.

Negative Experience of Being Treated Differently

Nearly one-third of faculty respondents, 26% of staff respondents, and 16% of student respondents reported a negative experience of being treated differently than others at GVSU in the past year because of a personal trait or belief.

Eight percent of faculty respondents and 7% of student and staff respondents reported a negative experience because of their race/ethnicity. About the same proportion reported a negative experience because of their political viewpoint. Nine percent of faculty respondents, 4% of student respondents, and 6% of staff respondents reported a negative experience because of their gender. (Note: Due to the small numbers, the vertical scale in the graph below is based on 10 percent not 100 percent.)

Graph 10. Experience of negative treatment



When examined by demographic groups, the numbers tell a more complete story. People of color (especially African-Americans), GLBT respondents, disabled respondents, and female faculty respondents were more likely than others to report negative experiences.

At least half of all African-American respondents experienced negative treatment because of their race/ethnicity and at least 40% of all GLBT respondents experienced negative treatment because of their sexual orientation. Thirty-two percent of disabled faculty, 25% of disabled students, and 12% of disabled staff respondents reported negative treatment because of their disability.

Table 22. Percent who experienced negative treatment because of a personal trait or belief

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>			
African-American/Black	51%	65%	57%
Asian/Pacific Islander	32%	39%	*
Other Race/Ethnicities	21%	16%	28%
White/Caucasian	1%	1%	2%

*Responses are included in the "others" category because there are < 20 in the group

Table 22. Percent who experienced negative treatment because of a personal trait or belief - continued

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>			
GLBT	42%	50%	40%
Heterosexual	0%	0%	0%
<i>Disability:</i>			
Disabled	25%	32%	12%
<i>Gender:</i>			
Female	5%	14%	8%
Male	2%	4%	3%
<i>Political Beliefs:</i>			
Conservative	8%	14%	5%
Liberal	9%	7%	11%
Moderate	6%	5%	3%
Other	6%	6%	23%
None of the above	5%	3%	3%
<i>Religious Beliefs:</i>			
Christian	5%	7%	4%
Humanist/Atheist/Agnostic	14%	7%	3%
Non-Christian	8%	6%	25%
Other	12%	8%	8%

*Responses are combined with "others" because there are < 20 in the group.

**Combines Green, Libertarian, Socialist/Leftist.

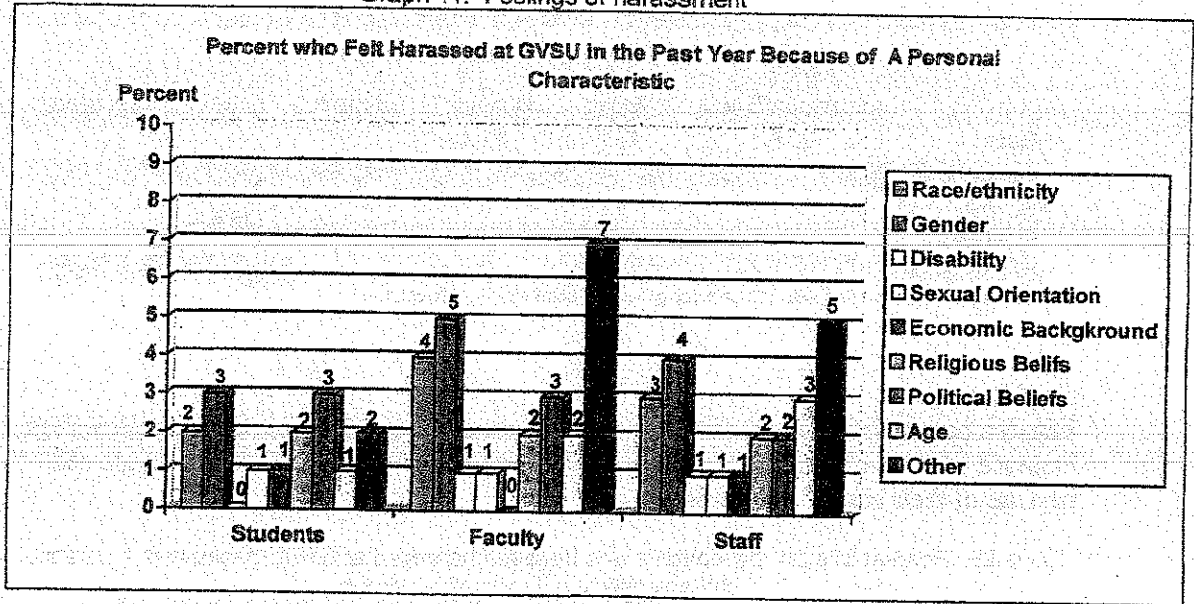
***Combines Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist.

Harassment

Overall, 16% of faculty, 13% of staff, and 10% of student respondents reported feeling harassed for one or more reasons. While race and gender were most often cited as the specific reason for the harassment, "other" reasons were also given. Those reasons varied but often involved interpersonal conflict.

Graph 11 shows the percentage of students, faculty and staff who felt harassed because of a personal characteristic. (Note: Due to the small numbers, the vertical scale in the graph below is based on 10 percent and not 100 percent.)

Graph 11. Feelings of harassment



Examining this issue by demographic group reveals that disproportionately more people of color, females, GLBT, and disabled respondents felt harassed.

Student Responses

Nearly one in five GLBT student respondents reporting feeling harassed because of their sexual orientation. Twelve percent of African-American students and 11% of Asian students felt harassed because of their race/ethnicity.

Table 23. Percent of student respondents who have felt harassed at GVSU because of a personal characteristic by demographic group

	African-American/Black	Asian	Others**	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Race	12%	11%	8%			
Gender				4%		
Sexual Orientation					19%	
Disability						8%

**All other racial/ethnic groups are combined in this column, excluding white/Caucasian.

Faculty Responses

One-fourth of African-American faculty respondents felt harassed because of their race and 18% of GLBT faculty respondents felt harassed because of their sexual orientation.

Table 24. Percent of faculty respondents who have felt harassed at GVSU because of a personal characteristic by demographic group

	African American/Black	Asian	Others**	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Race	25%	10%	11%			
Gender				10%		
Sexual Orientation					18%	
Disability						11%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column.

Staff Responses

Thirteen percent of African-American staff respondents and 16% of other minorities felt harassed because of their race/ethnicity. Fourteen percent of GLBT staff felt harassed because of their sexual orientation.

Table 25. Percent of staff respondents who have felt harassed at GVSU because of a personal characteristic by demographic group

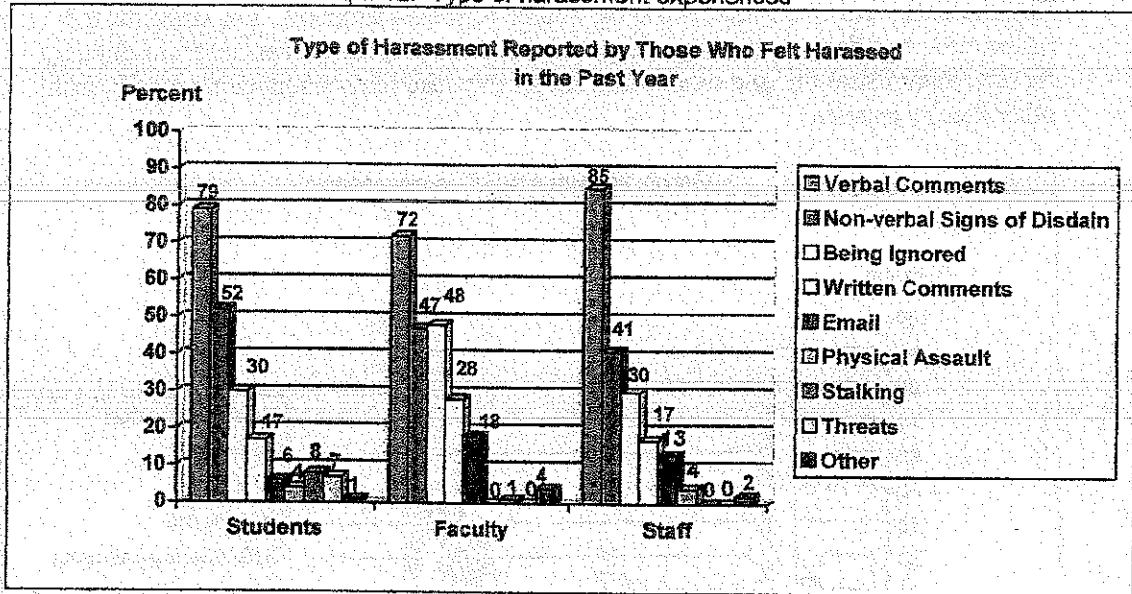
	African American/Black	Others**	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Race	13%	16%			
Gender			5%		
Sexual Orientation				14%	
Disability					8%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column.

Type of Harassment Experienced

The survey also asked respondents to identify how the harassment was expressed. In most cases, the harassment was expressed as verbal comments or non-verbal signs of disdain, such as glances or hand-signals, or being ignored. The table below shows the type of harassment. Respondents could identify more than one type of harassment.

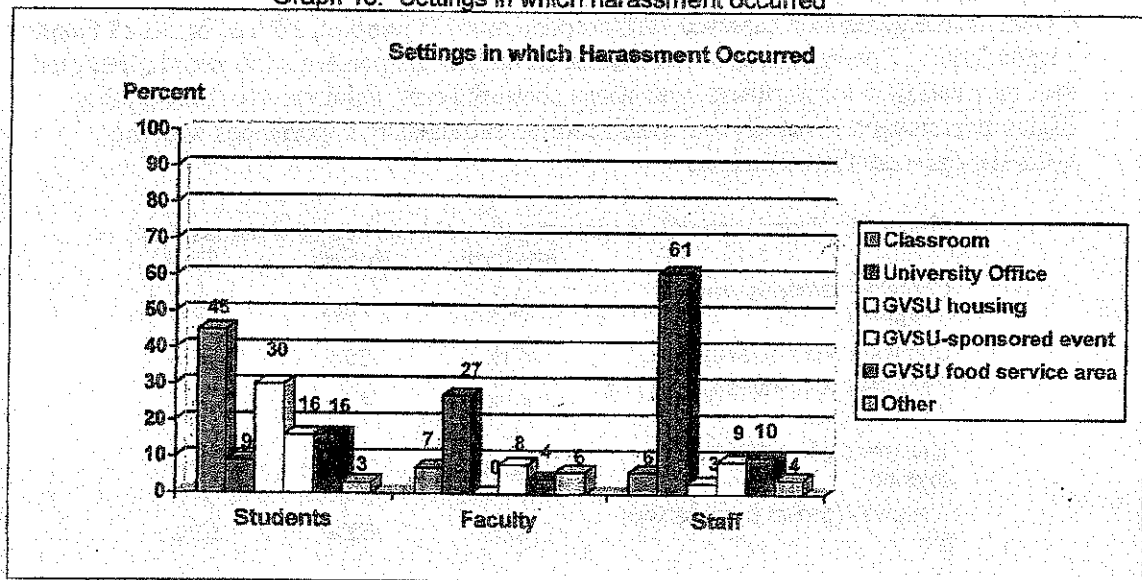
Graph 12. Type of harassment experienced



Location of Harassment

The place where the harassment occurred varied. For students, it mostly occurred in the classroom or in GVSU housing; for faculty and staff, it mostly occurred in university offices.

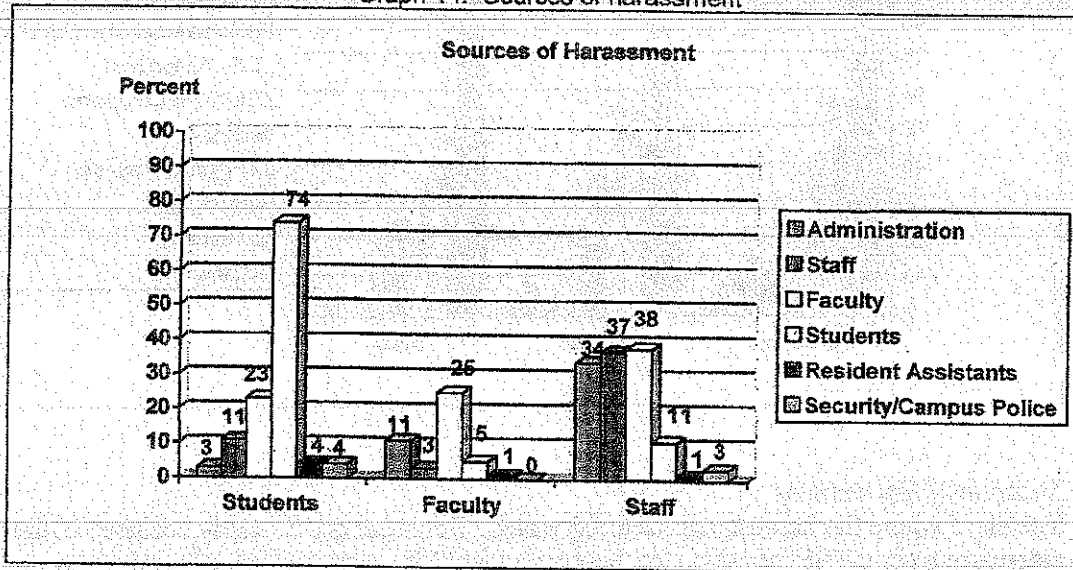
Graph 13. Settings in which harassment occurred



Sources of harassment

Respondents were also asked about the source of the harassment. For students, the harassment was done mostly by other students; for staff, the harassment was done by faculty, administration, and other staff; for faculty, the harassment came mostly from other faculty or staff.

Graph 14. Sources of harassment



Formal Harassment Complaints

Twenty-three percent of harassed staff respondents (23 people), 18% of harassed faculty respondents (17 people), and 11% of harassed student respondents (50 people) reported that they had filed a complaint. Questions about the complaint process showed that higher percentages of faculty and staff reported satisfactory experiences with the complaint process than students.

Table 26. Experience with the investigation of a complaint of harassment

	Students	Faculty	Staff
Complaint process was explained	58%	73%	78%
Complaint was investigated	60%	85%	77%
Complaint was investigated in a timely fashion	44%	61%	76%
The investigator(s) carefully listened	52%	75%	82%
The investigation process was fair	48%	62%	55%

Concerns for Physical Safety

Respondents were asked if they had feared for their physical safety at GVSU in the past year. Nine percent of students, 7% of faculty, and 5% of staff respondents reported that they had feared for their physical safety. When asked whether they feared for their safety because of a personal trait or belief (race/ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, economic background, religious belief, politic belief, age, or "other"), most cited gender or other reasons. "Other" reasons specified by respondents included concerns about being alone in the parking lot at night and hazardous weather.

The table below shows responses by various demographic groups.

Table 27. Percent who feared for their physical safety because of a personal trait or belief by demographic group

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>			
African-American/Black	8%	0%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%	0%	*
Hispanic/Chicano/Latino	8%		*
Other Race/Ethnicities	14%	0%	5%
White/Caucasian	9%	0%	0%
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>			
GLBT	10%	11%	3%
Heterosexual	0%	0%	0%
<i>Gender</i>			
Female	11%	6%	1%
Male	3%	0%	0%
<i>Political Beliefs</i>			
Conservative	8%	0%	0%
Liberal	10%	1%	0%
Moderate	8%	0%	0%
Other**	13%	0%	3%
None of the above	7%	3%	0%
<i>Religious Beliefs:</i>			
Christian	9%	0%	7%
Humanist/Atheist/Agnostic	9%	1%	7%
Non-Christian	8%	0%	13%
Other	8%	0%	0%

*Responses are combined with "others" because there are < 20 in the group.

**Combines Green, Libertarian, Socialist/Leftist.

***Combines Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist

Formal Complaints about Safety Concerns

Some of those who reported fearing for their safety filed a complaint: 24% of staff respondents (9 people), 18% of faculty respondents (6 people), and 10% of student respondents (34 people). Higher percentages of faculty and staff reported satisfactory experience with the complaint process.

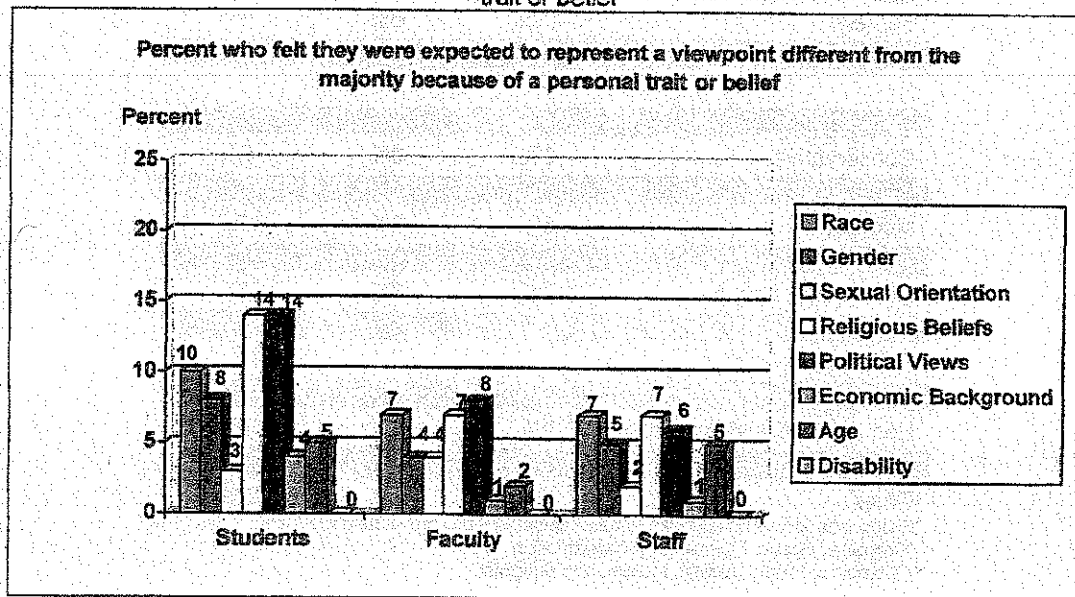
Table 28. Experience with the investigation of a complaint about physical safety concern

	Faculty	Students	Staff
Complaint process was explained	100%	61%	78%
Complaint was investigated	100%	59%	78%
Complaint was investigated in a timely fashion	100%	47%	78%
The investigator(s) carefully listened	100%	61%	78%
The investigation process was fair	67%	39%	56%

Expected to Represent a Viewpoint Because of One's Own Identity or Belief

Respondents were asked if they had been expected to represent a viewpoint different from the majority because of their race/ethnicity, gender, religion, politics, or other personal characteristic. Respondents who reported this experience were most likely to say it was due to their religious belief, political views, race/ethnicity, or gender. (Note: The scale on the graph below is 25% instead of 100% because of the small numbers.)

Graph 15. Expectation to represent a viewpoint different from the majority because of a personal trait or belief



Higher percentages of people of color, especially African-Americans, and GLBT respondents report this experience. In fact, 72% of African-American students have felt they were expected to represent the viewpoint of their race.

Table 29. Percent who felt expected to represent a viewpoint different from the majority because of a personal trait or belief

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>			
African-American/Black	72%	55%	57%
Asian/Pacific Islander	39%	19%	*
Hispanic/Chicano/Latino	39%		
Other Race/Ethnicities	28%	27%	24%
White/Caucasian	2%	1%	1%
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>			
GLBT	49%	54%	31%
Heterosexual	1%	0%	0%
<i>Gender:</i>			
Female	10%	7%	7%
Male	5%	2%	3%
<i>Political Beliefs:</i>			
Conservative	14%	15%	6%
Liberal	18%	7%	8%
Moderate	11%	7%	4%
Other**	25%	12%	10%
None of the above	7%	7%	3%
<i>Religious Beliefs:</i>			
Christian	13%	9%	7%
Humanist/Atheist/Agnostic	21%	5%	7%
Non-Christian***	29%	9%	13%
Other	19%	5%	0%

*Responses are combined with "others" because there are < 20 in the group.

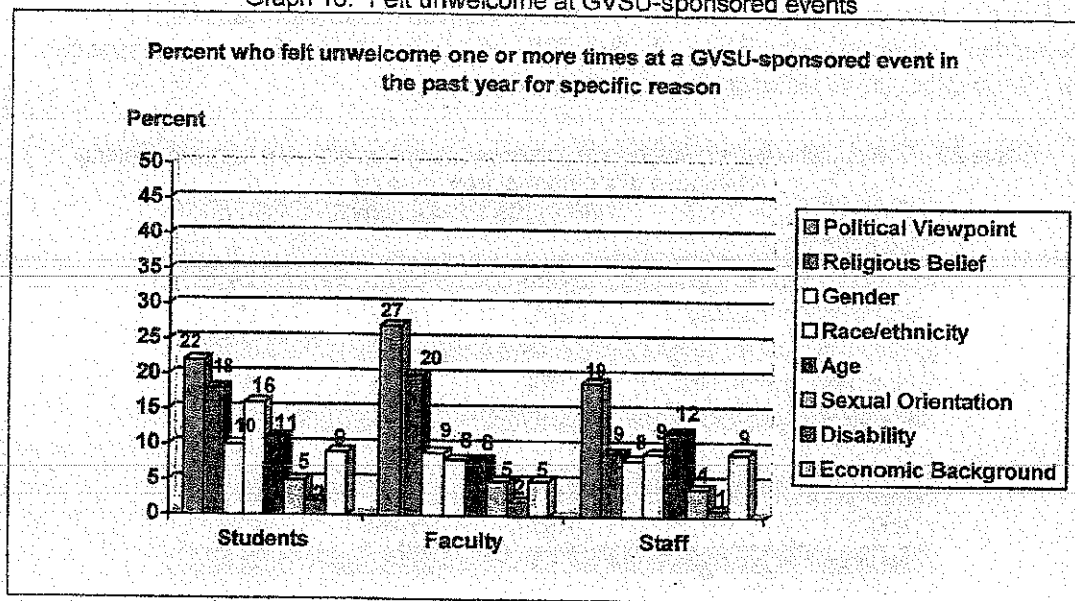
**Combines Green, Libertarian, Socialist/Leftist

***Combines Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist

Felt Unwelcome at GVSU Events

Respondents were asked how many times in the past year they had felt unwelcome at a GVSU-sponsored event because of a personal trait or belief, and most respondents reported that they had felt welcome at events. However, most of those who had felt unwelcome said it was because of their political viewpoint or religious belief, as shown in Graph 12 below. (Note: The scale of the graph is 50% instead of 100% because of the small numbers.)

Graph 16. Felt unwelcome at GVSU-sponsored events



Further examination of this issue reveals some differences among groups. A greater percentage of people of color and GLBT respondents reported feeling unwelcome at GVSU events, as shown in Table 30 below.

Table 30. Percent who felt unwelcome at a GVSU-sponsored event because of a personal trait or belief

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Race/Ethnicity:</i>			
African-American/Black	58%	42%	49%
Asian/Pacific Islander	34%	21%	*
Hispanic/Latino	45%	*	*
Other Race/Ethnicities	31%	17%	33%
White/Caucasian	10%	4%	4%
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>			
GLBT	59%	50%	53%
Heterosexual	3%	2%	2%
<i>Gender</i>			
Female	10%	11%	8%
Male	10%	7%	7%
<i>Political Beliefs:</i>			
Conservative	18%	24%	12%
Liberal	28%	27%	25%
Moderate	20%	28%	17%
Other**	34%	33%	36%
None of the above	14%	15%	16%

Table 30. Percent who felt unwelcome at a GVSU-sponsored event because of a personal trait or belief - continued

	Students	Faculty	Staff
<i>Religious Beliefs:</i>			
Christian	14%	18%	7%
Humanist/Atheist/Agnostic	30%	25%	19%
Non-Christian***	34%	16%	31%
Other	29%	16%	14%

*Responses are combined with "others" because there are < 20 in the group.

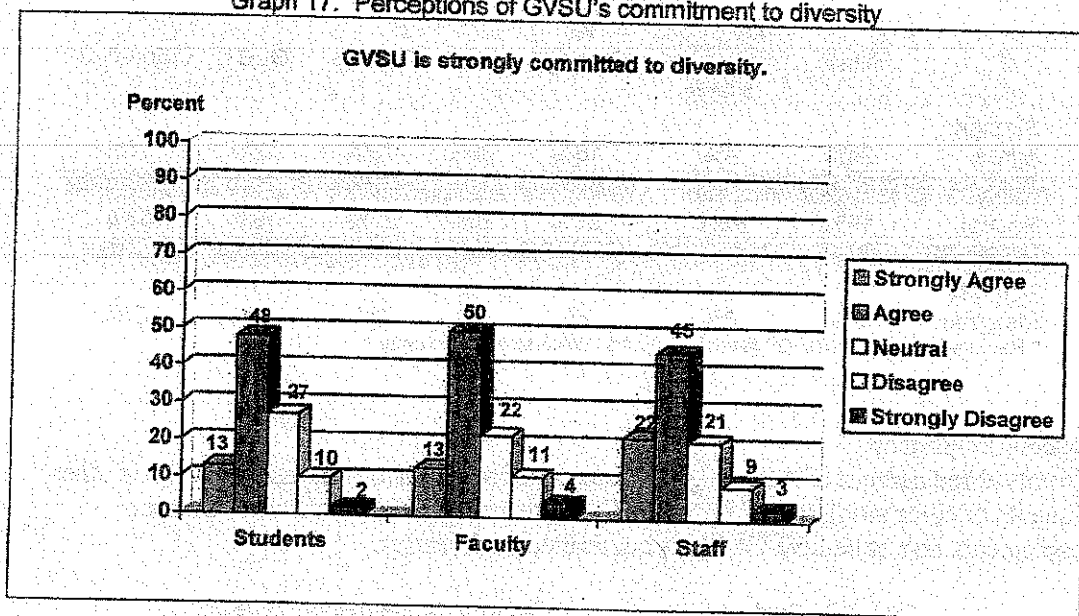
**Combines Green, Libertarian, Socialist/Leftist

***Combines Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist

Part IV. Perceptions about GVSU's Commitment to Diversity

The survey asked about the extent to which respondents believed GVSU is committed to diversity. Overall, about six out of ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that GVSU is committed to diversity.

Graph 17. Perceptions of GVSU's commitment to diversity



However, there is considerable variation in responses by demographic groups. People of color and GLBT respondents are less likely to agree that GVSU is committed to diversity.

Faculty Responses

Twenty-seven percent of African-American faculty respondents, 53% of GLBT faculty respondents, and 28% of disabled faculty respondents do not believe GVSU is committed to diversity

Table 31. Faculty perceptions of GVSU's commitment to diversity by demographic group

	White	African-American/Black	Asians	All Others**	Male	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Strongly Agree	13%	0%	10%	11%	18%	7%	0%	6%
Agree	52%	32%	59%	36%	48%	52%	14%	39%
Neutral	21%	42%	24%	22%	22%	22%	32%	28%
Disagree	11%	11%	7%	22%	9%	14%	32%	28%
Strongly Disagree	3%	16%	0%	8%	4%	5%	21%	0%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column.

Staff Responses

Twenty-seven percent of African-American staff respondents and 59% of GLBT staff respondents do not believe GVSU is committed to diversity.

Table 32. Staff perceptions of GVSU's commitment to diversity by demographic group

	White	African-American/Black	All Others**	Male	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Strongly Agree	24%	4%	16%	25%	19%	0%	11%
Agree	46%	19%	50%	42%	47%	23%	37%
Neutral	19%	49%	21%	20%	22%	19%	33%
Disagree	8%	21%	11%	10%	8%	36%	11%
Strongly Disagree	3%	6%	2%	3%	3%	23%	7%

**Racial/ethnic groups with <20 in each group are combined in this column.

Student Responses

Twenty-three percent of African-Americans students, 19% of Asians, and 15% of other students of color along with 35% of GLBT students and 17% of disabled student respondents do not believe GVSU is committed to diversity.

Table 33. Student perceptions of GVSU's commitment to diversity by demographic group

	White	African-American/Black	Asians	All Others	Male	Female	GLBT	Disabled
Strongly Agree	14%	9%	14%	13%	15%	12%	1%	10%
Agree	50%	30%	42%	45%	50%	47%	34%	50%
Neutral	26%	38%	26%	27%	25%	28%	33%	24%
Disagree	8%	17%	18%	11%	8%	10%	27%	13%
Strongly Disagree	2%	6%	1%	4%	3%	2%	8%	4%

Comments about Diversity Issues

The final question on the survey was open-ended, asking respondents if they would like to offer suggestions on how the university could move forward to improve the campus environment for people of diverse backgrounds. Comments were provided by 865 respondents – 15% of student respondents (576), 22% of staff respondents (150), and 31% of faculty respondents (139).

In general, the following themes appeared in the comments:

- desire for more action from university leadership in support of diversity
- need to define diversity within the context of the university and to be explicit that diversity includes ideas, ideology, religion, and culture as well as race/ethnicity.
- support for increasing diversity at GVSU by recruiting, hiring, and supporting minority and international students, faculty, and staff.
- concern that there is an unwelcoming, disrespectful, and sometimes hostile environment for some people on campus
- support for domestic partner benefits
- concern that discrimination in personnel issues occurs in some areas/departments despite official university policy
- need for orientation and training in diversity issues for students, faculty and staff

The following section discusses these themes and provides sample comments from students, faculty, and staff that reflect opinions expressed.

While some are satisfied with the way things are, others strongly believe that university leadership should take action to demonstrate their commitment to diversity.

“I think that GVSU feels committed to diversity, wants to be committed to diversity, but it needs to do more to make that commitment visible in the area of sexual orientation.”

“I believe that GVSU administrators support diversity in theory, but do little to actually promote diversity on the campus.”

“The university does quite a good job regarding diversity issues. I think sometimes the students are the ones who choose not to get involved or participate in them.”

“Have more programs that initiate conversation/activity between the different racial groups. Grand Valley is fairly diverse, but people stick to their comfort zones.”

“Continue to focus on gender issues and compensation levels of females among faculty and staff. Reducing the “gender pay gap” is an important step in achieving a diverse workforce.”

A number of respondents mentioned the need to define diversity within the context of the university, especially to define it broadly.

"I do not understand the meaning of diversity in the context of GVSU community....."

"The university suffers from an inability to effectively find a working definition of diversity. There is no formal faculty governance process to generate input on diversity, or to solicit input from faculty who identify with underrepresented groups.... The current university practice of soliciting input on diversity in an ad hoc basis (such as this survey) is symptomatic of the inefficiency of the system, inefficiency that is reducing the university's ability to solve diversity issues."

"Diversity of ideas is often missing in the dialogue regarding diversity."

"When speaking of diversity on campus, the immediate focus is racial diversity. We do not address physical disabilities...racial diversity is only one piece of a much larger diversity pie and we need to focus on all the pieces."

"Possibly focus on diversity of thoughts, opinions, and cultures rather than the diversity of different skin colors. I think that many of the differences that we face are not due to different ethnic groups but to different cultural beliefs."

"...I would like to hear the Administration's position on academic freedom and on legislation...that would curtail the freedom of faculty to articulate and explore views that contradict those of the nation's political leadership. It's as important to foster and defend a diversity of ideas as it is to create and retain a demographically diverse campus."

There is a sense among a number of respondents that diversity is an asset to the environment and should be strengthened through increasing efforts to recruit and hire/admit more people of color. Some suggested that additional resources should be made available for scholarships and for making minority hires during a time of limited budgets.

"Encourage people of diverse background to study here by giving them scholarships as well as teaching assistantships... Motivate faculty to work abroad, do conferences, give more courses in diversity and understanding of the differences...."

"Hire more faculty of diversity. That will be most likely THE most important contribution."

"I would like to see a more diverse student and faculty population. I am not aware of what steps GVSU is taking to recruit students of various ethnicities and races, but I support efforts in that direction."

"I think GVSU is on the right path. Surveying students and hiring more diverse faculty is a great start."

"I've never had a professor that wasn't white/Caucasian. (I know they exist at Grand Valley, but they aren't as common as white/Caucasians.) Professors are in a position of authority/respect. Perhaps if we had more multicultural professors it would make everybody more comfortable with diversity."

"If Grand Valley is truly committed to diversity and cares to create such an environment, then there needs to be a concerted effort made to the professional development and hiring of minorities to assume leadership and decision making positions, such as vp's, directors, and deans. Diversity attracts and retains diversity."

"Increasing the diversity of the faculty will only occur as dollars made available to

allow hiring in highly competitive market for minority and female faculty members.”

“...My suggestion would be for GVSU to have a special fund for retention and hiring of minority faculty. Such mechanism has proven to be very effective in the diversification policy of other universities.”

Concern was also expressed that GVSU does not do enough to support and retain minority students, faculty and staff who come here. More support and visibility for current programs as well as new activities were suggested.

“I know that we have programs to assist students who may have diverse backgrounds, but it seems like some programs encourage diversity, but then don't support those students in being successful.”

“Provide mentors for new students and staff members of minority groups....”

“Have a recognition/special career plan for diverse faculty who bring recognition/visibility to college/GVSU.”

“More cultural events not just directed for people of a minority but for everyone.”

“Overall, I think there needs to be a better mixture of people at events – not all black and not all white. Make events appeal to everyone so people of all backgrounds will attend and get a better understanding of each other.”

“There are many speakers that come to campus, but they're all because it is a special time. For example, having black speakers come for black history month. That is great, but why not do it other times throughout the year. There should not have to be a special event to recognize people of other races. Also, let's get some gay awareness events, speakers, or whatever going on. People are not as afraid of things that they know about. Let's educate them.”

Some respondents commented that there should be more effort at recruiting international faculty and students and doing more to make them feel accepted and valued here.

“GVSU needs to make a greater commitment to increasing the number of international students as an area of diversity. Our current attempts at diversity maintain an ethnocentric approach that limits the definition of diversity to this midwest region.....”

Although some respondents found the university to be a welcoming place, there was a mixed variety of complaints and comments about how various groups are poorly treated. Some felt that the environment was homophobic and intolerant of minorities. Some suggested that conservative viewpoints and Christian values were being attacked. Some were concerned about the lack of sensitivity to disability issues. Some believed there was too much emphasis on women's issues; others felt that sexism was a problem. Some commented that there was a lack of respect shown to non-faculty staff and to affiliate/adjunct faculty. Letters in the *Lantern* were cited as evidence of rudeness and incivility. Single parents and non-traditional students also expressed a lack of acceptance and accommodation to their situations.

“I am horrified by the intolerance shown towards homosexuals and atheists here.”

"I am very uncomfortable with prayers that are said at university events."

"I believe that faculty are often intolerant of conservative positions. We are encouraged to be tolerant of others' values but if your values are conservative they are often attacked."

"I personally think that a white Christian conservative may be one of the more looked down upon categories of people on campus. Especially if they don't agree with the liberal opinions of the majority of fulltime instructors at GVSU."

"...Some of our students have very little experience with people from other cultures and tolerate very little with anyone who is different from them in terms of accent, color, religiosity, or even postures.... Oftentimes, a professor who is from a different culture or country is the easiest target for them to vent their frustration."

"...Since this past year was an election year never have I seen so much animosity and hatred towards different political standings by the students but more surprisingly the teachers. I don't think I went to a class last year or walked through a building where I didn't hear badgering about how negative one party was and honestly in certain areas I just lied about my political view to prevent being badgered and harassed by not only students but professors...."

"More flexibility/accommodation should be allowed for a greater variety of abilities."

"...regarding disabilities and how GVSU adapts... These always include wheelchair and sight consideration but I would like to make sure hearing impairment is also considered... hearing impairment can affect both learning and social aspects of one's life..."

"I think that above race discrimination, there is more gender discrimination... This is not necessarily always strong harassment, it is more verbal comments."

"When I read one of the "rants" in the Lanthorn, it is clear that we need to do a better job with our students on questions of diversity and tolerance."

"If you really want to know the campus climate, see how students talk about their professors on www.ratemyprofessors.com and read the Lanthorn. It's insulting, demeaning, and primitive...."

"GVSU is a great college but not for a working adult with a family. I am in my 30's with a child and I am finding that most professors will accept football practice for an excuse for a late assignment but not a sick child. I have actually come across that situation a couple of times. The classes are geared more towards kids and not adults. The student associations are geared towards the full time students and not your part-time night students. Your job fairs do not accommodate the night students. There is a class of students out there that GVSU is really not tapping in to. In some cases it feels as though GVSU discourages the active participation from part-time adult night students. They don't count."

Many comments were made supporting domestic partner benefits, especially by faculty and staff. Some interpret the lack of benefits as a lack of meaningful support for diversity. Some students advocated for more GLBT support.

"The university should treat GLBT individuals in the same way that it treats heterosexuals....GLBT faculty on this campus know that they are considered second-class citizens."

"If the university would offer partner benefits, it would send the message that we really are committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and to treating employees equally."

"How can one be for diversity 'except for those people'?"

"I do not believe that GVSU is truly committed to diversity because the university does not offer domestic partner benefits to its own faculty."

"The university repeatedly talks about the importance of diversity but refuses domestic partner benefits or household policies for sick leave, funeral attendance, etc. to GLBT faculty and staff. This is very hurtful and hypocritical."

"More GLBT events and make it easier to find an office or staff to talk about GLBT issues."

Some commented that university policies, especially related to diversity and personnel issues, are not uniformly implemented across campus.

"The administration must take strong action against departments where known violations have taken place if it is serious about diversity."

"Some departments have very high diversity. Others appear to have none, creating a culture that appears to be intolerant..."

"We have a number of prejudiced individuals in the department that actively but covertly forward the agenda of white male dominance."

Many respondents commented that there should be more diversity training for students, faculty, and staff. Some thought it should be required – not optional. Others suggested more opportunities for open dialogue or discussion.

"Make US 201 mandatory for all students. Make diversity awareness training mandatory for faculty/staff/AP."

"Students should receive diversity awareness 'training,' workshops, etc. so that they are aware that their attitudes can contribute to a hostile learning environment for everyone."

"[There] is a lot of hidden racism at GVSU that needs to be dealt with. Also the majority of the Caucasian students at GVSU don't know a thing about black people or black life. They act as if they are afraid of black people [who] can show up in group projects and class discussions. GVSU needs more diversity, particularly when it comes to the black population because it seems as if the line between black and white is the thickest."

"I think a great deal of the faculty and staff ...are not fully trained to work with people of different cultures. When I interact with a lot of them, it's as if they feel uncomfortable and that they are trying not to offend me in any way."

"The only suggestion I have is to offer more classes on diversity. I am currently enrolled in a diversity class and it's one of the best classes that I have ever taken. So many things were brought to my attention that I had no idea that these things were going on around me and I didn't even know it."

"This is a good step, but I think implementing some form of event or open forum would help in understanding what is working and what isn't."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the racism seminars, the dialogue was excellent. Please continue to offer an outlet for open dialog sessions between different groups. The more we learn about other people, it lessens the chance of misunderstandings due to lack of knowledge. Would like to attend an open forum regarding diversity so that the GVSU community can voice their concerns and suggestions to the president personally."

Other strands of thought included concern about reverse discrimination, putting too much emphasis on diversity and political correctness, opposition to Affirmative Action policies, a need to respect religious holy days for all religions, and a desire to cancel classes on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. It should also be noted that some respondents were complimentary of the University and found it to be a wonderful place to work and attend school.

Next Steps

One of the values embraced at GVSU is to foster a healthy and diverse environment, where we act with integrity, communicate respectfully, and accept responsibility for our words and actions. This Diversity Study was an initiative of the Office of the President to examine the climate of acceptance and sense of community being experienced by students, faculty, and staff at GVSU.

The survey revealed that most of the GVSU community feels accepted and comfortable, but there are significant issues to be addressed to make this a welcoming and inclusive environment that allows everyone to reach their highest potential in a vibrant and equitable climate.

The next steps include convening groups of faculty, staff, and students to address the issues at a deeper level and encouraging colleges and departments to use the results of the survey to ensure a community environment that is respectful of individuals regardless of cultural, political, physical, or philosophical differences.

Those who are interested in exploring these issues more deeply are invited to contact the Office of Equity and Planning.