

INCLUSION, ENGAGEMENT, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS:

Challenging Assumptions About the Black Undergraduate Experience

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Increasing student enrollment, retention, and degree completion rates is a primary focus of higher education. However, according to the authors' institutional data, Black student enrollment is not increasing at a rate proportional to other racial and ethnic groups despite overall enrollment increases. As a way to try to address these gaps, authors reanalyzed the 2021 data that captures student perceptions of equity and inclusion to better understand the Black undergraduate experience and identify unique challenges compared to other racial and ethnic groups. These findings revealed a discrepancy in our assumption and the degree to which Black undergraduates are involved in and satisfied with academic activities and campus services. The findings led the Library to question what role it might play in developing a strategy for services or programming that contribute to improved retention and graduation rates for these undergraduates.

INTRODUCTION

The authors are from a racially and ethnically diverse public research university, the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). However, unexpected trends are evident in reviews of UIC institutional data that show student academic success measures defined as enrollment, retention, and degree completion rates reported for racial and ethnic groups. One fact is that Black student enrollment is not increasing at a rate proportional to other racial and ethnic groups despite overall enrollment increases.

UIC is an urban campus where 95% of students are commuters.¹ Yet the student population does not reflect the demographics of the metropolitan area in which the campus is located. Data from the 2020 census show that people identifying as Black make up the third largest demographic (at 16.5%) in the seven-county Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) region (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will).² Additionally, Chicago Public School (CPS) high school students, who should be a primary recruiting population for the university, show Black-identifying students as the second largest demographic (at 35.8%) based on

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racial and ethnic percentages reported in September 2022.³ Although Black student graduation rates are among the lowest, as shown in Table 1, they have increased over the last ten years by 10.8%, more than any other racial/ethnic student population. And yet, Black student enrollment itself has grown by only 0.2% over the last five years (Table 2).

TABLE 1			
UIC Graduation Rate (2007 and 2016)			
Race/Ethnicity		2007	2016
Asian	Total Cohort ^a	817	714
	6YR Grad Rate	65.4%	72.8%
Black	Total Cohort	345	290
	6YR Grad Rate	44.1%	54.8%
Hispanic	Total Cohort	591	1,252
	6YR Grad Rate	48.6%	52.2%
White	Total Cohort	1,335	818
	6YR Grad Rate	58.3%	68.0%

^a Cohort refers to new freshman enrolled full time in the first term

TABLE 2			
UIC student enrollment (2022 vs. 2017)			
Race/Ethnicity	Year	Number	%
Asian	2022	6,093	18.1%
	2017	5,696	18.7%
Black	2022	2,750	8.1%
	2017	2,405	7.9%
Hispanic	2022	9,473	28.1%
	2017	7,486	24.5%
White	2022	9,531	28.2%
	2017	10,324	33.8%
Others	2022	5,900	17.5%
	2017	4,628	15.2%

Note. Other race/ethnic groups include unknown, international, multi-racial, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian.

The University is making efforts to address gaps in enrollment and retention by forming a Racial Equity Taskforce consisting of three working groups focusing on Student Life and Support, Community Engagement, Staff Recruitment and Retention, and a new Public Safety board in order to foster an equitable and accountable campus.⁴ One overarching goal is to almost double Black student enrollment by 2030. It is imperative to understand the Black undergraduate experience and identify unique challenges that may be affecting their retention and graduation rates.

The authors reanalyzed data from a survey developed by UIC's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services.

This survey focused on undergraduate perceptions of overall university life, academic engagement, interactions with campus resources, and services in 2021. The authors' intent in reevaluating the results was to understand student perceptions of equity and inclusion at the campus, particularly how Black undergraduates have felt included and supported through various campus services. Because the original survey did not include the Library as a campus support service, the authors sought to find ways the UIC Library could collaborate with other academic support services and resources to contribute to a better experience for Black students on campus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student experiences might vary depending on race or ethnicity; however, the literature shows that institutions frequently focus on average (mostly white) student needs. This could lead to the neglect of minority students whose interactions at the same institution might be vastly different from their white counterparts. Studies have found that Black students enrolled in historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are more satisfied with their student experience than those enrolled in predominantly white institutions (PWIs).⁵ However, research has demonstrated that at both HBCUs and PWIs,⁶ a supportive atmosphere crucially impacts Black student satisfaction.

Post-graduate reflection on the value of the college experience yields interesting results among different races/ethnicities. Between 2016 and 2019, a U.S. study investigated student satisfaction with their college experience using a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample among four racial and ethnic groups (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and white).⁷ While the authors of the study acknowledge that students of different racial and ethnic origins may have vastly different experiences at the same institution, they discovered that when individual and college variables are taken into account, Black and Hispanic students appear to be more satisfied with their college experiences. This study underlined how institutional features and student experience are linked to student perceptions of college quality.

To take this further, the impact of a culturally engaging campus with sufficient resources beyond basic academic support has been the subject of a number of recent studies, including one in 2018 which examined the influence of campus support networks on student sense of belonging.⁸ The study advocates for more holistic support, asking educators to both serve as a “conduit to broader campus support networks” and “develop an awareness of various resources across their campuses.” The paper suggests that only by doing so, can we hope to grapple with the complexity of challenges that students of color face, and be prepared to refer students to the support they need.

A Lumina-Foundation/Gallup report published in 2023, surveyed over 6,000 U.S. adults, including more than 1,100 Black students enrolled in a variety of degree programs. Among the findings, it was noted that Black students in a bachelor's program are twice as likely than other racial/ethnic groups to have additional responsibilities working full-time or as caregivers (36% compared to 18%).⁹ More than half of these students (59%) indicated that greater flexibility in their schedule is very important to remaining enrolled, second only to financial support. And although 52% also indicated that enjoyment of their program was very important, this was not statistically different from other racial/ethnic groups.¹⁰ Like many other reports and studies, the Lumina-Foundation/Gallup report emphasizes “the need for data on the experiences of students enrolled in all forms of postsecondary education to identify specific challenges that threaten to derail their progress.”¹¹

More than just looking at current services, creating a welcoming space also means recognizing and addressing past (and sometimes all-too-current) barriers of entry for Black students. A recent study from Duke University acknowledged that Black students continue to navigate educational landscapes that “reflect and center White experiences, history, and values” where they “do not see themselves valued or accurately represented.”¹² The Duke study investigated student academic engagement and the perception of resource centers at the campus level, but also took the examination further, doing what was necessary to focus on student experience and perceptions specifically in the academic library. Because student perceptions of campus climate are so closely interrelated with service units, including the library is essential for understanding student needs and bolstering their academic success. The UIC campus data unfortunately did *not* include the Library as a service center.

A separate study conducted by the UIC Library used mixed methods focusing on undergraduate student perceptions of the library's impact on their academic success. Findings uncovered that most participants strongly and positively associate use of the library with their GPA. Additionally, these students consider academic success to not only be about their grades, but also about developing skills and new learning. Using the physical space and being able to access library resources was a highlight of the interviews that were conducted, of which 22% were Black students.¹³

Another study conducted by Stewart, Ju, and Kendrick¹⁴ explored how Black students on a campus perceived as racist were likely to also perceive the library as less welcoming. The study suggests that it is hard to separate the library from an overall negative campus perception in order to measure whether students feel welcome or if they are receiving the support or resources they need. A key finding from the UIC Library's biennial survey from spring 2021, related to students' perceptions of inclusion in the libraries indicate that Black and white students were more likely to feel a sense of belonging at the UIC library than Hispanic and Asian students. However, Black students were less likely to agree that their identity was respected at the UIC library compared to other race/ethnic groups.¹⁵

While at least one student at Duke ultimately characterized the library as the "least" of their problems with overall campus culture, students interviewed at Duke did make suggestions for how to improve physical spaces, marketing for services, events, collections, and communication between library staff and their Black patrons. Understanding what it means to be Black not only in the academic environment, but navigating the totality of a life experience was acknowledged as crucial to understanding the particular service needs of these students.¹⁶

This finding echoes the work done recently at Ohio State University, in which Black undergraduates were interviewed about their experiences and perceptions of a variety of libraries and the role of race in library interactions. Students reported experiences throughout their educational history, including within their public libraries, observing or enduring inequities in services and a sense of not belonging or being unwanted--that "somebody's staring at you."¹⁷ Few Black students reported ever interacting with Black librarians or staff, though noted that they felt less comfortable in suburban or rural libraries than urban ones. These students may bring the discomfort of these often-negative experiences into the academic setting. Some students also expressed not knowing what a subject librarian was and wishing for more proactive engagement. One specifically expressed that they don't feel librarians are interested in helping them, so they don't seek them out.

The following questions guided this project:

- How do Black students perceive their campus engagement in comparison to other race/ethnic groups?
- What are differences in the frequency of visits and satisfaction with campus services between racial and ethnic groups?
- What are the future directions and implications that the Library can propose based on the findings?

METHODS

Institutional Setting

In fall 2021, there were more than 34,000 students enrolled in 16 different colleges at UIC, a public research university with the R1 (very high research) designation. There are three campuses of the University: one in Chicago, and the other two are regional health sciences sites in Peoria and Rockford. Only ten percent of the total student body resides on campus. UIC is recognized as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), as well as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANA-PISI). UIC is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse student populations in the U.S. According to the UIC enrollment report, in fall 2021, 30% of students were white, followed by Hispanic (28%), Asian (18%), and Black students (8%). According to 2021 fall semester data, Black retention and graduation rates were the lowest.

Survey Instrument

To understand undergraduate perceptions of university experience, academic engagement, and interactions

with campus resources and services during a period of pandemic-related conditions that were outside of the traditional higher education environments, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) in partnership with the Office of Diversity and the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services conducted a survey during the spring of 2021. This initiative was intended to re-assess the campus survey focusing on racial and ethnic differences in their experiences of academic involvement, frequency, satisfaction, and degree of comfort when using campus centers. To see the full survey questions, please refer to Appendix A.

Survey Participants

All undergraduate students were asked to participate in an online survey, and 912 responded, for a response rate of 4.1%. This study compares the experiences of Black undergraduate students on campus to those of other racial and ethnic groups. For this article, four racial and ethnic groups—Asian, Black, Hispanic, and white—representing 88% of survey respondents (805 out of 912) were taken into account. Others consisted of unknown, international, multi-racial, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian and were excluded from this article.

Data Preparation and Analysis

The survey dataset was obtained from OIR and downloaded into Excel. The survey data analysis was conducted in Tableau.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants

As shown in Table 3, 32% of the survey respondents were Hispanic, followed by white (26%), and Asian (24%). Black students consisted of 7% of the survey respondents. This ratio was similar to the ratio of the university undergraduate student population (a difference of less than 3%). Overall, this indicates that survey respondents are generally representative of the university population.

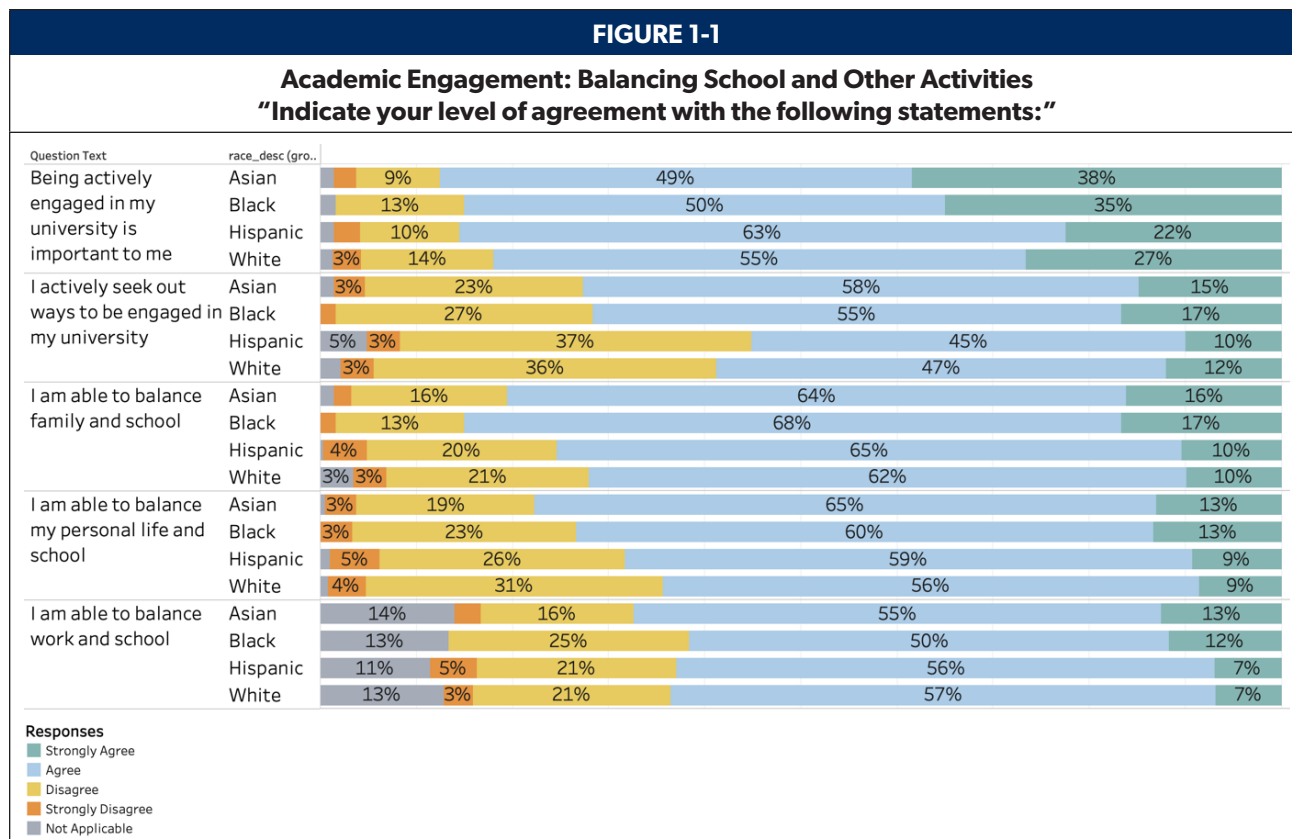
	Survey (Spring 2021)		Population (Fall 2021)	
	n	%	n	%
Race				
Asian	217	23.8%	4,650	20.9%
Black	60	6.6%	1,654	7.4%
Hispanic	290	31.8%	7,837	35.2%
White	238	26.1%	5,435	24.4%
Others	107	11.7%	2,703	12.1%
Total	912		22,279	

Note. Other race/ethnic groups include unknown, international, multi-racial, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian.

Perceptions of Academic Engagement

Generally, students had positive perceptions on their engagement at the university. Their highest rated positive perception focused on their comfort level with speaking to academic advisors and feeling that the university and their instructors provide them with academic support (Figure 1-1). Black students rated the highest academic

engagement in the area of being able to balance family and school, and second highest in the following areas: actively seeking out ways to be engaged in the university and being able to balance personal life and school. However, they rated lower in being actively engaged in my university is important to me and the lowest being able to balance work and school. It is also notable that 13% of Black students rated balancing work and school as not applicable.



Given common assumptions about student inability to manage family, work, and school as a factor in retention, these findings would indicate that balancing external activities may not have a significant impact on retention rates. Even though Black students reported the highest difficulty in managing work and school, this percentage is not appreciably different from any other racial or ethnic population at UIC. The relationship between their experience with external activities and their retention is unclear. Asking for further details on these particular subjects is an area of potential investigation in future surveys or focus groups.

Black students rated the highest in sufficient academic support and teaching assistants caring about their well-being, indicating that they perceived that they received a strong academic support (Figure 1-2). In contrast, they rated the lowest on sufficient emotional support and lower on their instructors caring about their well-being. At the same time, 17% of Black students rated not applicable on the emotional support. It is possible students perceive that they do not need emotional support, are not aware of the availability of emotional support resources, or simply do not expect emotional support from the campus level. Currently UIC has committed to investing \$4.47 million over the next six years for additional student mental health resources including a wellness drop-in space and an increase in the number counselors on campus.¹⁸ The development of this wellness strategy at the campus level may provide abundant opportunity for further research to understand student perceptions of their mental and emotional health needs.

As shown in Figure 1-3, Black students rated the highest agreement in being comfortable speaking with an academic advisor (93%) and in seeking out academic support (84%). However, more than 30% of the Black students rated disagreement with finding it easy fitting in at UIC and 7% of them answered not applicable. This

FIGURE 1-2

Academic Engagement: Support and Well-being
“Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:”

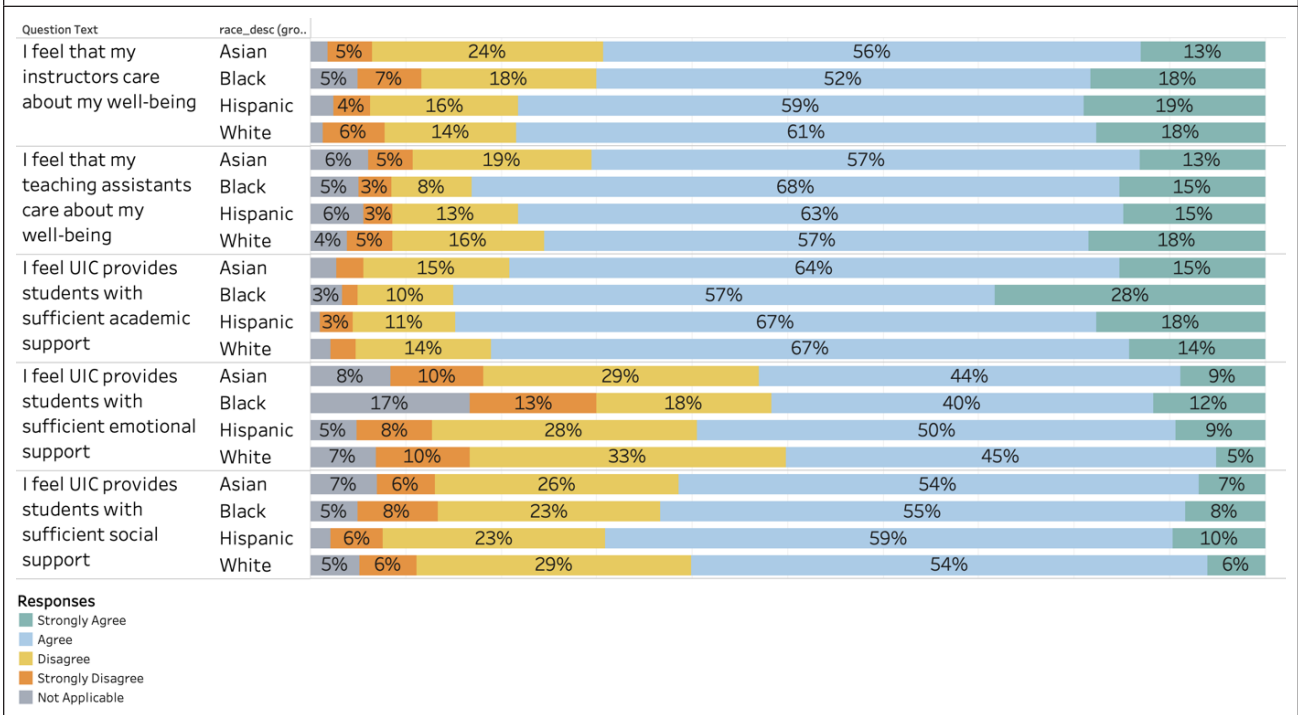
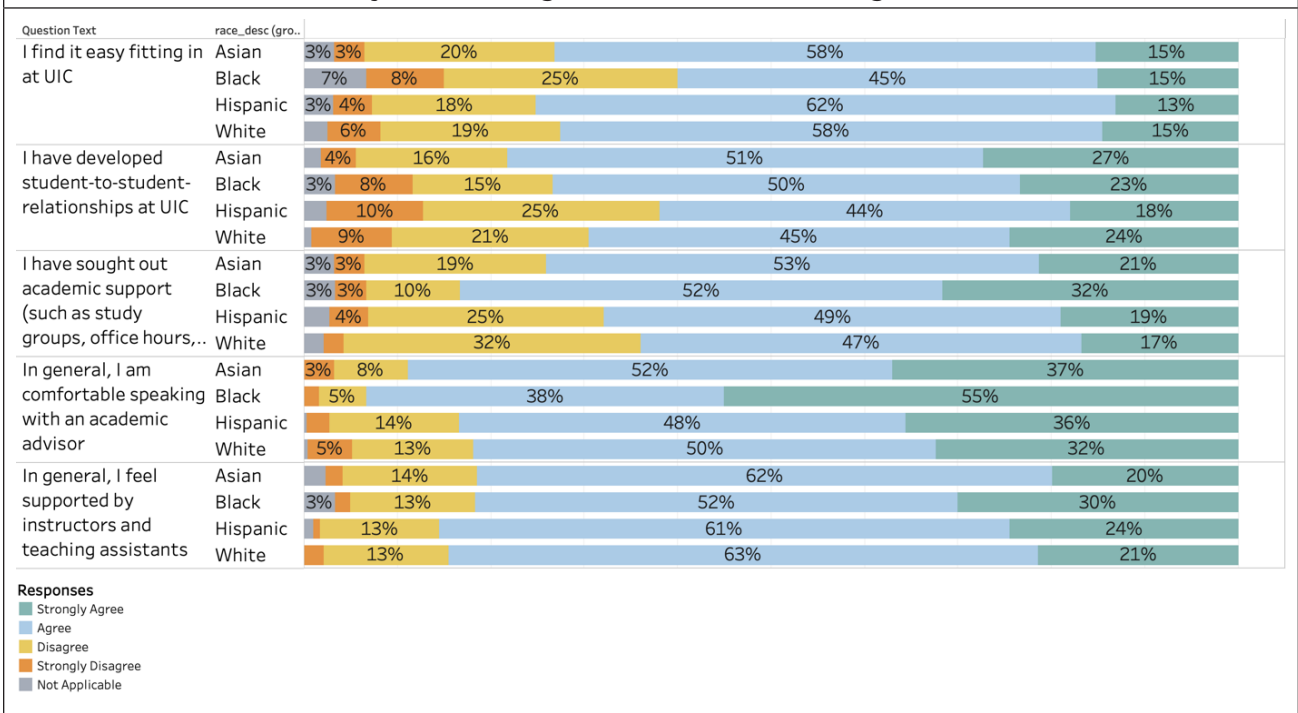


FIGURE 1-3

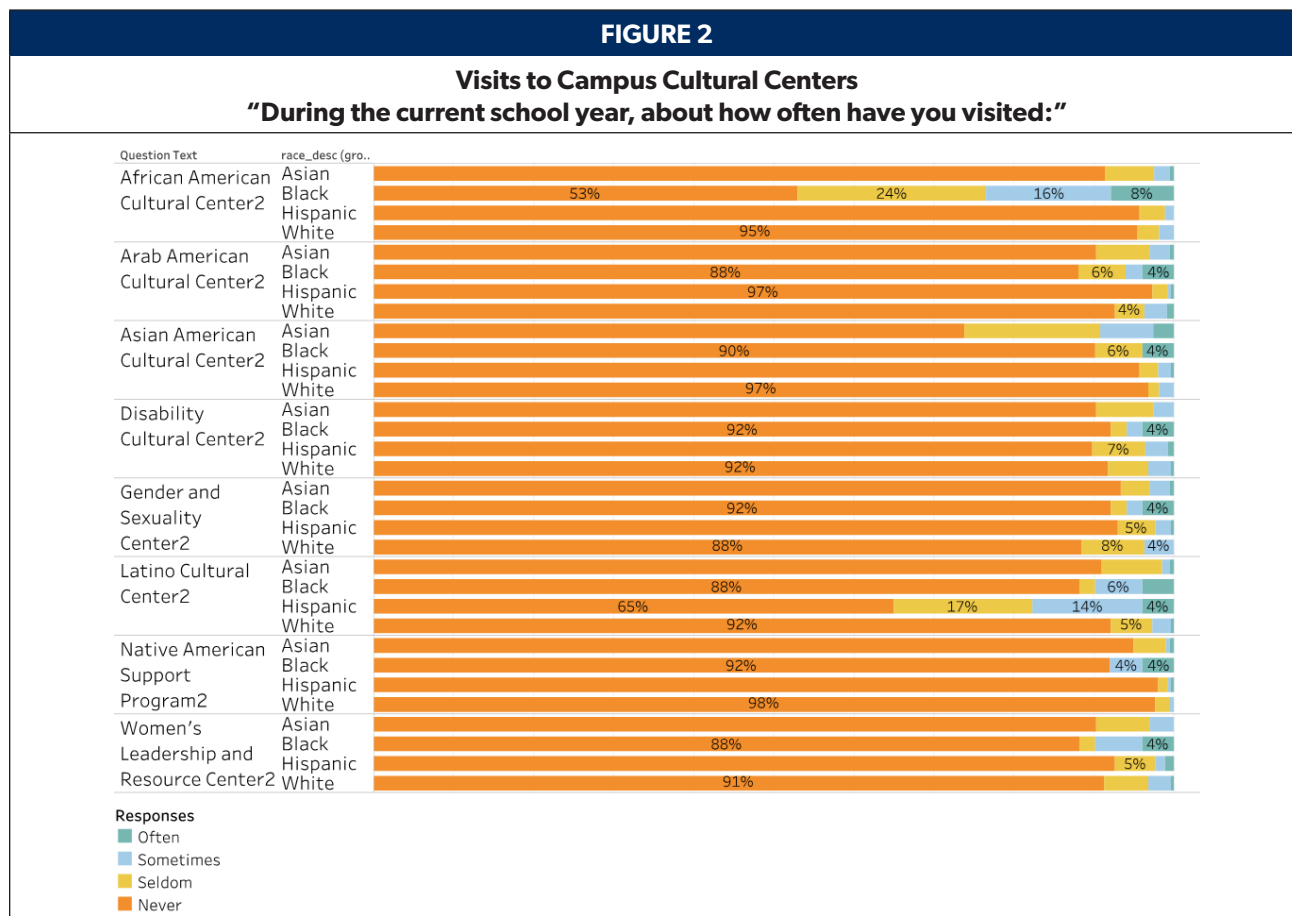
Academic Engagement: Sense of Belonging
“Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:”



finding implies that Black students, while comfortable interacting with their advisors and in seeking out academic support, are still not necessarily comfortable on campus as whole. Their perception of campus belonging particularly diverges from other race/ethnic groups. Black students reported the highest percentage of not belonging, but nuances in what this meant to them are unclear. Do students equate “fitting in” at UIC with a sense of belonging on the campus at large or just in terms of relationships within their own race/ethnic group? Given that this finding is challenging to interpret, questions centering on the definition of belonging may be critical to understanding Black student engagement.

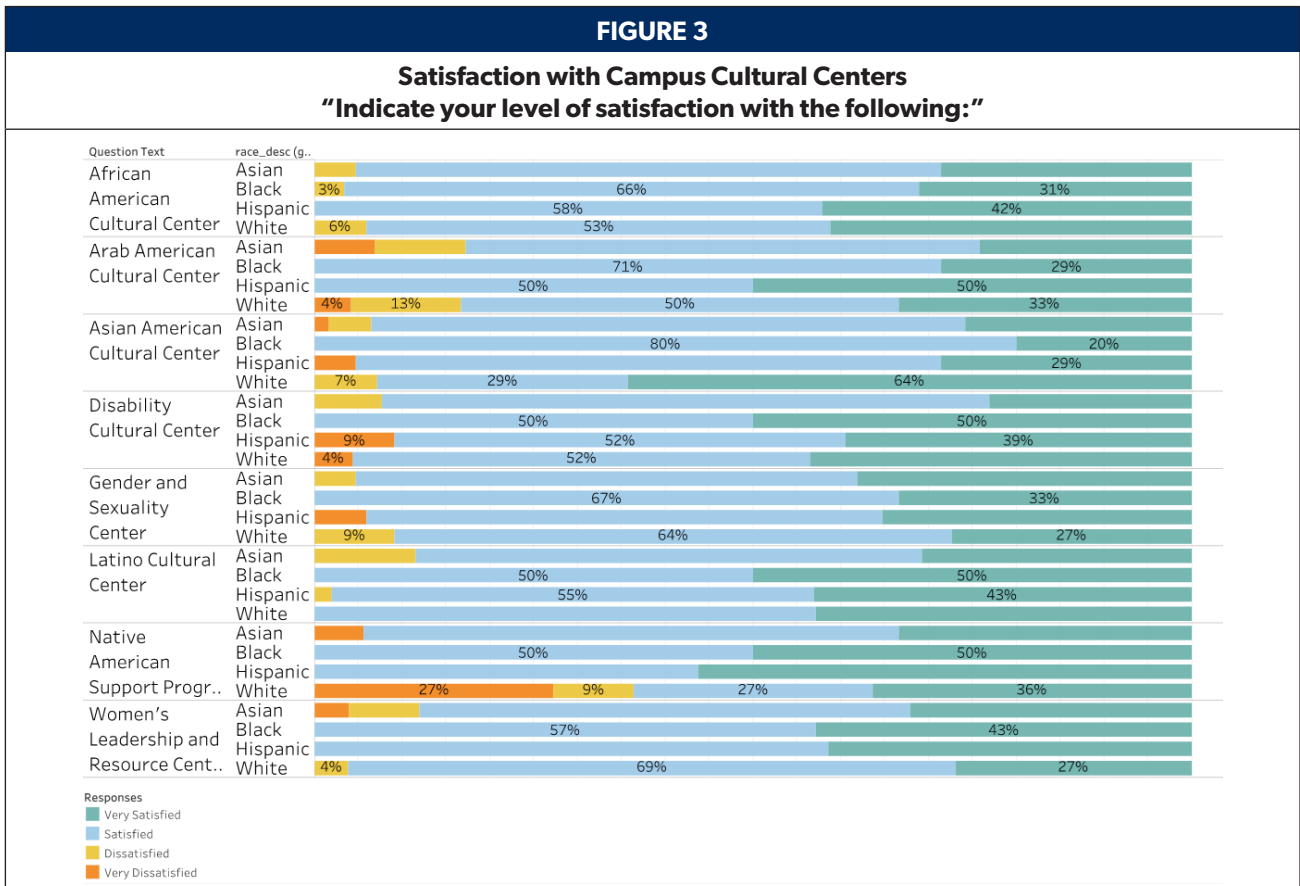
Visits to Campus Cultural Centers

The UIC Office of Diversity supports seven cultural centers to promote a welcoming campus environment and encourage intercultural engagement through a variety of services and events. For example, the African American Cultural Center offers exhibitions, performances, films, gatherings, lecture-demonstration, storytelling. Given that most services were offered online during the COVID-19 pandemic, less than 10% of all students visited most cultural and support centers on campus. For Black students, 8% did indicate that they visited the African American Cultural Center often, with an additional 16% indicating that they visited sometimes (Figure 2). This is the highest frequency of center visits among all racial/ethnic groups. The next group of most frequently visited centers were by Hispanic students to the Latino Cultural Center (18% often or sometimes). However, outside of the pandemic circumstances, it is unclear what percentages of students visited cultural centers prior to the lockdown and changes in regulations around group activities. Further data is needed to determine how the easing of pandemic-related restrictions on campus will impact the number of visits to cultural centers going forward, and whether these numbers will reflect pre-pandemic visits or demonstrate either an increase or drop in usage. This is the first time that UIC has reported visits to cultural centers on this level.



Satisfaction with Campus Cultural Centers

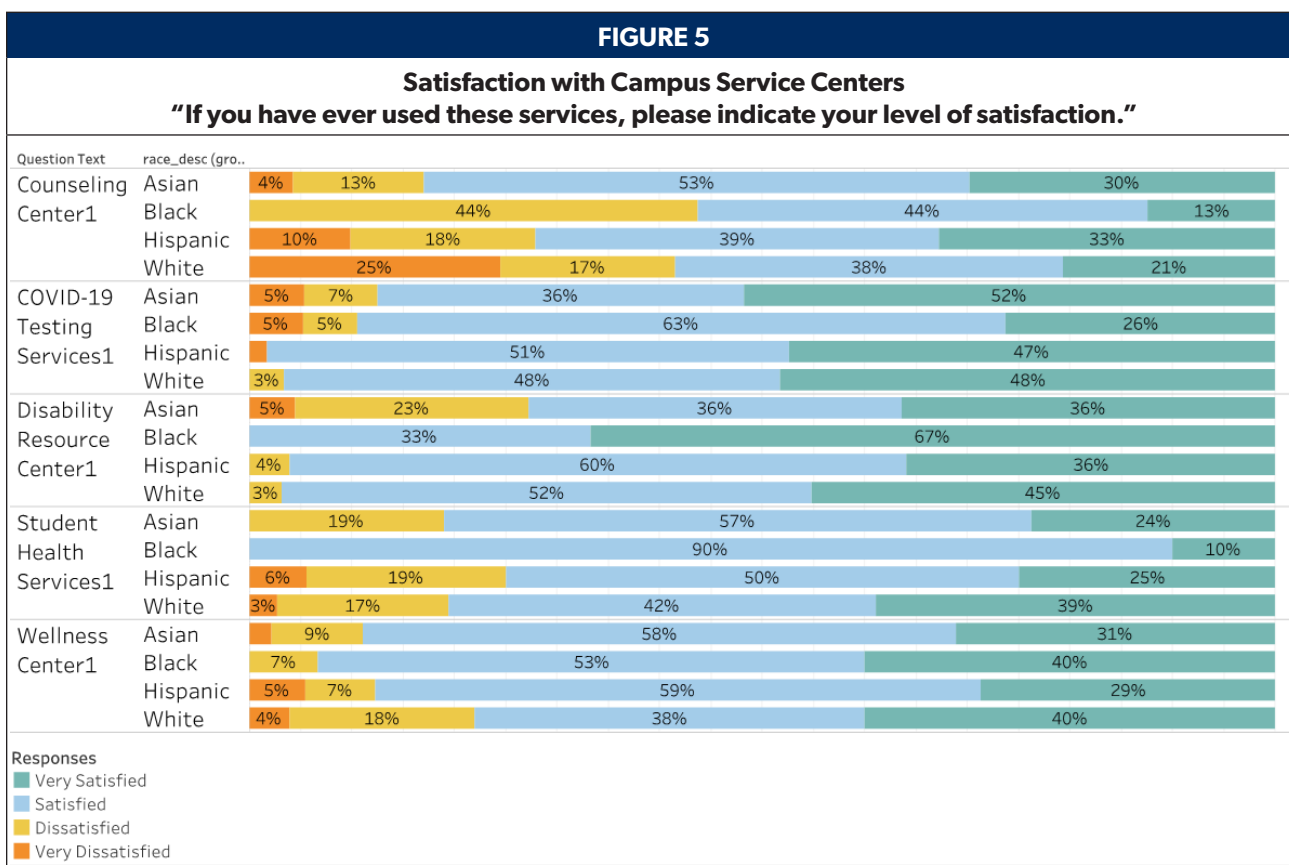
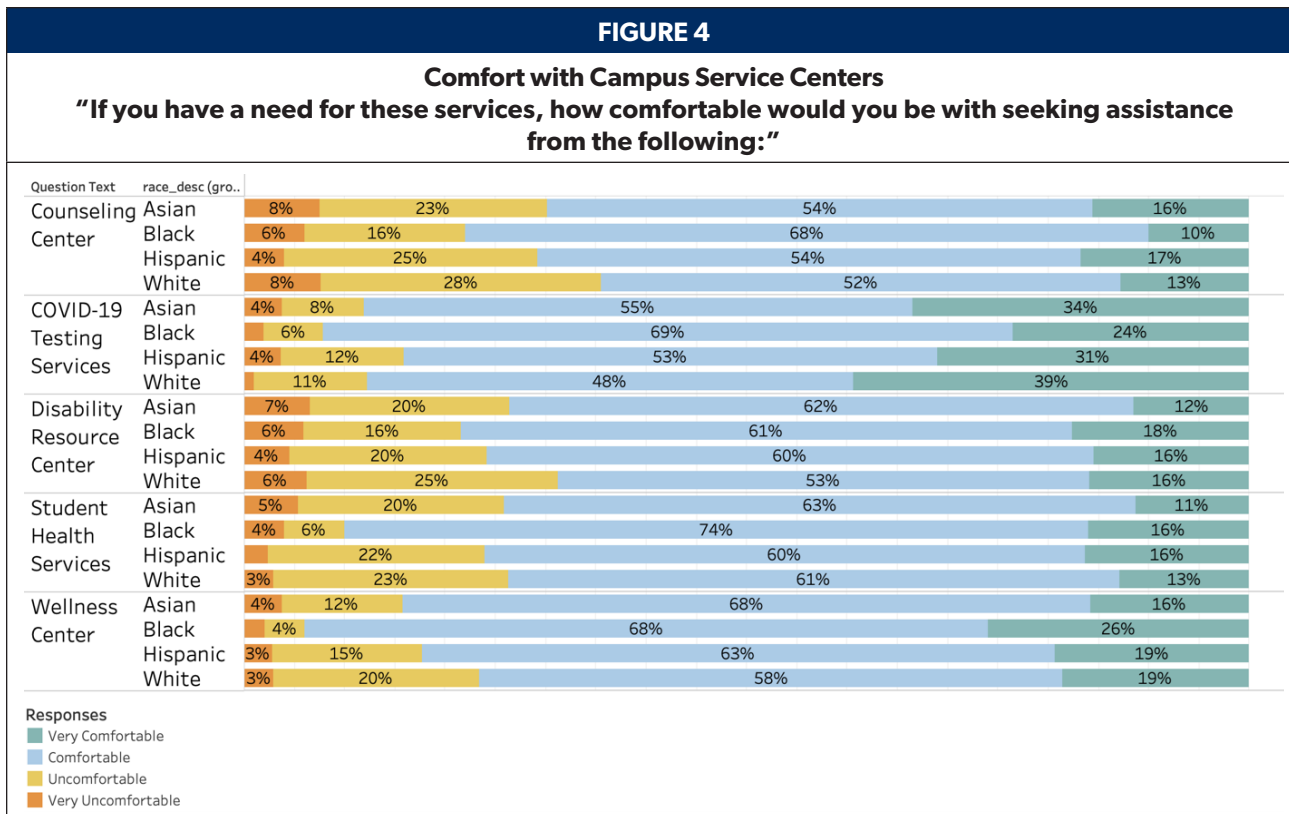
To see the satisfaction of those who visited the center, students who indicated “have not visited this center” were excluded from the graph (Figure 3). Of those who visited cultural centers, most Black students indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with all other campus centers in addition to 97% being satisfied with the African American Cultural Center. Black student satisfaction with the campus cultural centers was the highest among all racial/ethnic groups. Understanding the reasons for student satisfaction with the spaces and services provided at the African American Cultural Center, would inform the Library on how to create similar welcoming and inclusive spaces within the library.



Comfort with Campus Service Centers

Students were surveyed regarding a variety of services centers on the UIC campus. The Wellness Center supports academic success through promoting healthy attitudes and behaviors, empowering students to make informed choices, and enhancing holistic well-being. The Counseling Center offers mental health services including consultations and outreach. The Disability Resource Center ensures full access and engagement for students with disabilities in all aspects of college life such as providing exam proctoring, interpreters, notetakers, and more. And finally, Student Health Services and the COVID-19 testing center are concerned with medical consultations and services.

More than 90% of Black students said they would be comfortable going to the Wellness Center or other health services like COVID-19 testing or Student Health Services (Figure 4). Black students are more comfortable with seeking assistance from campus service centers in comparison with other racial/ethnic groups. However, 22% of Black students indicated a lack of comfort with the Counseling Center and Disability Resource Center. Given that the question reflects student perceptions on a hypothetical situation, it is uncertain from this data whether Black students will actually avail themselves of these services should the need arise.



Satisfaction with Campus Service Centers

Students who indicated that they had not visited a service center were excluded from further analysis on the topic. Of those who visited the centers, Black students reported the highest satisfaction with the Disability Resource Center and Student Health Services (100% Satisfied or Very Satisfied for both), and the Wellness Center (93% Satisfied or Very Satisfied) (Figure 5). However, their satisfaction with the Counseling Center (44% Dissatisfied) was the lowest among all group. Also, 10% indicated that they were Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied with COVID-19 Testing Services.

The Counseling Center satisfaction rate was overall the lowest rated service center across racial/ethnic groups. Concern surrounding critical mental health services for students has increased on campus since the start of the pandemic, hence UIC's commitment to improving and expanding mental health services.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation is that there is not enough context in the student answers (e.g., satisfaction with campus service center) to formulate hypotheses as to the cause of their responses or to address changes necessary to affect greater overall satisfaction.

Because the original survey did not include the Library as a campus support service, it is also not possible to fully understand the Library's role in contributing to a sense of belonging on the UIC campus. The Library, however, remains an essential service at UIC, providing instruction, materials, and space to support the academic success of students.

Despite these limitations, the authors approached this study from the perspective of the UIC Library to identify opportunities for collaboration or support services or resources to contribute to a better experience for Black students on campus.

FUTURE DIRECTION AND CONCLUSION

The data from institutional official records and reports illustrate that Black students at UIC are underrepresented in enrollment numbers compared to the racial/ethnic proportion of the general population, and experience lower graduation rates. To better understand the relationship between student satisfaction and degree completion, the authors reanalyzed campus data focusing on equity and inclusion. The unexpected findings revealed the high degree to which Black undergraduates are involved in and satisfied with academic activities and campus services, and challenged assumptions about the association between satisfaction and success.

The Library has been inspired to explore how to continue to keep Black student satisfaction high in a way that contributes to degree completion and what role the Library can play in developing a strategy for services or programming that enhances contributions toward improved retention and graduation rates for these undergraduates.

Hearing the voices of students is essential to answering these questions. The Library appreciates the sustained efforts of UIC's Office of Diversity and Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services to survey students' opinions of the quality of university life and their experiences with resources and service centers. The Library should reach out to colleagues in these campus offices and build the connections that would result in including questions about Library services in the university's annual equity and inclusion survey. This would be a first step toward gathering the kind of information required for the Library to develop an action plan.

In addition, it is incumbent on the Library to conduct its own inquiries to collect the depth of data it needs. Current surveys distributed by the Library cover a range of topics but none are any more focused than those at the campus level to compare and contextualize levels of satisfaction from various racial/ethnic groups.

In summary, the analysis of the survey findings led the Library to question what role it might play in developing a strategy for services or programming that contribute to improved retention and graduation rates for Black undergraduates. After conducting this analysis, our priorities include:

- Conduct a survey or focus group to probe the actual needs of undergraduates to gain a deeper understanding of their sense of belonging and support on the campus.

- Identify specific challenges to mental health and overall wellness faced by undergraduates. Identifying these challenges is particularly relevant to learning how students entering the post-pandemic experience campus culture differently compared to those who experienced the disruption at the university as it was occurring.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks to Anna Pasillas Santoyo and Danny L. Lambouths at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Office of Institutional Research for providing the data.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Where do you currently reside?

Choose One:

- On-campus in UIC residence halls
- Off-campus with family (walking distance)
- Off-campus with family (commuting via car, bike, or public transportation)
- Off-campus independently (walking distance)
- Off-campus independently (commuting via car, bike, or public transportation)
- I don't currently have a stable residence (housing insecure, homeless)

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Mark one for each: N/A, strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree

- Being actively engaged in my university is important to me
- I actively seek out ways to be engaged in my university
- In general, I feel supported by instructors and teaching assistants
- In general, I am comfortable speaking with an academic advisor
- I have sought out academic support (such as study groups, office hours, or tutoring)
- I have developed student-to-student-relationships at UIC
- I find it easy fitting in at UIC
- I am able to balance work and school
- I am able to balance family and school
- I am able to balance my personal life and school
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient academic support
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient social support
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient emotional support
- I feel that my instructors care about my well-being
- I feel that my teaching assistants care about my well-being

Please answer the survey questions from your perspective at this current moment to the best of your ability. We recognize that some of the questions will be less applicable to you now than in the past, given how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our ability to be in person/on campus right now.

About how many HOURS do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

Mark one for each item:

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)
- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)
- Working for pay on-campus
- Working for pay off-campus
- Unpaid Internship
- Doing community service or volunteer work
- Relaxing and socializing (time with friends, video games, TV or videos, keeping up with friends online, etc.)
- Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)
- Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)

During the current school year, how many times have you been involved in the following research opportunities?

- Independent study with a research component 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Thesis/Capstone Project 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Research project with a faculty member 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Research presentation or poster session at a conference or event 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Participating in a laboratory research project 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Public/Community engaged research project

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups outside of the classroom setting?

Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often

- People of a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from a socio-economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own
- People with gender identities other than your own
- People with sexual orientations other than your own
- People from countries of origin other than your own

During the current school year, about how often have you visited:

Never Seldom Sometimes Often

- African American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Gender and Sexuality Center
- Latino Cultural Center
- Women's Leadership and Resource Center
- Native American Support Program

Indicate your level of satisfaction with the following: Scale missing

- African American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Gender and Sexuality Center
- Latino Cultural Center
- Women's Leadership and Resource Center
- Native American Support Program

If you have a need for these services, how comfortable would you be with seeking assistance from the following:

- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services

- Wellness Center
- Disability Resource Center
- COVID-19 Testing Services

If you have ever used these services, please indicate your level of satisfaction:

- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Wellness Center
- Disability Resource Center
- COVID-19 Testing Services

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate? Choose one for each item:

- Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
- Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group
- Participate in a study abroad program
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)

Section 3: Campus Interactions

Please answer the survey questions from your perspective at this current moment to the best of your ability. We recognize that some of the questions will be less applicable to you now than in the past, given how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our ability to be in person/on campus right now.

How would you rate UIC along the following continuum: 5-point Likert Scale

- welcoming, neither welcoming nor hostile
- social inclusive, neither social inclusive nor socially exclusive
- anti-racist, neither anti-racist nor racist, racist
- diverse, neither diverse nor not diverse, diverse
- respectful, neither respectful nor intolerant, intolerant
- sexist, neither sexist nor not sexist, not sexist
- non-homophobic, neither non-homophobic, homophobic

How comfortable do you feel having meaningful conversations with students who hold different views on issues relating to: very comfortable, comfortable, uncomfortable

- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Immigration
- Race or Ethnicity
- Political Ideology
- Socio-economic Status
- Gender Identity

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: Mark one for each.

- I'm comfortable expressing my political views with other students
- I'm comfortable expressing my political views with my instructors
- I feel comfortable sharing ideas in class that are probably only held by a small number of students
- The campus climate prevents some people from saying things they believe because others may find them offensive
- I believe the right to free speech (First Amendment) is held in high esteem on this campus
- I have felt silenced from sharing my views on this campus

Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution: 7-point Likert Scale from 1 to 7 Excellent

- Students
- Academic Advisors
- Faculty
- Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

COVID-Related Questions

Since moving to online learning, how has your level of engagement been impacted by technological issues (access to a laptop, reliable internet services, etc.)?

Impacted a lot, Slightly Impacted, Not impacted

Are there new or different opportunities (internships, research projects, programs/events) open to you now that weren't available prior to the pandemic and the shift to online learning?

Demographic Questions

Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- White
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Multi-racial (two or more races)
- I do not identify with any of these categories
- I prefer not to respond

Which of the following best describes your current sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual (Straight)
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
- Questioning or unsure
- Another sexual orientation, not specified above
- I prefer not to respond

Which of the following describes your current gender identity?

- Female/Woman
- Male/Man
- Trans male/Trans man
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Genderqueer/gender non-conforming
- Questioning or unsure
- Another gender identity, not specified above
- I prefer not to respond

Do you currently have a disability?

- Yes
- No

- I prefer not to respond

What type(s) of disability do you currently have? (Check all that apply)

- Physical or Mobility Disability
- Sensory Disability (e.g., Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, Low Vision, etc.)
- Mental Illness/Psychiatric Disability (Depression, Bipolar, PTSD, OCD, Anxiety, etc.)
- Learning Disability (e.g., ADHD, Dyslexia)
- Developmental Disability (e.g., Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Autism)
- Communication Disability (e.g., Speech Impairment)
- Chronic Illness
- Chronic Pain
- Chronic Fatigue
- Brain Injury/Trauma
- Another disability, not specified above

To what extent would you say your disability or disabilities are visible to others?

- Extremely visible
- Very visible
- Moderately visible
- Slightly visible
- Not at all visible

End of Survey

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