COLGATE UNIVERSITY

HEDS Diversity & Equity Campus Climate Survey
Fall 2024

Executive summary

Overview

During the Fall 2024 term, Colgate's Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) again invited every member of the Colgate community to participate in a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) climate survey.

The data gathered from participants in the *HEDS Diversity & Equity Campus Climate Survey* ("*HEDS DEI Survey*") will inform Colgate's ongoing efforts to move forward with the strategic priorities outlined in the *Third-Century Plan* and the *DEI Strategic Plan*. The results of this survey are being made available to the community as called for in the *DEI Strategic Plan,* to support broad engagement in the efforts to improve policies and practices at Colgate.

The *HEDS DEI Survey* includes both questions with choice options and open-ended prompts. It covers multiple areas, including Colgate community members' perceptions of the overall campus climate at Colgate, perceptions of how Colgate supports diversity and equity, and experiences with discrimination and harassment at Colgate.

Individually identifying information has been excluded from this summary and the close-ended Tableau report that are being made available to the entire campus community. These documents are available to Colgate community members via the following Google Drive link: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1DEMMXnxBsnYocz2dVZvYreCOgfZnXjvk

Main findings

Survey respondents once again overwhelmingly endorsed the benefits of diversity at Colgate. When asked about the extent to which they agree "… that diversity on campus improves experiences and interactions within the classroom, the workplace, and the overall community," 89% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with only a slight difference between the responses of students (89%) and faculty and staff (92%). This represents a very small drop since the last run of this survey (in 2021, with 92% in agreement with this statement overall), which is perhaps not surprising given the extent to which discussions of equity and inclusion efforts on college campuses have been a focal point for recent critiques of American higher education. This drop is more notable in relative terms, as other surveyed institutions moved in the opposite direction (a national average increase from 89% in 2021 to 93%), indicating that Colgate has moved from above the national average in 2021 to somewhat below it in 2024.

Since the last DEI survey in 2021, there have been improvements in terms of satisfaction with overall campus climate (74% v. 65%), campus climate for diversity (56% v. 42%), and with belonging generally (44% v. 36% community-wide, 68% v. 65% personally, also see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who are satisfied with their sense of belonging

		Role		
	Overall	**Faculty**	**Student**	**Staff/ Administrator**
BIPOC	51.0%	50.0%	47.8%	63.5%
International	53.9%	54.2%	51.0%	—
White	75.6%	81.7%	75.2%	73.9%
Unknown	55.1%	50.0%	—	61.1%
Non-Binary	32.5%	—	—	—
Woman	69.8%	69.6%	64.7%	75.8%
Man	68.8%	75.6%	66.5%	69.8%
Unknown	47.7%	20.0%	41.7%	58.8%
LGBTQIA+	57.7%	51.2%	59.3%	60.6%
Heterosexual /Straight	71.8%	77.2%	67.0%	74.9%
Unknown	58.2%	50.0%	60.7%	70.4%
Overall	67.5%	70.2%	64.6%	72.1%

Note: Percentages for groups with fewer than 10 respondents are excluded (denoted with a —).

Overall discrimination or harassment rates also fell (27% v. 33%, also see Table 2 below), although it remains a concern on campus. Overall, 27% of respondents to the survey indicated that they have, or may have been, discriminated against while participating as a member of the Colgate community. Similar rates were reported by faculty (29%), staff (26%) and students

(25%), though it is worth noting that all these measures have dropped since 2021, when the rates were 33% for faculty, 27% for staff, and 35% for students. More than half of those who reported being discriminated against (60%), indicated that one or more of these experiences occurred within the last 12 months. Students indicated that their experiences happened within the last year at a higher rate than faculty or staff (80% v. 47% and 46%, respectively).

Table 2. Percentage of respondents indicating they have or may have been discriminated against while a member of the Colgate community

		Role		
	Overall	**Faculty**	**Student**	**Staff/ Administrator**
BIPOC	34.1%	39.6%	30.1%	36.6%
International	35.4%	37.5%	36.7%	—
White	21.9%	21.3%	20.5%	23.1%
Unknown	50.0%	53.4%	—	50.0%
Non-Binary	56.2%	—	—	—
Woman	27.2%	27.9%	25.5%	27.4%
Man	23.5%	25.2%	23.9%	20.2%
Unknown	45.0%	63.6%	0.0%	47.1%
LGBTQIA+	30.0%	31.7%	32.4%	24.6%
Heterosexual/ Straight	24.5%	24.6%	23.0%	24.3%
Unknown	41.6%	60.0%	15.4%	44.4%
Overall	27.3%	28.9%	25.0%	25.9%

Note: As with Table 1, percentages are not shown (replaced with —) for groups of fewer than 10 respondents.

When looking at different roles at Colgate, most climate measures (Tables 1 & 2) look reasonably similar. However, when we compare demographic identities such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, troubling patterns emerge. Respondents in historically

marginalized subgroups consistently report a worse experience than their peers.

- Respondents who identify as non-binary report the lowest belonging (Table 1), and highest rate of discrimination or harassment (Table 2) of any group.
- Respondents who identify as BIPOC, international or race/ethnicity unknown are at least 20 points less likely to report satisfaction with belonging compared to their peers who identify as White (Table 1), and at least 12 points more likely to report discrimination or harassment (Table 2).
- Respondents who identified as LGBTQIA+ or orientation unknown are at least 14 points lower on belonging (Table 1), and at least six points higher on discrimination or harassment (Table 2).

Political views continue to be a dimension of difference that challenges the campus, with more respondents reporting hearing insensitive or disparaging remarks (58%) about political affiliation or views than any other aspect of identity surveyed, nearly twice the next-highest category, gender or gender identity (31%). Comfort interacting with people with different political affiliations was also the lowest of any category measured at 77%, compared to 93% or higher for race/ethnicity, gender, religion and disability. Both patterns were also present in 2021 (71% remarks, 75% comfort)

Together, these findings reinforce the need for an ongoing institutional effort to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The information provided at the start of this section points towards a broad base of support for the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion for the institution and its role in the *Third- Century Plan*. The data also measures the broad improvements we have made as a community while demographic and identity disparities remain. It is also important to recognize that open-ended data suggests that there are incidents of discrimination that go unreported. Thematic analysis of the open-ended responses points towards concerns that reported bias will not be taken seriously or that there will be negative consequences of reporting.

Summary

As was the case in 2021, this survey's results are not surprising and seem to reflect the general sense that Colgate does not consistently offer the same sense of belonging to all members of the campus community. BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and non-binary community members experience a worse campus climate than their peers, and political affiliation remains the identity dimension the campus struggles the most to comfortably engage. There is some indication from open-ended data that incidents of discrimination go unreported, with the most frequent reason given being the belief that reporting does not lead to meaningful action. Nonetheless, the campus community has trended upward in overall satisfaction, indicating that everyone recognizes the institution's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as valuable and important, even in a changed context for higher education. As Colgate moves forward with DEI initiatives, aiming to close the gaps highlighted here serves as productive targets for progress.