Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) Survey:
Institutional Structures for Diversity

The Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) is the research and assessment office within UCLA's Student Affairs organization. The mission of SAIRO is to support the learning and development of the whole student by providing reliable, timely and useful information about students and their experiences; by developing the capacity of student affairs and other stakeholders to collect, interpret, and utilize data to enhance the quality of students' educational experience and environment; and by helping Student Affairs units assess and document the effectiveness of their programs and practices.

CONTENTS:

For more information or to submit a data request, please contact SAIRO at:
(310) 206-8470
E-mail: sairo@saonet.ucla.edu
www.sairo.ucla.edu

Executive Summary

Congruent with the Student Affairs Strategic Plan for Diversity, in the winter and spring quarters of 2011, the Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey was administered to provide data for the campus to aid in understanding and addressing aspects of diversity and climate. The DLE captured information on a variety of student experiences and perspectives. This topical brief focuses on students' perceptions of institutional efforts for diversity and their engagement with institutional structures that promote diversity, both curricular and co-curricular. This brief also includes analysis and reporting of significant differences between several sub-populations.

Key results from the analysis include:

- On average, UCLA students report positive opinions about the institution's commitment to diversity (90% agreement).

- Students are fairly satisfied (57-58%) with the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty, staff, and student body; however, Black students are significantly less satisfied.

- The majority of UCLA students have not been exposed to materials related to disability, sexual orientation, and privilege in their coursework.

- Students were most likely to have taken coursework that included materials related to race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status; however over one quarter reported not taking any course work that included this content.

- The majority of students (79%) have attended presentations, performances, or art exhibits on diversity at some point while at UCLA.

DLE Survey & Sample

The Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA, stems from research indicating that optimizing diversity in the learning environment can facilitate achievement of key outcomes, including improving students' motivations for lifelong learning, competencies and skills for living in a diverse society, and student retention and success. UCLA participated in this national research effort to generate greater understanding of diversity, student learning, and student success both inside and outside of the classroom.

The DLE was administered in the winter and spring quarters of 2011 as a census survey of all enrolled undergraduate students at UCLA. In all, 7,597 students responded to the survey, representing 30% of enrolled UCLA undergraduates. Compared to the overall undergraduate population at that time, the sample slightly over-represents Asian students and students that enrolled directly from high school and slightly under-represents Black students.

DLE Sample

	Percent	#
Race (n=4,962)		
American Indian	<1%	11
Black	2%	83
Hispanic	15%	737
Asian	46%	2,283
White	31%	1,536
Multiracial	6%	308
Gender (n=4,989)		
Male	37%	1,847
Female	63%	3,142
Year in School (n=7,461)		
First Year	17%	1,270
Second Year	20%	1,551
Third Year	31%	2,371
Fourth Year or More	32%	2,405
Entry Status (n=7,461)		
Direct Entry	76%	5,685
Transfer	24%	1,776
First Generation College Students (n=4,857)		
Yes	20%	952
No	80%	3,905
Field of Study (n=4,851)		
STEM Major	45%	2,191
Non-STEM	55%	2,660

Description of Factors

Throughout this brief, we report findings and analysis from both individual and factor variables. The factors were developed by HERI and represent broader thematic areas comprised of multiple variables. HERI conducted extensive factor analyses and created conceptual categories to better understand how groups of variables help inform a broader understanding of themes, such as sense of belonging, validation, discrimination, etc. The reliability of these factors was also confirmed with the UCLA data. Descriptions of the factors of interest and items that compose them are included in this brief. The frequencies, means of factor scores, and how well individual items collectively fit together as a factor are also reported. The measure of reliability is represented by the Cronbach's alpha statistic (α).

Satisfaction with Institutional Structures

UCLA students reported relative satisfaction (between 50-65% satisfaction) with the institutional structures for diversity (see Table 1). Approximately one third of student respondents reported "neutral" responses. Taking into account the proportion of students with neutral responses, the percentage of students who indicated dissatisfaction with any item ranged from 6-13%. While levels of outright dissatisfaction were low, the sizeable number of neutral responses suggests there is room for some improvement in this area in the future.

Aggregated results provided one snapshot of student satisfaction. Additional subgroup analyses revealed that the experiences of Black students differed from their peers from other racial/ethnic groups. Black students provided the lowest measures of satisfaction across all items described in Table 1. In particular, Black students were least likely to be satisfied with the racial and ethnic diversity of faculty (17%), student body (18%), and staff (17%). Other racial groups rated the above measures at least two times greater and ranged from 45-63% satisfaction.

Table 1. Satisfaction with Institutional Structures	Overall N	% "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"	% "Neutral"
Racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty	4,909	58%	34%
Racial/ethnic diversity of the student body	4,908	57%	31%
Racial/ethnic diversity of the staff	4,906	57%	36%
Interactions among different racial/ethnic groups	4,905	55%	33%
Administrative response to incidents of discrimination	4,904	50%	43%
Respect for the expression of diverse beliefs	4,906	65%	29%

Institutional Commitment to Diversity

This factor "measured students' perception of the campus' commitment to diversity" and included 5 agreement statements (Cronbach's α= .823) (see Table 2). Overall, UCLA students reported a positive outlook on the efforts UCLA has put in place to appreciate cultural diversity and representation. Almost all students (94%) reported that the university "promotes the appreciation of cultural difference." UCLA students were also very likely to report that the institution "accurately reflects the diversity of the student body in publications" (83%) and has a "commitment to diversity" (90%) (see Table 2). While results were very positive, one area for improvement suggested by the data is that efforts

Figure 1. Institutional Commitment to Diversity Factor Mean Scores

can be directed towards the frequency with which campus administrators speak about the value of diversity (only 76% agreement). Across racial/ethnic groups, Black students reported the lowest satisfaction with the Institutional Commitment to Diversity at UCLA (see Figure 1).

.
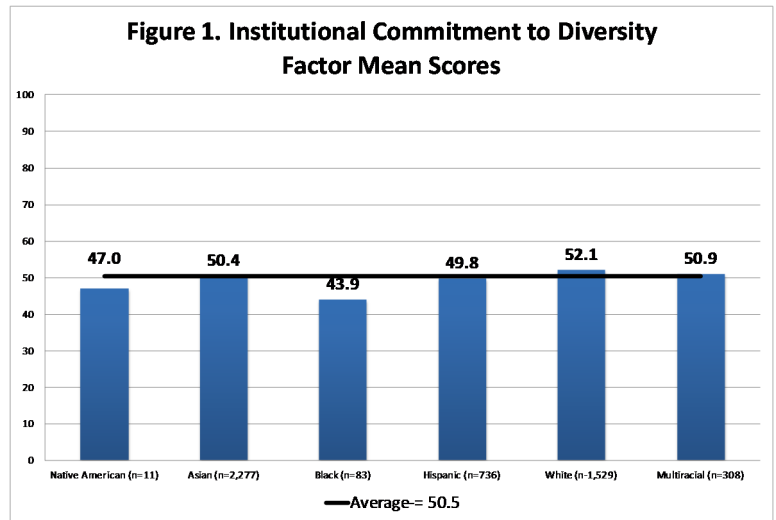
While students' acknowledged the institution's commitment to diversity, there were still reports of specific negative experiences involving faculty and staff. Approximately 200 students reported hearing "insensitive or disparaging remarks" from faculty and/or staff. While the percentages are relatively low, it is important to note that 4% of students had these types of negative experiences with faculty and 3% with staff.

Table 2. Institutional Commitment to Diversity	Overall N	% "Agree" or "Strongly agree"
This college promotes the appreciation of cultural difference.	6,506	94%
This college appreciates the differences in sexual orientation.	6,616	94%
This college has a long standing commitment to diversity.	6,515	90%
This college accurately reflects the diversity of the student body in publications.	6,505	83%
This college has campus administrators who regularly speak about the value of diversity.	6,496	76%

Inclusive Curriculum

The curriculum of inclusion factor measured "the number of courses a student has taken that include materials and pedagogy addressing diversity." This factor (Cronbach's α= .901) included 8 items that asked the number of courses taken at this college (see Table 3). Students were most exposed to materials about race or ethnicity (75%) and were least exposed to materials or readings that discussed disability (29%) or sexual orientation (46%). This data on the content of students' coursework continues an important conversation regarding students' curriculum and development.

There were differences in students' responses depending on their field of study and year in school. Not surprisingly, first-year students were least likely to have taken an "inclusive" course compared to Seniors (mean scores of 45.3 vs. 50.2). Across academic disciplines, students in science fields (e.g., Engineering, Physical Science, Mathematics or Statistics) were also less likely to have had diversity-related coursework or dialogue in comparison to students in Humanities or Social Sciences departments. The difference between the means of the curriculum factor for STEM and non-STEM students was –6.86, indicating a 7 point difference in the frequency with which STEM students were exposed with diverse concepts.

Although students reported favorable perceptions of the institution's commitment to diversity, students often did not take advantage of curricular opportunities to interact with students different from themselves. Almost half of respondents (43%) did not take classes that included intense dialogue between students with different backgrounds and beliefs. These results may indicate that while the institutional desire for a diverse undergraduate class is present, additional efforts are needed to influence students' experiences and practice. Additional curricular efforts and student spaces could enable diverse interactions. Implementing an undergraduate diversity requirement, such as the previously proposed "communities and conflict" GE, could provide such opportunities. Given the discrepancies in course-taking patterns across academic fields (see Table 4), it is important to consider how institutional structures may shape students' postsecondary experiences.

Table 3. Curriculum of Inclusion	Overall N	% Reporting "none"
Took courses that included:		
Materials/readings about:		
Race/ethnicity	5,311	25%
Sexual orientation	5,309	54%
Gender	5,313	37%
Socioeconomic class differences	5,309	28%
Privilege	5,308	49%
Disability	5,308	71%
Opportunities for intensive dialogue between students with different backgrounds and beliefs	5,308	43%
Opportunities to study and serve communities in need	5,310	63%

Table 4. Likelihood of Diversity-Related Coursework by Academic Fields	
Least Likely	**Most Likely**
Health Profession (Mean= 47.3)	English (Mean= 53.26)
Mathematics and Statistics (Mean= 43.2)	Social Science (Mean= 51.7)
Physical Science (Mean= 42.7)	History and Political Science (Mean= 50.9)
Engineering (Mean= 41.6)	

Co-Curricular Diversity

The Co-Curricular Diversity Activities factor (Cronbach's α= .822) measured "students' involvement with institutional programs focused on diversity issues" and included 6 items that asked students how often they had participated in various activities. Table 5 outlines the items included in the factor along with additional items regarding students' participation in religious/spiritual clubs and activities associated with the Disability Center.
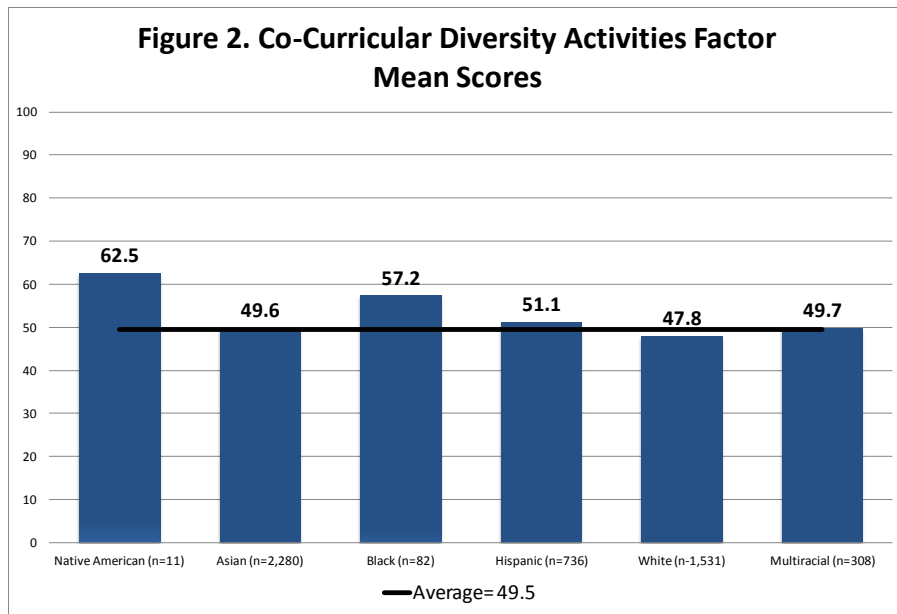
Given that UCLA does not have centers that focus on cultural, racial/ethnic, or gender issues specifically, it is not surprising that UCLA students would report less frequent utilization of such services. Data revealed that among co-curricular diversity activities, students reported greater participation in presentations, performances, and art exhibits on diversity and religious and spiritual clubs/groups (see Table 5).

Among all student respondents, the least frequently utilized programmatic services appeared to be activities associated with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) center and disability center on campus. Students that shared an identity characteristic with these services were more likely to use them. For example, among students that identified as LGBT (n=324), approximately half (49%) reported utilizing the LGBT center on campus to some capacity. A smaller portion of self-identified students with disabilities (22%) reported participating in the Disability Center activities. If the desire is to increase awareness of services and support beyond the focused communities, greater exposure and awareness may be needed.

Table 5. Co-Curricular Diversity Activities	Overall N	% Reported "often" or "very often"	% Reporting Any Participation
Attended debates or panels about diversity issues	5,090	11%	54%
Attended presentations, performances, and art exhibits on diversity	5,090	23%	79%
Participated in ongoing campus-organized discussions on racial/ethnic issues	5,084	11%	45%
Participated in the LGBT Center activities	5,085	5%	26%
Participated in Racial/Ethnic or Cultural Center activities	5,085	10%	38%
Participated in Women's/Men's Center activities	5,086	5%	25%
Participated in religious/spiritual clubs/groups[1]	5,084	16%	41%
Participated in Disability Center activities[1]	5,083	3%	19%

[1] Not included in factor

Comparison of factor means by race/ethnicity indicated that Native American and Black students were most likely to participate in diversity-related co-curricular activities (mean scores of 62.5 and 57.2) (see Figure 2). Specifically, Black students reported the highest levels of participation in four activities: 1) ongoing campus-organized discussions on racial/ethnic issues, 2) LGBT Center activities, 3) debates or panels about diversity, and 4) presentations, performances, and art exhibits on diversity. Comparisons across racial/ethnic groups indicated that Asian & White students were less likely to participate in diversity-related co-curricular activities (see Figure 2). These results reinforce the important role Student Affairs programming may have in facilitating and providing supportive spaces and opportunities for students of color on campus.

Figure 2. Co-Curricular Diversity Activities Factor Mean Scores

| Native American (n=11)	Asian (n=2,280)	Black (n=82)	Hispanic (n=736)	White (n-1,531)	Multiracial (n=308)
62.5	49.6	57.2	51.1	47.8	49.7

━━ Average= 49.5

Conclusion

While aggregated and generalized results show that students have favorable reports of satisfaction with institutional structures and commitment to diversity, careful analyses of subgroups revealed a more nuanced picture. Results of this brief highlight the differential experiences of Black students and the need to better understand how rates of satisfaction with institutional structures and institutional commitment to diversity vary by different subgroups. Additionally, students' exposure to diverse curriculum provides an interesting perspective for UCLA to consider how existing curriculum can be more inclusive to diversity-related content and opportunities for dialogue. It would also be pertinent to develop strategies for ways to implement diverse curriculum to students in STEM majors and to encourage STEM students to diversify their undergraduate curriculum.

Students' lack of participation in courses that provide opportunities for intense dialogue about differences is an area for focus (43% reported none). Given that "a critical element of our mission [is] providing students with the intellectual skills to understand and address conflict in a respectful and effective manner" (Chancellor Block, Letter to Campus Community, February 10, 2012), attention should be given to strengthening opportunities for diverse interactions and dialogue in the curriculum, co-curricular activities and student organizations. In addition, while students who identify as LGBT or students with disabilities are using their respective center's services, the low rates of participation overall suggest that more attention could be given to collaborations across departments to raise awareness of services as well as connect the broader campus community through awareness education and advocacy activities that could strengthen intergroup interactions on campus.

The UCLA DLE logo, designed by Brian Phan, a 2nd year UCLA student in Design and Media Arts, was utilized for all promotional materials and UCLA-affiliated websites.
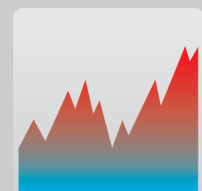
What's UCLA's temperature?
Tell us about campus climate.
Participate in the DLE Survey.