

Summary of the 2023 Climate Survey

Department of Biostatistics at the University of Washington, Seattle

In November 2023, the *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* (EDI) Committee within UW's Biostatistics department sent a survey to current faculty, staff, and students. The goal of the survey was to measure general social climate and gain insight into perspectives regarding EDI within the department, to direct priorities of the committee. A detailed outline of the survey is provided at the end of this document.

This summary report will provide a comprehensive overview of survey results, review prevalent threads among responses, and highlight notable/concerning information brought to our attention.

Executive Summary

The survey was open for one week and gathered 69 anonymous responses (10 faculty, 21 staff, 38 students, 0 did not wish to identify). It was composed of "Rank from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree" questions, with optional space for detailed responses.

A generalized summary of *approximate* results and proportions:

- Overall satisfaction with **culture and social climate** is strongly positive among faculty (9/10), positive among students (7/10), and moderate among staff (6/10).
- 7/10 individuals share a positive **sense of belonging** within the department. This sense is lowest among staff (6/10) and similar between faculty and students (8/10). Feelings of **exclusion or embarrassment** are contended most strongly by students (8/10) and moderately by faculty and staff (6/10).
- 2/10 individuals are aware of or have witnessed an **instance of bias/discrimination** within the department; they are most prevalent among staff (3/10) and similar between faculty and students (2/10). Across faculty, staff, and students, 6/10 are unaware of such behavior.
- 4/10 individuals are not familiar with a department member regarding **reporting of harassment/inappropriate behavior**. Unfamiliarity is most prevalent among staff (3/10) and least among faculty (1/10) and students (2/10).

Overall results and responses indicate a generally positive social climate within the department. However, evaluating responses of faculty, staff, and students separately reveals multiple areas where EDI-focused initiatives and attention within the Biostatistics department and community are seriously needed.

Faculty, staff, and students all expressed **opportunities for improvement** regarding EDI, including empowering the diversity of applicants, providing classroom materials, expanding faculty involvement within initiatives, and investing in permanent positions for this work. Multiple respondents expressed their impression that the department is interested in EDI but its work has been surface-level and insufficiently proactive.

Desirable Attitudes and Themes

Overall, faculty report the best experience within the department. Faculty report highest satisfaction with **employee diversity**, **work fairness**, and **comfort with supervisors**.

Students report strong **comfort in speaking openly** about personal challenges and social issues with their peers. They agree the most strongly that they do not experience exclusion or embarrassment from department members. Students were approximately as satisfied as they were unfamiliar/undecided on employment conditions but indicated a positive relationship with supervisors/mentors.

Undesirable Attitudes and Themes

Overall, staff report the worst experience within the department. They report the strongest contention of **work fairness**; a quarter express inability to openly express concerns to supervisors.

- A staff respondent described alarming, hostile work conditions. Details include repeated verbal harassment from management and a strict social hierarchy within the workplace.
- Another commented on the racial and economic homogeneity in their workplace

Student respondents describe a **divide between domestic and international students** across multiple areas of department life. Student members of the committee validated this general observation.

- A particular example is an observed racial divide on the Biostatistics department floor within the Hans Rosling Center (HRC); white students were described as the main occupants of the northern end, with open-space seating and desks, and students of color more so prevalent at the southern end, designed for quiet, independent work.
- Multiple student respondents expressed concern for an imbalanced demographic among department Teaching Assistants (TAs), again on domestic status. Some believe international students are asked to be TAs at higher rates than their domestic counterpart and are less equipped to self-advocate, experiencing improper or unfair workloads.

Notes on Interpretation

Interpreting a proportion out of 10. Response percentages were converted into approximate proportions of 10 individuals. These are intended to be interpreted as our estimate of the number of individuals we would expect to feel a certain way, out of 10 randomly selected department members.

Why report proportions? The central “Neutral” choice was designed to include respondents who desired to not answer or were undecided, because the survey did not allow respondents to skip questions. This distinction is important because it prevents usual interpretation of average rank. Instead, groupwise proportions are reported and compared.

When to include moderates? Central moderates were grouped with agreeers/disagreeers among questions that we suspected prompted true neutrality, e.g. “*I know who to speak with in the department if I experience sexual or verbal harassment, microaggressions, or other inappropriate behavior.*” Moderates were not paired with other respondents if questions were suspected to lend ‘Not Applicable’ responses, e.g. “*The department actively recruits/hires individuals from all backgrounds and communities.*”

Contact Us

If you have further questions or would like to request additional information, such as a copy of the survey, response data, and/or spreadsheets, please message the Biostatistics Associate Director of Student Services, Minh Vo, at minhtvo@uw.edu or the Biostatistics EDI TA, Alejandro Hernandez, at alejh@uw.edu.

Supplementary section continued on next page.

SUPPLEMENTARY: Detailed Survey Results

The central “Neutral” choice was intended to include respondents who desired to not answer or were undecided, because the survey was designed to not allow respondents to skip questions. This distinction is important because it prevents usual interpretation of average rank. Instead, groupwise proportions are reported and compared.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where

1 is Strongly Disagree

2 is Disagree

3 is Neutral/Uncertain/Undecided/Not Applicable

4 is Agree

5 is Strongly Agree

How would you rate the following statements?

Are you faculty, staff or a student?

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion
Faculty	10	15%	2/10
Staff	21	30%	3/10
Student	38	55%	5/10

1. I feel a sense of belonging within the department.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion
1	5	7%	1/10
2	5	7%	1/10
3	8	12%	1/10
4	29	42%	4/10
5	22	32%	3/10

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.*	Student Prop.*
1	1/10	<1/10	1/10
2	0/10	1/10	<1/10
3	1/10	2/10	1/10
4	3/10	3/10	5/10
5	5/10	3/10	3/10

7 Detailed Responses

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2 respondents (29%) answered **department** for this question.

racial tension **race/ethnicity**
group - and teh **department** **deparmental staff**
focused primarily **student's voices**
Biostats community

2. I feel comfortable talking about social issues with my peers.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion
1	8	12%	1/10
2	3	4%	<1/10
3	16	23%	2/10
4	26	38%	4/10
5	16	23%	2/10

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.	Student Prop.
1	2/10	1/10	1/10
2	0/10	0/10	1/10
3	3/10	4/10	1/10
4	2/10	4/10	4/10
5	3/10	1/10	3/10

3 Detailed Responses

3. I have not observed instances of bias or discrimination based on gender, race, ability, ethnicity, or other factors within our department.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	5	7%	1/10
2	8	12%	1/10
3	12	17%	2/10
4	17	25%	3/10
5	27	39%	4/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

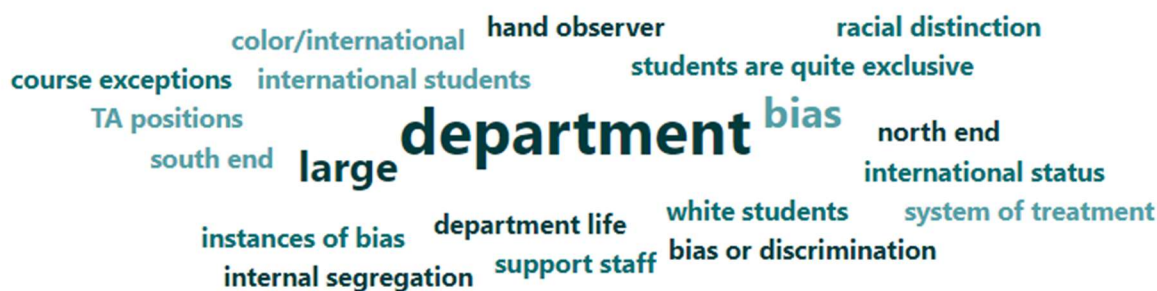
** Proportions sum is less than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.**	Student Prop.*
1	0/10	> 1/10	< 1/10
2	1/10	> 1/10	1/10
3	3/10	1/10	2/10
4	2/10	3/10	2/10
5	4/10	3/10	5/10

7 Detailed Responses

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3 respondents (43%) answered **department** for this question.



4. I have not felt isolated, excluded, or embarrassed by conduct within our department.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	5	7%	1/10
2	4	6%	1/10
3	9	13%	1/10
4	20	29%	3/10
5	31	45%	5/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.*	Student Prop.*
1	1/10	<1/10	1/10
2	0/10	1/10	<1/10
3	2/10	2/10	1/10
4	2/10	3/10	3/10
5	5/10	3/10	5/10

3 Detailed Responses

5. I know who to speak with in the department if I experience sexual or verbal harassment, microaggressions, or other inappropriate behavior.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion
1	8	12%	1/10
2	7	10%	1/10
3	11	16%	2/10
4	16	23%	2/10
5	27	39%	4/10

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.*	Student Prop.
1	1/10	2/10	1/10
2	0/10	1/10	1/10
3	2/10	<1/10	2/10
4	2/10	3/10	2/10
5	5/10	4/10	4/10

2 Detailed Responses

6. I know at least one person in the department I can speak with about personal challenges and worries.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	4	6%	1/10
2	2	3%	<1/10
3	4	6%	1/10
4	17	25%	3/10
5	42	61%	6/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.*	Student Prop.
1	1/10	1/10	<1/10
2	0/10	1/10	0/10
3	1/10	<1/10	<1/10
4	2/10	2/10	3/10
5	6/10	6/10	6/10

2 Detailed Responses

7. The department actively recruits/hires individuals from all backgrounds and communities. (3 is Neutral/Uncertain/Undecided/Not Applicable)

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	3	4%	<1/10
2	7	10%	1/10
3	23	33%	3/10
4	18	26%	3/10
5	18	26%	3/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.	Student Prop.*
1	0/10	<1/10	<1/10
2	1/10	1/10	1/10
3	1/10	4/10	4/10
4	2/10	3/10	3/10
5	6/10	1/10	2/10

5 Detailed Responses

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3 respondents (60%) answered **hiring** for this question.

backgrounds and communities process UW Recruiting level efforts
 student debt positions **hiring** works active work
 communities UW Hires students eg paying
 new avenues comparable positions
 core tenants willingness diverse audience postings positions in the area

8. Professional responsibilities of department employees are distributed and assigned fairly. (3 is Neutral/Uncertain/Undecided/Not Applicable)

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	2	3%	<1/10
2	5	7%	1/10
3	30	43%	4/10
4	15	22%	2/10
5	17	25%	3/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.	Student Prop.
1	0/10	1/10	0/10
2	0/10	1/10	1/10
3	3/10	4/10	5/10
4	3/10	2/10	2/10
5	4/10	2/10	2/10

8 Detailed Responses

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3 respondents (38%) answered **Student** for this question.

distribution of responsibilities privileged students fair distribution
 accurately answer international students jobs
 additional responsibilities ideas **Student work** TA assignments
 people are doing the work multiple people
 easier work domestic student n't have any ideas faculty or staff
 student status white students responsibilities very challenging

9. I feel comfortable expressing my concerns and opinions to my supervisors/advisors/mentors.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	4	6%	1/10
2	6	9%	1/10
3	9	13%	1/10
4	26	38%	4/10
5	24	35%	4/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.	Student Prop.
1	1/10	1/10	<1/10
2	0/10	1/10	1/10
3	1/10	1/10	2/10
4	3/10	3/10	4/10
5	5/10	3/10	3/10

2 Detailed Responses

10. I am satisfied with the overall culture and climate of our department regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Response	Count	Approx. Percent	Approx. Proportion*
1	4	6%	1/10
2	4	6%	1/10
3	13	19%	2/10
4	26	38%	4/10
5	22	32%	3/10

* Proportions sum is greater than 1

** Proportions sum is less than 1

Response	Faculty Prop.	Staff Prop.**	Student Prop.*
1	0/10	1/10	<1/10
2	0/10	1/10	<1/10
3	1/10	2/10	2/10
4	4/10	4/10	3/10
5	5/10	1/10	4/10

4 Detailed Responses

11. Finally, please rank the following priorities of the EDI Committee according to personal preference. (Most important at top, least important at bottom).

Approximate Percentages of Responses that Set *Response* at a Given Rank (Overall):

Response	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Mental Health Assistance	33%	33%	16%	10%	7%
Affinity Group Support	6%	12%	28%	28%	28%
International Student Resources	26%	26%	17%	16%	15%
Education on Global/Domestic Social Issues	15%	15%	20%	28%	23%
EDI Workshops (covering microaggressions, gender discussion, cultural identity, etc.)	20%	15%	19%	19%	28%

4 Detailed Responses

Approximate Percentages of Responses that Set *Response* at a Given Rank (Faculty):

Response	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Mental Health Assistance	10%	60%	0%	20%	10%
Affinity Group Support	0%	10%	20%	40%	30%
International Student Resources	30%	20%	10%	20%	20%
Education on Global/Domestic Social Issues	30%	10%	20%	20%	20%
EDI Workshops (covering microaggressions, gender discussion, cultural identity, etc.)	30%	0%	50%	0%	20%

Approximate Percentages of Responses that Set *Response* at a Given Rank (Staff):

Response	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Mental Health Assistance	38%	19%	29%	10%	5%
Affinity Group Support	0%	14%	24%	29%	33%
International Student Resources	14%	33%	14%	14%	24%
Education on Global/Domestic Social Issues	14%	24%	19%	29%	14%
EDI Workshops (covering microaggressions, gender discussion, cultural identity, etc.)	33%	10%	14%	19%	24%

Approximate Percentages of Responses that Set *Response* at a Given Rank (Students):

Response	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Mental Health Assistance	37%	34%	13%	8%	8%
Affinity Group Support	11%	11%	32%	24%	24%
International Student Resources	32%	24%	21%	16%	8%
Education on Global/Domestic Social Issues	11%	11%	21%	29%	29%
EDI Workshops (covering microaggressions, gender discussion, cultural identity, etc.)	11%	21%	13%	24%	32%

End of report.