Summary of the 2023 Climate Survey

Department of Biostatistics at the University of Washington, Seattle

This presentation condenses a comprehensive report;
please refer to the report for a detailed summary of results.

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Background

In November 2023, the *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* (EDI) Committee released a survey to current faculty, staff, and students.

- **Measure social climate** and review perspectives regarding EDI within the department, to **direct priorities of the committee**.

The survey was open for one week and gathered 69 anonymous responses (10 faculty, 21 staff, 38 students).

Background

The survey was composed of "Rank from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree" questions, with optional space for detailed responses. **Rank proportions were evaluated.**

Overall results and responses **indicate a generally positive social climate.** However, evaluating responses of faculty, staff, and students separately reveals where attention is seriously needed.

Executive Summary

Overall satisfaction with **culture and social climate** is strongly positive among faculty, positive among students, and moderate among staff.

- Faculty report high satisfaction with employee diversity, work fairness, and comfort with supervisors.
- Students report closeness among peers but describe a **divide between domestic and international students**.
- Staff report weak satisfaction and **alarming work conditions**.

Concerning Responses

Multiple students report a **divide between domestic and international students** across multiple areas of department life.

o   A student described a racial divide across workstations on the HRC 3rd floor.
o   Three students describe an imbalanced demographic among department TAs.

Staff report the worst experience within the department. They express poor **work fairness** and an **inability to openly express concerns** to supervisors.

o   A staff respondent described alarming, hostile work conditions.

Impression that the department is interested in EDI but its work has been surface-level.

	Q1 Sense of Belonging	Q2 Social Issue Talk	Q3 Negative Instance	Q4 Exclusion	Q5 Administrator	Q6 Personal Talk	Q7 Diverse Hiring	Q8 Fair Work	Q9 Supervisor Talk	Q10 Overall Satisfaction
FACULTY										
Negative	0.10	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00
Central	0.10	0.30	0.30	0.20	0.20	0.10	0.10	0.30	0.10	0.10
Positive	0.80	0.50	0.60	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.70	0.80	0.90
STAFF										
Negative	0.19	0.14	0.29	0.14	0.29	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.24	0.19
Central	0.19	0.38	0.10	0.19	0.05	0.05	0.38	0.38	0.10	0.24
Positive	0.62	0.48	0.62	0.67	0.67	0.76	0.43	0.43	0.67	0.57
STUDENT										
Negative	0.13	0.16	0.16	0.13	0.21	0.03	0.13	0.08	0.11	0.11
Central	0.08	0.13	0.18	0.08	0.21	0.05	0.37	0.50	0.16	0.18
Positive	0.79	0.71	0.66	0.79	0.58	0.92	0.50	0.42	0.74	0.71

Table 1. Response Proportions, Grouped by Attitude

	Q1 Sense of Belonging	Q2 Social Issue Talk	Q3 Negative Instance	Q4 Exclusion	Q5 Administrator	Q6 Personal Talk	Q7 Diverse Hiring	Q8 Fair Work	Q9 Supervisor Talk	Q10 Overall Satisfaction
FACULTY (n = 10)										
Negative	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Central	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	1	1
Positive	8	5	6	7	7	8	8	7	8	9
STAFF (n = 21)										
Negative	4	3	6	3	6	4	4	4	5	4
Central	4	8	2	4	1	1	8	8	2	5
Positive	13	10	13	14	14	16	9	9	14	12
STUDENT (n = 38)										
Negative	5	6	6	5	8	1	5	3	4	4
Central	3	5	7	3	8	2	14	19	6	7
Positive	30	27	25	30	22	35	19	16	28	27

Table 2. Response Counts, Grouped by Attitude

Executive Summary

Most individuals are not aware of or have not witnessed an instance of **bias/discrimination** within the department.

- Those who have are most prevalent among staff (~30%) and similar between faculty and students (~20%).

Many did not report familiarity with a department member regarding **reporting of harassment/inappropriate behavior**.

- Unfamiliarity is most prevalent among staff (~30%) and least among faculty (~10) and students (~20%).

We must explicitly consider…

- **Selection bias:** To what extent is our sample (10 faculty, 21 staff, 38 students) representative?

- **Outliers:** Regardless of majority responses, we must emphasize critical respondents and address their serious concerns.

- **Scope of interest/ability:** How may the department respond to serious allegations made by anonymous community members?

New EDI Subcommittees

Following department survey responses, we've split into…

o Mental Health Resources Subgroup for assisting students into mental health services, lead by Kevin Lin (kzlin@uw.edu).

o EDI Education and Workshop Subgroup for developing EDI workshops to educate the department on local, domestic, and global social issues, lead by Minh Vo (minhtvo@uw.edu).

An **International Student Resource repository** will be organized by EDI TAs Dhruv Mehta (dhruv17@uw.edu) and Alejandro Hernandez (alejh@uw.edu).

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Thank you, please contact us for all requests/concerns.

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Supplementary

More on…

- Student concerns
  - Addressing a divide among TAs and HRC workstations
- Overall rankings (counts and proportions)
- Positive responses
- Rankings of EDI issues

Addressing Student Concerns

Imbalanced demographic among department TAs?

This sentiment has been echoed by students through informal discussion. Why might international student be over-represented in teaching assistant positions? Minh Vo currently oversees TA appointment, [*ideas from Minh relating to historical context*].

Why may this be concerning? A survey respondent feels international student may be less inclined to self-advocate for lighter workloads, if they rely on a student visa for legal residency. Another respondent reported having witnessed biased behavior toward TAs based on domestic/international status.

Addressing Student Concerns

Divide across Biostatistics department floor workstations?

This sentiment has been echoed by student respondents in a *very* recent survey (16 responses) and through informal, daily observation. Southern-sitting international students appreciate **quiet for focus and productivity**. Northern-sitting domestic students appreciate **speaking for collaboration and productivity**; monitors and open-space were also cited.

Are there social aspects present? A student likes the south end as an introvert, another likes the north because their friends sit there. What role does similar identity, culture, or language play? Do you see this distinction reflected in classrooms and social events?

The original comment indicated this results from exclusive behavior by domestic, white students.

Executive Summary

	Sense of Belonging	Social Issue Talk	Negative Instance	Exclusion	Administrator	Personal Talk	Diverse Hiring	Fair Work	Supervisor Talk	Overall Satisfaction
Negative	0.14	0.16	0.19	0.13	0.22	0.09	0.14	0.10	0.14	0.12
Central	0.12	0.23	0.17	0.13	0.16	0.06	0.33	0.43	0.13	0.19
Positive	0.74	0.61	0.64	0.74	0.62	0.86	0.52	0.46	0.72	0.70
Negative	10	11	13	9	15	6	10	7	10	8
Central	8	16	12	9	11	4	23	30	9	13
Positive	51	42	44	51	43	59	36	32	50	48

Table 3. Overall Response Proportions and Counts, Grouped by Attitude

Positive Responses

- 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.

EDI Priority Rankings

Respondents ranked EDI priorities to focus committee attention and initiatives. Ranked in order of importance:

Group	1st	2nd	3rd
Faculty	International student resources	Education on global/domestic social issues	Mental health assistance and EDI workshops
Staff	Mental health assistance	EDI workshops	International student resources
Students	Mental health assistance	International student resources	EDI workshops