Retaining and Recruiting a Diverse Staff in Student Affairs University of Utah December 7th, 2010

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Executive Summary

Over the course of two months, our team interviewed members in various departments of Student Affairs. Using the information gathered in these discussions, a survey for all members in Student Affairs was created and distributed. The survey was designed to measure how diverse the department was and what measures were taken to promote diversity. After developing methods for analysis, our team concluded three main issues hinder the recruitment and retention of a diverse staff within Student Affairs: race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, and political views. Finally, our team offered recommendations for the department, emphasizing the importance of cross-cultural communication and augmenting the current diversity training sessions.

Introduction

The purpose of the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Utah is to create a campus culture that reflects the ethical and intellectual development fostered by students, staff and faculty. The office provides students an experience enriched with opportunities to actively engage in programs that generate awareness about the relationship between education, skills and attitudes needed to function in a changing society. In addition, the office provides services, which accommodate and stimulate the learning process and also fosters a campus community that promotes student involvement.

Furthermore, leadership in the Office of Student Affairs is responsible for developing the human and facility resources necessary to support the increasingly diverse student population. The office is challenged with increasing the diversity among their staff in order to better serve students. Kari Ellingson, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Student Development, requested our team provide strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff to the office of Student Affairs.

The social and political issues surrounding the increase in diverse populations, including race, sexual orientation, age, religious affiliation, special needs and political viewpoint, influence higher learning institutions in Utah. Our response to this imperative situation was to collect, analyze, and provide evidence to the Student Affairs leadership on how they can better cultivate a learning environment so the staff can promote and experience positive interactions when dealing with diversity.

Methodology/Process

The main objective of our project was to provide a set of recommendations to the Office of Student Affairs to recruit and retain a more diverse staff. The approach we followed in achieving the objectives of this project is discussed below.

In the initial stages of the project, we met with Kari Ellingson and Debra Daniels, Director of Women's Resource Center. Kari and Debra also co-chair the Diversity Council at the Office of Student Affairs. They gave us an initial overview of the current climate of diversity among the staff members working in Student Affairs. They also suggested we meet with people from different departments in Student Affairs to obtain more detailed insight into the level of diversity that exists in each department. We also met with Dr. Octavio Villalpando, Associate Vice President, Equity & Diversity at the University of Utah. Dr. Octavio gave us great insights into the importance of diversity in the Office of Student Affairs, and also provided us with the latest data which indicated the current level of diversity in the administrative staff at the University (**Appendix 1**).

At Kari's suggestion, we interviewed individuals from different departments in Student Affairs. We asked them questions about the current level of diversity in their respective departments and whether they would be comfortable in having a diverse staff working under them. The response of majority of staff was that their individual departments lacked diversity, but all those interviewed were open to working with people from different backgrounds. A diverse staff would also provide an opportunity to learn about different cultures and help develop innovative methods to tackle particular problems and situations.

Although the interviews gave us information about the current diversity levels, they did not tell us anything about what led to minimal diversity in Student Affairs. Thus we developed a survey which would help us identify the possible reasons for having such low diversity. The survey (**Appendix 2**), uploaded on studentvoice.com, was to be taken by all the staff and the questions were to be answered based on their individual work experiences. The survey was designed in such a manner that it would not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

After we received the survey results, we analyzed them based on various parameters. We analyzed the responses to the questions by using cross tab function and compared the responses with demographic information. For instance, one of the questions was whether any staff member has heard/observed a disparaging remark about a colleague's racial background. For this question, we analyzed the responses with respect to the information obtained on the racial backgrounds of the respondents.

After careful analysis, we discussed the problems that were possible causes for the lack of diversity in Student Affairs. We prepared a set of recommendations based on the conclusions derived from the survey results. The recommendations include the future work and the process that Student Affairs should follow and implement in order to improve the level of diversity.

Findings

Upon reviewing the results of the survey (**Appendix 2**), our team discovered the University of Utah was doing many great things already, but there were areas for improvement. Both of these areas will be discussed to show what actions taken by the University have worked and those that have not.

Areas of Strength:

One of the questions asked employees if they felt they had colleagues at work with whom they could discuss work related problems. Nearly 90% of those individuals felt this to be true. We believe this to be an important element in fostering diversity. Increasing staff diversity will be difficult unless f the environment is one where people trust one another.

75% of employees feel as though the University of Utah values their diversity initiatives on campus, which indicates the University supports employee involvement in such initiatives. Just over half the employees still feel that the University values their diversity initiatives when the work is done off campus.

2 of the 11 men identifying themselves as gay stated they had felt unwelcome among their colleagues because of their sexual orientation. Given the low percentage of individuals responding to the survey as having felt unwelcomed, it could be inferred that those two were isolated incidents and do not reflect the general attitude of the department. Therefore, our group believes sexual orientation is not a divisive issue in Student Affairs.

Although the ratio of women to men is about 2:1, the majority of survey respondents do not feel that the Student Affairs is a sexist environment. Only four males and four females feel the Office of Student Affairs is sexist. Based on these statistics, our group concluded that sexism is not a problem for the department.

Areas for Improvement:

When employees were asked if they felt included when work was required in groups or committees, 32% said they did not. The answer had a fairly even spread across demographics meaning regardless of their background, a third of respondents felt excluded from group and committee work.

Of those asked if they were expected to present a viewpoint different from the majority because of their identity in the past year, about 25% answered yes. While this does not seem like a large number, heterosexual Caucasians skew the data. When this question is cross-tabbed with sexual orientation/presentation and race, the results are quite different. Nearly half of Pacific Islanders/Hawaiians, Hispanics, and those who identified themselves as gay, bisexual, or another orientation said they felt like they were expected to present a different viewpoint because of their identity. The results of this question could be interpreted several ways. We viewed the question as a measurement of how much people are encouraged to share their unique views. Therefore, a response suggesting an individual felt compelled to share their view is a positive thing; individuals

18% of employees have observed discriminatory hiring/firing practices while employed. Little correlation was discovered between this observation and the respondents' demographics. The discriminatory practices were most prominently visible with respect to a potential employee's racial or ethnic background.

Two questions were asked regarding employees' diversity initiatives both on and off campus and whether or not the university valued these initiatives. While many felt their initiatives were valued, 21% felt neutral regarding on campus diversity initiatives and 38% off campus. The school's appreciation of diversity initiatives is apparent, but more can be done to encourage participation.

Close to 15% of men and 17% of women surveyed said they had felt unwelcome due to their racial background. Again, this number was skewed by Caucasians. About half of the respondents from non-Caucasian ethnicity felt unwelcome due to their racial background. This leads us to believe that racial inequality does exist and measures must be taken to correct it.

We were surprised to discover that 43.5% of individuals identifying themselves as LDS stated that they have felt unwelcome as a result of their religion. Latter Day Saints are the largest religious group within Student Affairs. Individuals identifying themselves as Protestant or Catholic had also felt unwelcome, along with those with no religious affiliation. LDS affiliation may be viewed by non-LDS in the department as conformist, however this notion runs counter to a department which prides itself on valuing diversity. Our team conjectured that those identifying themselves as valuing diversity may unknowingly cause those who following mainstream religious practices feel unwelcome due to miscommunication or misunderstandings between the two different groups.

Another area of concern was the number of people who had heard disparaging remarks about different types of diversity. The table below shows the number of people who have heard these types of remarks:

Type of Disparaging Remark	Percent Reporting They Have Heard These Remarks
A Person's Racial/Ethnic Background	32%
A Person's Gender identity	35%
A Person's Disability	20%
A non-native English Speaking Person	40%
A Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender	30%
Person	
A Person's Religious Background	46%
A Person's Political Viewpoint	52%
A Person's Age	38%

Since Student Affairs is fosters an environment that encourages diversity and acceptance of all types of people, these surprising statistics show that improvement needs to be made in this area. An individual or department that truly values diversity would not want to hear disparaging remarks even if the remarks were not specifically about them. Perhaps a no tolerance policy could be enacted to show that the Office of Student Affairs will not allow people to make disparaging remarks about people even if the person or party representative of the group being insulted is not around.

When someone in Student Affairs feels unwelcome, it is largely a result of their race/ethnicity, religious background, or political affiliation. The majority of unwelcome feelings are derived from co-workers and supervisors. Diversity will always invariably create challenges in group process; less effort may be required to understand differences when coworkers share a common background. Acceptance of all people is certainly the first step to create the desired diversity climate that Student Affairs strives for, and the environment to begin this process is already in place.

Although the Office of Student Affairs is accepting of diversity, the department also tolerates disparaging remarks about the diversity valued by individuals within the organization. A strictly enforced policy regarding disparaging remarks would nurture a diverse atmosphere and indicate that diversity is valued.

Open and respectful communication is key when successfully recruiting and retaining a diverse staff. How one communicates cannot be entirely separated from their culture, but active listening and clear goal setting can enhance communication.

Recommendations

Creating and cultivating learning environments and learning experiences for students has always been at the heart of Student Affairs. For that main reason, it is essential for the leadership to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel that have been fully trained in issues of diversity.

As a first step, Student Affairs should promote the importance of diversity trainings for its current personnel involved with students. Leadership should emphasize the importance of diversity in learning and also the value of working collaboratively with students, faculty, academic administrators, and others. Our team recommends mandatory employee involvement in a number of formal diversity trainings offered on and off campus, which would be an element in employee evaluation. Alternatively, diversity-training workshops for personnel in all divisions as part of a leadership-training program could be developed. We recommend the workshop be implemented in

the next two years.

The next step is to identify and eliminate non-accepting discriminatory practices that will taint the diverse culture established in the office of Student Affairs. Leadership should promote its focus on diversity by circulating a diversity plan to managers and supervisors. The diversity plan must be embedded within Student Affair's culture. Another suggestion is to stage recurring meetings where hiring supervisors from various departments can discuss challenges surrounding issues of diversity recruitment and retention. These meetings would provide the leadership an opportunity to educate and mentor current staff in identifying good practices when recruiting and retaining diverse staff. Once employees gain this understanding, the next must be implementing strategies addressing conditions that allow discrimination to exist.

The third step is enhancing the supportive environment in Student Affairs. Leadership and the diversity council should articulate more convincingly that diversity matters by broadcasting the goals to be completed within a given period of time. In order to foster the integration of diversity concepts and dialogue, a suggestion would be to build diversity initiatives across divisions with a centralized timeline. An example would be to establish measurements to monitor the progress of recruiting diverse staff at all levels, consistent with the available pool. Leadership should continually emphasize the value of diversity in the recruitment and re-appointment of key personnel.

Finally, in order to ensure diversity recruitment, Student Affairs should work with other organizations and alumnus within the community to promote the understanding and effectiveness of having a diverse staff in higher education. These organizations may include the Office of Diversity and Human Rights, Mayor's Office of Diversity Affairs, and the Salt Lake Chamber Diversity Connections office. Additional data can be collected and analyzed from the staff at Student Affairs, specifically those with hiring authority and power. In order to bring these individuals together, a virtual collaboration website can be created in order to exchange ideas of possible methods used to improve diversity recruitment and retention, discuss the latest challenges regarding diversity issues and promote scholarly dialogue between the staff and leadership. Possible results include the creation an Alumni Advisory Board for Diversity Recruitment, the creation of multiple events and organizations that will provide additional dialogue on diversity and funding mechanisms to support and promote diversity initiatives in the office of Student Affairs.

Conclusion:

Our report contains information that will allow Student Affairs to make critical decisions on the efficacy of their strategies used to recruit and retain diverse staff for Student Affairs. The survey conducted shows that Student Affairs has created a climate where differences are generally accepted, yet the department can do more. Fostering an environment of full acceptance requires both management and staff be on board; otherwise new ideas will be met with resistance.

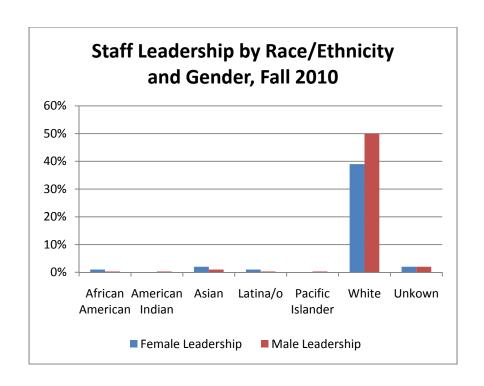
A common need that transcends race, religion and politics is open communication. Student Affairs aspires to create a framework for maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships by actively inviting students and staff to take part in diversity initiatives and activities on campus. The next step is encouraging staff to candidly share opinions about their role in the organization. The culture of Student Affairs creates a safe place for a diverse group people to work together, but the department must foster open communication between diverse groups and ensure everyone has an opportunity to discuss shared goals.

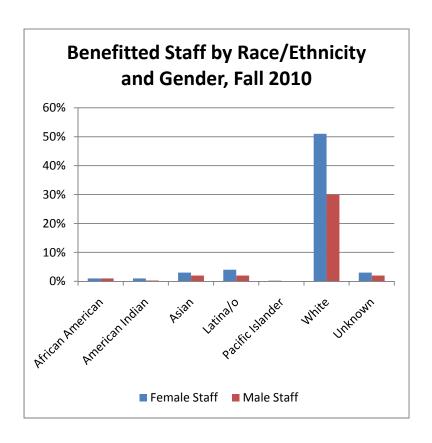
Race, religion and politics are the three main factors driving discomfort in Student Affairs. A more

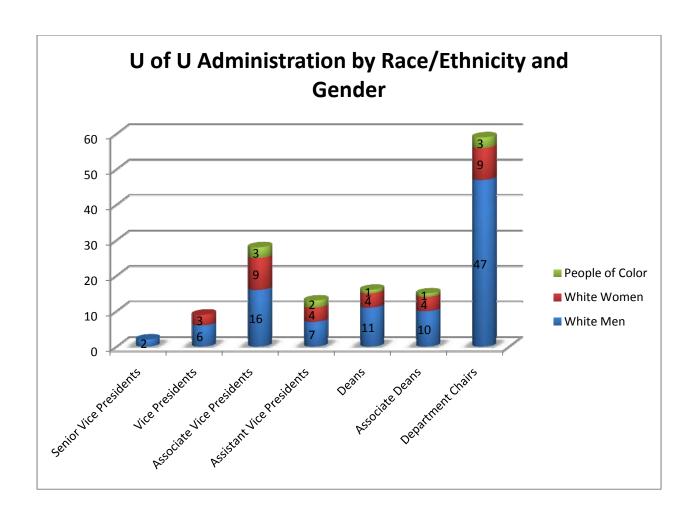
thorough understanding of the experience related to an individual's identification with a particular race and/or component of their worldview is an area where Student Affairs could improve. The fact that disparaging comments exist in Student Affairs is proof that a more empathetic stance needs to be taken to ultimately increase retention of staff. Developing better communication and understanding among Student Affairs staff will take time, but actively involving minority voices within the department will help achieve this goal.

Appendix 1

Staff Leadership, Benefitted Staff and University of Utah administration by race, ethnicity, and gender







Appendix 2

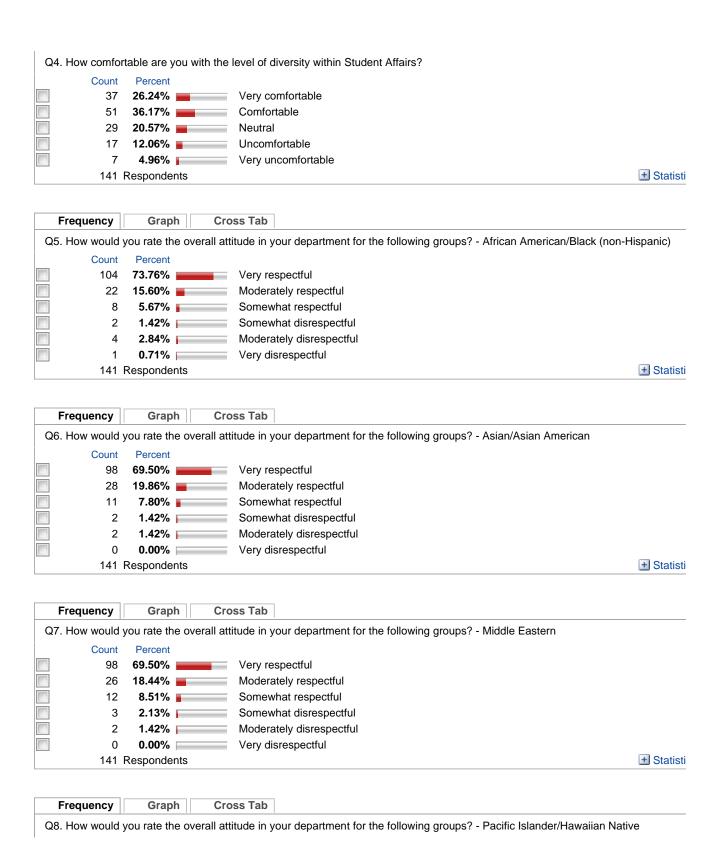
Student Affairs Diversity Survey 2010 Questions and Responses

Community my Student VoiceHome About Help **Get Started Projects Rubrics** Benchmark Projects > Student Affairs Diversity Survey 2010 > Results Student Affairs Diversity Survey 2010 Administration Type: Web Date Created: 10/28/2010 3:55:12 PM Date Range: 11/8/2010 12:00:00 AM - 12/3/2010 11:59:00 PM **Total Respondents: 158** Results Add/Remove Questions Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - The climate within the division of Student Affairs is accepting of who I am. Count Percent 52 36.88% Strongly agree 68 48.23% Agree 14 9.93% Neutral 6 4.26% Disagree 1 0.71% Strongly disagree 141 Respondents **Statisti** Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q2. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - My department is welcoming for employees from historically underrepresented groups. Count Percent 71 50.35% Strongly agree 53 37.59% Agree 7 4.96% Neutral 7 4.96% Disagree 3 2.13% Strongly disagree **±** Statisti 141 Respondents **Cross Tab** Frequency Graph Q3. To what extent do you experience a sense of community within the your department of Student Affairs? Count Percent 38.30% To a great extent 47 To a fair extent 33.33% 31 21.99% To some extent 7 4.96% Barely 2 1.42% Not at all **±** Statisti 141 Respondents

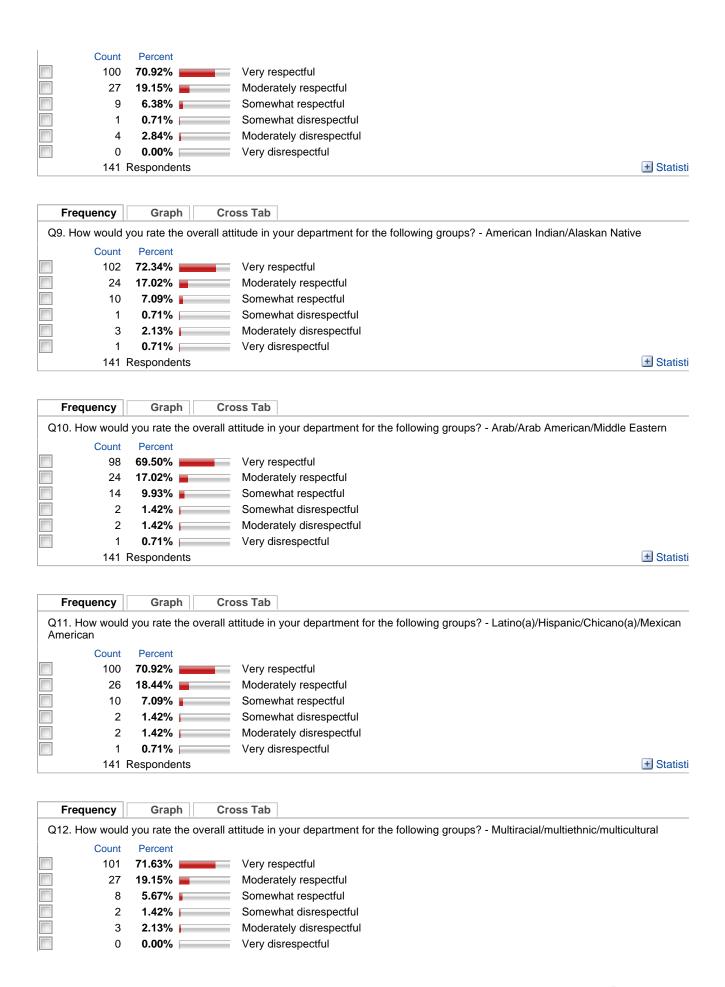
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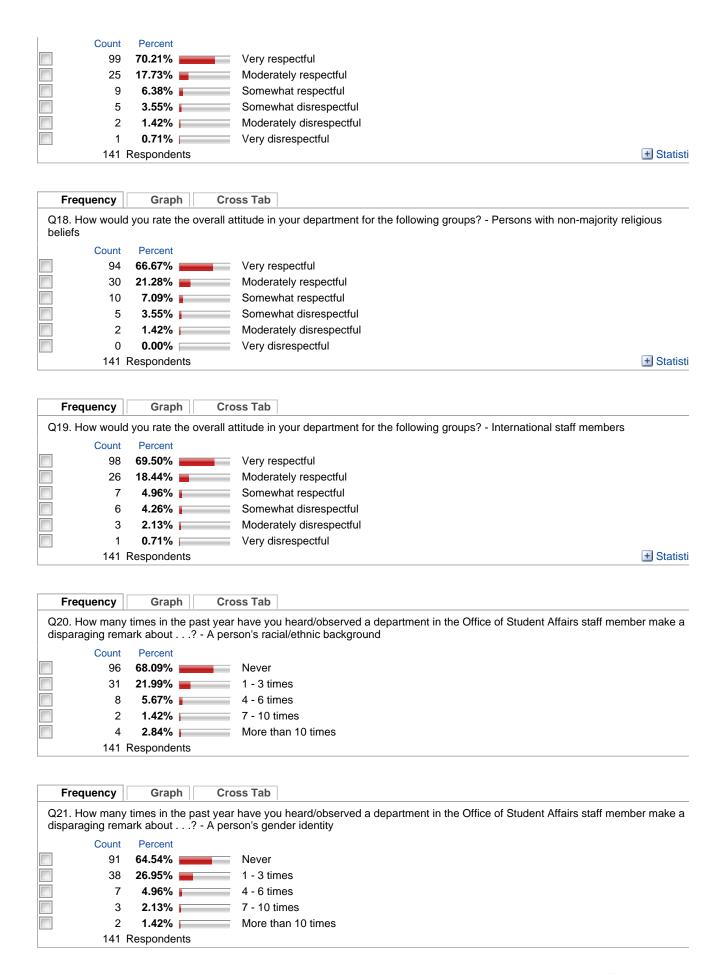
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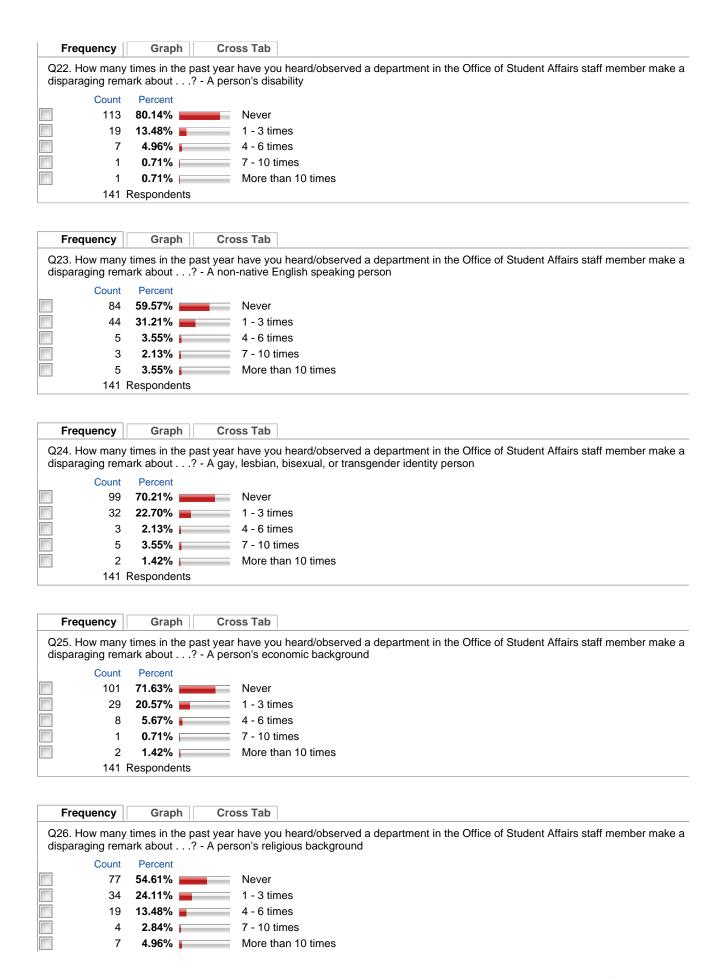


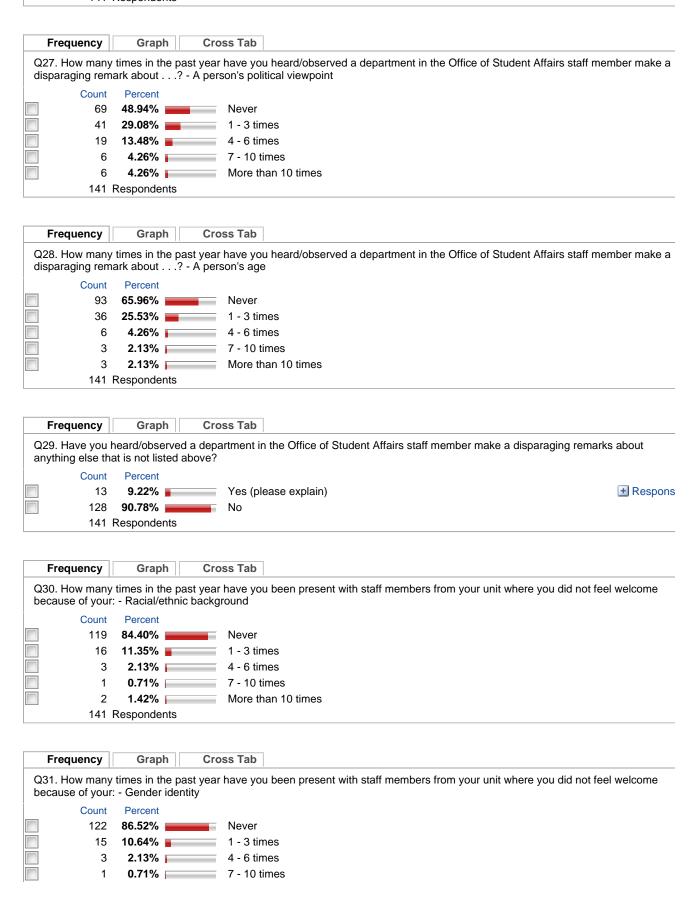
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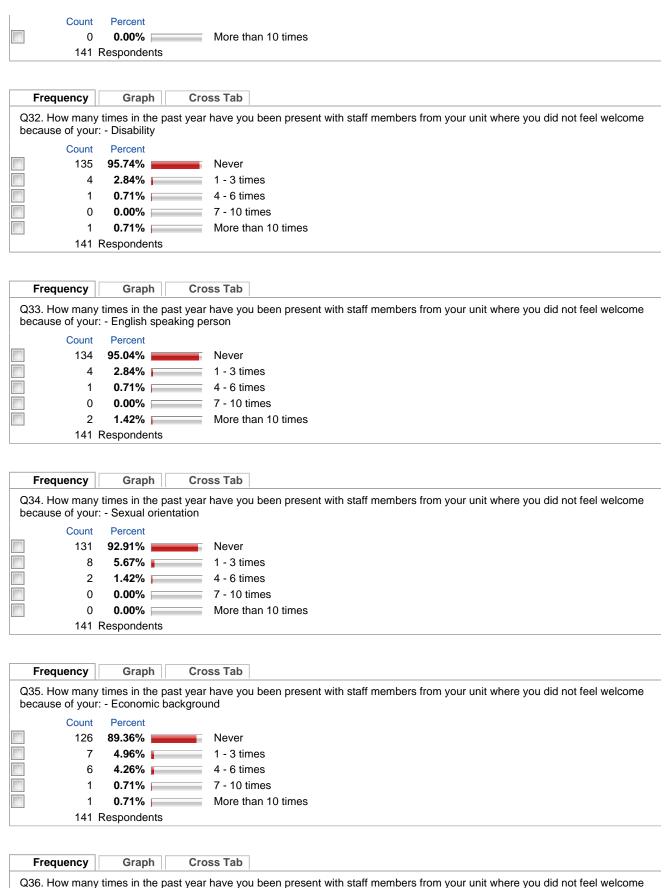


Count Percent **+** Statisti 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q13. How would you rate the overall attitude in your department for the following groups? - Non-native English speakers Count Percent 80 56.74% Very respectful 37 26.24% Moderately respectful 16 11.35% Somewhat respectful 4 2.84% Somewhat disrespectful 2 1.42% Moderately disrespectful 2 1.42% Very disrespectful **+** Statisti 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q14. How would you rate the overall attitude in your department for the following groups? - Men Count 109 77.30% Very respectful 24 17.02% Moderately respectful 4 Somewhat respectful 2.84% 3 2.13% Somewhat disrespectful 0 0.00% Moderately disrespectful 0.71% Very disrespectful Statisti 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q15. How would you rate the overall attitude in your department for the following groups? - Women Count Percent 109 77.30% Very respectful 25 17.73% Moderately respectful 3 2.13% Somewhat respectful 1 Somewhat disrespectful 0.71% 3 2.13% Moderately disrespectful 0 0.00% Very disrespectful 141 Respondents **±** Statisti Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q16. How would you rate the overall attitude in your department for the following groups? - Openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender Identity Count Percent 104 73.76% Very respectful 21 14.89% Moderately respectful Somewhat respectful 10 7.09% 3 Somewhat disrespectful 2.13% 2 1.42% Moderately disrespectful 0.71% Very disrespectful Statisti 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q17. How would you rate the overall attitude in your department for the following groups? - Persons with disabilities

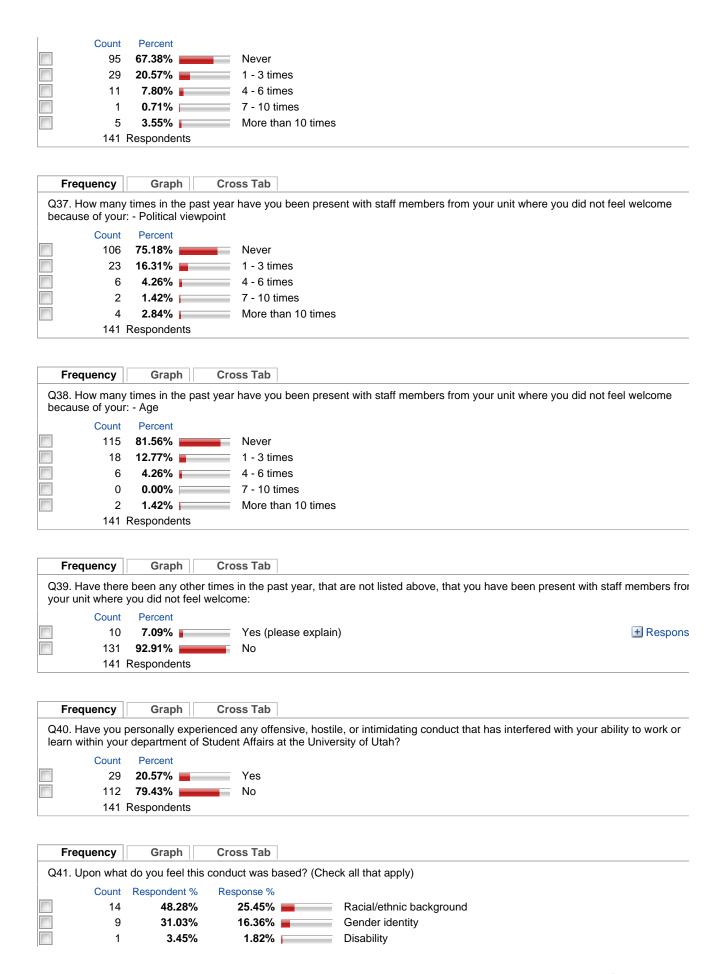






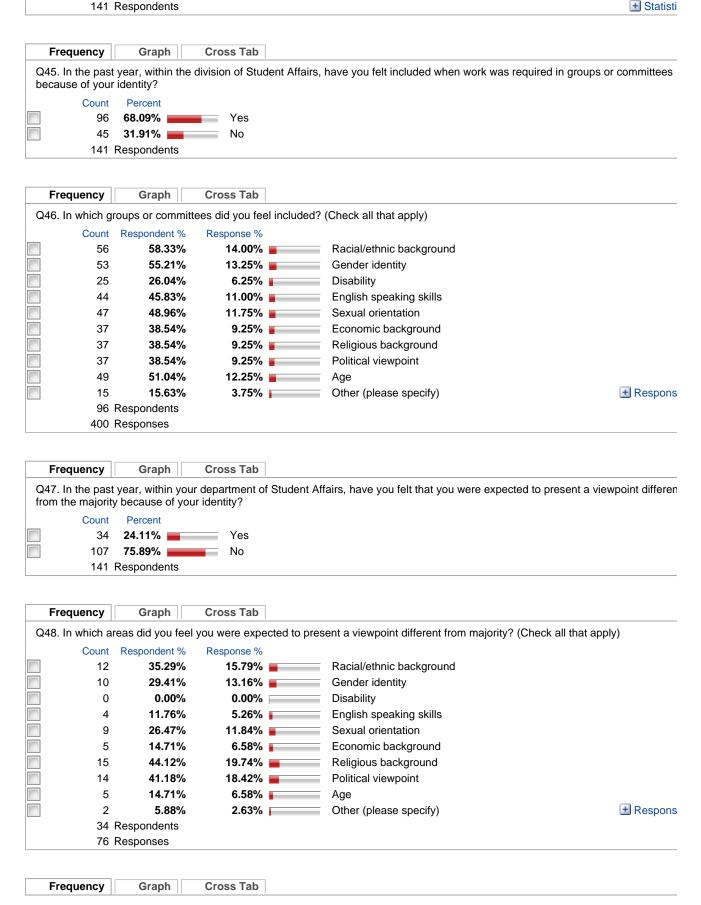


because of your: - Religious background



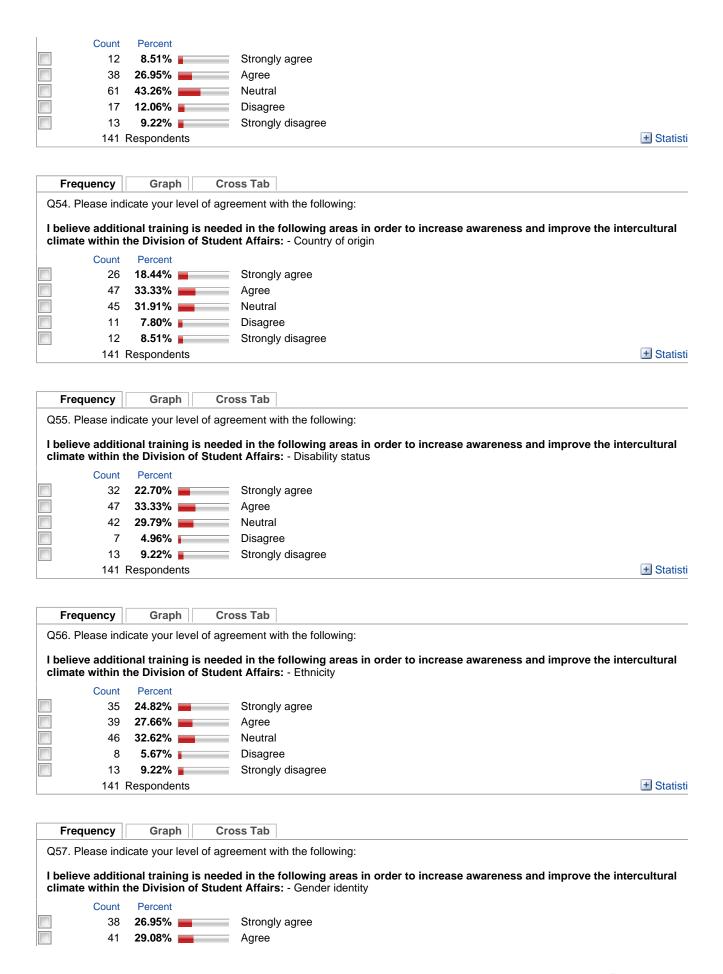
Coun	Respondent %	Response %		
4	13.79%	7.27%	English speaking skills	
3	10.34%	5.45%	Sexual orientation	
5	17.24%	9.09%	Economic background	
4	13.79%	7.27%	Religious background	
2	6.90%	3.64%	Political viewpoint	
4	13.79%	7.27%	Age	
	31.03%	16.36%	Other (please specify)	+ Respons
29	Respondents	-		_ '
	Responses			
Frequency	Graph	Cross Tab		
Q42. Who was	/were the source	of the conduct? (Check	all that apply)	
Count	Respondent %	Response %		
12	•	27.27%	My supervisor	
		9.09%	A unit head	
1		2.27%	Public safety officer	
5		11.36%	Supervisee	
3		6.82%	Graduate assistant	
		9.09%	AP staff member	
		_		
2		4.55%	COT staff member	D
13		29.55%	Other (please specify)	+ Respons
	Respondents			
44	Responses			
Frequency	Graph	Cross Tab		
	vour reactions to	experiencing this condu	ct: (Check all that apply)	
Q45. Describe	your reactions to	experiencing this condu	ct. (Check all that apply)	
	D 1 101	D 0/		
	Respondent %	Response %		
7	24.14%	7.78%	I felt harassed	
7 19	24.14% 65.52%	7.78% 1 21.11% 1	I avoided the person	
7 19 4	24.14% 65.52% 13.79%	7.78% 1 21.11% 1 4.44%	I avoided the person I left the situation immediately	
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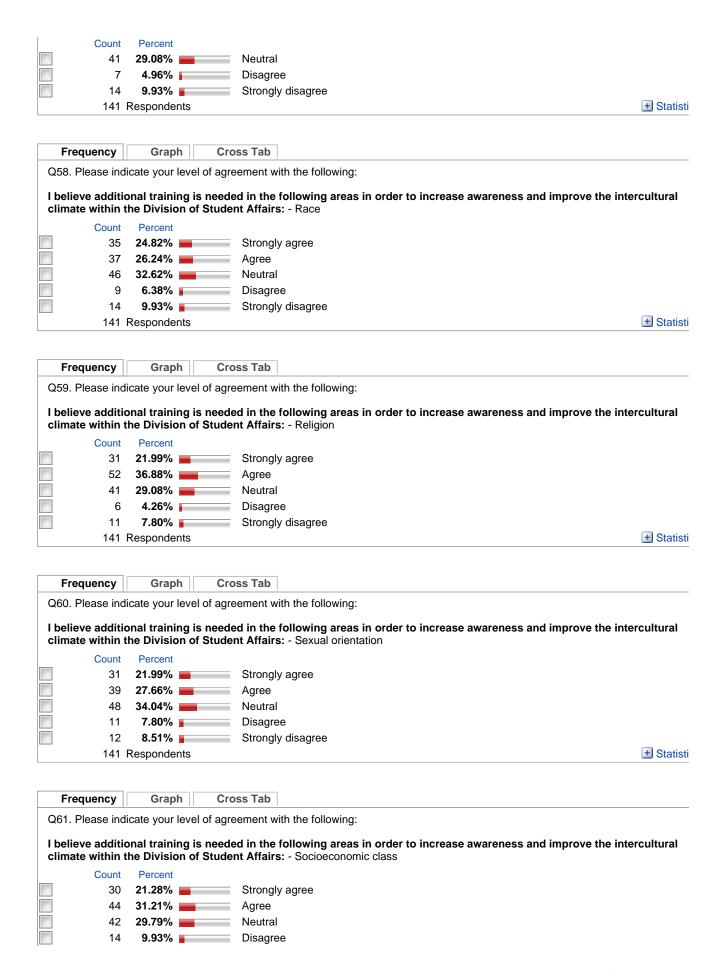


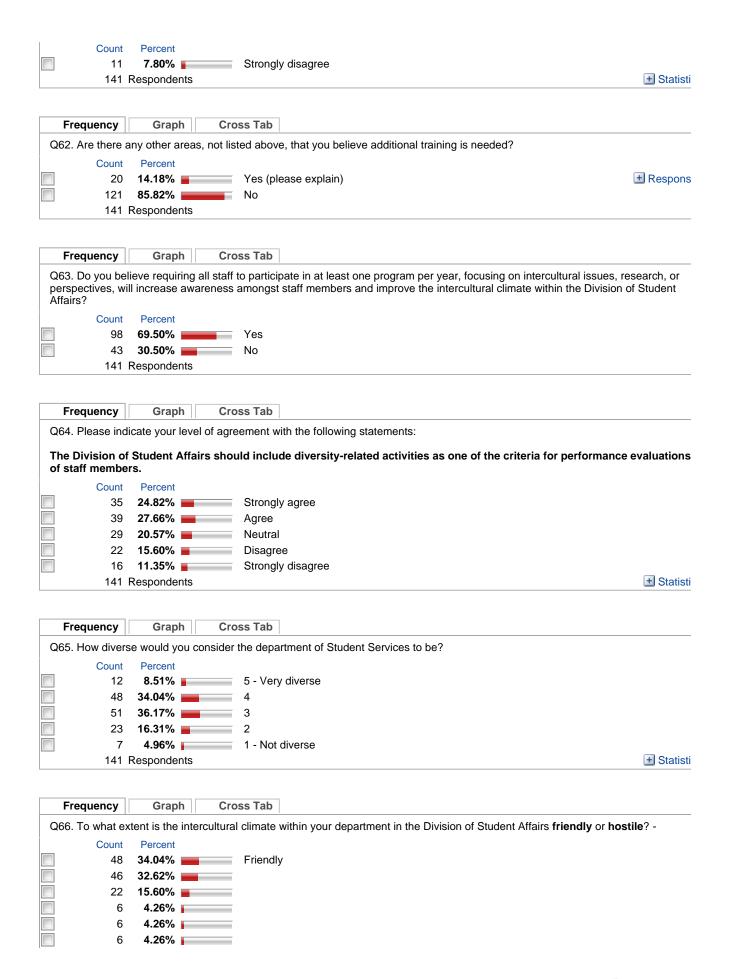


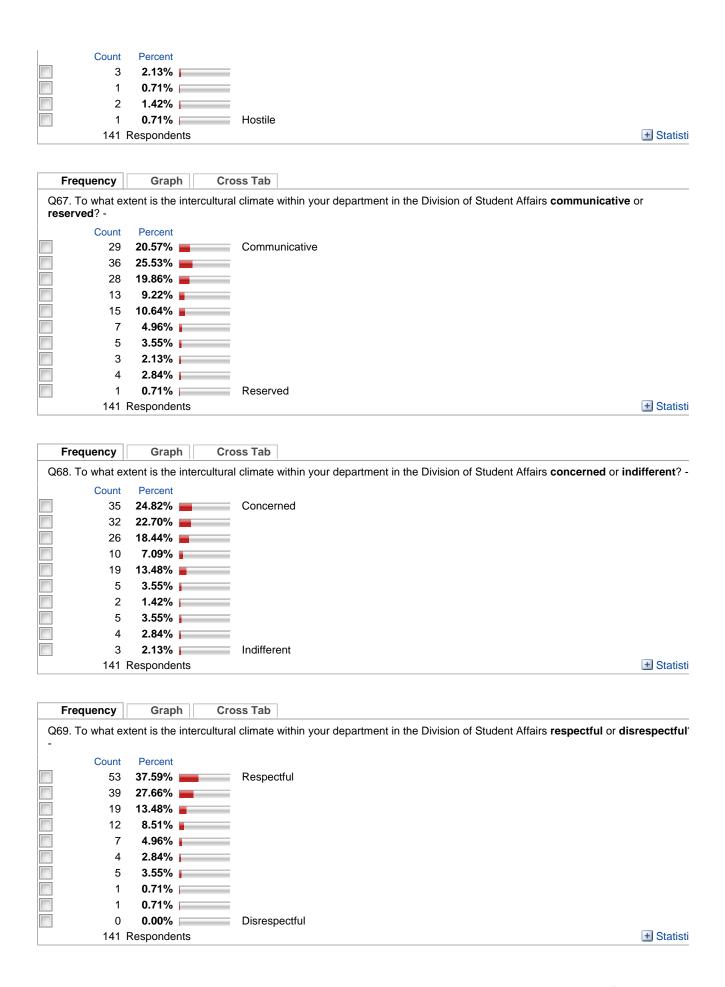
Q49. As a staff member in the Office of Student Affairs, have you observed discriminatory hiring/firing practices within your department (e.g., search committee, limited recruiting pool, etc.)? Count Percent 25 17.73% Yes 82.27% 116 Nο 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q50. As a staff member in the Office of Student Affairs, in which of the following areas have you observed discriminatory hiring/firing practices within your department at the University of Utah (e.g., search committee, limited recruiting pool)? (Check all that apply) Count Respondent % Response % 15 60.00% 31.25% Racial/ethnic background 4 16.00% Gender identity 2 8.00% Disability 4.17% 5 20.00% 10.42% English speaking skills 2 8.00% 4.17% Sexual orientation 4 16.00% 8.33% Economic background 3 12.00% 6.25% Religious background 0 0.00% 0.00% Political viewpoint 6 24.00% 12.50% Age 7 28.00% 14.58% Other (please specify) **H** Respons 25 Respondents 48 Responses Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q51. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: The Division of Student Affairs at the University of Utah values my involvement in diversity initiatives . . . - On campus Count 65 46.10% Strongly agree 40 28.37% Agree 29 20.57% Neutral 4 2.84% Disagree 3 2.13% Strongly disagree 141 Respondents Statisti Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q52. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: The Division of Student Affairs at the University of Utah values my involvement in diversity initiatives . . . - Off campus Count Percent 41 29.08% Strongly agree 36 25.53% Agree 53 37.59% Neutral 8 5.67% Disagree 3 2.13% Strongly disagree **+** Statisti 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q53. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following: I believe additional training is needed in the following areas in order to increase awareness and improve the intercultural

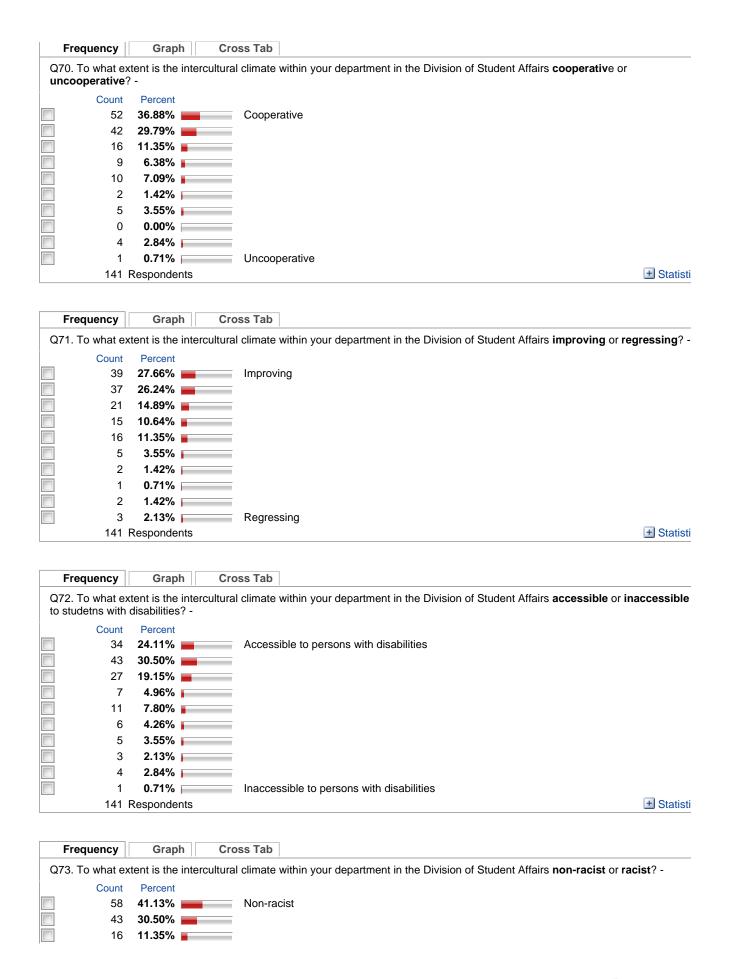
climate within the Division of Student Affairs: - Age

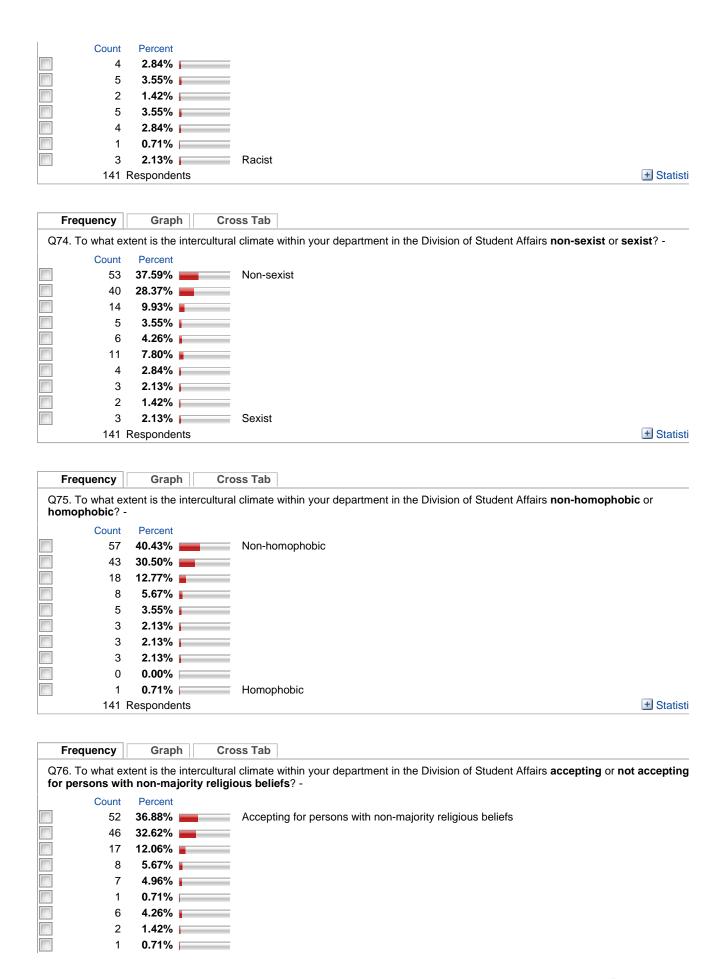


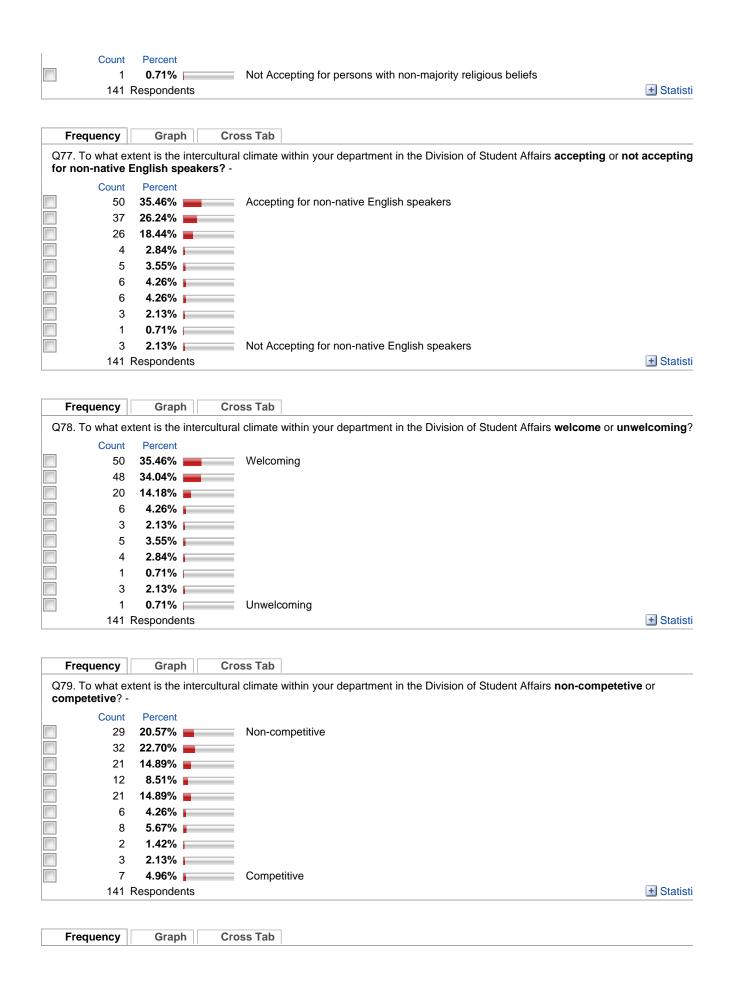




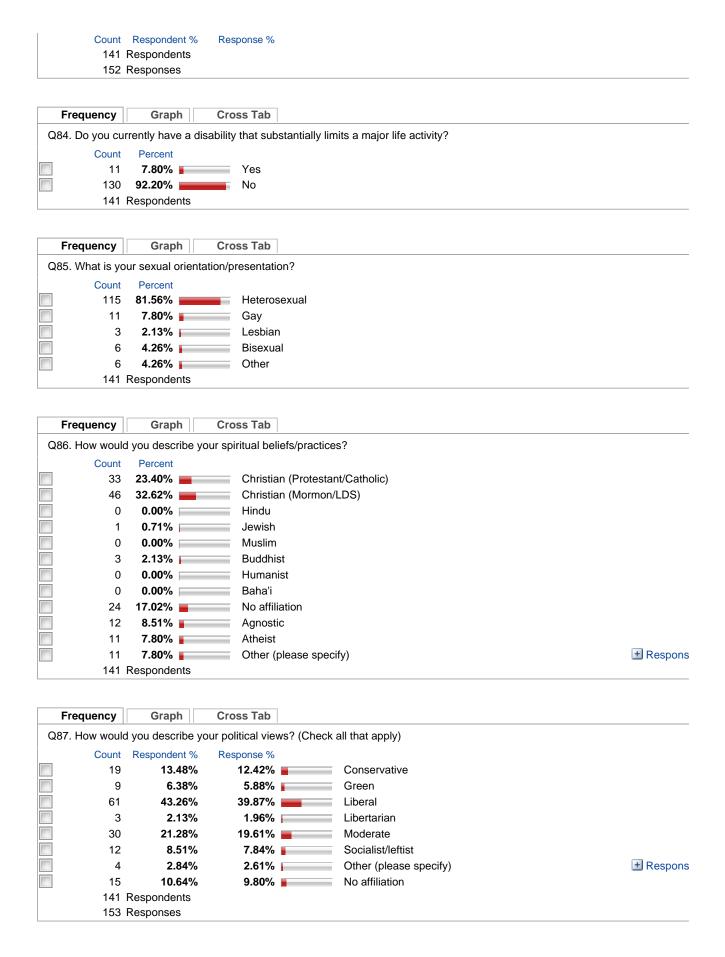


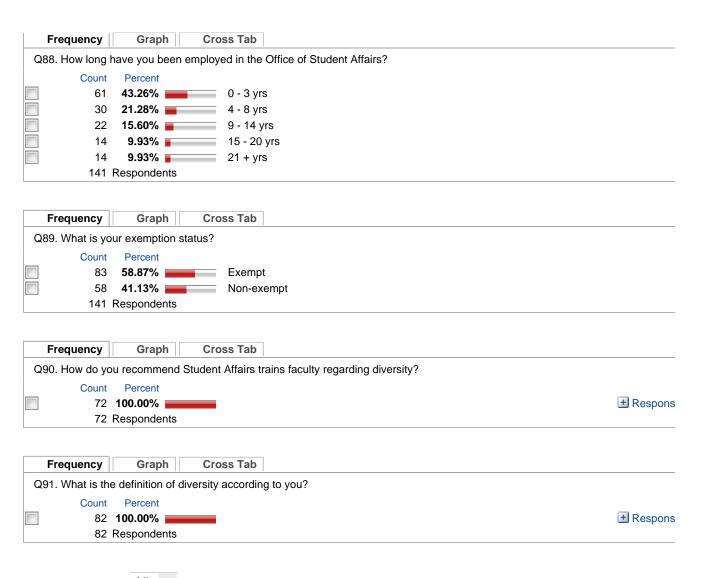






Q80. To what extent is the intercultural climate within your department in the Division of Student Affairs accepting or not accepting for persons who have children? -Count Percent 68 48.23% Accepting for persons who have children 41 29.08% 14 9.93% 8 5.67% 6 4.26% 1 0.71% 1 0.71% 2 1.42% 0 0.00% 0 0.00% Not accepting for persons who have children 141 Respondents + Statisti Frequency Cross Tab Q81. To what extent is the intercultural climate within your department in the Division of Student Affairs accepting or not accepting for person who do not have children? -Count Percent 70 49.65% Accepting for persons who do not have children 33 23.40% 9 6.38% 5 3.55% 11 7.80% 8 5.67% 2 1.42% 2 1.42% 0 0.00% 0.71% Not Accepting for persons without children 141 Respondents **+** Statisti Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q82. What is your gender identity? Count Percent 47 33.33% Male 92 65.25% Female 0 0.00% Transgender 0 0.00% Questioning **H** Respons 2 1.42% Other (please specify) 141 Respondents Frequency Graph **Cross Tab** Q83. What is your race or ethnicity? (If you are of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic/multi-cultural background, check all that apply) Count Respondent % Response % 2 1.42% 1.32% African American/Black (non-Hispanic) 3 2.13% Asian/Asian American 1.97% 0 0.00% 0.00% Middle Eastern 2 1.32% 1.42% Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native 2 1.42% 1.32% American Indian/Alaskan Native 2 1.42% 1.32% Arab/Arab American/Middle Eastern 15 10.64% 9.87% Latino(a)/Hispanic/Chicano(a)/Mexican American 122 86.52% 80.26% Caucasian/White 4 2.84% 2.63% Other (please specify) **H** Respons





Questions Per Page All

Copy of Team Poster

Retaining and Recruiting a Diverse Staff in Student Affairs

UNIVERSITY of UTAH **Process & Methodology**

Meet with VP Office SA Development and VP Office for Equity and Diversity

Interview Diversity Council Members

Form Survey from Info Gathered

Distribute Survey

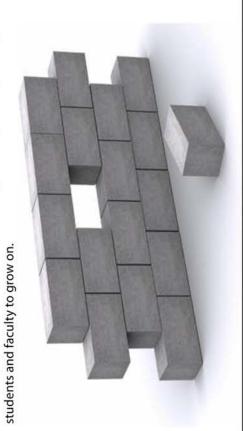
Understanding the different climates in your organization is essential for retaining and recruiting a diverse staff.

December 7, 2010



Building Student Affairs

student population. The office is challenged with providing a strong base for Leadership in the Office of Student Affairs is responsible for developing the human and facility resources necessary to support the increasingly diverse



Consider Diversity Campus Wide Analyze Interview Results &

Make Recommendations

Ideas and Recommendations

Discoveries and Findings

Causing friction in Student Affairs are three factors: race, religion and politics

- Diversity Council is Positioned to Take Initiative on Furthering Culture
- Strong Leadership Sets a Precedent
- Understanding vs. Accepting
- Training
- Dialogue
- Create a Forum



Interpreting Findings

is no race, religion, or political standing exempt Even majority groups feel marginalized. There from stereotyping. There is no such thing as

One-Size Fits All.



