



Black Undergraduate Perceptions of Inclusion and Engagement in a Public Research University: Strengths, Challenges, and Recommendations for the Library

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About UIC

UIC is a public research university with more than 34,000 students enrolled in 16 colleges. The University includes two locations in Chicago as well as a law school, and two additional regional health science locations. This presentation focuses only on Black undergraduate students.

About UIC students

63% Undergraduates

55% Female

93% Commuters

20% First generation college

30% Pell Grant recipients

31% White

26% Hispanic

18% Asian

8% Black

11% International



Background & Purpose

- UIC is committed to achieving racial equity at all levels as part of a coordinated campus-wide initiative.
- Little assessment at UIC has focused on a deeper understanding of Black students' college experience.
- In order to better understand and serve Black students, the current study reassessed campus level survey data from Black students to identify strengths, weaknesses, and challenges.



Literature Review

- Insufficient study into the Black student experience contributes to "systematically under-supported and disengaged" students, even in minority serving institutions (McDougal, Cox, Dorley, & Wodaje, 2018)
- Key findings from Mills' study indicated that "academic campus climate significantly predicted academic resilience such that more positive perceptions of academic campus climate predicted higher levels of academic resilience" (2021).



Research questions

- What characterizes Black students at institutions with no racial or ethnic majority?
- What are Black students' perceptions of academic engagement at an MSI public research university in an urban setting?
- What are some recommendations for actions to be initiated by campus units and the University Library that will increase support of Black students?



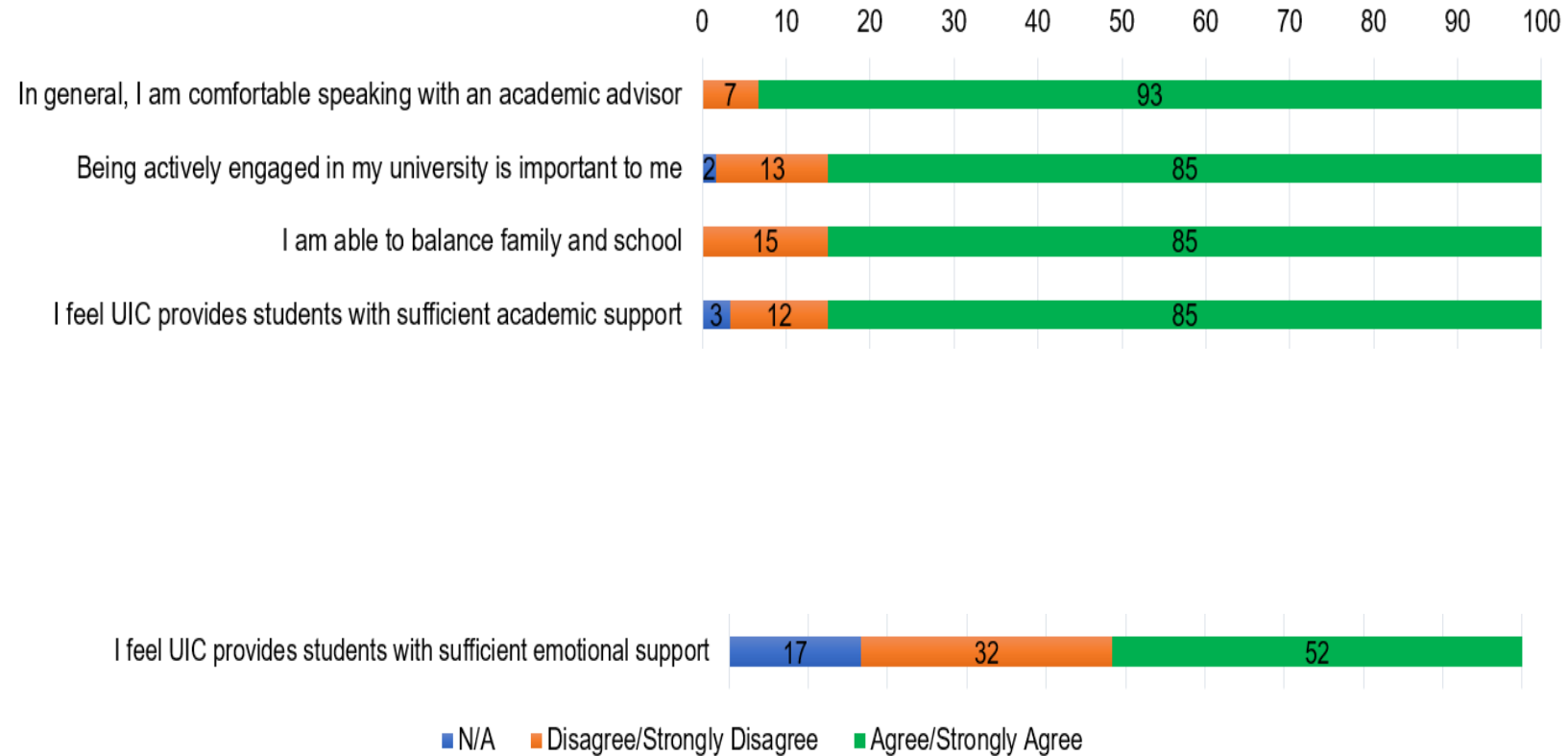
Methods

- This study reused a campus-wide survey conducted during Spring 2021 by the UIC Office of Institutional Research (OIR).
- This survey focused on undergraduate perceptions of overall university life, academic engagement, interactions with campus resources, and services.
- 912 undergraduates participated in the survey, of which 60 were Black. This represents 3.6% of the Black student population at UIC.



Findings & Discussion (1)

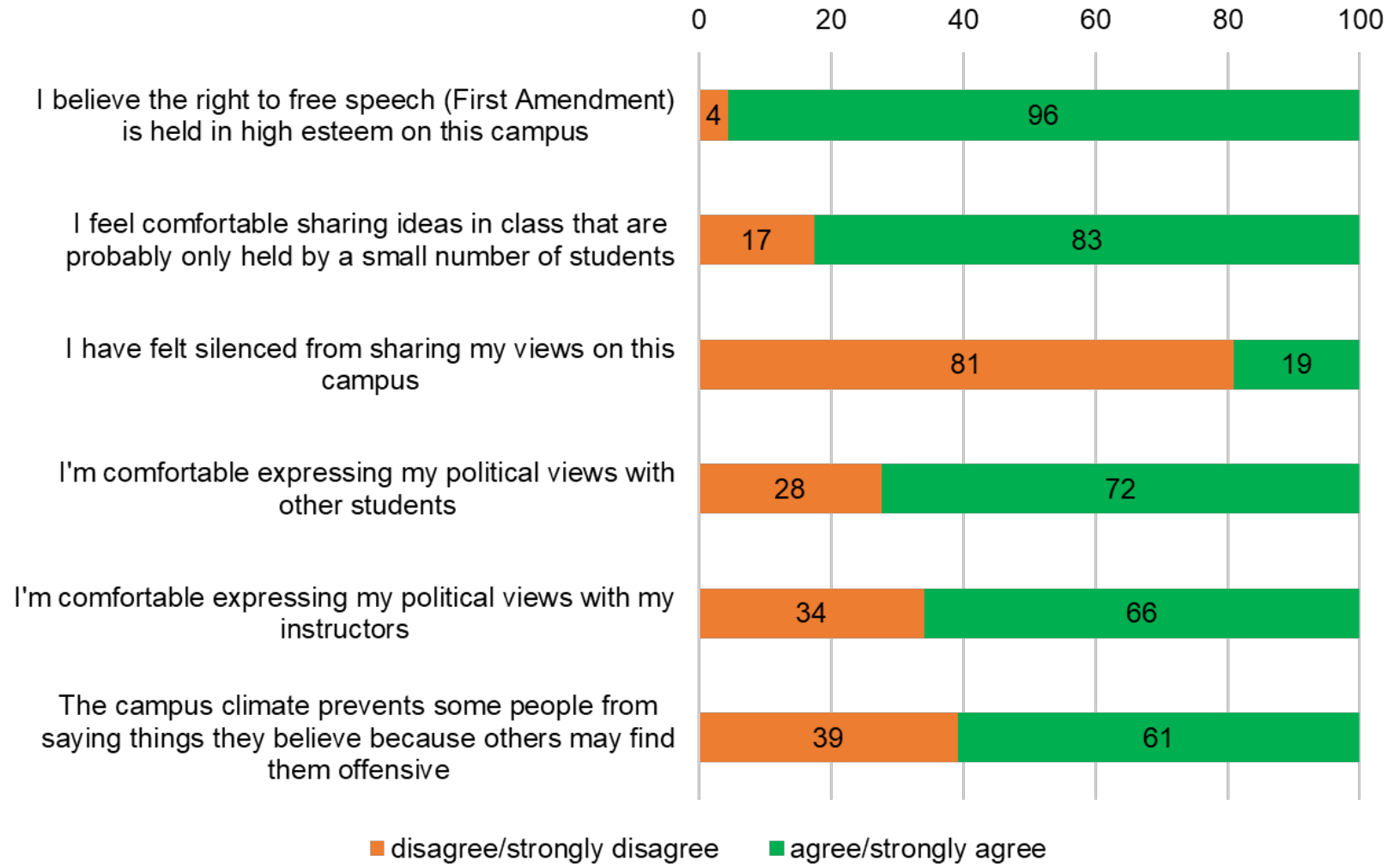
Black undergraduate perceptions of engagement





Findings & Discussion (2)

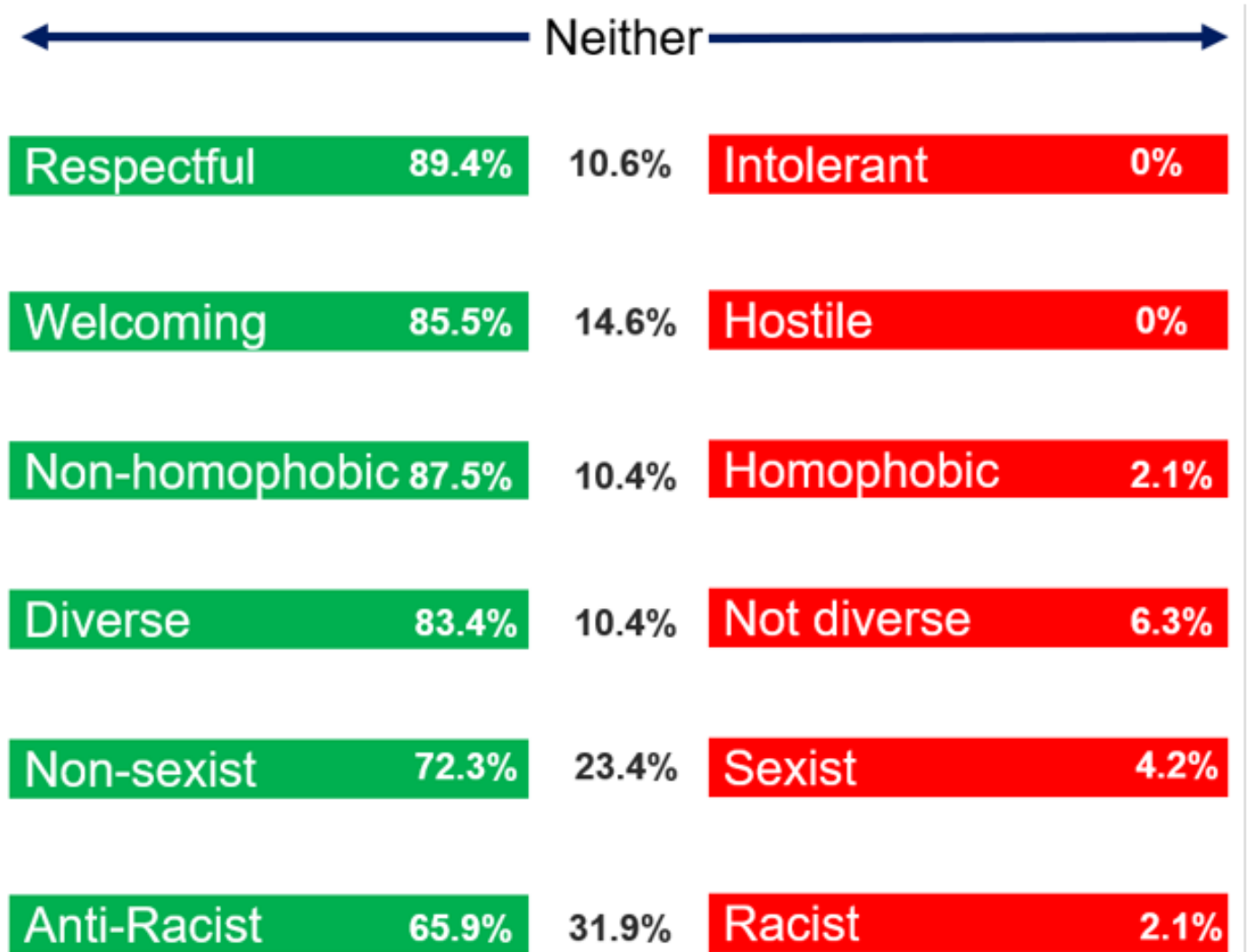
Black undergraduate comfort in expressing opinions





Findings & Discussion (3)

Black undergraduate perceptions of campus climate





Implementation & Future directions

Strengths: Interactions with faculty were supportive, providing an outlet to discuss academic performance and future career plans; however, interactions with instructors were rated higher than with student services and administrative staff.

Recommendations for the Library

- Implement cultural competency and intercultural dialogue training
- Increase the diversity of faculty and staff



Implementation & Future directions

Challenges: Insufficient emotional support despite of a high level of comfort taking advantage of services offered through the centers.

Recommendations for the Library:

- Offer complementary services or resources including support, workshops, or even just tips for school-work-life balance in collaboration with the Counseling Center
- Invite campus support services into the Library for student drop-in sessions or unstructured socializing



References

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Questions

