

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

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Introduction

University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), is committed to achieving racial equity at all levels and is especially focused on building an inclusive culture that supports student success. For a second year, UIC has been named a Fulbright Hispanic-Serving Institution Leader by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Flood, 2022). UIC's success was also recently recognized with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight into Diversity for the seventh year (Sadovi, 2022). This award highlights UIC's efforts to address graduation and retention of Black students in UIC's DuSable Scholars Program for students in STEM, as well as the African American Academic Network.

Alongside these acknowledgements, the UIC campus has increased awareness and concerns about Black students' experience on campus, including low enrollment and retention rates for Black students and a perceived lack of sense of belonging. Efforts to understand the needs and challenges of students on campus using various assessments at the university, college, and unit levels have not sufficiently probed for a deeper understanding of the Black students' college experiences. The University collects data from student enrollment to graduation which provide overall trends and some data examining differences among various races and ethnicities; however, no studies have been comprehensive or focused especially on Black students.

In order to better understand and serve Black students, the Library reexamined data from a recent campus survey conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic that gathered data intended to assess the campus culture climate. The goal of this paper is to better understand how Black undergraduates engage with university life and their perceptions of inclusion compared with other racial and ethnic groups.

This paper draws on campus-wide data to reexamine support and resources designed to improve Black student experiences of engagement and inclusion. This paper does not depict or generalize characteristics of all Black undergraduate students in the U.S., but examines the academic and engagement experiences of Black undergraduates in an urban, minority-serving, R1 institution. The findings may help guide the institution and University Library to strengthen current programs, resources, and services and develop more support programs where needed.

Literature review:

Past studies have shown that students of a racial minority who enroll in historically white universities are less likely to feel like they belong to the campus community and

are more likely to be dissatisfied with their college experience (Smith & Moore, 2002). They are also more likely to feel overlooked and treated unfairly (Rankin & Reason, 2005) and to leave college without completing their degree (Fischer, 2007). Over a decade of studies conducted between 1992 and 2007 on campus racial climate in US colleges and universities, Harper and Hurtado (2007) found that Black students had experienced discrimination at a higher rate than students of any other race.

Baker and Robnett (2012) went further, conducting a survey that examined whether there were differences in the undergraduate college experience and perceptions of the college environment among racial ethnic groups. The results revealed that Black student satisfaction with the overall campus experience was actually the highest when compared to white, Latino, and Asian-American students. Despite this finding, when compared to students of other races and ethnicities, Black students reported the lowest levels of feeling like they belonged on campus, that they were appreciated by students of all races, and of being satisfied with the social engagement that they had.

The Black student experience has also been the subject of analyses designed specifically to gauge the emotional impact of campus climate. One such study (Smith, Mustaffa, Jones, Curry, & Allen, 2016) conducted focus groups to investigate the experience of Black male students who were enrolled in historically white institutions. The researchers found that Black students experienced psychological stress symptoms indicative of racial combat exhaustion including frustration, shock, anger, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear.

Commodore and colleagues (2018) likewise identified similar psychological stressors among Black women college students. This analysis of literature reviews and national datasets described isolation, lack of mentoring opportunities, micro-aggressions, and barriers to seeking mental health counseling as special challenges for Black women despite their relative success in college, even when compared with that of Black men.

Another multi-campus study (McDougal, Cox, Dorley & Wodaje, 2018) noted that there remains insufficient research into the Black student experience. This factor, among many others, contributes to “systematically under-supported and disengaged” Black students even at minority serving institutions despite what is characterized by a “veil of diversity” (p. 194). Students in this study remarked on the contradiction of their MSI’s social justice branding and their contrasting treatment at the institution (p. 208). These students, however, also strongly testified to the impact of support from Black peers and faculty who provided “validation...affirmation and inspiration” (p. 211), noting that “Black students have created and benefit from a few sources of impactful support, which are unfortunately subject to under-resourcing and/or underrepresentation” (p. 213).

In another study by Mills (2021), the author looked at the relationship between various campus climates including general, academic, racial, and civic engagement, in correlation to the academic resilience of Black students. This study was conducted with 388 Black students at a large, predominantly white midwestern public research university. Key findings from the 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” (p.371). Mills

also felt that further research was necessary to draw conclusions, though believed “psychological sense of community may be one potential explanation of this finding” (p.371). This study is unique among recent research as it focuses on academic resilience rather than deficits suffered by Black students.

The issue of representation and resources on campus extend to Library spaces. A recent survey conducted at the UIC University Library investigated the ways in which undergraduates perceive their sense of belonging and identity, as well as the ways in which materials in the University Library collection reflect a variety of cultural identities (Scoulas, 2021). While most students felt a sense of belonging and that their identities were respected at the university library regardless of race or ethnicity, Black students were the least likely to agree that library materials reflected diverse cultural identities. This finding implies a need for more attention to collection development representing Black history and culture.

Mills (2021) concluded that “[c]oordinated efforts by multiple groups may advance academic resilience among Black college students by promoting more positive perceptions of general and academic campus climate and decreasing the likelihood of the ‘bait and switch’ wherein there is a mismatch between the projected image of a campus climate and actual student experiences” (p. 376).

The need for more assessment is a recurring and pervasive finding throughout the literature on the subject of the Black student experience. To expand or build on previous studies focusing on Black students, we looked at our own campus-wide equity survey data to investigate what Black students report feeling about our own MSI and whether the projected image of UIC as a positive and welcoming academic environment echoes the actual experience of Black students. As a result, the following questions are the focus of this study:

- What are Black students’ perceptions of academic engagement at an MSI public research university in an urban context?
- What are some recommendations for actions to be initiated by campus units and the Library that will increase support of Black students?

Methods

Institutional setting

UIC is a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) as well as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI); the student body has no racial or ethnic majority. UIC is a public research (R1) university with more than 34,000 students enrolled in 16 colleges. The University has three locations in Chicago including a law school and two regional health sciences locations. Ten percent of students enrolled live on campus.

While UIC is known for having one of the most ethnically and racially diverse student populations in the US, all Black students (undergraduates, graduates, and professional) comprised only 8% of the population in fall 2021 (UIC, n.d.) (white: 30%, Hispanic: 28%, Asian: 18%). According to 2021 fall semester data provided by the institution, Black retention and graduation rates were the lowest among all racial and ethnic

groups. Students who receive Pell Grants are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to retain aide eligibility. Among the 2018 Pell Grant cohort, a larger percentage of Black students received a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) cancellation than other ethnicities; students who received SAP cancellations were less likely to remain from first to second year or graduate compared to students who did not receive SAP cancellations.

Survey instrument

This project reuses a campus-wide survey conducted during spring 2021 by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services. This survey focused on undergraduate perceptions of overall university life, academic engagement, interactions with campus resources, and services during a period of pandemic-related conditions that were outside of the traditional higher education environments (for example, more online classes and services, reduced physical occupancy rates, and campus health safety guidelines regarding testing, distancing, masking, and vaccination status). The research team received de-identified data from OIR and analyzed it for patterns and gaps, comparing student experiences and focusing on Black undergraduates. To view the full survey questions, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Survey participants

All undergraduates were invited to complete an online survey, and 912 participated in the survey for a response rate of 4.1 %. OIR reported race/ethnicity participation as 32% Hispanic, followed by 31% white and 24% Asian; only 7% were Black. Not all respondents chose to answer the demographic questions including race/ethnicity. Given that the focus of this paper is to understand Black undergraduate student experiences at the campus, only Black undergraduates were selected for this study. OIR data was used because it is the official record of campus.

Based on the student enrollment record for fall 2021, Black undergraduates represent 7.4% of total enrollment. As the Black undergraduate respondents to the survey constitute 6.6%, this indicates Black undergraduate respondents were slightly under-representative of the total Black undergraduate population (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of Black undergraduate survey respondents and university population

Description	Number of survey respondents	University population (fall 2021)	Response rate
All undergraduates	912	22,279	4.1%
Black undergraduates	60	1,654	3.6%
Population percentage	6.6%	7.4%	-

Data preparation and analysis

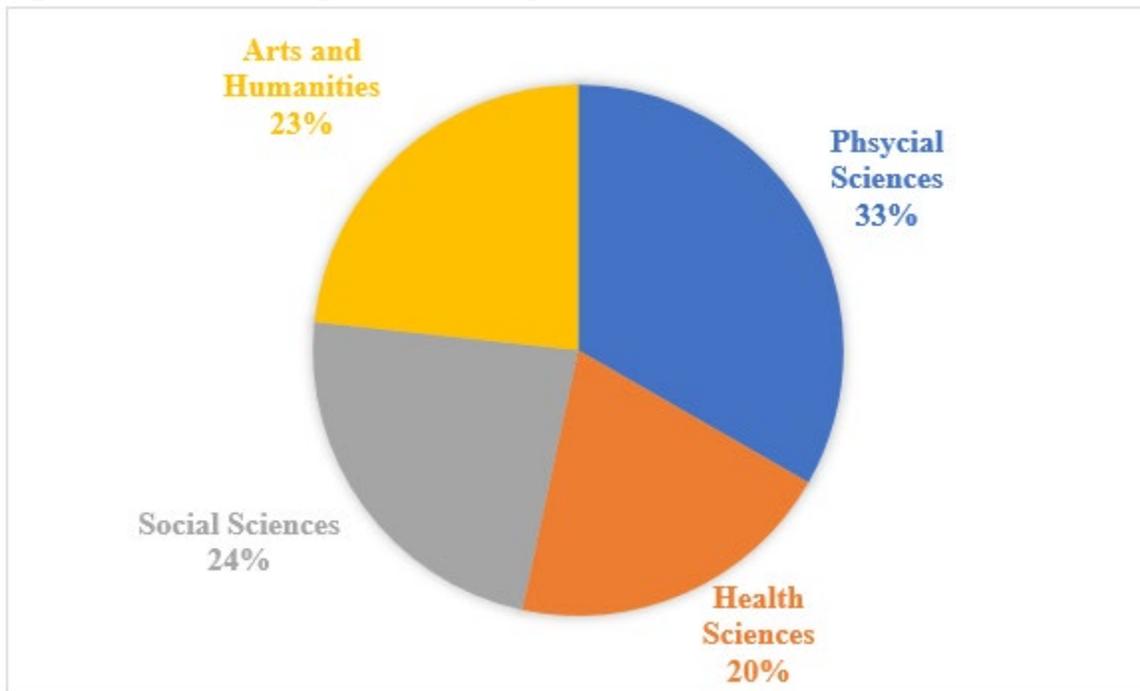
The survey dataset was obtained from OIR in Excel. To run the descriptive statistics of the survey data, the data were imported into SPSS 28.

Results

Participants

Twenty-one percent of the Black student respondents were first generation, 88% were full time students, 80% were female. As shown in Figure 1, one of three respondents was from physical sciences disciplines; the rest of the respondents were from the social sciences, arts and humanities, and health sciences. About one-third of respondents live off campus either with their family (47%) or independently (20%), while 28% of respondents live on campus in the university residence.

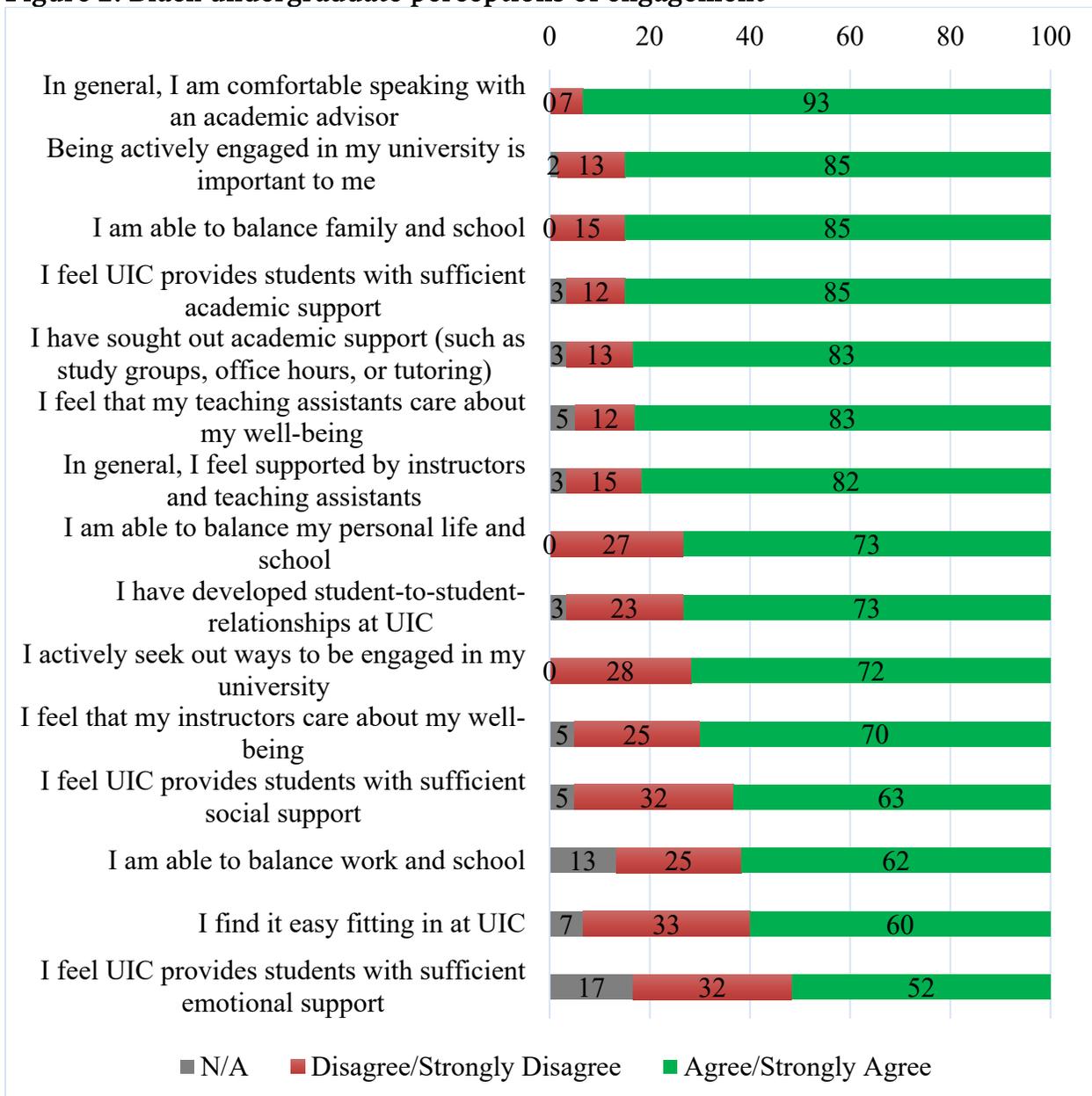
Figure 1. Black undergraduate disciplines



Perceptions of Engagement

Generally, Black students had positive perceptions of their engagement at the university. Their highest rated positive perception focused on their comfort level with speaking to academic advisors and feeling that the university and their instructors provided them with academic support (Figure 2). Their lowest-rated positive perceptions focused on a feeling of lack of emotional support and finding it difficult to fit in at the university.

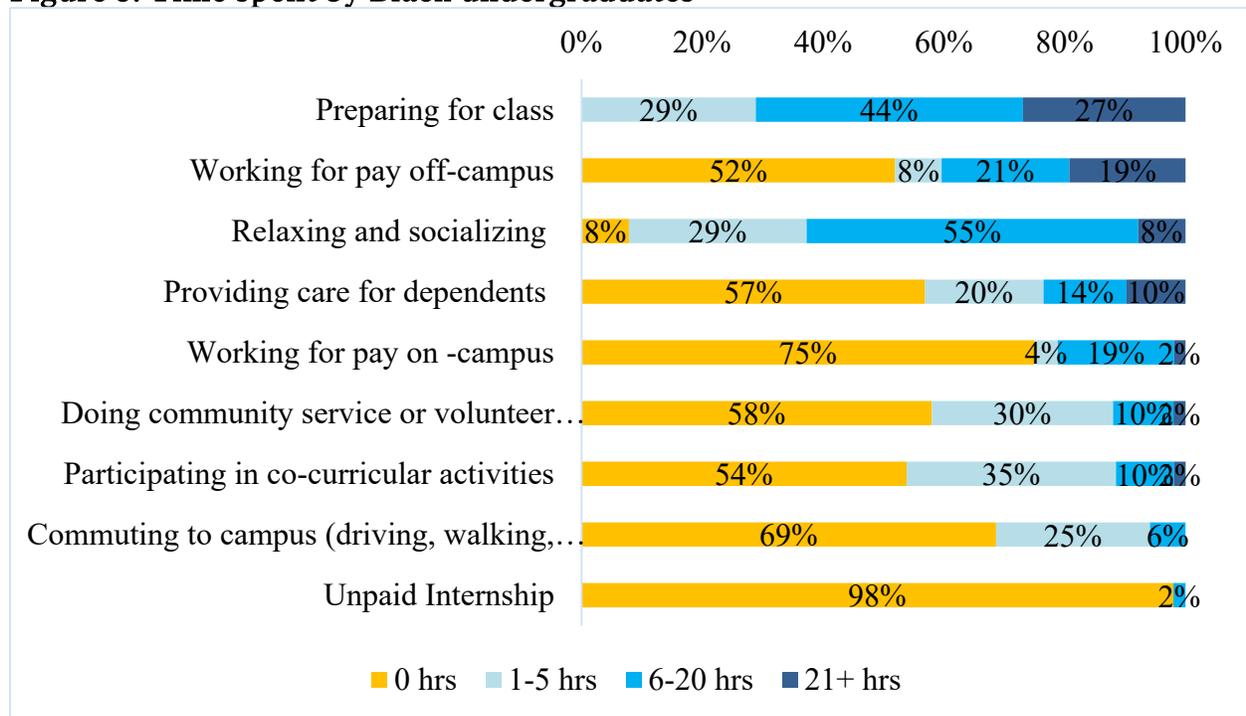
Figure 2: Black undergraduate perceptions of engagement



Hours spent per week

As shown in Figure 3, Black students spent significant time for preparing for class, working for pay off-campus, and providing care for dependents. Sixty-three percent of Black undergraduates spent time relaxing and socializing (for six or more hours). Almost none spent time on unpaid internships. Given that this survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and most classes were offered online only, commuting to campus also did not incur an expenditure of time for 69% of respondents.

Figure 3. Time spent by Black undergraduates



Research participation: Ninety percent of respondents never participated in presentations or laboratory research projects, and on average, less than 20% were engaged in research altogether.

Faculty engagement: Eighty-eight percent of students reported that they talked about career plans and discussed academic performance with a faculty member. However, about 60% of students never worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework.

Diverse engagement: About 60% of students often engaged in discussions with people of race, ethnicity, or gender identities other than their own. Only 22% of students often engaged with others of differing political views.

Campus center visits: Not surprisingly, given that most services were offered online during the COVID-19 pandemic, less than 10% visited most cultural and support centers on campus, though 8% did indicate that they visited the African American Cultural Center often, with an additional 16% indicating that they visited sometimes.

Campus center satisfaction: Fifty-six percent of respondents were satisfied with the African Cultural center and only 2% expressed dissatisfaction.

Comfort with service centers: More than 90% of respondents said they were comfortable going to the Wellness Center or other health services like COVID-19 testing or Student Health Services. However, 22% indicated a lack of comfort with the Counseling Center and Disability Resource Center.

Satisfaction with service centers: While less than 40% of students visited service centers, the majority were satisfied with services with a notable exception being the Counseling Center. More than 44% of respondents who indicated they had been to the Counseling Center were dissatisfied with the service.

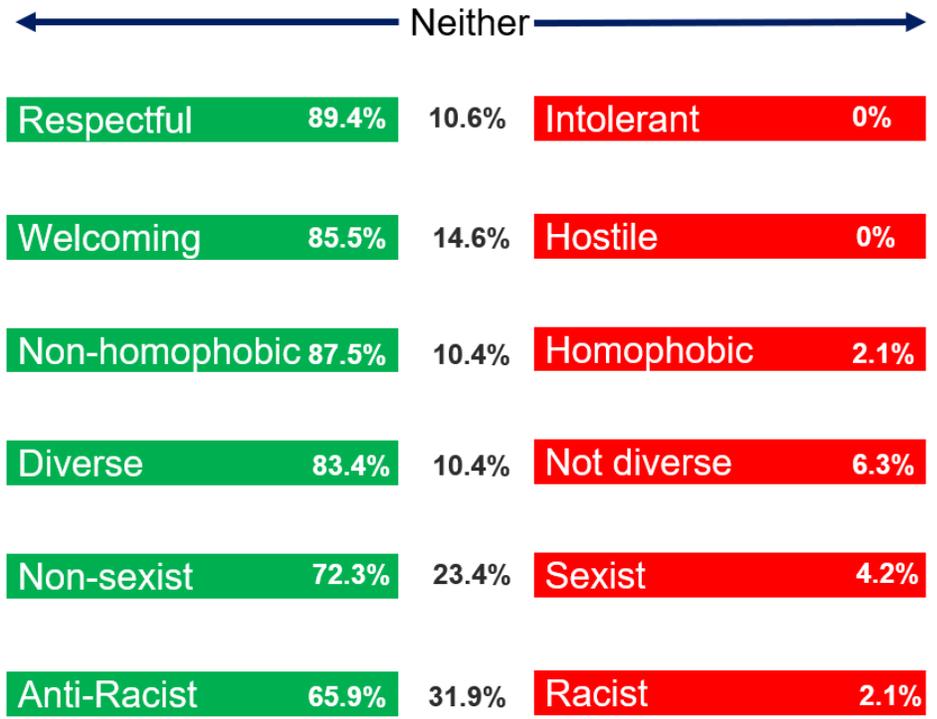
Pre-graduation professional activities: A majority of the respondents (74%) indicated that they already participated in or planned to participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement.

Campus Interactions

On a five-point scale, respondents perceived that UIC was welcoming and respectful (on average 87.5%) or at least neutral (12.5%) in Figure 4. However, only 66% perceived the campus as being anti-racist, with an additional 32% feeling neutral on the topic and the remaining 2% perceiving the campus as racist. Additionally, 73% considered the campus as being non-sexist, with an additional 23% feeling neutral on the topic and the remaining 4% perceiving the campus as sexist.

This finding suggests that there are subtle discrepancies between campus and student perceptions of the campus; some students do not feel that the University is fulfilling its mission regarding these values. For example, students perceived the campus as welcoming, however, they considered the campus as socially exclusive, racist, or sexist.

Figure 4. Black undergraduate perceptions of campus climate

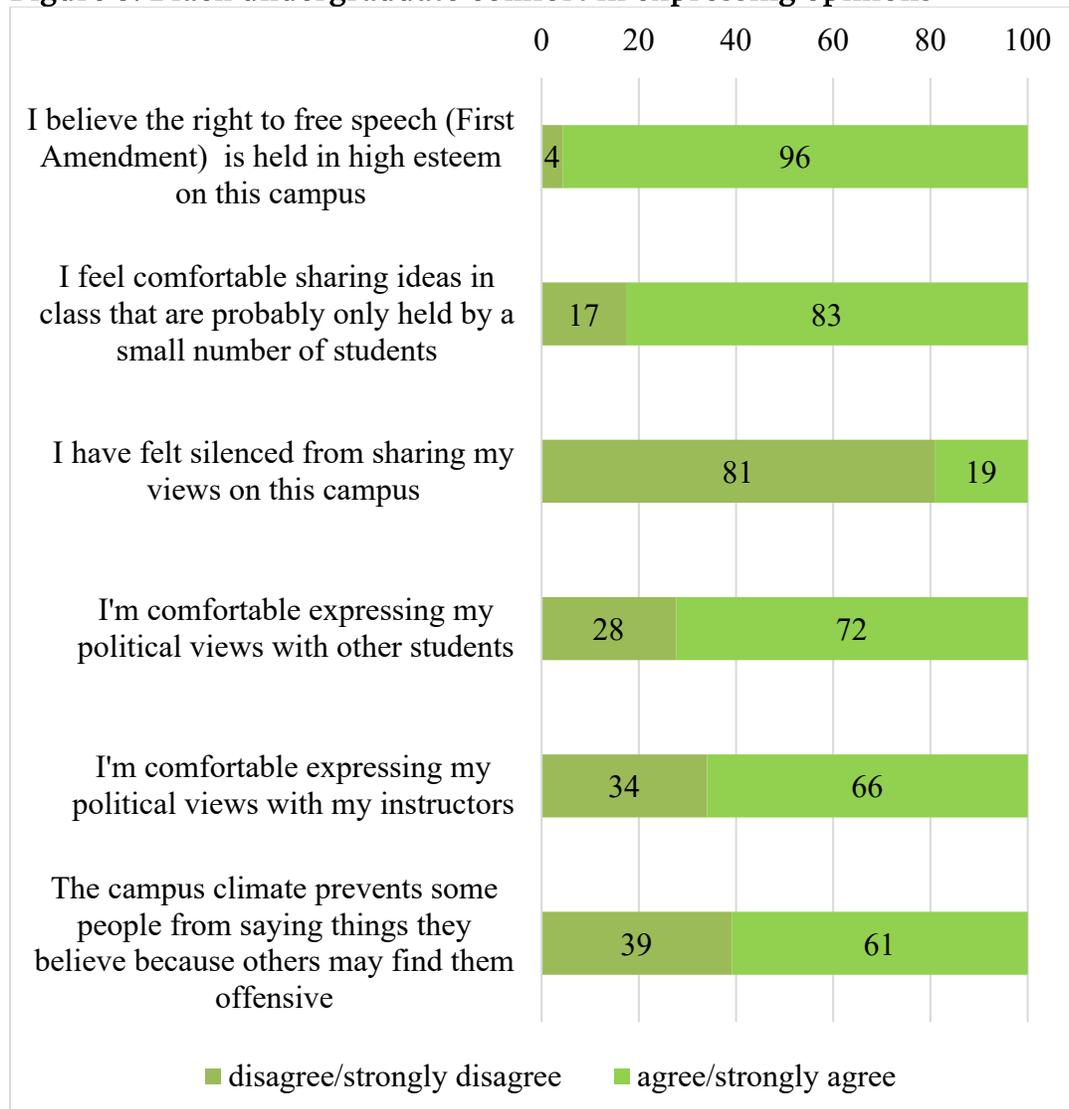


Peer interaction: More than 90% of the respondents indicated they felt comfortable when having conversations with students who hold different views on issues including religion, race-ethnicity, socio-economic status, immigration, and gender identity;

however, about 20% of respondents reported that they felt uncomfortable when communicating with peers on issues of political ideology.

Expression of opinions: Almost all respondents (96%) reported they felt that the right to free speech is held in high esteem on the campus (Figure 5). Despite this, only 66–72% indicated that they were comfortable with expressing their political views with other students or instructors, compared to more than 80% who indicated that they were comfortable sharing ideas with other students. More than half (61%) felt that the campus climate prevented them from expressing themselves because their views may offend others.

Figure 5. Black undergraduate comfort in expressing opinions



Quality of interactions at the institution: This set of questions used a seven-point Likert Scale and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation are presented in Table 2). Results showed respondents rated their interactions with academic advisors,

faculty, and students higher than their interactions with student services staff and other administrative staff and offices.

Table 2. Black undergraduate quality of interaction

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students	48	5.35	1.72
Academic advisors	48	5.71	1.62
Faculty	48	5.31	1.61
Student Services Staff	38	4.95	1.61
Other administrative staff and offices	42	4.86	1.86

COVID-related questions: Students were asked a question about how much their level of engagement was impacted by technological issues (access to a laptop, reliable internet service, etc.) after moving to online learning. A significant percentage reported that they were impacted “a lot” (44%). More than half reported being “slightly” impacted or not at all.

Discussion

This paper re-examined a campus survey conducted in spring 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, which assessed the cultural climate of university students. The authors focused on responses from Black undergraduates in order to better understand how they engaged with university life and their perceptions of feelings of inclusion. While there have been efforts and assessments to understand the needs and challenges of students at the university, college, and department level, little has focused primarily on a deeper understanding of the Black student experience. The survey findings revealed that in areas of academic experience, Black student perceptions were positive. However, in two areas—emotional support and campus climate—responses indicated a need for further evaluation and greater resources and support.

Since questions were directed more generally to the classroom experience and the Library was not specifically identified in the survey, no conclusions as to student perceptions of the quality of interactions involving the Library, its staff, or its services could be made. The Library can, however, examine its programs and services with the goal of expanding them to broaden their impact in areas where Black students identified gaps and needs. One already-launched program that can guide and measure the impact of the Library’s efforts is the campus-wide Advancing Racial Equity (ARE) initiative. ARE is a multi-phase action plan to address systemic racism, improve the campus climate, and make significant progress toward racial equity on campus. The initiative centers on student equity and inclusion and addresses faculty and staff inclusive excellence, collaborating with the community, promoting an atmosphere of caring and concern, and ensuring accountability. All academic units are required to write and implement a plan that commits to these goals and describes outcomes.

Academic experience

Overall, Black students reported having a positive academic experience, despite some concerns about balancing school with work responsibilities. The highest percentage of

respondents agreed that their interaction with faculty was supportive, including providing opportunities to discuss academic performance and future career plans. Black students rated the quality of their interactions with their instructors higher than those with student services staff and other administrative staff and offices on campus.

Although the majority of the respondents (74%) were participating in pre-graduation professional activities, a significant percentage (44%) of respondents said that they had no intention of participating in a study abroad program. According to the Study Abroad Office, Black student engagement in the program comprised 11% of the total participation during the previous academic year, which was much higher than the overall enrolment of Black students at UIC (7%) (UIC, n.d.). While the University study abroad program was temporarily suspended due to the pandemic and has only recently resumed, increasing access for this and other underrepresented populations is a strategic priority for the Study Abroad Office, and several initiatives were launched during the 2021 academic year to assist with this, including the facilitation of two student panels on Black students' experiences abroad.

Emotional support

Black students reported the lowest levels of agreement when asked about their ability to balance their work and school obligations and receiving university resources for emotional support.

These students reported an especially high percentage of feeling that they were not receiving sufficient emotional support despite a high level of comfort with taking advantage of services offered through resource centers. Only 22% indicated a lack of comfort with making use of the Counseling Center and Disability Resource Center. More than 44% of respondents indicated they had been to the Counseling Center and were dissatisfied with the service. Further investigation is required to determine in what way the center was unable to meet their needs.

Student perceptions of overall campus atmosphere

One hundred percent of Black respondents perceived that UIC was welcoming and respectful or were at least neutral in their responses. However, when asked whether UIC is anti-racist, 2% perceived the campus as racist. Additionally, 4% perceived the campus as sexist, demonstrating that students' sentiment about UIC campus culture is more nuanced than the survey questions could reveal.

Similarly dissonant, when considered with all other activities except preparing for class, Black respondents, compared with other racial/ethnic groups, spent the most time during the week relaxing and socializing. This would appear to indicate that these students were comfortable within a community of their peers; and more than 90% responded that they were comfortable speaking with peers on topics of potential controversy like race, sexual orientation, and other issues of identity. However, more than 60% of the respondents felt that the campus climate prevented them from expressing themselves within more general spaces because their views may offend others.

To expand on or build from previous studies focusing on Black students, the authors looked at their own campus-wide equity survey data to see if they could determine what Black students were experiencing at their own MSI, and whether the projected image of UIC echoes the actual experiences of Black students. Similar to the findings of other studies (e.g., Mills, 2021; McDougal et al., 2018), more data is required to definitively correlate Black student experiences on campus and their academic success; however, there appears to be a strong indication that it takes more than the designation of MSI status for students to feel welcome and supported, and that actual, observable climatic qualities may be requisite to retention and academic success.

Despite UIC's designation as an MSI and awards recognizing it as such citing targeted programs such as an African-American Cultural Center, Black student-run organizations, and numerous other resources, the feeling of inclusion and success rate of its Black students remains uncertain. The existing data provided by OIR cannot make clear whether Black students at UIC have a more positive overall experience of the campus compared to other MSIs, nor whether they may be experiencing the "bait and switch" effect described in Mills' study. The existing campus data also does not specifically reflect student experiences in the Library setting.

Practical Implications and Values

The findings may guide the UIC Library to strengthen current programs, resources and services, and make adjustments as needed. Key points of data revealed that Black students had a positive academic experience with instructors and pinpointed challenges with interactions with service administrative staff, juggling employment and school, and getting emotional assistance from the university.

The Library recently completed its UIC ARE plan, which includes continued active participation in the campus' African American Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Initiative (AARERI); increasing outreach to student organizations such as the Collegiate 100, the Black Student Union, African Student Council, and historically African American fraternities and sororities; and hosting visits from high school and middle school students from Chicago Public Schools to introduce them to a university campus and its library resources to encourage them to continue their education in college.

Action to be considered related to Emotional Support

One clear objective for the Library is to address the need for more resources related to emotional support. In collaboration with the Counseling Center, the Library may be able to offer complementary services or resources including resource workshops for well-being and school-work-life balance. Inviting campus support services such as the Counseling Center and the African American Cultural Center into the Library for student drop-in sessions or unstructured socializing could also make it easier for Black students to access emotional support assistance.

The Library could also do more to create spaces for deep study, meditation, and prayer. Designing sensory rooms that accommodate different lighting and seating needs is also something that could be investigated. The largest campus library that serves undergraduates provides a "Relaxation Station" during the height of the final exams

period which offers activities to divert stressed-out students. The popularity of these services that distract students from the pressures of deadlines and tests seems to indicate that more ongoing activities and support would be welcome.

Action to be considered related to Interaction with Staff

As to other actionable changes the Library can make to support Black students in their academic success, the data is currently insufficient. However, some steps that staff can take immediately include cultural competency training and intercultural dialogue sessions. This could include a structured program, which promotes open and respectful communication among people from different cultures.

A long-term goal of the Library is to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff. Considering the survey findings that Black students have high comfort levels interacting with peers, and research demonstrating the importance of supportive Black faculty interactions to retention and graduation, having more librarians of color may improve students' feelings of acceptance and engagement.

The Library's regular, ongoing biennial student survey can provide data on the perceptions of Black students over time with regard to representation reflected in the collections and how the Library respects their identities and their sense of belonging (Scoulas, 2021). But these surveys have been limited in terms of how they aggregate the general UIC population across all racial and ethnic groups. The plan for spring 2023 is to examine specific interactions of Black students with staff, security, and services in the Library, and to get a clearer sense of how the Library may impact the academic success of UIC's Black student population.

A possible future consideration is to conduct specific focus groups with Black students to determine the future of the Library's success initiatives. These conversations may help identify ways in which it can act as a stronger ally for incorporating anti-racist practices and can guide the Library in setting goals for training staff and implementing services that align with the specific needs of Black students.

Campus administration, library administration, and librarians who provide and develop user experience and undergraduate engagement programs can benefit from interrogating their own data and building from it to begin conversations with their Black students to assess and meet their needs as they express them.

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Appendix A: Survey questions

Where do you currently reside?

Choose One:

- On-campus in UIC residence halls
- Off-campus with family (walking distance)
- Off-campus with family (commuting via car, bike, or public transportation)
- Off-campus independently (walking distance)
- Off-campus independently (commuting via car, bike, or public transportation)
- I don't currently have a stable residence (housing insecure, homeless)

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Mark one for each: N/A, strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree

- Being actively engaged in my university is important to me
- I actively seek out ways to be engaged in my university
- In general, I feel supported by instructors and teaching assistants
- In general, I am comfortable speaking with an academic advisor
- I have sought out academic support (such as study groups, office hours, or tutoring)
- I have developed student-to-student-relationships at UIC
- I find it easy fitting in at UIC
- I am able to balance work and school
- I am able to balance family and school
- I am able to balance my personal life and school
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient academic support
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient social support
- I feel UIC provides students with sufficient emotional support
- I feel that my instructors care about my well-being
- I feel that my teaching assistants care about my well-being

Please answer the survey questions from your perspective at this current moment to the best of your ability. We recognize that some of the questions will be less applicable to you now than in the past, given how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our ability to be in person/on campus right now.

About how many HOURS do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing the following?

Mark one for each item:

- Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities)
- Participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)
- Working for pay on-campus
- Working for pay off-campus

- Unpaid Internship
- Doing community service or volunteer work
- Relaxing and socializing (time with friends, video games, TV or videos, keeping up with friends online, etc.)
- Providing care for dependents (children, parents, etc.)
- Commuting to campus (driving, walking, etc.)

During the current school year, how many times have you been involved in the following research opportunities?

- Independent study with a research component 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Thesis/Capstone Project 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Research project with a faculty member 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Research presentation or poster session at a conference or event 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Participating in a laboratory research project 0 1 2 3 4 5+
- Public/Community engaged research project

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups outside of the classroom setting?

Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often

- People of a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from a socio-economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own
- People with gender identities other than your own
- People with sexual orientations other than your own
- People from countries of origin other than your own

During the current school year, about how often have you visited:

Never Seldom Sometimes Often

- African American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Gender and Sexuality Center
- Latino Cultural Center

- Women’s Leadership and Resource Center
- Native American Support Program

Indicate your level of satisfaction with the following: Scale missing

- African American Cultural Center
- Arab American Cultural Center
- Asian American Cultural Center
- Disability Cultural Center
- Gender and Sexuality Center
- Latino Cultural Center
- Women’s Leadership and Resource Center
- Native American Support Program

If you have a need for these services, how comfortable would you be with seeking assistance from the following:

- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Wellness Center
- Disability Resource Center
- COVID-19 Testing Services

If you have ever used these services, please indicate your level of satisfaction:

- Counseling Center
- Student Health Services
- Wellness Center
- Disability Resource Center
- COVID-19 Testing Services

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate? Choose one for each item:

- Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
- Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group
- Participate in a study abroad program
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)

Section 3: Campus Interactions

Please answer the survey questions from your perspective at this current moment to the best of your ability. We recognize that some of the questions will be less applicable to you now than in the past, given how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our ability to be in person/on campus right now.

How would you rate UIC along the following continuum: 5-point Likert Scale

- welcoming, neither welcoming nor hostile
- social inclusive, neither social inclusive nor socially exclusive

- anti-racist, neither anti-racist nor racist, racist
- diverse, neither diverse nor not diverse, diverse
- respectful, neither respectful nor intolerant, intolerant
- sexist, neither sexist nor not sexist, not sexist
- non-homophobic, neither non-homophobic, homophobic

How comfortable do you feel having meaningful conversations with students who hold different views on issues relating to: very comfortable, comfortable, uncomfortable

- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Immigration
- Race or Ethnicity
- Political Ideology
- Socio-economic Status
- Gender Identity

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: Mark one for each.

- I'm comfortable expressing my political views with other students
- I'm comfortable expressing my political views with my instructors
- I feel comfortable sharing ideas in class that are probably only held by a small number of students
- The campus climate prevents some people from saying things they believe because others may find them offensive
- I believe the right to free speech (First Amendment) is held in high esteem on this campus
- I have felt silenced from sharing my views on this campus

Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution: 7-point Likert Scale from 1 to 7 Excellent

- Students
- Academic Advisors
- Faculty
- Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

COVID-Related Questions

Since moving to online learning, how has your level of engagement been impacted by technological issues (access to a laptop, reliable internet services, etc.)?

Impacted a lot, Slightly Impacted, Not impacted

Are there new or different opportunities (internships, research projects, programs/events) open to you now that weren't available prior to the pandemic and the shift to online learning?

Demographic Questions

Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latinx
- White
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Multi-racial (two or more races)
- I do not identify with any of these categories
- I prefer not to respond

Which of the following best describes your current sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual (Straight)
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
- Questioning or unsure
- Another sexual orientation, not specified above
- I prefer not to respond

Which of the following describes your current gender identity?

- Female/Woman
- Male/Man
- Trans male/Trans man
- Trans female/Trans woman
- Genderqueer/gender non-conforming
- Questioning or unsure
- Another gender identity, not specified above
- I prefer not to respond

Do you currently have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

What type(s) of disability do you currently have? (Check all that apply)

- Physical or Mobility Disability
- Sensory Disability (e.g., Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, Low Vision, etc.)
- Mental Illness/Psychiatric Disability (Depression, Bipolar, PTSD, OCD, Anxiety, etc.)

- Learning Disability (e.g., ADHD, Dyslexia)
- Developmental Disability (e.g., Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Autism)
- Communication Disability (e.g., Speech Impairment)
- Chronic Illness
- Chronic Pain
- Chronic Fatigue
- Brain Injury/Trauma
- Another disability, not specified above

To what extent would you say your disability or disabilities are visible to others?

- Extremely visible
- Very visible
- Moderately visible
- Slightly visible
- Not at all visible

End of Survey