



JUNE 2020

# RACISM & DISCRIMINATION AT LOYOLA

A REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS OF COLOR  
AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO IN 2020



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# Acknowledgments

This work would not have been possible without the support and contribution of several individuals and groups both within and outside of the Loyola University community.

Firstly, I would like to extend my immense gratitude to every student of color who responded to the survey, shared their various experiences, and who have done the emotional labor of existing and learning in unsafe spaces. Without your voices, this report would not be possible and it is for you that I do this work.

I would also like to thank my sisters on the Executive Board of the Black Graduate Student Alliance (BGSA). You each pour yourself into the work of BGSA while completing your coursework, your thesis/dissertation, and working full-time. You have each taught me important lessons about rest, laying down the 'Strong Black Woman' trope and being more authentically myself. Thank you for loving and supporting me as a Loyola Student, member of BGSA and Black woman.

I am also grateful for the support of the Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL). CURL has helped me to mature as a researcher, thinker and activist. Thank you, for pushing me, accepting me and supporting me.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family without whom I would not be the person nor researcher I am today.

Thank you all.

“Multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom. It forces us all to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind.”

— bell hooks,  
Teaching to Transgress:  
Education as the Practice of Freedom

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## A Statement from the Author

There is some disagreement within Sociology with regards to how to and when to acknowledge your positionality in research. While historically, the veil of objectivity has been used to argue for obscuring and eschewing all sense of self to become the objective onlooker and the perfect scientist; there is a growing movement of Sociologists and social scientists alike who are adopting a more human science wherein we acknowledge our identities, submit our privilege and dedicate our full, embodied selves to the production of quality research.

I do not approach this research as an objective onlooker nor a perfect scientist. I come to this research as a Black woman, a Master of Public Policy, a PhD student in Loyola's Sociology Department, a Graduate Research Fellow at the Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) and the Historian and representative of the Black Graduate Student Alliance (BGSA). All of these identities hold their own unique privileges and problems; and while I am proud to identify myself with each group, I am most saliently and at every waking moment, first and foremost a Black woman.

Acknowledging my identities, also allows me to be honest about the fact that reading about the discriminatory experiences of my fellow Loyola students is emotional and has personally impacted me. It has not however, distorted my science. Quite the opposite. My personal connection to this work has motivated me to honor my peers by accurately representing their experiences in this report.

Equally, I feel a responsibility to make sure that the findings of this report are not ignored, but are used to bring about necessary and meaningful change for the sake of creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students at Loyola.

Sincerely,  
Moriah Johnson



# Diversity & Discrimination

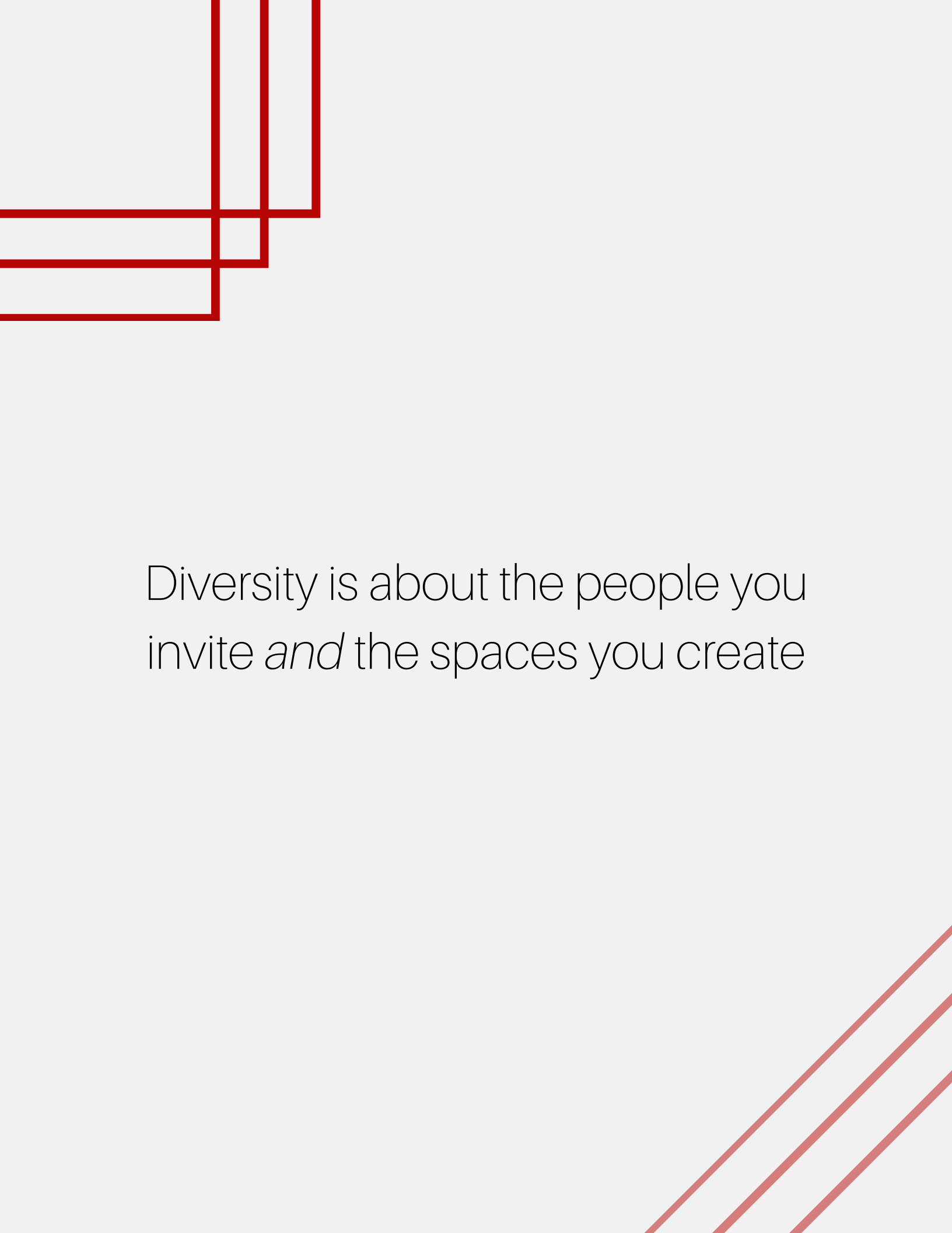


# Diversity + Discrimination

It should go without saying, but I am going to say it: diversity and discrimination are oppositional constructs that cannot sustainably coexist. Their goals are inherently conflictual as discrimination seeks exclusion, diversity seeks inclusion. Yet, they are often forced to coexist within Higher Education, as Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) or Historically Racist Institutions (HRIs) take on Diversity efforts that do nothing to address the structural discrimination fundamental to their institutions.

The use of arithmetic as a metric for diversity, fails to capture the experiences of students of color in supposed diverse spaces. In fact, the ongoing negative experiences of students of color in higher education are the manifestation of the conflict between diversity and discrimination.

Any space, educational or otherwise, that purports to be a diverse space, must also do the work of dismantling all racist and discriminatory structures including and especially ideological structures that uphold white supremacy. Without this work, these spaces will only ever be white spaces in which people of color are invited into, but are neither welcomed nor supported.

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Diversity is about the people you  
invite *and* the spaces you create

# Diversity + Discrimination

## In Higher Education

Diversity is about the people you invite *and* the spaces you create. Although diversity initiatives have largely focused on inviting the right people, there is a need for greater focus on creating spaces where diversity can thrive and be sustained. Indeed, inviting the right people does not tackle the ways in which discrimination is an interpersonal and a structural problem (Lieberman, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Blank, Dabady & Citro, 2004). Without both an interpersonal and structural approach, diversity looks like a numbers game where there are plenty of diverse faces, but not enough support for the diverse needs of the people who were “invited.” While discrimination persists not only because there are people who discriminate, but because there are power structures willing to ignore, support and/or encourage such discriminatory behavior. Taking a more structural approach to diversity issues requires an understanding of the symbolic and authoritative power structures prevalent in the institution under investigation. In this case, Higher Education.

While it is believed that education is the great equalizer, educational institutions are a space where the larger inequalities of the United States are replicated and reinforced through structural discrimination (Lieberman, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Blank, Dabady & Citro, 2004). When discussing structural discrimination or what they referred to as discrimination in organizational processes, the NRC wrote that,

**“The United States has a long history as a racially biased society. This history has done more than change individual cognitive responses; it has also deeply affected institutional processes. Organizations tend to reflect many of the same biases as the people who operate within them” (National Research Council, 2004).**

Universities are a particularly unique microcosm of North American social life. Students represent a disempowered and lower class within the university system. Furthermore, students of color are particularly susceptible to negative experiences due to their racial and ethnic identities in addition to their lower-class position as students. This compounded social position, where their racial and ethnic identities intersect with their student-role, shapes their experiences within higher education. While many universities and colleges in the United States tout diversity as both a goal and trophy, many more continue to fail their diverse students in this area. By measuring diversity only by the number of students, faculty and staff from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, universities miss the point of diversity entirely. It is not about how many black and brown people we can fit into a room or a photo on a brochure, but how we restructure our intellectual communities to value and support diverse students, faculty and staff. Like discrimination, diversity can be felt on the interpersonal level, but it must be implemented and supported structurally.

# Literature:

## "Racial Capitalism"

*By Nancy Leong,  
Harvard Law Review, 2013*

Measuring diversity only by numbers is what Nancy Leong calls a "thin" version of the diversity objective and is a product of racial capitalism. Nancy Leong coined the term racial capitalism in 2013 and defined it as "the process of deriving social or economic value from the racial identity of another person." (p.2152) In her Harvard Law Review article, "Racial Capitalism," Leong focuses particularly on the ways in which white individuals and PWIs engage in racial capitalism by recruiting and seeking out "nonwhite racial identities" because of a perceived or realized benefit to the white individual or institution. She writes that,

**"In a society preoccupied with diversity, nonwhiteness is a valued commodity. And where that society is founded on capitalism, it is unsurprising that the commodity of nonwhiteness is exploited for its market value" (Leong, 2013, p. 2154).**

The Recruitment of black and brown individuals into white spaces that have no intention of supporting them or dismantling the structural discrimination that harms them, but rather using their nonwhiteness to attract funding and/or praise is racial capitalism.

Numerical diversity is insufficient, and it can result in further harms for students of color. As Leong writes, "Racial capitalism also forecloses progress on a practical level, both by inflicting identity harms on nonwhite individuals and by displacing substantive antidiscrimination reform" (2013, p. 2156). Appearance-based diversity looks good, but it is really a distraction from the real work of antidiscrimination, which diversity is supposed to both give way to and imply.

Diversity efforts that do not include metrics for the experiences of persons of color in historically racist and predominantly white institutions only benefit white individuals and institutions. Through the commodification of diversity, brown and black people are exploited to create the appearance of diversity over the experience of diverse spaces.


# Literature:

## "Is Diversity for White People? On Fear-mongering, picture taking , and avoidance"

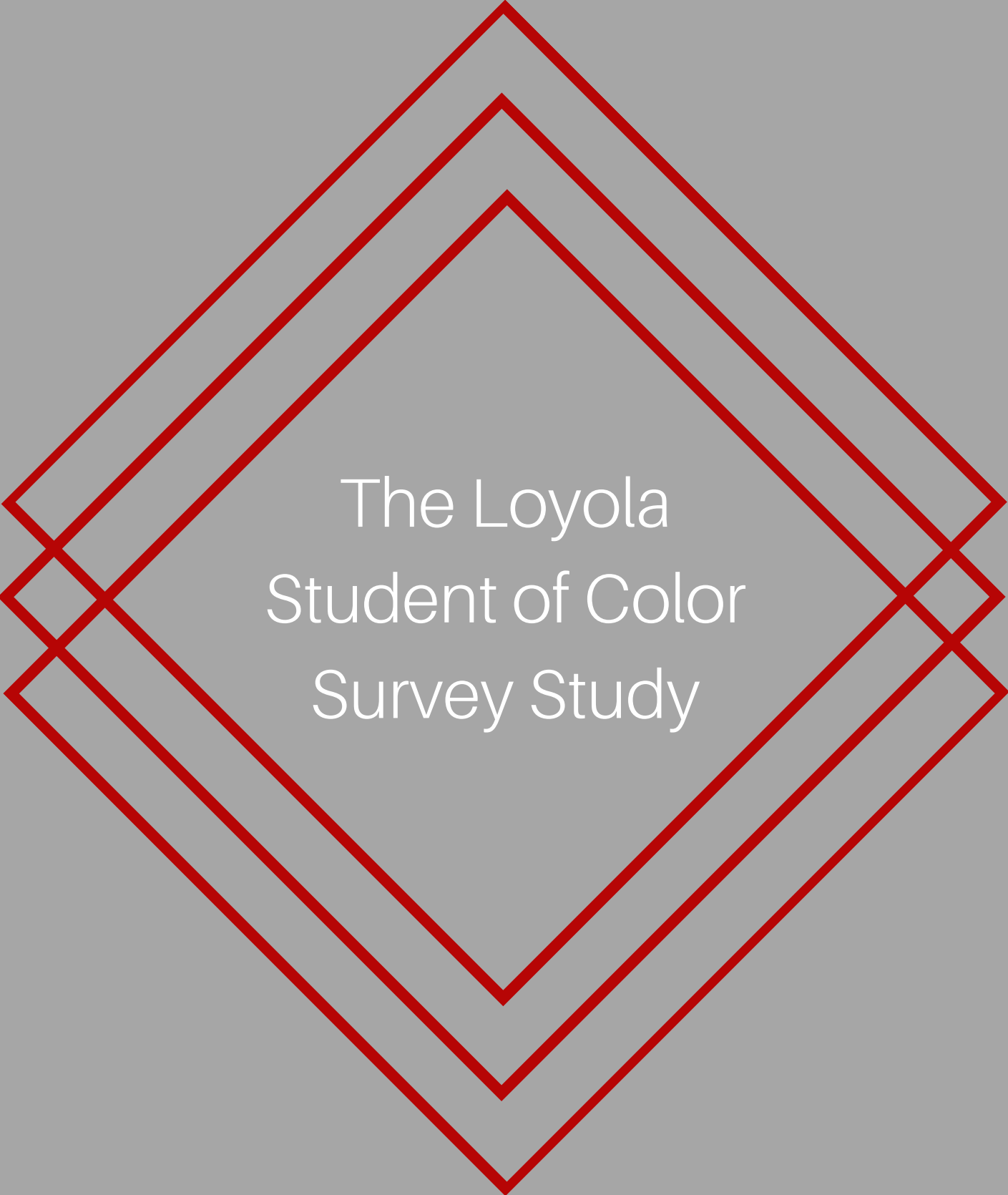
*by Jeff Chang,  
We Gon' Be Alright (2016)*

Please consider reading Jeff Chang's 2016 Book of Essays, *We Gon' Be Alright*. It includes a challenging and important essay that calls to question the intention behind diversity efforts. Namely, are institutions simply engaging in performative, appearance-based diversity to pander to white people? Does this performative diversity serve to make white people feel good about their choice in school or their place of work? and how can we tell if our diversity is performative?

Through the commodification of diversity, brown and black people are exploited to create the appearance of diversity over the experience of diverse spaces. This is highlighted in Jeff Chang's essay, "Is Diversity for White People? On fear-mongering, picture taking, and avoidance." In this essay, Chang poses important questions about the purpose and intention behind diversity initiatives especially in higher education. Chang highlights a University of Wisconsin-Madison scandal in 2000 in which diversity is exploited for recruitment materials to explicate the various and disingenuous ways that diversity is commodified and exploited. Further Chang also discusses how diversity is used as a replacement for equity and how diversity is in fact a lower standard than equity. Focusing on appearance-base diversity blinds us from the real problem diversity is meant to solve. Indeed, diversity is an instrument meant to assist us in our pursuit of a more equitable world.

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The question is *not* how can we make Loyola a more diverse place, but rather how can we make Loyola a safer diverse space?



The Loyola  
Student of Color  
Survey Study

# Objectives

- To better understand the experiences of Students of Color (SOC) at Loyola
- To capture specific examples of the challenges faced by Loyola SOC
- To create solutions that consider the specific experiences/perspectives and needs of Loyola SOC
- To help create a more supportive and safe learning space for ALL Loyola students

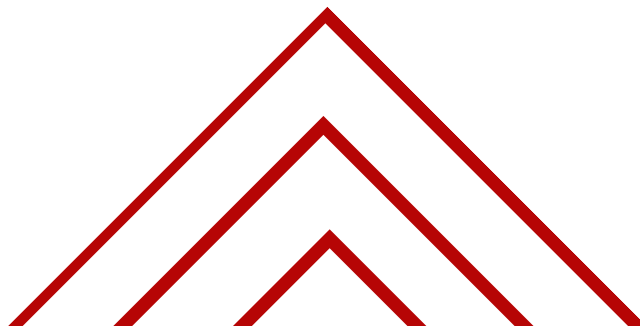
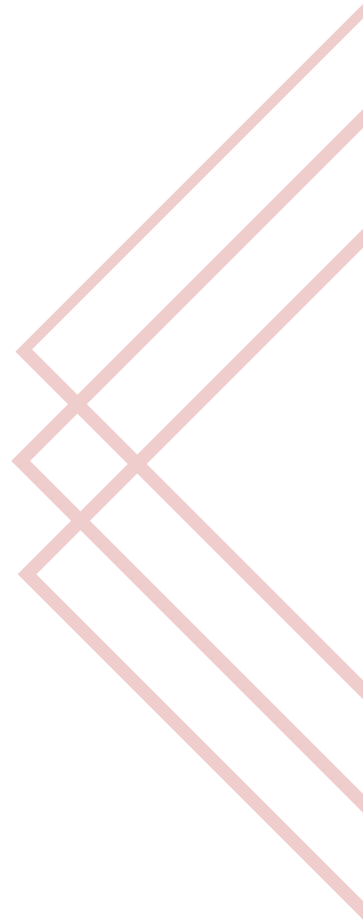


# Methods

This study used a survey-based methodology to explore the perspectives and experiences of students of color at Loyola University Chicago. The original purpose of the survey and data was to communicate to Loyola's Student Academic Services (SAS) Department how it can better support Loyola's Students of color.

The survey consisted of 13 questions using a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. The survey included questions about student's racial/ethnic identity and gender expression (with options to create their own categories to prevent exclusion); their experiences with professors who shared their racial/ethnic identities; their exposure to diverse scholars; questions about if Loyola respects diverse scholars and students; and lastly, specific experiences of discrimination or challenges while attending a Predominantly White Institution (PWI).

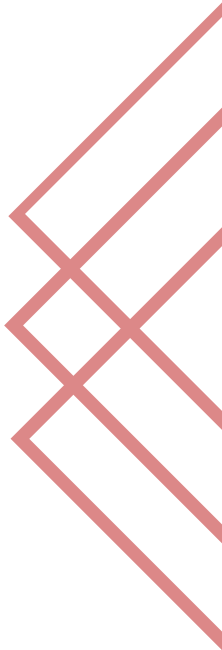
Through a mix of snowball-sampling, word-of-mouth and printed and digital flyers, the survey was disseminated on both the Lakeshore and Water Tower Campuses of Loyola University Chicago including the Arrupe College as well as across multiple social media platforms. Data was collected from current undergraduate and graduate students as well as recent graduates (students who graduated in the last 12 months). The survey remained open for two weeks and a total of 200 students of color responded.



# Anti-Blackness + Avoiding Erasure

Students were first asked to self-identify their racial/ethnic identities as well as their gender expressions. There are four analytical purposes behind asking respondents to identify their racial or ethnic identities. The first analytical reason is to confirm that the respondents are in fact students of color, rather than Caucasian or white. The second analytical reason is to examine if the racial demographics of the respondents are representative of Loyola's broader student body. Matching the racial demographics of the respondents and student body increases the validity of the findings. While the survey could not capture the experiences of every individual student of color enrolled at Loyola (because not every student of color responded to the survey), by having respondents that are racially similar to the student body, the representativeness of the experiences can be inferred and generalizable to an extent. The third analytical purpose is that it allows for the analysis of the race/ethnic-specific experiences of students at Loyola and avoids erasure of those specific experiences.

While using the designator student or person "of color" can be helpful, it is important not to engage in erasure of race-specific experiences. This is particularly important when discussing the ways in which America and American institutions have not only been historically racist, but specifically anti-Black (Giroux, 2010; Love, 2016). In this study, using a racial lens to analyze some of the findings will elucidate the ways in which the experiences of students of color differ by race. The final analytical purpose for asking about both the racial/ethnic identity of respondents and their gender expression was to use an intersectional lens in the analysis. The literature indicates that there are gendered differences in the experience of racism and discrimination in Higher Education (Singh, Robinson & Williams-Green, 1995; Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). In fact, "African American women face dual burdens of racism and sexism in institutions of higher education" (Singh, Robinson & Williams-Green, 1995). This necessitates an intersectional approach to data collection and analysis that explores the unique experiences of persons of color at the intersection of their race and gender expression.



# Demographics

## Race + Ethnicity

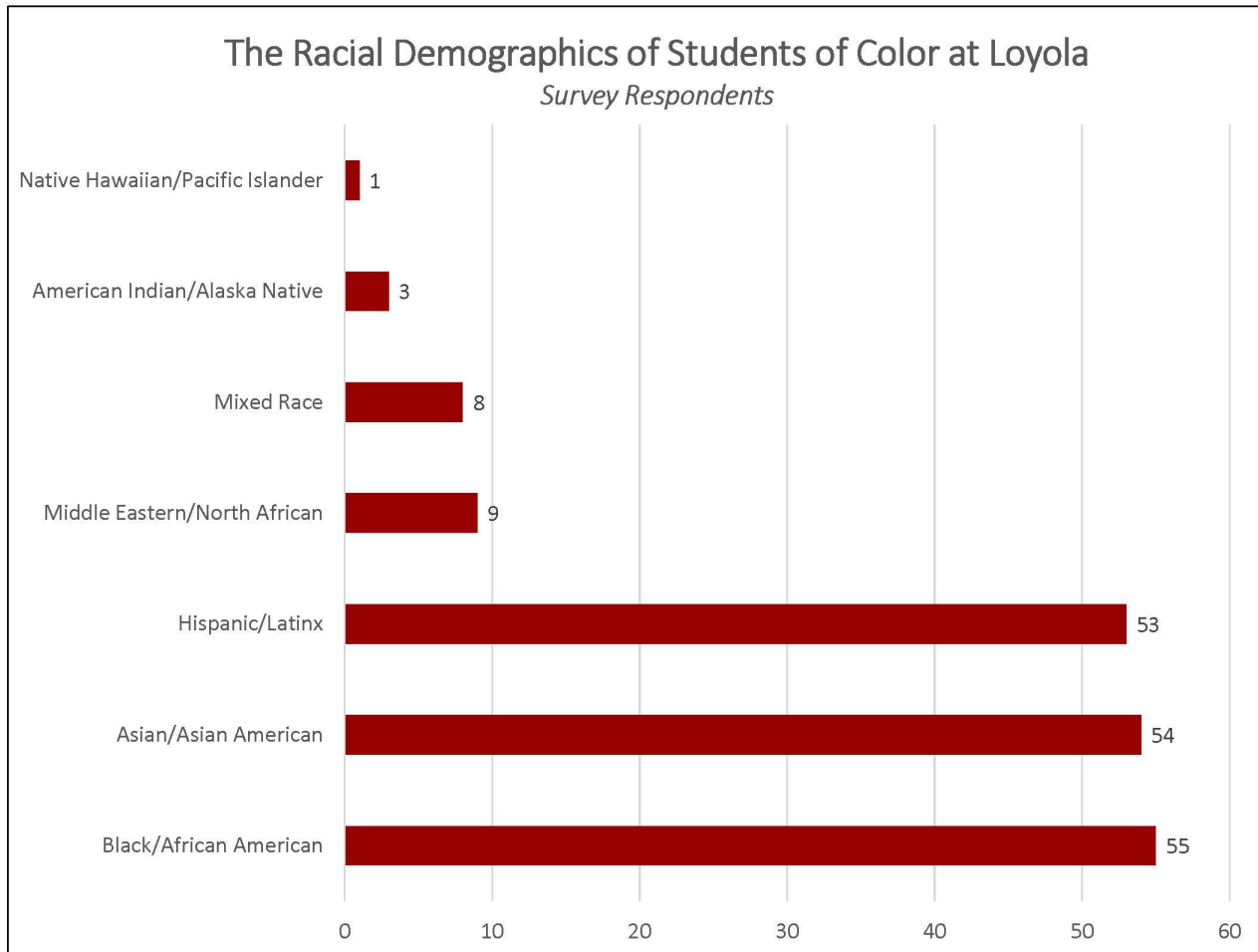


Figure 1. The Racial Demographics of the Survey Respondents

There were three racial groups that were highly represented in the Loyola Student of Color survey data. Of the 200 students, 28% identified as African American, 27% identified as Asian or Asian American and 27% identified as Hispanic or Latinx (See Figure 1 above). The remaining respondents identified as Middle Eastern or North African (4%), Mixed or Multiple race (4%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (2%) and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (1%).

According to Loyola's 2018-2019 Annual Report on Diversity, amongst the student of color population, Hispanic (16.1%) students held the majority with Asian (12.3%) students following close behind and African Americans (7.5%) students being third. The report also measured mixed race students at 3.9%. The other three racial categories that my survey measured were not measured by Loyola's Report.

# Demographics

## Gender

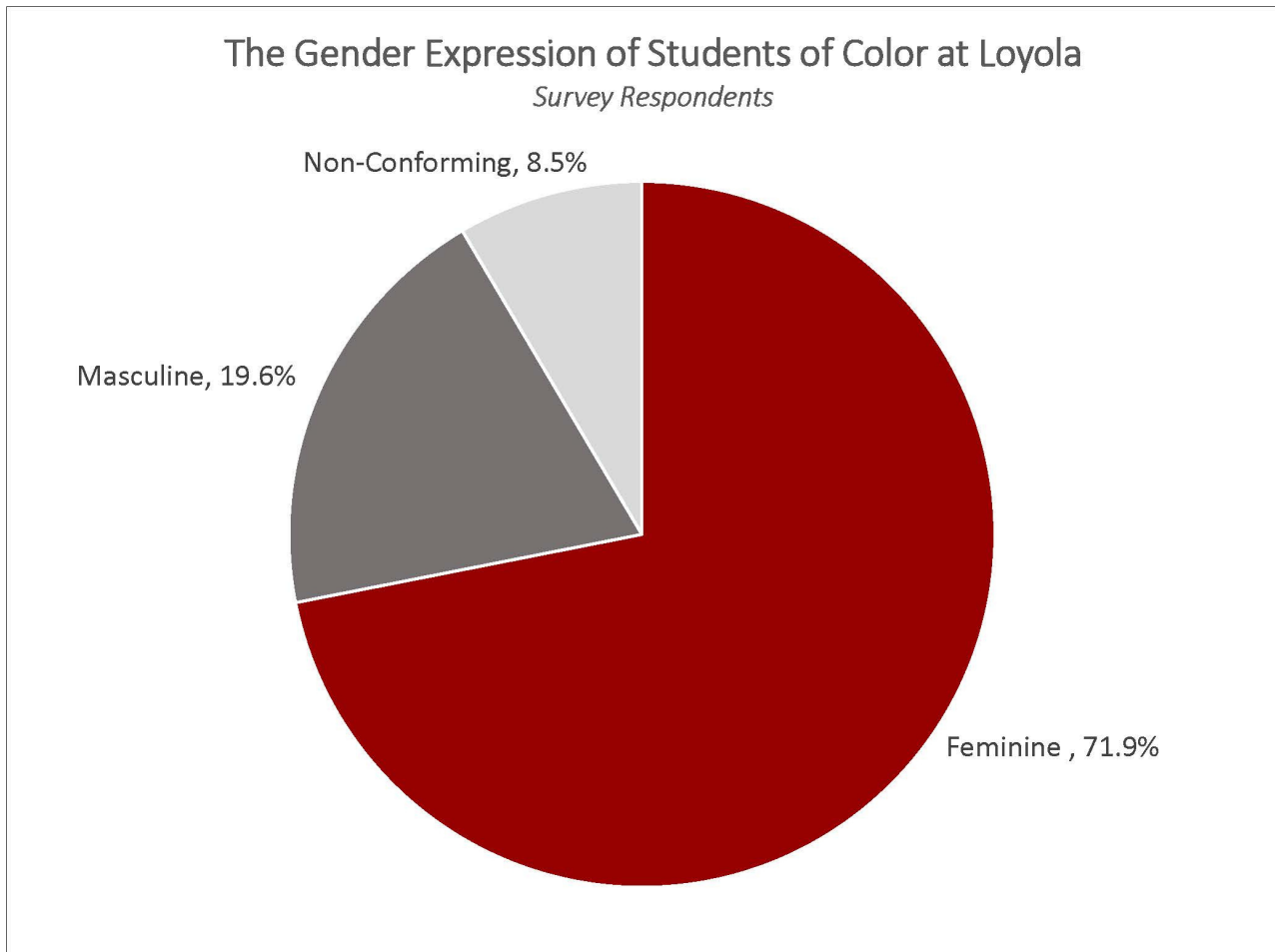



Figure 2. The Gender Demographics of Survey Respondents

Most of the respondents identified that their gender expression was feminine. This is representative of the fact that Loyola has more women than men according to the Diversity Report. The report shows that in the 2018-2019 Academic year, the student body was 66% women and 34% men. However, it is important to note that the Loyola report measured 'sex' along the man-woman binary rather than measuring gender identity, which means it excluded those who identify as gender non-conforming (8.5% of those who responded to my survey).

Overall, African American and feminine-identifying student voices were the most represented in the data, with Asian/Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx students following immediately after. The over-representation of African American respondents is likely due to the recruitment methods used, as it reflects my personal networks and my campus connections (i.e. Black Graduate Student Alliance, Black Cultural Center and Arrupe's Black Student Union). While the data may not represent the experiences of every student of color at Loyola, the experiences reported give insight into both the interpersonal and structural discriminatory factors that contribute to the negative experiences of students of color at Loyola.



Are Students of Color  
Experiencing Discrimination at  
Loyola?

200 Students of Color at Loyola University Chicago responded to the survey. 43% said yes, they experienced discrimination at Loyola, 23% said they were unsure if they had experienced discrimination, but shared they experienced and witnessed microaggressions regularly. An alarming number of students shared their experiences of discrimination and racism both inside and out of the classroom; both in front of and at the hand of Faculty, and Peers.



# Discrimination at Loyola

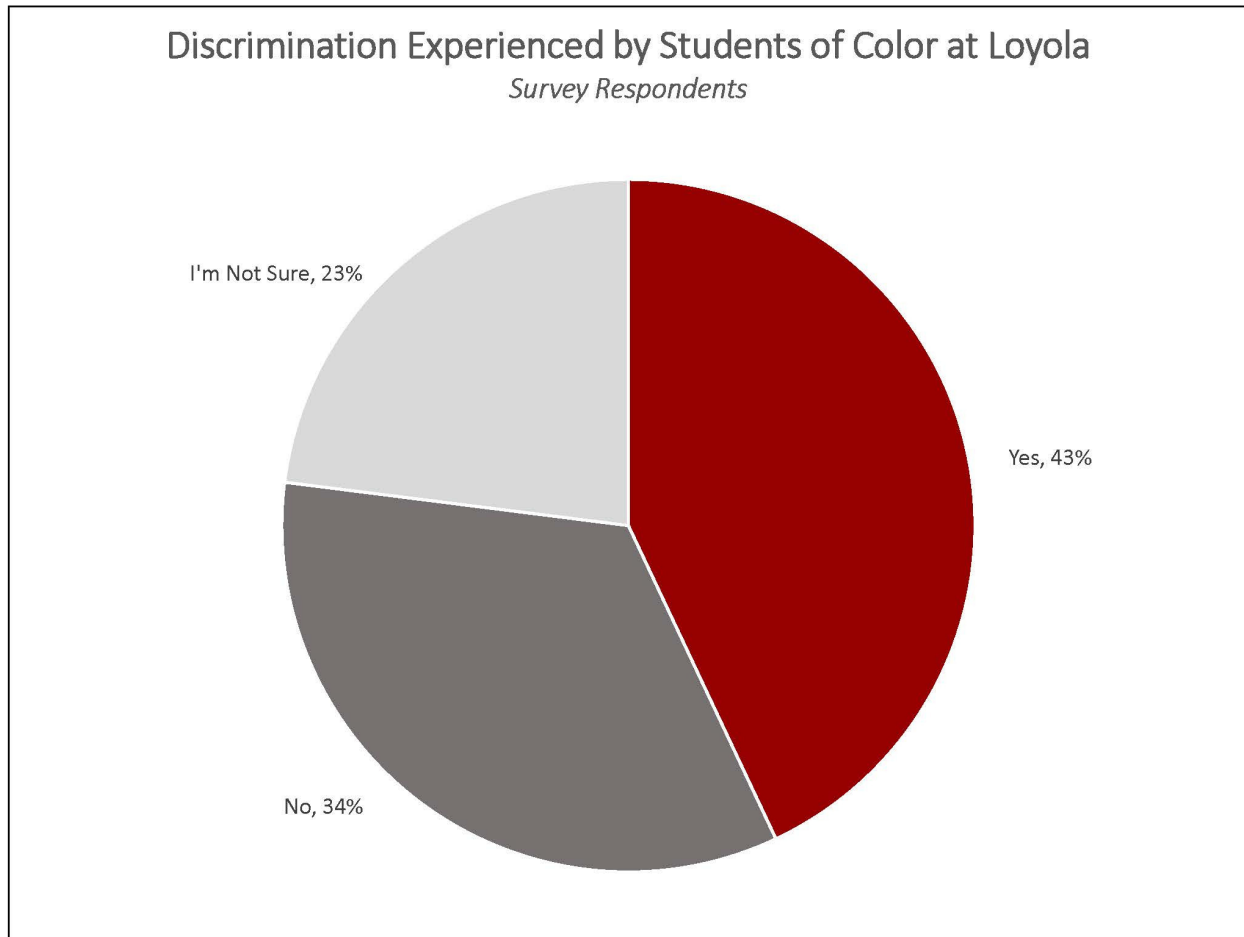
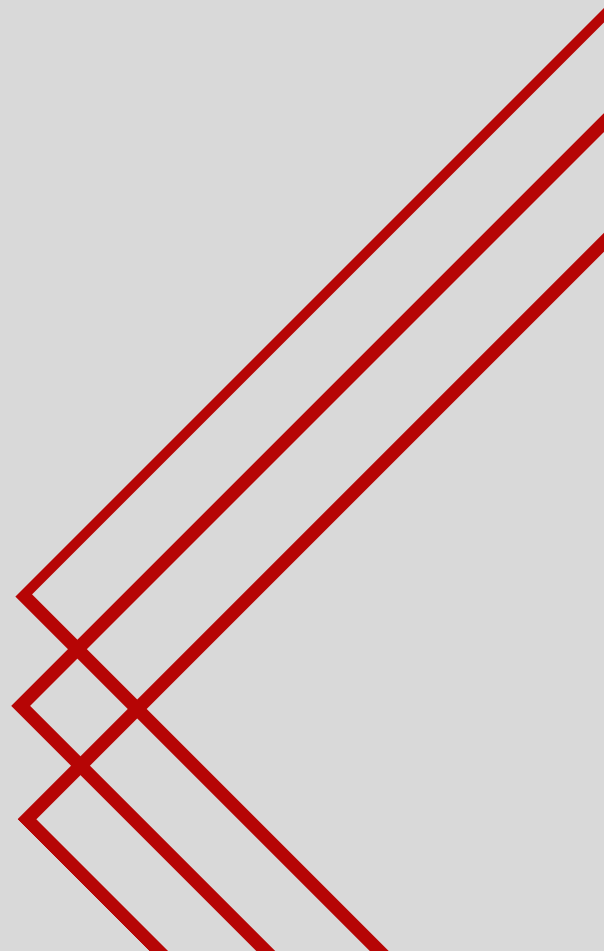


Figure 3. Discrimination Experienced by Students of Color at Loyola

In order to understand the extent of discrimination experienced by students of color at Loyola, respondents were asked if they had experienced discrimination since attending Loyola. As shown in Figure 3 above, although not a majority, it is significant that 43% of students of color said 'yes' they have experienced discrimination at Loyola. Presumably, the goal is that no student will experience discrimination at Loyola. This being the goal, the question must be asked: Why do students of color experience discrimination in Higher Education institutions and specifically, at Loyola?

# Major Findings

*01 Discrimination Against  
Students of Color is Race-  
Specific*





## 01 Discrimination Against Students of Color is Race-Specific

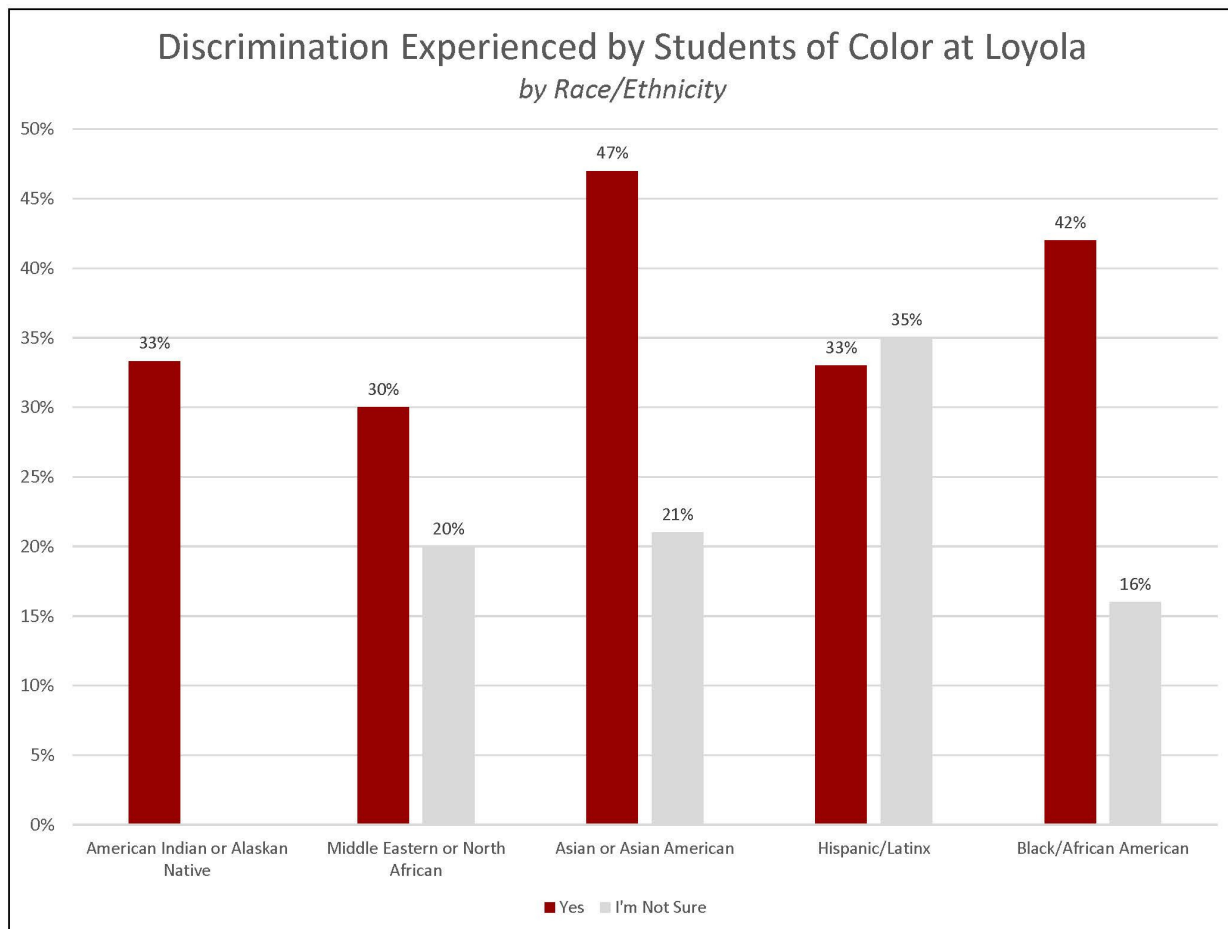


Figure 4. Race-Specific Experiences of Discrimination at Loyola

According to the data, experiences of discrimination differed across race. Although there are fewer Asian students, they reported the most amount of discrimination (47% said yes to experiencing discrimination). While 42% of Black/African American students and 33% of Hispanic/Latinx students reported experiencing discrimination at Loyola. Additionally, 30% of Middle Eastern and North African students reported discriminatory incidents and 20% said they were not sure if they had experienced discrimination. There was only one American Indian or Alaskan Native, but she too reported experiencing discrimination.

*The following presents the experiences of students of color by race with specific examples from the students in their own words. Pseudonyms are used.*

## Asian/Asian American Students


Indeed, discrimination at Loyola was race-specific and most forms of discrimination reported by the students highlighted their non-whiteness. For example, Asian students were the only students to talk about experiencing discrimination based on their religious expression, which is often more visible than other racial groups. In fact, 55% of Asian students who felt discriminated against referenced religious discrimination, which was more than any other racial group. One student described her experience: "I have been microaggressed more times than I can count throughout my four years here for my religious expression and the way I look." The student in this case emphasizes how expressions of her religion and the way she looks makes her a target for countless microaggressions.

Other students shared that feelings of otherness based on their appearance was the greatest challenge to attending a predominantly white institution (PWI): "As visibly Muslim, it sometimes is hard navigating through college because of completely different cultural and religious backgrounds. I'm an environmental science major so my classes are all predominantly white." The visibility of their "otherness" or non-whiteness in predominantly white spaces are a source of challenge for students.

Other Asian-identifying students shared that Loyola seems hostile to other religions, despite language affirming that all religions are welcome. One student shared that "Based on my religion, I've never felt properly welcomed especially when it comes to eating or celebrating specific religious [and] cultural traditions" and in another incident, a student was made to feel uncomfortable due to the Christian-normative classrooms at Loyola, he shared:

It's more of a religious discrimination, I was asked to recite a verse from the Bible, and I am not Christian. It was the assumption that we would all know the verse. Despite Loyola being a Jesuit institution, it prides itself on being religiously diverse, yet this experience made me uncomfortable and unseen in the eyes of the faculty. (Jin)

The experience of religious microaggressions was quintessential to stories of discrimination for Asian and Asian American students. These microaggressions create a hostile environment for the practice and expression of their religious and cultural traditions. Within a PWI, students of color face intersecting experiences of discrimination as their race, ethnicity and religion is contrary to the dominant culture especially at a Catholic, Jesuit institution.



"I have been  
microaggressed more  
times than I can count  
throughout my four  
years here for my  
religious expression  
and the way I look."

(Kira)

## Hispanic and Latinx Students

In the same way, Hispanic and Latinx students' experiences of discrimination often centered on their cultural identities. Hispanic/Latinx students report receiving comments about not being "Mexican enough" or "not looking Mexican" enough from both ingroup and outgroup members, including comments by Professors. Many Hispanic/Latinx students shared that speaking Spanish also made them the target of abuse.

One student shared that "People don't say my last name, I get dirty looks for speaking Spanish and people call me exotic when I say I'm Mexican." Another student shared a similar experience of their language being targeted: "someone in the dining hall came at me saying I was talking bad about them when I wasn't. They based their argument on the fact that I was speaking Spanish with my friends." Other Hispanic/Latinx student reported being made to feel uncomfortable about expressing their "cultural and ethnic background" in their dorm rooms or that some students tried to tokenize their culture, while whitesplaining it to them.

Outside of explicit discrimination or microaggressions, students shared that they sensed a normalized culture of whiteness and centering whiteness at Loyola:

While there has not been overt discrimination, I have experienced some small things that I would qualify as a centering of whiteness at Loyola: For example, a professor mixing up the names of women of color in a class of less than 10 people, another Loyola grad student feeling the need to explain to me, a 3rd generation Mexican-American, the importance and significance of Cinco de Mayo in Mexican American culture. These are not examples of discrimination but of a [department] culture that would not be able to thrive if there was value and awareness of the experiences of all students. (Leona)

I've never experienced discrimination at LUC when it comes to faculty and staff. However the social climate here is unwelcoming to POC and there isn't nearly enough support or funding for clubs that cater to POC in comparison to non-POC clubs and organizations. That in and of itself shows the students here who matters and who don't. (Roberto)

It is possible to read these experiences and think, they are not "so bad." And if you hold that belief, ask yourself: Do we want Loyola to be a white space that we invite people of color into or a diverse space where all students feel equally welcomed and have equal ownership of the space? Because the way Loyola funds certain groups and treats its students of color shows everyone "who matters and who don't."

"Fellow classmates once stated that "I should be happy now that almost all of the students in class were students of color."

In the same class, another white student complained to a faculty member that "he felt threatened" by students of color, he was talking about me and one other student of color in particular." (Rian)

## Black and African American Students

The same was true for the experiences of Black and African American students. Multiple experiences of discrimination were based specifically on the skin color of Black students. For example, one student shared that she was called a “very demeaning racial slur” and another student experienced racial profiling in her residence hall. Without knowing students more intimately, “racial slurs” and “racial profiling” is based on judgments about the skin color of people and the fact that they don't appear to fit in or belong.

The most explicit experience of discrimination based on skin color occurred during a Communications class by a Professor toward a Black female student, she shared the experience in detail:

I was in my Intro to the School of Communication course and we were recording mock newscasts. No one in the class was aware we'd be heading over to SOC's newsroom or that we would be on camera. When it was my turn to be anchor I sat at the anchor's table in the front of the room and began reviewing my lines. It was September and the weather was nice so I was wearing a white sleeveless blouse. The faculty member in charge of the newsroom points his finger at me and starts explaining essentially how annoying it is, to have to readjust the settings on the camera because of the contrast between my white shirt and my skin. Saying when “you have skin that dark” it makes it really hard on the camera people. And even saying “someone with my skin tone” [the professor's skin tone], which was white, could wear white but I should stick to a darker color. This was in front of the entire studio with about 15 other students surrounding us and 10 backstage. To say I felt embarrassed was an understatement. It would have been perfectly fine for him to just say point blank, “hey try to stay away from wearing white when you're an anchor” but for him to get into my skin tone and saying when “you're that dark” that I can't “get away” with wearing a white shirt, in front of our entire class. I remember you could honestly have heard a pin drop that's how silent the room was. I then had to go onto read my lines a minute later and remember stumbling over them since I still was in shock of what he said. (Shauna)

Although these examples do not cover all of the experiences of discrimination shared by students of color, they are emblematic of how discrimination differs by race in specific ways. The experiences differed by race, but they all targeted students of color, non-whiteness or non-normative cultural expressions. Sadly, as this example demonstrates, students experience discrimination both outside of and within the classroom.

"It's hard seeing Faculty  
be open about their  
discrimination and not be  
open to aid me in classes  
because of my race and  
being told to just work  
harder instead of being  
offered help."(Louis)



# Being a *Minority*

## Minority Student at a Majority White School

Although they represented a smaller proportion of survey respondents, the experiences of Students of Color outside of the more represented minorities (Hispanic/Latinx, Asian and Black students) are equally important. Erasure of the experiences of Middle Eastern/North African, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students would be equally wrong and yet, emblematic of their on-campus experiences. As one student shared:

The school only cares about African Americans and South Asians, no other ethnic group has any representation. (Anna)

These students reported their experiences of discrimination, exclusion and on-campus erasure. Particularly salient were experiences of cultural and religious erasure, as one student shared:

Because of Loyola's connection to the Catholic Church, they are much more likely to support Zionism and Israeli-aligned organizations on campus, rather than those who support Palestine, such as SJP. It's hard for me to see Loyola as respectful of people of all ethnicities/backgrounds if they clearly support what is the product of over a century of war and erasure of my people. (Mila)

As a minority minority, students shared experiences of feeling disconnected and isolated from their culture and people who look like them. Students also shared that they did not feel like the university cared or supported them or their community due to the lack of financial and social support on campus. For example, one student shared that "the university does not offer many scholarships for Indigenous students."

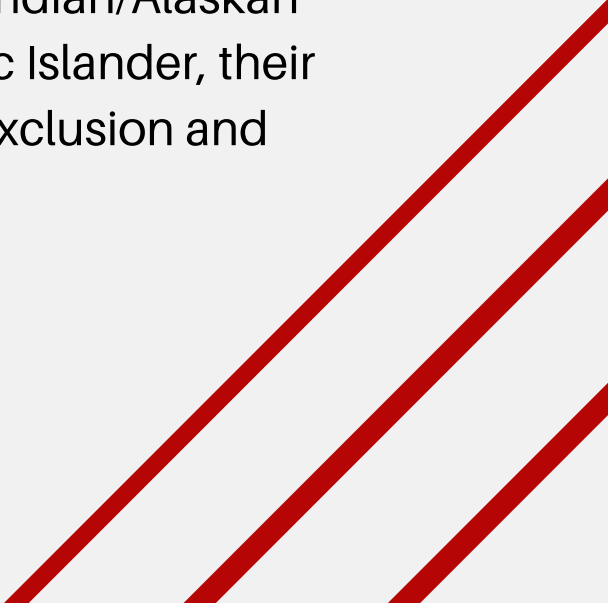
Overall, these students expressed a collective frustration of not just discrimination, but overall underrepresentation and outright exclusion from narratives surrounding experiences and needs of students of color at Loyola.



**The race-specific experiences of discrimination were not based on membership to the “student of color” category, but rather membership to specific cultural, religious and racial groups.**

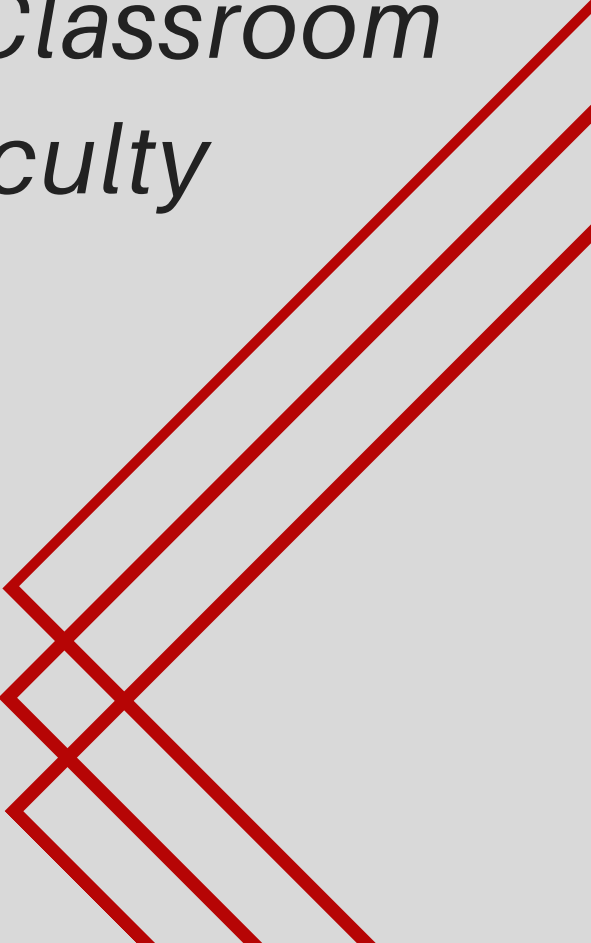
The findings indicate that the discriminatory language or behavior highlighted students’ non-whiteness as a tool to further their exclusion and highlight outgroup membership. Therefore, the discrimination experienced by students of color was race-specific.

For Asian students this was visible expressions and practices of their religion, for Hispanic/Latinx students this was both cultural and linguistic expressions and for Black students it was as simple as the color of their skin. For Middle Eastern/North African, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, their experiences were of complete exclusion and erasure.

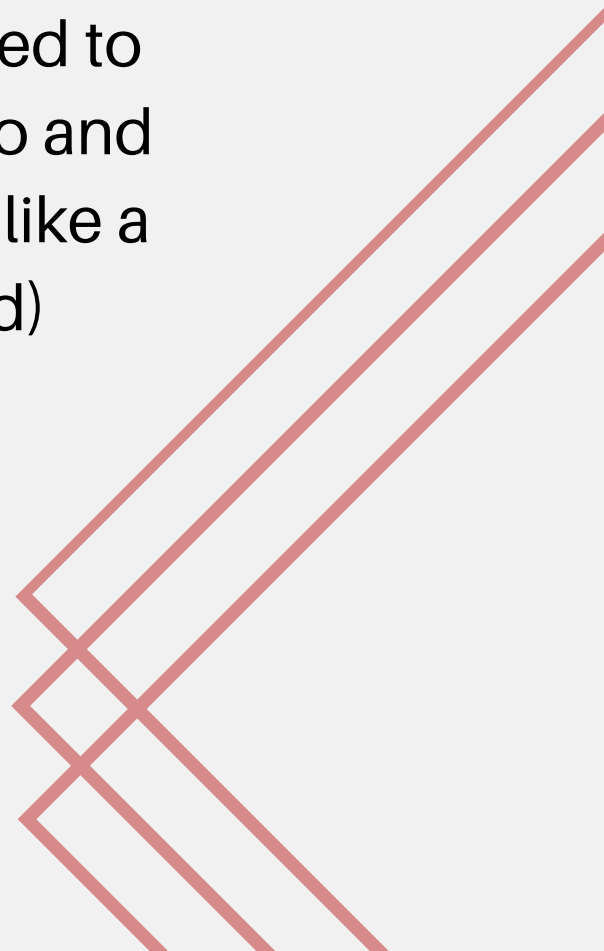


# Major Findings

*02 Students of Color at  
Loyola experience  
discrimination In-Classroom  
at the Hands of Faculty  
and Peers*

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, parallel red lines that form a series of nested, elongated shapes pointing towards the bottom right corner of the page.

"My professor told me  
"you don't look Mexican"  
once, and I'm just  
confused on what that  
meant. Am I supposed to  
be wearing a poncho and  
a sombrero to 'look' like a  
Mexican?" (David)



## 02 Students of Color at Loyola experience discrimination In-Classroom at the Hands of Faculty and Peers




Figure 5. The Locations of Experiences of Discrimination by Race/Ethnicity

Students of Color reported experiencing discrimination inside the classroom at high rates, but the rates differed by race. Respondents offered the details about their discriminatory experiences in an open-ended question. Although respondents were not prompted to indicate where they experienced discrimination or who discriminated against them, 66% of students mentioned a location when describing their experience of discrimination. Of those who mentioned any location, 50% were in-classroom experiences of discrimination. These numbers skew when examining differences by race.

*\*Not all racial and ethnic groups from the data are represented in the chart above because there was insufficient data to provide proportions or they did not provide enough details about the experience to be included.*

"I had a professor who would go off on me over minor things. She never said anything to other students who did the same. It didn't help that I was the only person of color in the class."(Liang)



## 02 Students of Color at Loyola experience discrimination In-Classroom at the Hands of Faculty and Peers

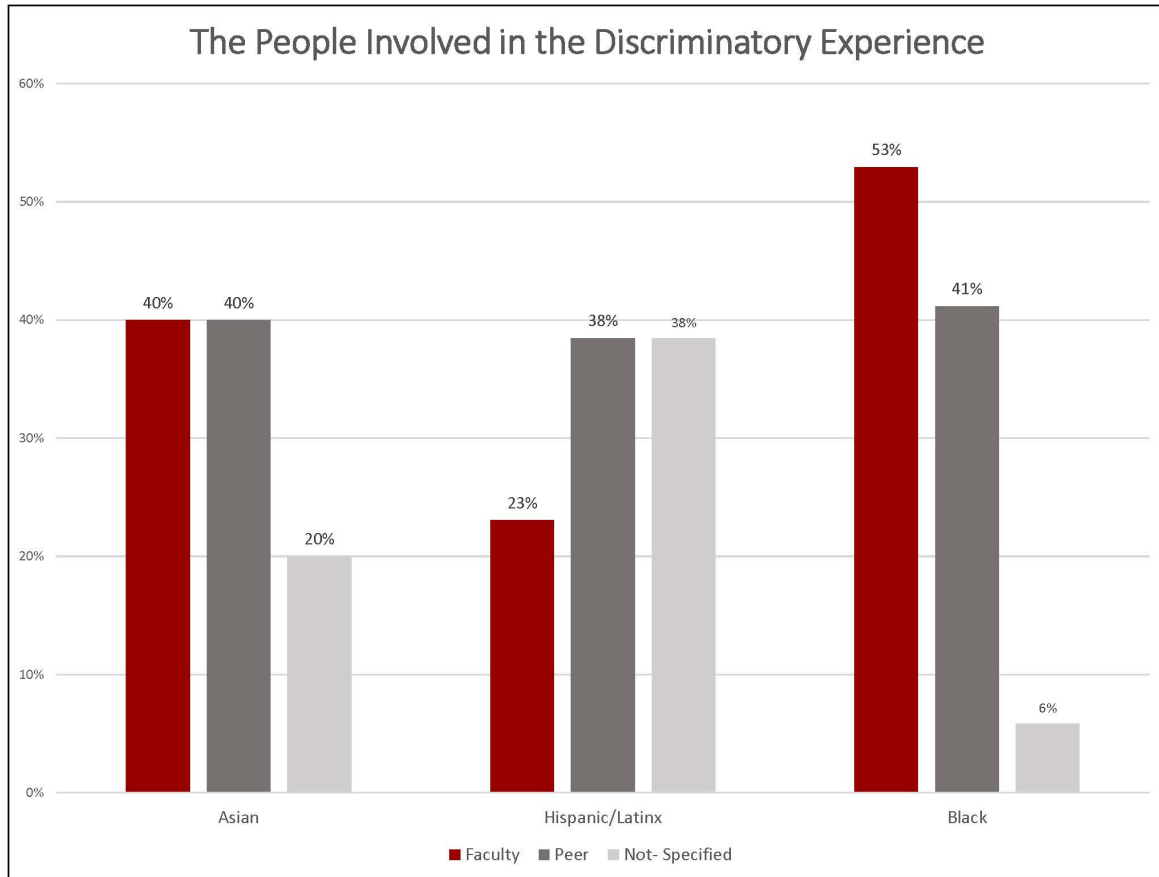
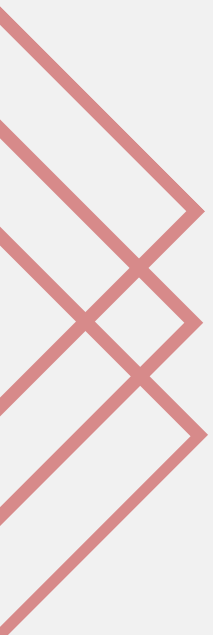


Figure 6. The Race-Specific Experiences of Discrimination by Faculty and Peers

For Asian students, 44% of cases of discrimination occurred in-classroom and discrimination was experienced equally at the hands of peers and faculty members. While 36% of Black/African American students reported experiences of discrimination in the classroom, 53% involved faculty to student discrimination and 41% involved peer to peer discrimination. For Hispanic and Latinx, 15% of all experiences of discrimination occurred in the classroom and 23% involved faculty and 38% involved peers.

*\*Not all racial and ethnic groups from the data are represented in the chart above because there was insufficient data to provide proportions or they did not provide enough details about the experiences to be included.*

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several overlapping, parallel red lines that form a series of diamond or parallelogram shapes, creating a textured, geometric pattern.

"I had a professor who made unwelcoming, rude comments all the time. In class black people are always pathologized or talked about in a way that discredits ability, agency, autonomy, and resilience."  
(Amber)

# In-Classroom Discrimination


When it comes to in-classroom experiences of discrimination at Loyola, I was interested in the classroom dynamics that allow for this. Two classroom dynamics of interests are the racial/ethnic identity of Professors and the racial/ethnic identity of scholars on the syllabi.

The survey asked if students had ever had a professor who shared their same racial/ethnic identity and if they had ever been assigned a reading from a scholar who shared their same racial/ethnic identity. These questions indirectly ask if having professors who share the same racial identity of students and having exposure to scholars who share the same racial identity as the students improves experiences in higher education for Students of Color. While not every student of color who reported discrimination experienced it in the classroom, discrimination in the classroom is particularly odious.

Theoretically, classrooms are equal learning spaces for all students. However, experiences of discrimination in the classroom can impact the well-being of students and their ability to learn. For the student, Shauna, who shared the experience of her professor targeting her skin tone in front of the class, she talked about the embarrassment and shock of the moment. Despite her shock, Shauna immediately had to continue with the class exercise and mask her feelings. Discrimination makes it harder to learn and engage meaningfully in the classroom.

The odiousness of in-classroom discrimination is furthered by the fact that professors should be a source of support for students not a source of harm. When professors allow for discriminatory language or behavior to go unchecked or, worse, are the cause of discrimination, not even the classroom is a safe and supportive space for students of color.





"People don't really understand me, where I'm from, or even what Palestine is. There's a large amount of ignorance about the culture and even the locations of other countries, and I've had a lot of conversations with students on campus that include micro-aggressions against Palestinians and Arab people in general. I feel sometimes like I just do not belong." (Nahid)



Exposure to Faculty and  
Scholars of Color at Loyola

## Exposure to Professors of the Same Race/Ethnicity

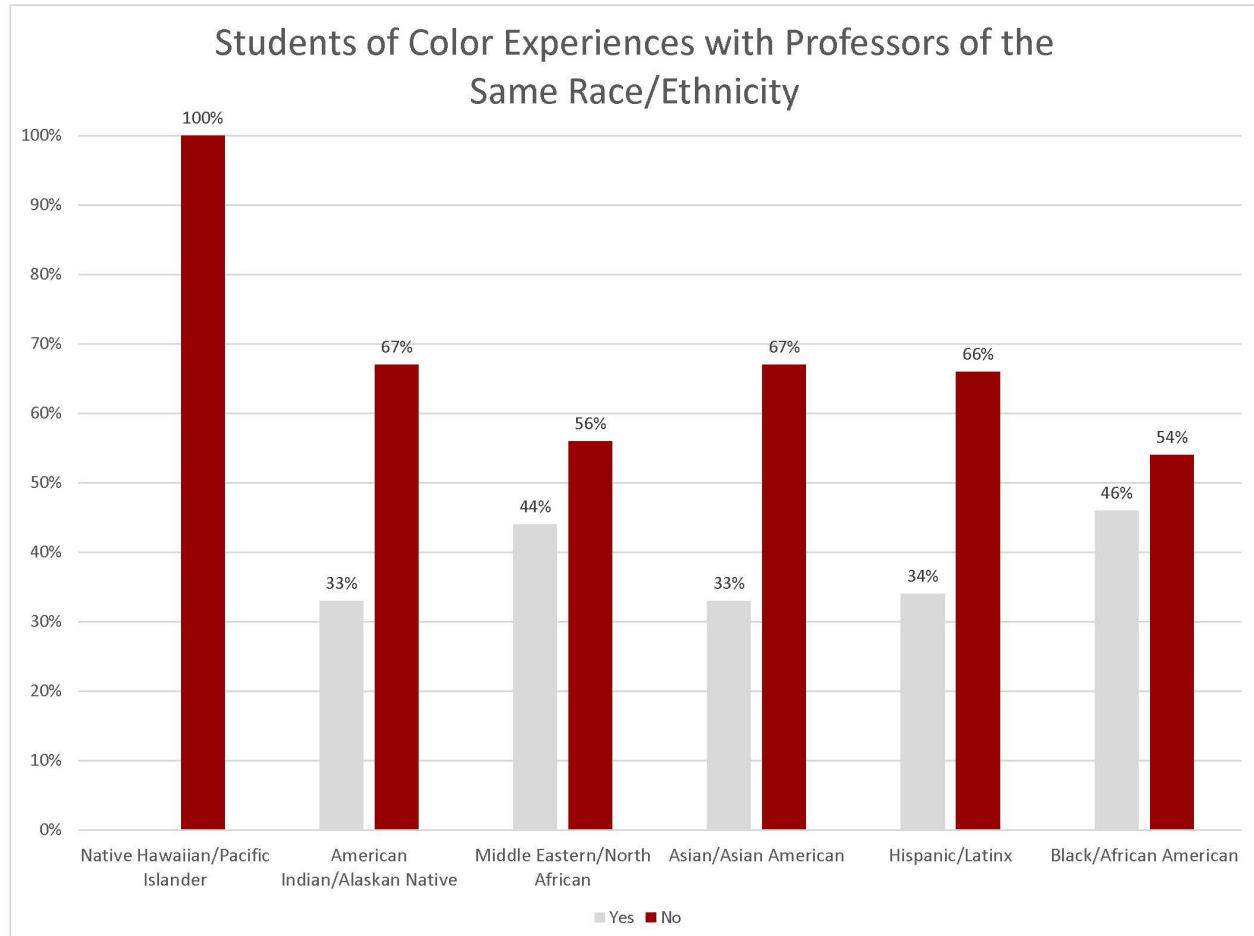


Figure 7. Exposure to Professors of the Same Race/Ethnicity

Like diversity, discrimination is structurally supported, but is experienced on the interpersonal level. While the students shared their interpersonal experiences of discrimination, those experiences are supported by a lack of accountability in the classroom, ineffective reporting structures and white-centered learning spaces that reify white dominance. Particularly within the classroom there are both symbolic (i.e. curricula) and authoritative (i.e. Faculty and Teacher's Assistance) power structures that impact the experiences of students of color. Faculty within the classroom represent a authoritative power structure within the classroom as they hold more power in the larger university context and more power over students.

## Exposure to Scholars of the Same Race/Ethnicity

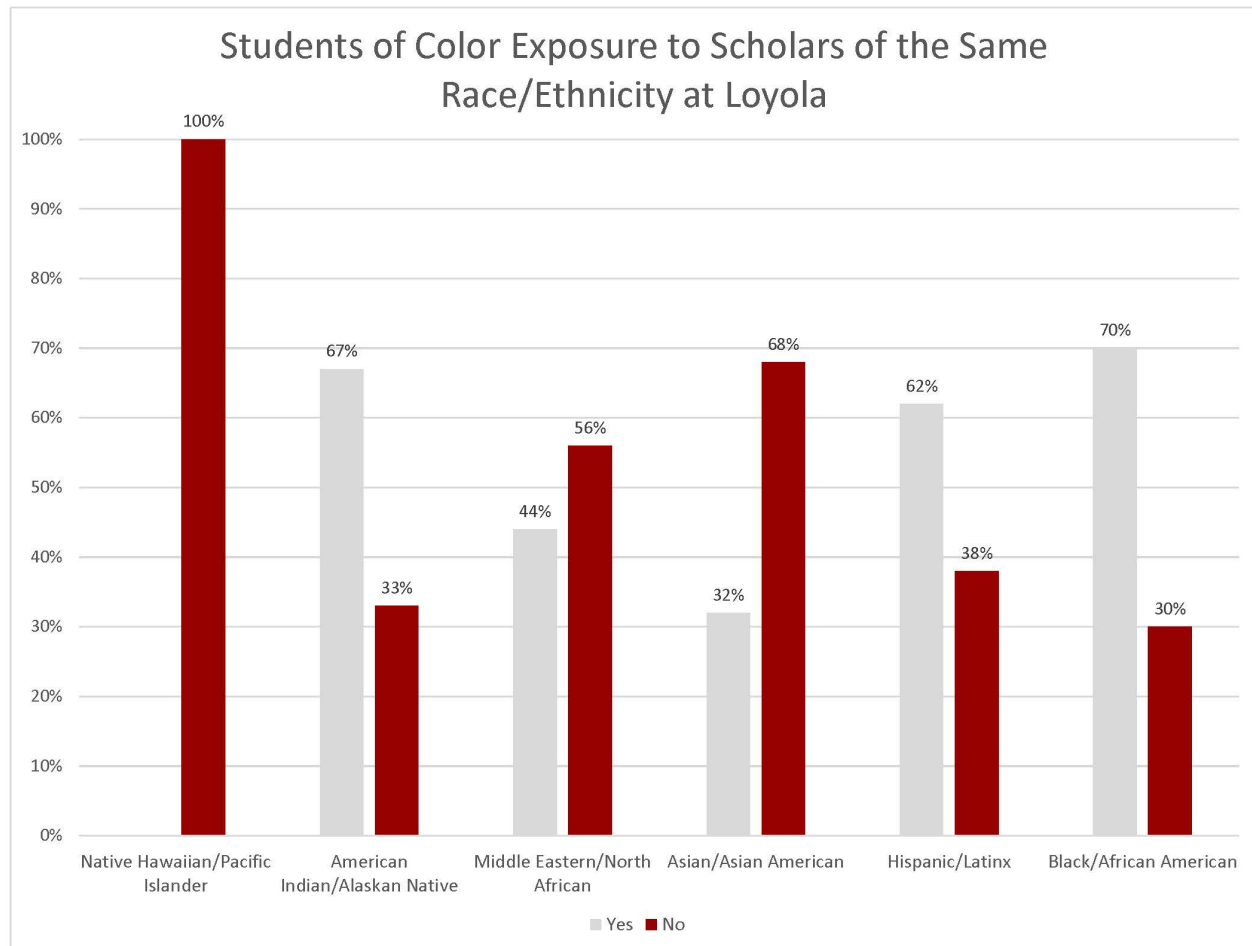


Figure 8. Exposure to Scholars of the Same Race/Ethnicity

Equally, the curriculum that faculty choose are a product of symbolic power structures within academia and are replicated in the classroom. When faculty choose to only include white and masculine scholars on the syllabus, they reify white patriarchal dominance within academia. For Master's and PhD-level students, this has the added effect of making them feel excluded from the very fields they hope to contribute valuable scholarship.

Students of color share that they seek role models of color in faculty, but are unable to find them: one student shared that she wants to "find a career in academia but [she doesn't] see people like [her] there" and another student described wanting to "see relatable role models in faculty and administration," but finding none. Still other students lamented the poor treatment of faculty of color. One student shared how hard it has been for him to see "faculty of color be disrespected, or staff of color with credentials to make them faculty but are not promoted." The visible lack of faculty of color and the treatment of the few faculty of color impacts students' of color views of themselves as potential scholars and faculty of color.

## In Total...

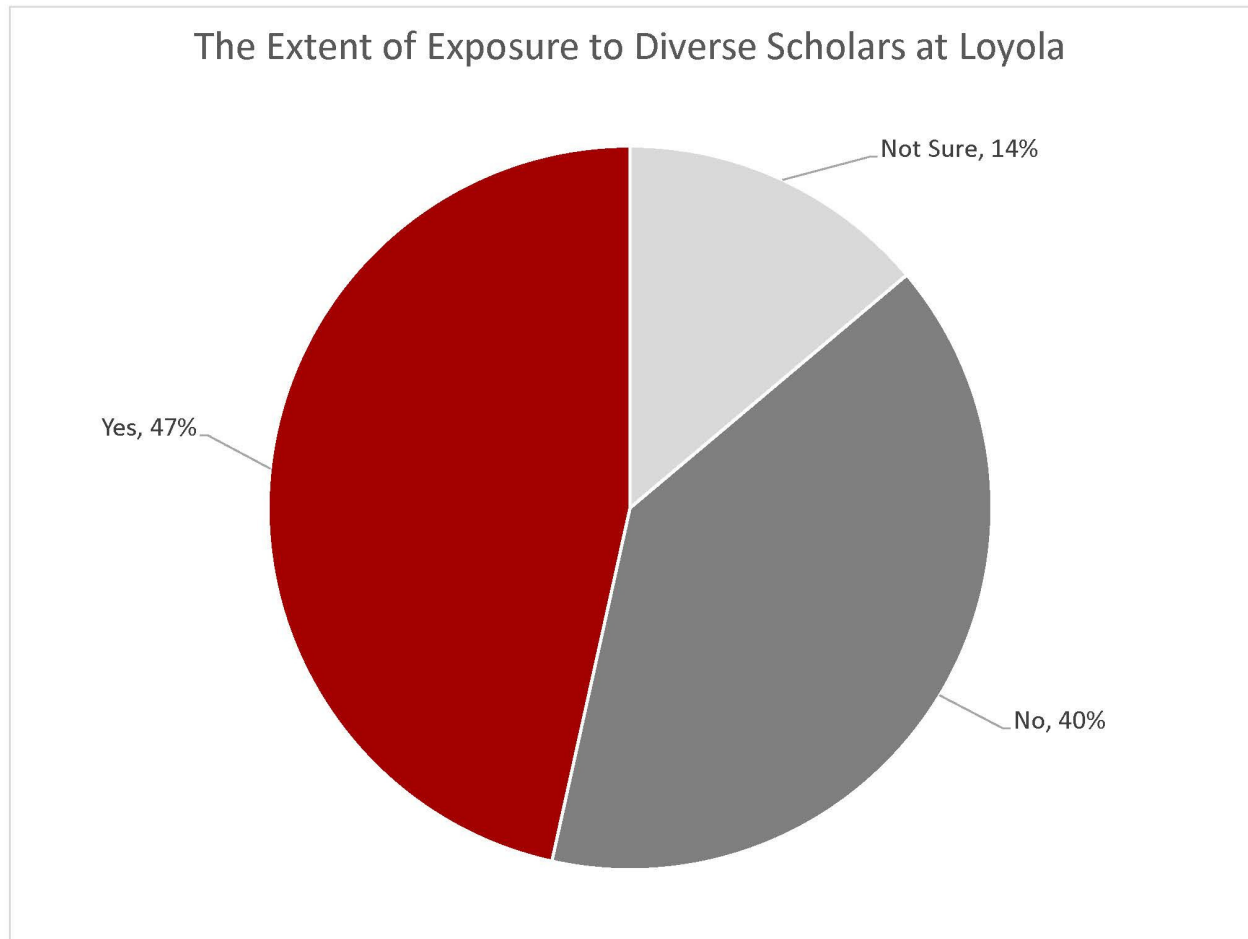


Figure 9. Students Shared the Extent of their Exposure to Diverse Scholars at Loyola

Although overall, 59% of students of color (or 109 students) said they have never had a professor who shared their racial or ethnic identity, 84% (Or 157) said they would like to have a professor who shares their racial or ethnic identity. Similarly, only 47% of students said they had exposure to scholars that shared their racial and ethnicity identity, while 93% (or 164 students) said they would like more exposure. Not only do students of color want more exposure, they're willing to seek it out:

The greatest challenge to attending a predominantly white institution is not having professors that share my identity. I have only had two and that is because I chose to take Intro to Latin American history and Latinx Politics. (Lena)

This student intentionally sought out professors of her same racial/ethnic background and has still only had two professors who met that qualification.

## Do Students Want Exposure to Diverse Scholars?

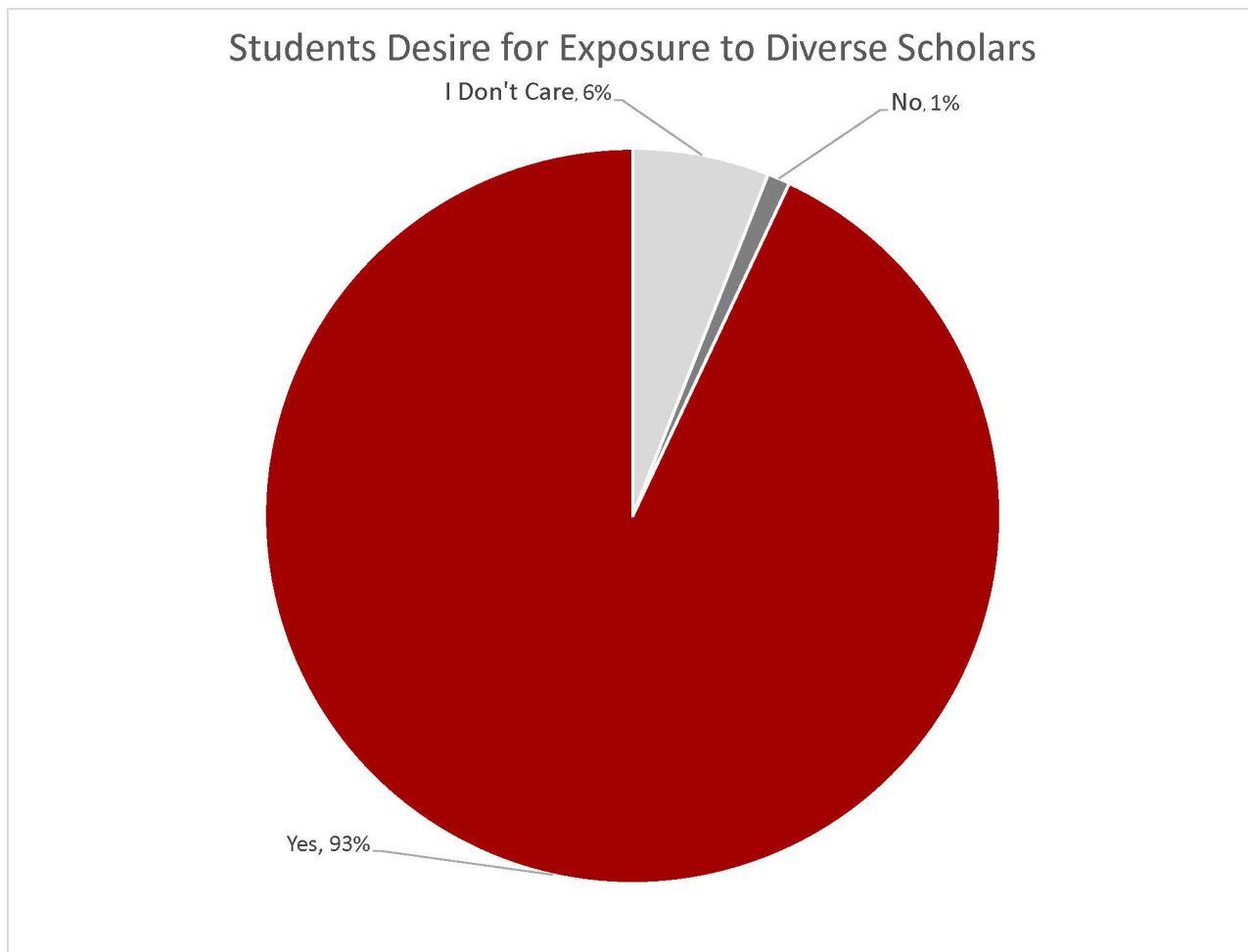



Figure 10. Student Share that They Overwhelmingly Want More Exposure to Diverse Scholars

There is an undeniable desire among students of color to have greater exposure to scholars and faculty of color. One student shared this desire and the disbelief that the contributions of people of color are so obviously ignored in a seminar course he took at Loyola:

Having more diverse faculty would be so nice. I am in a seminar class where speakers are brought in and every speaker has been a white man except for one who was a Chinese man. Am I supposed to believe no women out there are making a contribution to the chemistry field? And only one person of color? (Aran)

The data does not only show the desire for more exposure to scholars and faculty of color, it also demonstrates that these may in fact be more than preferences, but means of mitigating harm. Having more professors and scholars who share the racial and ethnic identities of students can reduce harm experienced within the classroom.



Is the desire for  
Professors or exposure  
to scholars that share  
the same racial/ethnic  
identity as students  
*just* a preference?

It may be true that having Professors that share your racial and ethnic identity and that being exposed to diverse scholars is a preference. In fact, it's a preference that can be met through attendance at Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs) or other Minority Serving Institutions (MSI). However, insofar as Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) are interested in redeveloping themselves to be Anti-Racist Institutions (ARIs), this *preference* needs to be addressed. More importantly, the harm caused by ignoring these preferences needs to be considered.



# 01 Harm:


## We don't belong here

"It feels like I can't relate to most of the people in my program and professors. I don't feel like I can be my full self. I get frustrated with people's perceptions of Latinos." (Alex)

"As a biracial student of color the biggest challenge of attending a PWI, is struggling to find employees at Loyola who also share the same identity as me. I have never had a professor who is a person of color...It's discouraging to attend classes with professors whom I am unable to relate with outside of the classroom, both from a cultural perspective and by societal expectations/stigma." (Lena)

"It is a challenge to find faculty that are aware of their whiteness and how they are contributing to inherently racist systems. I would like more faculty to acknowledge or talk about how their whiteness, or the whiteness of the classroom may be silencing other voices." (Maya)

"Not having resources allocated specially for people who hold my identities. It is a very pointed way of saying that someone like me does not belong." (Prasanna)



“Classes in Diversity  
and Inclusion being  
geared toward white  
folks and centering  
their learning”  
(Nadir)

# 02 Harm:

## We don't get to be *just* students

"The university really isn't equipped to assist students of color. So many of the professors here don't even know how to remedy the harm that students of color experience just with daily microaggressions. In the classroom, too many professors have allowed just about anything to be said for the sake of "discussion." My experience, and what I see lots of other students of color doing, is having to defend themselves/their communities or having to correct white students. It's maddening and tiring." (Lauren)

"I had one class with a professor that constantly expressed microaggressions against my Muslim identity. Because I was the only one in the class, it was difficult for me to express my concerns or address the harm he was causing let alone correcting the insulting misinformation he spewed. It made it very difficult to absorb any of the material I learned while also causing much anxiety every week. As it kept occurring every week and I shared the experience with close friends and colleagues, it sparked more conversation around how other professors have mistreated other students of color and students of diverse backgrounds. It truly opened my eyes to how often it happens both at the undergraduate and graduate level." (Pranav)

"As a student of color the biggest challenge is facing the expectations that because I'm a student of color I am also expected to speak on the behalf of those who look like me even though my experience is not exactly the same as those like me. It's also emotionally exhausting to be the person everyone in the class looks to to speak on topics of racism, gentrification, or general racial discrimination." (Mike)

“I often questioned what my professors and peers thought of me because all they seemed to know about Black people were negative things. It was exhausting having to discredit and bring “new” perspective to the classroom about things people should already know (aka contributions to research and academia by Black people, especially in Psychology). It’s a shame that we talk about race and inclusivity, but Janet Helms is never mentioned.” (Sheila)



# 03 Harm:

## We can't imagine ourselves as Scholars

"I want to find a career in academia but I don't see people like me there." (Mehtarab)

"I want to be able to see relatable role models in faculty and administration." (Maya)

"Seeing faculty of color be disrespected, or staff of color with credentials to make them faculty but are not promoted." (Kira)

"The hardest part about attending a PWI is the invisibility" (Rhea)

"The challenge for me is to look like I am American, to talk as if I am American and to engage socially as if I am an American. I have had to adapt to this academic and American environment to be successful" (Rahul)

# But Did They Report it?

Outside of the classroom, students seek structural supports and remedies for harm caused by discrimination but find few. In fact, several students made specific mention of the lack of structural support: for example, advisors discriminating against them, grade grievance appeals and conduct hearings that ignored their evidence and favored white students. It isn't surprising that only 44% of students said they reported the discrimination with a Loyola staff or faculty member. Only one student sharing using 'Ethicsline' specifically. Unfortunately, for those who reported their experience, 72% said nothing was done about it.

Further, even if the cases of discrimination were not reported, many of the experiences occurred during class in front of faculty or, worse by faculty members. Anytime faculty, an advisor or person in power in the university does not reprimand or hold accountable discriminatory language or behavior, they reify structural supports for discrimination within higher education. Indeed, one student shared that the greatest challenge they face attending Loyola is "knowing that nothing will be done to protect me or handle the racism made against me. I'm alone here." Lack of remedy and support in the face of discrimination makes students of color feel isolated and further compounds distrust in systems within Higher Ed.

The data highlighted the ubiquity of distrust in systems of reporting amongst students of color. One system for reporting at Loyola is called "ethicsline." It is an online reporting hotline available to all Loyola students, staff and faculty to "report suspected or wrongful acts of conduct by Loyola University Chicago faculty, staff or administrators." Firstly, only one student mentioned using "ethicsline" to report discriminatory misconduct and another student used the "end-of-semester surveys" to report discrimination.

Both students shared they did not know if anything happened after they made the report. Still another student mentioned going through the Loyola conduct hearing process and her evidence not being treated equally and the accused student not receiving any disciplinary action. The remainder of the students spoke directly to faculty, staff or other students about their experiences. One student shared that they didn't report it because "honestly, I just wanted to forget it ever happened and knew nothing would change" and another shared her reason for not reporting:

I did not feel that I could make any larger changes within the departmental or university environment that concretely addressed harm that was happening to students of color constantly. I think also hearing past stories of faculty not taking concerns of students of color seriously made it even harder for myself to act on such institutionalized practices. (Yashir)


There is a general sense that nothing will be done to remedy or support students of color in the case of discrimination. Therefore, students of color rely on support from people they trust (some faculty, staff and other students of color), but forego a system they distrust. Outside of the classroom, reporting structures are an example of another power structure within higher education institutions. These structures are an opportunity for equitable treatment and support, but they repeatedly fail students of color. Between the discrimination faced by students of color, both in and out of the classroom, and the disempowerment for creating change with regards to those experiences, there is significant work to be done at Loyola to better support students of color in Higher Education and to make PWIs safe and supportive learning spaces for all students.



# Concluding Thoughts



We cannot continue to treat incidents of discrimination as incidental. They are not. Discrimination at the interpersonal level is a product of structural discrimination; it is supported and sustained through power dynamics inside the classroom and within the university at large. Every time you do not promote a qualified person of color or ignore the complaint of a student of color, or construct a syllabus without thoughtfully including the critical work of scholars of color, you are directly supporting the power dynamics that reify white dominance and supremacy in academia.



## Less of a conclusion, more of a call to action

The classroom is still one of the most segregated spaces in America. From the syllabi that only include white men scholar's work to the predominantly white faculty, the classroom is the perfect unit of analysis for understanding persistent forms of discrimination within education. Furthermore, the classroom environment highlights both the structural supports and the interpersonal experience of discrimination. As this study showed, students experience discrimination at the hands of professors and students in the classroom and when they try to report these instances nothing is done. These dynamics all speak to the present-day structural supports for discrimination. This is not just a thought experiment. As both a student and scholar of color, specifically a Black woman, I care deeply about and sadly, share many of experiences captured by students of color in this study. As a sociologist with a background in public policy, I am interested in public and applied sociology that doesn't end research papers with a period, but rather a question mark. Namely, what can we do about this?

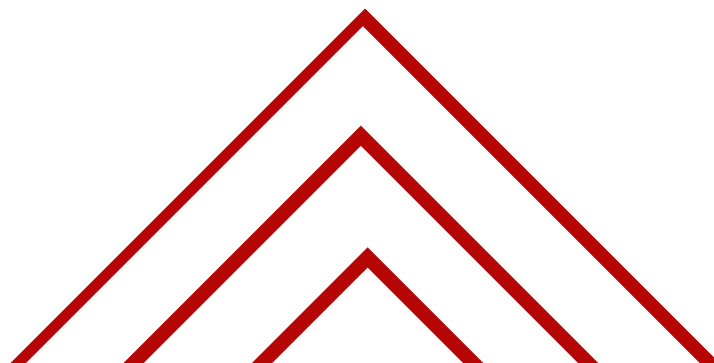
Academic and activist, Rachel Cargle answered this question, in part with a post she made about the structural supports for white dominance which lead to discrimination, namely whitewashed syllabi:

Academic institutions need to actively address the whitewashing of their teaching materials. It's unacceptable to have reading lists quilted with all things white and male. To suggest all expertise is at the tongue of men or only obtained through the lens of whiteness. Syllabi need to be scoured, scrubbed and reimaged to include - and in every chance possible should center - marginalized voices as an act of intention toward being an inclusive place for learning. (Cargle, 2020)

Cargle presents the solution as an invitation to reimagine academia as we've come to know it. As scholars and educators, we ought to assess our goals and align our teaching materials to fit those goals. Is the goal to build equitable diverse learning spaces or to continue to uphold white-centered learning spaces where we invite students of color to learn about white superiority?


In the words of Jeff Chang, *who is diversity for?* If it turns out that diversity is for all students, faculty, staff and the university at-large, then we must reconstruct the university and the power structures within the university to better support all students, faculty and staff equitably. Right now, syllabi, faculty and other support structures reify white dominance and cause disproportionate harm to students of color. Tackling discrimination today means confronting subtle and structural discrimination and the ways we support the existence of both. Increasing diversity in the student body or faculty membership isn't as exciting as having more diverse students and faculty members who feel respected and a sense of belonging in the academic space. What I've aimed to show is that as issues of discrimination incorporate power dynamics and occur on both the structural and interpersonal level, diversity efforts ought to take structural and interpersonal approaches.

We cannot continue to treat incidents of discrimination as incidental. They are not. Discrimination at the interpersonal level is a product of structural discrimination; it is supported and sustained through power dynamics inside the classroom and within the university at large. Every time you do not promote a qualified person of color or ignore the complaint of a student of color, or construct a syllabus without thoughtfully including the critical work of scholars of color you are directly supporting the power dynamics that reify white dominance and supremacy in academia. Whether subconsciously or consciously, students of color find it hard to imagine themselves as scholars of color and to imagine that their contributions to their respective fields will matter. There can be no equal treatment or equal outcomes in an educational system that segregates scholars by race and ethnicity rather than by subject matter. If we cannot construct safe and supportive learning spaces for all students, then we must reexamine our approaches to diversity. Finally, we must challenge the ways in which we measure diversity because there is a significant difference between being invited and being glad you came.



At its best, diversity is an instrument that increases the quality of our work, school and life spaces by expanding our experiences, knowledge and understanding of people and the world beyond our limited personal spheres. It is not an end itself, but a means to a more equitable world.

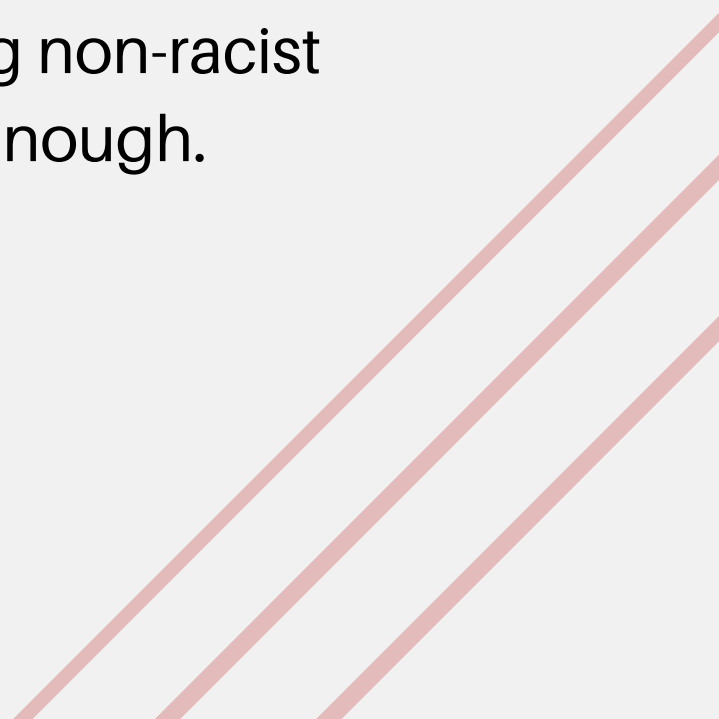
However, none of the best of diversity can be accessed or achieved if we do not first dismantle the very structures that make our diversity efforts necessary.





Anti-Racism  
at  
Loyola

Anti-Racism work is WORK. No one and no organization can label itself as "anti-racist," without engaging that work. And the work begins when we are honest about our starting point. For many people and organizations this will mean acknowledging their racism and for others, this will mean coming to terms with that fact that being non-racist simply is not enough.



# Recommended Anti-Racist Work at Loyola

## 1. Loyola Faculty and staff must do their OWN work:

- DO YOUR OWN WORK to produce safe and diverse learning spaces, which includes calling out discriminatory, microaggressive and ignorant comments in class
- DO Research, google, ask experts, or participate in trainings/workshops when you have questions or are interested in unpacking your biases
- Do NOT rely on students to tell you how to treat and teach them/their community

## 2. Loyola Departments must develop diverse curriculum that incorporates the critical work of Scholars of Color:

- NO syllabus should ever be ALL white or ALL male
- NO syllabus should only include ONE non-white and non-male scholar
- Loyola needs to integrate annual reviews of curricula/syllabi to stay appraised on diverse scholars and emerging work in the field. Not only will this improve the quality of the education offered, but it will eliminate the reification of white supremacy in the classroom by filtering in the work of scholars of color

## 3. We need to adapt the way we measure diversity at Loyola. Current metrics focus on the numbers, but eschew the disparate experiences of the diverse people we've invited to share the Loyola experience

# For Faculty of Color

The three recommendations are by no means the only work necessary for Loyola to become an Anti-Racist Institution (ARI), but a first step in line with the findings of this report. Other crucial steps have been outlined by the Executive Board of Loyola's Black Graduate Student Alliance (BGSA) and the Black Cultural Center (BCC).

In addition, this report has focused specifically on the experiences of students of color, but the experiences of staff and faculty of color are also important to this conversation. There are actions Loyola needs to take with regards to faculty and staff of color: (1) Loyola should examine and address the high-turnover of faculty of color on both the department-level and the university-level, (2) support hiring more faculty of color and (3) promote qualified persons of color at Loyola.

Learning how Loyola can support its persons of color includes understanding the needs of faculty and staff of color who are essential to both the function of the university and to creating a safe and supportive learning environment for students of color.



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