

Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey

Key Findings Report

FEBRUARY 2021

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

Office of Assessment and Planning

BACKGROUND

In June 2020 Brigham Young University (BYU) formed the Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging (CoREB) to examine race and inequality issues at BYU. The creation of this committee under President Kevin J Worthen was in response to the call of leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for educational institutions to “review processes, laws, and organizational attitudes regarding racism and root them out.”¹

As part of this ongoing effort, President Worthen invited students and employees to complete the national Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey. The purpose was to help the university understand attitudes regarding diversity and equity on a number of topics and to develop plans to improve the campus experience for all students and employees.

These data complement the qualitative data collected by CoREB. The committee’s work included numerous meetings with students, alumni, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as more than 500 submissions to race.byu.edu of experiences and perspectives from members of the campus community.

The HEDS survey assessed the following key topics:

- ◆ Overall campus climate
- ◆ Experiences with discrimination and harassment at BYU
- ◆ Interactions with people from various backgrounds
- ◆ Activities that have influenced personal support for diversity and equity

The HEDS survey defined discrimination and harassment as follows:

- ◆ Discrimination is the unfavorable treatment of a person based on that person’s race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, or political beliefs.
- ◆ Harassment is a form of discrimination consisting of physical or verbal conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, or political beliefs. Harassment occurs when the conduct is sufficiently severe and/or pervasive that it alters the terms or conditions of employment or substantially limits the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the college’s educational and/or social programs.

At the recommendation of a CoREB member, the university added questions to the HEDS survey from the color-blind racial attitudes scale short form.² These questions assess “the extent to which individuals deny, distort, and/or minimize the existence of racism and racial issues.”³

Starting October 13, 2020, BYU sent email invitations to 34,840 BYU undergraduate and graduate students and 6,289 employees (faculty, staff, or administrator). Respondents received up to three reminders. The survey was closed on November 25, 2020.

1. Russell M. Nelson, Derrick Johnson, Leon Russell, and Amos C. Brown, “Locking Arms for Racial Harmony in America,” *Medium*, June 8, 2020, https://medium.com/@Ch_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37.

2. Helen A. Neville, Roderick L. Lilly, Georgia Duran, Richard M. Lee, and LaVonne Browne, “Construction and Initial Validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS),” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 47, no. 1 (January 2000): 59, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.1.59>.

3. Helen A. Neville, V. Paul Poteat, Jioni A. Lewis, and Lisa B. Spanierman, “Changes in White College Students’ Color-Blind Racial Ideology Over 4 Years: Do Diversity Experiences Make a Difference?” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 61, no. 2 (April 2014): 179, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035168>.

A total of 19,628 persons (48 percent of the sample) responded to at least one survey question; 19,552 responded to a question about their role at the university. These respondents included 15,782 students (45 percent of the student sample), and 3,671 employees (58 percent of the employee sample), and 99 who categorized their role at the university as “other.” Demographic data revealed the survey participants to be very similar to the broader BYU population regarding gender, ethnicity, year in school, and other measures. Before sharing the raw data with BYU, the HEDS Consortium removed all identifying data. To preserve anonymity, they grouped responses for race and ethnicity to non-White and White only (respondents could select more than one race or ethnicity). Therefore BYU is not able to make conclusions based on specific racial or ethnic groups.

For this report, responses of “often” or “very often” are combined and reported as “often.” Similarly, “satisfied” or “very satisfied” are reported as “satisfied,” and “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” are reported as “dissatisfied.”

This report provides a summary of the key findings from BYU’s Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Age

| | Younger than 25 | 25–34 | 35–44 | 45–54 | 55–64 | 65 or older |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Undergraduate Student | 93% | 6% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Graduate Student | 34% | 51% | 9% | 5% | 1% | 0% |
| Faculty | 0% | 9% | 30% | 28% | 24% | 9% |
| Staff/Administrator | 4% | 15% | 22% | 24% | 26% | 8% |

Gender

| | Woman | Man |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| Undergraduate Student | 53% | 47% |
| Graduate Student | 50% | 50% |
| Faculty | 34% | 66% |
| Staff/Administrator | 48% | 52% |

Ethnicity

| | Non-White | White |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|
| Undergraduate Student | 19% | 81% |
| Graduate Student | 23% | 77% |
| Faculty | 11% | 89% |
| Staff/Administrator | 12% | 88% |

KEY FINDINGS

Overall Campus Climate

The majority of students and employees (80 percent) reported satisfaction with the overall BYU campus climate. Nine percent were dissatisfied.⁴

Most survey results varied by gender and race/ethnicity. In many cases, but not all, these differences were 10 percentage points or more. For example, fewer non-White respondents (71 percent) reported satisfaction than White respondents (82 percent). Similarly, more non-White respondents (13 percent) reported dissatisfaction than White respondents (8 percent). Eighty-three percent of men were satisfied, while 78 percent of women felt the same.

Though most students and employees reported satisfaction with the overall climate, many acknowledge that there are tensions on campus related to individual or group differences. Overall, 45 percent of respondents disagreed that the campus is *free* of tensions. Non-White respondents (46 percent) and White respondents (45 percent) held similar views.

The BYU Campus Experience/Environment Regarding Diversity

There was overwhelming agreement (88 percent) that campus diversity improves experiences and interactions within the classroom, the workplace, and the overall community; 3 percent disagreed.

When asked about satisfaction with the BYU campus experience/environment regarding diversity, about half of respondents (53 percent) reported being satisfied. Overall, 24 percent were dissatisfied.

As with the overall campus climate, the results varied along gender and racial/ethnic lines. Fewer non-White respondents (45 percent) reported satisfaction than White respondents (55 percent). Similarly, more non-White respondents (33 percent) reported dissatisfaction than White respondents (22 percent).

Among women, 46 percent were satisfied with the campus experience/environment regarding diversity, while 59 percent of men were satisfied. There were similar differences in dissatisfaction, with 30 percent of women and 18 percent of men being dissatisfied.

A Sense of Belonging and Community

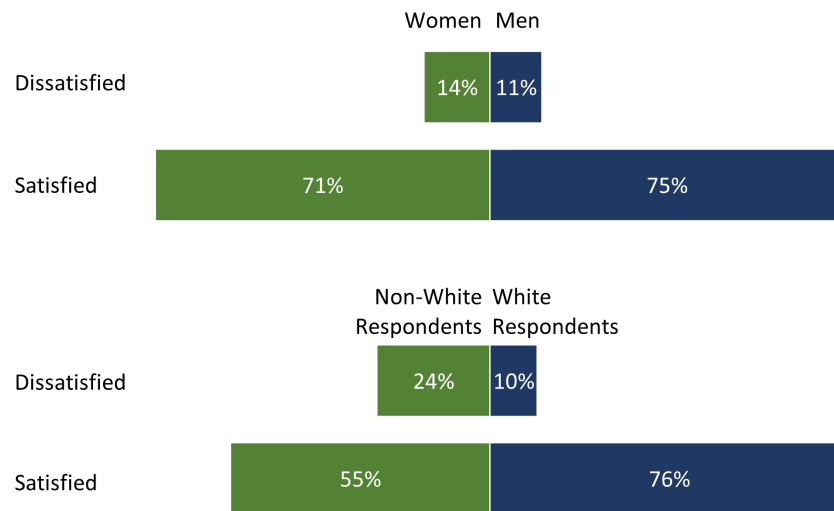
Another measure of the campus climate is the degree to which people feel a sense of belonging and community. The majority of respondents (72 percent) reported being satisfied with the extent to which they experience a sense of belonging and community. Thirteen percent were dissatisfied.

As with the overall campus climate results, satisfaction with their sense of belonging and community varied along gender and racial/ethnic lines (see Figure 1). Fewer non-White respondents (55 percent) reported satisfaction than White respondents (76 percent). Similarly, more non-White respondents (24 percent) than White respondents (10 percent) expressed dissatisfaction. Fewer women (71 percent) reported satisfaction related to belonging and community than men (75 percent).

Both faculty and undergraduate students reported satisfaction with a sense of belonging and community. Satisfaction was slightly higher among faculty (79 percent satisfied) than undergraduate students (70 percent satisfied). Fourteen percent of undergraduate students and 9 percent of faculty reported dissatisfaction with their sense of belonging and community at BYU.

4. The question response options included “neither agree nor disagree” or “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.”

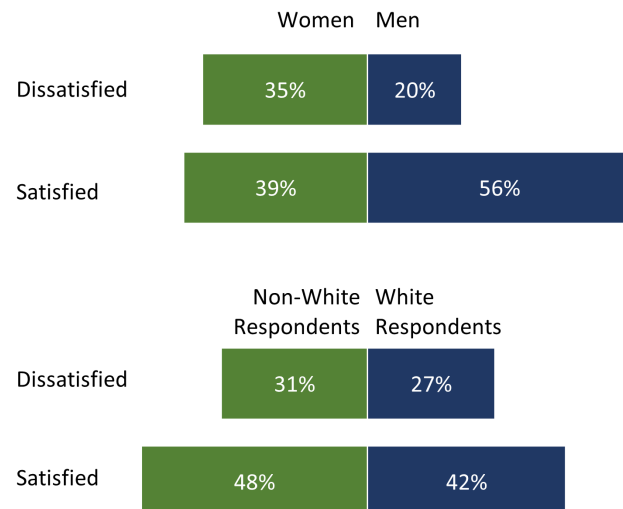
Figure 1. Satisfaction with the Extent to Which *They* Experience a Sense of Belonging and Community at BYU, by Gender and Race



Respondents recognize that not all students and employees feel a sense of community—only 47 percent were satisfied with the extent to which all BYU community members feel a sense of belonging. Just over a quarter (28 percent) were dissatisfied.

In contrast to the campus climate data reported above, there is consistency across race/ethnicity for satisfaction with how the whole community experiences belonging (see Figure 2). Similar percentages of non-White respondents (31 percent) and White respondents (27 percent) reported dissatisfaction with the sense of belonging and community that students and employees experience. Rates were similar for satisfaction (42 percent for non-White respondents and 48 percent for White respondents). Rates on this measure for faculty respondents were 43 percent satisfied and 31 percent dissatisfied. Among undergraduate student respondents, 46 percent were satisfied and 38 percent dissatisfied. In contrast, more men (56 percent) than women (39 percent) were satisfied with the extent to which all community members experience a sense of belonging.

Figure 2. Satisfaction with the Extent to Which *All* Community Members Experience a Sense of Belonging and Community at BYU, by Gender and Race



Institutional Priorities

BYU President Kevin J Worthen has spoken publicly about his commitment to diversity and belonging, including in his opening devotional address to the BYU community on September 8, 2020. In that talk, he shared:

I hope that each of you feels fully a part of the BYU community and that every one of you feels you belong here at BYU. As I mentioned at the recent university conference, I hope that we can each develop “a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of” all of God’s children, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or other distinguishing feature, each of which is secondary to our common identity as “beloved spirit [children] of heavenly parents.” I hope we can learn to have difficult conversations without being difficult, because those kinds of conversations, held in love, will be necessary if we are to be a true Zion community.⁵

In June 2020 he issued the following statement:

With the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others over the years, and the confluence of recent events, important conversations are happening throughout the nation, including at BYU.

We extend our love and concern to all members of our university community who are impacted by these events.

We know there is work to do, on campus and throughout the nation, for us to better come together, to address injustice and to truly love one another. It will take sustained effort from all of us to make things better. We remain committed to doing that. We can do that in a unique way at BYU because of our understanding of the important truth that each of us are children of heavenly parents.

BYU stands firmly against racism and violence in any form and is committed to promoting a culture of safety, kindness, respect, and love.

As we continue to move forward together, let us do so with charity. Let us be kind. Let us respect others. Let us listen. Let us follow the example of Jesus Christ.⁶

Fifty-nine percent of respondents agreed that senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to diversity and equity on the BYU campus. Fourteen percent disagreed with this statement. Thirty-nine percent of respondents agreed that the recruitment of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority. Slightly more (43 percent) agreed that the retention of these persons is a priority.

Both non-White respondents (36 percent) and White respondents (39 percent) agreed that recruitment is an institutional priority, and both non-White respondents (39 percent) and White respondents (44 percent) agreed that retention is an institutional priority. On these questions, a third of respondents selected “neither agree nor disagree.”

Views about BYU’s senior leadership commitment to diversity and equity varied across racial and ethnic lines. Fewer non-White respondents (49 percent) agreed that senior leadership is committed to diversity and equity than White respondents (61 percent). Likewise, 19 percent of non-White respondents disagreed about senior leadership’s commitment, and 12 percent of White respondents disagreed. Rates of agreement were similar among faculty (61 percent) and undergraduate students (57 percent), as were rates of disagreement (19 percent for faculty and 13 percent for undergraduate students).

5. Kevin J Worthen, “The Process and Power of Hope,” BYU Devotional, September 8, 2020, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/process-power-hope/>.

6. Kevin J Worthen, “A Message from BYU President Kevin J Worthen,” BYU News, June 2, 2020, <https://news.byu.edu/announcements/a-message-from-byu-president-kevin-j-worthen>.

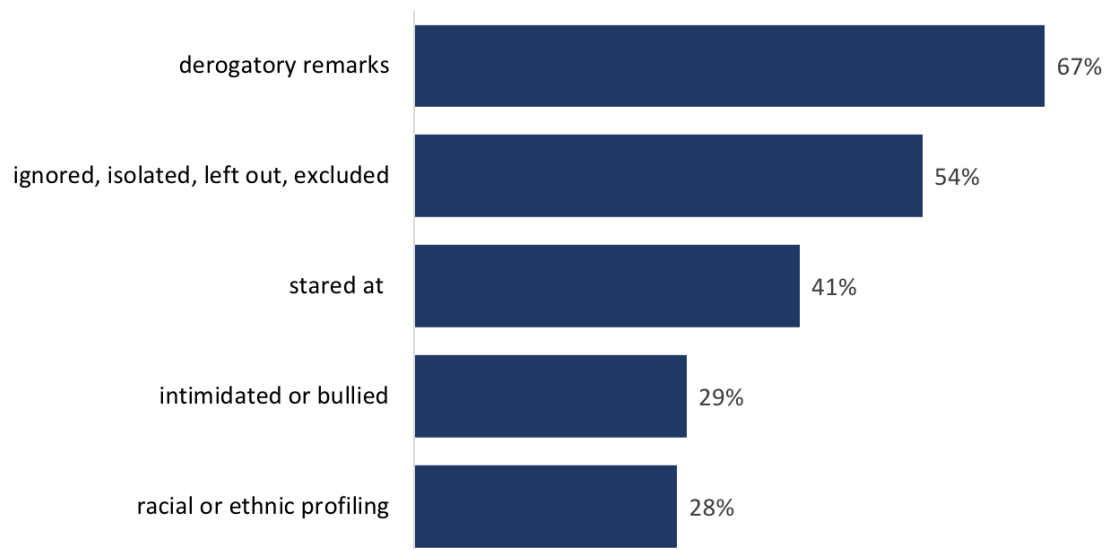
Experiences with Discrimination or Harassment at BYU

Sixteen percent of respondents (N = 3,144) said they had experienced discrimination or harassment on the BYU campus, at an off-campus residence, or at a BYU-affiliated off-campus program or event. Sixty-one percent of those respondents (N = 1,931) reported incidents that happened in the last year.

Forms of Discrimination or Harassment

Respondents who reported experiencing discrimination or harassment in the last year were also asked what form the discrimination or harassment took (N = 1,917). The most common forms experienced in the previous year (see Figure 3) were receiving derogatory remarks (67 percent); being ignored, isolated, left out, or excluded (54 percent); being stared at (41 percent); being intimidated or bullied (29 percent); and experiencing racial or ethnic profiling (28 percent).

Figure 3. Forms of Discrimination or Harassment Experienced *in the Last Year* by BYU Students and Employees (of 1,917 respondents who experienced discrimination or harassment in the last year)



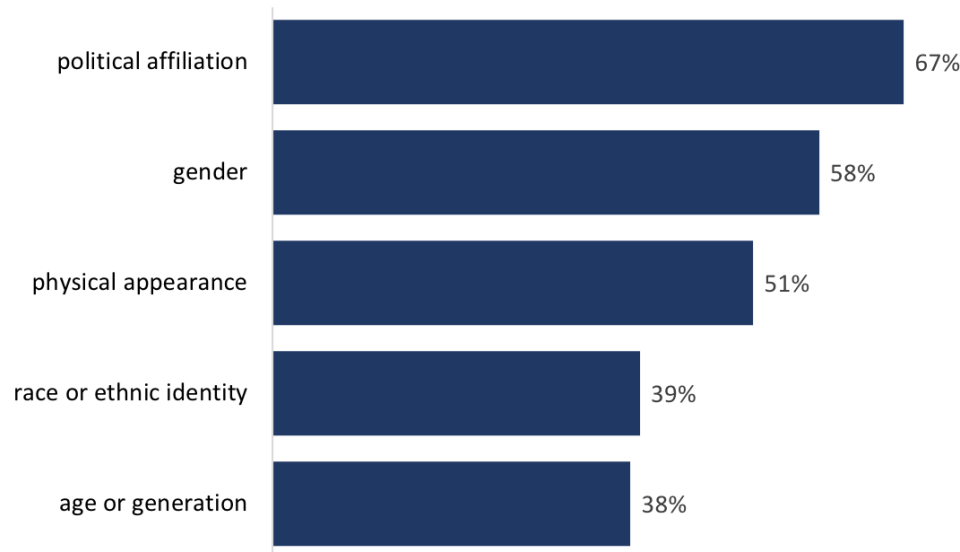
There were few between-group differences in forms of discrimination and harassment. The following data represent a subset of the 16 percent of respondents who experienced discrimination, who also experienced it in the last year (N = 1,917). Of these, 55 percent of the non-White respondents reported being stared at, and 33 percent of White respondents said the same. More women (44 percent) than men (34 percent) also reported staring as harassment. As expected, non-White respondents (67 percent) reported experiencing racial and ethnic profiling more often than White respondents (7 percent).

Reasons for Discrimination or Harassment

Of those respondents who have ever experienced harassment or discrimination at BYU (16 percent), the perceived reasons (see Figure 4) were not limited to race or ethnic identity (39 percent of the 16 percent) but

included political affiliation (67 percent of the 16 percent), gender (58 percent of the 16 percent), physical appearance (51 percent of the 16 percent), and age or generation (38 percent of the 16 percent).

Figure 4. Reasons for Discrimination or Harassment Experienced by BYU Students and Employees (of the 16 percent who have experienced discrimination or harassment)



Women more often reported gender and race as the reason for discrimination. Of those who had experienced discrimination or harassment due to gender, 40 percent of women reported experiencing this often, compared to 25 percent of men. Of those who reported experiencing discrimination or harassment based on race, 42 percent of women reported this happening often, while 36 percent of men said this happened often.

Non-White respondents reported physical appearance-related discrimination or harassment, while White respondents reported gender discrimination or harassment. Of those experiencing physical appearance-related discrimination or harassment, 34 percent of non-White respondents said this happened often, while 19 percent of White respondents said it happened often. However, of those experiencing gender-related discrimination and harassment, 33 percent of non-White respondents said this happened often, while 39 percent of White respondents stated it was often.

Of those who experienced discrimination or harassment due to racial or ethnic issues, 48 percent of non-White respondents said it happened often, while 18 percent of White respondents said the same.

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment

BYU has official discrimination complaint procedures and a sexual misconduct policy. However, only 37 percent of all students and employees agreed that they knew whom to contact if they experienced or observed an act of discrimination or harassment; 49 percent disagreed. More faculty (58 percent) and staff/administrators (62 percent) agreed that they knew whom to contact, compared to 31 percent of undergraduate students.

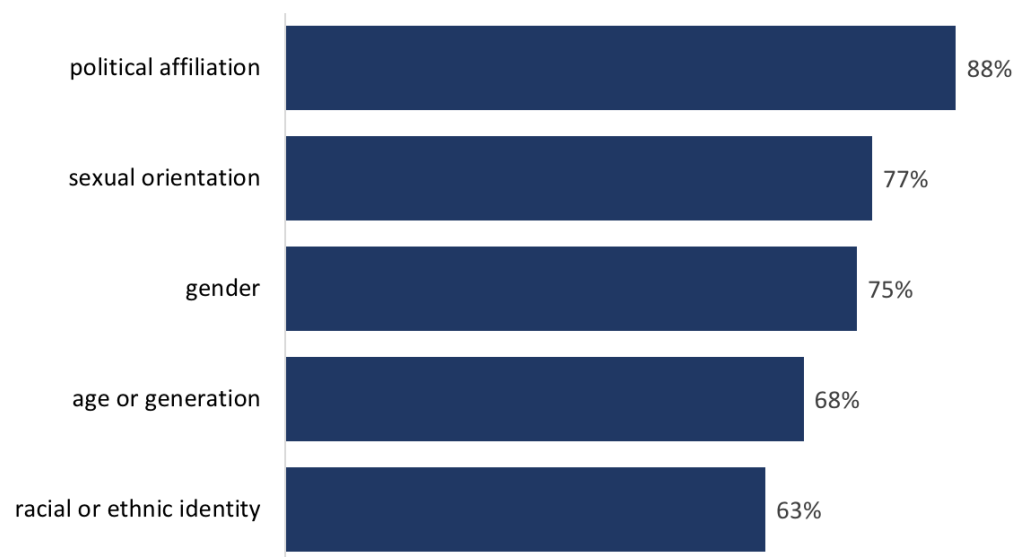
Similarly, few respondents agreed that that the process for reporting (28 percent) and the process for investigating (22 percent) discrimination or harassment at BYU are clear.

Insensitive or Disparaging Remarks about People

Although the rate of experiencing discrimination and harassment was 16 percent, the majority of respondents (73 percent) said that during their time at BYU they had heard someone make an insensitive or disparaging remark about people. Of those who had heard disparaging remarks, 95 percent had heard remarks from students, 50 percent from faculty, and less than 40 percent from staff and administrative employees. It should be noted that the majority of the sample was students, so it is somewhat expected that they would be the source of the comments more often than employees.

Among those who reported hearing insensitive and disparaging remarks, the most common topics (see Figure 5) are similar to the reasons for discrimination and harassment: political affiliation (88 percent), sexual orientation (77 percent), gender (75 percent), particular age or generation (68 percent), and racial or ethnic identity (63 percent).

Figure 5. Most Common Topics of Disparaging or Insensitive Remarks Heard by BYU Students and Employees (of the 73 percent who reported hearing disparaging or insensitive remarks)



There were some notable differences across gender and racial/ethnic lines. Thirty-six percent of non-White respondents who heard comments about racial and/or ethnic identity said they heard them often, while 18 percent of White respondents heard them often. Of those who reported hearing disparaging or insensitive comments about gender, 35 percent of women heard them often; 22 percent of men heard them often.

Interactions with People from Various Backgrounds

The majority of respondents feel comfortable interacting with persons from various backgrounds. This includes differences in racial or ethnic identity (97 percent), nationality (97 percent), gender (95 percent), political affiliation (86 percent), and sexual orientation (83 percent).

Activities That Have Influenced Personal Support for Diversity and Equity

The majority of respondents said that the following activities had increased their support for diversity and equity: performed community service (78 percent); participated in discussions, training, or activities on racial or ethnic issues (64 percent) or on religious diversity issues (60 percent); or participated in discussions or activities concerning political issues (63 percent).

In contrast, about half of the respondents had *not* participated in discussions, training, or activities on immigration issues (50 percent), socio-economic status issues (49 percent), or disability issues (47 percent).

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes

Besides observing overt forms of racism, social researchers have found that racism often manifests in subtle ways. One of these subtle forms of racism is called “color-blind racism,” which is rooted in the notion that we live in a post-racial society; color-blind racism includes the belief that race should not and does not matter. This leads to the belief that not talking about race relations is actually a necessary step in creating a just society. Empirical studies, however, have demonstrated that we are not in a post-racial society.

The color-blind attitudes scale offers understanding about the depth of this color-blind logic throughout a community. The higher the score, the higher the prevalence of these attitudes. Research also shows that higher scores are significantly associated with greater racial prejudice.⁷

Researchers using the color-blind racial attitudes scale short form among college students nationwide have reported a mean score of 3.21 to 3.49,⁸ and 3.14 for Asian Americans, 2.74 for Black/Latino, and 3.47 for Whites (in a range of 1–6).⁹

BYU results were similar for non-White respondents (3.33) and White respondents (3.34). However, BYU scores were higher for men (3.40) than for women (3.27). This gender disparity is consistent with data from other researchers who indicate that “women on average are more sensitive to social injustices than their male counterparts.”¹⁰ This statement is also consistent with the BYU data regarding the extent to which all community members feel a sense of belonging or community, where women were less likely to be satisfied with how much others feel belonging and community. Additionally, of those respondents who heard disparaging or insensitive comments about race, more women (25 percent) than men (16 percent) reported hearing such comments often.

7. Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, and Browne, “Construction and Initial Validation.”

8. Neville, Poteat, Lewis, and Spanierman, “Changes in White College Students’ Color-Blind Racial Ideology.”

9. Lisa B. Spanierman, Helen A. Neville, Hsin-Ya Liao, Joseph H. Hammer, and Ying-Fen Wang, “Participation in Formal and Informal Campus Diversity Experiences: Effects on Students’ Racial Democratic Beliefs,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 1, no. 2 (June 2008): 108, <https://doi.org/10.1037/1938-8926.1.2.108>.

10. Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, and Browne, “Construction and Initial Validation.”

CONCLUSION

Overall, students and employees feel positive about the BYU climate. However, there is room to improve the climate to be more welcoming for all students and employees, particularly for women and for people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. More women and non-White students and employees report experiencing discrimination and harassment as well as insensitive or disparaging comments; fewer women and non-White students feel a sense of community and belonging.

During his January 12, 2021, devotional address BYU President Kevin J Worthen encouraged the campus community to do two things to lay the foundation for a stronger, more diverse, and more unified campus:

First, we must avoid contention. . . .

This does not mean that we will not disagree with each other, but it does mean we will do so in a way that both focuses on issues and not on ad hominem attacks and reflects the truth that each of us, including those with whom we disagree, is a beloved spirit child of Heavenly Parents. . . .

Second, we need to recognize that perfect unity can be achieved only through God and Christ. Our efforts to become united will be fully successful only if we focus first on our relationship with Them. . . .

If we align ourselves more with God and Christ, we will become more loving, we will see others more for who they really are, and we will draw closer to both God and our fellow human beings.¹¹

11. Kevin J Worthen, "Persevere in Unity," BYU Devotional, January 12, 2021, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/kevin-j-worthen/unity/>.