2017 UBC Psychology Department Equity Survey – Summary of Results

Take Away Messages

- Respondents acknowledged that the survey has generated more awareness and discussion of equity issues in the Psychology Department than had been present previously.
- There was a lot of support for offering training/workshops to faculty, staff, and students regarding how to create an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment in the department.
- There was a lot of interest in developing procedures to help settle conflicts or perceived inequities or unfairness, and to facilitate more open and constructive dialogue about these issues.
- Most respondents reported the highest ratings for things they personally do to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in the department, and lower ratings for what is done by other members of the department and the department’s policies and procedures.
- Overall, staff reported the highest satisfaction with the current support structures for diversity, equity, and inclusion, while students reported the lowest satisfaction.
- Most respondents reported feeling included and treated equitably in this department, although a nontrivial number of people reported experiencing issues in this regard.
- In terms of personal characteristics related to perceived personal experiences of unfair treatment or exclusion, gender was the most commonly reported answer. Race and age were also frequently reported.

Proposed Action Items for the 2017-2018 Academic Year

- Provide workshops or discussion spaces about:
  - how to create a more inclusive and supportive environment in the classroom or lab
  - the biases that we may have that affect social interactions and hiring/admissions
  - formal department policies / procedures and informal departmental norms that may have implications for equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Propose procedures to support giving feedback in a constructive fashion to colleagues/peers/supervisors/supervisees regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion issues.
- Develop a formal document that articulates, in detail, a set of practical and implement-able recommendations (regarding specific departmental policies, procedures, etc.) designed to enhance equity and diversity and inclusion for all members of the departmental community.

Please see the pages that follow for a description of survey procedures and more detailed results.

All of us on the committee welcome your feedback: Amori Mikami (mikami@psych.ubc.ca), Mark Schaller, Kristin Laurin, Peter Graf, Alex Terpstra, Armin Sohrevardi
Survey Procedures

We invited psychology faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students, to complete a survey about equity, diversity, and inclusion in our department. Data were collected from March 17-31, 2017. Questions covered respondents’ perceptions of how well the department is doing in three areas: Raising awareness, providing equal access, and supporting growth and success. Next, respondents were invited to report about their personal experiences of inclusion or exclusion. Please see the link for a table that includes sample items for each of these four areas. Finally there was space for open ended responses about what the department, peers, and the respondent can do to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in our department.

Questions were answered on a scale from 1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=strongly agree

In order to preserve participant confidentiality, we did not ask respondents to self-identify their gender, race, etc. It is therefore unknown to what extent responses to questions might differ as a function of these demographic characteristics.

It is unknown to what extent respondents are representative of their groups. Particularly for the undergraduate respondents, for whom there was a low response rate, it is unclear to what extent this is a biased sample. Additionally, because there are few department staff members, it is possible that staff members could be more concerned about their anonymity being preserved, particularly if they had negative responses.

Faculty Results (N = 33)

- In general, respondents provided ratings of between a 4-5 for most questions. Please see the table summarizing results.
- Low rated items: Diversity issues are incorporated into staff meetings and training activities (3.42); The department promotes information and resources related to diversity equity and inclusion (3.70); the department has good procedures to address conflicts related to perceived inequity or unfairness (3.73)
- High rated items: I make proactive efforts to ensure that all students are engaged and feel comfortable sharing their voices in classroom discussions (5.33)
- Personal experiences: most respondents report feeling included by other members in the department (79% rated as somewhat agree or strongly agree), but a sizable minority disagreed.
- A substantial number of respondents reported that they had been excluded or treated unfairly because of their gender (45% answered yes or maybe). The other common answers were due age (33% answered yes or maybe) and race (12% answered yes or maybe). Although we wish to highlight the categories in which a high percentage of respondents reported personal experiences of negative treatment, we would also like to remind readers to consider the base rate of some personal characteristics. That is, if a characteristic is relatively unusual among
faculty, all of the individuals with that characteristic may have experienced negative treatment but this may appear to be a very low proportion of respondents.

- **Open-ended responses:** Multiple respondents stated concerns about gender inequity particularly related to salary, promotion, advancement, and hiring decisions (representing 8 of the 38 narrative responses given). Having a female department head was mentioned as a goal by several respondents. By contrast, in 4 of the 38 responses, the respondent explicitly stated that they did not perceive any problems with equity, diversity, or inclusion in the department.

**Staff Results (N = 9)**

- In general, respondents provided ratings of between a 5-6 for most questions. Please see the table summarizing results.
- Low rated items: the division of additional workplace responsibilities is done in an equitable manner in this department (5.00)
- High rated items: when I can contribute to staff hiring, I make proactive efforts to consider diversity and inclusion (6.00)
- Personal experiences: all respondents report feeling included by other members in the department (100% rated as somewhat agree or strongly agree)
- Almost all staff reported no experiences with feeling excluded or treated unfairly because of personal characteristics. We would also like to remind readers to consider the base rate of some personal characteristics. That is, if a characteristic is relatively unusual among staff (and given that a small number of staff completed the survey overall), all of the individuals with that characteristic may have experienced negative treatment but this may appear to be a very low proportion of respondents.
- Open-ended responses: some respondents raised that diversity goes beyond race and gender and includes socioeconomic backgrounds. Also, having more respect for staff was raised as an ideal, as was greater attention to diversity in faculty/staff hiring and student recruitment.

**Graduate Student Results (N = 32)**

- In general, respondents provided ratings of about a 4 for most questions. Please see the table summarizing results.
- Low rated items: The department promotes information and resources related to diversity equity and inclusion (3.63); the department has good procedures to address conflicts related to perceived inequity or unfairness (2.61); I know how to support students I mentor who are from diverse backgrounds (3.37); I know what to do if I observe bullying/harassment (3.65), I consider equity/diversity/inclusion when hiring undergrad RAs (3.64).
High rated items: I have equal access to supervisors/courses/events in the department (5.22), As a TA/instructor I try to make sure all students are engaged and feel comfortable (4.64), I make proactive efforts when working with a diverse group to support equity and fairness (4.76)

Personal experiences: while more respondents report feeling included by other members in the department (69% rated as somewhat agree or strongly agree), a quite sizable proportion of respondents do not feel this way (23% reported slightly disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree).

In regards to experiences with feeling excluded or treated unfairly because of personal characteristics, the most common responses were feeling excluded because of gender (32% yes or maybe), and mental health condition (24% yes or maybe). In addition, at least one respondents reported “yes” or “maybe” to feeling excluded for the other categories. We would also like to remind readers to consider the base rate of some personal characteristics. That is, if a characteristic is relatively unusual among graduate students, all of the individuals with that characteristic may have experienced negative treatment but this may appear to be a very low proportion of respondents.

Open-ended responses: Multiple respondents suggested that more training be offered (or required) in diversity, conflict resolution, and inclusive language (9 of 34 narrative responses). Multiple respondents mentioned a desire for faculty to be more open to student voices and respect student views about diversity, including being more open about a range of political views. A desire for better procedures to handle situations where students have conflicts with their supervisors or perceive unfair treatment was stated as a goal by several respondents.

Undergraduate Student Results (N = 79)

In general, respondents provided ratings of about a 4 for most questions. Please see the table summarizing results.

Low rated items: The department promotes information and resources related to diversity equity and inclusion (3.80); the department hires and retains diverse faculty and staff (3.71); the department has good procedures to address conflicts related to perceived inequity or unfairness (3.88); the time I dedicate to my own versus others’ responsibilities is distributed fairly (3.58)

High rated items: I have equal access to supervisors/courses/events in the department (4.64), I promote an equitable and fair academic environment for diverse students (4.98)

Personal experiences: almost half of respondents report feeling included by other members in the department (47% rated as somewhat agree or strongly agree), but 28% rated slightly agree. In addition, 25% rated as slightly disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

In regards to experiences with feeling excluded or treated unfairly because of personal characteristics, somewhere between 10-28% of respondents reported these experiences. The most common responses were feeling excluded because of gender (28% yes or maybe), and race (27% yes or maybe). In addition, a minimum of 10% of respondents reported “yes” or “maybe”
to feeling excluded for each of the other categories. We would also like to remind readers to consider the base rate of some personal characteristics. That is, if a characteristic is relatively unusual, all of the individuals with that characteristic may have experienced negative treatment but this may appear to be a very low proportion of respondents.

- Open-ended responses: Responses were quite varied. Multiple respondents suggested that faculty receive more training in diversity, conflict resolution, and inclusive language. More than one respondent specifically mentioned a desire for more diverse faculty to hired that better reflect the diversity in the student body. Similarly, many respondents expressed a desire for more explicit discussion of rules for inclusive behavior in classes, and for a better system of handling conflicts around inequity or unfairness. Finally, some respondents discussed a desire for student voices to be better respected and for faculty to be interested in student opinions and wellbeing.