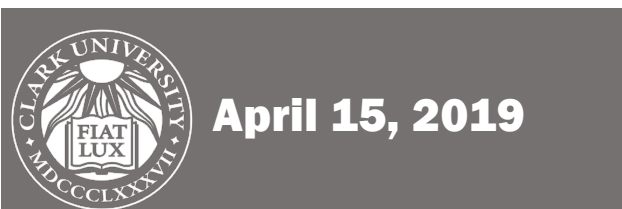


# **Clark Climate Survey Topline Results**

Graduate Students



# Summary

## Grad Students

Through the Clark University Survey on Campus Culture and Community, Clark strives to gain an understanding of the institution's and community's strengths in diversity, inclusion, and equity, and to recognize ways of maintaining this momentum in growth and progress. This report offers a snapshot of results. Over the coming months, members of the Clark community will gather to discuss results and potential next steps.

**01**

**Fostering  
Community and  
Sense of Belonging**

**02**

**Socioeconomic  
Status and Supports**

**03**

**Structural Barriers  
and Accessibility**

### Summary of Major Findings

Overall, three-quarters of graduate students reported satisfaction with sense of student community and agreed that they saw themselves as part of the community. These rates were slightly lower than undergraduates' perceptions.

The findings point to areas for further discussion:

- 1) Enhancing sense of belonging and sense of community among all students. Specifically, conservative students, Latinx, Black/ African American, transgender, LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities were less likely to voice satisfaction with the sense of student community. Increasing cross-racial interactions, opening up the political climate, support for historically underrepresented groups all arose as potential areas for strengthening.
- 2) Continued attention to support graduate students overall, particularly among students of low socioeconomic status, and for historically underrepresented populations. A number of students reported wanting more supports for racial/ethnic minoritized groups and LGBTQ+ students, access to more clubs, and financial support for health insurance.
- 3) Increased sensitivity of discrimination and microaggressions that occur, particularly in the classroom.
- 4) Increased racial/ethnic diversity among faculty, staff, and students.

## Respondent Profile

Half (47%) of graduate students are under 25 years old, and a quarter (27%) are 25-30, and the remaining quarter (26%) are 30 years or older. One in eight (13%) have children under 18. Six in ten respondents (60%) are completing a two year master's program, 19% are completing a fifth year master's degree program, and 22% are doctoral students. 89% of grad students are a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

Approximately 1 in 5 (19%) graduate respondents have a reported disability, and 12% of grad students reported having a psychological disorder. Half of all graduate students identify with a religion, and 17% identify as Christian, 13% as a different religion, 7% as Roman Catholic, 6% as Muslim, 6% as Hindu, and 2% as Eastern Orthodox.

Compared to the entire graduate student population, the demographics of survey respondents are close to overall graduate student demographics. However, the survey does represent slightly more Asian and Multiracial students and fewer International students. NOTE: The Clark University Factbook data does not reflect the full range of gender identity.

### Graduate Students Demographics

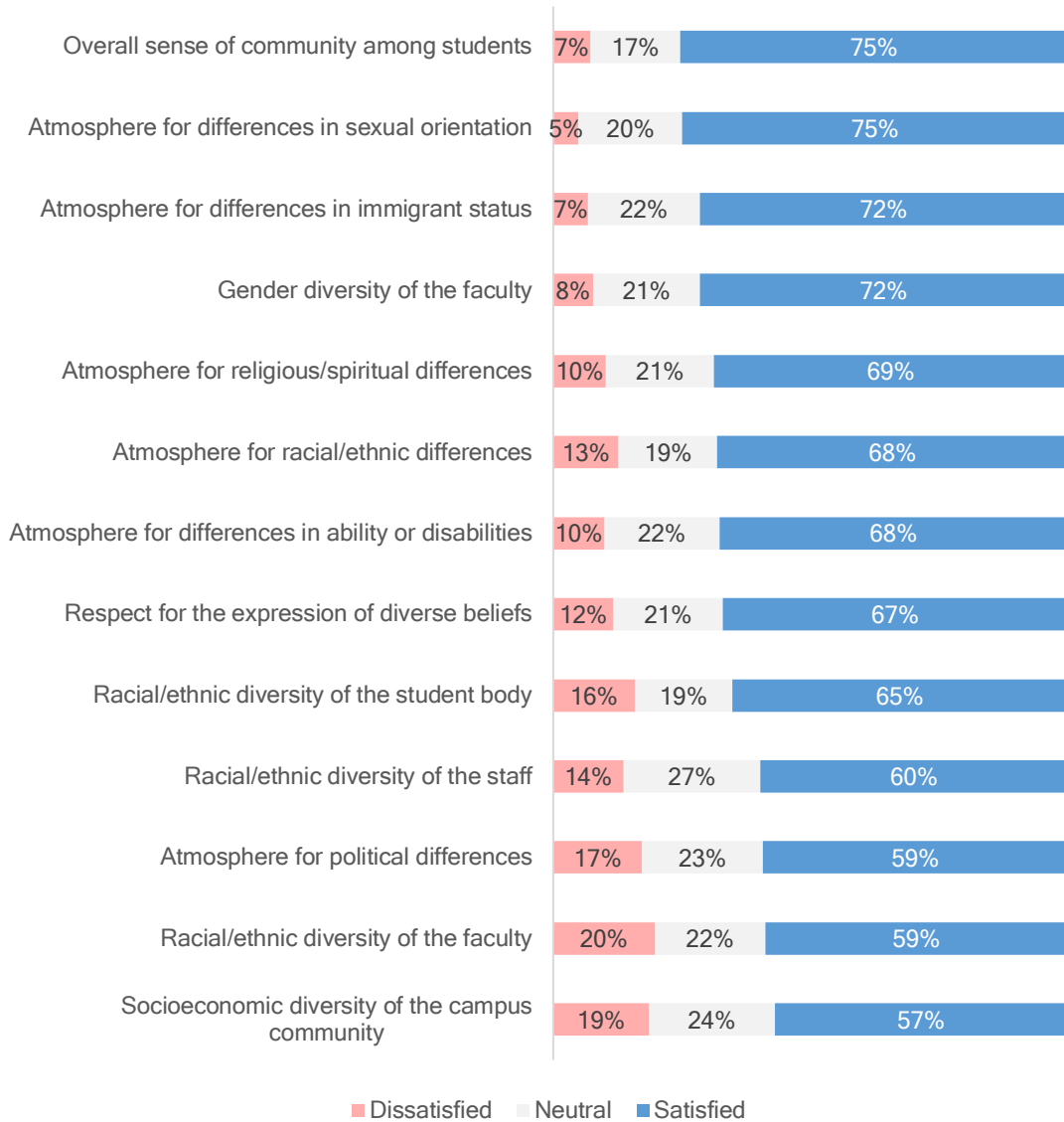
	Survey Respondents	All Grad Students
<b>Total</b>	387	976
<b>Male</b>	40%	39%
<b>Female</b>	60%	53%
<b>Black</b>	3%	3%
<b>Asian</b>	11%	3%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	2%	4%
<b>Multiracial</b>	7%	1%
<b>White</b>	33%	35%
<b>Other/Unknown</b>	8%	4%
<b>International</b>	35%	42%

Source: Clark University Factbook

# Overall

In the survey, students were asked to rate their satisfaction across various facets of climate. Graduate students rated the highest level of satisfaction with the overall sense of community among students, atmosphere for differences in sexual orientation, and atmosphere for differences in immigrant status. Approximately one in five students indicated dissatisfaction with the socioeconomic diversity of the campus community, racial/ethnic diversity of faculty, students, and staff, and the atmosphere for political differences.

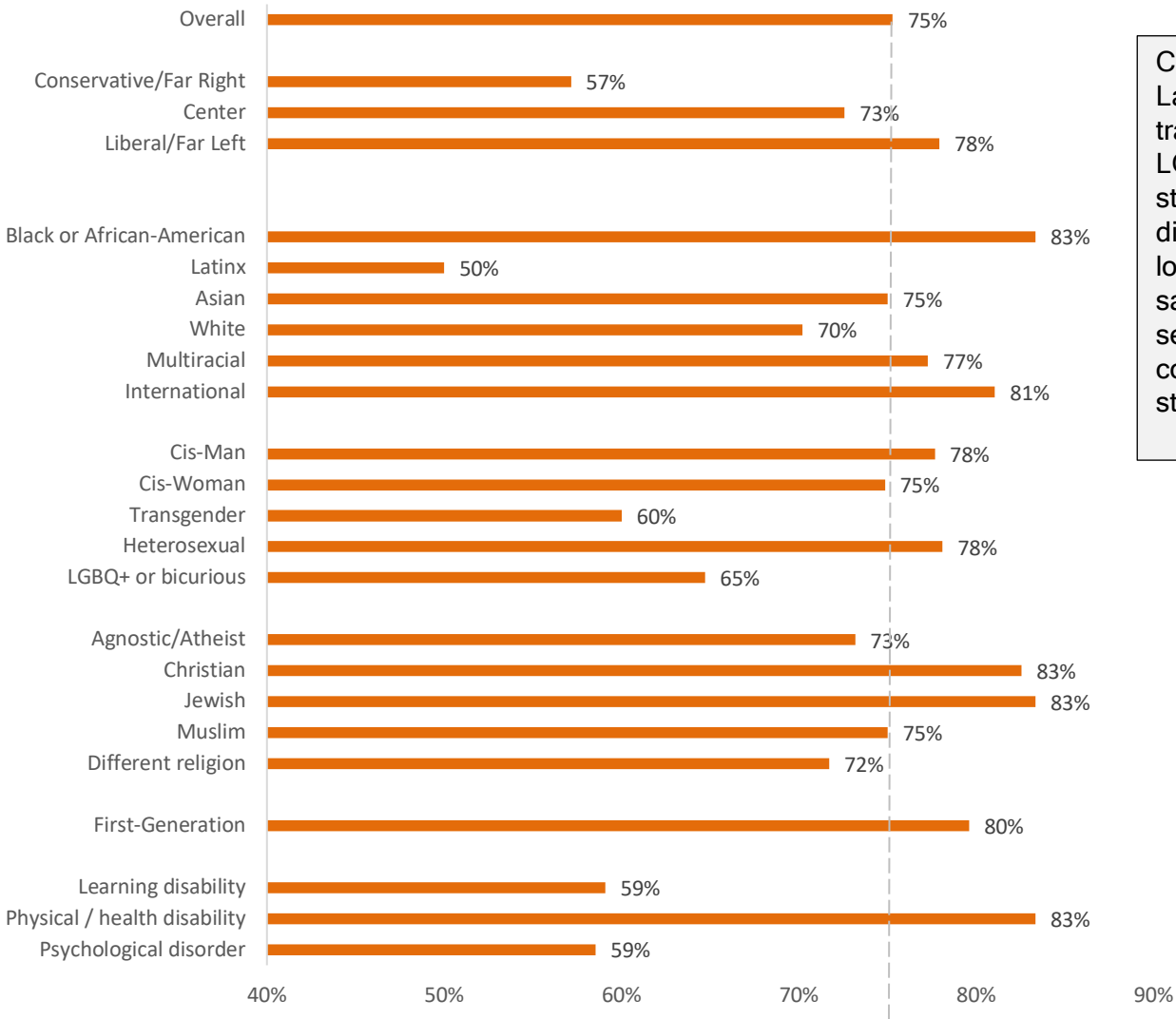
Percent of Students Reporting Satisfaction with:



# Theme 1: Fostering Community and Sense of Belonging

Similar to other colleges and universities, Clark strives to achieve a strong sense of belonging, community and satisfaction among students. Graduate students report highest levels of satisfaction with the overall sense of community among students (75% are satisfied). Black/African American, international, Christian, Jewish, first generation, and students with health disabilities most frequently rated satisfaction with sense of community. In contrast, politically conservative, Latinx, White, transgender, LGBTQ+ or heteroflexible, and students with disabilities rated lower sense of community.

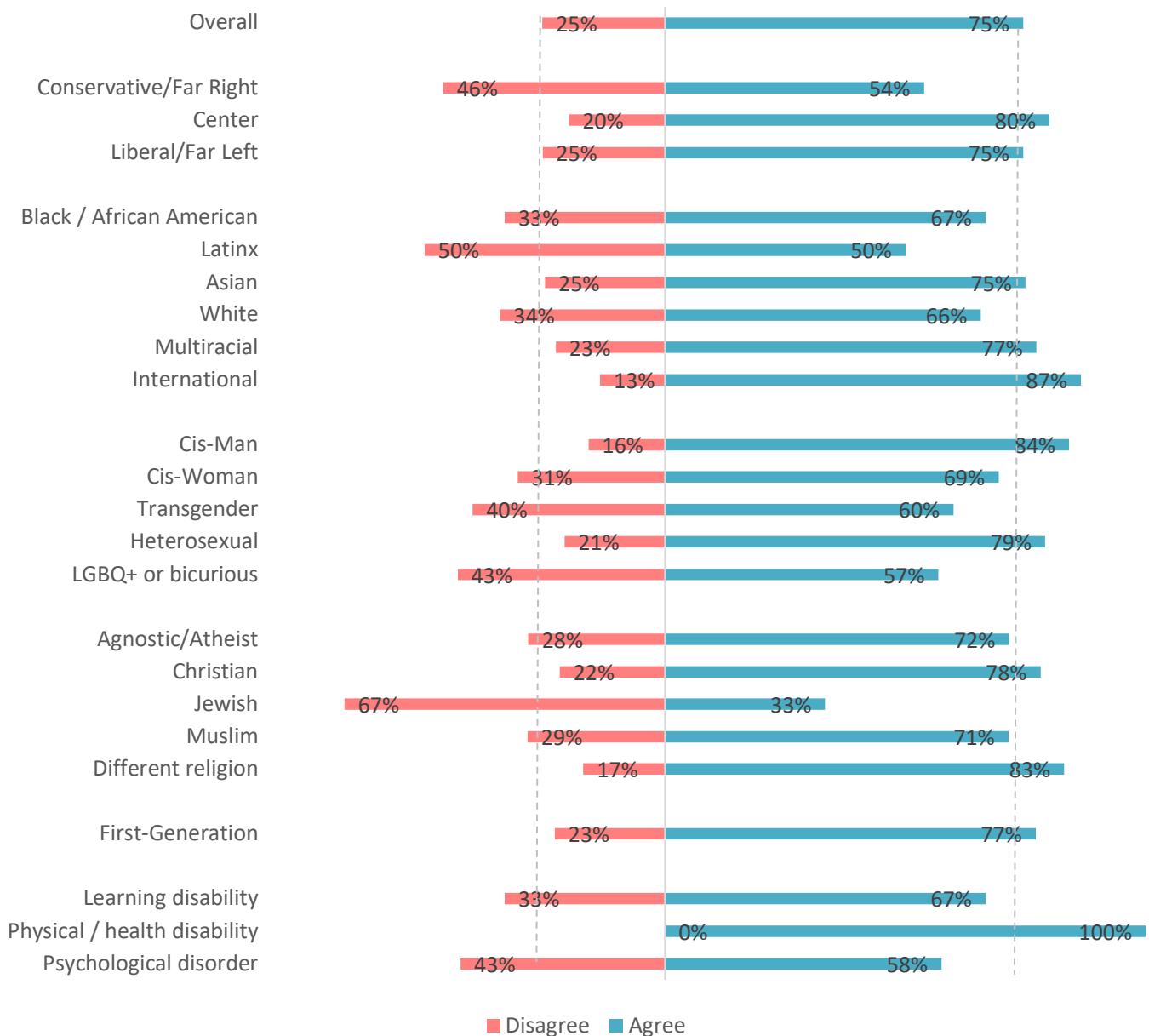
% Satisfied with Sense of Student Community by Demographics



Conservative, Latinx, transgender, and LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities report lower levels of satisfaction with sense of community among students.

When asked whether they see themselves as part of the campus community, three-fourths (75%) of graduate students agreed. Groups that were less likely to agree include conservative students, Black / African American, Latinx, White, transgender students, LGBTQ+ students, Jewish students, and those with a psychological disorder or learning disability.

## Agreement to "I see myself as a part of the campus community"



In open-ended comments, students referenced wanting access to greater services and programming that could help with their professional development as well as access issues that are not covered in their coursework. Others also discussed wanting to have access to on-campus clubs. Sample responses follow:

*"More speaker's forums around social issues that are not being addressed in classes or in society. We need to provide those safe spaces where people can come forward and speak their minds (appropriately) because if they remain silent, nothing will be addressed and they will not feel entirely welcome at Clark."*

*"Create more partnerships with the community and hire more diverse staff."*

*"More research and job expos [can] improve the quality of campus life."*

*"Clark University should make an effort to provide a better community for graduate students, and appreciate the research we do at the same level as for the teaching we are being asked to do."*

*“Joining BSU helped me be part of the small community on students of color on campus. Through my various leadership roles, events, and discussions[sic] I have definitely[sic] become a more socially[sic] conscious person. I am much more aware of the inequalities that exist in[sic] communities[sic] and why.”*

*“Basically graduate students are not part of undergraduate clubs due to the fact that most of the money comes from undergraduate activity fees, so I can’t take part in some of the undergraduate clubs. The reason is perfectly valid, and it’s annoying but the way things appear to be done around here.”*

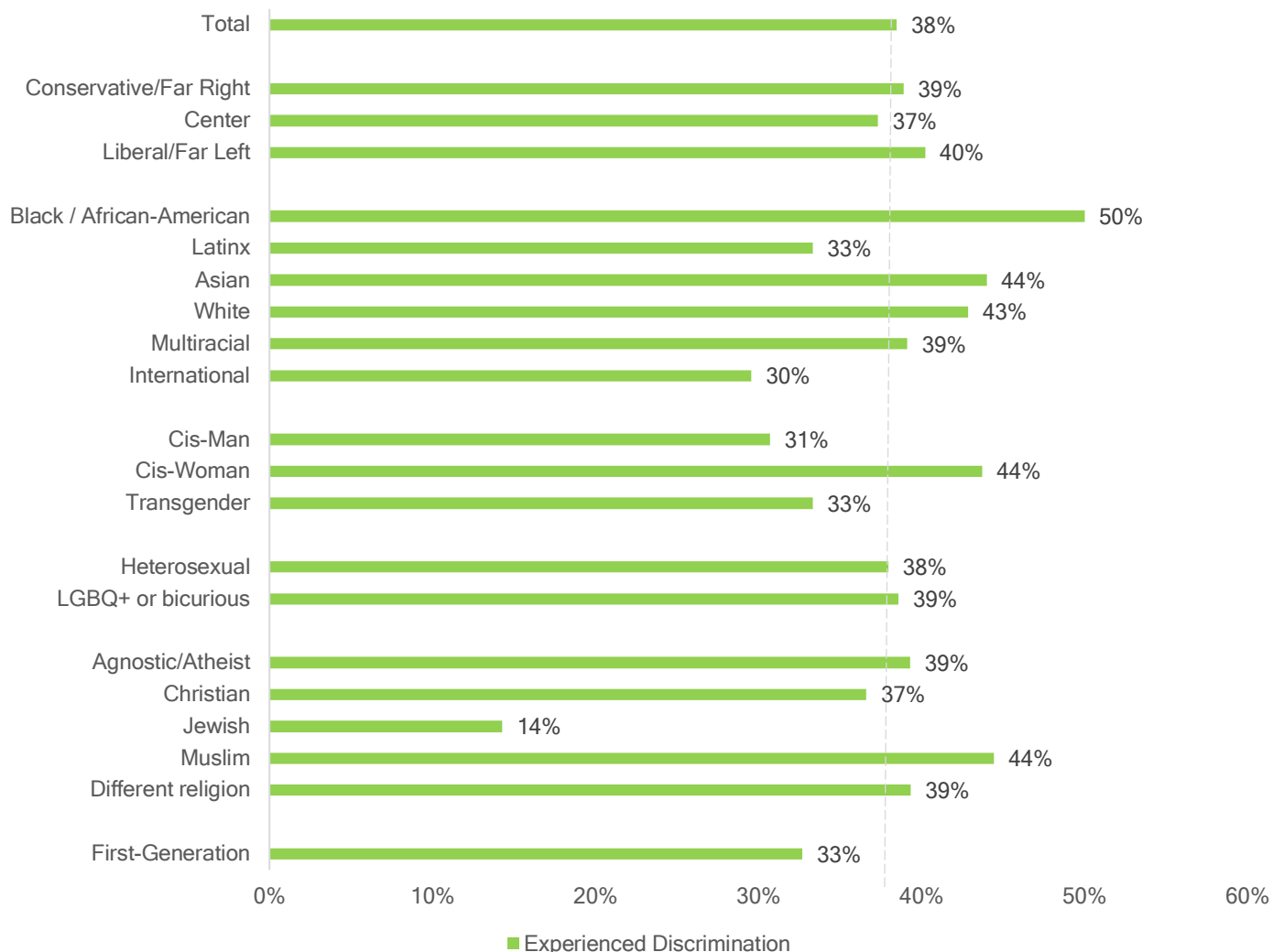
## Experiences with Discrimination

**NOTE:** The Clark policy definition for “discrimination” is *an act or communication that unlawfully interferes with an individual’s or group’s ability to participate fully in the Clark University community on the basis of race, sex, religion national origin, age, color, disability or other legally protected status.* The Survey did not adopt our campus policy definition but relied on the respondents understanding of the term discrimination.

Approximately four in ten (38%) of graduate students denoted experiencing discrimination from another Clark community member. Groups that are more likely to experience discrimination within the community include Black/African-American students, Asian students, women, and Muslim students.

Graduate students most commonly experience discrimination from the following sources: other students (35%), faculty (20%), and staff (11%). Discrimination most often occurs in classrooms (26%), off-campus events (18%), campus events (13%), and faculty offices (8%).

Experienced discrimination from Clark community member



Two-thirds (65%) of Black / African American students have experienced discrimination due to their race/ethnicity and 37% have experienced it three or more times.

In open-ended comments, graduate students more frequently described discriminatory encounters with faculty members. Incidents related to gender, religion and/or grading. Sample comments are below:

*"[Clark should have] race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, class/socioeconomic, disability training for ALL teaching staff - every professor should know what a microaggression is, and why they should avoid committing them."*

*"Despite said faculty member's repeated remarks over many years that made those of us with religious beliefs and/or female feel [expletive], there was nothing ever done about it and nothing ever would be done about it."*

*"When a bully and a harasser has had tenure for 50 years, only thing the university does is give [them] a lifetime achievement award. Also, if someone is a sexist or a racist, they invite them to give lectures on campus, but only if they're well-connected alumni who donate lots of money."*

When asked to share what discrimination graduate students witnessed, a few respondents also noted seeing their non-English speaking peers being ignored:

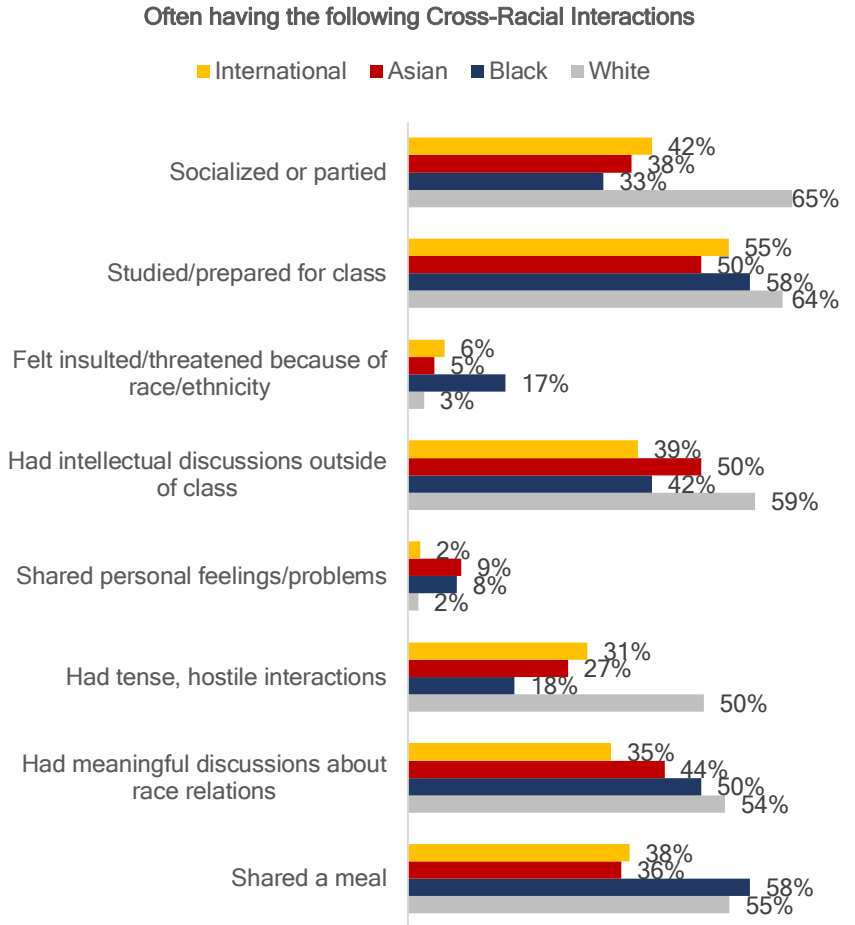
*"Being in the MSPC program, I see a lot of the ESL Chinese students get underestimated and/or put down by faculty members at times because they struggle with participation or written assignments. They are not taken seriously or spoken to in a derogatory way."*



*“Students with heavy accents are often ignored in group-work. Again, women’s ideas are reexplained by a man and the man gets more credit. There have also been times when a POC or a woman is chosen to answer a question several times while a professor will pass over a new, white male contributor, which I find to be discriminatory.”*

### Cross-racial Interactions

There appear to be opportunities to foster more cross-race interactions. Overall, Asian and international students are less likely than Black or White students to report *often* interacting with others from other race/ethnicities. White students expressed concerns regarding their perspective being minimized because of their dominant racialized identity.



## Theme 2. Socioeconomic Status and Supports

Through ratings and comments, graduate students called attention to structural and policy barriers they faced on campus. Issues centered on accessibility to resources both financially, through student programming, and on campus grounds.

In open-ended comments, some students commented on the challenges they encountered due to their low socioeconomic status and limited social capital:

*“As a graduate student, access and awareness of course offerings and departmental research positions is related to your agency and networking abilities with staff and professors. This can be an issue for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or minorities who do feel out of place in the classroom, and especially lack the aggressively network and inquire about opportunities. This furthers the divide between those with privilege. Making access to research positions and making course-listings and requirements transparent and distributed equally to all students should have higher importance within the Graduate programs in particular.”*

Other students also noted a desire for more scholarships and stipends to support living costs or health insurance. Additionally, some students referenced the lack of staff and faculty from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and desire for greater support for students of color. Additional comments follow:

*“More protections and spaces for expression of racial minorities, more racial diversity in staff so students can approach them for help, more services specific to racial minorities.”*

*“More needs based scholarship program would improve the campus climate. It is difficult being from a poor background and being barely able to afford rent or food and seeing [other] students who have family funding and are much more well off financially than I. Reduced rent housing or 100% tuition remission would greatly help.”*

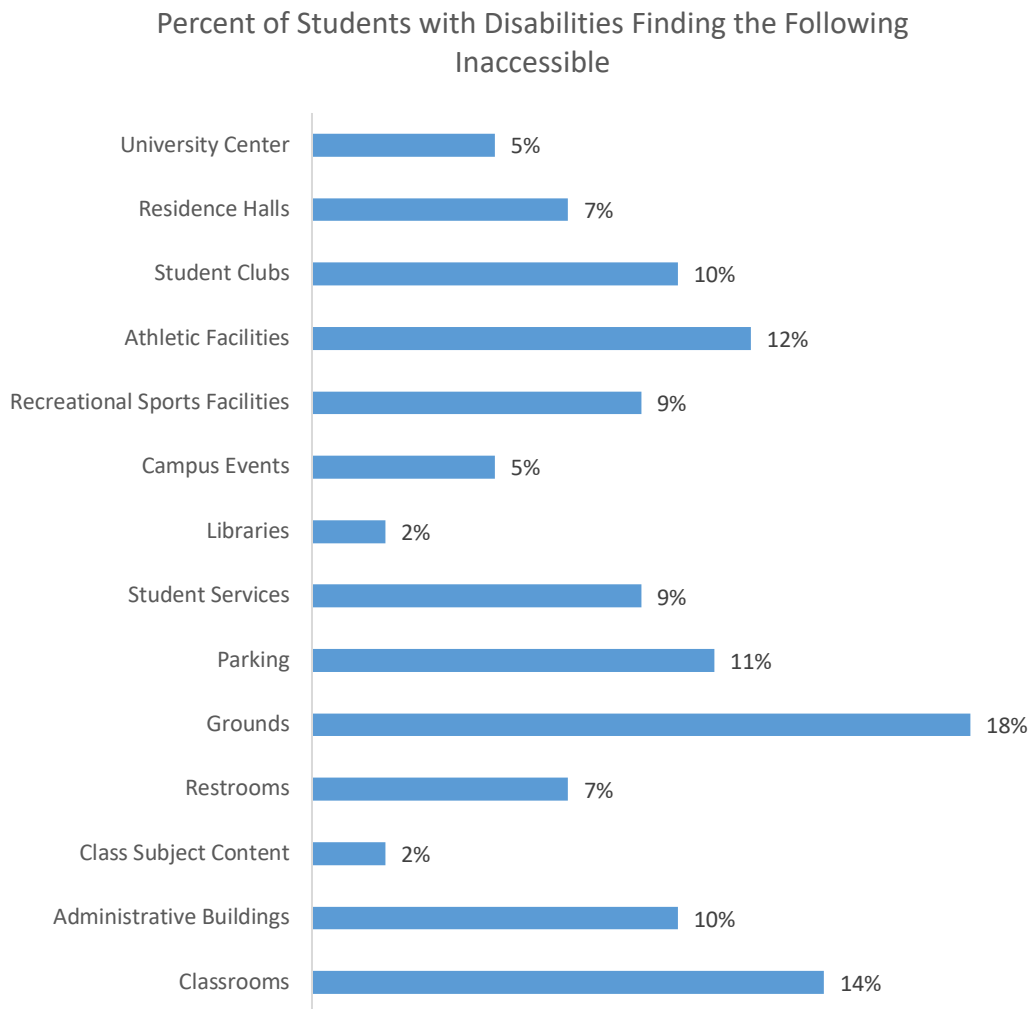
*“Focus on structural betterment like affordable health access, quality of education, working hours/wage, respect, accessibility, affordable and accessible fun activities etc. Focusing on bigger issues will increase quality of life for everyone.”*

*“There's a perception that the institution cares more about its administration and board members than the students, faculty, staff, or grad students. We have to pay our own health insurance -- that's practically unheard of. It'd be nice to see some actual material (and structural) changes, rather than political lip service.”*

Some comments were also made about desiring greater supports about certain groups of students:

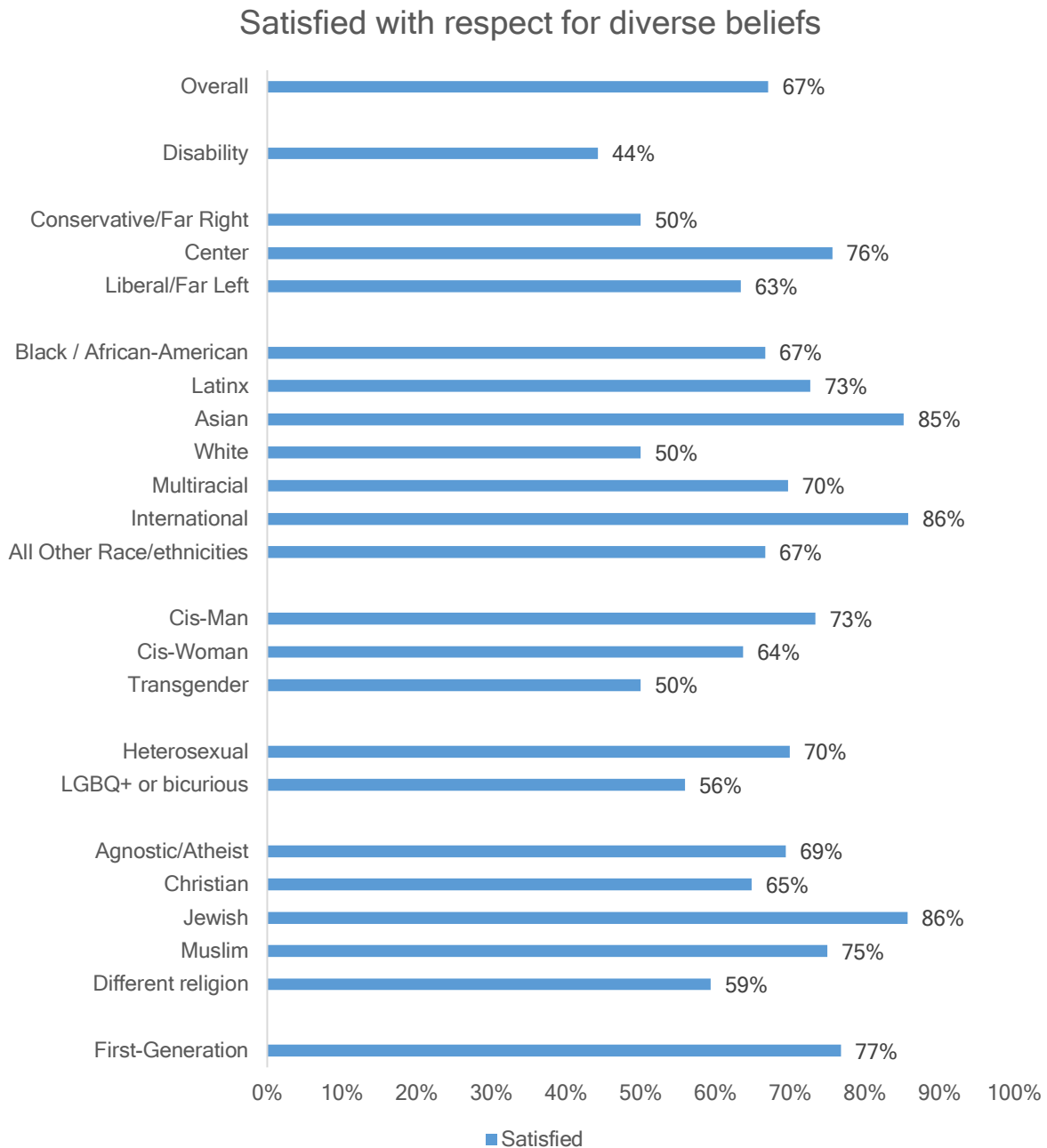
*“The senior leadership of this school doesn't seem to give a damn about GLBTQIA. An email comes out whenever there is racism, but when it comes to issues of queerness in our society (and others not related to skin color), there's silence. I am very happy that issues of racism are taken so seriously here, but why nothing else?”*

When asked to rate accessibility of various campus resources, one in five students with disabilities noted campus grounds as inaccessible.



### Theme 3: Fostering Respect for Diverse Beliefs

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the respect for the expression of diverse beliefs at Clark. Overall, two-thirds (67%) of graduate students reported their satisfaction in this area. More dissatisfied groups include those with a disability, conservative students, White students, transgender students, LGBTQ+ students, and those of a minority religion.



Six in ten (59%) of graduate students identify politically as liberal/far-left, 26% identify as moderate, and 6% identify as conservative/far-right. Liberal students are less likely to be satisfied with the atmosphere for political differences with 55% satisfied compared to 64% of moderate students and 61% of conservative students. Conservative students are more likely to report experiencing discrimination on the basis of political ideology with 22% experiencing one or more instances compared to 16% of moderate students and 14% of liberal students.

Compared to undergraduates, graduate students are less likely to feel challenged to think broadly on an issue (54% vs 72% of undergraduate students). In their open-ended comments, some students expressed a desire for greater openness to and representation of differing ideologies:

*“More open environment that allows for EVERYONE to speak and feel comfortable - even if you don't agree with them.”*

*“...I think it would be beneficial to encourage a broader range of intellectual and political viewpoints on campus. Diversity should reflect not only differences of racial, gender, dis/ability and socioeconomic identity, but also the beliefs (even if misguided) that inform much of America, and to some extent global, politics. I would like to better understand the people across the country that do not end up in places like Clark. I hope to one day better understand people with whom I (strongly) disagree, and rather than facilely dismissing their views as backward and incompatible with my own, I hope to find common ground where possible. And if common ground were to prove impossible, I might at least better understand why that is the case, And so, ideally, better understand my own point of view.”*

This summary provided highlights of graduate students' responses to the Survey on Campus Culture and Community. Over the coming year, members of the Clark community will be gathering to discuss results and potential next steps. This will involve broad campus engagement with constituencies to develop recommendations. We hope that you get involved and that we'll see you at a future event.

Appendix Table 1. Respondent Demographics

		Students	
		Count	Col. %
<b>Overall</b>	Total	387	100%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	Black	13	4%
	Latinx	7	2%
	Asian	41	11%
	White	129	36%
	Other	4	1%
	Multiracial	26	7%
	International	137	38%
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Cis-Man	141	40%
	Cis-Woman	207	58%
	Transgender	7	2%
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Heterosexual	292	82%
	LGBQ+, bicurious, heteroflexible	64	18%
<b>Recoded Political Orientation</b>	Conservative/Far Right	20	6%
	Center	90	26%
	Liberal/Far Left	203	59%
	Other	31	9%
<b>Ability</b>	No disability	314	81%
	Has disability or disorder	73	19%
	Learning disability/ADHD	28	7%
	Physical Disability/Chronic Illnes	7	2%
	Psychological Disorder	48	12%
<b>Religions (collapsed)</b>	Agnostic/Atheist	171	49%
	Christian	83	24%
	Jewish	7	2%
	Muslim	22	6%
	Different religion	66	19%
<b>First-Generation Status</b>	Not First-Generation (at least one parent attended some college)	265	82%
	First-Generation	59	18%
<b>Age Group</b>	Under 30	387	100%
	30-39	13	4%
	40-49	7	2%
	50-59	41	11%
	60+	129	36%

**Appendix. Graduate Student Responses to Select Questions**

% Satisfied:	Total	Race/Ethnicity					Political Orientation			Gender		
		White	Asian	Black	Latinx	Intl.	Right	Center	Left	Cis-Men	Cis-Women	Trans-gender
<b>Overall sense of community among students</b>	75%	70%	73%	83%	50%	81%	57%	73%	78%	78%	75%	60%
<b>Racial/ethnic diversity of the faculty</b>	59%	44%	71%	25%	33%	77%	61%	72%	52%	66%	54%	50%
<b>Racial/ethnic diversity of the student body</b>	65%	54%	83%	33%	33%	78%	67%	76%	59%	70%	62%	67%
<b>Racial/ethnic diversity of the staff</b>	60%	52%	71%	25%	33%	71%	56%	76%	52%	65%	56%	50%
<b>Gender diversity of the faculty</b>	72%	61%	81%	42%	33%	85%	67%	74%	68%	76%	69%	60%
<b>Atmosphere for racial/ethnic differences</b>	68%	59%	77%	50%	40%	80%	61%	77%	64%	76%	64%	67%
<b>Atmosphere for gender and gender differences</b>	75%	64%	90%	42%	67%	87%	61%	83%	72%	78%	74%	67%
<b>Atmosphere for political differences</b>	59%	41%	77%	50%	50%	75%	61%	64%	55%	64%	56%	67%
<b>Atmosphere for religious/spiritual differences</b>	69%	58%	84%	50%	50%	81%	61%	73%	67%	73%	66%	83%
<b>Atmosphere for differences in sexual orientation</b>	75%	66%	81%	67%	83%	84%	56%	79%	74%	79%	72%	83%
<b>Atmosphere for differences in ability or disabilities</b>	68%	55%	74%	58%	50%	83%	61%	78%	63%	77%	63%	50%
<b>Atmosphere for differences in immigrant status</b>	72%	65%	74%	58%	33%	82%	67%	73%	69%	81%	66%	67%
<b>Socioeconomic diversity of the campus community</b>	57%	41%	68%	42%	33%	75%	44%	67%	53%	64%	53%	50%
<b>Respect for the expression of diverse beliefs</b>	67%	48%	77%	50%	67%	86%	50%	76%	63%	73%	64%	50%
<b>% Agree</b>												
<b>I see myself as a part of the campus community</b>	73%	65%	73%	67%	50%	84%	54%	77%	75%	83%	68%	60%
<b>At least one faculty member has taken an interest in my development</b>	86%	83%	73%	91%	100%	88%	92%	83%	87%	90%	84%	100%
<b>If asked, I would recommend this university to others</b>	83%	83%	82%	100%	83%	81%	77%	77%	86%	90%	80%	60%