

## **Assessing Student Learning Experiences in Undergraduate Diversity Requirement Courses Using SERU 2019 Survey Data**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report summarizes the results of 4 new questions on student learning experiences in Diversity requirement courses from the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) 2019 survey of undergraduates at the University of Washington. 15.6% of undergraduates gave a partial or complete survey response. 2,719 to 2,738 students responded to the 4 questions identified. Overall, undergraduate students reported that their understanding of issues of diversity and inequality improved from when they started on this campus compared to now. 57% of respondents said their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality was good to excellent when they started at UW, compared to 88% now. Among respondents who indicated they had taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement, 84% somewhat to strongly agreed that the courses helped foster a climate where all students could learn and participate and 81% somewhat to strongly agreed that the courses had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW.

Responses varied by student level, entrance type, gender, and race/ethnicity of respondents. Seniors reported the highest average difference in their proficiency levels from when they started compared to now for understanding issues of diversity and inequality. Seniors were also less likely than other levels of students to agree with the statements that courses that met the UW Diversity requirement fostered inclusive climates or had a positive effect on their education quality. 25% of transfer student respondents indicated they had not yet taken courses that meet the UW Diversity requirement, compared to 12% of first-time first year students. Women respondents reported higher levels of proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started at UW and now relative to men. A higher percentage of women respondents reported having taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement, and overall women were more likely than men respondents to agree with the statements that courses that met the UW Diversity requirement had a positive impact on climate and their education quality. Hispanic and white students reported the highest average increase in proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality from when they started at UW. International students were more likely than students of other races or ethnicities to agree with the statements that courses that met the UW Diversity requirement had a positive impact on climate and their education quality.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides results of the SERU 2019 survey of University of Washington. Specifically, this report summarizes the results of 4 SERU questions written by the Faculty Council on Teaching & Learning subcommittee on Equity and Diversity Pedagogy and the Office of Educational Assessment to address student learning experiences of undergraduate students in diversity requirement courses.

Prior to survey launch, OEA and the FCTL subcommittee wrote 4 new custom questions for the Wildcard Module of the SERU survey instrument. One set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of

proficiency in understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality when they started at this campus and to rate their level of proficiency now. Respondents were asked to evaluate their level of proficiency on a 6-point Likert scale from “Very Poor” to “Excellent.” The questions as they appear in the survey instrument can be seen below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. SERU 2019 Understanding Issues Questions in Survey Instrument**

**Q1c. [Page\_W\_01c] Please rate your level of proficiency in the following areas when you started at the University of Washington and now.**

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Using self-reflection and self-assessment to guide future directions: When you started <i>[Q01j]</i>	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Using self-reflection and self-assessment to guide future directions: Now <i>[Q01j]</i>	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality: When you started <i>[Q01k]</i>	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality: Now <i>[Q01j]</i>	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Two additional custom questions were written and added to the Wildcard Module to collect data on the perception of the impact of courses that met the UW Diversity requirement. Respondents were asked to select their level of agreement with the statement on a 6-point Likert scale. A seventh response option of “No courses taken” was provided as well. The questions as they appear in the survey instrument can be seen below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. General Education Diversity Requirement Courses Questions in Survey Instrument**

**Q2b.** [Page\_W\_02b] The next set of questions ask about your experience in University of Washington General Education (GE) courses. By General Education, we mean lower-division, required courses you take outside of your major that satisfy the following requirements: Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts (VLPA); Individuals and Societies (I&S); the Natural World (NW); English Composition; Quantitative & Symbolic Reasoning; and Diversity. Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about UW General Education (GE) courses overall.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No courses taken
My GE coursework helped me to choose my major [Q02f]	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
My GE coursework contributed to my success in my major [Q02g]	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Courses that met the UW Diversity requirement fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate [Q02h]	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
The UW Diversity requirement has had a positive effect on the quality of my education at UW [Q02i]	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

## METHOD

### Population

The original population selected for the survey sample included all undergraduate students enrolled at the Seattle campus on the tenth day of winter quarter 2019. Students under the age of 18 at the start of the survey, visiting and exchange students, university employees enrolled using a faculty or staff exemption, and those with no email address on file were excluded from the population. The final population included N=29,688 students.

Students were recruited to participate through targeted emails, physical ads displayed on campus, and digital ads in online spaces like MyUW.

### Response Rate

The survey went out on April 1, 2019. The survey closed on May 10, 2019 with 5,349 interactions. Of the 5,349 interactions, 679 individuals reached the consent page and did not consent or decline to participate, 14 respondents formally declined to participate, 1,864 respondents consented and provided a partial survey response, and 2,792 respondents consented and provided a complete survey response.

Of the 4,656 partial and complete responses, 4 were graduate students and 8 were students who were under the age of 18 who must be excluded from analysis. Thus, the qualified total response rate for SERU 2019 was 4,644/29,688, or 15.6%. The table below shows the response counts and rates for each of the diversity requirement questions.

**Table 1. SERU 2019 Responses Rates for Diversity Requirement Questions**

Question	Count of Responses	Question Response Rate
Understanding issues when started	2,738	59.0%
Understanding issues now	2,731	58.8%
Diversity requirement courses fostered climate	2,719	58.5%
Diversity requirement positive effect on quality of education	2,720	58.6%

The 4 new questions appear in the very last section of the survey in the Wildcard Module. Question location in the survey may explain the low and declining response rates among respondents.

## RESULTS

### “Understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality”

On a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being “Very Poor” and 6 being “Excellent”, respondents gave an average rating of 3.66 when they started compared to an average rating of 4.55 now for their proficiency in understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality. 57% of respondents rated their proficiency level at good to excellent when they started at UW. 88% of respondents rated their proficiency level at good to excellent now.

2,729 respondents provided a rating for both questions. A paired t-test shows that the average difference in the rating for understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started and now was significantly different at  $p < 0.001$ , with a mean difference of 0.89.

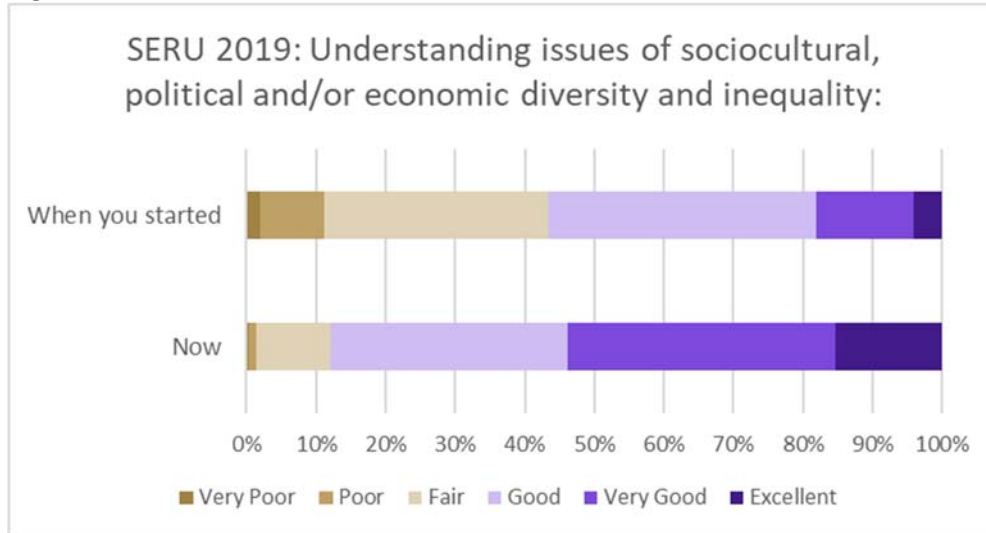
60% of those who provided a rating for both when they started and now indicated their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality increased overtime (N=1,624). 39% indicated there was no change in their proficiency (N=1,073). And 1% indicated their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality decreased over time (N=32).

**Table 2. SERU 2019 Responses Understanding Issues**

	When you started		Now	
	N	%	N	%
Very Poor (1)	54	2%	10	0%
Poor (2)	249	9%	27	1%
Fair (3)	885	32%	294	11%
Good (4)	1,054	38%	931	34%
Very Good (5)	383	14%	1,050	38%
Excellent (6)	113	4%	419	15%
N	2,738		2,731	
Mean Rating	3.66		4.55 <sup>p</sup>	

<sup>p</sup> The difference in mean rating for understanding issues of diversity and inequality when you started and now is significant at  $p < 0.001$

**Figure 3.**



Mean ratings of proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started and now varied by student level, entrance type, gender, and race/ethnicity.

**Table 3. SERU 2019 Understanding issues of sociocultural, political and/or economic diversity and inequality, Mean ratings**

	Mean Rating When you started	Mean Rating Now	Difference	Total who answered both
<b>By Class</b>				
First-year	3.83	4.40	0.57 ***	219
Sophomore	3.78	4.38	0.60 ***	601
Junior	3.81	4.53	0.72 ***	830
Senior	3.44	4.70	1.26 ***	1079
<b>By Entry Type</b>				
FTFY	3.60	4.52	0.92 ***	2,263
Transfer	3.95	4.70	0.75 ***	466
<b>By Gender</b>				
Men	3.62	4.42	0.80 ***	990
Women	3.68	4.63	0.95 ***	1,737
<b>By Ethnicity</b>				
African American	4.03	4.74	0.71 ***	76
American Indian/Alaska Native	3.82	4.76	0.94 ***	33
White	3.73	4.69	0.95 ***	1,075
Hispanic/Latino	3.68	4.66	0.98 ***	252
Asian	3.54	4.42	0.88 ***	975
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3.71	4.65	0.94 ***	34
Other/Unknown	4.32	4.68	0.37	19
International	3.58	4.30	0.71 ***	265
<b>N</b>	2,738	2,731	2,729	
<b>Overall</b>	3.66	4.55	0.89 ***	

Note: 3 alphas for statistical significance of paired t-tests are denoted in this table: \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\* p<0.001.

The difference of mean ratings between when they started compared to now was significantly different for all groups at  $p < 0.001$  except other/unknown race respondents with no significant difference in self-evaluation of proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality over time.

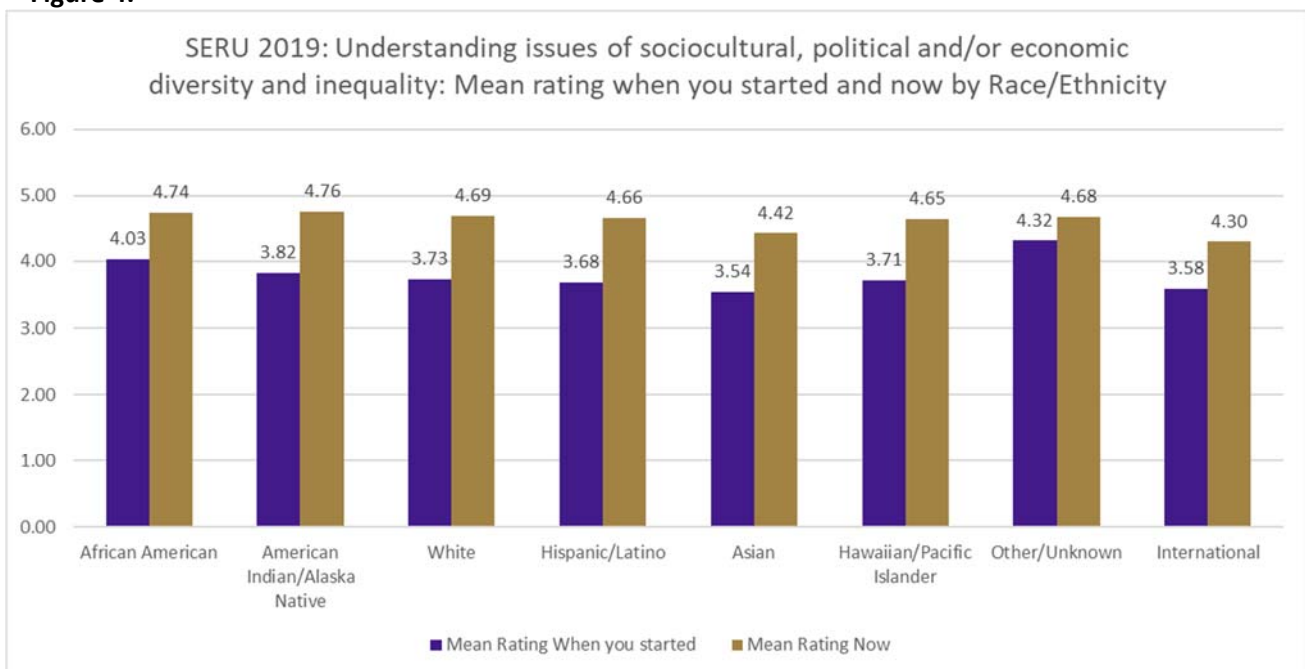
Seniors had the highest mean rating of their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality now (4.70), and the highest mean difference from when they started (1.26). Interestingly, seniors also gave the lowest mean rating of proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started (3.44)

Transfer students rate their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started at UW and now higher than students who entered as first-time first years. First-time first year students reported a higher average difference in proficiency now compared to when they first started. This is likely because respondents are asked to evaluate their skills when they started the UW, therefore first-time first year students are looking back to their ability as freshmen, while transfer students may be looking back to their ability as a sophomore or junior class standing compared to now.

Women reported a higher mean rating of their proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started (3.68), and now (4.63), as well as a higher average difference in proficiency over time (0.95) relative to men.

Hispanic students reported the largest difference in proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started compared to now (0.98 mean difference), followed by White students (0.95) and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students and American Indian/Alaska Native students tied at 0.94. Race unknown students and African American students reported the highest proficiency understanding issues of diversity and inequality when they started, and the lowest mean difference in their proficiency over time.

**Figure 4.**



**“Courses that met the UW Diversity requirement fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate”**

On a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 6 being “Strongly Agree”, respondents gave an average rating of 4.42 of their agreement that courses that met the UW Diversity requirement fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate. Among the 2,341 respondents who indicated they had taken a course that met the UW Diversity requirement, 84% somewhat to strongly agreed that the courses fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate.

Levels of agreement varied by student level, entrance type, gender, and race/ethnicity.

**Table 4. SERU 2019 Responses Diversity Requirement Climate**

**Courses that met the UW Diversity requirement fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate:**

	N	%
Strongly Disagree (1)	82	3%
Disagree (2)	107	4%
Somewhat Disagree (3)	176	6%
Somewhat Agree (4)	717	26%
Agree (5)	903	33%
Strongly Agree (6)	356	13%
No Courses Taken	378	14%
N	2,719	
Mean Rating*	4.42	

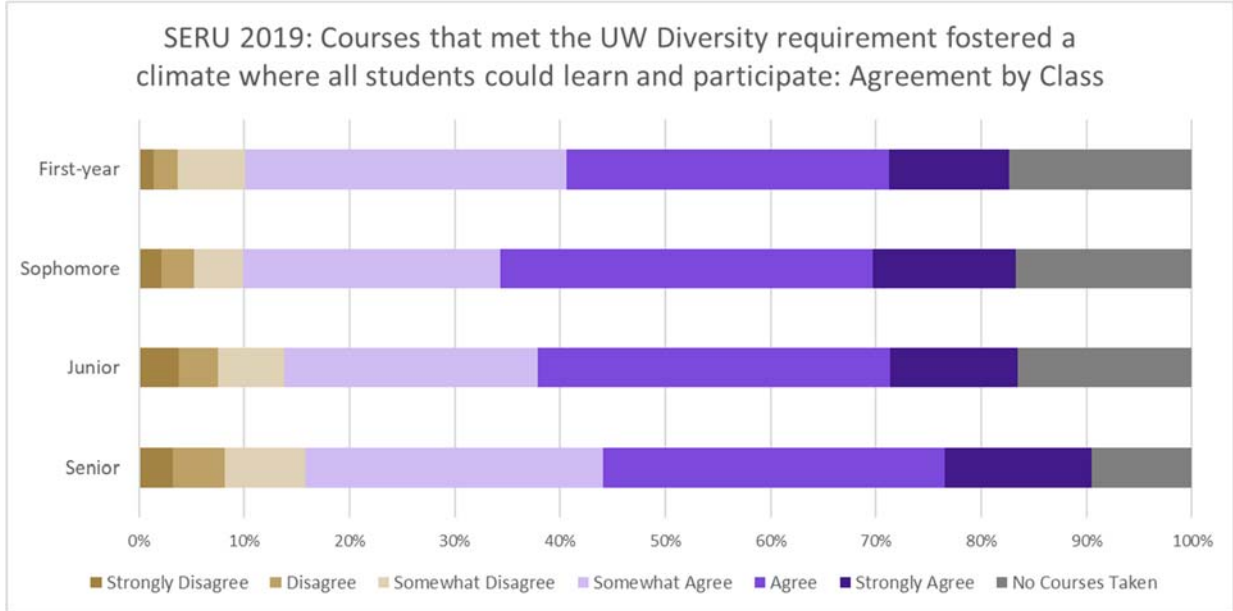
\*Mean rating excludes those who selected No Courses Taken

**Table 5. SERU 2019 Diversity requirement course climate, Mean ratings**

	Mean Rating	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Courses Taken	Total
<b>By Class</b>									
First-year	4.46	3 1%	5 2%	14 6%	67 31%	67 31%	25 11%	38 17%	219
Sophomore	4.54	13 2%	18 3%	28 5%	146 24%	211 35%	81 14%	100 17%	597
Junior	4.39	31 4%	31 4%	52 6%	199 24%	276 33%	100 12%	137 17%	826
Senior	4.37	35 3%	53 5%	82 8%	305 28%	349 32%	150 14%	103 10%	1077
<b>By Entry Type</b>									
FTFY	4.42	65 3%	95 4%	147 7%	623 28%	771 34%	297 13%	260 12%	2258
Transfer	4.43	17 4%	12 3%	29 6%	94 20%	132 29%	59 13%	118 26%	461
<b>By Gender</b>									
Men	4.26	47 5%	44 4%	77 8%	245 25%	310 31%	108 11%	156 16%	987
Women	4.50	35 2%	63 4%	99 6%	471 27%	593 34%	248 14%	221 13%	1730
<b>By Ethnicity</b>									
African American	4.39	2 3%	3 4%	7 9%	18 24%	27 36%	9 12%	10 13%	76
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.65	0 0%	1 3%	3 9%	8 24%	13 39%	6 18%	2 6%	33
White	4.48	26 2%	43 4%	65 6%	237 22%	356 33%	147 14%	195 18%	1069
Hispanic/Latino	4.51	5 2%	10 4%	16 6%	66 27%	84 34%	40 16%	27 11%	248
Asian	4.32	40 4%	39 4%	64 7%	296 30%	302 31%	118 12%	118 12%	977
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4.36	2 6%	1 3%	1 3%	9 27%	11 33%	4 12%	5 15%	33
Other/Unknown	3.94	0 0%	2 11%	3 16%	5 26%	6 32%	0 0%	3 16%	19
International	4.46	7 3%	8 3%	17 6%	78 30%	104 39%	32 12%	18 7%	264
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>82 3%</b>	<b>107 4%</b>	<b>176 6%</b>	<b>717 26%</b>	<b>903 33%</b>	<b>356 13%</b>	<b>378 14%</b>	<b>2,719</b>

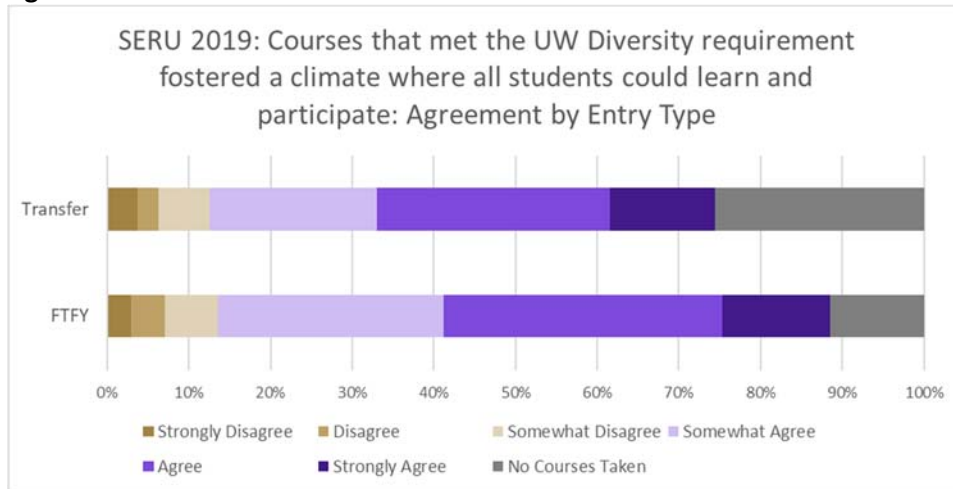
Sophomores had the highest mean rating of agreement (4.54), while seniors had the lowest mean rating or agreement (4.37). 17% of first-years, sophomores, and juniors indicated they had not yet taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement. Among those who had taken the courses, 88% of first-years, 88% of sophomores, 83% of juniors, and 83% of seniors somewhat to strongly agree that they fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate.

**Figure 5.**



Mean rating of agreement did not vary by entrance type; transfer students had a mean rating of agreement of 4.43 while students who entered as first-time first years had a mean rating of agreement of 4.42. However, a greater percentage of transfer students had not yet taken courses that meet the UW Diversity requirement. Among those who had taken the courses, 85% of first-time first year and 83% of transfer students somewhat to strongly agree that they fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate.

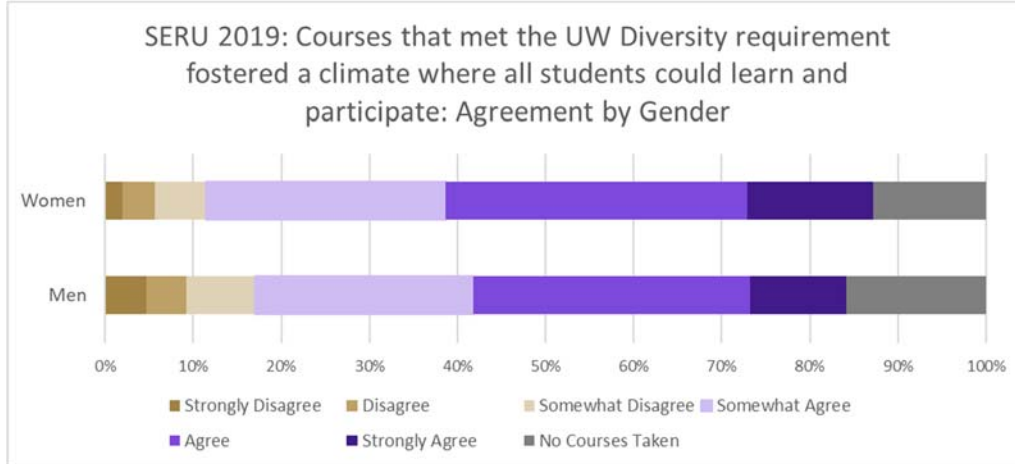
**Figure 6.**



Agreement varied significantly by gender. Women had a higher mean rating of agreement with 4.50 compared to 4.26 for men. A higher percentage of men indicated that have not yet taken courses that meet the UW Diversity requirement relative to women. Among those who had taken the courses, 80% of men and 87% of women somewhat to strongly agree that they fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate.

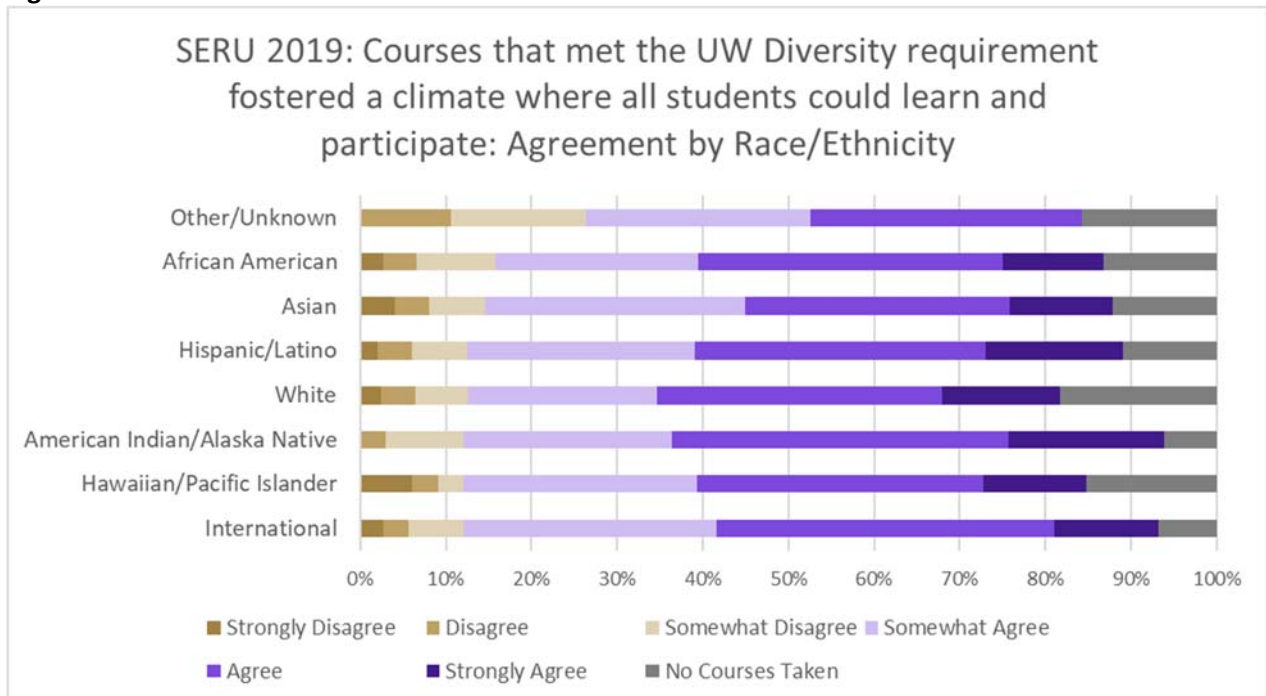


**Figure 7.**



Students with other/unknown race had the lowest mean rating of agreement with 3.94. American Indian/Alaska Native students had the highest mean rating of 4.65. Among those who had taken the courses, 87% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 87% of International, 86% of Hispanic, 86% of Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 85% of White, 83% of Asian, 82% of African American, and 69% of Other/Unknown students somewhat to strongly agree they fostered a climate where all students could learn and participate.

**Figure 8.**



**“The UW Diversity requirement has had a positive effect on the quality of my education at UW”**

On a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 6 being “Strongly Agree”, respondents gave an average rating of 4.35 on their agreement that the UW Diversity requirement has had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW. Among the 2,337 respondents who indicated they had taken a course that met the UW Diversity requirement, 81% somewhat to strongly agreed that the requirement had a positive effect on the quality of their education.

Levels of agreement varied by student level, entrance type, gender, and race/ethnicity.

**Table 6. SERU 2019 Responses Diversity Requirement Quality**

**The UW Diversity requirement has had a positive effect on the quality of my education at UW:**

	N	%
Strongly Disagree (1)	117	4%
Disagree (2)	123	5%
Somewhat Disagree (3)	216	8%
Somewhat Agree (4)	682	25%
Agree (5)	776	29%
Strongly Agree (6)	423	16%
No Courses Taken	383	14%
<b>N</b>	<b>2,720</b>	
<b>Mean Rating*</b>	<b>4.35</b>	

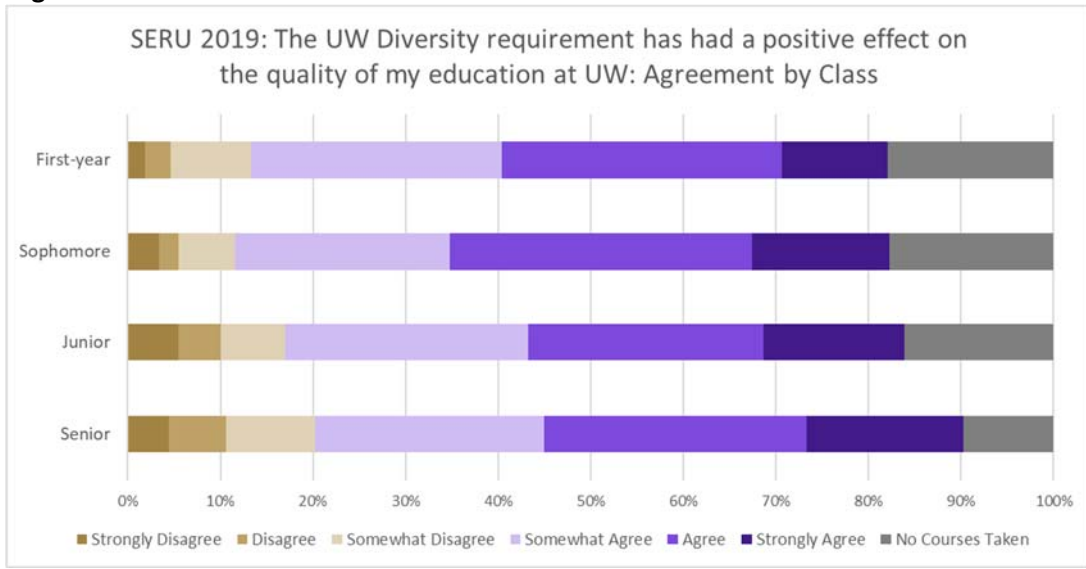
\*Mean rating excludes those who selected No Courses Taken

**Table 7. SERU 2019 Diversity requirement education quality, Mean ratings**

	Mean Rating	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Courses Taken	Total
<b>By Class</b>									
First-year	4.41	4 2%	6 3%	19 9%	59 27%	66 30%	25 11%	39 18%	218
Sophomore	4.51	20 3%	13 2%	36 6%	139 23%	195 33%	89 15%	106 18%	598
Junior	4.28	45 5%	38 5%	57 7%	217 26%	210 25%	126 15%	133 16%	826
Senior	4.30	48 4%	66 6%	104 10%	267 25%	305 28%	183 17%	105 10%	1078
<b>By Entry Type</b>									
FTFY	4.35	96 4%	101 4%	183 8%	588 26%	664 29%	356 16%	269 12%	2257
Transfer	4.30	21 5%	22 5%	33 7%	94 20%	112 24%	67 14%	114 25%	463
<b>By Gender</b>									
Men	4.01	77 8%	62 6%	90 9%	254 26%	236 24%	110 11%	159 16%	988
Women	4.53	40 2%	61 4%	126 7%	428 25%	539 31%	313 18%	223 13%	1730
<b>By Ethnicity</b>									
African American	4.47	2 3%	3 4%	5 7%	20 26%	24 32%	12 16%	10 13%	76
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.66	2 6%	0 0%	3 9%	6 18%	12 36%	9 27%	1 3%	33
White	4.31	44 4%	61 6%	95 9%	225 21%	287 27%	167 16%	191 18%	1070
Hispanic/Latino	4.54	6 2%	10 4%	14 6%	71 29%	68 27%	51 20%	29 12%	249
Asian	4.28	52 5%	39 4%	79 8%	271 28%	272 28%	138 14%	125 13%	976
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4.54	2 6%	0 0%	3 9%	6 18%	10 30%	7 21%	5 15%	33
Other/Unknown	3.94	1 5%	3 16%	0 0%	6 32%	6 32%	1 5%	2 11%	19
International	4.48	8 3%	7 3%	17 6%	77 29%	97 37%	38 14%	20 8%	264
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>117 4%</b>	<b>123 5%</b>	<b>216 8%</b>	<b>682 25%</b>	<b>776 29%</b>	<b>423 16%</b>	<b>383 14%</b>	<b>2,720</b>

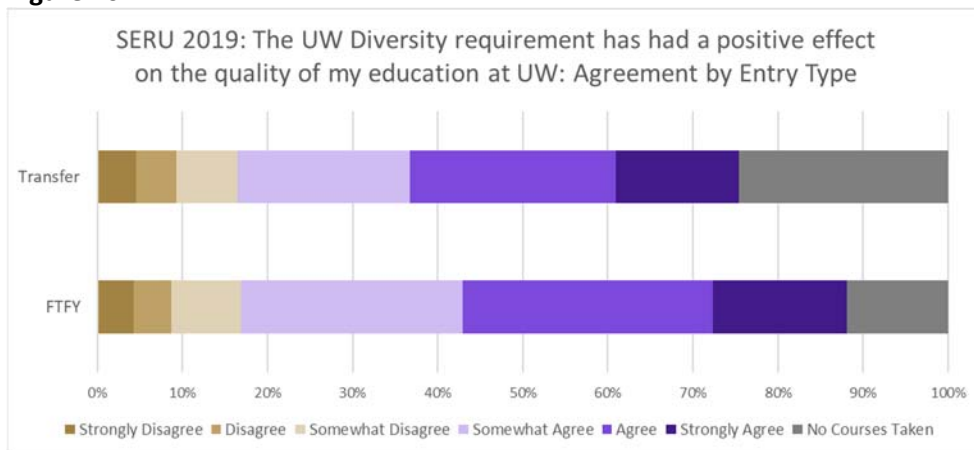
Sophomores had the highest mean rating of agreement (4.51), while juniors had the lowest mean rating or agreement (4.28). 18% of first-years and sophomores, 16% of juniors, and 10% of seniors indicated they had not yet taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement. Among those who had taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement, 84% of first-years, 86% of sophomores, 80% of juniors, and 78% of seniors somewhat to strongly agree that they had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW.

**Figure 9.**



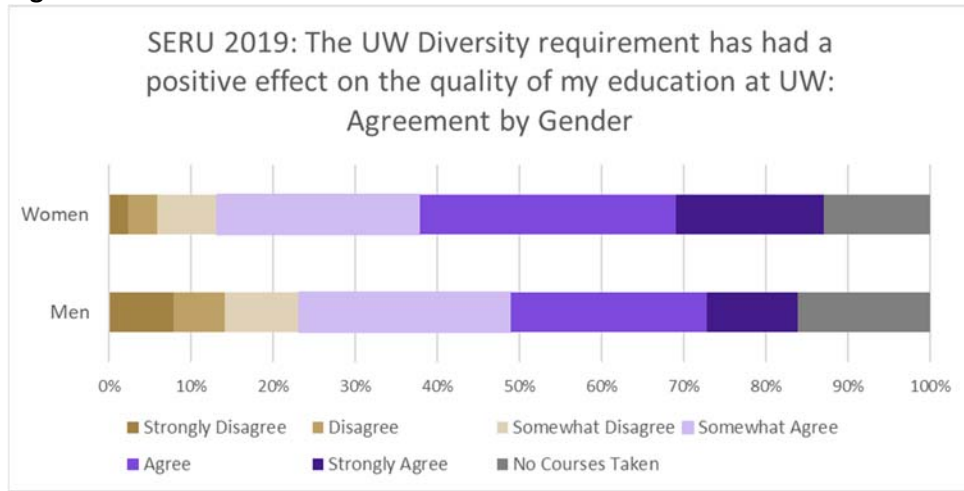
Mean rating of agreement varied slightly by entrance type; transfer students had a mean rating of agreement of 4.30 while students who entered as first-time first years had a mean rating of agreement of 4.35. As mentioned above, a greater percentage of transfer students had not yet taken courses that met the UW Diversity requirement. Among those who had taken the courses, 81% of first-time first year and 78% of transfer students somewhat to strongly agree that they had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW.

**Figure 10.**



Agreement varied significantly by gender. Women had a higher mean rating of agreement of 4.53 compared to 4.01 for men. A higher percentage of men indicated that have not yet taken courses that meet the UW Diversity requirement relative to women. Among those who had taken the courses, 72% of men and 85% of women somewhat to strongly agree that they had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW.

**Figure 11.**



Students with other/unknown race had the lowest mean rating of agreement of 3.94. American Indian/Alaska Native students had the highest mean rating of 4.66. Among those who had taken the courses, 87% of International, 86% of Hispanic, 85% of African American, 84% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 82% of Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 80% of Asian, 77% of White, and 76% of Other/Unknown students somewhat to strongly agree that they had a positive effect on the quality of their education at UW.

**Figure 12.**

