

UW-UAW Equity Survey 2018-19



I. INTRODUCTION

The UW-UAW Equity Survey was developed and administered jointly between University of Washington and UAW 4121 in Fall 2018 and Winter 2019 for the purpose of assessing the prevalence of discrimination faced by UW Academic Student Employees (ASEs), as well as to better understand ASEs' perceptions of equity and inclusion at UW and to strategize interventions. As the 2018 NASEM report on sexual harassment in academic science, engineering, and medicine demonstrates, climate surveys such as these are a key tool for understanding and addressing structural inequity and for measuring progress over time (NASEM 2018, 182-183).

In this first year of the UW-UAW Equity Survey, results provide a troubling picture of UW's climate for ASEs: **40% of men, 60% of women, and 80% of non-binary people report experiencing at least some form of harassment in the past year.** And these numbers are consistent with findings in academia more broadly: e.g., a significant 2003 meta-analysis demonstrates that 58% of female university employees experience sexual harassment at work (Ilies et al 2003. Also discussed at NASEM 2018, 40).

While these results are undeniably troubling, **they also offer a key opportunity for the University and Union to develop innovative, standard-setting programs that will place UW at the cutting edge of equity work nationwide.** As we've seen with the success of the jointly developed Empowering Prevention and Inclusive Communities (EPIC) training program for ASEs, such collaborative work can be highly effective and can provide a compelling model for future work at

UW and in academia more broadly. Given the nature of UW's size relative to its resources and administrative capacity, we follow the guidance of the NASEM report that to truly push for culture change at UW, equity work must happen simultaneously from both the top down and the bottom up (NASEM 2018, 126).

This report is broken down as follows: In Section II, we outline methodology for both the design and implementation of the survey. We then analyze the survey results along several lines: (§III) equity, inclusion, and experiences with harassment; (§IV) experiences with and perceptions of reporting; and (§V) equity, inclusion, and career development. In Section VI we provide recommendations for future programming based on this analysis.

II. METHODOLOGY & REPRESENTATION

The 2018-19 Equity Survey was developed jointly by UW and UAW in Fall 2018. During development, feedback was provided by a number of key stakeholders: UW Labor Relations, UW Office of Learning Assessment, UW Graduate School, UW SafeCampus, UW College of Engineering, UW College of Arts and Sciences, UW School of Medicine, and UAW 4121. Final questions were jointly agreed upon between the University and the Union at the end of Fall 2018. In keeping with scientific consensus about surveying on issues of harassment, the survey asked participants about their experiences with specific behaviors that constitute harassment, rather than asking about harassment generally (e.g., refer to the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire developed by Fitzgerald et al 1988).

In Winter 2019, the survey was jointly administered to

UW ASEs through a variety of communication channels: UW Labor Relations sent a central email to all ASEs and outreached to department chairs to ask that they send it to ASEs in their departments, UAW 4121 sent a central email to all ASEs, and UAW 4121 department representatives sent emails to ASEs in their departments. Reminder emails were sent through several of these channels.

In total, 1165 people participated, or about 25% of the ASE unit at the time the survey was administered. Most UW colleges were represented roughly proportionally, with most falling between 21% and 31% participation. Racially, response rates were very close to proportionate with UW Grad School 2018 enrollment rates (Figure 2). For gender, response rates were also very close to proportionate with UW Grad School enrollment rates (Figure 1). Survey response rates for trans people were higher than the most recent estimates for Washington State (3.0% compared with 0.62%) (Flores et al 2016). Survey response rates for queer people were higher than 2018 estimates for Seattle (24.4% compared with 12.5%) (Gates 2018).

In Spring 2019, a survey analysis plan was agreed upon jointly between the University and the Union. Analysis was completed by Orion Dollar, Mark Rafferty, Paige Sechrest, and Sam Sumpter.

As described in the UW-UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Equity Survey will be distributed every year and used to strategize further steps for promoting equity, inclusion, transparency and accountability. As a result, this first year’s results are particularly important for providing a baseline that we can measure future years against to assess how our efforts are making progress and how we still need to improve.

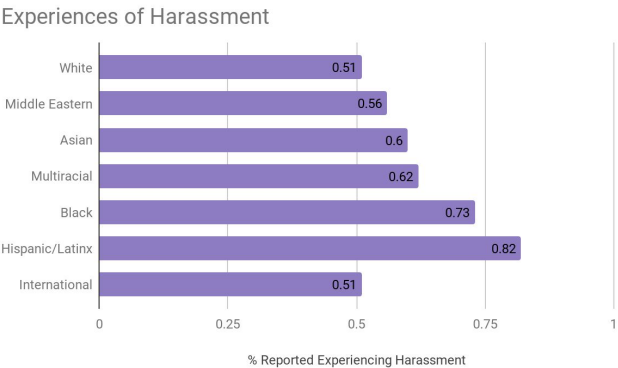
Figure 1	Equity Survey	Grad School Enrollment
Man	45%	46%
Woman	53%	54%
Non-Binary	2%	Not tracked

Figure 2	Equity Survey	Grad School Enrollment
Asian	22%	14%
Black	3%	4%
Hispanic	5%	7%
Multiracial	11%	Not tracked
Native	1%	2%
White	58%	50%

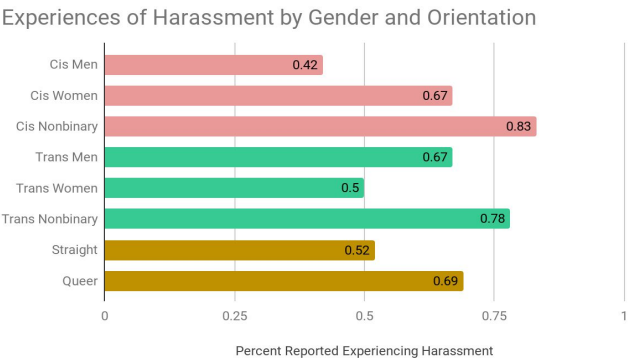
III. EQUITY, INCLUSION AND EXPERIENCES WITH HARASSMENT

Experiences With Harassment

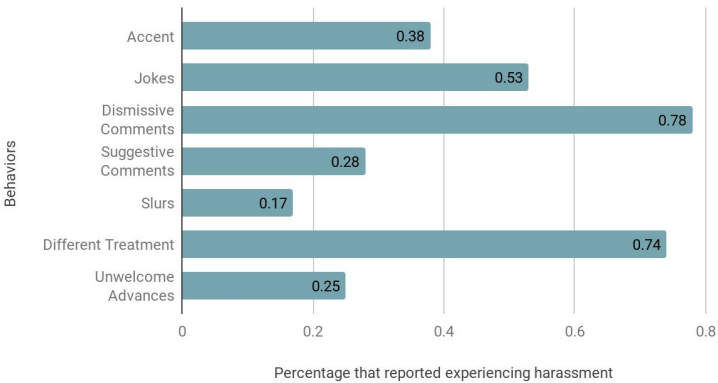
The survey asked whether respondents had had particular behaviors directed at them: derogatory jokes based on identity; jokes or comments about the way they talk or their accent; explicit or suggestive comments; slurs; different treatment from others based on identity; unwelcome romantic or sexual advances; sexual advances that continued after they asked the person to stop; and sexual advance where they felt that something about their work was contingent on complying. Overall, 57% of the sample reported experiencing at least one of these behaviors in the past year. Hispanic/Latinx and black respondents reported experiencing these behaviors at the highest rates.



Respondents who identified as women, nonbinary, trans and queer experienced higher rates of harassment than others in the sample.



Experienced Behaviors by Type



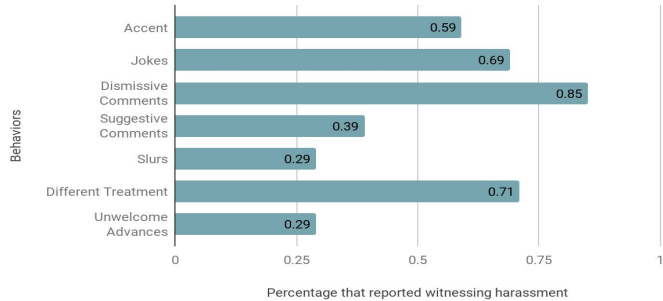
The harassing behavior that people reported experiencing most frequently was dismissive comments. Of the people who reported experiencing harassment, 78% reported having such comments directed at them. The survey defined these as comments that were about women, people of color, indigenous/native people, undocumented people LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, or other underrepresented groups; or dismissive comments about the concerns and inclusion of those groups.

The next most common harassing behavior that people experienced was different treatment from others in the department or group that seemed to be based on the person’s identity or some part of their identity. It is noteworthy that in assessing which kinds of discriminatory behavior are most commonly witnessed, people are experiencing behavior that is discriminatory at the level of interpersonal disrespect as well as access to equal treatment within the department. This corresponds to research on sexual harassment, which says that atmospheres that are tolerant of overt forms of sexual harassment are first tolerant of more subtle forms of harassment and disrespect (NASEM 2018).

Witnessing Harassment

In addition to asking respondents whether any of the previously mentioned harassing behaviors had been directed at them, the survey asked respondents whether they had witnessed any of those behaviors.

Witnessing Harassment Behaviors

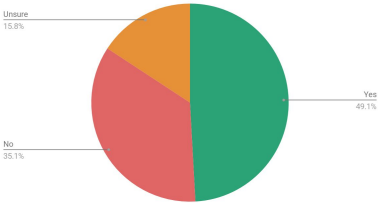


The behaviors that were witnessed most frequently corresponded to the behaviors that people reported experiencing most frequently: dismissive comments and different treatment based on identity. Interestingly, in the context of experiencing harassment, the percentage of people who reported experiencing dismissive comments is fairly close to the percentage of people who reported experiencing different treatment based on their identity, whereas in the context of witnessing harassment, the percentage of people who reported witnessing dismissive comments is substantially higher than those who experience different treatment. This perhaps suggests that people are witnessing comments about particular groups that they recognize as being dismissive, even if they do not actually belong to those groups.

Disability Accommodations

Of the 1,165 respondents, 57 identified as disabled. The high number of people who reported being unsure about whether they had had difficulty accessing disability accommodations

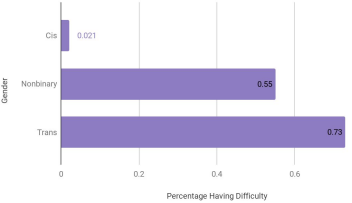
Difficulty Accessing Disability Accommodations



may suggest that there is a need for more information about how people are put into contact with those accommodations, although it is possible that these data need to be supplemented by qualitative research in order to gauge what the response of “unsure” represents experientially.

Bathroom Accessibility

Difficulty Accessing Safe or Affirming Bathrooms

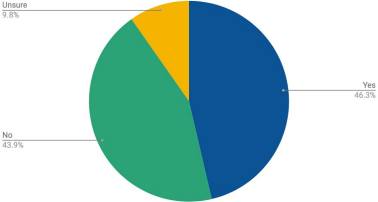


Over half of nonbinary people who participated in the survey reported having difficulty accessing safe or affirming bathrooms, as did almost three quarters of respondents who identified as trans, indicating that this continues to be a pressing problem for this community.

Lactation Stations

In the survey sample, 73 people identified as parents. 41 responded to the question about whether they had had difficulty accessing lactation stations. Of these parents, people who had no trouble accessing lactation stations were in the minority.

Difficulty Accessing a Lactation Station (Parents)



IV. REPORTING

Overwhelmingly, survey participants who experienced some form of harassment in the past year did not get help, with **90% stating that they did not go to anyone to make a report or even to seek support** (Figure 3). For instance, one participant who had experienced harassment wrote, “I went to counseling during that stressful period, but I did not even tell the counselor what was going on, because I was confused, I thought I did something wrong, and could not figure out why I am so stressed.”

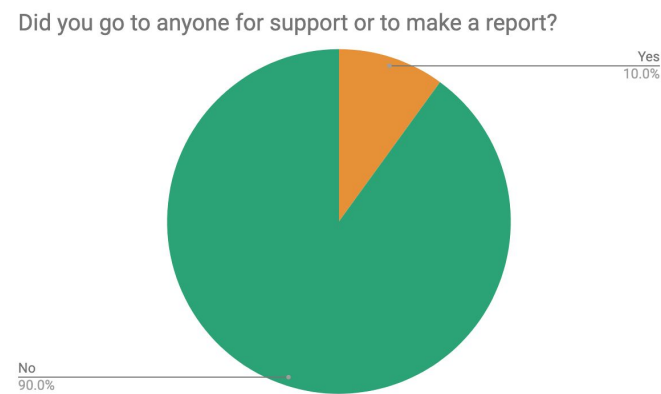


Figure 3. Use of any support or reporting resource by survey participants who experienced harassment.

Of those who experienced harassment and did seek help, most went to a department administrator or faculty member. Very few sought help from UW support resources (SafeCampus, Confidential Advocates) or UW reporting resources (police, Title IX Investigators, UCIRO, ombuds), and more went to their Union than any other reporting resource (Figure 4). While few participants used SafeCampus or Confidential Advocates, a majority of those who did were ‘very satisfied’ with their experience, whereas far fewer AEs who went to a department administrator or faculty member were ‘very satisfied’ (Figure 5). This suggests that AEs may not be using SafeCampus or Confidential Advocates because of a lack of awareness rather than a lack of need or interest.

Meanwhile, few who went to a UW reporting

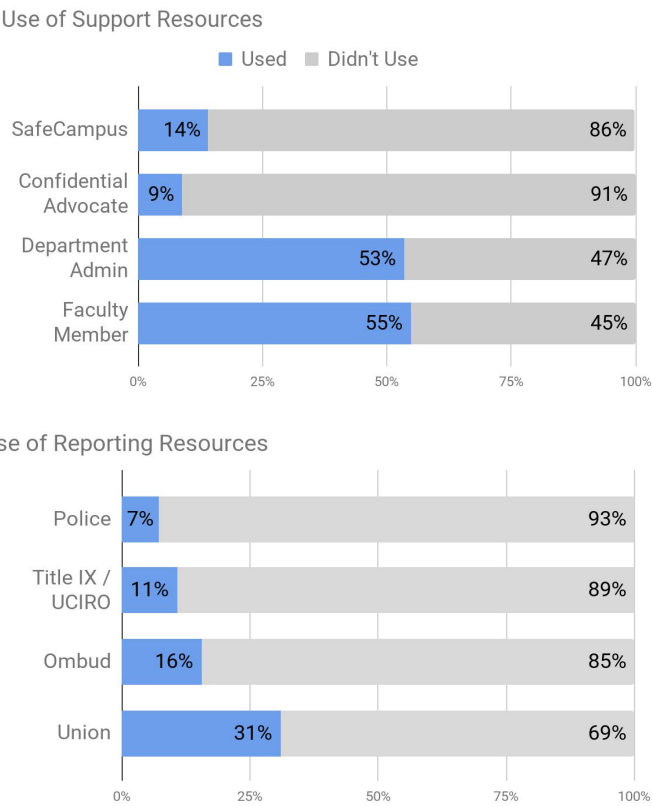


Figure 4. Use of specific support or reporting resources by survey participants who experienced harassment.

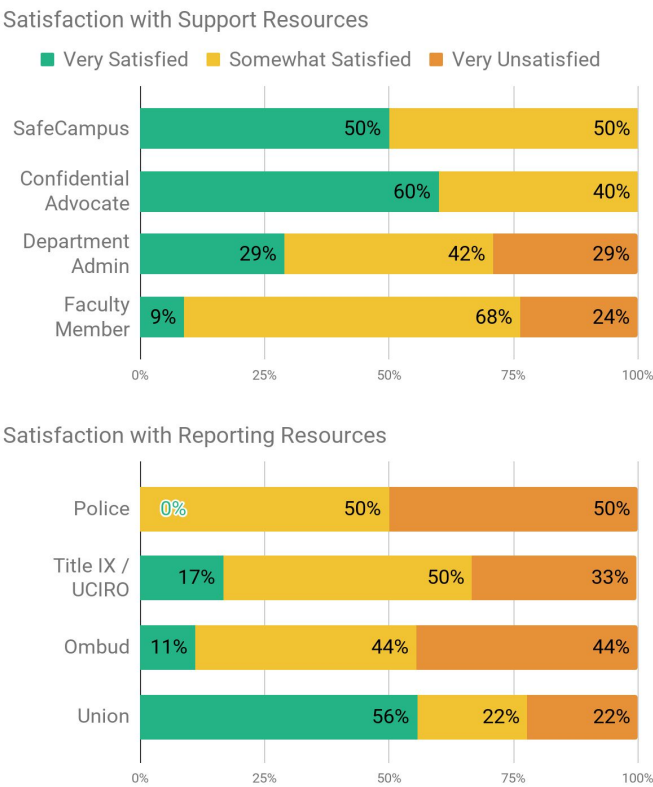


Figure 5. Satisfaction with support or reporting resources for survey participants who had used them.

resource were ‘very satisfied’ with their experience, and many were ‘very unsatisfied.’. This suggests that while ASEs may not be using these resources because they do not know about them, they may also not be using them because they do not think they will be helpful. By contrast, many who went to their union were ‘very satisfied’ with their experience, and more than 75% were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ (Figure 5).

All participants, including those who had not experienced harassment in the past year, were asked to assess how likely or unlikely they thought different factors would be if they made a report of harassment with UW. Across all survey participants, there are fairly high levels of confidence that if they made a report of harassment, their reports would be handled fairly and their privacy would be maintained. However, participants were significantly less confident that their report would be handled in a reasonable amount of time, that they would be protected from retaliation, or that they’d be able to continue working during the investigation safely and with minimal interruptions (Figure 6).

Among demographic groups, negative perceptions of likely experiences with UW reporting resources were particularly exacerbated for binary and non-binary trans ASEs (Figures 8 and 9). In addition, these concerns are particularly exacerbated for ASEs who actually had experienced harassment and made a report with a UW reporting office (Title IX, UCIRO, Police, or Ombud) (Figure 7): E.g., nearly 75% did not think it was likely the report would be handled in a reasonable time or that they would be able to continue working with minimal interruptions. While these questions are about perceived likelihood of experience, given that these participants have actually had these experiences, it’s reasonable to infer that these responses reflect their actual experiences with UW reporting resources. For instance, one participant reported that a grad student they knew who had reported an incident “was

Perceptions of Likely Experiences with UW Reporting Process

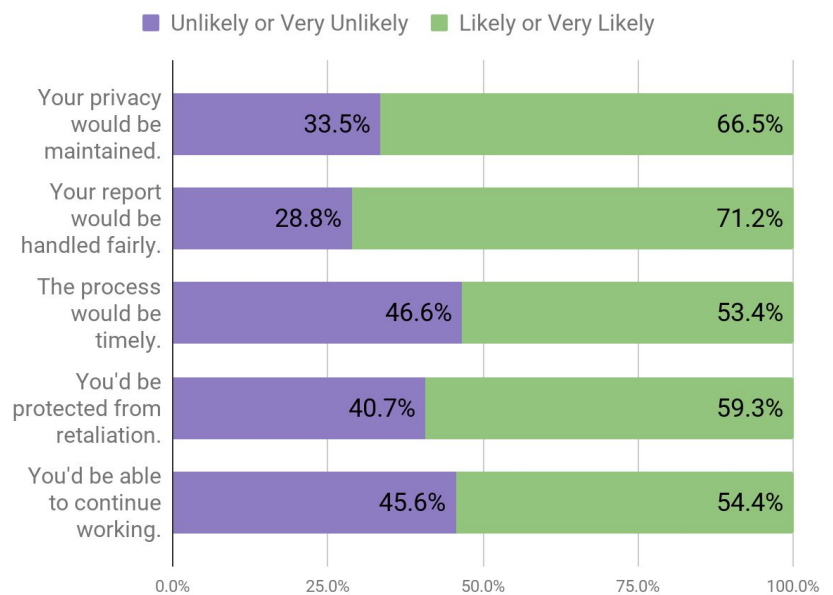


Figure 6. Perceived likelihood of experiences with different elements of UW reporting processes across all survey participants.

Perceptions of Likely Experiences with UW Reporting Process

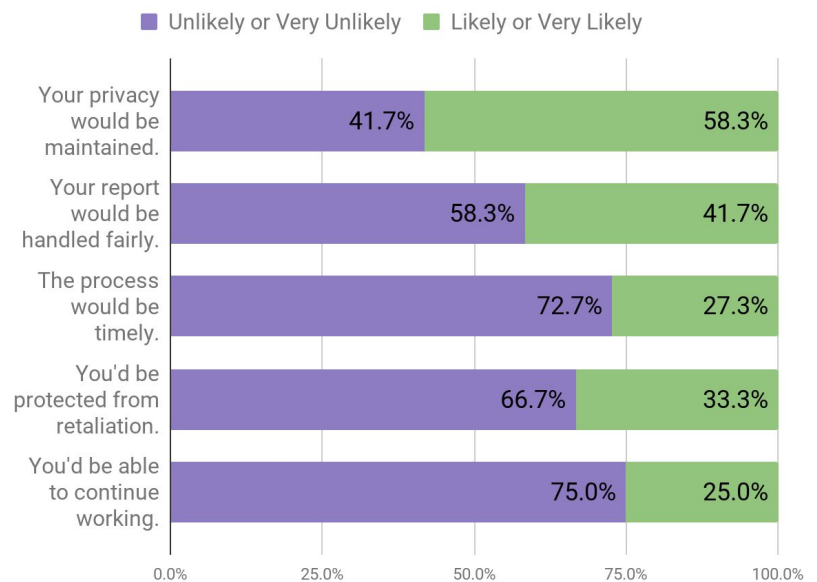


Figure 7. Perceived likelihood of experiences with different elements of UW reporting processes for survey participants who had actually accessed a UW reporting resource in the past.

completely not satisfied with the help she got. As an international student she was constantly worried that this professor would retaliate at her and make it hard for her to receive her degree/stay in this country.” Another wrote of their experience, “I spoke about this to my PI and his suggestion was just to remove me from any interaction with this person,

which I feel is not the best for my education (in a way, this is punishing me as the perpetrator has a lot of expertise that directly pertains to my work)."

For all groups, negative perceptions about the reporting process are deterrents to reporting: Participants who didn't think they would be protected from retaliation, who didn't think their report would be handled in a reasonable amount of time, and who didn't think they would be able to continue working and learning safely and with minimal interruptions were all less likely to want to make a report if they were harassed (Figure 10). In particular, survey results indicate at least four key factors that deter reporting:

First, participants express a clear concern about how reporting could negatively impact their career. For some, this is most salient in concerns that reporting would delay their degree progress, or would decrease or harm their status or reputation in their professional network:

- *"I can't see myself as ever feeling comfortable reporting an incident due to backlash and academic progression."*
- *"I feel like making a formal report would take up so much time and effort that it would negatively affect my studying time."*
- *"I do not have faith that reporting harassment would be confidential, and that it would not come back to hurt me professionally."*

For many, a particular area of concern is their dependence on their advisor or dissertation committee:

- *"The thought of retaliation is terrifying and would definitely stop me from reporting harassers with power over me, unless I was guaranteed they would no longer have that power."*
- *"there are not very clear measures in place around what would happen should someone make a complaint about someone on their committee."*

Perceptions of Likely Ability to Continue Working Safely & With Few Interruptions

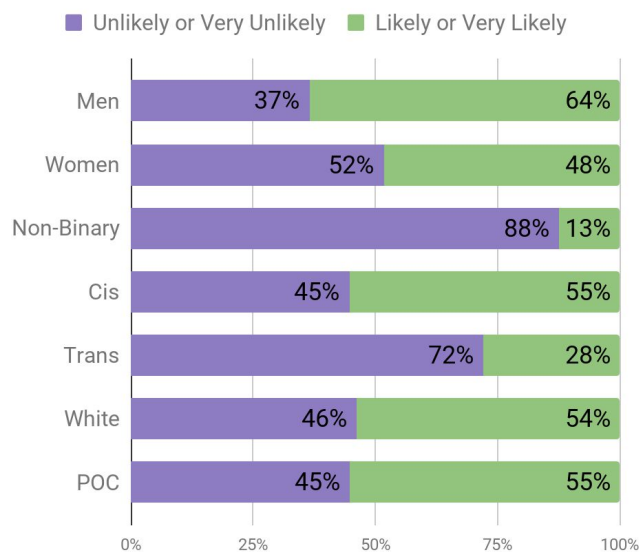


Figure 8. Survey participants' perceptions of how likely it would be that they would be able to continue working and learning safely and with minimal interruptions if they used a UW reporting resource.

Perceptions of Likely Protection From Retaliation

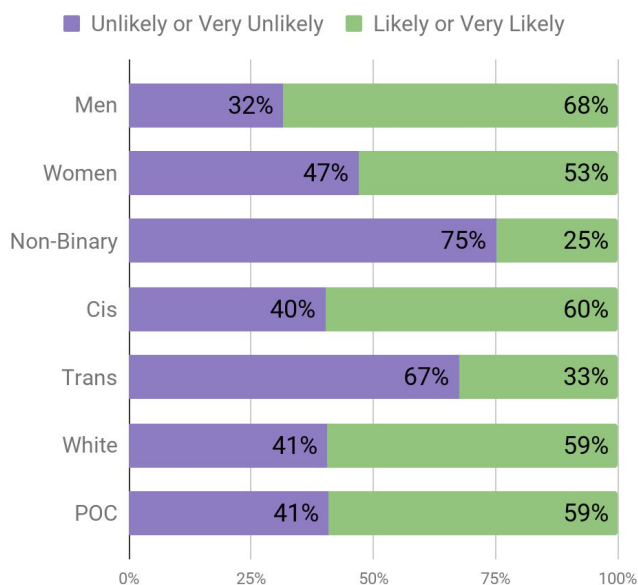


Figure 9. Survey participants' perceptions of how likely it would be that they would be protected from retaliation if they used a UW reporting resource.

Second, participants express perceptions that reporting processes don't make a difference and that perpetrators won't be held accountable:

- *"I would not file any formal report because I*

Likelihood to Report if Harassed

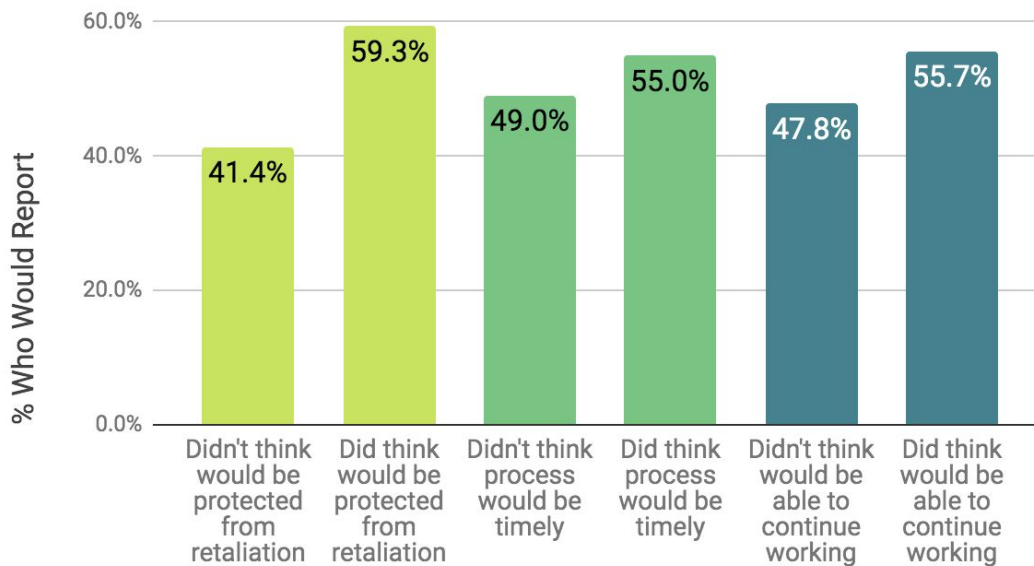


Figure 10. Differences in likelihood to use a reporting resource between survey participants who had positive and negative perceptions of expected experiences with UW reporting resources..

do not feel that would make a difference. I feel the report would just be dismissed unless I was reporting a murder."

- *"There seemed to be no consequences to the person besides a more serious talk despite that behavior happening again after I reported it."*
- *"People don't trust that their evidence and reports will be taken seriously, and that won't change until there is a track record of successful investigations and action taken."*

Third, participants indicate that they find available reporting processes unclear or difficult to navigate:

- *"UW resources are unacceptably difficult to navigate and ineffective. UCIRO does not consistently actually follow through on implementing resolutions, faculty and staff are not properly trained, websites need to be improved, the counseling center does not help long or often enough. I could go on."*
- *"The lack of transparency with UW resources is painful. When the UCIRO investigator told me I wouldn't hear from them the result of the investigation, I was shocked."*
- *In my department, we are not oriented about*

where and how to report harassment."

- *"I have no idea what the procedure would be for making a formal report."*

Fourth, participants express a lack of community buy-in or understanding of how to respond to and prevent harassment:

- *"I think faculty and staff require more training on what is and isn't appropriate behavior (i.e. consent training), as well as information on how to support victims/survivors, including providing resources and reporting tools."*
- *"I would LOVE to see mandatory, thoughtful, and in-depth sexual harassment workshops tailored toward faculty and professors complete with discussions of unequal power dynamics."*
- *"I feel there are not adequate resources for all individuals at the university to be able to comfortably report harassment."*
- *"There needs to be a cultural shift that will only come by people being explicitly told 'this behavior is not ok' by a person or office with power over them, and being convinced that there would be strong repercussions."*
- *"There needs to be mandatory trainings for faculty."*

V. INCLUSION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

An **average of 51.5%** of all survey participants responded that in the past year, they have experienced persistent uncertainty about what they need to do to succeed in their chosen career path. These rates were consistent for all tested demographics, and were particularly high for binary and non-binary trans ASES and Hispanic/Latinx ASES (Figure 11).

Rates of Persistent Uncertainty About How to Succeed

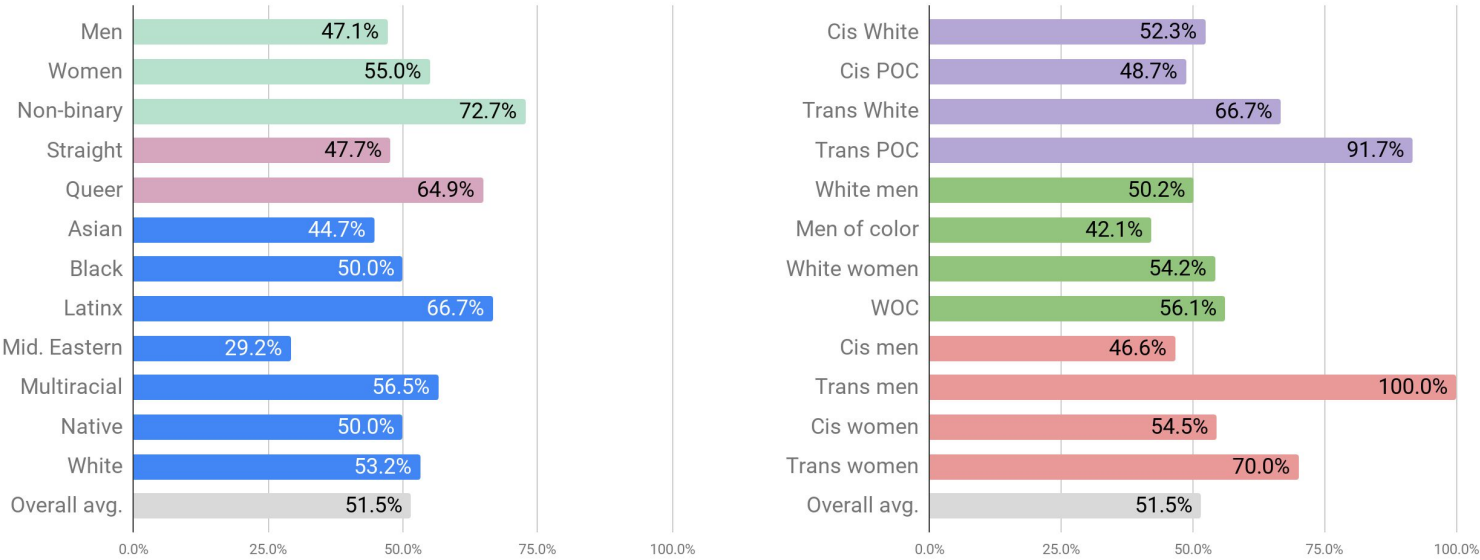


Figure 11. Survey participants' rates of persistent uncertainty in the past year about how to succeed in their chosen career path.

An **average of 49%** of survey participants responded that in the past year, they felt they didn't belong at UW. This again was consistently high rate across demographics, and was particularly exacerbated for binary and non-binary trans ASES, queer ASES, Hispanic/Latinx ASES, and Native ASES (Figure 12).

Rates of Feeling You Don't Belong at UW

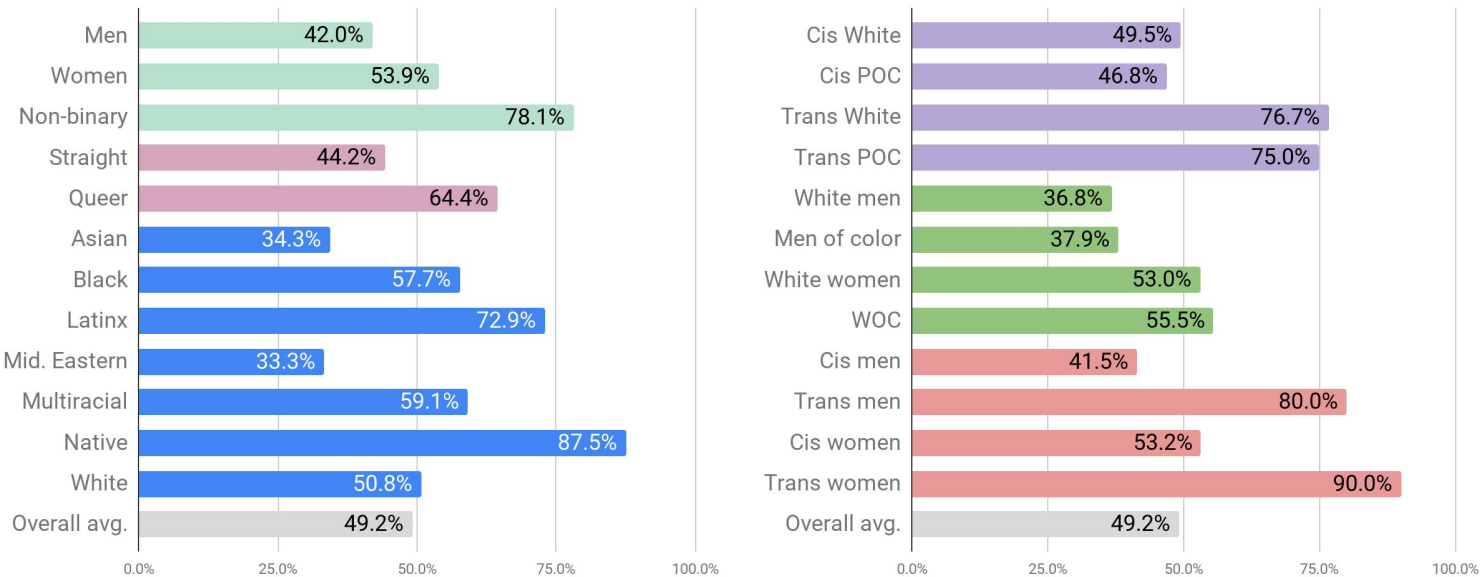


Figure 12. Survey participants' rates of feeling in the past year that they don't belong at UW.

Across demographics, binary and non-binary trans ASEs and queer ASEs experienced the highest rates of thoughts they might drop out of UW because they weren't receiving the support they needed (Figure 13).

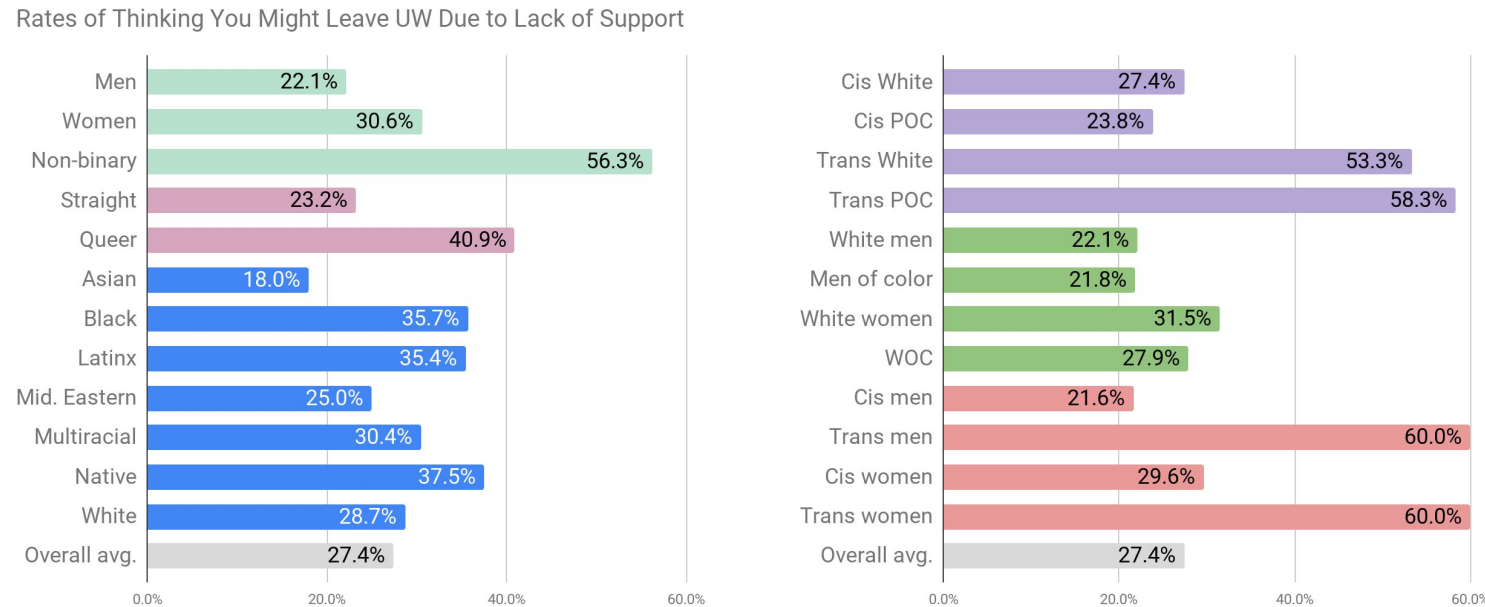


Figure 13. Survey participants' rates of thinking they might drop out or leave UW in the past year because they weren't receiving support they needed.

Binary and non-binary trans ASEs also experienced much higher-than-average difficulty finding good, affirming, or effective mentorship, as did queer ASEs and Hispanic/Latinx ASEs (Figure 14).

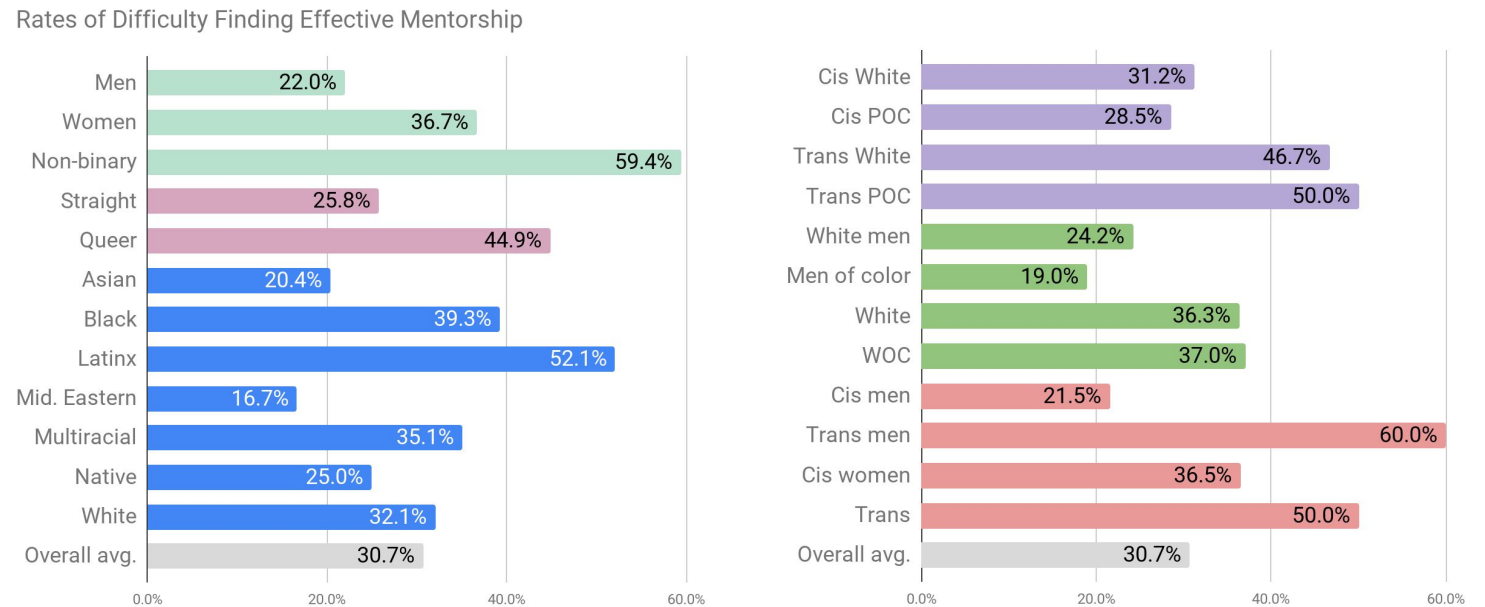


Figure 14. Survey participants' rates of difficulty finding good, affirming, or effective mentorship in the past year.

Participants who reported thoughts about dropping out of UW because they didn't have sufficient support also reported high levels of exclusion and uncertainty. Of those who had thoughts about dropping out of UW, **89%** were persistently uncertain about how to succeed in their career, **87%** felt they didn't belong at UW, and **68%** had difficulty finding effective mentorship (Figure 15).

Experienced Thoughts About Dropping Out of UW

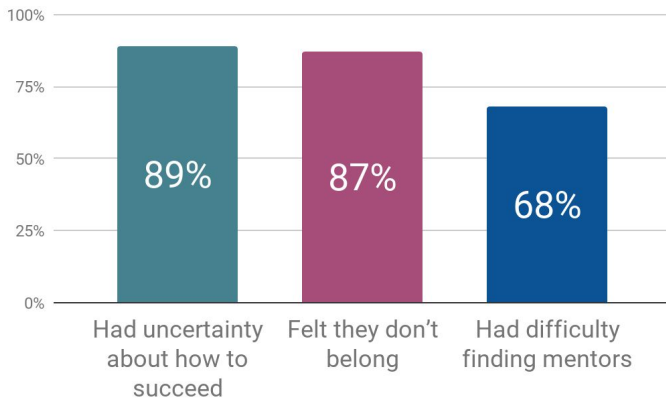


Figure 15. Rates of feelings of exclusion and uncertainty among survey participants who reported thoughts of dropping out of UW in the past year.

Survey responses indicate a few key factors that contribute to these dynamics. **First**, participants link their experiences with the dynamics above to underrepresentation of their identity group:

- “There aren’t very many LGBTQ students in [my field], which causes feelings of not belonging, and makes me question my career path.”
- “There are very few openly trans faculty members at UW.”
- “There isn’t a strong Indigenous population on campus. I wish I had a professor in my community.”
- “Latinas and women in my department are nonexistent. Also there aren’t any graduate Latino organizations to join at UW...the chances of me finishing my PhD are small.”

Second, participants report feeling unprepared for pursuing their career after graduation:

- “when looking for resources for career opportunities or what to do after graduation, I find it hard to find support. Often, I feel like I have to do the work and feel lost on where to find resources.”
- “The career center is not specialized enough to help with [careers in my discipline].”
- “I don’t feel that there is effective mentorship available, and I also feel unprepared for life after school.”

Third, participants report needing clearer communication and expectations from advisors, and more clarity about how to find mentorship:

- “Faculty members are not trained to be proper managers...how to motivate people, how to proper[ly] communicate with students”
- “My advisor is often disrespectful of me and unprofessional in communications to me. They often make statements that make me feel as if I am incompetent.”
- “The PIs can be absent, lack clarity in their directions, fail to provide better clarity when pressed, and view their roles as “facilitating research” more than “mentoring students.”...This was disheartening and at times makes me question my direction with graduate school & my likelihood of finishing under my current rotation PI.”
- “I wish I had knowledge of more formal routes for finding mentorship.”

Fourth, participants report that their advisors are not sufficiently attentive to their needs or don’t know how to support their specific goals:

- “As a queer woman, I do not feel that I belong in academia and struggle against well intentioned but damaging mentorship. This has made me considering dropping out of my graduate degree and this career path.”
- “I’ve had a really terrible and inattentive advisor that almost caused me to leave my PhD program. Faculty are stretched way too thin to be great advisors in general in my 4 years of experience.”
- “In our department, faculty are a big zero when it comes to mentorship...those I do come in contact with are nice people who listen well, but offer little to no guidance or support. We’re largely left to fend for ourselves.”

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusion

Survey results point to several key demographic groups who experience especially high rates of exclusion and uncertainty at UW: binary and non-binary trans ASEs, queer ASEs, women, Hispanic/Latinx ASEs, black ASEs, and native ASEs. In particular, binary and non-binary trans ASEs and Hispanic/Latinx ASEs experienced high rates of negative experiences more consistently than any other demographic groups: On nearly every tested metric, these groups reported significantly higher rates of negative experience than did comparison demographic groups. We recommend sustained programming and support developed particularly for these groups, where such programming should be targeted specifically at ASEs and/or grad students.

In addition, we recommend specific attention to the finding that a majority of all survey participants report high rates of persistent uncertainty about how to succeed in their chosen career path. We recognize that there is some level of uncertainty that will come with any profession, but 52% of survey participants reporting *persistent uncertainty in the past year* indicates a clear problem. Interventions to help improve this issue can vary, but based on this survey's responses, might include: improvements to mentorship practices and expectations; increased mentorship training for faculty; increased attention to mental health, particularly on topics such as imposter syndrome; increased clarity of expectations in graduate programs; increased scaffolding and career development integrated into graduate education; increased representation of minoritized groups (both among students and mentors); etc.

Reporting

We recommend three areas of intervention with respect to reporting: First, training and other educational measures should be taken to increase awareness of which resources exist, what they do, and how to access them. Given that survey participants seek support from department

administrators and faculty more frequently than any other resource at UW, faculty and staff in particular should be equipped with clear information about support and reporting resources.

Second, reporting processes themselves should be improved to increase accountability and transparency and to incentivize reporting. In particular, measures should be taken to minimize potential retaliation or negative career impacts, to improve timeliness, to minimize delays to degree progress, and to increase accountability for all members of the UW community.

Third, measures should be taken to improve community buy-in that harassment is not tolerated and to enhance building a culture of prevention at UW. As one participant wrote, "It's good to have resources available after events have already taken place. But it's better to create an environment where these things are explicitly and thoroughly covered such that the gray area is minimized. Harassment needs to transform into something clearly intolerable and outside of the norms."

Access

To increase access for parents and binary and non-binary trans people, we recommend increasing the number and location of both lactation stations and all-gender bathrooms, as well as increased distribution of information about those locations. We also recommend increased public signage at gender-segregated bathrooms affirming that people may use the bathroom that accords with their gender identity. We additionally recommend increasing the ease and transparency of securing accommodations for a disability.

VII. WORKS CITED

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