Analysis of 2016 and 2017 Surveys of Alumni, Current Students and Faculty by the Cultural Responsiveness Task Force (CRTF)

8-24-2018

OVERALL INTRODUCTION

Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically, and unintentionally affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Implicit bias is an unconscious sentiment that refers to internal perceptions about ourselves and our environment that impact our stereotypes and pre-conceived notions and result in our attitudes and actions towards others (Jackson, Hillard, & Schneider, 2014). Behavioral scientists refer to this phenomenon as dissociation. Such dissociations are often observed in attitudes toward individuals of socially marginalized groups, based upon, e.g. race, age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Research has shown that implicit bias can pose a barrier to the education of Black students by increasing “stereotype threat.” Steele (1997) and Steele and Aronson (1995) termed the feelings, pressures and outcomes that Black students experience while attempting not to fulfill negative stereotypes about their intelligence, “stereotype threat.” Stereotype threat can be defined as the belief by Black students that they will fulfill stereotypical perceptions about their ability for academic achievement based on their race. For Black students, particularly in STEM majors, the consequences of stereotype threat can be so disruptive to their academic trajectories that they often switch majors after their first year of school (Chang, Eagan, Lin, & Hurtado, 2009). Research also suggests that, for Black students in STEM majors at PWI’s (Predominantly White Institutions), stereotype threat also has significant negative effects on academic and test performance (Beasley & Fischer, 2012).” (1)

The phenomenon of implicit bias and stereotyping has been acknowledged by the NIH and, in consequence, they have created The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI). As stated on the NIH OEDI website, “the good news is that implicit bias can be mitigated with awareness and effective bias-reduction strategies.” NIH Staff have created a wide array of tools to address this phenomenon. These tools are based on intervention research completed by a variety of organizations. Among the results of this research, they found that institutions do a better job of increasing diversity when they forgo control tactics and frame their efforts more positively. The most effective programs spark engagement, increase contact among different groups or draw on people’s strong desire to look good to others. They mention such interventions as voluntary training, self-managed teams, cross training, mentoring and diversity task forces, and have developed a number of programs based on this research which now are in the NIH “Toolkit” used by its Office of Scientific Workforce Diversity and its Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Activities and Results of The Work of Xavier’s Cultural Responsiveness Task Force

While Xavier University of Louisiana is designated as a Historically Black University, and Xavier’s student body is predominantly Black or African American (69.6% Black or African American, 11.4% Asian, 5.9% White, and 3.7% Hispanic), only 33.8% of the Xavier faculty are Black or African American. This difference is not surprising, especially in the biomedical sciences, where African American STEM PhDs in the U.S. are greatly underrepresented. Given the environments in which many of us have grown-up, it would not be surprising that at least some of our faculty do, unconsciously, suffer from implicit bias. To better understand and address this issue, the Cultural Responsiveness Task Force (CRTF) was created to (a) develop and execute cultural responsiveness surveys to currently enrolled students and faculty in the biomedical disciplines, and also alumni seeking PhDs in the biomedical sciences, to determine if and how cultural responsiveness among Xavier faculty need to be enhanced; (b) help the Xavier community (faculty, staff, and students) recognize and understand existing cross cultural implicit bias; and (c)
recommend and implement strategies that will help eliminate such biases in an effort to improve mentoring, advising, and the education of underrepresented groups within these disciplines. This effort has been led by Dr. Cirecie Olatunji and Dr. Gene D’Amour with the assistance of Dr. Silas Lee.

To this end we have:

• Developed a conceptual framework to stimulate fruitful discussions regarding these issues;
• Brought in eminent outside speakers, in person or by video transmission, to ignite discussion about implicit bias and other non-cognitive factors influencing students' involvement in biomedical sciences such as:
  o Tim Wise who is among the nation's most prominent antiracist essayists and educators. Mr. Wise has spent the past 25 years speaking to audiences in all 50 states, on over 1000 college and high school campuses, at hundreds of professional and academic conferences, and to community groups across the nation.
• Developed instruments to communicate to, and engage faculty in, discussions of implicit bias including podcasts, newsletters, and a website; and
• Identified and explored model programs that attempt to address implicit bias by meeting with outside experts, in person and by video transmission such as:
  o Dr. Linda Strausbaugh, founding Director of both the University of Connecticut's Professional Science Masters in Applied Genomics Program. Dr. Strausbaugh has developed excellent methods to address implicit bias.
  o Representatives of four other universities who were identified by the NIH-funded National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) as having model programs that deal with implicit bias.

The most extensive work of the CRTF has been to develop and carry out surveys of alumni, students, and faculty to determine potential presence and extent of implicit bias at Xavier, and to use the resultant information as a basis for making recommendations to the University on next steps. This activity began in the first year of the NIH/NIGMS-funded Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) program at Xavier, Project pathways. The BUILD Program’s main goal is to increase diversity in the biomedical research workforce. Once the Committee was formed, the Members worked with Xavier’s Office of Institutional Research to develop the initial surveys and with Dr. Silas Lee, a Sociology Assistant Professor at Xavier, who has served as a pollster and strategist for numerous corporate, nonprofit, public sector, political, and legal clients over the last 27 years. Dr. Lee also is a court-certified specialist in public opinion research and has assisted attorneys in jury selection and defining the social and cultural perspectives of potential jurors in criminal and civil cases.

SURVEY PROCESS

During the FY 2016 and 2017 academic years, after IRB approval, biomedical alumni (graduates from 2013 to 2017), Xavier faculty and current students in biomedical disciplines were invited to participate in an online survey disseminated via email, measuring their perceptions of, and experience with, advisors, mentors, programs and services available to them while enrolled at Xavier University and to capture the existence and impact of subconscious stereotypes activating implicit biases. The invitation included informed consent documentation which informed participants that their answers would remain confidential. In 2016, 1,560 current students, 732 alumni and 92 faculty were invited to complete the survey. The response rates for these surveys were 19% for current students, 17% for Alumni, and 51% for faculty. In 2017, another survey was sent out to 1,752 current students with a response rate of 9%,
742 alumni with a response rate of 11%, and 86 faculty with a response rate of 46%. (2) Please note that there was some overlap between the individuals surveyed in 2016 and 2017.

While average response rates over the two years were quite good (current students 14%, alumni 14%, and faculty 46%), we were initially concerned about what appeared to be a low response rate in the 2017 surveys. Based on further research, however, we found that the response rates were what one would expect. In fact, institutions of higher education are continuously confronted with responding to the question of low response rates impacting the accuracy of research data. (It is notable that the most recent student survey used by the NIH BUILD’s Center for Evaluation and Coordination had a response rate of approximately 10% across the Consortium.) To assuage the concerns of researchers to this question, as stated by Dr. Silas Lee, “analysts have concluded that a high response rate does not guarantee better data accuracy, nor does a low response rate indicate unreliable data.” This is due to the size of the population group available to researchers at an institution. A study by Indiana University School of Education on confidence in response rate to surveys at universities concluded that, “depending on the size of an institution, a low response rate can provide reliable institutional level estimates.” They also noted, “institutions with larger enrollments generally see lower response rates but they may have a higher degree of confidence in estimates due to the sheer number of respondents.” In the case of the CRTF surveys, the size of the population for current students (3,312), alumni (1,474) and faculty (178) was large enough to allow confidence in respondent surveys.

A few factors of note:

- Where comments identify specific professors, names have been removed;
- The second-year surveys were revised to make them shorter in an attempt to get a better response rate;
- In the analysis below, we have identified common questions by the notation AA/BB where AA is from the 2016 survey and BB from the 2017 survey. Where the questions analyzed were in only one of the surveys, we designated AA/ for 2016 and /BB for 2017;
- Student surveys included “not applicable” as an option. In the case where this option was chosen, the response was not included;
- Student and faculty surveys also included the options “don’t know” or “neutral.” Many students chose these options so the “agree” and “disagree” survey percentages do not necessarily add up to 100% and we speculate that some of the students may have been uncomfortable answering some of the questions;
- For each question in student, alumni and faculty surveys, the total percentages of responses were measured by the categories “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” “neutral,” “strongly disagree,” somewhat disagree,” and “don’t know.”
- While there is extensive information available in the surveys including recommendations for changes in the University, the analyses in this report focus only on responses that primarily deal with race-related cultural responsiveness;
- The student survey analysis focuses only on percentages of Black or African American students’ responses - more analyses from different perspectives are certainly warranted, such for Hispanic or Vietnamese American students;
- While analyses of each survey have been broken out by racial/cultural classification of the participant, by gender and, in the case of current students, by racial composition of high school attended, only the breakouts by racial classification have thus far been analyzed.
- The alumni and current student responses are broken into 3 categories, namely:
  I. How do student respondents feel about their Xavier education?
II. To what extent do faculty appear to be aware of racial biases that might exist and to actually incorporate this information into their classroom teaching, advising, or mentoring?

III. To what extent are faculty seen as being biased.

IV. To what extent do faculty appear to express or act on what appears to be racial bias?

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

It is perhaps unsurprising that the results indicate at least 20% of our alumni and current students perceive some of our faculty as having implicit biases. A higher percentage of Black or African American than other faculty have similar perceptions. That said, it is notable that Xavier faculty still are perceived by almost all students as doing an excellent job in educating them and preparing them for graduate school. Given that Xavier is #1 in the nation in the number of Blacks or African Americans who graduate with an MD, and is #1 as the primary undergraduate source of Black or African American Life Science PhDs, this is not surprising. As such, we do not see implicit bias at Xavier as a major problem impeding our students’ success, but rather as a promising opportunity to improve even further student experiences and support. It is exciting to consider how Xavier might, with modest interventions, be able to have an even stronger impact on the education of its biomedical students and the production of African American MDs and biomedical PhDs. Furthermore, based on interviews of our African American faculty who went from predominantly Black undergraduate institutions to predominantly White graduate schools in which they had to confront a much higher degree of implicit bias and stereotyping, we believe that faculty being able to better help our students to prepare for this transition through enhanced advising and mentoring can increase the level of retention and persistence of students in graduate school. This will require helping our faculty better understand how to recognize these biases, and to engage in discussions with our undergraduate students about racial bias and stereotyping, and ideally know how best to handle it should it occur. And, we know our students would appreciate such an opportunity. As demonstrated by the HERI 2017 CIRP Freshman Survey of Xavier Freshmen (which had a response rate of 66%), 87%, vs. 69% and 79% of Xavier’s two selected comparison groups, all Universities, and all HBCU’s respectively, said that “helping to promote racial understanding” is essential or very important.

Detailed analyses of the CRTF surveys that led us to these conclusions are provided below, followed by recommendations.

Analysis of Surveys -Significant Results

Alumni:
Note: 99% of responses were from Black or African American alumni. The analysis focuses only on the responses of former students who are Black or African American.

I. How do student respondents feel about their Xavier education, overall, as related to advising and as related to mentoring?

Q1. If you were starting college over again, how likely would you be to attend Xavier University? - 85% said definitely or probably, while 13% said probably not, and 0% said definitely not.
Q47/42. Overall, I believe Xavier prepared me academically for graduate school. - 75% agreed; 4% disagreed.
Q58/44. Do you still maintain contact with your mentor/advisor at Xavier University? - Over 50% agreed.
Q2. The quality of the content in courses taken in my major provided the subject matter needed for me to be successful in graduate school. - 84% agreed; 5% disagreed.

**Selected Comments - Overall**

- “Xavier was a great platform to prepare me for my future studies in a STEM field. My time there gave me more clarity about what direction I wanted to take my future in.”
- “Hands down, my four years at XULA were the best four years of my life. I learned, grew, and matured greatly at Xavier.”
- “Hire more African American STEM faculty members.”
- “The HBCU experience is the greatest, being at Xavier University of LA, I have learned so much about being myself and understanding my culture and who I am as far as being a part of this nation. I truly appreciate coming back home with the knowledge and skills to continue to succeed in my career. Thank you!”
- “I felt extremely prepared for graduate school immediately after completely undergraduate.”
- “It was an experience that I will never forget.”
- “It was a very accepting and supporting environment.”
- “Xavier University thoroughly prepared me for graduate school and for my next steps in achieving my goal.”
- “Helped me improve my study habits, provided me the skills to be successful in school and encouraged me to never give up.”
- “It was a great experience overall. I appreciated the environment cultivated by staff, faculty, and students. Learning to be a scientist amongst peers that are young and of color was a great experience.”

**Selected Comments – Regarding Advisors**

- “Dr. XX was amazing as both a professor and as an advisor. I will always be grateful for the way that she pushed me to succeed and achieve my goals. She was always there to give me advice in regards to both academia and my personal life. During my time at Xavier, XX was one of, if not the, biggest supporter that I had in my corner.”
- “My Advisor was Dr. XX and he was awesome. From being one of my professors and advisor, he got to know more about me than most of his students. I could go to office and talk about anything school related and he would be there with his honest opinion. He was a guiding light that I needed to make it through my last two years at Xavier!”
- “(My advisor was) A wonderful, caring man.”

**Selected Comments – Regarding Mentors**

- “My mentor was highly intelligent, well versed, and respected in his field of work/research. His zeal for science was very encouraging. In addition, my mentor was very kind and supportive. He was patient and he also challenged me to solve problems and handle more responsibility. All in all, he was a great lab mentor, great person, and inspiration.”
- “My research mentor continues to be an influential aspect of me attending graduate school.”
- “I was honored to work with two professors for research. Drs. XX and YY are amazing at what they do. Both were there for me in my time of need. I do encourage students to be more proactive with faculty members.”
- “Drs. XX and YY continuously supported me during my years at Xavier & they go above & beyond for the students! I appreciate them so much!”
“My research mentor, Dr. YY, was fantastic. He provided me with support as it pertained to our research and also, he helped me search for other opportunities. He helped me with graduate school and even after leaving Xavier we keep in contact for my academic career support and advice.”

“They were very discouraging and never got to know me. I had to seek help and advice outside of Xavier to succeed towards graduation. My advisor was very favorable.”

Selected Comments - STEM Support Programs

- “It helped me be more confident in my own work and more comfortable with asking for help when I needed it.”
- “They taught me humility, study skills, and the meaning of hard work.”
- “(Taught me the) strength to complete a rigorous course of study, research skills, and organizational skills.”
- “Internships filling my resume and giving me practical work experience; Dr. XX being an excellent teacher and devoting countless hours outside the classroom to student learning and achievement; the friendships, social bonds and supports I made within the STEM field, in class and on internships.”
- “(STEM support services) helped by preparing me, guiding me into a field, and by motivating me to understand that school is not the end of the rope.”
- “It helped me understand what it takes to succeed in the STEM field, what path I should take to achieve my goal, and gave me the motivation I need.”
- “To be academically prepared for failure, understanding that the ways Xavier treat African Americans was rare to non-HBCU schools and how to be professional.”
- “Helped me improve my study habits, provided me the skills to be successful in school and encouraged me to never give up.”
- “Prepared me with the time management skills necessary for the work load associated with graduate school, prepared me to work independently on research projects developing new ideas from previously known techniques. Prepared me to confidently stand in front of an audience and discuss my research result.”

II. To what extent do Faculty appear to be aware of racial biases that might exist and to actually incorporate this information into their classroom teaching, advising or mentoring?

Responses to the following questions appear to give some insight into this question:

Q10/. My advisor was aware of race biases African American and Minority students may experience at other institutions. - 73% agreed; 13% disagreed.
Q24/. My mentor was aware of race biases African American and Minority students may experience at other institutions. - 78% agreed; 12% disagreed.
Q11/4. My advisor understood the needs of students like me. - 72% agreed; 28% disagreed.
Q25/30. My mentor understood the needs of students like me. - 79% agreed; 10% disagreed.
Q21/15. My advisor supported the idea that programs aiding African American students to succeed in STEM courses is important to the mission of Xavier University. - 58% agreed; 15% disagreed.
Q36/33. My mentor supported the idea that programs aiding African American students to succeed in STEM courses is important to the mission of Xavier University. - 83% agreed; 9% disagreed.

Selected Comments
• “My faculty advisor and I never discussed issues related to race and gender. However, she was very helpful in navigating through undergrad.”
• “My research mentor had great knowledge about the African American community and was always looking for new research topics to provide better understanding for the community. She even brought concepts and ideas to me that I had never considered before. She was always looking for 'out of the box' ideas that had never been discussed before to bring additional awareness about certain ideas and perceptions in the African American and other minority communities.”
• “My advisor knew the struggles of a Black woman studying mathematics.”
• “Some faculty advisors may not have been aware of racial/cultural biases happening.”
• “He/she knew the odds against those of minority backgrounds.”
• “My advisor, though a different race than me, was very aware of the systems that worked against African American students and allowed me to talk about my problems regarding my race and gender, whether those problems arise in or off campus.”
• “(My advisor) told me to not only to be great because I’m a minority but to be great because I’m capable.”

III. To what extent do faculty appear to express or act on a racial bias?

Q12/5. I felt comfortable discussing race or gender issues with my advisor. - 54% agreed; 26% disagreed.
Q26/21. I felt comfortable discussing race or gender issues with my mentor. - 62% agreed; 17% disagreed.
Q13/7. My advisor expressed views that demonstrated race or gender bias. - 19% agreed; 63% disagreed.
Q27/23. My mentor expressed views that demonstrated race or gender bias. - 31% agreed; 55% disagreed.
Q14/9. I think the racial/cultural biases of my advisor influenced his/her interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. - 20% agreed; 52% disagreed.
Q28/25. I think the racial/cultural biases of my mentor influenced his/her interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. - 29% agreed; 58% disagreed.
Q15/10. My advisor made exclusionary comments that could have alienated some students from diverse backgrounds. - 8% agreed; 80% disagreed.
Q29/26. My mentor made exclusionary comments that could have alienated some students from diverse backgrounds. - 16% agreed; 73% disagreed.

Selected Comments
• “My mentor was by no means racist. I just think that he failed, as many White males do, to understand his privilege and the depths of systemic racism at play in people of colors lives.”
• “STEM support services should not judge student’s abilities based on previous students from the same ethnic groups.”
• “As a psychology student of African descent, I did my Advanced Research project on Individualism, Collectivism, Racial Identity and Reasons Black Students Choose to Attend HBCUs. My advisor, a White male, seemed very uninterested and vocalized the fact that he was unfamiliar with these issues and how they pertain to the Black community. He also seemed reluctant to assist me with the statistical program SPSS until I lost my temper a little bit out of frustration.”
• “During my time at Xavier, I benefitted from a mentorship with the only Black female professor in Chemistry. Xavier lacks diversity in the faculty members that instruct STEM related courses. In my
opinion, the female student population at Xavier would benefit from more Black female faculty members in STEM.”

- “Dr. XX was not supportive, pleasant or fair; he also strongly displayed signs and actions of a racist.”

IV. To what extent do our students have difficulty transitioning to graduate school?

Q38/. The academic environment is what I expected. - 58% agreed; 17% disagreed.
Q39/35. My professors have the same expectations of me as they do of other students in my classes. - 69% agreed; 6% disagreed.
Q49/. When I started graduate school, I felt confident that I would succeed. - 60% agreed; 5% disagreed.
Q44/40. I am often excluded from scholarly activities because of my racial/cultural background. - 9% agreed; 62% disagreed.

Selected Comments

- “I think there needs to be more discussions about transitioning from a HBCU to a PWI graduate environment.”
- “I think the STEM program somewhat prepared me to enter a PWI environment where minorities are often not represented. I think knowing the history of African Americans and research helped to better understand the barriers to participation and etc.”

Undergraduate Students:

Of the undergraduate students who took the CRTF surveys, 19% were freshmen, 27% sophomores, 24% juniors, and 28% seniors. The racial distribution of this group was 76% African American, 3% White, 14% Asian, and 2% Hispanics. Regarding the disciplines represented, the respondents were 50% Biology majors, 28% Chemistry majors, 1% in Computer Science, 3% in Math, 3% in Physics, 12% Psychology majors, and 4% Public Health Sciences majors. Only responses by Black or African American students are analyzed below.

I. How do student respondents feel about their Xavier education?

Q2/1. If you were starting college over again, how likely would you be to choose to attend Xavier University? - 86% said they would choose Xavier again; 12% said they would not.
Q11/3. I was exposed to new career opportunities that I never previously considered. - 73% % agreed; 6% disagreed.
Q13. The quality of the content in the courses taken in your major provides the subject matter needed to be successful in graduate school. -86% agreed; 4% disagreed.
Q14. The presentation of the course content by my professors is stimulating. - 76% agreed; 10% disagreed.

Selected Comments

- “Honestly, I love attending Xavier because how the professor feedback and the faculty supports you. It makes me feel Xavier is my second home.”
- “I feel blessed to have the opportunity to be here. Aside from a few, the faculty is great go above and beyond to actually learn the information instead of benefiting it and spitting it back out a test.”
- “I cannot say anything more than Thank you for providing a safe learning environment with excellent professors. Thank you!!”
• “Provide faculty members that are more people of color. The advisors and faculty in Xavier's largest and most recognized department are mostly white and I can't understand why an HBCU can't hire professors of color who understand their students and are positive role models for their Black students. I know there are Black teachers, why does Tulane have more than Xavier....”
• “Everything that I need. I’m very pleased and proud of being a Xavier student.”
• “Xavier has been a great experience for me. As a transfer student I can say that the academic rigor at Xavier is great and rewarding as I am confident that I am being prepared for life after Xavier. Transferring to Xavier was one of the best academic decisions I have made for myself.”
• “There is a strong need of more African American professors in the science department! ... if I had more supporting professors such as my African American history professor, my healthcare professor, or my communications professor maybe I'd perform better because these professors are sooo uplifting! They tell us that we are capable & to keep pushing. And you know the one thing all these uplifting professors have in common.... They’re African American! As said by one of the professors... "Just because they teach you doesn't mean they’re for you". “

II. To what extent are Faculty aware of racial biases that might exist and to actually incorporate these topics into their classroom teaching, advising or mentoring?

Responses to the following questions appear to give some insight to this question:
Q20/8. My advisor is aware of race and gender biases African American and minority students may experience at other institutions. - 64% agreed; 9% disagreed.
Q38. My mentor is aware of race and gender biases African American and minority students may experience at other institutions. - 58% agreed; 17% disagreed.
Q21/13. My advisor understands the needs of students like me. - 67% agreed; 14% disagreed.
Q39/44. My mentor understands the needs of students like me. - 79% agreed; 3% disagreed.
Q31/25. My advisor supported the idea that programs aiding African American students to succeed in STEM courses were important to the mission of Xavier University. - 61% agreed; 7% disagreed.
Q50/43. My mentor supports the idea that programs aiding African American students to succeed in STEM courses is important to the mission of Xavier University. - 75% agreed; 4% disagreed.

Selected Comments
• “There should be a survey for incoming freshmen that pairs them with an advisor who closely matches their college goals and interest while understanding the different struggles of a particular cultural background or race or gender personally or closely.”
• “Emphasize the need, and encourage the hiring of more African-American professors, particularly in the STEM disciplines. I believe in doing so, many students (me, included) who do not come from strong science/math foundations, will feel more confident and prepared upon matriculation from Xavier, as future STEM professionals.”
• “Xavier should show that they support the African American population considering that it is an HBCU.”

III. To what extent do students perceive that their faculty instructors/advisors/mentors might have racial biases?

Q23/16. My advisor expresses views that demonstrate race or gender bias. - 16% agreed; 62% disagreed.
Q41/35. My mentor expresses views that demonstrate race or gender bias. - 22% agreed; 55% disagreed.
Q30/24. My advisor demonstrates that he/she was committed to all students achieving in STEM courses. - 67% agreed; 10% disagreed.
Q22/14. I feel comfortable discussing race or gender issues with my advisor. - 51% agreed; 25% disagreed.
Q40/33. I feel comfortable discussing race or gender issues with my mentor. - 64% agreed; 10% disagreed.

IV. To what extent do faculty appear to express or act on what appears to be racial bias?

Q25/19. My advisor makes exclusionary comments that could have alienated some students from certain cultural backgrounds. - 9% agreed; 67% disagreed.
Q43/38. My mentor makes exclusionary comments that could have alienated some students from certain cultural backgrounds. - 11% agreed; 68% disagreed.
Q24/18. I think the racial/cultural biases of my advisor influences his/her interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. - 22% agreed; 44% disagreed.
Q42/37. I think the racial/cultural biases of my mentor influences his/her interactions with students from diverse backgrounds. - 29% agreed; 41% disagreed.
Q41/35. My mentor expresses views that demonstrated race bias. - 22% agreed; 55% disagreed.

Faculty:

I. Does Xavier have an environment that is supportive of all students?

Q4. I believe Xavier offers a supportive environment for all students to succeed? - Black or African American faculty, 82% agreed, 18% disagreed, with a slightly more positive viewpoint among White faculty 92% agreed, 5% disagreed.
Q20. My colleagues believe Xavier offers a supportive environment for all students to succeed. - For White faculty 66% agreed and 8% disagreed, while among Black or African American faculty, 64% agreed and 24% disagreed having a somewhat more negative view regarding their colleagues' perceptions.

II. Do faculty explore/have knowledge of different cultures?

In this area, there appears to be a major difference between Black or African American and White responses and between how faculty view themselves and how they view their colleagues.
Q6. My experiences at Xavier have helped me become knowledgeable about issues associated with diverse races/cultures? - Black or African American respondents agreed 47%, disagreed 48%, and Whites respondents 86% agreed, and only 5% disagreed.
Q21. My colleagues often reflect on how race/culture affects their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. - 44% of Black or African American respondents agreed and 26% disagreed, while 45% of White respondents similarly agreed and 13% disagreed.
Q22. The experiences of my colleagues at Xavier have helped them become knowledgeable about issues associated with diverse races/cultures. - 38% of Black or African American respondents agreed and 24% disagreed, while 53% of White respondents agreed and only 6% disagreed.

III. To what extent do faculty teach about other cultures in their classrooms?

(Note that some of these questions were not as clearly worded as they should have been.)
Q27. My colleagues think it’s a good idea to incorporate different cultural perspectives in class presentations. - 55% of Black or African American respondents agreed and 25% disagreed, while 37% of White respondents agreed and 7% disagreed.

IV. To what extent are faculty comfortable in interacting with different races/cultures?

Q9. I feel comfortable when interacting with students from racial/cultural backgrounds different than mine? - 100% of both Black or African American and White faculty agreed that they are comfortable.
Q25. My colleagues are comfortable when interacting with students from racial/cultural backgrounds different than theirs? - 88% of Black or African American respondents agreed (only 6% disagreed), while only 58% of White faculty agreed and 9% disagreed.
Q13. I find that it is not difficult for me to identify with students from different racial/cultural backgrounds than mine. - 100% of Black or African American respondents agreed, and 85% of White respondents agreed while only 5% disagreed.
Q12. I can effectively deal with biases and prejudices directed at me from students of different races/cultures. - 95% of Black or African American faculty respondents agreed and only 5% disagreed; 87% of the White faculty respondents agreed and only 2% disagreed.
Q28. My colleagues can effectively deal with biases and prejudices directed at them from students of different races/cultures. - 62% of Black or African American respondents agreed and 13% disagreed; only 35% of White respondents agreed and 6% disagreed.
Q35. What are three suggestions you would make that would help faculty to improve how STEM support programs serve students? There were Lots of suggestions for teaching improvements; the following are those that pertain to race/culture:
  • “More Black faculty and mentors employed on campus and more first-generation faculty.”
  • “Train faculty in institutional racism, implicit bias and structural barriers to success.”
  • “Diversify faculty, and do a better job of addressing retention of non-majority group faculty members.”
  • “Increase interactions with students that are not limited to academic. Take an interest in student-based cultural ideas.”
  • “Develop in class based cultural activities.”
  • “Read and research the positive cultural history of African Americans and use this to engage additional faculty that are knowledgeable about student development and needs and listen.”
  • “Explore their own history of biases, prejudices, and beliefs!! and check them or leave Xavier!”
  • “Do not judge students’ abilities based on previous students from the same ethnic groups.”
  • “Get administration to crack down on faculty who use race/diversity issues against fellow faculty. This really has no place here... we can't expect our students to respect us, if we don't respect each other!”
  • “Training for White faculty in implicit bias & structural racism/discrimination.”
  • “Faculty training in anti-racist pedagogy.”
  • “More administrative emphasis on improving cultural responsiveness.”

Q36. Have you noticed any issues related to how faculty members interact with students who are different than them in regard to race/culture?
  • “Yes! They struggle to connect and their behavior is discriminatory and prejudiced.”
  • “Yes. The head of my department refers to Xavier generally as "backwards," using language that is often used to describe Africa or the global south. She teaches on the global south and knows this. Students have approached me and other faculty and stated that they believe the chair doesn't like
Black people or thinks Black students are not smart. The department head frequently refers to our majors as "the leftovers."

- “I feel like a lot of non-Black faculty brush off the Black students assuming they can't help them because the student is a different race. I’ve also seen where non-Black faculty have very negative views of most of the Black students in their classes.”
- “On rare occasions but such folks don't last long at XU.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Further analysis of the results considering other demographic factors and the intersections between them should be conducted.

2. The Institutional Research Office should include in their regular surveys of students, alumni and faculty a few key questions regarding cultural responsiveness that can help measure progress in bringing about increased cultural responsiveness.

3. CAT+FD (Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development) workshops should expand their workshops on cultural responsiveness or consider modifying the format if needed based on these results.

4. Create a faculty Cultural Responsiveness open discussion forum similar to SERG (Science Education Research Group) in order to encourage conversations, seminars, workshops etc. regarding topics such as the differences between African American and Caucasian cultures. and to address some of the difference observed in faculty perceptions, attitudes, and biases. A similar open forum can be organized for staff, and also for students. The faculty forums would benefit from being separate from Staff and students since they will need to deal with mentoring/advising issues from a different approach.

5. The NRMN (National Research Mentoring Network) has assembled “Professionals across race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, able-ism and geography, with demonstrated expertise and acknowledged leadership in culturally responsive mentoring, networking, mentor training and professional development activities.” They have developed a workshop called “Culturally Aware Mentorship.” The purpose of the workshops is to enhance mentors’ and trainees’ ability to effectively address cultural diversity matters in their research mentoring relationships. The curriculum has three components:
   - **Online modules:** An online, self-directed module that “reviews key cultural diversity terms and research on the relevance of race, ethnicity, and other dimensions of cultural diversity to research training in the biomedical, behavioral, and clinical sciences.”
   - **Cultural Awareness training:** This includes intensive training designed for mentors who have already completed some form of mentor training. It includes a combination of “activities including group discussion, case studies, and role play as mentors learn and practice culturally aware mentoring skills in order to increase their capacity to respond better to cultural diversity matters in their research mentoring relationships.”
   - **Culturally Aware Mentoring Skills (CAMS) Survey:** a 21-item skills self-assessment relating to culturally aware mentoring.
We recommend that Xavier encourage and support more faculty participating in these workshops. In 2016, CAMS workshop was β-tested at Xavier, and in Spring 2018, faculty participate in the survey to assess that training.

6. The NIH Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has training modules the purpose of which “is to empower all NIH learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to cultivate a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and productive work environment.” Dr. Hannah Valentine, the Head of EDI, has stated that there is a significant decrease in implicit bias after completing NIH modules. Dr. Valentine visited Xavier in 2017 and made presentations to the students and faculty. We recommend that Xavier encourage use of these modules.

7. Increase the number and/or modify the format of sessions currently held by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Graduate Opportunity (CURGO) for students before they transition to PWI for graduate/professional schools.

8. The University has actively increased recruitment efforts for African American faculty over the past few years and has been successful in hiring a number of very talented new African American faculty over the past two years. We recommend continuing these efforts.

9. Create a cultural responsiveness budget to support the above activities.

Footnotes:
1. Information provided by Dr. Cirecie Olatunji in Xavier’s Division of Counseling and Education.
2. In that surveys were sent to all current students who had been freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in 2016, these students also would have received the 2017 survey, with new freshmen receiving it for the first time; Also, alumni who had graduated two or three years earlier would have received the same invitation in 2017, with students who had just graduated receiving it for the first time. In 2017, all faculty, except new faculty, would have received the invitation again. While there would have been duplication among these groups, we believe individuals who received the survey twice would have been unlikely to have filled it out again. This is shown in the reduced response rate.