

2010 Climate Survey Findings in Brief

PEERs is an integrated program that is designed to create a welcoming climate for all students to succeed in engineering. Populations of particular concern are under-represented minority (URM) students, students with disabilities, and women. Components of this central goal include:

1. Raising awareness of biases towards students
2. Cultivating change agents
3. Promoting actions that students and faculty can take to counteract biases
4. Building foundations for future collaboration

To accomplish these goals, PEERs has developed and implemented two student-level interventions, including an annual one-credit seminar on diversity in engineering and a peer-to-peer internship program whereby previous seminar students serve as campus change agents. PEERs has also implemented three campus-level interventions, including a Campus Climate Survey, two Capacity Building Institutes, and an online Community of Practice.

To provide some contextual background about the climate survey, PEERs administered the survey twice during the duration of the grant—once in November of 2010 and once in May of 2013. The purpose of the 2010 survey was twofold: first, it gauged the campus climate for undergraduate students in the College of Engineering; secondly, it identified ways in which underrepresented students' experiences differed from other students' experiences in the College of Engineering. The survey was unique among climate surveys in that it was designed to account for several social identities, including those that may coexist (women students with disabilities, for example). The survey included social identity questions about gender, disability status, ethnic and racial identity, national citizenship, age, and socioeconomic status. The survey was administered to 10,663 students across 33 majors with an overall response rate of 19% (n=1,910). Upon completion of the survey, PEERs evaluators forwarded results to department chairs and offered to discuss the data and appropriate diversity-focused interventions as requested. Evaluators also disseminated survey results to other University of Washington stakeholders, including the College of Engineering's Student Academic Services Office and the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity. In general, the survey provided the College of Engineering community with baseline climate information and data-driven evidence that climate differentially impacts the experience of underrepresented student groups.

This report is based on the results of the 2010 climate survey. Overall, the survey data suggest that URM students, students with disabilities, and female students have a different undergraduate experience than non-URM students, students without disabilities, and male students in many ways.

Student Demographics

The climate survey was administered to 10,663 students across 33 majors in November and December 2010 with an overall response rate of 19% (n=1,910). All students enrolled in one of the 33 selected majors were sampled. Of the 1,910 surveyed, 58% are White, 31% are Asian-American, 2.4% are African-American, 1% are Hawaiian/Pacific-Islander, 1% are American-Indian, and 6% did not indicate a race. 51% of those surveyed are females and 48% are males. Of the 1,910 respondents, 359 (~19%) are engineering majors. Five percent of students surveyed reported having a disability that affects their ability to perform as a student. The most common disabilities reported were learning (22%), attention (19%), mental health (18%), mobility (10%), and hearing (8%). Of the 96 students who

reported having a disability, 36% reported having two disabilities, 20% reported having three disabilities, and 0.8% reported having four disabilities.

Results: Summary of Findings Related to URM, Disability, and Gender

URM students are more likely to participate in programs, such as volunteer work and co-op programs than non-URM students. URM students are slightly more likely to desire a different major than non-URM students. However, in many other ways, URM students have similar or improved experiences as non-URM students. For example, URM students are more likely to find study centers useful and to recommend the UW to others than non-URM students. **Students with disabilities** seem to generally feel less confident than students without disabilities. For example, students with disabilities are less likely to think that their course syllabi are clear, less likely to feel like a part of a community, and less likely to feel confident in their overall academic ability. **Female students** seem to have less confidence and comfort and feel more overwhelmed academically than male students. For example, they are less comfortable asking questions and getting help from professors; less confident in their overall academic ability; and less happy with their chosen major as compared with males. In addition, females are less likely to participate in academically-oriented activities, such as internships, and more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, such as volunteer work, compared with males. Out of the three groupings (URM vs. non-URM, disability vs. non-disability, and female vs. male), the most number of significant differences on the survey items were found between males and females.

Results: Engineering/Non-engineering Comparisons

In comparing these groups between engineering and non-engineering majors, **females, URMs, and students with disabilities** were more likely to report being in honors programs, satisfaction with resources for students, as well as adjustment difficulties and stress if they are in engineering. **Females and URM students** were more likely to report having quality professors and confidence in their abilities, and less likely to report having a difficult learning environment or a positive impression of UW if they are in engineering.