

2013 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 2013 climate survey was threefold: first, it provided updated information about the campus climate for undergraduate students in the College of Engineering; second, it allowed evaluators to gauge campus climate change in the College of Engineering between 2010 and 2013; third, it aided evaluators in drawing inferences as to the impact of PEERS on campus climate in the College of Engineering. In April and May of 2013 the survey was administered to 10,880 students in 33 majors with an overall response rate of 10% (n=1,141). Evaluators are currently developing “Diversity Action Plans” for department chairs in which they will outline the results of the 2013 survey and suggest departmental interventions. Overall, the 2013 survey results indicate that the College of Engineering’s climate improved between 2010 and 2013. Furthermore, students who had heard of PEERS indicated significantly higher average ratings related to interaction with other students, involvement with campus activities, and confidence than students who had not heard of PEERS.

This report is based on the results of the 2013 climate survey. The purpose of the second survey was to gather information about undergraduate students’ experiences in order to identify whether the climate in engineering has improved compared to non-engineering departments, drawing inferences to the impact of PEERS.

Overall, although satisfaction on various categories of climate examined did not increase in the aggregate between 2010 and 2013, *results indicate that the average satisfaction for engineering majors increased significantly more than non-engineering majors between 2010 and 2013 in the areas of student interaction, confidence, and campus life.* In addition, students who had heard of PEERS indicated significantly higher average ratings related to *interaction with other students, involvement with campus activities, and confidence.* These outcomes are *consistent with the PEERS intervention in terms of its focus on making students aware of the implications of implicit bias, their role in perpetuating it, and what they can do to recognize and interrupt bias within themselves and others.*

Student Demographics

The climate survey was administered to 10,888 students across 33 majors in April and May 2013 with an overall response rate of 10% (n=1,141). All students enrolled in one of the 33 selected majors were sampled. Of the 1,141 surveyed, 48% are White, 27% are Asian-American, 2.4% are African-American, 6.5% are Hispanic, 1.3% are

Box 352135 101 Wilson Annex Seattle, WA 98195-2135

Hawaiian/Pacific-Islander, and 0.4% are American-Indian. 58% of those surveyed are females and 42% are males. Six percent of students surveyed reported having a disability that affects their ability to perform as a student. Of the 1,141 respondents, 394 (35%) are engineering majors.

Results: Student who have Heard of PEERS

A survey item that asked "Have you heard of PEERS program at UW?" Of the respondents, 90 (9% - including those who took the PEERS course) indicated "yes," 845 indicated "no" and 93 indicated "don't know." A comparison between the group of students who had heard of PEERS and the group who had not revealed significant differences (t-tests). Students who indicated that they had heard of PEERS indicated significantly higher average ratings related to interaction with other students, involvement with campus activities, and confidence. In addition, the students who indicated "yes" were asked a follow-up question to help the PEERS team better understand the impact of PEERS. Forty-eight (48) responded to "Please describe in what ways PEERS has changed your personal awareness of diversity issues." Responses could be grouped along four themes of 1) no real change due to PEERS (54%), 2) a deeper understanding of diversity (15%), 3) awareness raising (15%), and 4) creating change agents (13%).

Results: Engineering/Non-engineering Comparisons

Results of linear regression models indicate that engineering majors improved more than non-engineering majors in terms of the student interaction outcome, the confidence outcome, and the campus life outcome. The models demonstrate that for majors matched on initial (2010) satisfaction with student interaction, student confidence, and campus life, the engineering major will have an average, expected value of final satisfaction with student interaction (2013) that is 0.2, 0.2, and 0.14 points higher than the non-engineering major for each climate measure respectively, meaning the ratings for the engineering majors increased more during this time than the ratings for the non-engineering majors.