

Mistreatment and Discrimination at WIU

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An electronic survey was conducted with 424 students at WIU between August and October 2020. The questions were directed to assess experiences of mistreatment and discrimination in Macomb and Western Illinois University based on several factors including race, gender, sexual orientation, accent, physical appearance, as well as others. The results for WIU are reported here.

Demographic and Other Characteristics

Students across campus were represented. The gender of participants were 90% female, 40% male, and 1% other. The race of participants was 78% White, 16% African or Black, Asian 5%, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Table 1. Race

| Answer | % | Count |
|---|--------|-------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.43% | 2 |
| Asian | 4.70% | 22 |
| Black or African American | 16.24% | 76 |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0.43% | 2 |
| White | 78.21% | 366 |
| Total | 100% | 468 |

About 12% of respondents identified as Latino/a.

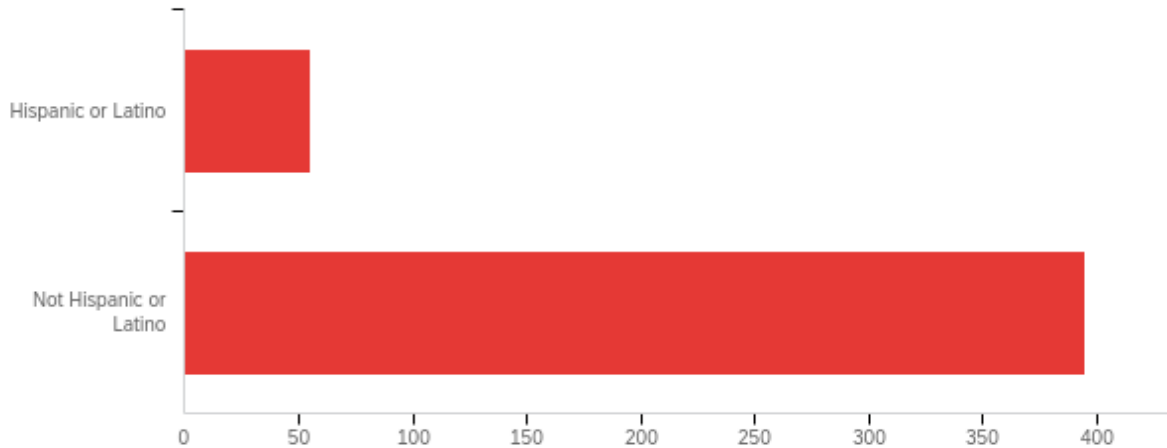


Figure 1. Latinos/s versus non-Latinas

Less than one fourth (94) of the participants were international students from Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East, Latin America, or North America.

Question: How often do you feel...?

The first question aimed at capturing the frequency of experiences of mistreatment and discrimination. The results are in below.

Table 2. Frequency of Experiences of Mistreatment and Discrimination

| Question | N = 424 (%) | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|-------|
| | Almost everyday/A Few Times a Month | A few times a Year/Less than once a year | Never |
| You are treated with less courtesy than other people are. | 19 | 29 | 52 |
| You are treated with less respect than other people are. | 20 | 30 | 50 |
| You receive poorer service than other people | 13 | 27 | 60 |
| People act as if they think you are not smart. | 24 | 32 | 43 |
| People act as if they are afraid of you. | 13 | 20 | 67 |
| People act as if they think you are dishonest. | 12 | 25 | 64 |
| People act as if they're better than you are. | 32 | 30 | 38 |
| You are called names or insulted. | 11 | 25 | 64 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----|----|
| You are threatened or harassed. | 8 | 22 | 70 |
|---------------------------------|---|----|----|

Question: What do you think is the main reason for this experience?

Another question was intended to reflect the perceived reason for discrimination. The answers to this question can be found in Figure 1.

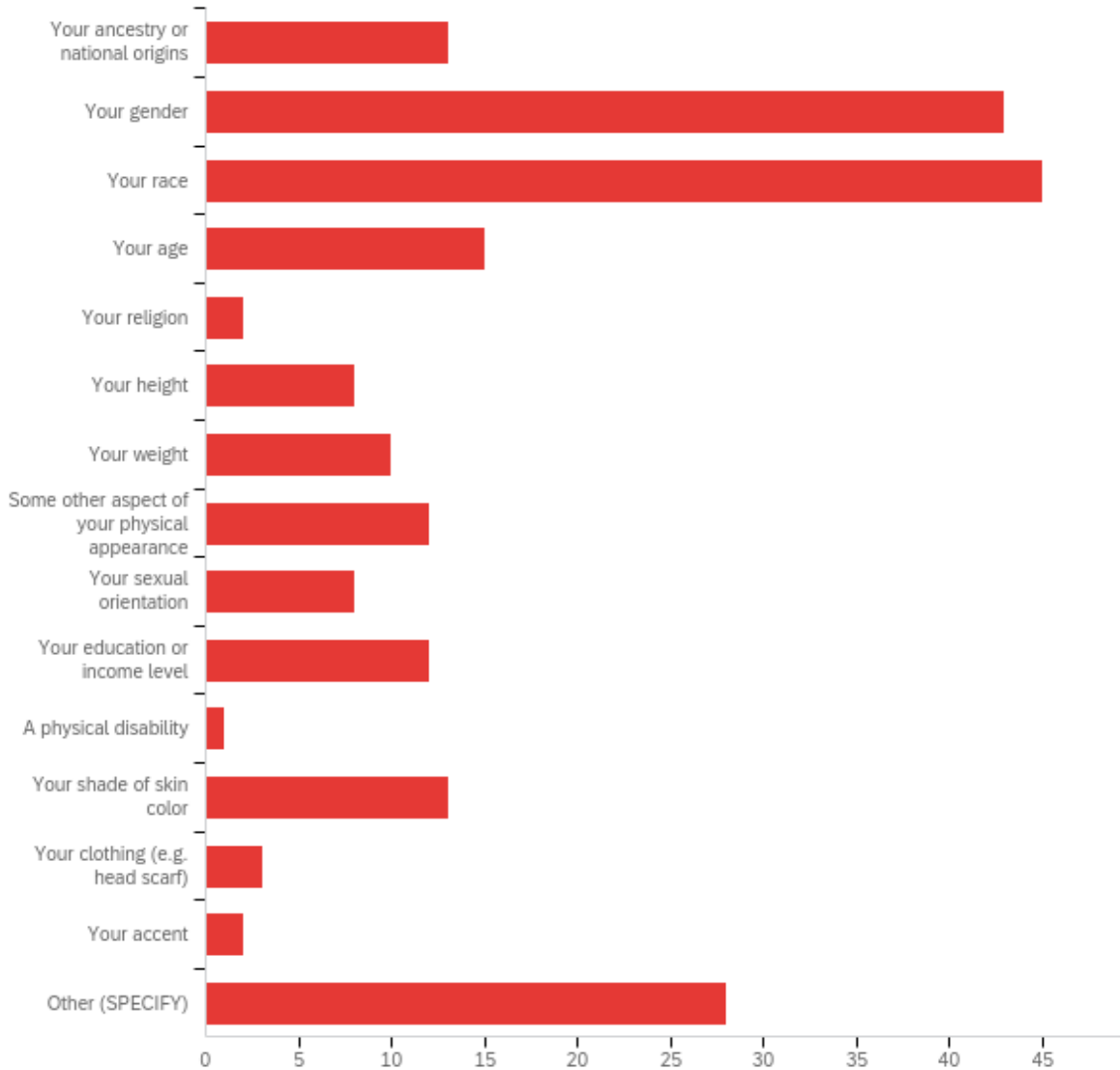


Figure 2-Perceived Reason for Mistreatment or Discrimination

Question: Please, describe your experience if you are comfortable.

In order to assess the gravity/seriousness of the experience described as mistreatment or discrimination, another question asked participants to describe this experience. A summary of the responses can be found below.

Examples of Mistreatment or Discrimination (unedited):

Sometimes people want to put others down and so they will make comments while a group is hanging out and it is clear that they mean me.

There is a sense of entitlement among many of the groups at WIU.

Again, being a female, men on campus cat call and whistle and or make derogatory comments towards me.

people think i am a hick

So far, I haven't been mistreated, but I do think some students think I'm not as intelligent as them based on my race

I have been harassed during work for not doing things "quickly" enough or when I make mistakes.

I was looking for an on- campus job. I have a very telling resume and advised that I would like an office job. I was only provided applications to dining halls and was told no office positions were available. I soon found out that there were a few office positions open and was able to get one.

The way they ask me to repeat something because of my accent

“Dumb white girl” and “blonde bitch” are the only two that come to mind. It's usually just a group of girls that are cliquy and hateful, which is why I just ignore it. It's a waste of my time and theirs.

I believe non white students treat me with a greater hesitation. I do not know if this is from a general attitude that pervades campus or my own appearance.

I was trying to figure things out with the housing and dining office and the person was very rude to me. He said he would do me a favor and look into the situation that his office messed up. He also did not get back to me for a long time and kept putting off my calls so when the last few weeks of the semester were left I had to spend over a thousand dollars that they took away from me wrongfully.

Faculty members are not understanding of emergencies impacting absence. Additionally, the division between Greek life and non-Greek life. Moreover, the university DOES NOT HANDLE HAZING WITHIN GREEK LIFE AT ALL!

I have not been treated poorly by anyone on campus. I am filling this out to highlight the fact that I believe I am treated this way due to being a white woman and hope to provide a comparison for how white people are treated versus people of color

Girls can sometimes be cruel. By calling me a slut behind closed doors at a party.

Its a safe learning community

I am fairly comfortable at Western. Any frustrations with the department are more due to false advertising of course offerings and disorganization from the administration and faculty.

Too many times.

Education disparities between students and faculty can sometimes manifest itself in perceptibly condescending or patronizing ways (talking down to students, treating them like they are ignorant, etc.)

I believe that because my skin is not colored I'm treated with less respect by some people with color in their skin.

none. I have never had a problem at WIU

Treated with less courtousy and respect

not feeling included

Everyone who's works at this school has they moments where they start acting funny

I am female and have a lot of male characteristics so people assume I am transgender

On-campus my friends and I are verbally and physically harassed it happened to a friend in class, it happens at the rec center, and in the dorms.

Women walk faster if I am behind them or occasionally seem to cross the street. No big deal, generally

Lots of entitled, white, male business students

I have been sexually assaulted on campus, catcalled, and grabbed.

In specific students clubs, the other member avoid talking to me or making eye contact, making me feel isolated and not motivated to keep going to the activities

People hate on Greek life and think we are just a bunch of dumb rich kids that party to much.

Others say things that tend to be rude towards people that they have never meet.

Teacher told me that it was an easy question and did not understand how i got it wrong. When most of the class got the same question wrong but he specifically directed it to me and addressed me by name.

I'm a female in a science major, and people, usually males, assume that I am not intelligent (or as intelligent as they are) because of my sex.

one lady in the c store in the union calls Indians rag heads and makes other remarks

First, Molly Homer used to be my honor's adviser. One day, she took out what she thought was my file and saw I was [a respectable major.] She came over and started a respectful, mature conversation, but she stopped short when she looked up and saw the picture didn't match my face. She went back to find my actual file, opened it, and saw I was a music ed major. I kid you not, she instantly started talking to me like a stereotypical elementary teacher talks to her kids (pseudo-baby talk). She then proceeded to tell me that even though I was one class away from achieving General Honors, I shouldn't take the class because I really "didn't need it." Well yeah, I guess I can graduate without honors, but so can everyone else, so then why are we here? The fact that she keeps being named a great adviser tells me she doesn't tell that to any other major. Other music majors have actually told me she's advised them to not take honors classes either, so it's not me. We've complained, but I was only moved to another adviser. I'm not proud that WIU keeps people on who discriminate against students based on their major. Second, Miretzky with the education department is known (!) for disliking and not respecting music ed majors. My education (not music) advisers opened up two other sections of the class this semester with a different professor, but they never bothered to tell the music majors even though they knew we'd have issues, so now about 12 of us are stuck in a class where we're going to be treated like worthless pieces of shit for the rest of the semester. The college of ed as a whole doesn't always work well with COFAC, and I get that we have different degree requirements and that just makes their jobs harder, but we're all in it for the same goal. I want to teach students to be better people, so why make my life so hard over it?

Faculty Member made comments about my intelligence.

Called a homosexual with disdain.

Same treatment received during Vietnam conflict.

I have had professors and graduate students alike talk down to me, dismiss my ideas and thoughts, and dismiss me out of hand, both in social and academic settings.

The disrespect in regards to day-to-day life mostly come from students, opposed to faculty. In classrooms, students can be cold and unwelcoming.

Nothing bad ever happens on this campus other than sexual misconduct, which is addressed appropriately.

People tend to avoid me at first due to thinking that I am intimidating.

Several teachers would derive finals grades without showing how it was derived or the criteria by which they were grading from.

it's really the same on campus as in town, except that WIU faculty and staff are better trained in appropriate accommodations for disabled students so they almost always have a positive impact on how I feel when needing assistance. Students are more open-minded than the average town citizen as well probably because they are more worldly.

Not everyone comes from the same background, so please understand if a person is asking for help. Learn to work with them

Catcalled twice while walking on campus

Getting mistreated on the ECOEE tour a few years back from my professor.

No mistreatment but I've seen when I'm with my black friends white people (on campus) do get uncomfortable if they around more than like 2 this hasn't happened a lot just like once or twice Students think they're better or they think you're better and don't want be around someone that they think is better then them

I had a math professor last semester that constantly stared at me and got uncomfortably close to me in class and when I went to see him for a question during his office hours.

How about we start caring about the climate of the earth. It's the middle of January and it's nice enough to go to the beach. We need to focus on our future and take care of our planet

I have had professors, including professors teaching a women studies class, be rude or condescending to me as a female student. Also as a women I am used to men belittling me or harassing me

same sexual harassment and professors have told me i am not able to pass the course even when i'm not failing.

Found in violation of alleged sexual harassment of a female. Council that decided this was all female.

I am always being watched at C store inside Grote Hall.

The Mistreatment Came from

Table 4. Where the Discrimination Happened

Another question asked participants to identify where the mistreatment and discrimination came from. Here are the answers.

| Answer | % | Count |
|------------------------|--------|-------|
| Faculty | 16.67% | 37 |
| Staff | 11.71% | 26 |
| Administration | 9.01% | 20 |
| Other students | 52.70% | 117 |
| Others, please explain | 9.91% | 22 |
| Total | 100% | 222 |

Q19 - Please, indicate area/department of the university if you are comfortable with it:

Students were asked to identify where the mistreatment or discrimination took place. Below are the answers.

Table 5. Area of the University where Mistreatment of Discrimination Happened

| Area | Counts |
|---------------|--------|
| Union | 4 |
| Dining Halls | 4 |
| Housing | 4 |
| Psych | 3 |
| Stipes | 3 |
| All | 2 |
| Science | 2 |
| Seal | 2 |
| B King | 2 |
| Student Rec | 2 |
| Morgan Hall | 2 |
| Registrar | 1 |
| Financial Aid | 1 |
| Honors | 1 |
| Polisci | 1 |
| Public Safety | 1 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Theater | 1 |
| Office where they assign jobs | 1 |
| Supply Chain Management | 1 |
| English | 1 |
| Education | 1 |
| Honors | 1 |
| Theater | 1 |
| Grounds | 1 |

Ways for Improving Race and Other Relationships

Finally, participants were asked to propose ways for improving race relations on campus. Most of the students proposed more education, awareness and conversations (20), having combined events and desegregating the campus (11), having a zero-tolerance policy and consequences to racist actions (8), diversifying the campus (administration, faculty, staff) (3), whites assuming they have a major role (2). One student suggested having discrimination support, another student complained about past efforts and the firing of Jack Thomas, and two students thought there is no solution.