

# Diversity and Diverse Experiences

## 2014 College Senior Survey

In spring 2014, we asked graduating seniors at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to participate in the *College Senior Survey*. The survey was administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in conjunction with the Office of Planning and Institutional Research. It is a follow-up to *The Freshman Survey (TFS)* which was administered to this cohort in fall of 2010. Of 983<sup>1</sup> potential participants, 33% (n=326)<sup>2</sup> submitted responses. Their results are compared to students from a comparison group of universities<sup>3</sup>. This report provides information about students' experiences with diversity (broadly defined) and spirituality on campus.



### Measures

The results include constructs derived from multiple items on the survey instrument. The constructs are designed to capture the experiences and outcomes that institutions are often interested in but find challenging to measure because of their complex and multifaceted nature. Constructs are particularly helpful in examining trends over time and making comparisons to other institutions. The construct scores detailed in this report are more than a basic summation of individual items. Rather, they are computed using Item Response Theory (IRT)<sup>4</sup> and have been scaled such that the population means equal 50. *Construct scores should not be converted into percentages or compared to other constructs.*

In addition to the constructs, additional individual items are highlighted in the report. The full distribution for constructs and individual items is available on the IR website at: <https://www.case.edu/ir/srvyresults/>. All significant differences also include a measure of effect size, Cohen's d. Effect size allows us to estimate the size of the differences between two means<sup>5</sup>. For ease of reference, bulleted items which demonstrate significant differences are italicized.

<sup>1</sup> Population n=983: Women=399 (41%), Men=584 (59%); Caucasian=515 (52%), Asian=189 (19%), Black=41 (4%), Hispanic=33 (3%), Other=29 (3%), Unknown=106 (11%), International=70 (7%)

<sup>2</sup> Sample n=326: Women=166 (51%), Men=160 (49%); Caucasian=184 (56%), Asian=53 (16%), Black=10 (3%), Hispanic=8 (3%), Other=11 (3%), Unknown=42 (13%); International=17 (5%)

<sup>3</sup> Pepperdine University, Northeastern University, Fordham University, Texas Christian University and Biola University

<sup>4</sup> Item Response Theory (IRT) uses response patterns to derive construct score estimates while simultaneously giving greater weight in the estimation process to survey items that tap into the construct more directly. This results in more accurate construct scores.

<sup>5</sup> The effect size is the size of the difference between two means. Cohen's d values were interpreted according to the criteria used by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research: small ~ .1, medium ~ .3, large ~ .5, very large ~ .7. These benchmark criteria were applied unilaterally to both constructs and individual items for simplicity.

## Pluralistic Orientation

The *Pluralistic Orientation* construct is a unified measure of skills and dispositions appropriate for living and working in a diverse society. These skills and dispositions include ability to work cooperatively with diverse people, openness to having one's views challenged, and ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues. Graduating seniors at CWRU scored slightly higher on pluralistic orientation than those at the comparison institutions; ( $M=52, SD=7.51$ ) vs. ( $M=51, SD=7.96$ ),  $d=0.14, p<.05$ . This construct was comprised of the following items:

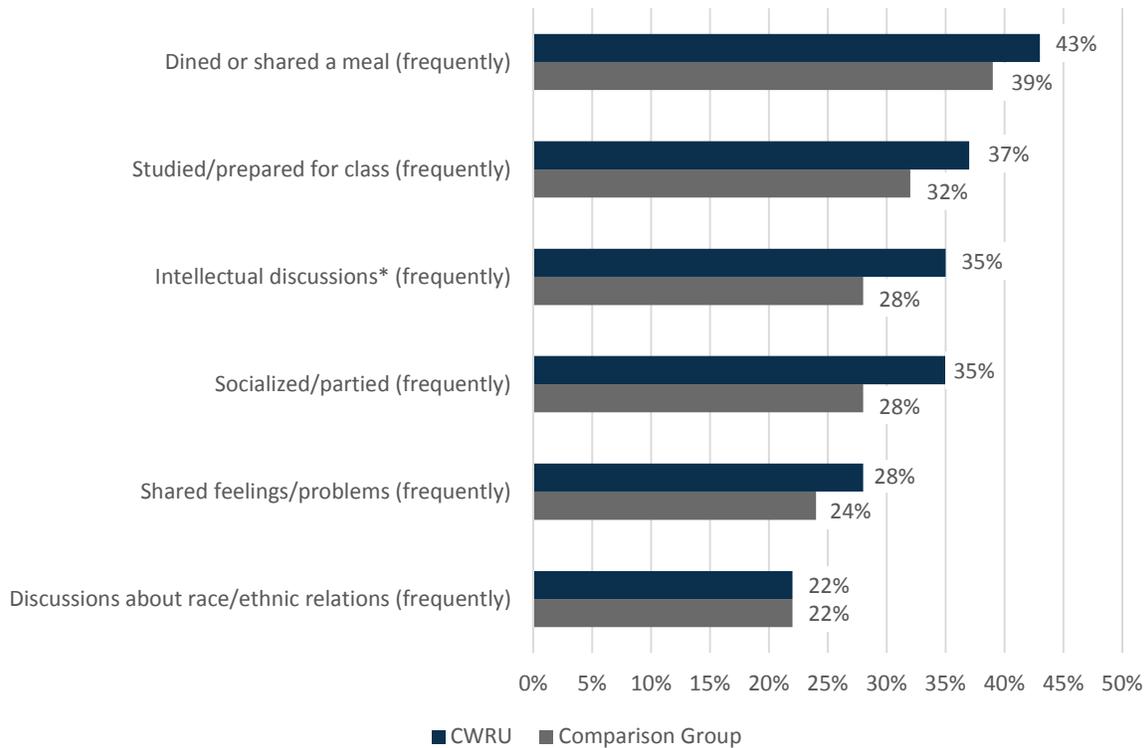
- *Tolerance of others with different beliefs*: 36% vs. 29% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=4.24, SD=0.66$ ) vs. ( $M=4.09, SD=0.71$ );  $d=0.21, p<.01$
- *Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people*: 35% vs. 32% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=4.21, SD=0.68$ ) vs. ( $M=4.15, SD=0.69$ ); No meaningful difference
- *Openness to having my views challenged*: 23% vs. 21% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=3.96, SD=0.72$ ) vs. ( $M=3.86, SD=0.77$ );  $d=0.13, p<.05$
- *Ability to see the world from someone else's perspective*: 30% vs. 29% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=4.14, SD=0.68$ ) vs. ( $M=4.10, SD=0.70$ ); No meaningful difference
- *Ability to negotiate and discuss controversial issues*: 25% vs. 23% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=3.94, SD=0.78$ ) vs. ( $M=3.89, SD=0.79$ ); No meaningful difference

At CWRU, Latino students scored moderately higher on pluralistic orientation than white students; ( $M=58, SD=6.77$ ) vs. ( $M=52, SD=6.99$ );  $d=0.37, p<.05$ .

## Positive Cross-Racial Interaction

The *Positive Cross-Racial Interaction* construct is a unified measure of students' level of positive interaction with diverse peers. The interactions measured took place outside of class. Graduating seniors at CWRU demonstrated slightly higher positive cross-racial interaction than those at the comparison institutions; ( $M=56, SD=7.83$ ) vs. ( $M=55, SD=7.75$ ),  $d=0.13, p<.05$ . Following is a comparison of each item in the construct.

## Positive Cross-Racial Interaction



\*Slight difference: intellectual discussions ( $d=0.17$ )

At CWRU, white students scored moderately lower on positive cross-racial interaction than Asian students ( $M=55, SD=7.72$ ) vs. ( $M=58, SD=7.03$ );  $d=-0.31, p<.05$ .

## Negative Cross-Racial Interaction

The *Negative Cross-Racial Interaction* construct is a unified measure of students' level of negative interaction with diverse peers. CWRU students and those at the comparison institutions reported similar levels of negative cross-racial interaction ( $M=52, SD=7.51$ ) vs. ( $M=52, SD=7.32$ ).

- Had tense, somewhat hostile interactions: 2% vs. 2% very often; ( $M=1.72, SD=0.97$ ) vs. ( $M=1.70, SD=0.93$ ); No meaningful difference
- *Felt insulted or threatened because of race/ethnicity*: 3% vs. 2% very often; ( $M=3.94, SD=1.00$ ) vs. ( $M=3.76, SD=1.03$ );  $d=0.17, p<.01$
- Had guarded, cautious interactions: 5% vs. 3% very often; ( $M=2.35, SD=1.05$ ) vs. ( $M=2.36, SD=1.01$ ); No meaningful difference

CWRU students were also slightly less likely to agree with the following statement: "There is a lot of racial tension on this campus." (1% vs. 2% strongly agree); ( $M=1.67, SD=0.69$ ) vs. ( $M=1.81, SD=0.74$ );  $d=-0.19, p<.05$

Students were also asked about perceptions of discrimination and stereotypes. While there was no meaningful difference between CWRU and the comparison institutions on student perceptions of discrimination, CWRU students were less likely to agree that they heard faculty express racial, gender, sexual orientation, or religious stereotypes in class.

**Table 1. Perceptions of Discrimination and Stereotypes**

	CWRU	Comparison	<i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
I have felt discriminated against at this institution because of my race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation (strongly agree)	2%	3%	-0.08	N/A
In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation (strongly agree)	3%	4%	-0.22	<.001

White and Latino students scored significantly lower on negative cross-racial interaction than black, Asian and international students, as described in the graph below.

**Other Diversity-Related Items**

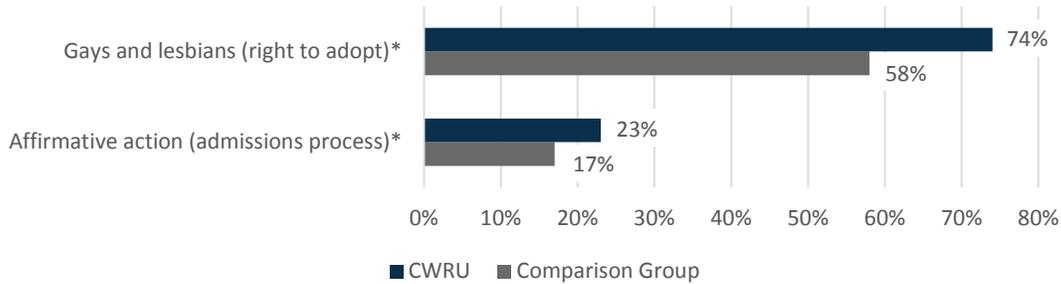
The CSS included several additional items related to diversity. While CWRU students did not demonstrate a meaningful difference in terms of being “very satisfied” with the racial/ethnic diversity of the student body relative to the comparison institutions (21% vs. 17%), CWRU students were slightly more satisfied with respect for the expression of diverse beliefs on campus (35% vs. 28% very satisfied); (*M*=4.03, *SD*=0.94) vs. (*M*=3.91, *SD*=0.95); *d*=0.13, *p*<.05.

Respondents were also asked to rate how important the following items were to them. Results for responses that indicated “essential” (the highest rating) are listed below:

- Helping to promote racial understanding: 13% vs. 13%; (*M*=2.24, *SD*=0.96) vs. (*M*=2.35, *SD*=0.92); No meaningful difference.
- *Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures*: 24% vs. 31%; (*M*=2.79, *SD*=0.90) vs. (*M*=2.95, *SD*=0.88); *d*=-0.18, *p*<.01.

In addition, students were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following issues, as described in the table below. CWRU students were more likely to agree with the use of affirmative action in the admissions process than the comparison group. Students at CWRU were also more likely to agree that gays and lesbians should have the right to adopt.

### Relative Incidence of "Agree Strongly"



\*Slight to moderate differences: gays and lesbians right to adopt ( $d=0.35$ ), affirmative action admissions process ( $d=0.15$ )

Relative to the comparison institutions, students at CWRU had less experience with diversity-oriented courses and workshops<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 2. Coursework and Workshops**

	CWRU	Comparison
Taken an ethnic studies course	33%	45%
Attended a racial/cultural awareness workshop	34%	41%

### Spirituality

The CSS asked several items pertaining to religion and spirituality. CWRU students represent a wide range of religious backgrounds. Most students indicated they had no religion or were Roman Catholic. As outlined in the items below, CWRU students were slightly to moderately less likely to be involved in spiritually-related activities than students at the comparison institutions. Note that four of the five comparison institutions in the comparison group have religious affiliations.

- *Attended a religious service: 14% vs. 34% frequently; ( $M=1.54, SD=0.72$ ) vs. ( $M=1.93, SD=0.86$ );  $d=-0.45, p<.001$*
- *Spent over 20 hours per week in prayer/meditation: 0% vs. 1%; ( $M=1.61, SD=0.93$ ) vs. ( $M=2.12, SD=1.28$ );  $d=-0.40, p<.001$*
- *Spirituality: 11% vs. 13% self-rated as highest ten percent; ( $M=3.02, SD=1.15$ ) vs. ( $M=3.29, SD=1.09$ );  $d=-0.25, p<.001$*
- *Discussed religion: 14% vs. 32% frequently; ( $M=1.87, SD=0.63$ ) vs. ( $M=2.11, SD=0.72$ );  $d=-0.33, p<.001$*
- *Integrating spirituality into my life: 17% vs. 35% rated as essential; ( $M=2.14, SD=1.10$ ) vs. ( $M=2.66, SD=1.18$ );  $d=-0.44, p<.001$*

<sup>6</sup> Significance statistics are not provided for dichotomous variables.

**Table 3. Religious Preference**

	<b>CWRU</b>	<b>Comparison</b>
Baptist	0.7%	5.1%
Buddhist	2.9%	2.0%
Church of Christ	0.7%	1.7%
Eastern Orthodox	0.7%	1.0%
Episcopalian	1.5%	1.1%
Hindu	3.3%	1.1%
Jewish	3.3%	2.3%
LDS (Mormon)	0.0%	0.2%
Lutheran	3.6%	1.7%
Methodist	2.5%	1.3%
Muslim	1.8%	1.1%
Presbyterian	2.9%	3.6%
Quaker	0.0%	0.2%
Roman Catholic	22.9%	21.4%
Seventh-day Adventist	0.4%	0.2%
United Church of Christ/Congregational	0.4%	1.1%
Other Christian	8.0%	25.7%
Other Religion	2.5%	2.4%
None	41.8%	26.9%

### **Sexual Orientation**

This year, the CWRU CSS included an item pertaining to students' sexual orientation<sup>7</sup> summarized below. This item was not included in the HERI instrument, so no comparison data are available.

**Table 4. Sexual Orientation**

	<b>CWRU</b>
Straight or heterosexual	75.5%
Non-straight	9.2%
No response	15.3%

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<sup>7</sup> Sexual orientation and gender identity are distinct concepts. While this item assessed sexual orientation, the instrument did not allow students to self-report gender identity/expression in ways that could identify students as transgender, trans-sexual, or trans. After internal discussions, an item that included these categories was ultimately excluded from the instrument a) in an effort to reduce survey burden and b) because of a likely lack of variation in responses and c) insufficient numbers of students who identified as transgender to do meaningful analysis on this population. This decision should not indicate that such differences are not valued at CWRU.