

LEWIS & CLARK LAW SCHOOL DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

Experiences of Students of Color
at Lewis & Clark Law School
An Assessment

WHAT ARE WE SAYING?

- ❑ *Mission:* “We hold the following core values: ...We create and sustain a learning environment enhanced by interaction between faculty, students, and staff of diverse backgrounds, identities, and cultural traditions. We believe that such a learning environment is necessary to provide our students with the skills and values they will need to practice law.”

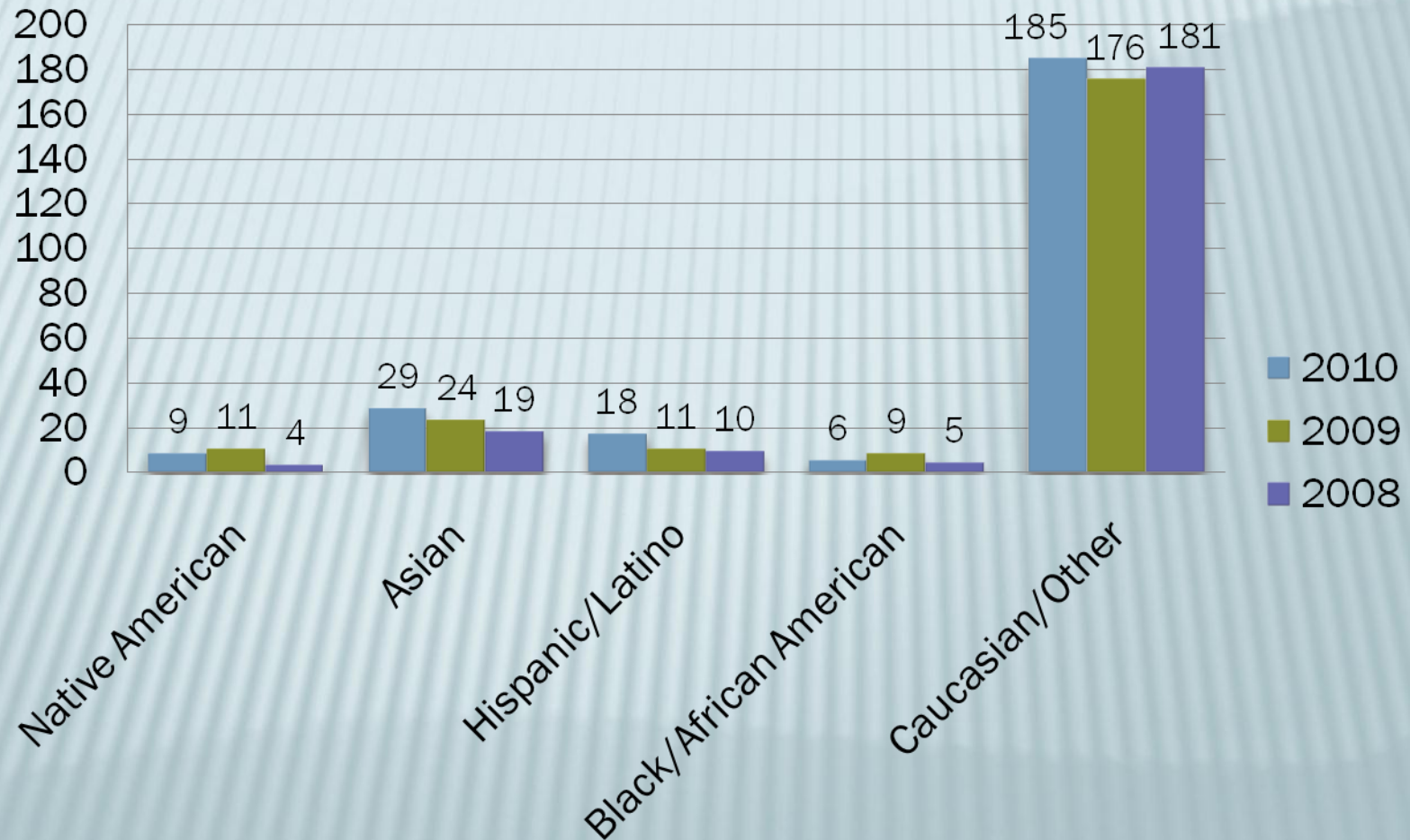
--Mission Statement

- ❑ Lewis & Clark Law School believes that the lack of ethnic minority attorneys nationwide, as well as in Oregon, demonstrates a need for innovative and comprehensive programs to help ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups in the legal field succeed academically. Read more about [the importance of diversity](#) in education.

–[Lewis & Clark, Admissions, 2010, ¶ 10](#)

HOW ARE WE DOING?

A race/ethnicity break down of our 2008, 2009 & 2010 IL students:



WHO CHOOSES TO COME?

2
0
1
0

Enrolled
6

- African-American
- Applied: 99
- Admitted: 40

Enrolled
9

- Native American
- Applied: 78
- Admitted: 32

Enrolled
29

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Applied: 323
- Admitted: 116

Enrolled
18

- Hispanic/Latino
- Applied: 247
- Admitted: 95

Enrolled
185

- Caucasian/Other
- Applied: 2583
- Admitted: 902

2
0
0
9

Enrolled
9

- African-American
- Applied: 95
- Admitted: 34

Enrolled
11

- Native American
- Applied: 63
- Admitted: 28

Enrolled
24

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Applied: 279
- Admitted: 93

Enrolled
11

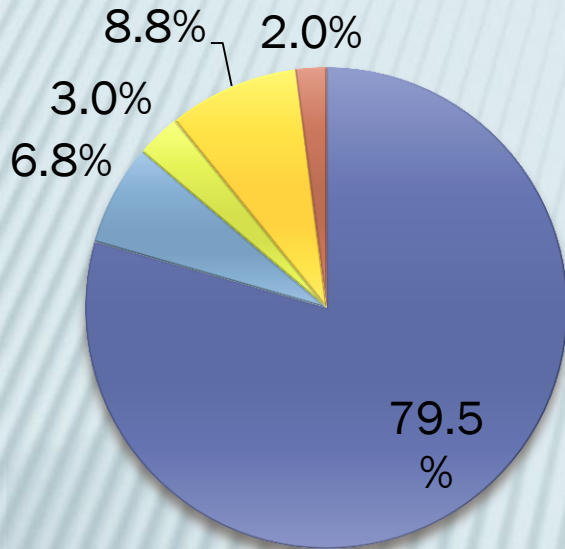
- Hispanic/Latino
- Applied: 215
- Admitted: 90

Enrolled
176

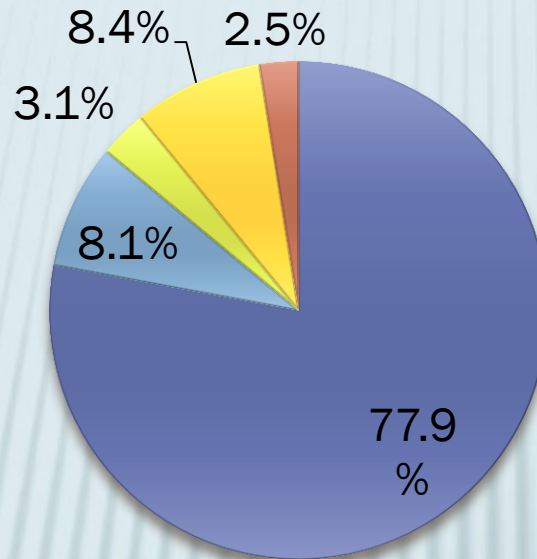
- Caucasian/Other
- Applied: 2530
- Admitted: 862

2009 TOTALS

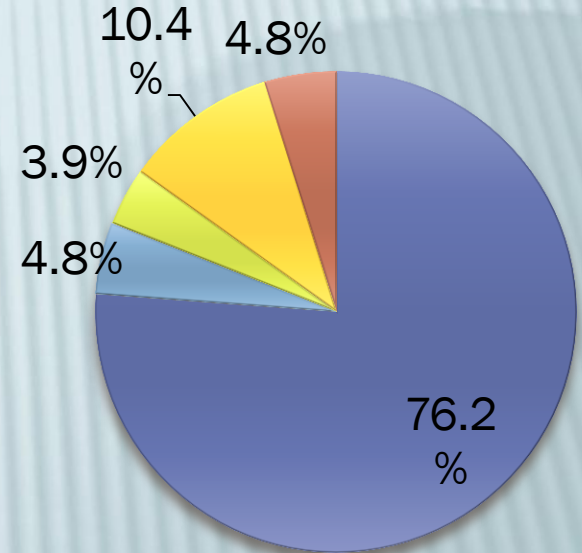
Applied



Admitted



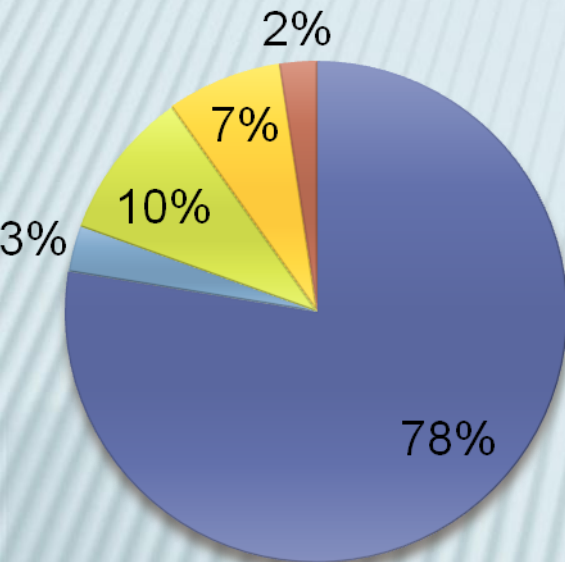
Enrolled



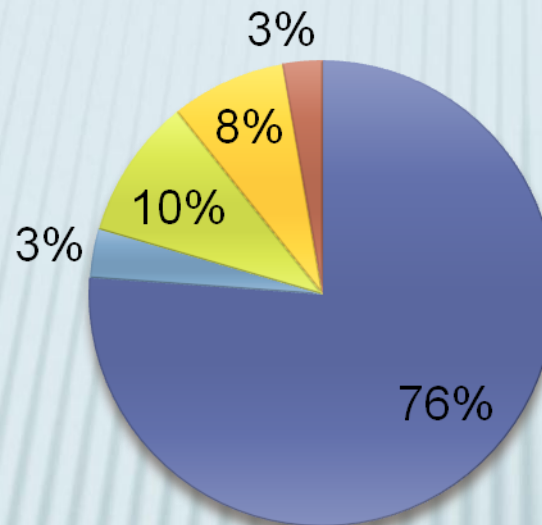
- Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African-American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaskan

2010 TOTALS

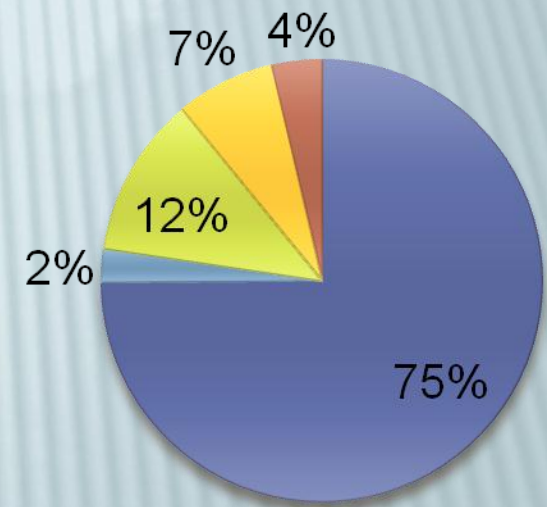
Applied



Admitted



Enrolled



- Caucasian
- African American
- Asian American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American

IF NOT HERE...WHERE?

LC doesn't break out which schools admitted minority applicants attend if they don't come here, but of the overall applicant pool, the following schools tend to enroll most of our cross-over admits:

- Univ of Washington
- UC Hastings
- Univ of Colorado
- UC Davis
- Seattle University
- Univ of Oregon
- Univ of Wisconsin
- Univ of Arizona
- Univ of Utah
- Santa Clara Univ

GOALS OF SURVEY PROJECT

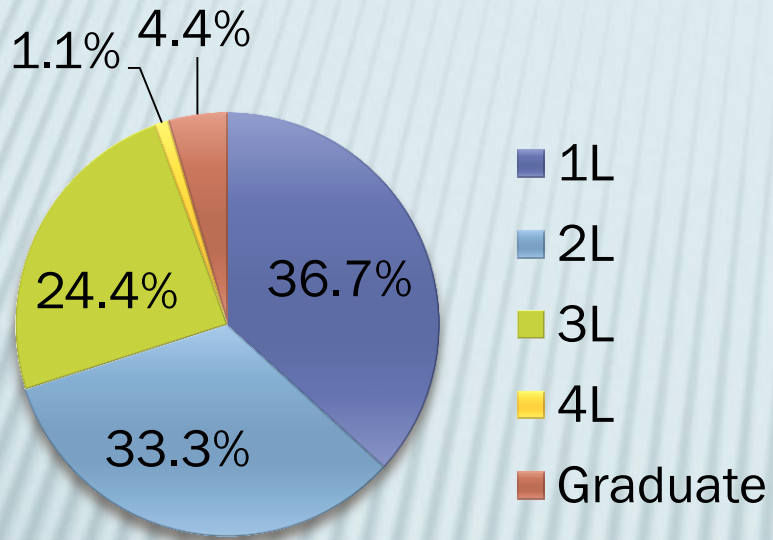
- To gain an understanding about the experiences and the factors that contribute to the resilience and persistence of self-identified students of color at Lewis & Clark Law School.
- To provide information to the law faculty and staff about areas that are meeting student expectations and needs as well as those that are failing the students and the institution as a whole.

METHODOLOGY

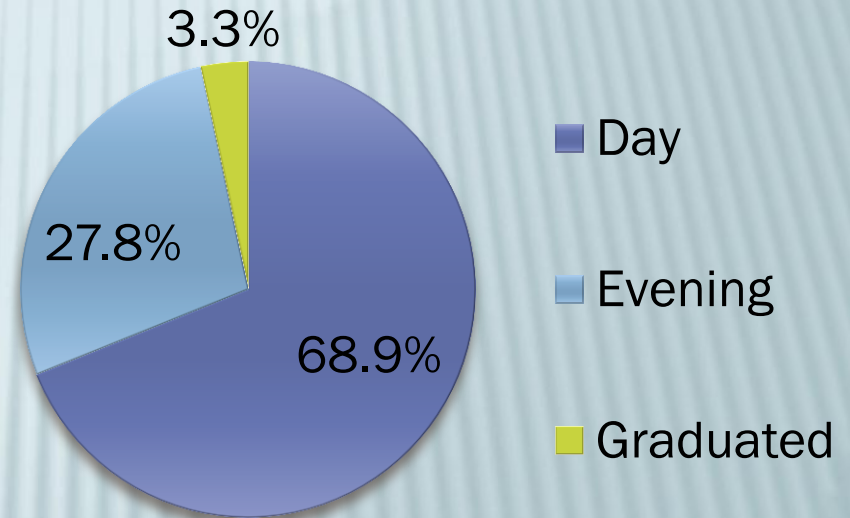
- ❑ On-line survey sent out to all self-identified students of color
 - ❖ Responses collected from March 9 to 19, 2010
 - ❖ 90 out of the 134 survey recipients responded

- ❑ Invitations went out to self-identified students of color who indicated a desire to participate in a focus group
 - ❖ 7 students participated in two focus group sessions run by L&C's Ombud

OVERVIEW OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

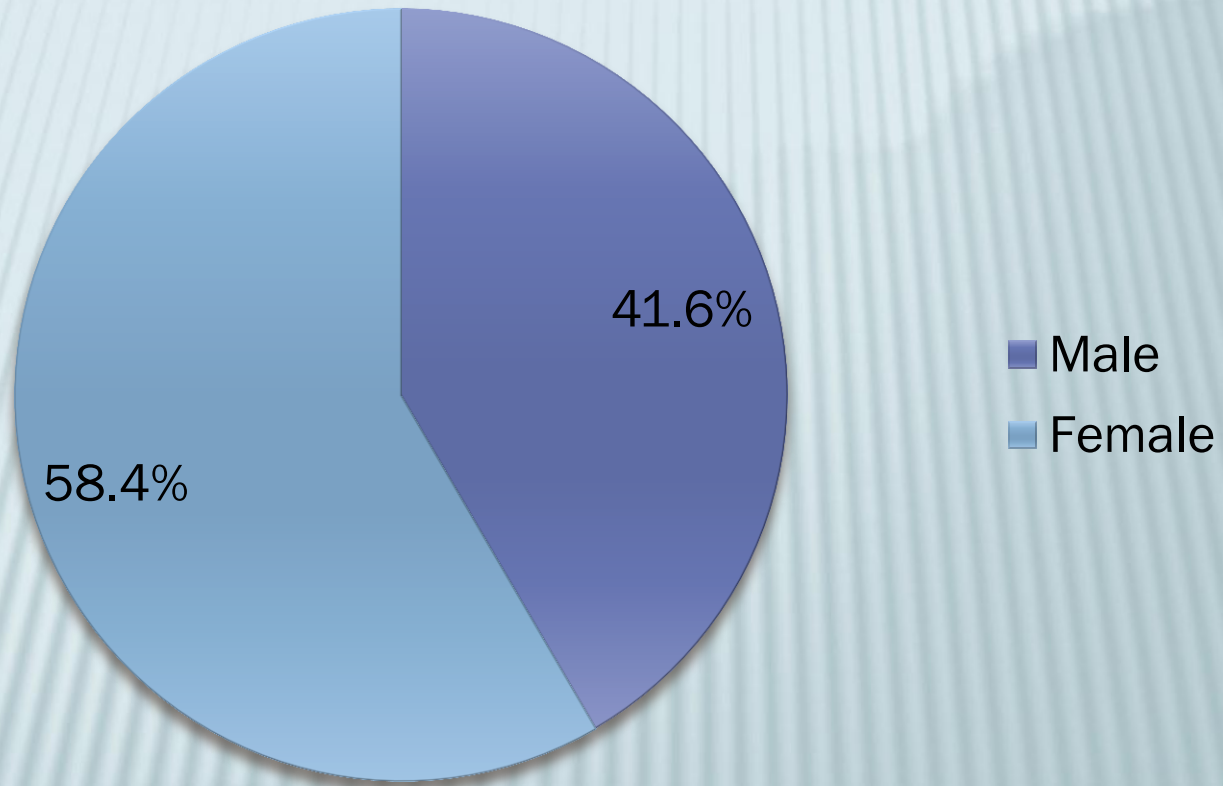


Class



Division

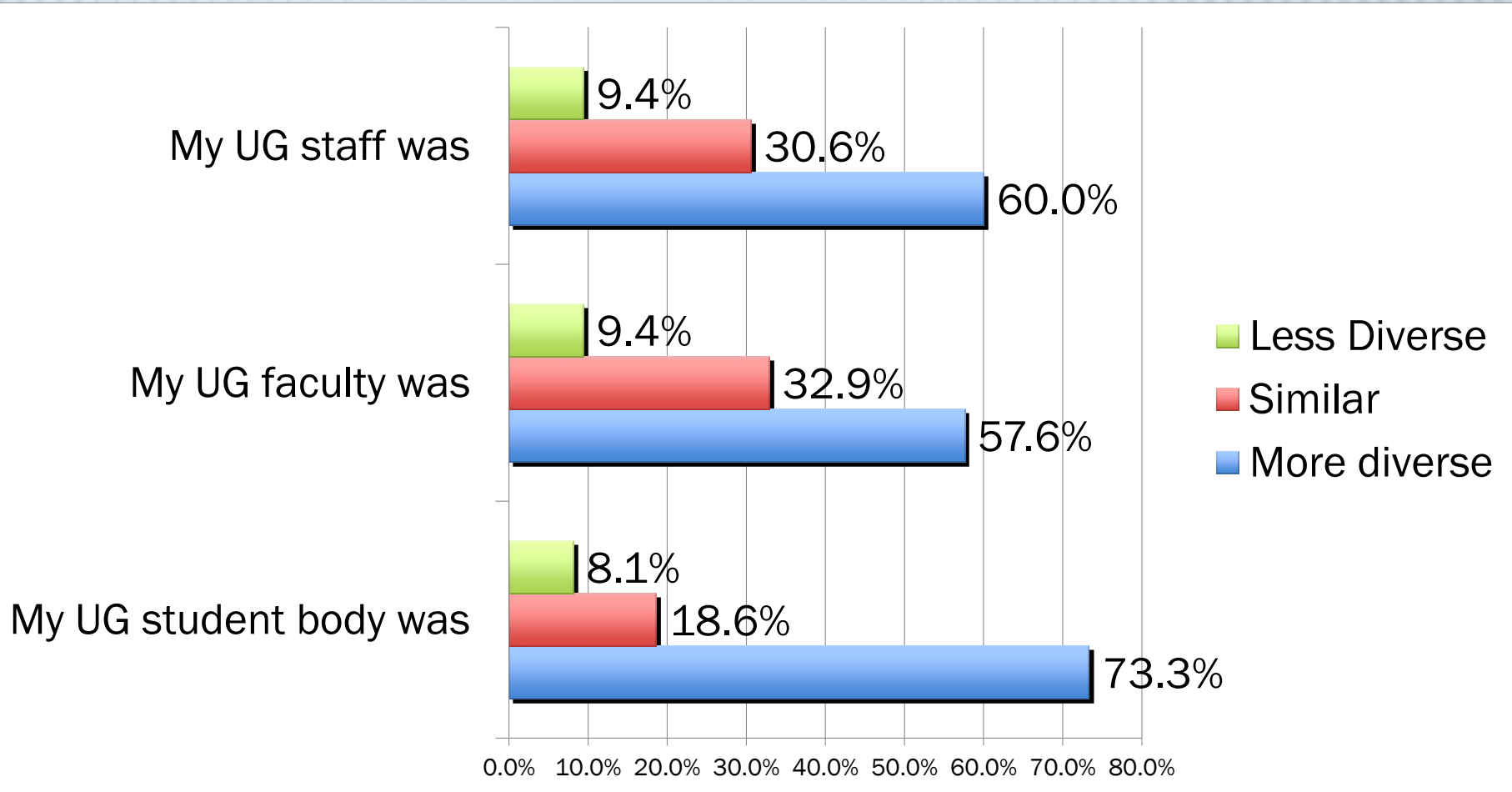
PARTICIPANTS OVERVIEW



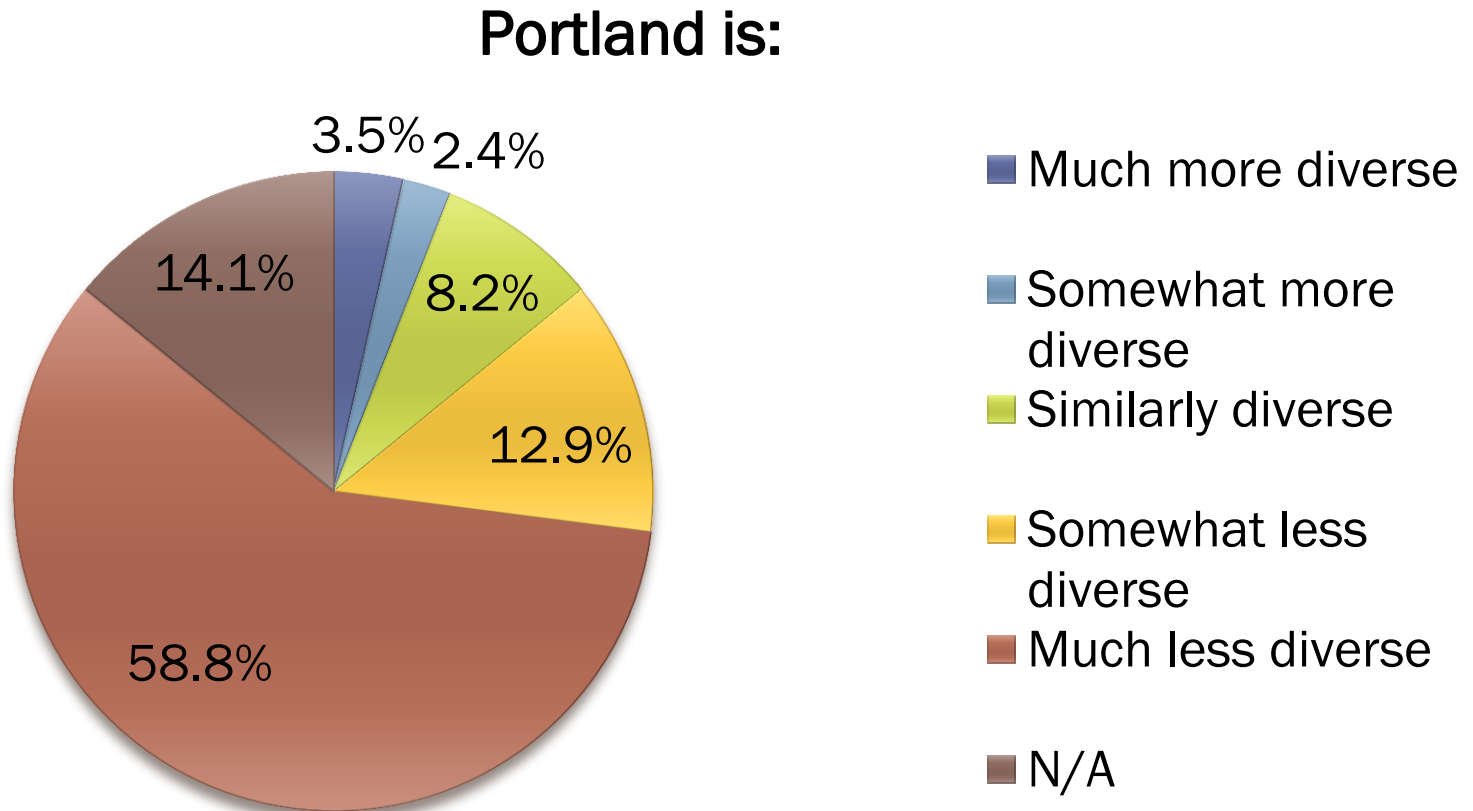
Gender

On-line Survey Findings

WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF THE STUDENT BODY, FACULTY, AND STAFF AT YOUR MOST RECENT COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY AS SIMILAR TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY AT L&C?



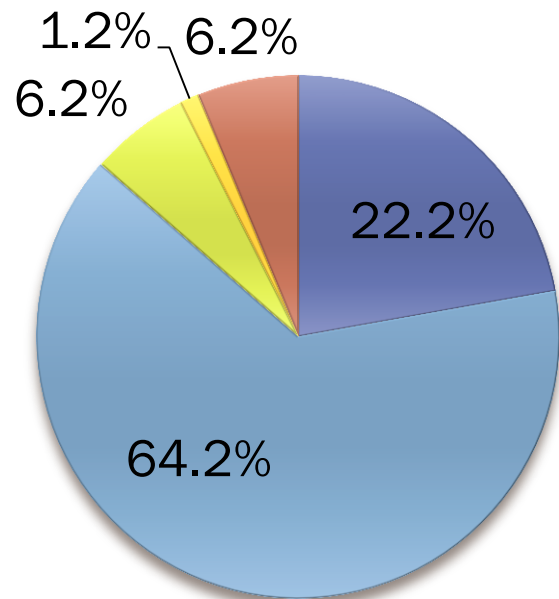
WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PORTLAND AS SIMILAR TO OR DIFFERENT FROM THE PLACE YOU HAVE MOST RECENTLY CALLED HOME?



IF THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF PORTLAND OR L&C IS DIFFERENT FROM THE DIVERSITY OF THE PLACE YOU MOST RECENTLY CALLED HOME, WHAT ROLE HAVE THESE DIFFERENCES PLAYED, IF ANY, IN YOUR LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?

- *[D]espite being not as diverse, Lewis & Clark is very welcoming...*
- *I have never felt any different at law school based on my ethnicity*
- *It has ... made me feel “isolated,” “disconnected,” “homesick” “self-conscious about my ethnic and cultural upbringing,” “more aware of my skin color,” “off-balance in a sea of whiteness,” “insecure in my abilities”*
- *There is a “lack of diverse perspectives,” “less acceptance of [cultural] values that are not considered [the] ‘norm’”*
- *It has ... made my law school experience less pleasant. [In my last community] no one seemed afraid to talk about race like they are here...I feel as though I am walking on eggshells. . . .*
- *[I]t makes talking in class more stressful ... because I feel like I am a representative for the minority voice when I speak. But...being one of the few minorities at the school [made me stand out more] and that comes with certain advantages.*
- *The viewpoints of those who are different or diverse don’t get as much credence. It’s difficult to be the only ethnic minority in a classroom.*
- *I don’t think some faculty/staff...and students are use[d] to interacting with people of my background. Sometimes it can cause...mistakes ...in communication.*
- *[I’m] acutely aware of how ...difficult it feels to have positions of authority filled by someone who looks different & has different experiences than you.*
- *I have found many students to be somewhat insensitive about race.*
- *I sometimes questioned whether other students viewed me as unintelligent.*
- *My experience in law school has been enriched by being surrounded by a more diverse community.*

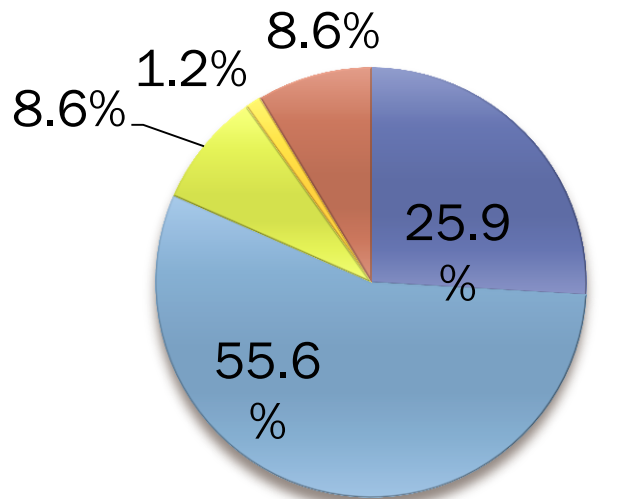
BEFORE ATTENDING L&C, MY PERCEPTION OF THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR WAS:



- Very welcoming
- Welcoming
- Non-welcoming
- Very non-welcoming
- Other

- *The outreach campaign from the admissions office was definitely very welcoming and I knew that L&C were interested in increasing its diversity in the student population so that was encouraging.*
- *I did notice the statistics about a predominantly white campus and city...but I liked all the different student groups available for minorities.*
- *I didn't have much of a perception...*

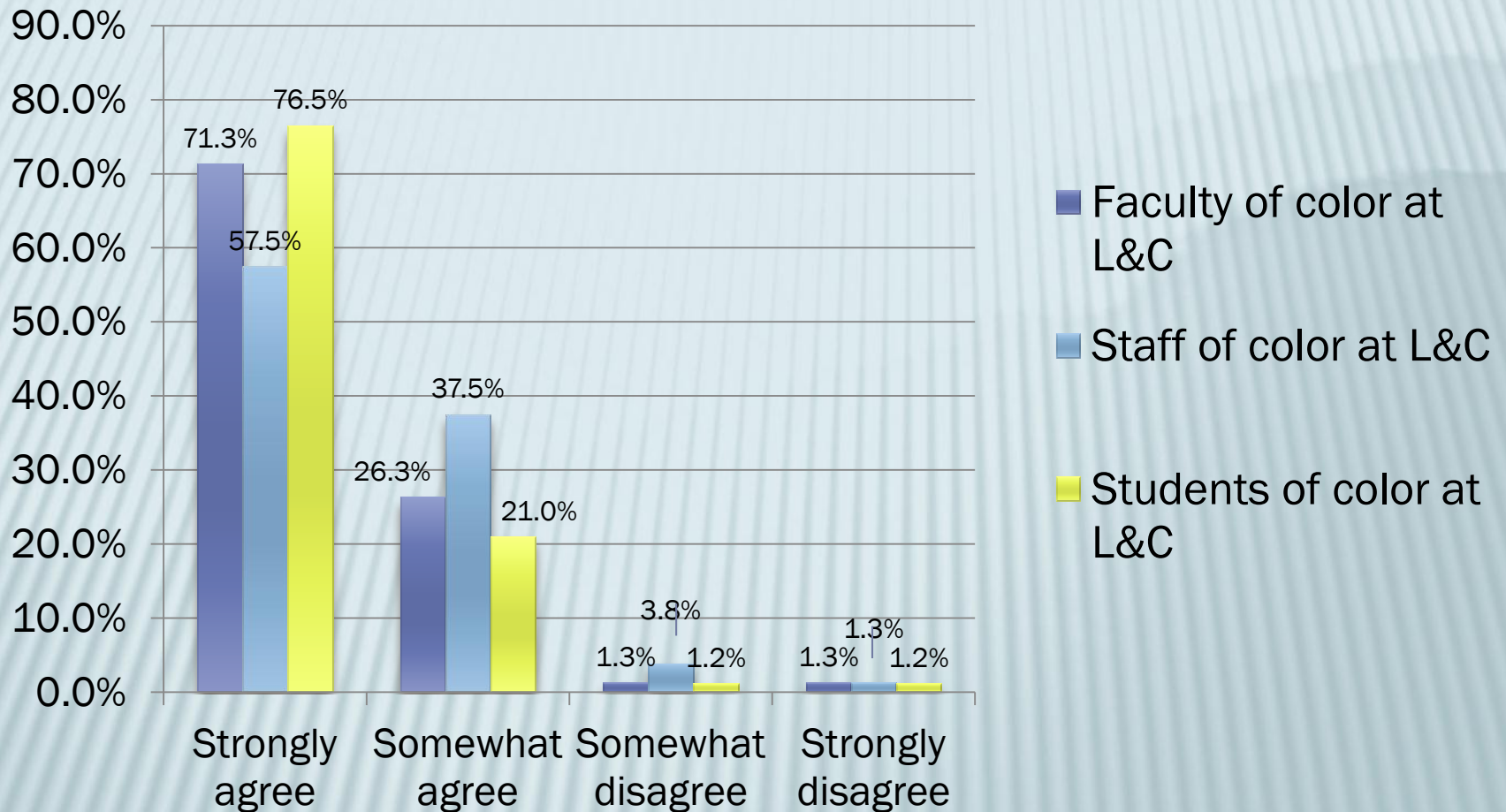
NOW THAT I AM ATTENDING L&C, MY PERCEPTION OF THE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR IS:



- Very welcoming
- Welcoming
- Non-welcoming
- Very non-welcoming
- Other

- ✗ *[T]here are so few students of color.*
- ✗ *“[A] significant portion of the faculty and staff, as well as the minority law student population, is very...welcoming”*
- ✗ *[S]ome non-minority students default to the belief that people start from the same basic viewpoint that they start from....[They] have no concept that different cultures have different perceptions of the world and issues.*
- ✗ *[P]eople like to act as if race is not an issue...you cannot talk about race....*

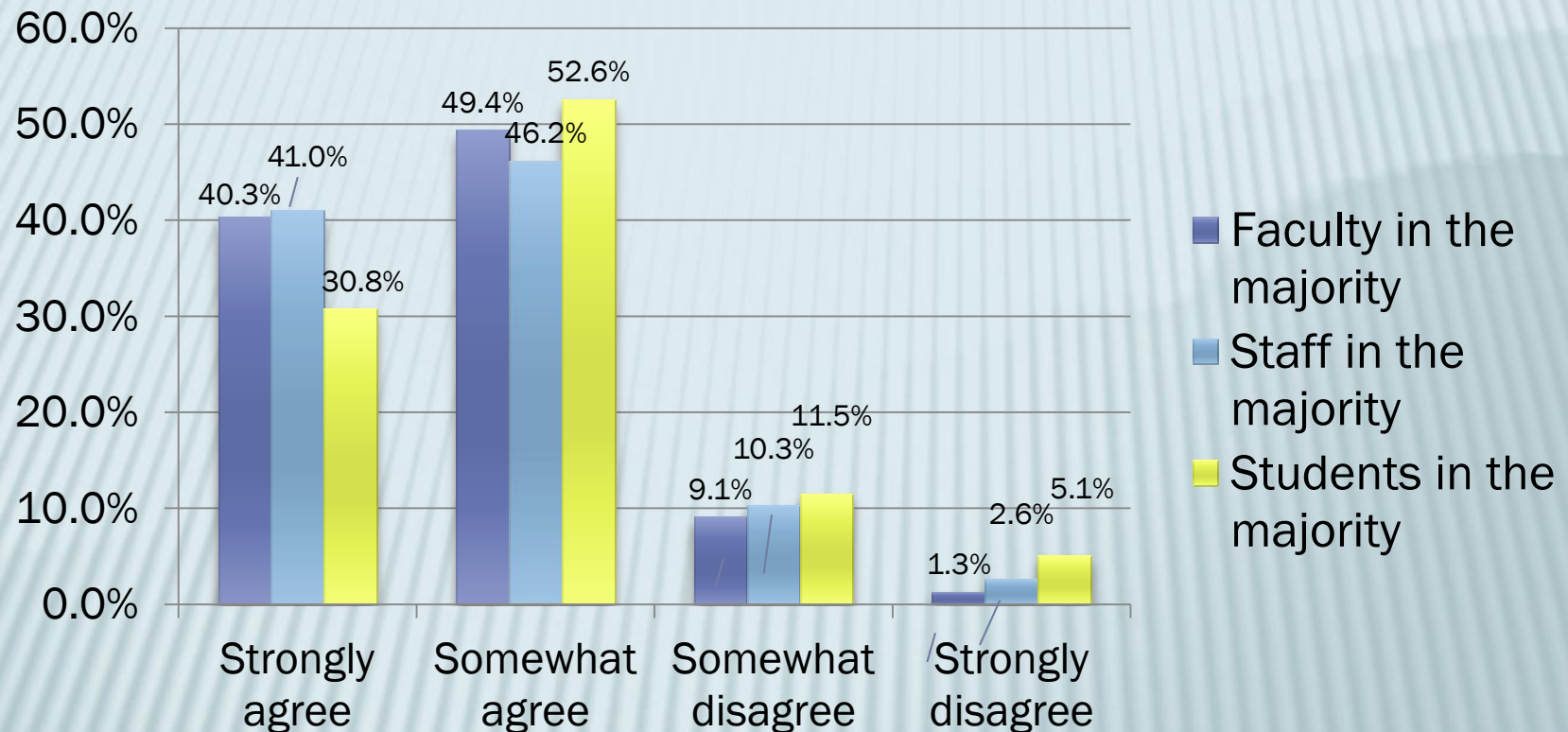
IT IS IMPORTANT TO ME THAT THERE ARE:



COMMENTS:

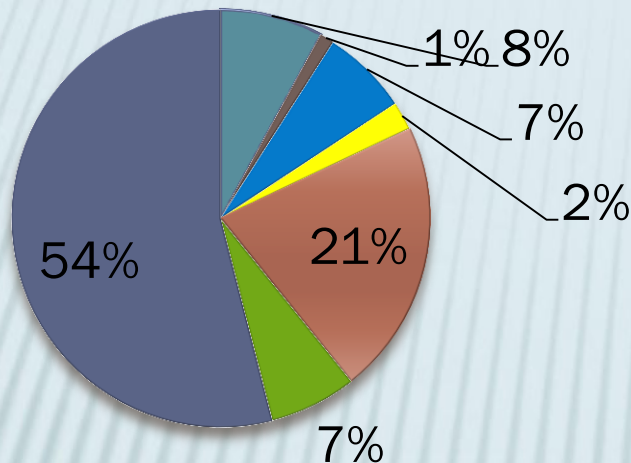
- *[I]t would be nice to see a little more diversity in the faculty.*
- *Having black professors helps to reinforce that students of color are qualified and are as intelligent.*
- *[T]here should be an attempt to integrate the perceptions of minorities in the legal curriculum, as a diversity of opinions and views on how the justice system works (or doesn't) is important [to] think[ing] critically about the law.*
- *It's really not the color that makes the difference; it's the background, world experiences, and cultural perspectives. Those things are sometimes correlated with color and sometimes they're not.*

MY RACIAL/ETHNIC BACKGROUND IS APPRECIATED AND RESPECTED AT L&C LAW SCHOOL BY:



- *Faculty in the majority do not know how to value and respect differences, evident by problems/hypos they use, comments made in class, lack of understanding of minority views on particular issues of interest to minorities.*
- *[I]t is very difficult to be a person of color in the E-Law program b/c there are no faculty, staff, or other students of color ...in the more activist organizations...*
- *I do feel very valued and supported as an ethnic minority.*

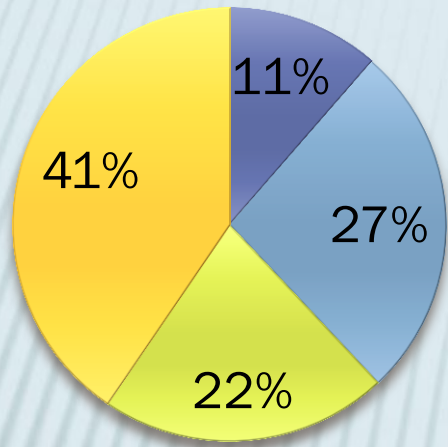
I HAVE ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS RELATING TO RACE/ETHNICITY ISSUES THAT INVOLVED:



- Faculty in the majority
- Faculty of color
- Staff in the majority
- Staff of color
- Students in the majority
- Other students of color
- No problems with these groups

- ✗ *[T]he school does a better job with cultural sensitivity than the community that it is in.*
- ✗ *I haven't encountered any problems. It's the lack of perspectives that is problematic.*
- ✗ *While there have never been any blatant acts of racism, there have been remarks and comments that can be seen as insensitive and ignorant in some cases within a classroom setting.*
- ✗ *To say that I've had 'problems' would be far too strong...It's as if people are afraid to be "racist," so discussions around the issue don't happen.*

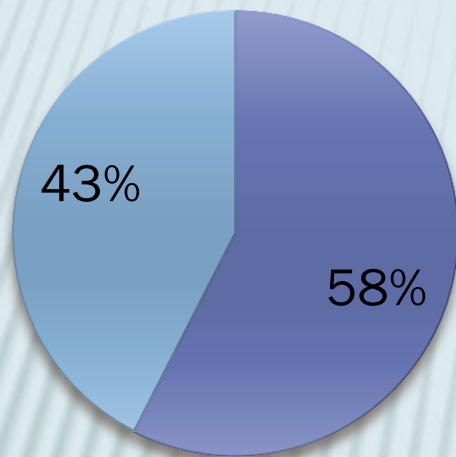
I HAVE FELT PRESSURE TO TEMPER MY RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY TO FIT IN HERE AT L&C:



- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

- ✖ *[T]he relative dearth of people in my racial/ethnic identity has caused me to more strongly embrace my racial identity in order to preserve my heritage.*
- ✖ *This is particularly true of classroom discussions involving minority rights. None of us want to be the token minority spokesperson. . . .*
- ✖ *I have not felt pressure to temper (good) nor have I felt encouragement to express (bad).*
- ✖ *It really has not been an issue at all...*

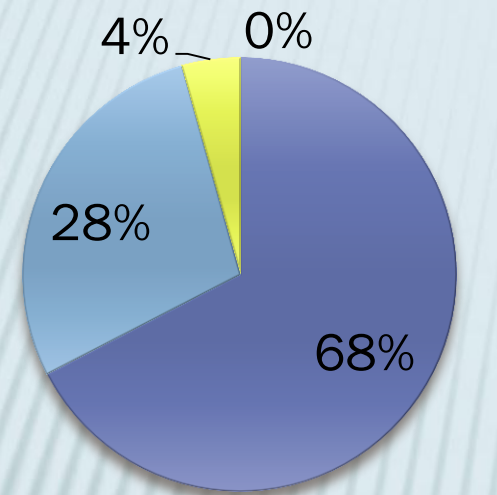
IN MY LAW SCHOOL CLASSES, ISSUES RELATING TO RACE/ETHNICITY ARE:



■ Addressed ■ Not addressed

- ✗ *[S]omewhat. Addressed in con law and in crim pro but not ... much (if at all) in other [1L] classes.*
- ✗ *This is one area where having faculty members of color might make a difference. Different cultural perspectives result in different legal perspectives.*
- ✗ *Race is talked about very openly in some of my classes, even when the law refuses to do so but it is behind the facts...[A]cknowledging racial climate is essential and I'm glad my professors are doing that.*
- ✗ *[T]his is a huge problem because ...race/ethnicity is a factor in all fields of law.*

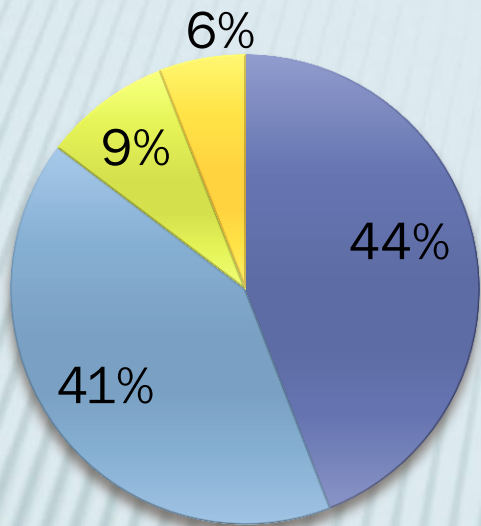
WHEN RACE/ETHNICITY ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED IN MY LAW SCHOOL CLASSES, THEY ARE ADDRESSED IN AN APPROPRIATE MANNER:



- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree

- ✘ *I have sat in on at least one class where a student has made offensive comments when discussing legal issues in regard to constitutional law and race (as well as with gender). . . .*
- ✘ *I don't feel like we ever talk about race...*
- ✘ *[R]ace/ethnicity are difficult issues to tackle in all settings, including an academic setting. [T]he professors ... I have seen deal with these issues have been respectful and thoughtful while managing to remain engaged in class material.*

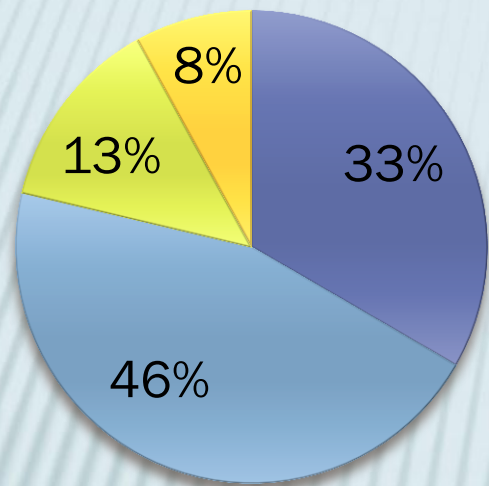
I FEEL THAT RACE/ETHNICITY ISSUES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN SOME OR ALL OF MY LAW SCHOOL CLASSES:



- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree

- ✘ *In classes like Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure, race is definitely important to bring up.*
- ✘ *Depends on the subject matter of the class. Contracts, for example, does not include an exploration of American history of the right to make contracts and how minorities, women, and others were denied this right because of their racial, religious, ethnic, or gender status. So it would be strange to add a racial/ethnic component to this type of class.*

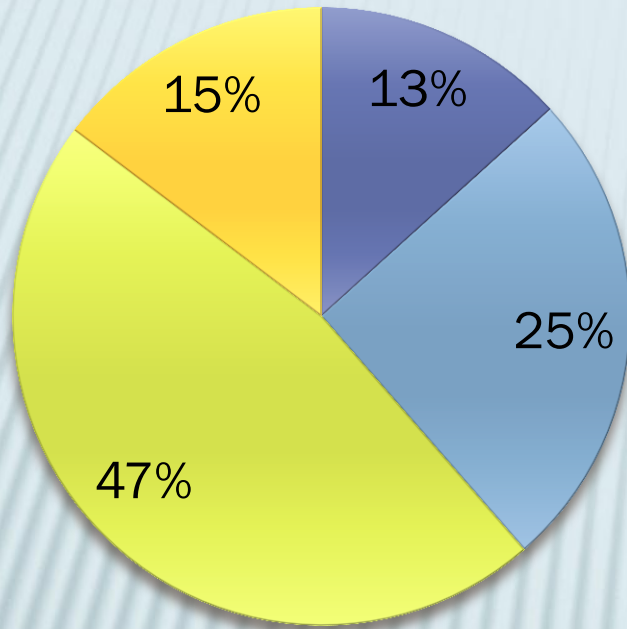
MY LAW SCHOOL CLASSES SHOULD MORE OFTEN ADDRESS RACE/ETHNICITY ISSUES:



- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree

- ✘ *I don't think it should be a forced issue but if it does come up, it would be nice for the professor to address it.*
- ✘ *I think it is important to discuss these issues, but at the same time, I am scared to hear what my peers may say.*
- ✘ *It would only foster more discussion among the majority race about what they believe equal protection is. Not helpful.*
- ✘ *Everyone just kind of pushes it under the rug. People are afraid to offend.*

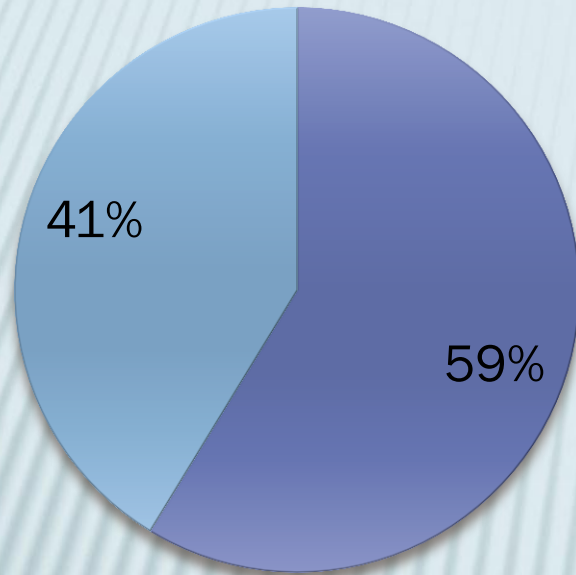
IF I WERE TO BRING UP AN ISSUE RELATING TO RACE/ETHNICITY DURING CLASSROOM DISCUSSION, I WOULD FEEL:



- Comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable

- ✖ *If an issue of race does come up in class sometimes it feels as if I am speaking on behalf of my race...I don't want people to confuse my opinions for the opinions of an entire race.*
- ✖ *I think it would be viewed as a digression [from] more important hard legal issues.*
- ✖ *[I]f I bring it up then other students are less likely to respond.*
- ✖ *[P]eople here (because the majority are white) are uncomfortable about issues involving race and it makes discussion in class less "colorful" or interesting.*

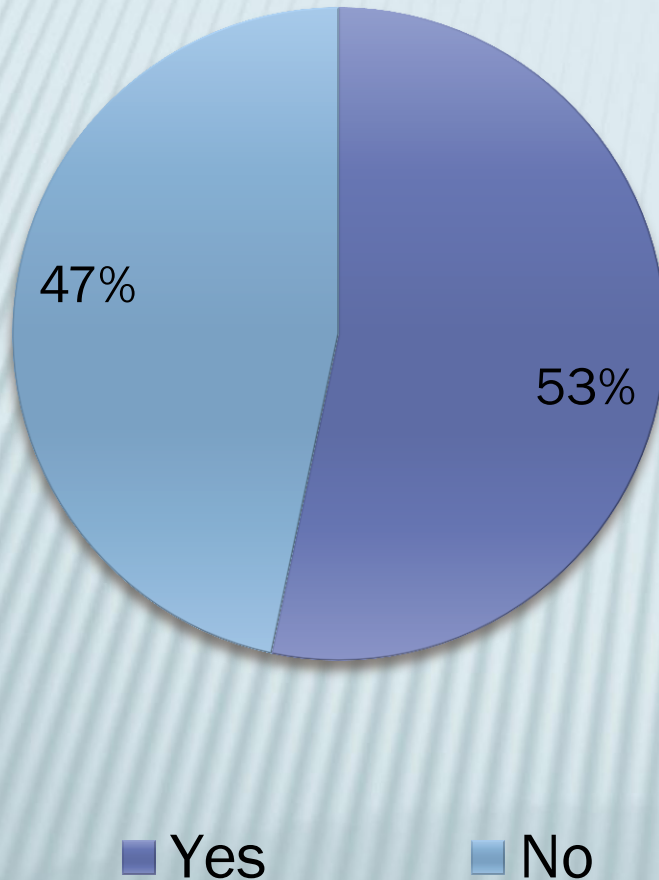
THE LIST OF LAW COURSES OFFERED RELATING TO RACE/ETHNICITY:



- Provides sufficient options
- Could be expanded to include more

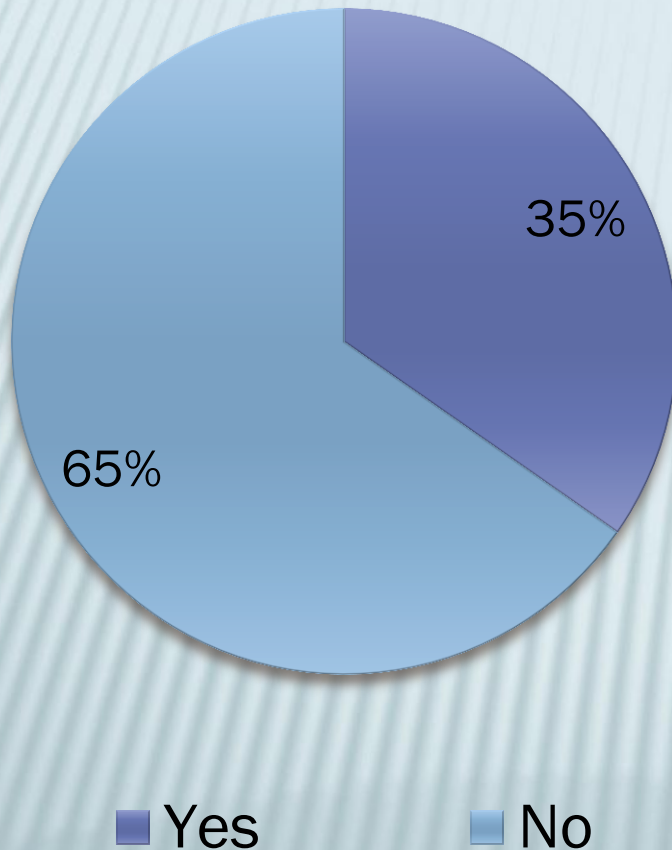
- ✕ *I wish the current classes were offered more than just every other year.*
- ✕ *“Race and the Judiciary,” “race/ethnicity and the law,” critical race studies.”*
- ✕ *Law and Alaska Natives.*
- ✕ *Intersectionality of race and sex within the law.*
- ✕ *Practical course on dealing with race in the workplace. . . .*
- ✕ *[S]eminars that [discuss] race/ethnicity and the law [in] Environmental Law, Criminal Law, Labor Law, Indian Law, and Immigration Law.*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER:



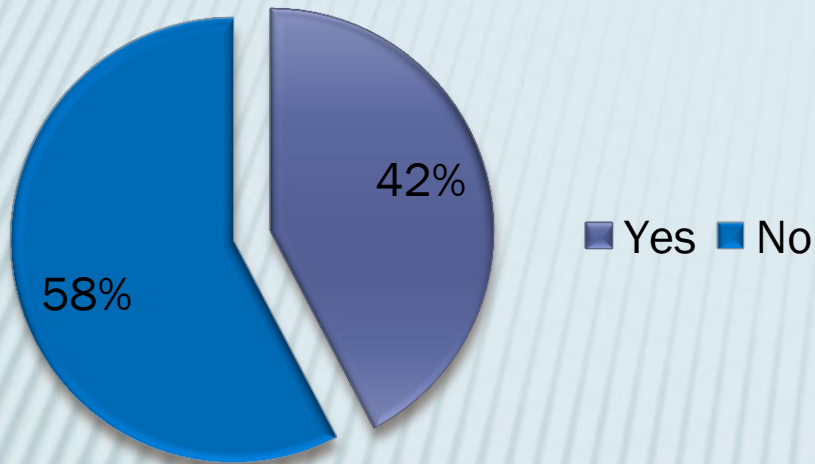
- ✖ *The law school and legal community takes extra measures to promote being active. . . .it shows there are people and [groups] to ensure that students of color and women feel comfortable...*
- ✖ *Some professors clearly feel uncomfortable having anyone other than white males speak up in class, or speak for more than a minute, or bring up opinions that have feminist or pro-minority overtones.*
- ✖ *I think it's much harder getting a job in the legal field if you are not a white male, because you have that much less credibility...*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY:

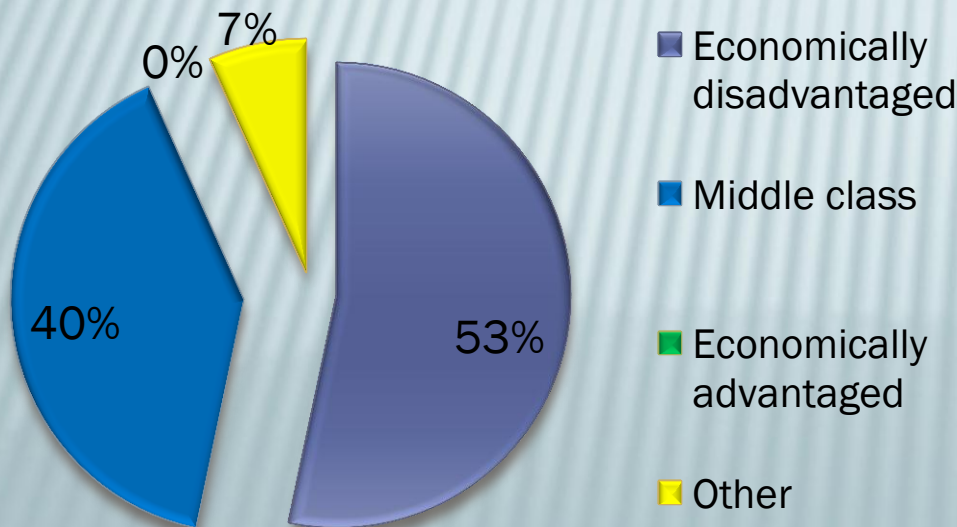


- ✖ *My experience as a sexual minority student has been very positive.*
- ✖ *[I've learned] how to handle discrimination issues effectively.*
- ✖ *Sometimes I feel uncomfortable in class... because I am not out to all of the other students....[T]here is an overall assumption of heterosexuality on campus.*
- ✖ *As a racial and sexual minority, I feel that I approach many of my classes with a different point of view. I feel that I question the law more frequently....*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND ECONOMIC STATUS:

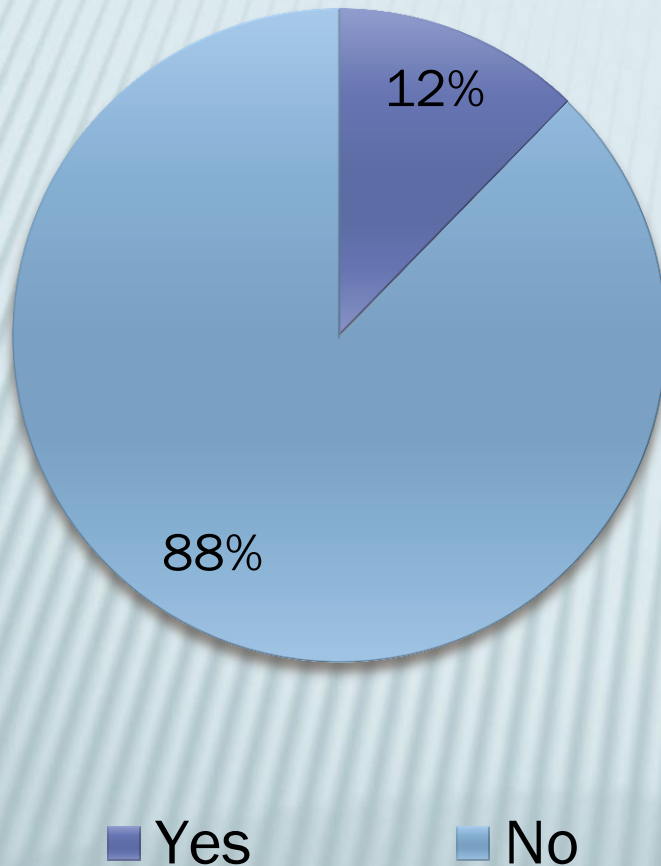


- ✖ *[It's d]ifficult to come into an environment filled with legacies of lawyers. It gives a sense of pressure to perform and a need to catch-up.*
- ✖ *It can be hard to relate to students who come from a privileged background, because they see the world differently than those who have always had to struggle to pay the rent. They also see legal issues differently...*



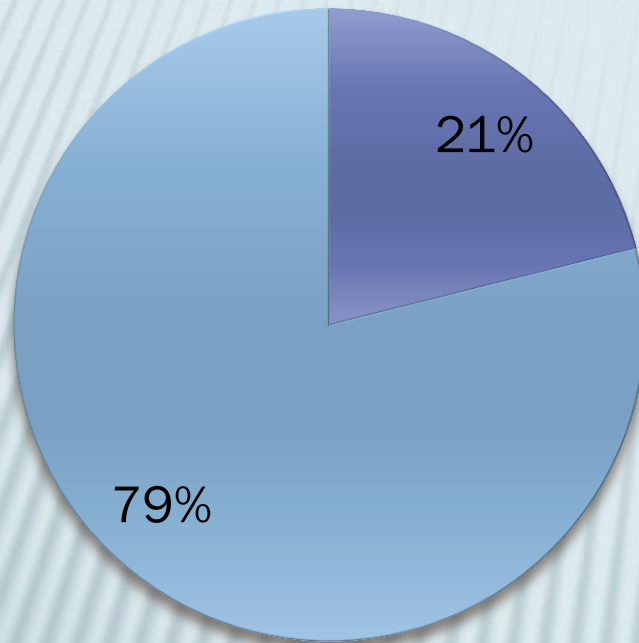
- ✖ *I have views based on my lower SES that do not coincide with the majority views and are not given any credence in class.*
- ✖ *I have chosen to work and study at the same time. My grades have ...suffered.*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND IMMIGRATION STATUS:



- ✖ *[I]t makes me proud to be of immigrant parents. I love my culture and being one of few has only made me embrace and love who I am more.*
- ✖ *As an immigrant, I feel that [U.S.] laws do not protect immigrants well enough, especially undocumented immigra[nts]...[C]lasses and tests should dedicate more time asking... if the laws should be changed, how, and what policy decisions should be shaping our view of the law.*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND RELIGION:



■ Yes

■ No

- ✕ *I have found that some people know more than I thought about my religion and don't hold the misplaced stereotypes I would expect.*
- ✕ *There is definitely a feeling that I can't express the fact that I am a Christian and have that be respected.*
- ✕ *People do not like religious people, or they tend to ridicule religious people who are of a traditional religion. . . .*
- ✕ *When religion is brought up in class, at times I feel very uncomfortable because not only am I the minority as far as race but I am also the minority when it comes to religion.*

MY LAW SCHOOL EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN IMPACTED, POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY, BY THE INTERSECTION OF MY RACE/ETHNICITY AND OTHER IDENTIFIERS:

- *Disability*



- *Being a parent*



- *Political orientation*



- *Being a non-native Oregonian*



AN ISSUE STUDENTS OF COLOR ENCOUNTER AT L&C LAW SCHOOL THAT OTHERS MIGHT NOT BE AWARE OF IS:

- The expectation to act as a representative of my race, or as an ambassador of my race.
- Being “color blind” is a bad thing. People should see the differences in each person and culture because this creates an environment more conducive to open discussion on race and racial issues. This would make people more aware of different issues and ignorance can be addressed openly, instead of waiting until a racial incident occurs.
- While there are not [a lot] of students of color here, most everyone is kind and accepting of others regardless of their own race.
- In some cultures you are raised to not speak your mind or question what is told to you. It’s a barrier to some students of color participating in class.
- I have no friends or family here. The minority students that I know are in the same boat. We don’t have a community.
- [S]tudents of color tend to react more strongly to [cases] that involve persons of color (such as slavery), but don’t...bring up their reaction in class because they feel they are the only ones reacting that way.
- Count the number of times ethnic minorities are called on in class, or how many times the Professor forgets their names. Imagine what it would feel like to walk into a[n] all non-white classroom with a Professor (demographically) unlike you.

SOMETHING THAT WOULD BENEFIT STUDENTS OF COLOR AT L&C LAW SCHOOL IS:

- *[T]he school is on the right track...making more of an effort to foster a diverse campus...*
- *Discussion of race in general!*
- *More ...willingness to talk about how varying backgrounds result in varying legal conclusions.*
- *Increase the efforts to recruit diverse students. Foster discussions of race in classrooms. Keep supporting programs and groups that provide events for minority students.*
- *Having a professor of color in the first year.*
- *More black law professors. Law students would not be under so much pressure to say something intelligent if the person leading the class is doing it.*
- *More focus on how diversity can make you successful; [a 'c]oping with diversity in the workplace' component' to career services sessions; a program that [helps] students of color connect with the legal community...That way they would not be looking to ...take their talents and diversity elsewhere....*
- *[N]etworks throughout the 3 L&C campuses/student-bodies.*
- *More staff and faculty of color. How about some sensitivity training for faculty?*
- *More money for BLSA, APALSA, MLSA, OutLAW groups so they can attract their white peers through parties and interesting talks.*
- *The AEP program is very helpful...anything that would make [students] more comfortable voicing opinions in class or speaking about cultural issues when applicable...*

I WOULD DESCRIBE MY OVERALL EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT OF COLOR AT L&C LAW SCHOOL AS:

- Great. I love the school.
- Positive. Welcoming law school community, easy going, and open minded.
- Typical of any law student.
- Uncomfortable, but I do appreciate this experience because it has ... made me proud to be a person of color and part of the minority.
- [A] great learning experience. Before coming to law school, I took diversity for granted. Now I have come to appreciate my own heritage more and to appreciate being [in] a place that is ethnically diverse.
- [F]air. There is room for change ...that would help students of color tremendously. I have seen progress I have seen the students of color become more relevant to the student body. But an effort to promote a more diverse student body would be excellent.
- Fair, but I found myself gravitating towards other students of color that could relate [to] my own experiences and upbringing.
- Decent. But it makes me want to move out of Oregon.
- Mediocre. I think there are ...efforts to include minorities, but they are programs run by minorities. I'd like to see more efforts within the 'regular' portion of the law school community.

For more information, please contact Heather McCambly, Assistant Director of Global & Diversity Initiatives, (hmccambly@lclark.edu, x6938).