



CU Boulder Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance

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- Address



In characterizing their graduate program based on their personal experiences, a majority (>70%) of both master's and doctoral students see their program as friendly, civil, and respectful, as well as not sexist, not racist, and not homophobic. A majority (>70%) also agree that their program is accommodating of people with disabilities, and accepting of transgender people, diverse religious beliefs, and diverse national origins. Although a majority were still in agreement, lower percentages of students at both levels perceive acceptance of diverse political opinions in their programs.

Participants were asked if they had witnessed *other graduate students* in their program make derogatory or insulting comments about people who are members of a range of identity groups. Fewer than 10% of students reported witnessing comments directed at most groups. The percentages were greater than 10% for people with a particular religious/spiritual affiliation or belief. Frequency of witnessing derogatory comments made by other graduate students was highest for comments against women (master's 14% and PhD 18%) and people with conservative political beliefs (master's 23% and PhD 32%).

Participants were also asked if they had witnessed *a faculty member* in their program make derogatory or insulting comments about people from a range of identity groups. Again, reports of witnessing these types of comments were rare. The percentages of students witnessing derogatory comments made by faculty were highest for comments about women (master's 5% and PhD 10%) and about people with conservative political beliefs (master's 10% and PhD 15%)

A majority of respondents at both levels have positive perceptions about program support. Three-quarters agree/strongly agree



Survey participants were asked which gender they identified with: female, male, transgender man, transgender women, genderqueer, prefer not to state



75% of men). Women in doctoral programs are more likely to report that they have felt they were treated awkwardly by faculty because of some aspect of their social identity (32% vs. 17% of men) and more likely to report having been marginalized or excluded from a work group/lab for some aspect of their social identity (19% vs. 11% of men).

With respect to witnessing other graduate students make derogatory or insulting comments about certain identity groups, a higher percentage of PhD women have witnessed negative comments about women (22% vs. 13% of men). More women than men also reported witnessing negative comments by faculty members about women (13% vs. 6% of men). Fewer women students agree that their department/advisor provides the support needed to graduate in a timely manner (66% vs. 72%). Finally, 20% of female PhD students report having been the target of hostile treatment, as compared to 10% of male PhD students.

Survey participants were asked about their sexual orientation. Response options included: bisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, queer, questioning, prefer not to state, and write-in response option. Respondents also had the option of not answering the question. After reviewing the comments section for the "other" category which included multiple mentions of pansexuality, participants were categorized into three sexual orientation groups: GLBQ+, Straight, and No Answer. Gender

lower percentages of GLBQ+ master's students agree that their program is friendly (60% vs. 81%), civil (72% vs. 90%), respectful (45% vs. 88%), or not homophobic (73% vs. 93%).

And a higher percentage of GLBQ+ master's students than straight students report witnessing derogatory comments made by other graduate students about racial/ethnic minorities, women, men, GLB people, people from other countries, no ag -4(s.)5( 81%)80[(r01 Tw( minr)1)10(o5)4(gw06( rac)16(,



for International master's students (5%) and ranged from 10-14% for the other race/ethnicity groups.

### Doctoral Students

For PhD students who responded to the survey, there was a large discrepancy between URG students and students in the other race/ethnicity groups with respect to perceptions of the social climate ( ). Only 44% of PhD URG students agree/strongly agree that they feel welcome at CU Boulder (compared to >70% for the other groups) and only 57% feel welcome in their graduate program (compared to >70% for the other groups). Fewer than half of URG students feel like a respected member of the CU community (38%), compared to Whites (52%), Asian-Americans (58%), and International students (63%); nor do they feel respected in their graduate program (47%), as compared to Whites (63%), Asian-Americans (56%), and International students (71%). Twenty-nine percent of PhD URG students report that they have been excluded or marginalized from a lab or group work due to an aspect of their social identity, compared to <17% for other groups.

Reports of witnessing another graduate student make derogatory comments about racial/ethnic minorities, GLB people, and people with a particular religious/spiritual belief are highest for URG PhD students. Reports of witnessing other graduate students making derogatory comments about people from other countries are highest for PhD International students (18%). Reports of witnessing derogatory comments made by faculty about women were highest for PhD URG students (16%). A higher proportion of URG PhD students (25%) report witnessing derogatory faculty comments about people with conservative political beliefs, as compared to other groups (range of 5-18%). More than a quarter of PhD students in all race/ethnicity groups agree/strongly agree that faculty behave in ways that humiliate or intimidate graduate students. A higher percentage of URG PhD students report experiencing hostile treatment (31%) as compared to White (15%), Asian-American (18%), and International students (6%). Finally, about one-third of White, Asian-American, and URG students would "definitely" choose CU again if they had the opportunity to start over, as compared to 46% of International students.

Institutional Research reviewed system records data to determine the enrollment/graduation status of survey participants as of March 2017. We then matched enrollment/graduation information with survey respondents' demographic information and survey responses. Of the 1603 master's and doctoral students who took the survey, 1526 were still enrolled at CU Boulder or had finished their degree, and 77 were no longer attending CU Boulder. There were no statistically significant differences in retention between women and men, or across the five race/ethnicity groups. However, the chi-square test of independence performed to examine the relationship between sexual orientation and retention showed that the relationship between these variables was significant,  $X^2 (1, N = 1603) = 7.11, p < .01$ ; GLBQ+ students are twice as likely as Straight students to have withdrawn from the university without completing a degree between the time of the survey in fall 2014 and March 2017 when this analysis was conducted (withdrawal rate=4% for

- f* People from another country
- f* Non-English speakers

- *Program Character*

- Students' characterizations of the program: Rate your graduate program on the following characteristics:
  - f* Racist (1)/not racist (6)
  - f* Sexist (1)/not sexist (6)
  - f* Homophobic (1)/not homophobic (6)
  - f* Not accepting (1)/accepting of trans people (6)
  - f* Not accepting (1)/accepting of diverse national origins (6)
  - f* Not accommodating (1)/accommodating of people with disabilities (6)

- *Program Climate (1=strongly disagree, 6=strongly agree)*

- Overall, the intellectual climate of my graduate program is positive
- Overall, the social climate of my graduate program is positive
- Students in my graduate program are treated with respect by faculty
- Faculty members in my program demonstrate respect for others in the program through personal actions and behavior
- Faculty members in my program create a supportive working and learning environment for graduate students
- Faculty members in my program treat students fairly

- *P*

We mathematically combined the questions in each theme to create composite scores and used these six composite variables to test the relationships among themes and to test each theme's predictive value for explaining students' responses to the question, "If you were to start your graduate career again, would you select this same university?" (*Would Choose CU Again*). This question was measured on a 4-point scale: 1=definitely not, 2=probably not, 3=probably, 4=definitely. We chose this question because it provides a measure of a student's sense of connection to the graduate program, institution, and community.

We also took into account whether a student reported experiencing "hostile treatment" from administrators, faculty, staff, or other graduate students (yes/no). This was defined as "behavior that is offensive, intimidating, or hostile and sufficiently serious to interfere with the ability to work or learn." Finally, we constructed a "failed expectations" variable by summing the number of "no" responses that each participant gave to a set of six items that assessed whether, prior to starting at CU, students had received accurate information about: availability of funding for the academic year, availability of funding in summer, the cost of student fees, whether the student would receive annual evaluations of their academic progress, the availability of training in how to teach, and the availability of instruction/guidance in preparing p(lt)-4 ac(o)-4((c)4)9(h)-4(av)dbi9(ilit)-4(in)-4(sh)-4(av) ac(o)C /







- Use survey and focus group findings to identify 3-5 key benchmarks for improvements and