



# SAFE SPACES

## Campus Climate Report

Gauging the Environment for Sexual and Gender Minorities at the University of Alberta

# Acknowledgments

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services would like to acknowledge the many undergraduate students who took the time to complete this survey and share their perceptions and feedback to help improve University of Alberta campuses for sexual and gender minority students. We would like to thank Lionel Kinkartz for his lead role in developing the survey instrument, conducting the survey, compiling the results, and for his contributions in writing the report. A special thank you to the dedicated reviewers who provided their valuable time, knowledge, and expertise to help ensure our report would be accurate and comprehensive. Finally, we would like to thank our sexual and gender minority and allied alumni who, over many decades, fought to be visible, recognized, and fully included at the University of Alberta. This report is dedicated to them for leading the way in challenging times when support was limited and visibility meant probable victimization. Their footprints are not forgotten as we march along the road to full equality.

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# Foreword

Those who engage in studies to become caring professionals learn that it is imperative to meet the physical and safety needs of individuals as a starting point in helping them to grow, develop, and reach their full potential. This point is emphasized in the transdisciplinary Chief Public Health Officer's 2011 and 2012 annual reports on the state of public health in Canada. I served as an external reviewer and contributor to these reports. The 2011 report—*Youth and Young Adults: Life in Transition*—draws a disturbing conclusion: While, in general, Canadian youth and young adults comprise a healthy and resilient population, sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals are disproportionately represented among those young persons who are not thriving. The 2012 report—*Influencing Health: The Importance of Sex and Gender*—is clear on another important point: With sex and gender traditionally expected to function within the parameters of heterosexuality and the male/female binary, SGM youth have problems adjusting to boundaries and expectations guiding behaviours and practices in key social arenas including places of learning. Not adjusting can impact an individual's social acceptability, cultural status, educational performance, employment and career opportunities, economic security, and comprehensive health.

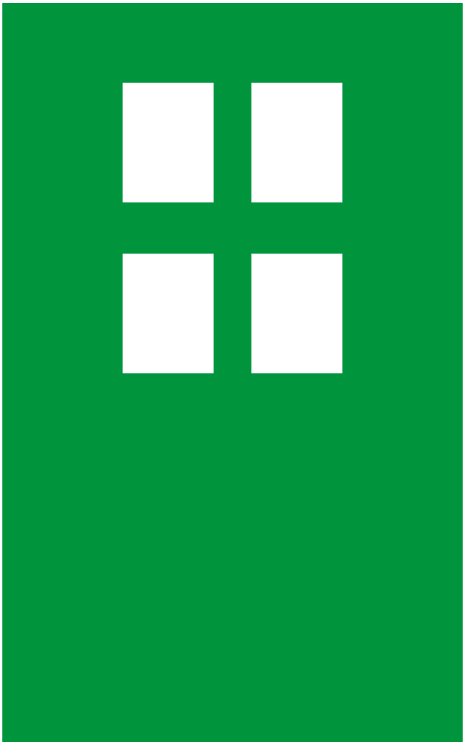
In speaking to the importance of education research, the 2012 report stresses the need to study how both sex and gender affect the individual, social, and environmental needs of youth, their learning experiences and outcomes, and the kinds of educational initiatives, interventions, curricula, instructional strategies, and climate supports needed to create sex-and-gender inclusive educational institutions.

The Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report makes a valuable contribution in this regard. What we learn from this research can help us to improve conditions for sexual and gender minority students at the University of Alberta as we build awareness and challenge erroneous assumptions regarding sex and gender as identities and expressions.

The University of Alberta has a duty and an obligation to meet the needs of all students, respecting individual differences including sexual orientation and gender identity. To fail in this regard is to place the comprehensive health of those excluded in jeopardy. The Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report represents the first encompassing research conducted on the climate for sexual and gender minorities on campuses of the University of Alberta. Its findings constitute vital information about the needs and concerns of a historically invisible population. The report provides impetus for acting to improve conditions for SGM students in learning and, indeed, all facets of university life. I encourage you to read the document, reflect on its factual revelations, and use what you learn to make life and learning better NOW for sexual and gender minorities in the University of Alberta community.

André P. Grace, PhD  
Professor, Faculty of Education  
Director of Research, iSMSS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



# Executive Summary & Key Findings

## Background

Founded in 1908, the University of Alberta is home to 18 faculties, offers more than 400 programs, supports over 400 student groups, and is comprised of almost 40,000 students and staff. The University of Alberta Safe Spaces Campus Climate Survey was developed based on feedback generated from focus group discussions composed of University of Alberta staff and students. The themes from these discussions helped guide the development of the Safe Spaces survey, which was distributed via email to a random sample of 10,000 University of Alberta undergraduate students. The survey remained open for students to complete from November 17, 2011 to December 9, 2011. Of these 10,000 students, 2,372 students started and 2,046 completed the survey, providing an impressive response rate of over 20%. To our knowledge, this is the first university-supported survey of its kind to be completed at the University of Alberta.

## Demographics

The group of “sexual minority students” consists of students who identified themselves as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, or two-spirited. “Gender minority students” consists of students who identified themselves in at least one of the following categories: female-to-male, gender-queer, male-to-female, questioning, transgender, transsexual, or two-spirited <sup>1</sup>.

When asked to identify their sexual orientation, 83% of students identified as heterosexual. The next highest category of self-identification was asexual, which included 7.5% of students. The remaining 9% of sexual minority identities received responses ranging from 6.1% to 0.6%: Bisexual orientation was indicated by 6.1%, gay by 3.2%, questioning by 2.1%, queer by 1.5%, pansexual by 1.4%, lesbian by 1%, and two-spirited by 0.6%.

Students were similarly asked to identify their gender identity. Of students indicating, 63% identified as female and 34% as male. The various gender minority categories were also selected by some 3% of students, with the highest cohorts being male-to-female at 1.6% and female-to-male at 1.4%.

Students were also asked to identify their faculty, year of study, age, size of home community, international student status, and the minority groups with which they identify (i.e., racialized, ethnic, or cultural). Nine in ten students were under 25, and 21% came from home communities of less than 10,000 people, with another 39% from communities between 10,000 and 100,000 people. By Faculty, 24% of the students were in Science, 18% in Arts, 12% in Engineering, 10% in Education, and the other third of students were in more than 11 other Faculties. Students were relatively evenly represented by year of study, with around 20% each in 1st and 2nd years, and around 25% each in 3rd and 4th years. International students accounted for 5% of students.

Minority group identification was indicated by 56% of students, with the most frequently mentioned including ethnic at 22%, racialized 19%, religious 18%, cultural 17%, Aboriginal/FNMI 16%, and sexual orientation 16%.

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions of these and other terms see the glossary in Appendix B



## Campus Atmosphere

A 5-Point Likert Scale<sup>2</sup> was used to gauge students' feelings about the campus climate, which enabled comparison across different demographic groups. Students were first asked to rank their level of agreement with the statement, "I feel comfortable being open with my sexual orientation on campus." Students who identified as heterosexual and male or female had an average response of 4.6, showing a high level of agreement with the statement. In contrast, sexual minority students had a lower level of agreement, with an average response of 3.8. Of particular note were two subgroups that showed stronger disagreement with the statement. Students who identified as both a sexual minority and a racialized, ethnic, or cultural minority had an average response of 3.4, and students who identified as both a sexual minority and 30 years or older had an average response of 3.0, although the sample size was small (n=11) for this last group.

When asked about their comfort level in being open about their sexual orientation, responses were mixed. Some students indicated that campus is a positive space for sexual and gender minority students, with statements such as, "There is a girl in my class who is lesbian. She has talked about her girlfriend more than once, [and I] haven't heard anything judgmental about it." However, other students were less positive, expressing "Disgust at the general intolerance and prejudice the other students throw around."

When given the same statement about being open with about their gender identity, heterosexual-identified male and female students provided an average response of 4.6, while gender minority students had an average response of 4.0. The group of students who identified as both a gender minority and religious minority had an average response of 3.5, which may suggest the potential vulnerability of these overlapping intersections of identity.

## Homophobia and Transphobia on Campus

Students identified several key factors that hindered their openness about their sexual orientation on campus. For example, 47% of sexual minority students cited a fear of unfair assumptions or stereotyping, and 31% identified a fear of derogatory comments as relative concerns regarding openness. More alarming, however, was that 13% of sexual minority students identified hate crimes, and 14% identified sexual harassment, as concerns for being open about their sexual orientation. These patterns were more pronounced among students who identified both as a sexual and racialized, ethnic, or cultural minority. In this group of students, about 1 in 4 identified hate crimes, sexual harassment, and physical intimidation and bullying as concerns related to being open with their sexual orientation on campus.

In some cases, students also identified how heteronormative and gendernormative attitudes and behaviours on campus served to interfere with their coursework. For example, one student complained about language courses and stated, "It is common to have an exercise for a student to explain what celebrity they find attractive or what they look for in a person they would date.... During these exercises I try not to participate (and may even lose participation marks) because I'm uncomfortable in making a decision between lying or coming out." Another student had similar

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<sup>2</sup> The options were: Strongly disagree (1), Somewhat disagree (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat agree (4), Strongly agree (5), and Unsure.

issues with writing assignments, stating, “Sometimes in English, I have to write about romance. I don’t really know how to do that because I’m asexual.”

Gender minority students identified these same issues as concerns, but at slightly smaller rates. For example, 36% of gender minority students identified fear of unfair assumptions and stereotyping, 23% identified derogatory comments, 10% identified hate crimes, and 10% identified sexual harassment as concerns. Typical among difficulties that gender minority students experience, one student related how they have “actually been friends with someone for quite a while whom just recently began transitioning (MtF) .... [T]hese are generally trying and in some cases despairingly difficult times to those who are dealing with transition.”

The prevalent use of homophobic and transphobic language on campus also emerged as a significant survey finding. Many students revealed that homophobic language is a routine part of their on-campus experience. For example, 1 in 5 sexual minority students reported hearing homophobic language used routinely in conversations on University of Alberta campuses, and another 11% heard such language a few times per day. Given these findings, it is not surprising to find such a sizable portion of these students expressing fear of a variety of repercussions for being open about their sexual orientation.

In comparison to homophobic language, gender minority students report a fairly low rate of transphobic language on campus. One possible reason for this difference was summed up by a student who suggested that the rarity of transphobic language could be due to “less public perception of transsexual people.” Another student noted, “I think the reason it isn’t heard more often is because it isn’t talked about or an obvious thing about someone at first glance.” Such explanations may provide salient reasons why gender minority students report slightly less discomfort with language slurs on campus than their sexual minority peers.

Much of the homophobia identified by students revealed a lack of awareness, rather than bigotry or targeted discrimination. This finding speaks to the need for increased education around a number of key issues: implementing practices of inclusion; challenging heteronormative assumptions; addressing the use of casual homophobia; and utilizing respectful and inclusive language. Correspondingly, many students explicitly stated the need for increased public education, demonstrated by comments such as, “I really hope the UofA does something to teach its students to avoid usage of words like ‘gay’ and ‘retard’ in order to describe something unliked.” Likewise, another student stated, “I would like to see more education on the topic, because people fear what they don’t understand.”

## **Expressing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to Staff Members**

Students were also asked about their comfort with expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity to professors and instructors, non-academic staff, and healthcare service providers on campus.

Comparisons of the perceptions of heterosexual students with those of sexual minority and gender minority cohorts reveal significant differences in comfort levels. This is particularly evident in the attitudes of sexual minority students both to professors and instructors and to non-academic staff, with average agreement ratings of 3.4 for both groups, while the heterosexual

cohort had an average agreement rating of 4.3 for both. Sexual minority students also rated comfort with healthcare providers and services on campus lower than heterosexual students, averaging 4.0 compared to 4.6. Again, as with other survey statements, gender minority students gave somewhat more positive ratings than sexual minority students did, but they were still less positive than the heterosexual cohort.

Many students stated that they did not think it would ever be appropriate to express their sexual orientation or gender identity to university staff; yet, the reality for many students is that it is often necessary. Several students provided stories about assignments and classroom discussions, in areas such as English, Psychology, and Education, where their sexual orientation or gender identity became relevant considerations. For example, one student chose to avoid parts of class work, describing their dilemma this way: “Sometimes I’m required to speak about myself for certain assignments or presentations. While others may choose to speak about their partners... I usually avoid this portion of the activity because I’m not comfortable expressing this information to other students or staff.” Another student described having issues in a course because “someone in my group refused to work with me” because of perceived sexual orientation. This could be interpreted as a violation of the Code of Student Behaviour.

## Residences

Students generally revealed a high degree of comfort in expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity in University of Alberta residences. For example, one student stated how the Lister Centre was “the most gender/sexual orientation accepting environment I’ve ever been in.” Likewise, several other students referenced the importance of Lister’s inclusive language policy<sup>3</sup>. While the overwhelming response to University of Alberta residences was positive, some students observed, “Homophobia was very obvious for many of the students.” One issue also highlighted was the potential discomfort for trans students in gender-segregated housing.

## Summary

Survey results indicate University of Alberta campuses are perceived as a relatively safe, inclusive, and supportive places for sexual and gender minority students. Many students echoed this perception with comments such as, “Overall, the University provides a safe and respectful environment.” Still, other students clearly identified areas that continue to need improvement. In particular, the prevalence of homophobic language and a high percentage of students expressing serious concerns with being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity strongly indicate how there is still much work to do if sexual and gender minority students are to feel fully included, welcomed, and respected on our university campuses.

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3 Residence Services. (2011). *University of Alberta Residence Community Standards Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.residences.ualberta.ca/CurrentResidents/CommunityStandards/NewCommunityStandards.aspx>

## Key Findings & Themes

- Homophobic, transphobic, and homonegative language is a common campus experience for sexual and gender minority students and it affects students' feelings of safety, acceptance, and wellbeing.
- Stereotyping and unfair assumptions about sexual and gender minority people are a major concern for many students on University of Alberta campuses.
- Increased professional development opportunities and sexual and gender minority sensitivity training for University faculty, staff, student groups, and instructors are needed.
- Sexual and gender minority topics and issues should be introduced into existing course content at all levels of study.
- Instructors and administrators must actively address heteronormativity and gendernormativity within class discussions, course assignments, and governing University policies and procedures.
- Focused efforts should be undertaken to increase the visibility of sexual and gender minority supports and services (i.e., student groups, safe spaces, campus climate, student recruitment, etc.) on all University of Alberta campuses.
- Initiatives are needed on all campuses for improving gender-inclusivity and reducing gender-based discrimination, including the development of all-gender washrooms, adoption of sexual and gender minority inclusive forms and policies, and support for transgender and transsexual students in gendered classes.

## Recommendations

### Institutional

- Conduct a review of sexual and gender minority best practices at other leading postsecondary institutions across Canada.
- Conduct a review of University of Alberta policies to ensure sexual and gender minority inclusiveness.
- Establish a dedicated sexual and gender minority equity officer/advisor staff position.
- Provide dedicated training for all frontline staff on sexual orientation and gender identity issues.
- Conduct a gender identity audit on campus to ensure trans inclusiveness in policies, facilities, and programs.
- Develop clear institutional policies and procedures for name changes, preferred gender, and pronouns.
- Provide at least one gender-inclusive/all gender bathroom in each building on University of Alberta campuses.

- Actively recruit, hire, and retain self-identified sexual and gender minority faculty and staff.
- Provide dedicated sexual and gender minority counseling supports and services to assist students in the process of gender transition.
- Develop an active sexual and gender minority and allies alumni group.
- Host a University of Alberta campus pride week to celebrate and bring visibility and institutional recognition to sexual and gender minority issues and identities.
- Establish a campus-wide sexual and gender minority advisory committee.

### **Academic**

- Provide professional learning opportunities for professors and instructors on SMG topics and provide sensitivity training.
- Continue to support campus sexual and gender minority speakers' series and events.
- Develop a sexuality studies undergraduate interdisciplinary minor.
- Develop sexual and gender minority inclusive library collections and sexual and gender minority library guides at disciplinary and interdisciplinary levels.
- Develop more sexual and gender minority specific scholarships and bursaries.
- Establish sexual and gender minority faculty networks and research clusters.

### **Student Services**

- Establish a centralized sexual and gender minority student resource centre.
- Develop a mentorship program for sexual and gender minority students.
- Hire a Safe Spaces campus coordinator.
- Increase gender-inclusive options for residences.
- Ensure campus health services include access to accommodative sexual and gender minority specific counseling supports and services.

### **Campus Protective Services**

- Publicly identify a sexual and gender minority Protective Services Liaison Officer.
- Provide sexual and gender minority inclusive training for all Campus Protective Services staff.
- Develop and communicate to the wider University of Alberta community clear procedures for reporting sexual and gender minority bias, harassment, and hate crimes and incidents.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
SAFE SPACES  
CAMPUS CLIMATE  
SURVEY REPORT



# University of Alberta Safe Spaces Campus Climate Survey Report

## Introduction

### Background and Methodology

Founded in 1908, the University of Alberta is home to 18 faculties, offers more than 400 programs, supports over 400 student groups, and is comprised of almost 40,000 students and staff. On January 22, 2011, the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services held a one-day Safe Spaces retreat composed of staff and students from across the University of Alberta. Participants at the retreat were divided into five focus groups and asked the following question, “What would ‘safe spaces’ mean to undergraduate students on the University of Alberta campuses?” The focus group discussions were summarized into five key themes, including (1) Gender Inclusivity, (2) Visibility, (3) Policy, (4) Education and Awareness, and (5) Language. These themes provided the foundation for the development of the University of Alberta Safe Spaces Campus Climate Survey, which was emailed to a random sample of 10,000 undergraduate students and remained open for voluntary participation from November 17, 2011 to December 9, 2011. Two email reminders were sent to students in this sample to complete the survey. Of these 10,000 students, 2,372 began the survey and 2,046 completed the full survey, providing an impressive response rate of more than 20 percent. Only the data from the students who completed the full survey are included in this report<sup>4</sup>. To our knowledge, this is the first university-supported survey of its kind to be completed at the University of Alberta.

The purpose of the Campus Climate Survey was to assess the climate on the University of Alberta’s campuses for undergraduate students in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression issues, needs, and concerns. The survey began with questions asking about the demographics of the students, followed by general questions about their feelings regarding campus climate, actions, and attitudes on campus, perceptions of the institution, and views about campus facilities (including residence life, campus athletics, and sports teams) in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. The full survey instrument can be found in Appendix 1. The survey was supported by the Office of the Dean of Students and received University of Alberta Research Ethics Board approval.

## Demographics

For the purposes of survey response comparison, students were grouped into the following categories: sexual minority students, gender minority students, and heterosexual and male or female identified students. The “sexual minority students” consist of students who identified as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning or two-spirited. “Gender minority students” consist of students who selected at least one of female-to-male, gender-queer, male-to-female, questioning, transgender, transsexual or two-spirited<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For statistical calculations, only data from completed surveys were used. However, a small number of comments from uncompleted surveys were included in this report when they offered relevant insights. Ninety-five percent confidence levels helped to ensure for accuracy in our comparative analysis.

<sup>5</sup> Although the statistical analyses do not reflect this nuance, it is important to note that some of the students who solely selected ‘female’ in the gender identity category also referred to themselves as gender minorities in their comments. In addition, some students who have transitioned genders may no longer identify themselves as a gender minority.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The first two questions of the survey asked students to identify their sexual orientation and gender identity. It was possible to provide as many answers as the survey respondent desired. The options for these questions can be seen in Figures 1 and 2<sup>6</sup>.

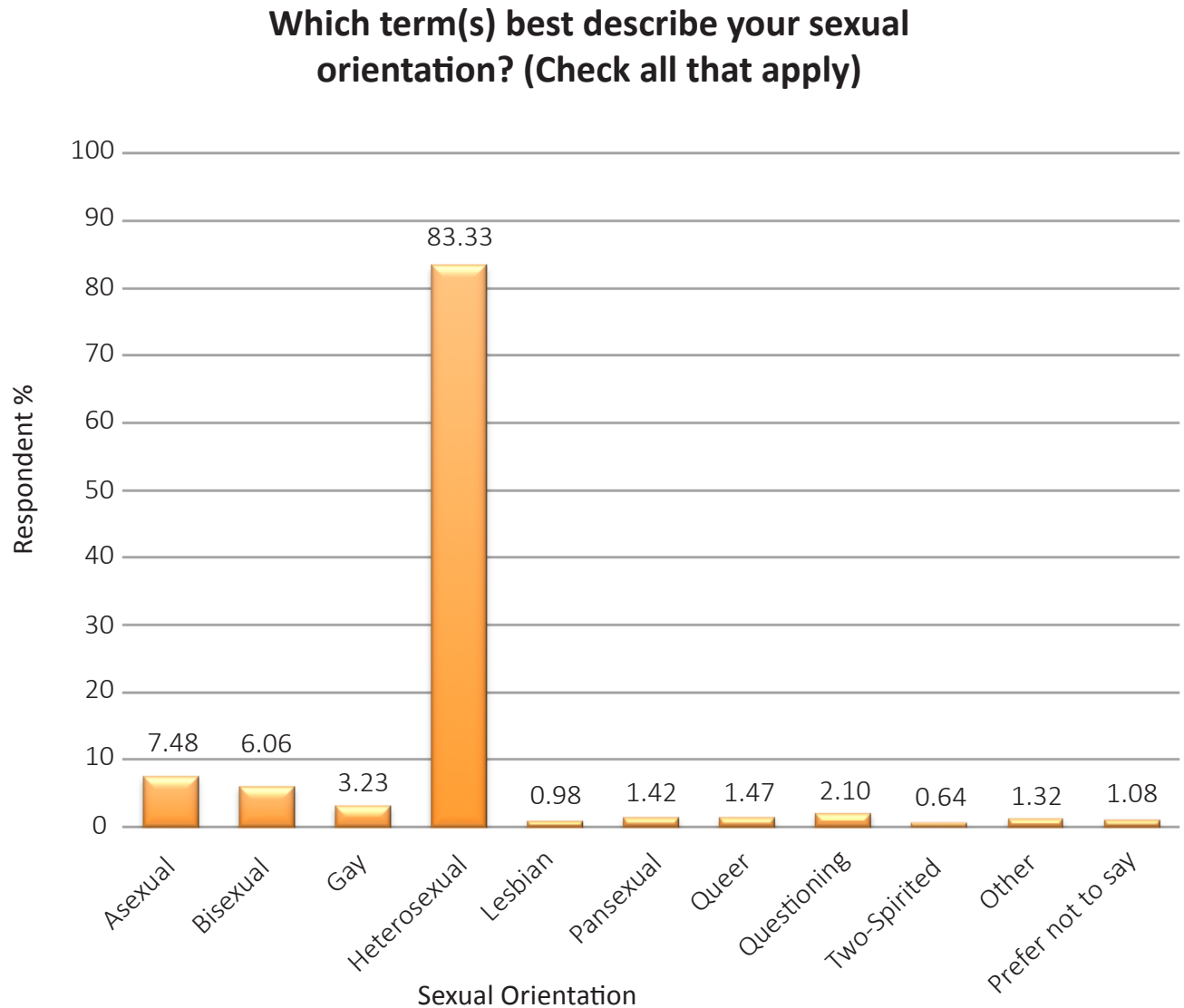


Figure 1- Demographics

2,046 students, 2,232 responses

An interesting finding about students' sexual orientation was that while 83% of students (1,705 individuals) chose "heterosexual" as a response to the question, 113 of these 1,705 individuals also selected one of the options classified as a "sexual minority". Although in some cases this indicated an individual who identified as "questioning" (24 of those 113 people), this number suggests the need for increased sensitivity to a wider variety of sexual orientation identities on campus. For example, while a student might identify to their peers as heterosexual, and even pursue heterosexual relationships, they may also self-identify as a sexual minority.

<sup>6</sup> Note that in Figure 1 and Figure 2, the respondent percentages are greater than 100%. This is because participants were able to select multiple responses to the questions.



Asexual individuals represented the largest sexual minority group identified in the survey. This finding indicates that campus supports and services should strive to become more inclusive of a wider variety of sexual orientations and identities. For example, several students explicitly expressed their frustration at the lack of legitimacy afforded to asexuality. One student stated, “No one understands my situation. So, it’s impossible to find people to talk to about something that most people consider a joke or lie. I think that there should be a way for people who are asexuals to talk about it.”

Several students also felt that bisexuality is poorly understood on campus. One respondent stated, “I don’t think having deep and legitimate feelings for members of both sexes is understood yet in the university atmosphere. Therefore, I have trouble embracing the label ‘bisexual’ and openly admitting my sexual orientation.”

It is important to note that the frequency of self-identified non-heterosexual students in the survey is much higher than would traditionally be expected. Such numbers could be due to a self-selection bias of students choosing to take this survey. However, the internal validity of the results presented is strengthened by the fact that the findings are divided into a sexual minority group and a heterosexual group for the purposes of comparison.

### Which term(s) best describe your gender identity? (Check all that apply)

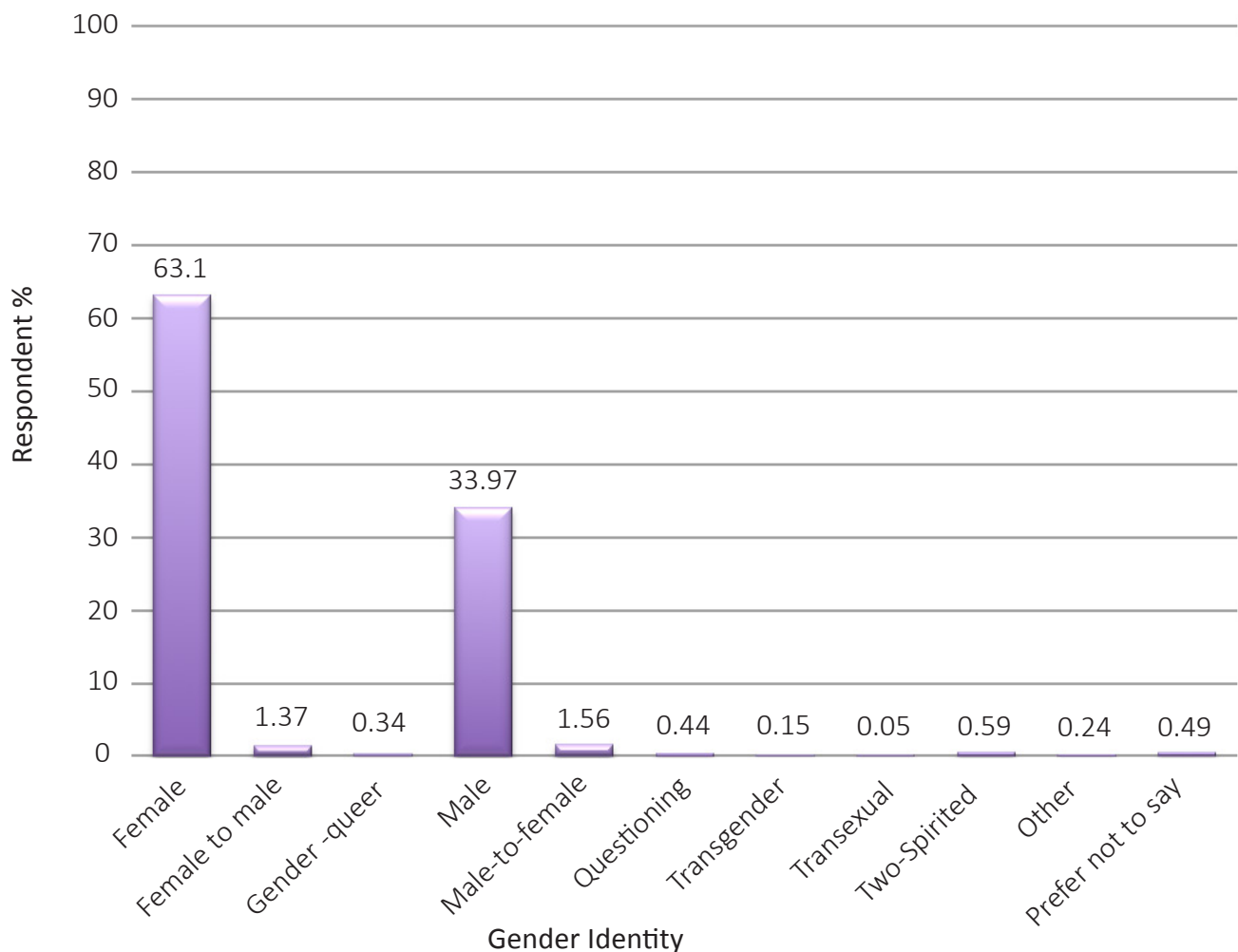


Figure 2- Demographics

2,046 students, 2,232 responses

Figure 2 shows that 97% of students identified as either male or female. The largest gender minority categories were female-to-male and male-to-female, at 1.4% and 1.6% of students, respectively.

In contrast to sexual orientation, it is not uncommon for an individual who identifies as a gender minority to also self-identify as either male or female. For example, a transgender individual may choose to identify as both transgender and as the gender that aligns with their internal gender identity. In our survey, 36% of individuals who identified as a gender minority also identified as either male or female (29 out of 80). Survey participants also selected other non-binary gender identifications, indicating the complex and fluid nature of gender identity and gender expression.

A recommendation from this study is for all official student records, information systems, and class lists to reflect this diversity in gender identification by including more categories than just male and female as possible categories for self-identification.

Other student demographic information on the survey included age, year of study, faculty, size of home community, international student status, and minority status (See pps. 19-20). Nine in ten responding students were under 25 years of age; only 4% were 30 or older. Students were relatively evenly represented across undergraduate years of study, with around 20% in each of their 1st and 2nd years and around 25% in each of their 3rd and 4th years. By Faculty, 24% of the students were in Science, 18% in Arts, 12% in Engineering, 10% in Education, and the other third of students were represented across more than 11 other Faculties.

One in five students came from home communities of less than 10,000 people, with another 39% from communities between 10,000 and 100,000 people. Half of all students came from larger population centres. International students accounted for just 5% of students, and it might be noted in passing that, overall, survey results indicate responses from international students were very similar to non-international students. However, at least one international student did comment on feelings of loneliness, mentioning that, "I wish I lived on the University of Alberta Campus. As an international student, it was a bad idea choosing to live off of campus without a friendship network."

### Age

Age	Respondent % (n=2046)
Under 18	4.69
18-20	44.53
21-24	39.20
25-29	7.33
30 or over	4.25

Table 1

## Year of Study

<b>Year of Study (According to Beartracks)</b>	<b>Respondent % (n=2046)</b>
1st year undergraduate	19.89
2nd year undergraduate	20.72
3rd year undergraduate	24.24
4th year undergraduate	25.42
5th year undergraduate	6.01
Other	3.71

Table 2

## Faculty

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Respondent % (n=2046)</b>
Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences	7.53
Arts	18.28
Augustana	3.86
Business	5.28
Education	10.26
Engineering	12.37
Extension	0.05
Law	1.47
Medicine and Dentistry	3.76
Native Studies	0.64
Nursing	3.08
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	1.86
Physical Education and Recreation	3.86
Saint-Jean	2.35
Science	24.14
Other	1.22

Table 3

## Size of Home Community<sup>7</sup>

<b>Size of Home Community</b>	<b>Respondent % (n=2046)</b>
Under 10 000 population	20.72
10 000 – 50 000 population	13.25
50 000 – 100 000 population	16.08
Over 100 000 population	49.95

Table 4

<sup>7</sup> "Home community" is defined as community the student lived in prior to attending the University of Alberta.

## International Student Status

International Student (Yes/No)	Respondent % (n=2046)
Yes	5.08
No	94.92

Table 5

Minority group identification was indicated by 56% of students. The most frequently mentioned minority categories were ethnic at 22%, racialized 19%, religious 18%, cultural 17%, Aboriginal/FNMI 16%, and sexual orientation 16%. Mentioned fewer times were special needs (12%), gender identity (10%), and linguistic differences (9%). See Figure 3 on the next page.

## Minority Status

**In which of the following categories do you identify as being a minority? (Check all that apply)**

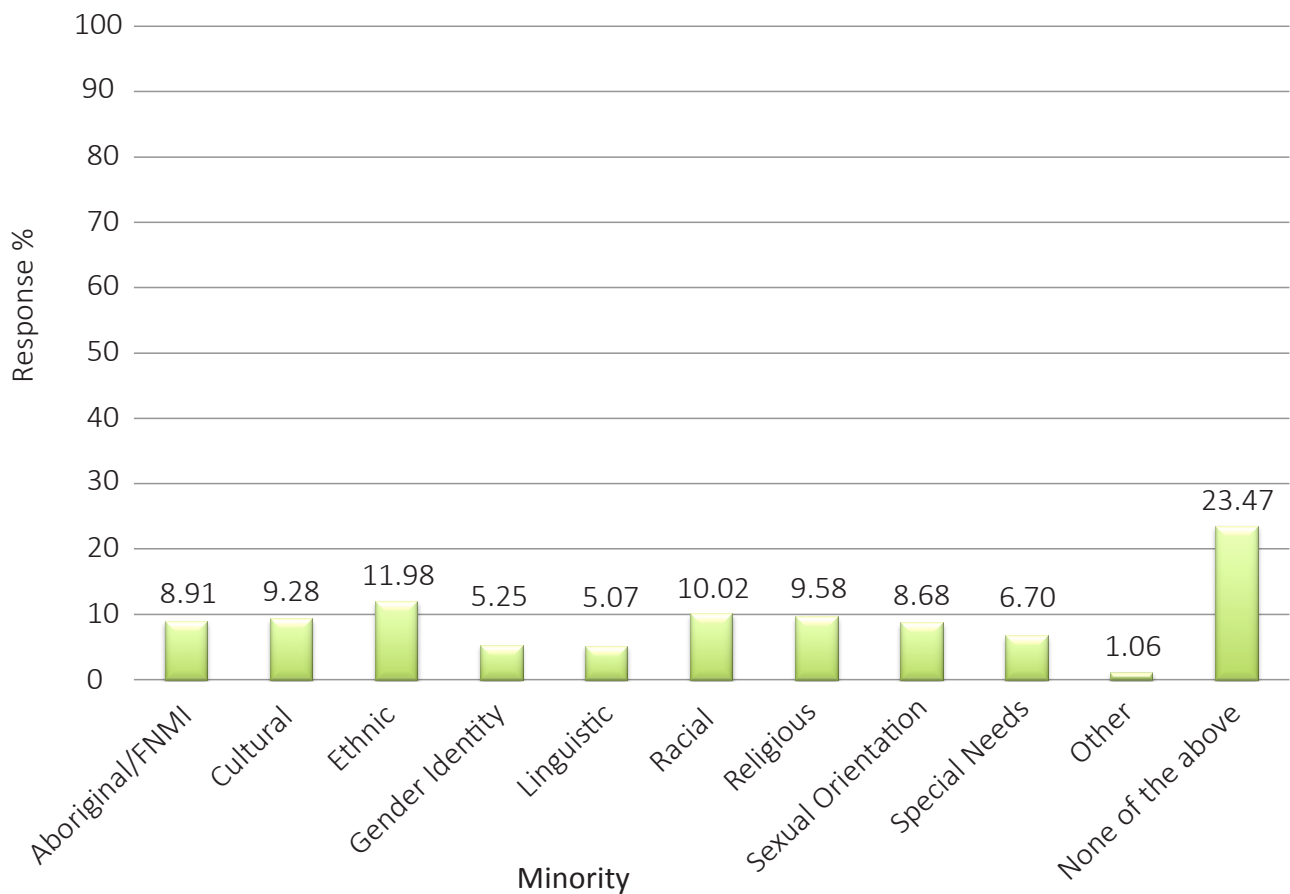


Figure 3 - Demographics

2046 respondents, 3780 responses

# CAMPUS CLIMATE



## Campus Climate

A Likert Scale was used to gauge students' feelings about the campus climate, which allowed for responses to be compared across a variety of student demographic backgrounds. The scores for the following statements represent the average response ratings on the Likert Scale. The five-point Likert Scale options provided to students included:

- (1) Strongly disagree
  - (2) Somewhat disagree
  - (3) Neutral
  - (4) Somewhat agree
  - (5) Strongly agree
- Unsure

Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following series of statements:

<b>I feel comfortable being open with my sexual orientation on campus.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.42	4.37-4.47
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.55	4.50-4.60
Sexual Minority (n=390)	3.79	3.67-3.92
Sexual and Racialized Minority (n=70)	3.38	3.03-3.74
30+ and Sexual Minority (n=11)	3.00	2.21-3.79

Table 1

Male or female identified heterosexual students had an average response rating of 4.6, showing a high level of agreement with this statement. In contrast, sexual minority students had an average agreement rating of only 3.8. Of particular note, two sub-groups showed even lower agreement with this statement. Students who identified as both a sexual minority and a racialized minority had an average rating of 3.4, and students who identified as both a sexual minority and 30 years or older had an average of 3. However, the small sample size (n=11) for this latter group results in less certainty about the magnitude of the difference.

Students' comments about feeling comfortable being open with their sexual orientation were mixed. Some students indicated that campus is a positive place for sexual and gender minority students. For example, one student stated, "There is a girl in my class who is lesbian. She has talked about her girlfriend more than once, [and I] haven't heard anything judgmental about it." However, other students were less positive, expressing such comments as, "Disgust at the general intolerance and prejudice the other students throw around."

<b>I feel comfortable being open with my gender identity on campus.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.57	4.52-4.61
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.62	4.57-4.67
Gender Minority (n=80)	3.99	3.68-4.29
Religious and Gender Minority (n=18)	3.47	2.68-4.26

Table 2

When given the same statement about being open with their gender identity, heterosexual males and females gave an average rating of 4.6, a high level of agreement, while gender minority students had an average of 4.0. On the other hand, the group of students who identified as both a gender minority and religious minority had an average rating of 3.5 for this statement, thereby highlighting a potential vulnerability this group of students may feel. Students who self-identified as both sexual and racialized minorities or as both religious and gender minorities showed lower agreement levels when compared with other groups. This finding supports the view that compounding forms of multiple oppressions increase student vulnerability.

One significant and unexpected theme revealed by survey results was the tendency for gender minority students to express somewhat more positive feelings and experiences than sexual minority students do. These results are worth further investigation through qualitative interviews to determine possible reasons for this survey finding. For example, key barriers to campus inclusivity and acceptance for gender minority students that emerged from the Safe Spaces retreat focus groups were the lack of gender inclusive washrooms, heteronormative and gender normative university forms, gender segregated classroom practices, and the difficulty in officially changing gender markers on student records.

<b>I would feel comfortable being visible with my partner on campus (e.g. holding hands).</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.32	4.27-4.37
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.44	4.38-4.49
Sexual Minority (n=390)	3.88	3.74-4.01
Gender Minority (n=80)	3.92	3.62-4.22
Religious and Gender Minority (n=18)	3.06	2.32-3.80

Table 3

When asked about their level of comfort being visible with their partner on campus, students showed a similar divide between the male and female identified heterosexual group and the sexual and gender minority groups. Male and female identified heterosexual students had an average agreement rating of 4.4, in contrast to 3.9 for sexual minority students and 3.9 for gender minority students. The cohort expressing the most disagreement with this statement was the group of students who identified as both religious and gender minorities. While the sample size (n=18) is too small to be certain about the magnitude of the difference, it is clear that this latter group shows a greater level of discomfort than other students.

One student did explicitly state that the university is a positive place to be with a partner, saying, “Despite the fact that its not perfect, the University of Alberta Campus is probably the place I feel safest when expressing my sexual orientation (e.g., kissing, holding hands). It is a positive environment!”

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation to other students.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.32	4.27-4.37
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.46	4.41-4.51
Sexual Minority (n=390)	3.63	3.49-3.76
Racialized and Sexual Minority (n=70)	3.33	2.96-3.71

Table 4

When students indicated their comfort level expressing their sexual orientation to other students, sexual minority students showed significantly less comfort than students who identified as heterosexual and male or female. While male or female identified heterosexual students had an average response of 4.5 on the 5 point Likert Scale, sexual minority students had an average agreement rating of 3.6. Students who identified as both a racialized and sexual minority had the lowest comfort levels, with an average rating of 3.3. Further opportunities for student education about the diversity, complexity, and intersectionality of identity may be one positive way to increase student understanding, empathy, and comfort levels.

Stories of students’ comfort expressing their sexual orientation varied dramatically. Some students had more negative comments, such as, “Some of my friends (fellow students) have experienced discrimination on campus due to their sexual orientation. This discrimination has been at the hands of fellow students.” Other students commended the University of Alberta, saying, “Overall, the University provides a safe and respectful environment.”



<b>I feel comfortable expressing my gender identity to other students.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.51	4.46-4.55
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.56	4.51-4.61
Gender Minority (n=80)	3.97	3.67-4.28
Religious and Gender Minority (n=18)	3.53	2.76-4.30

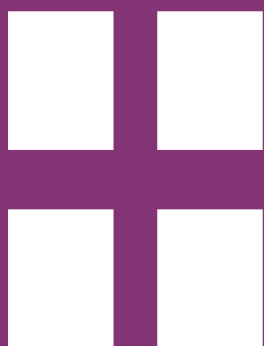
Table 5

According to survey results, gender minority students showed slightly more comfort in expressing their gender identity to other students than did sexual minority students in expressing their sexual orientation. Still, gender minority students showed a lower average agreement rating on the Likert Scale than did male or female identified heterosexual students. While male or female identified heterosexual students had an average rating of 4.6, gender minority students averaged 4.0. Students who identified as both a religious and gender minority had an even lower average response of 3.5. However, it is important to note the small sample size (n=18) of this latter group, resulting in less reliability for this survey pattern.

These patterns and respondent statements regarding campus climate demonstrate, on average, that sexual and gender minority students are less comfortable in expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity. There are still significant challenges for many sexual and gender minority students. For example, pervasive homophobia is evident in this student’s response: “Why the heck is this survey about gays/lesbians/transsexuals mainly, when the majority of people that may complete this survey don’t care about them. Simply they are not normal, according to the Bible and society, but I’m not the one to judge them. And thus it is not socially acceptable, since it is not a norm in Western society.”

Clearly, key aspects of improving conditions for sexual and gender minority students on University of Alberta campuses include improving awareness and feelings of acceptance, experiences of safety, and perceptions of belonging.

# ACTIONS & ATTITUDES



## Actions & Attitudes

Students were asked a series of questions to identify possible concerns about being open about their sexual orientation and gender identity as well as to gauge the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic language on campus. Sexual minority students identified several key factors that hindered or prevented them from being open about their sexual orientation on campus, with a fear of unfair assumptions or stereotyping mentioned by 47% and a fear of derogatory comments by 31%. The next most common areas of concern were verbal discrimination, exclusion/isolation, and future career implications. Alarming findings were that 13% of all sexual minority students identified hate crimes and 14% identified sexual harassment as concerns with being open about their sexual identity. Figure 1 (on the next page) shows the full range of concerns identified by sexual minority students.

Some students also described how dominant heteronormativity interfered with their coursework. For example, one student mentioned that, in language courses, “It is common to have an exercise for a student to explain what celebrity they find attractive or what they look for in a person they would date.” The student explained that, “During these exercises I try not to participate (and may lose participation marks) because I’m uncomfortable in making a decision between lying or coming out.” Another student had similar issues with writing assignments, stating, “Sometimes in English, I have to write about romance. I don’t really know how to do that because I’m asexual.”

## Concerns About Being Open With Sexual Orientation

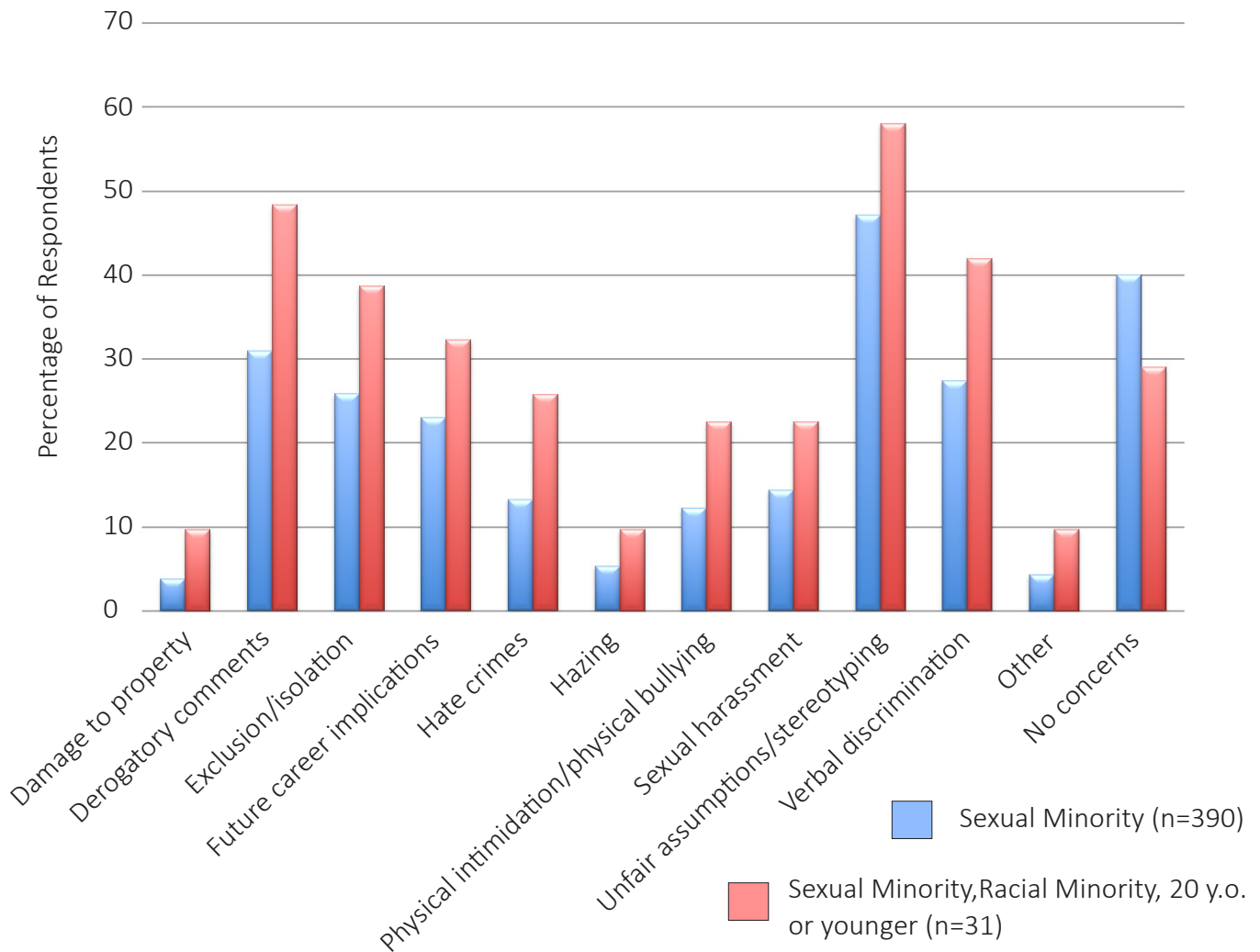


Figure 1 – Actions and Attitudes

Figure 1 identifies the heightened vulnerability of students who self-identify as a racialized minority, sexual minority, and are 20 years of age or younger. This cohort showed substantially elevated concerns about being open with their sexual orientation compared to all sexual minority students. Of particular note is the number of students in this demographic who expressed concern for their physical safety. About 1 in 4 of these students indicated that hate crimes, sexual harassment, and physical intimidation and bullying were concerns related to being open about their sexual orientation.

It is suggested that further research is needed to understand the prevalence of these perceived risks. Even the presence of perceived risk is a significant enough factor to warrant further work towards enhancing students' feelings of safety and security on campus.

## Concerns About Being Open With Gender Identity

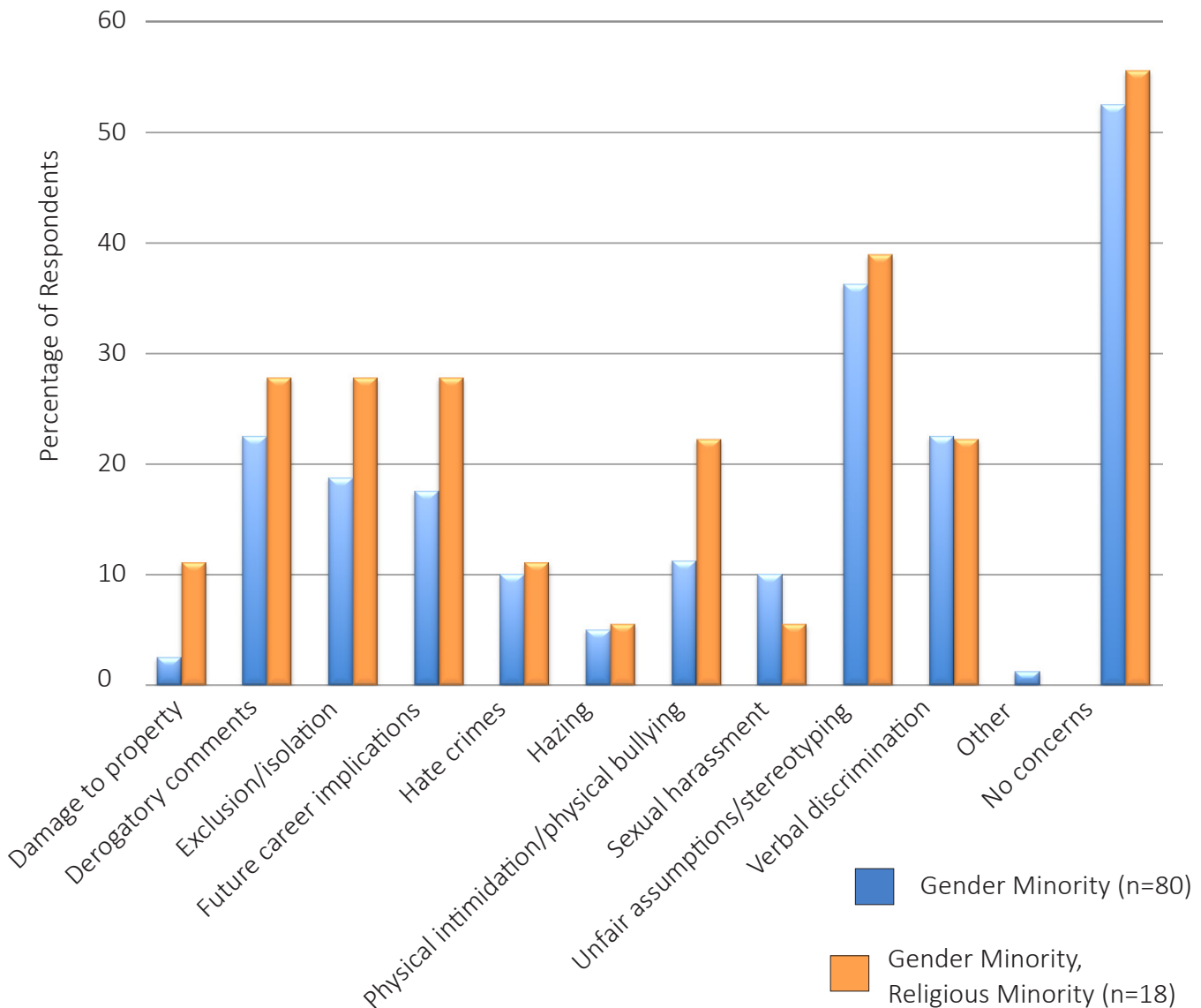


Figure 2 – Actions and Attitudes

When asked about concerns with being open with their gender identity, fewer gender minority students identified each of the categories than sexual minority students. Still, many of the same concerns were mentioned frequently: 36% of gender minority students referenced unfair assumptions/stereotyping, 23% derogatory comments, 23% verbal discrimination, 19% exclusion/isolation, and 18% future career implications.

One potential reason for these lower percentages, when compared to sexual minority students, could simply be due to a lack of general awareness about gender minority issues. As a lesser known, and less visible minority, such students may experience less overt discrimination since other students simply are not aware they exist. Several students echoed this perspective: “Awareness about gender identity and transgendered people is quite low.” However, it must be noted that trans-identified people, and particularly trans persons of colour, experience heightened levels of discrimination and harassment.

However, there were several comments that clearly indicated very real and pressing challenges for gender minority students on campus. For example, one student shared how they have “Actually been friends with someone for quite a while whom just recently began transitioning (MtF) ... [T]hese are generally trying and in some cases despairingly difficult times to those who are dealing with transition.”

Several female-identified students also expressed concerns with being a minority because of their gender. One student stated, “I worry about how stereotypes/bias towards my gender will affect my chances of entering, and my experience in, graduate studies. I still feel bias towards my gender will impact my professional life.”

### Frequency With Which Students Hear Homophobic Language on Campus

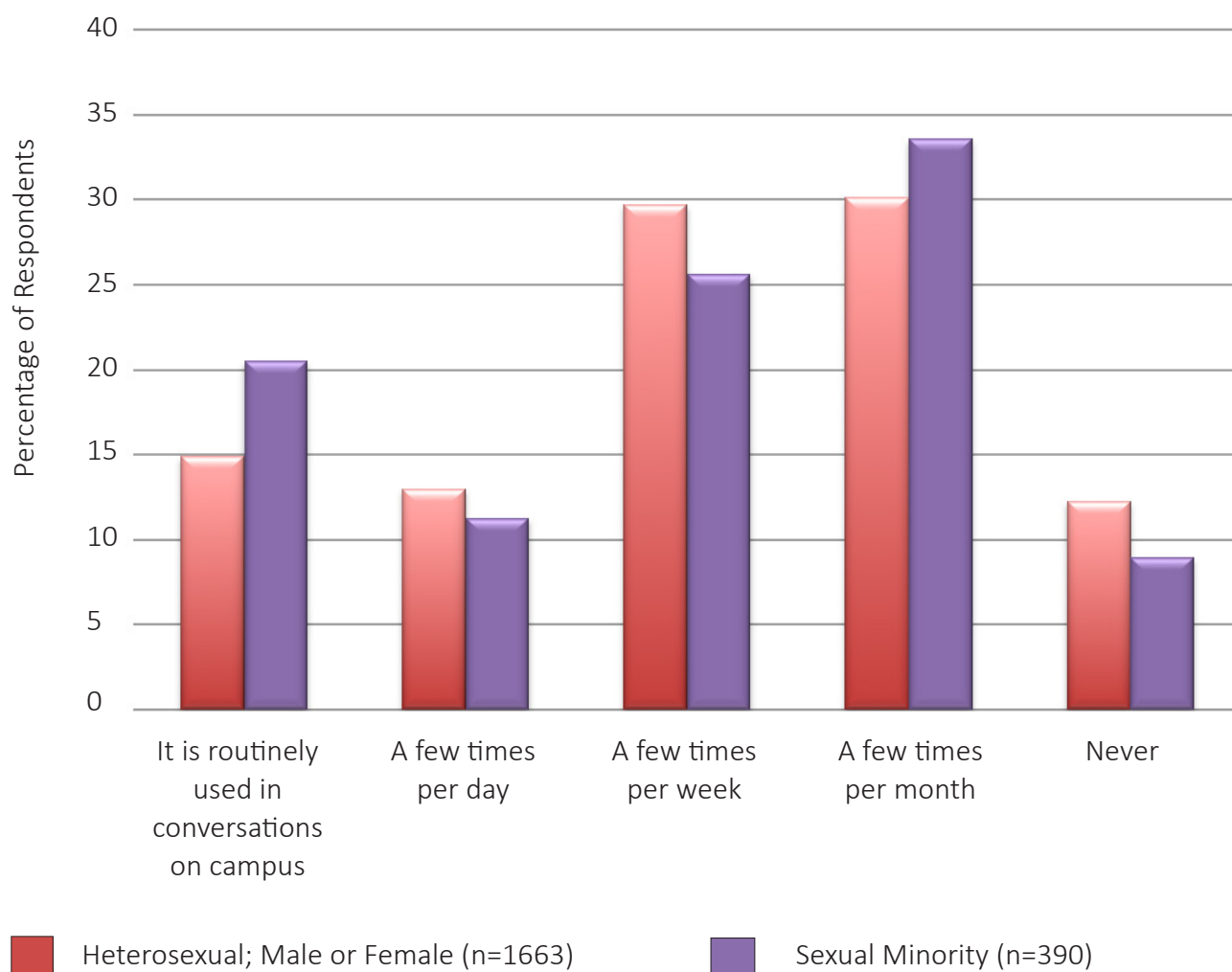


Figure 3 – Actions and Attitudes

Eliminating homophobic language is critical to creating an environment that is safe, respectful, and inclusive for sexual minority students. Nearly 60% of sexual minority students said they heard homophobic language at least a few times per week or month, with more than 1 in 10 hearing it a few times per day. Similarly, 60% of heterosexual male or female students reported hearing homophobic language at least weekly or monthly, and 15% reported hearing homophobic language as a routine part of conversation on campus. However, it should be noted that many students

rejected the survey categorization of the phrase “that’s so gay” as a homophobic comment, and therefore likely under-reported the actual frequency of exposure to homonegative references based on their personal beliefs about what constituted such language. For example, one student claimed, “Calling something/someone gay or a fag is not always homophobic. If you don’t understand watch more South Park. Anyone who grew up in the 90’s should know exactly what I mean.” Another student stated, “It’s not actually attacks against people, we’re just being hilarious.” Many other students echoed such responses in attempting to justify their use of homonegative language on campus. Their comments suggest a problematic relationship: the more frequently a homonegative term or phrase is used in everyday conversation, the less it is considered homophobic and hurtful.

The prevalence of homophobic or homonegative language was described by one student as a “major problem,” which may relate to the higher levels of concern that sexual minority students expressed generally in considering degree of openness with their sexual orientation. If homonegative language is commonly heard but seldom addressed on campus, it is likely that many students will fear potential repercussions for being open with their sexual orientation around individuals they perceive to be homophobic, non-supportive, or unsafe. For example, one student powerfully related that, “During an English course, a first-year acquaintance of mine who didn’t know my sexual orientation read a novel in which there was a homosexual sex scene, and later he and his friends started screaming derogatory and hateful comments about it to me, and made me very uncomfortable.” Such actions are likely to exacerbate students’ negative experiences of safety, acceptance, and inclusion, and in many cases, will keep students in the “campus closet” due to fear and ignorance.

Poignantly, this survey has revealed how deeply ingrained or institutionalized homophobic and homonegative language may be in some parts of the university population. Several students took offense to even being asked about the use and occurrence of homophobic language on campus. For example, one student responded, “Who fucking cares you guys are so PC [it] is sickening,” while another student said, “When it is used, it’s only joking. Those that feel slighted by it should take it as such, and not be oversensitive.”

The lack of understanding and awareness by some students about the impact of homophobic and homonegative language suggests that progressive education around this topic is essential. Indeed, the need for continued education was mirrored by several students, who commented, “[I] really hope the University of Alberta does something to teach its students to avoid usage of words like ‘gay’ and ‘retard’ in order to describe something unliked, etc.”

At the same time, while many students echoed the desire for greater campus education, several students also expressed aversion, or advised caution, with regard to the university providing further education about these issues. One student suggested, “Sometimes, in the teaching and promotion of tolerance toward other sexual orientations and gender identities, I have found overt harassment of my religious background.” Clearly, extensive further discussion is needed to address the impact of homophobic, homonegative, and other prejudicial or derogatory forms of language used on campus. Concepts of diversity, equity, tolerance, and human rights must be unpacked and critically examined not only in student course work, but also in student programs, supports, and services.

## Frequency With Which Students Hear Transphobic Language on Campus

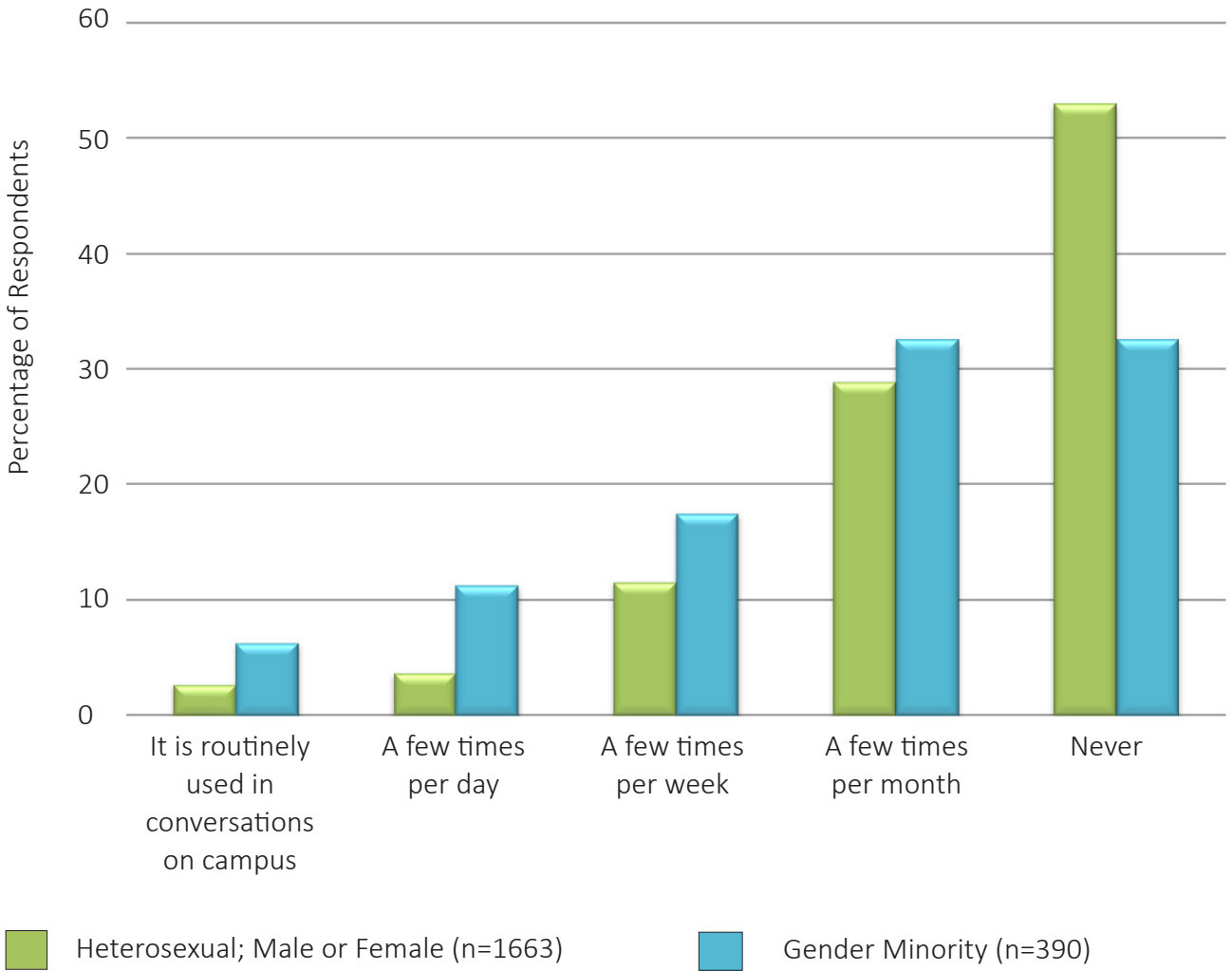


Figure 4 – Actions and Attitudes

The elimination of transphobic language is equally important to the creation of a safe, inclusive, and accepting university climate. 33% of gender minority students reported they heard transphobic language at least monthly, and often several times per week (18%). In contrast, 12% of male or female identified heterosexual students said they heard transphobic language at least a few times per week. Students reported two key tendencies: (1) derogatory speech towards gender minorities (such as transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, and genderqueer individuals), and (2) derogatory speech towards women (who referenced the fact that transphobic language was defined as “demeaning language directed towards others for the expression of their gender”). While 53% of heterosexual male and female students claimed that they never hear transphobic language, only 33% of gender minority students said that they never hear it, a significant discrepancy of over 20 percentage points. Such a marked disconnect emphasizes the general need for increased education about the impact of derogatory language of any kind on campus.



One student speculated that there was less transphobic language on campus due to “[l]ess public perception of transsexual people, probably due to reliance on stereotyping for information. I don’t think that doesn’t mean that it doesn’t happen though.” Another respondent concurred, stating, “I believe that if people were to talk about trans\* people more often, there would definitely be transphobic language heard, I think the reason it isn’t heard more often is because it isn’t talked about or an obvious thing about someone at first glance.”

Many students clearly expressed their discomfort with derogatory language. For example, one student stated, “I find it disturbing and offensive when homophobic and transphobic language is used on campus.” As with homophobic language, the presence of transphobic language is a significant factor in students being open about their gender identity on campus.

Several female identified students also referenced their frustration with the treatment that they received based on their gender. One student said, “As a woman, I consider any slang like whore, bitch, slut, skank, etc. to be demeaning language directed towards others for the expression of their gender. If a woman is open about her sexual desires or sexuality, then she is victim of stereotyping, [and] making jokes about a women’s place in society is NOT okay.” This and similar statements in the survey suggest that misogyny on campus is an important area for further reflection and study.

Student responses were not universally negative about the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic language on campus. Several individuals suggested the inclusive language policy adopted by Lister Center—a University of Alberta undergraduate student residence—has been beneficial in improving residence life. For example, one student commended the University of Alberta for its inclusivity, stating, “I am very impressed with the accepting culture on campus. I feel that I would have to go out of my way to find discrimination against people.”

# INSTITUTIONAL PERCEPTION



## Institutional Perception

The overall perception of the University, its services, and its staff were also addressed by the survey through a series of 10 questions relating to campus climate, comfort in approaching university staff and in accessing university supports and services, and institutional visibility and recognition of sexual and gender minority students.

<b>The University of Alberta has an accepting climate for sexual and gender minority students.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	3.85	3.80-3.89
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	3.90	3.85-3.95
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.65	3.55-3.75
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.59	3.38-3.81

Table 1

Students were asked to indicate, again on a 5-point Likert Scale, the extent to which they agreed that the University of Alberta has an accepting climate for sexual and gender minority students. While the average rating varied across demographics, it was interesting to note that there is greater similarity among these ratings than with the previous survey statements gauging campus climate openness. Heterosexual students and sexual and gender minority students all indicated similar average ratings, between 3.6 and 3.9, thus showing weak to moderate agreement with the perception of University of Alberta as accepting.

Once again, students provided a wide diversity of perspectives. Many praised the University of Alberta, stating such comments as, “It appears as though UofA is a friendlier place for persons of non-traditional orientation and gender identity than the rest of the city and province.” At the same time, however, students expressed concerns such as, “I am surprised by the homophobic comments (albeit few) that I hear from my classmates. I was sure that as we become more educated homophobia would phase out. Although I don’t know any homosexuals on campus – which I find very odd since I know plenty off-campus – I would be afraid to make my orientation known to my classmates if I were gay.”

Students also offered several faculty-specific comments indicating where they found sources of support as well as ongoing challenges. The following comments reflect the tenor of student responses shared in the survey:

“It is my experience in the Nursing faculty that any gender or sexual identities [...] are accepted by peers and staff.”

“My experiences in Perls [Physical Education, Recreation and Leisure Studies] 104 & Perls 304 were very valuable in bringing to light ‘sexual issues’ (i.e. being gay/les/trans) in society and sport, and I feel that it is important for everyone to have exposure to these issues to better understand them in order to facilitate an open and accepting campus and society.”

“I’m in a BFA [Bachelor of Fine Arts] program and therefore spend most of my time in the Fine Arts Building. Everyone is super welcoming and understanding towards gender identification and sexual orientation, my answers really only reflect the attitude in FAB. I have no idea what it’s like anywhere else on campus.”

“Augustana is a great place to express whatever sexual orientation or gender you are. The campus and staff are open and inviting to all kinds of people. This years theme is especially great for this campus to inform students.”

“Faculty of Ed focuses on concerns for lgbt and creates a positive climate.”

“I am isolated in the law centre and did not attend this institution for my undergraduate degree. I know that law has the OUTlaw club. I hope that people of ALL gender identities and sexual orientations can find a safe place on campus.”

“I feel that as a student in the Faculty of Education, I do not have the ability to communicate my experiences as a gay man, without fear of repercussion from my peers and/or my instructors with regard to future practicums or employment.”

“I am in business, we learn how to segregate different demographics of all shapes and sizes, but why not cater to sexual minorities? I feel it is overlooked because the profs feel that the discussion could take a turn against sexual minorities in a hurry from some inconsiderate people...but why not directly address the matter.”

<b>Prior to coming to the University of Alberta, I viewed it as an accepting place for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	3.85	3.80-3.89
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	3.91	3.86-3.96
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.62	3.51-3.74
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.71	3.46-3.97

Table 2

A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 shows students’ average ratings are quite similar, perhaps demonstrating how their perceptions and expectations of the University of Alberta’s climate prior to attending the University closely mirrored the reality that they experienced upon arrival.

<b>Through written and/or verbal means, sexual and gender minorities are recognized by the University as groups that are valued as part of campus diversity.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	3.64	3.59-3.69
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	3.66	3.61-3.72
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.54	3.43-3.66
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.49	3.25-3.74

Table 3

With regard to campus diversity, students were ambivalent about University recognition of sexual and gender minorities as valued groups. Average ratings ranged from 3.5-3.7, showing weak agreement with the statement.

Generally speaking, however, the survey findings do not suggest clear divisions of negative environments where discrimination is rampant. No one Faculty was shown to be substantially more or less hostile or supportive than others. Of course, campus climate can be a nebulous phenomenon that may vary as a measure in a particular campus unit, department, office, or faculty. However, gauging climate in the university is more about assessing the sum as well as the range and diversity of student experiences, and how students perceive their individual experiences in different venues on campus.

As the survey indicates, while the University of Alberta appears to have a relatively accepting climate overall, there are areas in which support for sexual and gender minority students can be improved. One way for the university administration to help increase students' positive perceptions of campus climate may be to publicize and intensify the visibility of explicitly identified supports for sexual and gender minority students. While some members of the University of Alberta's administration have explicitly expressed their endorsement of projects such as the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services' Safe Spaces Initiative, many students remain unaware of the level or extent to which institutional support is provided for sexual and gender minority populations.

The apparent disconnect between the support that has been shown for students by administration and survey responses suggests that institutional support needs to occur more frequently, with greater publicity, and increased visibility. Two examples of enhanced and more visible institutional support would be expanding the existing campus Safe Spaces Network and providing a "Pride Week" festival<sup>8</sup> for University of Alberta campuses. Another example would be the development of an interdisciplinary minor in sexuality studies together with a corresponding graduate level program.

<sup>8</sup> In March 2013, the University of Alberta held the first institutionally supported Pride Week with support from the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services and OUTreach Student Group. See [www.prideweek.ualberta.ca](http://www.prideweek.ualberta.ca) for full details.

Comfort expressing Sexual Orientation/ Gender Identity to...	Average score on 1-5 Likert Scale		
	Heterosexual Male or Female Identified Students	Sexual Minority Students	Gender Minority Students
Professors and Instructors	4.30	3.41	3.78
Non-academic staff	4.29	3.39	3.64
Health care providers and health care services on campus	4.57	4.00	4.13

Table 4

Students were asked to rate their comfort with expressing their sexual orientation and gender identity to professors and instructors, non-academic staff, and health care service providers on campus. Comparisons of the perceptions of heterosexual students with those of sexual minority and gender minority cohorts reveal significant differences in comfort levels. This is particularly evident in the attitudes of sexual minority students both to professors and instructors and to non-academic staff. The heterosexual cohort had an average agreement rating of 4.3 for both professors and instructors and non-academic staff, while sexual minority students had 3.4 for both groups. Sexual minority students also rated comfort with health care providers and services on campus lower than heterosexual students, averaging 4.0 compared to 4.6. Again, as with other survey statements, gender minority students gave somewhat more positive ratings than sexual minority students did, though they were still less positive than the heterosexual cohort.

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to University of Alberta professors and instructors.</b>		
Demographic	5 Point Likert Scale	
	Mean	95% C.I.
All (n=2046)	4.15	4.10-4.20
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.30	4.25-4.35
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.41	3.27-3.55
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.78	3.47-4.09

Table 5

When asked about their agreement with this statement, the gap between the responses of heterosexual and sexual minority students was significant, and narrative comments were often polarized. Many students felt that expressing their sexual orientation or gender identity to professors was completely inappropriate and could not imagine such a scenario.

One student demanded, “Why would I have to tell them anything??? Telling my professor I am a heterosexual???? Why???? Like hey Prof I had sex with a guy last night???? Who cares??? Even if I was being bullied I would go elsewhere to tell about it. Like the mental health clinic.”

Such responses show the lack of awareness that some heterosexual students may have about the frequency with which sexual orientation is unconsciously revealed. As a minority, many sexual minority students are acutely aware of any and all expressions of their sexual identity. In fact, several students went on to expand in later questions, discussed below, about instances when their sexual orientation or gender identity had interfered with their ability to complete coursework.

Importantly, even though many students found the question objectionable, heterosexual students had an average agreement rating of 4.3 on the Likert Scale. This suggests that on the whole, these students were comfortable with professors being aware of their sexual orientation and gender identity. In contrast, sexual minority students had a substantially lower average agreement rating of 3.4 and gender minority students 3.8. These differing response scores indicate the importance of examining aspects of heteronormativity and gendernormativity and how they impact the teaching and learning environment.

*“I tend to be very wary about expressing my sexual orientation to any individual until I see evidence said individual will be accepting and open. I am more likely to see University staff/professors acting indifferent or dismissive, though this has not always been the case. On rare occasions, professors have gone out of their way to explicitly state that they will not tolerate homophobia/transphobia in the classroom, which went a long way to making me feel more comfortable and accepted.”*

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to non-academic University staff (e.g., administrative staff).</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.14	4.09-4.19
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.29	4.24-4.34
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.39	3.25-3.53
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.64	3.34-3.93

Table 6

The average ratings for comfort with non-academic staff were quite similar to those for professors and instructors. While there were still some students who emphatically stated that such identity considerations should never be revealed to non-academic staff, far fewer students expressed this sentiment than they did for professors and instructors. This difference could be due to the heightened power imbalance perceived by students with their professors and instructors, as compared to relationships with non-academic staff who may seemingly pose less of a threat to students.

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to health care providers/health care services on campus.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	4.47	4.42-4.51
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	4.57	4.52-4.61
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	4.00	3.88-4.12
Gender Minorities (n=80)	4.13	3.88-4.38

Table 7

In terms of comfort expressing sexual orientation or gender identity to health care providers and services on campus, average agreement ratings were higher for all student cohorts than for the previous two statements. Heterosexual male and female identified students had an average response of 4.6, while sexual minority students had an average of 4.0 and gender minority students 4.1. Given these responses, there is still a noticeable gap between the comfort levels of sexual and gender minority students and those of heterosexual students in comfort with disclosing to health care providers and services.

<b>Sexual and gender minority topics are present in the material of courses that I have taken when it may be relevant to the topic.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	3.71	3.65-3.77
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	3.76	3.69-3.82
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.50	3.37-3.63
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.83	3.51-4.14

Table 8

All student cohorts had similar average responses on the 5-point Likert Scale for this statement, ranging from 3.5 to 3.8. This suggests that instructors should include course content on sexual orientation and gender identity topics and issues within curricula where appropriate. As students noted in the survey, knowledge about and exposure to sexual and gender minority identities, topics, and issues add significant value to their educational experience. For example, one psychology student stated, "As a psychology major, I believe that these topics are very relevant but I cannot think of one time that it has been discussed in my courses. Hopefully, it is yet to come." Similarly, a nursing student indicated, "We do discuss sexuality but not the different dimensions. Also this is not covered in lecture only through assigned readings. Also we are not taught how to do health assessment, or address health concerns of Transgendered clients (referring to post op). Also we are not given health promotion resources to assist clients if they are struggling with these issues." Another student suggested that these identities "could be better addressed in some Education curriculum classes."



An important equity consideration centers on how historically disenfranchised minority groups are appropriately included within educational and curricular contexts. This inclusion often requires sensitivity, appropriate knowledge, and professional development. As one student indicated, if the instructor is not adequately prepared or knowledgeable, resulting classroom dialogue may do more harm than good. Another student stated, “Both my spring and summer classes attempted to cover material surrounding hardships faced by LGBT youth in the current Education system. But neither professor had received enough training or possessed enough knowledge to properly facilitate class discussion, especially when pedophilia and religious beliefs were brought up. I did not feel that I could participate fully, without being ostracized by both the professor and the class.”

The need for continued professional development for professors and instructors in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity is an important area for consideration and, in turn, a critical opportunity for personal reflection and professional growth.

<b>If I need support regarding my sexual orientation or gender identity, I am able to access supportive services on campus.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=2046)	3.93	3.87-3.98
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=1663)	3.96	3.90-4.02
Sexual Minorities (n=380)	3.82	3.69-3.94
Gender Minorities (n=80)	3.92	3.67-4.17

Table 9

The moderate levels of agreement with this statement were consistent across student cohorts. Heterosexual male and female identified students, as well as sexual and gender minorities, all had average ratings ranging from 3.8 to 4.0. However, several students did identify challenges in knowing where to find support. For example, one student stated, “If I was having problems with support, I wouldn’t have any idea of where to go to seek support.” Another student questioned, “Where can a person go on campus for support services relating to sexuality and gender? Nowhere. There are only counselling programs. There is nothing proactive - the only services are to deal with issues (depression, bullying) that have already happened.” A third student provided this extensive comment on the impact of isolation, alienation, and a perceived lack of campus support:

As stated earlier, I am an individual who happens to not be open and out with my sexual orientation, and I am also well into my 20’s. As such, this has all caused a lot of pain for me as I have been dealing with these personal issues more and more and more over the past couple of years, and have been doing so alone, in silence, never having confided in anyone. There isn’t a person in the world who knows this about me, which means there isn’t a single person in the world who really knows me. The point is, I would like more than anything to be able to talk to someone about these things, or to have some kind of help, but I’m far too embarrassed/ashamed/scared to seek these services on campus, or anywhere. I think it would be beneficial for there to be some type of anonymous help system. It would also help if the UofA had some type of “support group”, or something, gay/lesbian students who other students can meet with to talk to, one on one or in a small group so they can just listen while others talk. If I were to ever come out it would

be in that type of setting. And for all I know these things do already exist at the UofA and I'm just completely unaware. So basically I just wish the UofA's sexual/gender minority communities had more of a presence because for someone like me, who will never go out of my way to seek those communities out due to the embarrassment and fear and the fact that I haven't come out to anyone, it would be SO beneficial even just to see other gay people around and to see the sexual/gender minority communities out and doing things around campus to spread awareness, because like I said, I'm not aware of any of this. Also I'm very glad this survey exists because it makes me feel like something is being done to give a voice to people like me who otherwise would never have expressed any of the thoughts I've just typed. In addition, to whoever may be reading this, completing this survey is the closest I have ever come to "coming out", but, if there is a next step in this process, I don't know what it is, and am too scared to find it on my own. So I probably never will.

These student comments suggest that a wider variety of campus-based supports need to be developed and better advertised to increase student awareness of available supports and their usefulness. A recommendation would be to develop a dedicated sexual and gender minority student services office or equity portfolio tasked with helping students become knowledgeable about existing services available on campus for meeting their health, safety, socialization, and educational needs. An additional recommendation would be to implement an institution-wide pride week to celebrate sexual and gender minority community members and raise the visibility of campus-based supports. No student should have to leave University of Alberta campuses to find support.

**If applicable, please identify services that you have found to be supportive of your sexual orientation or gender identity.**

In this open-ended question, students identified the following services as supportive of their sexual orientation or gender identity:

- Peer Support Centre
- Augustana Queers and Allies
- Counseling Services
- Health Services
- Sexual Assault Centre
- APIRG
- Options Sexual Health Centre
- Medical Students' Association Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Advocacy Committee (MSA-SGA)
- Faculty of Med/Dent Office of Learner Advocacy and Wellness (LAW)
- Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)
- iSMSS (Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services)
- Camp fyrefly
- OUTreach
- Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights
- Julie Rak (professor)
- Ombuds Service
- Safe Spaces
- Safewalk

- Residence Services
- Siderite
- Drama Department
- Health and Wellness Team
- Voices for Choices
- University Women’s Centre Collective
- WISEST
- Women’s Studies

Such an extensive list of both on and off campus resources demonstrates that many students can identify a wide-variety of supportive and inclusive services and resource people. Given that a sizable number of students questioned the existence of such resources, there is a clear and pressing need for increased visibility, access, and awareness of existing resources, especially those located within departmental units, student service offices, and academic programs.

**Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when interacting with University employees?**

It was encouraging to see so few responses to this question. Only 24 students, about 1%, identified instances where their sexual orientation or gender identity caused problems with university employees. The common theme among those 24 students was a feeling that their gender was not respected. For example, one student commented, “My [course name removed] professor was sexist. The chair of department conceded that sexism was occurring in the classroom, but completely dismissed my concerns. He said that it was ‘Not the gender studies department.’” Another student took issue with “the word ‘bitch’ being said by a professor when referencing a female professor. It was in a “joking” context. But I think it was very offensive.” Another student suggested, “[P]eople take girls less seriously (especially in engineering).” Another student described difficulties with name changes, saying, “[I]t is VERY HARD to be a woman with a man’s name, and changing your name legally takes a really long time in Alberta. Fortunately, the Registrar’s Office was accommodating after I wrote a letter.”

**Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when participating in class or completing assignments or tests?**

While only 24, or 1% of students said that their sexual orientation or gender identity had caused problems interacting with University of Alberta staff, more than twice as many (51 students or 2.5%) identified concerns arising when participating in class or completing assignments or tests. For example, one student commented, “During a class discussion one of my comments was disregarded by a classmate, he used the comment ‘Of course you would say that – you’re a woman.’ My professor did not correct him.”

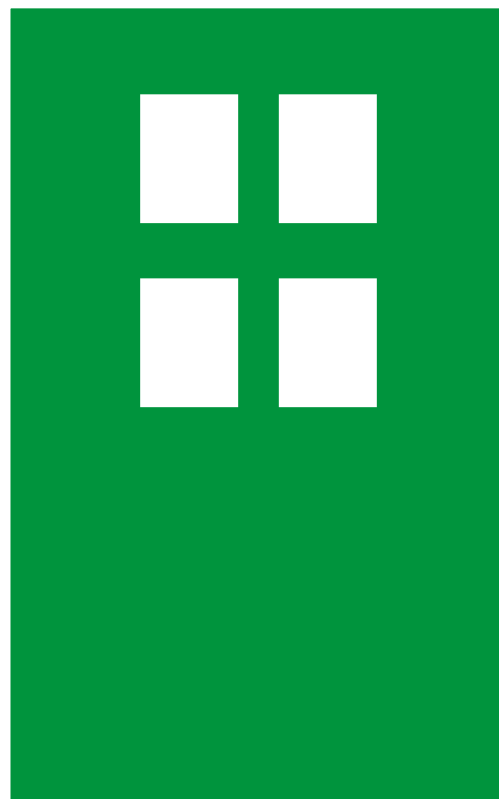
Another important consideration is how the topic of romantic or intimate partners comes up in courses. One student summarized this concern, stating, “In language courses it is common to have an exercise for a student to explain what celebrity they find attractive or what they look for in a person they would date (physical appearance, personality, etc.). Although I would not wish to lie to new friends in class, I also do not feel comfortable coming out to the whole class for a relatively insignificant exercise. I have also witnessed classmates make ‘errors’ in speaking the language by suggesting they would like someone of the same sex and then being laughed at and ‘corrected’.

During these exercises I try not to participate (and may lose participation marks) because I am uncomfortable in making a decision between lying or coming out.”

Another student related, “Sometimes in English, we have to write about romance. I don’t really know how to do that because I’m an asexual. That’s kind of an issue.” Another student expressed discomfort by sharing, “In compositional classes I have had trouble letting my inhibitions go and writing overtly about same-sex love/desire. However, this is not the fault of my peers or profs, who seem very open-minded. I think I am just afraid of being labeled.”

Each of these student narratives demonstrates the impact that heteronormative and gendernormative assumptions can have on student learning and classroom experiences. Unfortunately, when learning environments default to heterosexist and normative assumptions, opportunities for important student learning are foreclosed, identities are erased, and voices are silenced.

# CAMPUS FACILITIES



## Campus Facilities

Two key areas surveyed in relation to campus facilities were recreational facilities and campus housing. These areas can play a significant role in the health, safety, and wellbeing of sexual and gender minority students on University of Alberta campuses. Given that not all students utilize these services, 262 students (12.81% of the survey sample) who identified as living on campus responded to questions about university accommodations.

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation in University of Alberta residences.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=262)	4.34	4.21-4.48
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=202)	4.41	4.26-4.56
Sexual Minorities (n=60)	3.98	3.66-4.30

Table 1

Heterosexual male and female identified students showed a high level of agreement with this statement, with an average rating of 4.4. Sexual minority students also agreed with the statement, but at a slightly lower level, 4.0. Such an overall response from sexual minority students is encouraging, but also indicates a sufficient gap that more work still needs to be undertaken to improve the climate in university residences. On the positive side, one student indicated there are allies among residence staff that sexual minority students feel comfortable turning to for support. For example, one student stated, “There is a girl on my floor who openly hated on homosexuals after I told her that my sister is, in fact, a lesbian. But my FC [Floor Coordinator] did work to resolve the issue.”

<b>I feel comfortable expressing my gender identity in University of Alberta residences.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=262)	4.45	4.33-4.58
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=202)	4.50	4.35-4.64
Gender Minorities (n=15)	4.20	3.59-4.81

Table 2

Gender minority students showed a high level of agreement with this statement, which was also similar to the average agreement rating for heterosexual male and female identified students. The common and perhaps stereotypical perception that university residences are not safe places for gender minorities does not appear to be substantiated. However, it is important to note both the small sample size of gender minority students (n=15), and the survey validity issue prompted by combining all gender minority categories together. For example, a student who is “questioning” their gender and reasonably comfortable in facilities that align with the gender assigned to them at birth might have a very different experience than another student who is in the process of gender transition. For these reasons, these statistics should be interpreted with care and attention to differences within the gender minority campus population.

<b>I feel that University of Alberta residences provide adequate facilities to individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.</b>		
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>5 Point Likert Scale</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>95% C.I.</b>
All (n=262)	4.00	3.86-4.14
Heterosexual and Male or Female Identified (n=202)	4.04	3.88-4.20
Sexual Minorities (n=60)	3.79	3.51-4.07
Gender Minorities (n=15)	4.00	3.28-4.72

Table 3

Sexual minority, gender minority, and male and female identified heterosexual students showed very similar levels of agreement with this statement, ranging from 3.8 to 4.0. In general, it appears that the majority of students identify residence facilities as adequate. To probe deeper into potential facility concerns, we asked those who disagreed with this statement to further elaborate on their experiences and to identify possible solutions.

**If you do not feel that campus housing provides adequate facilities to individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities, please specify why you feel this way and how you would like it to be improved.**

Twenty-one students responded with comments, although not all comments identified problems. One important question raised was: “There are only Men’s and Women’s washrooms in Lister Centre, and in Classic there are Men’s and Women’s wings - where does that leave transgendered people? If I were a transgendered person, I think, I would find it difficult here.” Several students also suggested that further services (and visibility for these services) would be helpful. For example, one student stated, “I don’t know of any facilities in Lister that provides facilities like that, something needs to be implemented.” Another student suggested that while services are adequate, they may not always be accessible: “The University has adequate facilities, but due to [my] class [schedule], I’ve never been able to attend the residence support group since they only meet once a day.”

It is important to note that throughout the survey many students identified University residences as safe places. Specifically, several students referenced Lister’s inclusive language policy. For example, one student shared, “I really appreciate how Lister Hall maintains an inclusive language policy. This makes more people feel accepted as there is no discriminatory language.” Another student stated how the inclusive language policy “is one of the best parts of living here.”

**Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when using campus recreation or participating on campus sports teams?**

Survey findings suggest that campus recreation and campus sports teams appear to be supportive. There were only 25 comments on this question, comprising just over 1% of students. Many of these comments had to do with sexism in sports. For example, one student observed, “When taking a volleyball class, if we are shorter than males, then why are we being graded on spiking when taller males have the advantage. And since the University of Alberta curves classes, this isn’t fair.” A few students did share comments suggesting discomfort due to their sexual orientation, but this did not appear to be a common issue among survey participants. Overall, there were no generalizable trends or patterns observed in relation to access or accommodation experienced by survey participants.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



## Recommendations

Based on student responses to our survey questions, themes from our focus groups, and a review of sexual and gender minority inclusive best practices for post-secondary institutions, the following recommendations are provided for consideration in four categories: institutional; academic; student services; and campus protective services.

### Institutional

- Conduct a review of sexual and gender minority best practices at other leading postsecondary institutions across Canada.
- Conduct a review of University of Alberta policies to ensure sexual and gender minority inclusiveness.
- Establish a dedicated sexual and gender minority equity officer/advisor staff position.
- Provide dedicated training for all frontline staff on sexual orientation and gender identity issues.
- Conduct a gender identity audit on campus to ensure trans inclusiveness in policies, facilities, and programs.
- Develop clear institutional policies and procedures for name changes, preferred gender, and pronouns.
- Provide at least one gender-inclusive/all gender bathroom in each building on University of Alberta campuses.
- Actively recruit, hire, and retain self-identified sexual and gender minority faculty and staff.
- Provide dedicated sexual and gender minority counseling supports and services to assist students in the process of gender transition.
- Develop an active sexual and gender minority and allied alumni group.
- Host a University of Alberta campus pride week to celebrate, and bring visibility and institutional recognition to sexual and gender minority issues and identities.
- Establish a campus-wide sexual and gender minority advisory committee.

### Academic

- Provide professional learning opportunities for professors and instructors on SGM topics / sensitivity training.
- Continue to support campus sexual and gender minority speakers' series and events.
- Develop a sexuality studies undergraduate interdisciplinary minor.
- Develop sexual and gender minority library collections and guides at disciplinary and interdisciplinary levels.
- Develop more sexual and gender minority specific scholarships and bursaries.
- Establish sexual and gender minority faculty networks and research clusters.

### Student Services

- Establish a centralized sexual and gender minority student resource centre.
- Develop a mentorship program for sexual and gender minority students.
- Hire a Safe Spaces campus coordinator.
- Increase gender-inclusive options for residences.
- Ensure campus health services include access to accommodative sexual and gender minority specific counselling and services.

## Campus Protective Services

- Publicly identify a sexual and gender minority Protective Services Liaison Officer.
- Provide sexual and gender minority inclusive training for all Campus Protective Services staff.
- Develop and communicate to the wider University of Alberta community clear procedures for reporting sexual and gender minority bias, harassment, and hate crimes and incidents.

# APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT



# Appendix A: Survey Instrument

## Campus Climate Survey for Students

The Vice-Provost and Dean of Students, along with the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Research (iSMSS), invite you to participate in this short online survey to help us better understand your experiences. The survey is expected to take no longer than 15 minutes and participation is completely optional and anonymous. By submitting your responses, you are consenting to have your anonymous information inform various groups around campus to assist in the development of student-focused initiatives. It will not be possible to withdraw your information after you have begun the survey.

This is a campus climate survey about the environment present for sexual and gender minority undergraduate students. This survey is intended for all undergraduates, regardless of how they identify their sexual orientation or gender identity.

By completing this survey you may enter an optional draw for a prize. The answers to this survey are not in any way linked to the personal information that you may provide to enter the draw.

Prizing is as follows:

- 1 - A600 GPS Navigator, donated by the U of A Bookstore (value: approx. \$500)
- 2 - \$100 Bookstore gift cards, donated by the Office of the Dean of Students
- 3 - \$50 Bookstore gift cards, donated by the Office of the Dean of Students

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please contact Lionel Kinkartz at [SafeSpaces@ualberta.ca](mailto:SafeSpaces@ualberta.ca) or David Newman at [david.newman@ualberta.ca](mailto:david.newman@ualberta.ca).

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

## Survey Definitions

**Gender identity:** The gender to which an individual feels that they belong. This may or may not be the same as the sex with which they were born.

**Gender minorities:** An umbrella term referring to, but not limited to, categories such as female-to-male, genderqueer, male-to-female, transgender, transsexual and two-spirited.

**Homophobia:** Prejudice or discrimination against sexual minorities due to fear and/or hatred of them.

**Sexual minorities:** An umbrella term referring to, but not limited to, categories such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual and two-spirited.

**Sexual orientation:** The trait of an individual that dictates for which gender(s) they have sexual attraction.

**Transphobia:** Prejudice or discrimination against those who do not express their gender in the way that society expects due to fear and/or hatred of them.

## Demographic information:

1. Which term(s) best describe your sexual orientation? (Check all that apply.)
  - a. Asexual
  - b. Bisexual
  - c. Gay
  - d. Heterosexual
  - e. Lesbian
  - f. Pansexual
  - g. Queer
  - h. Questioning
  - i. Two-spirited
  - j. Other (please specify)
  - k. Prefer not to say
  
2. Which term(s) best describe your gender identity? (Check all that apply.)
  - a. Female
  - b. Female-to-male
  - c. Gender-queer
  - d. Male
  - e. Male-to-female
  - f. Questioning
  - g. Transgender
  - h. Transsexual
  - i. Two-spirited
  - j. Other (please specify)
  - k. Prefer not to say
  
3. What was your age as of September 1, 2011?
  - a. Under 18
  - b. 18-20
  - c. 21-24
  - d. 25-29
  - e. 30 or over
  
4. Are you an international student?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

5. In which of the following categories do you identify as being a minority? (Check all that apply.)
- Aboriginal / First-Nations, Metis, Inuit (FNMI)
  - Cultural
  - Ethnic
  - Gender identity
  - Linguistic
  - Racial
  - Religious
  - Sexual orientation
  - Special needs
  - Other (please specify)
  - None of the above
6. What year of your study are you current enrolled in (according to BearTracks)?
- 1st year undergraduate
  - 2nd year undergraduate
  - 3rd year undergraduate
  - 4th year undergraduate
  - 5th year undergraduate
  - Other (please specify)
7. To which faculty do you belong?
- Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
  - Arts
  - Augustana
  - Business
  - Education
  - Engineering
  - Extension
  - Law
  - Medicine and Dentistry
  - Native Studies
  - Nursing
  - Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
  - Physical Education and Recreation
  - Public Health
  - Rehabilitation Medicine
  - Saint-Jean
  - Science
  - Other (please specify)
8. Please indicate the size of your home community (defined as the community you lived in prior to attending the University of Alberta).
- Under 10 000 population
  - 10 000 to 50 000 population
  - 50 000 to 100 000 population
  - Over 100 000 population

## General Campus Environment Questions:

9. I feel comfortable being open with my sexual orientation on campus.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
10. I feel comfortable being open with my gender identity on campus.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
11. I would feel comfortable being visible with my partner on campus (e.g. holding hands).
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
12. I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation to other students.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
13. I feel comfortable expressing my gender identity to other students.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure



14. Which of the following are concerns for you in being open with your sexual orientation on campus? (Check all that apply.)
- Damage to property
  - Derogatory comments (e.g. “that’s so gay”)
  - Exclusion / isolation
  - Future career implications
  - Hate crimes
  - Hazing
  - Physical intimidation / physical bullying
  - Sexual harassment
  - Unfair assumptions / stereotyping
  - Verbal discrimination
  - Other (specify)
  - I have no concerns about being open with my sexual orientation on campus.
15. Which of the following are concerns for you in being open with your gender identity on campus? (Check all that apply.)
- Damage to property
  - Derogatory comments (e.g., “that’s so gay”)
  - Exclusion / isolation
  - Future career implications
  - Hate crimes
  - Hazing
  - Physical intimidation / physical bullying
  - Sexual harassment
  - Unfair assumptions / stereotyping
  - Verbal discrimination
  - Other (specify)
  - I have no concerns about being open with my gender identity on campus.
16. How frequently do you hear homophobic language used on campus (either overt discrimination or comments such as “that’s so gay”)?
- It is routinely used in conversations on campus
  - A few times per day
  - A few times per week
  - A few times per month
  - Never
17. How frequently do you hear transphobic language on campus (e.g. demeaning language directed towards others for the expression of their gender).
- It is routinely used in conversations on campus
  - A few times per day
  - A few times per week
  - A few times per month
  - Never

18. Do you have any additional comments about homophobic or transphobic language on campus?
- Yes (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
19. The University of Alberta has an accepting climate for sexual and gender minority students.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
20. Through written and/or verbal means, sexual and gender minorities are recognized by the University as groups that are valued as part of campus diversity.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure
21. Prior to coming to the University of Alberta, I viewed it as an accepting place for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly disagree
  - Unsure

### **University Staff/Services:**

22. I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to U of A professors and instructors.
- 1 strongly disagree
  - 2 somewhat disagree
  - 3 neutral
  - 4 somewhat agree
  - 5 strongly agree
  - Unsure

23. I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to non-academic University staff (e.g. administrative staff).

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure

24. I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation and gender identity to health care providers / health care services on campus.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure
- I do not use these services

25. Sexual and gender minority topics are present in the material of courses that I have taken when it may be relevant to the topic.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure

26. If I need support regarding my sexual orientation or gender identity, I am able to access supportive services on campus.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure

If you answered that you disagree, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, please identify services that you have found to be supportive of your sexual orientation or gender identity. \_\_\_\_\_

27. Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when interacting with University employees?

- a. Yes (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No

28. Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when participating in class or completing assignments or tests?

- a. Yes (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No

29. Have there been instances where your sexual orientation or gender identity has caused problems for you when using campus recreation or participating on campus sports teams?

- a. Yes (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- b. No

Housing:

30. Do you live in University of Alberta housing?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Note: If "No" is answered in the above question, the rest of the housing section is skipped.

31. I feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation in University of Alberta residences.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure
- Does not apply to me

32. I feel comfortable expressing my gender identity in University of Alberta residences.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure
- Does not apply to me

33. I feel that University of Alberta residences provide adequate facilities to individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2 somewhat disagree
- 3 neutral
- 4 somewhat agree
- 5 strongly agree
- Unsure
- Does not apply to me

34. If you do not feel that campus housing provides adequate facilities to individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities, please specify why you feel this way and how you would like it to be improved.

Open Response:

35. If you have any additional comments, please include them in the space below.

**Thank you for completing the survey!**

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please contact [SafeSpaces@ualberta.ca](mailto:SafeSpaces@ualberta.ca).

If this survey has raised health, safety or educational concerns for you, please contact the following campus supports and services.

The Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS) ([www.ismss.ualberta.ca](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca))

Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights ([www.osdhr.ualberta.ca](http://www.osdhr.ualberta.ca))

Peer Support Centre (780-492-4357)

Safe Spaces Initiative ([www.ismss.ualberta.ca/safespaces.htm](http://www.ismss.ualberta.ca/safespaces.htm))

Sexual Assault Centre (780-492-9771)

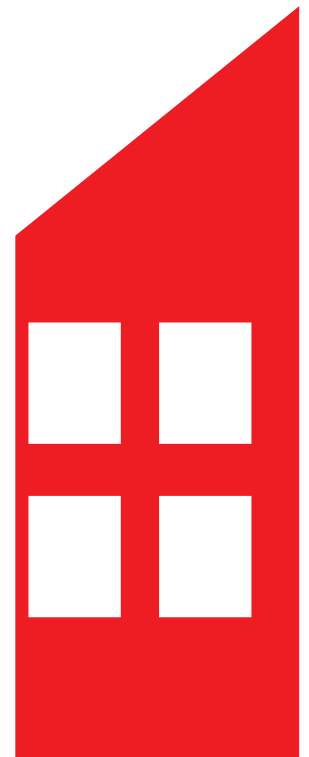
University Health Centre (780-492-2612)

UWS Mental Health Centre (780-492-5205)

University of Alberta Protective Services (780-492-5050)

Edmonton 24-hour Distress Line: 780-482-4357

# APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY



# Appendix B: Glossary

**Ally:** An individual who is supportive of sexual and gender minority people and their rights.

**Asexual:** A person whose attraction to others does not include, or is not solely based on, sexuality.

**Bisexual:** An individual who is attracted to the same and opposite sex.

**Cisgender/Cissexual:** An individual whose assigned sex and gender is the same as their gender identity.

**Fag/Faggot:** A derogatory term for a gay man. Historically the term was used to describe a bundle of sticks used to burn individuals at the stake that went against the church, such as those accused of homosexual behavior.

**Gay:** Refers to a male who is physically and emotionally attracted to other males. This term can apply to both men and women.

**Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of gender. It relates to one's sense of maleness, femaleness, or represents a fluid interplay between these two constructs.

**Gender Transition:** The process of aligning one's physical body and gender expression with one's gender identity. This may or may not include surgery, hormone therapy, and changes in dress, appearance, name, and pronoun usage. "Affirming" one's gender is a synonymous term.

**Gender Diverse/Creative:** Umbrella terms referring to individuals whose gender expression (how you present your gender to society, and how others read your gender identity) differs from the culturally constructed male/female gender binary, or what is 'expected' of them. The phrase gender creative is often used in reference to children.

**Genderqueer:** A label for individuals whose gender identity and expression are fluid and fall outside of the male/female gender binary. A political term often associated with challenging the gender binary and stereotypes.

**GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance):** Student organizations found in some K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions that create a safe and supportive places for sexual and gender minority students and their allies.

**Heterosexism:** The assumption that all gender/sexual minorities are inferior. It is often institutional and systemic, and therefore quite pervasive and damaging.

**Homophobia:** An irrational fear or hatred of people who are, or perceived to be, gay, lesbian, or bisexual, often exhibited by prejudice, discrimination, intimidation, or acts of violence.

**Homosexual:** Associated with a medical model, this term refers to a person who is physically and emotionally attracted to someone of the same gender. This is an outdated term that carries negative connotations due to its association with the medicalization and discrimination of LGBTQ people.

**Inclusive Language:** The use of gender non-specific language (e.g.: “partner” instead of “husband/girlfriend” or “they” instead of “he/she”, etc.) to indicate consideration of sexual and gender minority individuals.

**Intersex:** A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the culturally constructed categories of ‘female’ or ‘male’. Some people’s natal physical sex may be physically ambiguous, and others may not discover that they are intersex until later on in life if they are chromosomally sex-variant and absent of any external indicators.

**Lesbian:** A female who is physically and emotionally attracted to other females.

**LGBTQ/GLBT/LGBTQQIA\*:** Acronyms that represent the constellation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirit, and queer identities. The asterisk represents the inclusion of additional identities not represented in the acronym. ‘Sexual and gender minorities’ is synonymous and is often used as an umbrella category.

**Outing:** The public disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without that person’s permission or knowledge. This can be very disrespectful and is potentially dangerous.

**Pansexual/Omnisexual:** A person who is physically and emotionally attracted to people of many different gender identities. This pair of terms reflects an understanding of gender that reaches beyond the male/female binary.

**Pink Triangle:** Pink (for gay men) and Black (for lesbian women) triangle symbols were used by Nazis for gay and lesbian prisoners; now reclaimed as symbols of gay and lesbian pride.

**Queer:** Historically a negative word for homosexuality. Recently it has been reclaimed and used in positive ways to describe identities, communities and social movements.

**Rainbow Flag:** A symbol of the LGBT movement designed in 1978 in response to the murder of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man elected to public office in California.

**Reclamation of Language:** Taking back and reinvigorating historically negative and derogatory terms used by infusing them with positive meaning for personal and social empowerment.

**Sexual Orientation:** Feelings of attraction, behaviour, intimacy, or identification that direct people towards intimacy with others.

**Stonewall:** An LGBTQ bar in New York City that was the site of 1969 riot between patrons and police. This event is considered to be the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement.



**Transgender/Trans/Trans-Identified:** Umbrella terms used to refer to people whose gender identities or expressions differ from the sex or gender they were assigned at birth.

**Transsexual:** A term to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex or gender they were assigned at birth, and may undergo a gender transition that could include surgical or hormonal treatments. Unlike transgender/trans/trans-identified, transsexual is not an umbrella term, and not all transgender individuals identify as transsexual.

**Two-Spirit:** A spiritual identity for some Aboriginal people. This term implies the embodiment of both masculine and feminine spiritual qualities within the same body, and has different meanings for different Aboriginal communities. Some Aboriginal people use this term instead of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.

Prepared by



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