

**Students' Perceptions of the Faculty of Education's Diversity Climate: A Mixed Methods
Survey Study**

By

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Abstract

The cultural climates of Canadian universities' are becoming increasingly diversified. As such, regular evaluations ensuring that the unique needs of culturally diverse students are being met are necessary. Here, in this convergent sequential mixed methods survey study, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed to address the current diversity climate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. The sample was comprised of 269 participants, yielding a 7% response rate. The quantitative results show the vast majority of students perceive the Faculty's climate as positive, feel respected and included, and have not personally experienced or witnessed forms of discrimination or harassment. Between group differences highlighted that students who identify as 'other diversity,' (including students who are married, students who identify as Mormon and Jewish, and students who are single parents with dependents) experienced the Faculty's climate as significantly more negative than their peers, while the students who identify as Indigenous rated their experiences with professor-based feedback as significantly more favourable than others. A total of 1,417 open-ended responses were analyzed. In terms of perceived strengths and weaknesses, four themes emerged from qualitative data, including Academic Resources, Discrimination and Harassment, Feelings of Inclusion, and the Concern for the Future of the Faculty. And finally, following typical mixed methods research (MMR) procedures, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to fully comprehend student experiences in terms of the highlighted Faculty strengths and weaknesses. The most notable finding being that while cases of discrimination or harassment were low, they are highly salient experiences that negatively affect all students' well-being. Identified study limitations, implications, and directions for future research are, in the last chapter, addressed and discussed in detail.

Preface

This thesis study analyzes “climate” survey data collected previously by the Faculty of Education’s Diversity, Equity and Respect (DER) Committee. Data was collected in 2014. In 2015-16, I developed research questions, framed the study’s methodology (i.e., mixed methods), analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data, and wrote up (and discussed) the results. The project was funded by the Dean’s Office – in the form of a Research Assistantship – but no one else was involved in data analysis or interpretation, aside from my advisor/supervisor, Dr. William Hanson. As a result, this research was used to fulfill my graduate requirements and inform the DER Committee of Faculty strengths and weaknesses. Aside from initial survey development and distribution, all of the work is my own. Original data were collected only after receiving official REB approval (Project 00044944). Please also see Appendix A.

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Glossary of Terms and Variables

Assimilation refers to the gradual process whereby a member of an individually and culturally diverse group internalizes the customs, attitudes, and values of the larger host culture (Broesch & Hadley, 2012).

Climate Survey is a survey intended to capture the present atmosphere (i.e., attitudes and behaviours) of a particular cultural setting, like a university.

Cultural Climate is a culture's customs, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that create the atmosphere experienced by its members (Hurtado, Carter, & Kardia, 1998).

Cultural Diversity is defined as the presence of various cultures in a particular setting (Tierney, 2007).

Ethnocultural Communities are comprised of individuals who share a common ethnic background. Membership to this group is based on a blend of both a common religion and ancestral background (Matsumoto, 2000).

Diversity Group refers to people considered to be uniquely different than majority of the population. This group difference is based on a variety of factors, such as race, culture, sexual orientation, and disability, and it is not seen as 'deficient' in any way, shape, or form (Soen, Shechory, & Ben-David, 2012).

Mixed Methods Research (MMR) is a research methodology that merges the closed-ended questions of quantitative data inquiry with the open-ended questions of qualitative data inquiry (Creswell, 2015). It utilizes the strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies when addressing the research problem and questions (Creswell, 2015).

Multiculturalism is defined as numerous cultures co-existing in harmony or acceptance in a region (Kymlicka, 2012).

'Other Diversity' is used throughout this thesis to describe one of the diversity groups from the pool of research participants. This 'other diversity' group consists of students who are married, students who identify as Mormon and Jewish, and students who are single parents with dependents.

Pluralism is the accepted existence of the unique cultural values and practices of various diversity groups (Hazard & Stent, 1973). These held cultural values and practices fall within the laws and values of the dominant cultural and are therefore not in opposition (Hazard & Stent, 1973).

Racialized Group refers to a group of individuals, from a common culture, that are assigned a racial identity by individuals from a different cultural group. These racial identities are often based on stereotypes and are stigmatizing in nature (Hyman & Wray, 2014).

Refugees are individuals who have left their country of origin because they are in danger as a result of their race, nationality, or religion (United Nations Refugee Agency, n.d.).

University Climate is defined as the atmosphere of a university comprised by the current attitudes and behaviours of the university's population (Rankin & Reason, 2005).

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Over the past 70 years, Canada's cultural diversity has dramatically increased.

Approximately half the Canadian population is comprised of residents with a cultural heritage other than Canadian, French, or British (Nassrallah, 2005). Further, 20% of these residents are born in another country, thus highlighting the role immigration plays in shaping Canada's cultural climate (Nassrallah, 2005). Due to increasing rates of cultural diversity, universities are recognizing the need for cross-cultural training in counselling psychology programs, specifically, and an increased valuing of diversity, multiculturalism, and pluralism, generally (Ponterotto, Alexander, & 1995; Pope-Davis, Liu, Nevitt, & Toporek, 2000).

Accordingly, universities are becoming increasingly diverse and adding cross-cultural courses to the curriculum (Ponterotto et al., 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 2000). There are four main reasons underpinning this heightened attention to the state of multiculturalism in counselling psychology programs. First, multicultural training makes culturally relevant materials and services readily available to clients (Toporek, Liu, & Pope-Davis, 2000). Second, multicultural training fosters multicultural research, thus furthering knowledge in appropriate training and treatment techniques (Toporek et al., 2000). Third, multicultural training reduces cultural biases in treatment programs and staff (Toporek et al., 2000). Lastly, multicultural training leads to greater diversity, overall, in universities (Toporek et al., 2000).

Before turning to the Faculty of Education's climate survey, I review important cultural concepts, such as multiculturalism in Canadian counselling psychology programs, assessment of cultural competencies, and diversity issues facing applied psychology programs. This background information "sets the stage" for the current study and provides potentially helpful historical context, as well as best practices in diversity training.

Multiculturalism in Canadian Counselling Psychology Programs

The rise in effort to address multiculturalism in Canadian counselling psychology programs can be credited to a change in Canadian policy and an example set by the United States of America (USA; Sinacore, Borgen, Daniluk, Kassan, & Long, 2011). Of the first changes to Canadian policy was the Immigration Act of the 1960s. This new legislation diversified the Canadian population with increased rates of immigration (Sinacore et al., 2011). Ten years later, the Official Languages Act and the Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework were created to recognize the cultural diversity of Canadian residents and to grant equal status (Sinacore et al., 2011). Together, these two legislations paved the way for conversations pertaining to the acceptance of cultural diversity. In the early 1980s, Position Papers started to emerge that further argued the need to reevaluate the current state and conceptualization of cross-cultural counselling. Sue et al. (1982) challenged the held perspective that current mainstream counselling practices could be applied to individuals with diverse culturally backgrounds. Held notions of white superiority and ignorance in treatment and research were echoed, opening the discussion for change (Sue et al., 1982).

The inclusion of multicultural guidelines in American accreditation further influenced Canadian universities to change how they addressed the topic of cultural diversity. In 1997, the American Psychological Association (APA) recognized that their accreditation process should involve multicultural components (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). As a result, accreditation guidelines specific to multicultural training were published (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). These guidelines required that a university meet requirements across six domains (i.e., research, faculty, students, institutional commitment, practica and internships, and curriculum; Ponterotto et al., 1995; Pope-Davis et al., 2000).

In addition, three multicultural counselling competencies have become the framework for APA guidelines and many training programs (Sinacore et al., 2011). These multicultural

counselling competencies include (1) the counsellors' awareness of their own personal biases and worldview and how this may affect their clinical work, (2) the counsellors' knowledge of their attitude toward the clients' cultural background, and (3) the counsellors' training or ability to provide culturally sensitive counselling interventions (Sue et al., 1982). While these multicultural counselling competencies have yet to be formally endorsed by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), they nonetheless guide many Canadian counselling programs (Sinacore et al., 2011).

Despite influences from the USA, Canada's approach to the issue of multiculturalism is distinct and reflects Canada's vastly diverse cultural climate (Sinacore et al., 2011). Some multicultural counselling concerns related to diversity within Canada extend, for example, to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) populations (Sinacore et al., 2011). The CPA ethical guidelines denote that respect must be granted to all types of diversity, this includes a variety of orientations from racial to sexual (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). Counsellors working with LGBTQ clients are cautioned to remember that like other diverse groups, the LGBTQ population has unique needs and experiences (Sinacore et al., 2011).

Other multicultural counselling concerns faced by Canadian counselling psychology programs relate to the country's past treatment of people who are Indigenous. Canada's Indigenous population was left in a devastating state after the European settlers attempted to force assimilation (Milloy, 1999). Policies, such as The Indian Act and the Sixties Scoop, along with the creation of residential schools shattered the Indigenous culture (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Linda & Francis, 2006). As a result, the Indigenous population experiences high rates of mental illness and a mistrust of the "white" culture and its healing methods (Bombay et al., 2011; Graham, 2014; Thomason, 2011).

It is common for Canadian counsellors to work with culturally diverse clients to understand how their unique worldview shaped by their multiple identities and roles (Sinacore et al., 2011). From this, the counsellor becomes the student as the client shares how their unique worldview has shaped their life (Sinacore et al., 2011). Canada's Indigenous population creates a unique challenge for counselling psychology programs because they must come to understand and prepare their students for treatment with a population who mistrust their intentions. Counselling psychology programs are encouraged to urge their students to incorporate the traditional healing methods of the Indigenous people into their practice in a respectful and appropriate manner (Blue et al., 2010).

Assessment of Multicultural Competencies

Regardless of the efforts put forth to address cultural diversity in Canadian universities, a formalized procedure is required to ensure that efforts are successful. This led to the development of assessment measures intended to objectively evaluate the current state of multiculturalism in counselling psychology programs. The Multicultural Competency Checklist (MCC) was among the first assessment measures developed to aid in this endeavor (Ponterotto et al., 1995). The MCC was created to address the presence of six categories thought to capture the necessary areas required to successfully teach multiculturalism. These categories included assessing multiculturalism in counselling practice and supervision, curriculum, student and faculty competency evaluation, diversity representation, research considerations, and physical environment (Ponterotto et al., 1995).

In the early years, the majority of the assessment measures used to address the quality of the multicultural training in counselling psychology programs evaluated the cross-cultural curriculum and ethnic representation in an 'all' or 'none' fashion (i.e., MCC; Toporek et al., 2000). There are two overarching problems associated with the use of an 'all' or 'none' checklist

when evaluating multicultural training (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). First, the degree of agreement pertaining to a specific category is lost (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). As a result, programs are not aware of areas where they should allocate greater efforts. Second, multiple aspects are listed under one overarching category (Pope-Davis et al., 2000). This leaves the training program with limited information regarding how to improve their multicultural efforts in a given category.

Researchers have argued that greater insight to a program's cultural competence can be gathered from an assessment measure that addresses the training environment more holistically and attitudinally (Toporek et al., 2000). The Multicultural Environment Inventory (MEI) and its later version, the Multicultural Environment Inventory-Revised (MEI-R), were created to address this need (Pope-Davis et al., 2000; Toporek et al., 2000). The MEI-R is a 27-item measure that utilizes a likert scale rating system, which allows for information pertaining to the degree that a university meets a multicultural training category (Toporek et al., 2000). This information is particularly important because it provides counselling psychology programs with the necessary information to properly adjust their efforts in certain training areas (Toporek et al., 2000).

The MEI-R also differs from the MCC in that it asks faculty and students to share their perceptions of their multicultural training and abilities (Toporek et al., 2000). The MEI-R's subscales include assessing beliefs pertaining to multicultural training and supervision, level of comfort as a member in a multicultural environment, honesty about multicultural recruitment in the program, and options about whether or not their program facilitates multicultural research (Toporek et al., 2000). These subscales cover topics addressed by the APA's accreditation guidelines, which furthers the merit of its use in academic settings (Pope-Davis et al., 2000).

Toporek et al. (2000) offer suggestions for the use of the MEI-R. These suggestions included (1) stimulating a discussion about the salient multicultural issues faced by a department or university and the potential solutions, (2) supplementing with objective data (i.e., number of

cultural courses, ethnic representation, etc.), and (3) assessing whether or not efforts to rectify multicultural issues have affected faculty and students (i.e., pretest, posttest information). It is important that attitudes toward multiculturalism be addressed across a variety of levels (Toporek et al., 2000). In so doing, areas in need of improvement are identified, such as supervisor multicultural competence or multicultural support by the university (Toporek et al., 2000).

Present Issues Faced by Canadian Counselling Psychology Programs

While efforts to adapt to a growing cultural climate are being made by universities, several notable problems may still arise. For example, often the Faculty members designated the role of addressing multiculturalism do not have adequate multicultural training and experience (Moodley, 1999; Ponterotto et al., 1995; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994; Pope-Davis et al., 2000). As a result, these individuals may be ill equipped to take on such a role (Moodley, 1999; Ponterotto et al., 1995; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994; Pope-Davis et al., 2000).

Other issues pertain to the perception of the minority clients. In a review paper, Moodley (1999) argued that after two decades of multicultural efforts and research, ethnic clients still felt misunderstood and pressured from theory styles and counselors that embody the individualist, eurocentric, and ethnocentric ideals. Further, while majority of counselors see the merit of addressing culture in therapy sessions, less than half actively do so (Zhang & McCoy, 2009). This is particularly troubling given that such conversations can strengthen the therapeutic relationship, address clients presenting concerns, and prevent premature termination (Moodley, 1999; Zhang & Burkard, 2008).

Issues have also surfaced in terms of cultural content addressed by counselling psychology programs. In the 1970s and 1980s, when the importance of multiculturalism began to surface, multicultural counselling efforts were focused on immigration, assimilation, and adaption (Moodley, 1999). At this time, there was a heavy focus on viewing the client's culture

as their sole identity, an approach that is no longer viewed as acceptable and has since been replaced by incorporating the client's culture into treatment at a level perceived as appropriate by the client (Hwang, 2006; Moodley, 2007). In the 1990s, with the rise of equality efforts, multicultural counsellors focused on trying to understand the client from their unique circumstances (Moodley, 1999). This led to a 'I' versus 'them' perception that fostered the negative stereotype that all ethnic groups are different than the dominant white race and functionally the same as other ethnic groups (Moodley, 1999).

In the more recent years, we have seen multicultural counselling efforts and research shift their focus from immigration adjustment to cultural transitioning (Sinacore et al., 2011). This new area of interest includes topics related security across economic, occupational, educational, and social domains (Sinacore et al., 2011). Other current movements in Canadian multicultural counselling include a national request for mental health care workers to address the mental health of the Indigenous population and to attend to cultural differences in ethnic populations (i.e., immigrants, ethnocultural communities, refugees, and racialized groups; Kirmayer, Guzder, & Rousseau, 2014). The practice of cultural consultation is argued to be a culturally sensitive approach to meet these national requests (Kirmayer et al., 2014).

Despite notable progress towards cultural sensitivity and equality, there is still room for growth. Moodley (2007) criticizes multicultural counsellors for perceiving visibly diverse groups as the sole recipients of culturally sensitive counselling. It is argued that multicultural counselling needs to extend to a variety of cultural groups, such as sexually diverse, culturally diverse, and the economically opposed (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Moodley, 2007). To improve the state of multicultural counselling, it is suggested that counsellors (1) appreciate the multiple, intersecting forms of identify, such as sexual orientation and gender, (2) perceive all clients as diverse,

including White clients, and (3) structure therapy around the Indigenous populations traditional healing methods when appropriate (Moodley, 2007).

An Overview of Multiculturalism in Climate Survey Research

Issues pertaining to multiculturalism and diversity extend beyond counselling psychology programs and more broadly to a university as a whole. Climate surveys are becoming an increasingly popular tool used to address issues related to cultural inclusion and discrimination (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Throughout this thesis, the term climate is used to explain the current behaviours and attitudes of a university population. This population includes students, Faculty staff, and administrators. The climate of a university is shaped by the frequency and quality of social interactions on campus (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Some universities, such as the University of California, have argued that efforts to address cultural inclusion and discrimination are not fruitful unless the climate of the campus is evaluated, thus highlighting the value of such research (University of California Los Angeles, 2014).

Addressing ethnic and racial diversity is argued to be especially important for personal growth during the university years while individuals are actively learning, developing their social identity, and open to new experiences (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). When a university's climate is perceived as culturally inclusive, students tend to be more resilient in their ability to more adapt to an increasingly multicultural environment (Gurin et al., 2002). Further, these students experience growth in areas, such as cultural and racial understanding, citizenship engagement, perspective-taking, and the ability to contribute to a diverse democracy (Gurin et al., 2002). Based on this evidence, it is argued that exposure to diversity in university years will positively impact racial segregation in society.

A student's sense of belonging and perception of 'being cared for' by a university plays a crucial role in improving ethnic students' academic success (O'Keeffe, 2013). Komarraju,

Musulkin, and Bhattacharaya (2010) found that when Faculty members are perceived as caring, respectful, and approachable students feel motivated and confident in their abilities, which, in turn, will aid in academic success. Further, having a culturally diverse student and Faculty body has been associated with higher grades, academic retention, positive beliefs about diversity from non-minority students, and feelings of social inclusion (Fischer, 2010; Love, 2008; O'Keeffe, 2013; Ward & Zarate, 2015).

The climate of a university plays a crucial role in the professional well-being of staff and Faculty and the academic success of students (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart, 2006). Currently, Canada has over 90 universities, many of which have published climate surveys to better understand the current state of diversity, discrimination, and harassment on campus. Some of the Canadian universities to have taken on such a task include the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Ottawa (Kinkartz, Wells, & Hillyard, 2013; University of British Columbia, 2016; University of Ottawa, 2013; University of Saskatchewan, 2016).

The results from such surveys have the potential to affect the implementation of new policies and programs aimed to improve identified cultural issues. For example, the University of Saskatchewan's climate survey found that while their Indigenous students felt they could confide in someone at the university, rated Indigenous services as more favourable than their peers rated their support services, and attended a higher rate of cultural activities, they still felt less included as a member of the university (University of Saskatchewan, 2010). Having this information provides the University of Saskatchewan with a direction for future cultural endeavours and program planning.

University Climate and Diversity Groups

Various racial groups may perceive the same university climate differently (Rankin &

Reason, 2005). When compared to white students, other students were found to be more likely to experience discrimination and perceive the university climate as hostile (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Fischer (2010) longitudinally studied students over the course of their 4-year degree to examine the effects of stereotype threat on ethnic students. After controlling for factors such as academic readiness and parental social economic status (SEQ), Black and Latino/a students were found to endure the greatest struggle (Fischer, 2010). These ethnic students had the highest rates of performance burden, delayed graduation, low social satisfaction, and generally perceive the racial climate of the university as more negative (Fischer, 2010). Other research has identified a relationship between racial stereotypes and lack of motivation, high attrition rates, and low morale (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005).

Unique information can be gleaned from qualitative research. Vaccaro (2010) interpreted the results from two opened-ended questions from a seemingly positive university climate. The questions pertained to what students liked about their university's climate and how they would improve their university's climate (Vaccaro, 2010). Gender differences emerged in terms of how men and women reacted to the topic of diversity (Vaccaro, 2010). Women were found to be more open to topics concerning diversity and desired avenues to discuss such topics, where as men preferred the university climate to limit diversity conversations and showed resentment towards liberal equality movements (Vaccaro, 2010).

Other researchers have also noted gender differences between racial groups in that white female students appear to be at the highest risk for harassment (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Derogatory remarks and inappropriate written comments were found to be the most common form of harassment against females and occur at both the student and Faculty level (Rankin & Reason, 2005). This form of subtle harassment also extends to the LGBTQ group and is associated with heightened mental and physical health issues in areas such as anxiety, depression,

substance abuse, chronic stress, poor self-esteem, and obesity (Grant et al., 2014; Woodford et al., 2014; Woodford, Kulick, & Atteberry, 2015).

“Minority stress theory” has been used to explain the negative physical and mental health effects of harassment on culturally diverse groups (Woodford et al., 2015). This theory denotes that forms of subtle harassment such as prejudice, stigma, and discrimination, leads to chronic stress and the development of accompanying health issues (Meyer, 1995; Meyer, 2003). What appears to be pivotal is how harassment affects the individual’s perception of their fit in society (Meyer, 2003). It is through forms of harassment that members of a culturally diverse group internalize negative perceptions of their self-worth and begin to view their role in society as trivial (Meyer, 2003). Given that universities create their own unique form of society, it is important to investigate the rates of harassment against culturally diverse group and the associated affect on the individuals’ well-being.

Summary of Research

The research conducted by other universities to understand their cultural climates provides valuable insight to popular methodology. Given the vast number of universities found across Canada, the larger institutions and those whose climate survey results were easily accessible were chosen for review. This search yielded nine climate surveys/reports. Some of which were completed reports and others that were survey materials. Five of these climate surveys/reports utilized mixed methods research (MMR) methodology by either combining closed-ended and open-ended questions or by hosting a focus group that followed survey administration (Kinkartz, Wells, & Hillyard, 2013; University of British Columbia, 2016; University of Ottawa, 2013; University of Saskatchewan, 2016; University of Toronto, 2015). The other four climate surveys/reports utilized quantitative research methodology by administering either a climate survey or by analyzing incidences of reported complaints (McGill

University, 2015; University of British Columbia, 2014; University of Ottawa, 2016; Western University, 2016). The topics of these climate surveys included perceptions of rape, campus diversity, feelings of inclusion and respect, discrimination and harassment, and employment equity. When sample sizes were provided, they ranged from single Faculty reviews with 56 participants to university-wide reviews with participant numbers ranging from 1,088 to 5,205 (Kinkartz, Wells, & Hillyard, 2013; University of Ottawa, 2013; University of Ottawa, 2016; University of Saskatchewan, 2016).

There are currently three climate surveys/reports being conducted by Canadian universities. These include one quantitative study by Dalhousie University to assess sexual violence, one MMR study by the University of Ottawa to assess diversity and inclusion through both surveys and semi-structured interviews, and one qualitative study by the University of Western Ontario to assess international students experiences through focus groups (Dalhousie University, 2016; University of Ottawa, 2017; Western University, 2017).

There are notable strengths and weaknesses for the various forms of methodology utilized in the discussed climate surveys/reports. The strength of the quantitative survey methodology rests in the ease of delivery and ability to quickly commute results. From this, a university can conduct annual reports that allow for subsequential progress reports. The weakness of the quantitative methodology is limited insight as the survey can only capture information pertaining to the specific questions asked. This is perhaps why several universities have opted for a mixed methods research methodology that combined closed-ended and open-ended questions. However, despite room for further explanation from the participants, information is again limited to the question included in the climate survey. Follow-up focus groups can rectify this issue. The weakness of these focus groups is the time required to conduct and analyze the qualitative data.

The chosen methodology for climate survey research becomes a balancing act of the identified strengths and weaknesses.

Significance of Study and Relevance to Counselling Psychology

University climate research is significant for three reasons. First, it highlights the unique perspectives held by individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. Second, the struggles and resiliencies these individuals experience has the potential to provide valuable insight that may inform psychological treatment on university campuses and future research endeavours. Third, the findings allow for an informed allocation of resources for individuals from various diversity groups. The ethical principles and practise standards for psychologists will now be discussed. This will expand on the relevance and applicability of these highlighted points.

Counselling psychologists, like other applied psychologists, operate from a self-regulated profession and must adhere to four ethical principles and ten practise standards (Gelso, Nutt Williams, & Fretz, 2014). These overarching guidelines are put in place to help psychologists treat their clients and serve the public in a virtuous manner. A psychologist is expected to embody good character and virtues, which is thought to put the profession in a reputable stance (Gelso, Nutt Williams, & Fretz, 2014). From this stems the professional obligation to move beyond direct psychological intervention and technique to the welfare of the society (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). Therefore, while standards of practice allude to the manner a psychologist should behave in assessment and therapeutic circumstances, there is also a professional responsibility to the public. Thus far, the value of university climate research has been discussed in terms of its relevance for counselling psychology programs and a university as a whole, but not for individual psychologists. This section will highlight how university climate research fits within the ethical principles and standards that govern practising psychologists.

From the first ethical principle, Respect for the Dignity of Persons, the value of university climate research can be found in the obligation to treat all persons equally and fairly (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). As a result, psychologists are expected to exercise caution when working with vulnerable clients (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). University climate research offers the necessary information to be informed of the unique challenges faced by racial groups and the factors that may place certain populations in a position of vulnerability. While this information is fruitful for all psychologists, it may be particularly beneficial for psychologists working with clients attending post-secondary education. Further, this research is in line with the notion that psychologists must engage in activities that promote a fair, non-discriminate distribution of services.

The second ethical principle, Responsible Caring, emphasizes the welfare of clients in terms of addressing areas of potential risk and benefit (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). In order to fully embody this ethical principle, psychologists' must constantly evaluate their ability to treat presenting issues (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). University climate research can increase therapeutic competence. Just as university climate research can highlight vulnerable populations, it also furthers our understanding of the unique issues that may be faced in academic situations. Information pertaining to the issues faced by the various racial groups seen by psychologists will lead to treatment that maximizes therapeutic benefits while minimizing therapeutic harm.

The last two ethical principles may speak most directly to the value of university climate research. The third ethical principle, Integrity in Relationships, suggests that psychologists exhibit good character in their relationships (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). This is comprised by values such as honesty, a lack of bias, and straightforwardness/openness to the public (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). University climate research conveys to the

public that an interest is taken in the welfare of those at risk for harm. Further, it provides a platform for discussion as crucial information is shared with the public and interested parties.

The final ethical principle, Responsibility to Society, speaks to psychologists' duty to their community and to the promotion of the greater good (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). From this ethical principle stems the requirement to engage in activities that evaluate and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable populations (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000). University climate research fits within this obligation as it contributes to an ongoing wealth of knowledge in the area of cultural diversity and academic growth. Such information will aid in the implementation of the necessary prevention and treatment programs. Further, as mentioned, university climate research also highlights the progression of diversity training in counselling psychology programs, which will address the need for program revision. Finally, university climate research, acts to promote positive change in society, which shows the professions respect for diversity.

The Present Study

The present mixed methods thesis study uses a survey to investigate the climate of the Faculty of Education within the University of Alberta. The purpose of the study is to (1) understand the factor structure of the climate survey, (2) assess how supportive and culturally inclusive the climate is within the Faculty, (3) highlight the Faculty's diversity-related strengths and weaknesses, and (4) use open-ended questions to identify themes relating the diversity and the Faculty's climate. Ultimately, the aim is to bridge the gap between university policy, programming, and student well-being.

Research Questions

Throughout the mixed methods research (MMR) literature, the importance of research questions (RQs) is continuously highlighted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2015;

Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). While RQs are necessary for design selection for all types of methodologies, they are argued to be particularly important for MMR given the complex nature of such research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). In MMR, the RQs dictate the chosen design by allowing the researcher(s) to assess areas such as the value of the potential information gathered from quantitative and qualitative methodology, the ideal point of data integration, and the necessary steps for sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006).

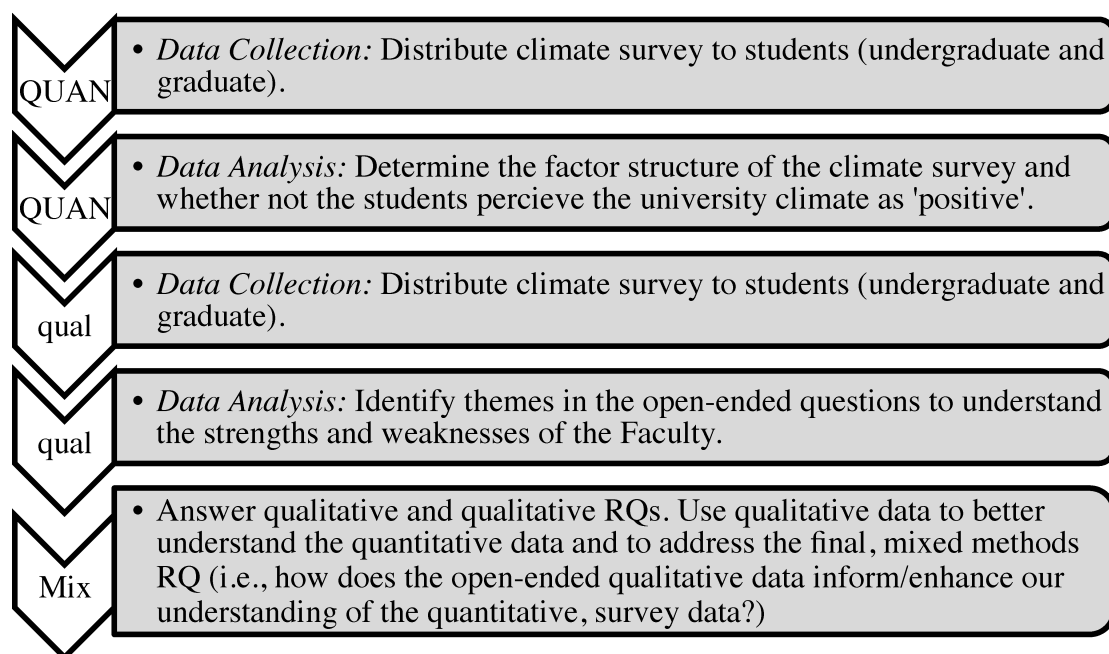
In line with typical MMR, the present study has research questions that determine a need for the merging of quantitative and qualitative methodology. These questions include (1) what is the factor structure of the climate survey?, (2) to what extent is the Faculty climate supportive and inclusive?, (3) what are the Faculty's strengths, diversity-wise?, (4) what are its weaknesses?, (5) how does the open-ended qualitative data inform/enhance our understanding of the quantitative, survey data? The first two questions are addressed by quantitative methodology, while questions three and four are addressed by qualitative methodology. The final question is addressed by merging both quantitative and qualitative methodology, which ultimately highlights the needs for a MMR design.

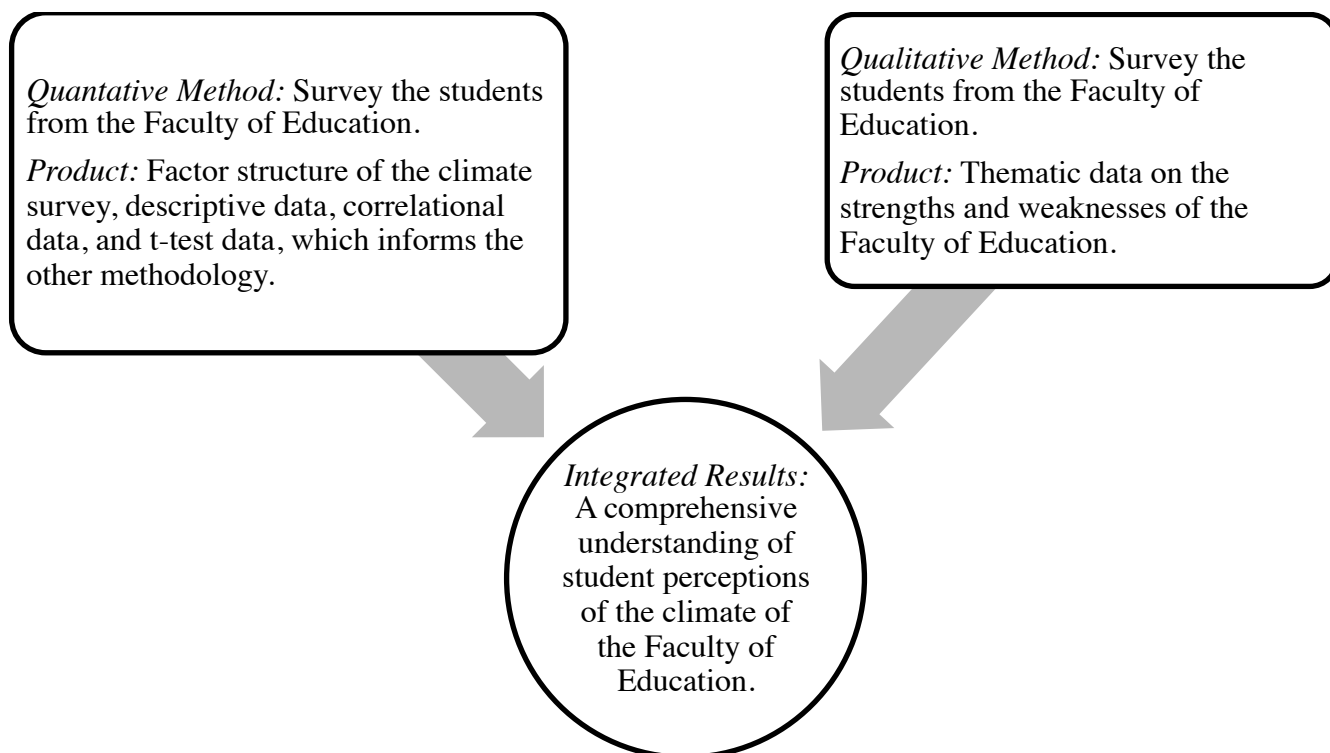
Mixed Methods Design

In light of the RQs, the mixed methods research (MMR) design employed for this research was a blend of a sequential and convergent MMR designs (Creswell, 2015; Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). And, in line with the convergent MMR design, the data for both the quantitative and qualitative arms of the study were collected concurrently. The quantitative data was given priority and analyzed first, which is typical within a sequential MMR design. From this data, questions pertaining to the factor structure of the climate survey and whether or not the students perceive the university climate as positive were obtained. Data analysis of the collected qualitative data followed. The role of the qualitative data was to better

inform the quantitative data and to address questions pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of the Faculty. Finally, both the quantitative and qualitative results were reviewed simultaneously and addressed in the discussion section of this thesis to address the final RQ pertaining to how the qualitative data supplements the quantitative data. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of this study's MMR design.

Figure 1. Mixed Methods Procedure





Rationale for Mixed Methods Design

To date, researchers interested in the climate of university campuses have heavily focused on quantitative methodologies, such as numeric survey data collection (Maramba & Museus, 2011). While much can be obtained from such an approach, such as generalizability, it is argued that valuable information can be lost (Maramba & Museus, 2011). More specifically, the use of predetermined variables can limit the data gathered and result in an incomplete picture of an investigated phenomena (Maramba & Museus, 2011). As a result, the university policy that follows quantitative climate survey data may be ill-informed and not fully address the areas of concern.

More recently, there is increasing interest in gaining a deeper understanding of what students and Faculty members have to say about their experiences, thus highlighting the value of qualitative research (Vaccaro, 2010). By using a qualitative methodology, researchers are able to

understand how individuals' experience their environment (Creswell, 2007). This insight is particularly important for university climate research because it offers unique information that may not have been initially addressed by a quantitative climate survey (Vaccaro, 2010). A MMR design that addresses a variety of diversity and social inclusion variables, while offering the opportunity for open-ended elaborations is argued to provide the most complete picture of the university's climate.

Research Hypotheses

Given that hypotheses are limited to quantitative inquiry, they will only be provided for the first two research questions. For the first research question, it is hypothesized that the factor structure of the climate survey includes three factors: learning climate, discrimination and harassment, and feedback. When the climate survey used for this research was created, the Faculty of Education's Diversity, Equity and Respect Committee sought to include questions that fit these themes in terms of their face validity. For the second research question, it is hypothesized that the Faculty of Education provides a supportive environment for their students. This hypothesis would be evident by high ratings in the learning climate and low ratings in the discrimination and harassment factor. This is hypothesized based on the culturally supportive findings from the University of Alberta's Safe Spaces Campus Climate Report (Kinkartz, Wells, & Hillyard, 2013).

Chapter 2: Method

Participants

The final sample was comprised of 269 students, which represented 7% of the Faculty of Education's graduate and undergraduate student population. Eighty-one percent of participants identified as female ($n = 208$), 18% as male ($n = 47$), and <1% as transgender ($n = 1$). In terms of age, 54% were between 18-24 ($n = 138$), 27% were between 25-34 ($n = 69$), 15% were between 35-44 ($n = 39$), and 2% were between 45-54 ($n = 6$). The majority of the respondents (59%, $n = 159$) reported diversity group status. These individuals reported being part of an 'other diversity' (including single mothers, various religious affiliations, younger and older students than the majority, and students in unique academic situations; 21%), visibly diverse (16%), disability (11%), sexually diverse (8%), or Indigenous (7%). Participants were also comprised of a higher number of undergraduate students ($n = 206$) versus graduate students ($n = 63$). In terms of year of study, 13.8% were in 0-1 year, 22.5% were in 1-2 year, 55.3% were in 3-4 year, and 8.3% were in 5+ year. The same participants from the quantitative data collection were used in the qualitative data collection. While other sampling methods, such as purposeful sampling, are common, it was expected that rich information would be gathered by allowing all climate survey respondents the opportunity to answer open-ended questions.

Measure

Climate Survey. The survey comprised 31 items that were broken down into three sections thought to represent a 3-factor structure: (1) Learning Climate, (2) Discrimination and Harassment, and (3) Feedback. Please see Appendix A. The Learning Climate section included 13 questions that addressed topics of inclusion, respect, satisfaction with the department, and mentoring. Items were rated on likert scales that ranged from 5-point (i.e., strong agree to strongly disagree, positive to negative, or always to never) to 3-point (i.e., yes to no) and an 8-

point frequency scale (i.e., daily to never). For nine of the likert-scale items, there was a second, open-ended question (i.e., why or why not?). One item asked participants to openly list the Faculty activities/events they had attended. This section also contained ten open-ended questions that asked respondents to share their perceptions (i.e., why or why not?) concerning topics of respect, inclusion, type of campus climate, recommendations for improvements, satisfaction with university offered guidance, recognition, and types of university events/activities attended.

The Discrimination and Harassment section included six items that addressed topics of personal and witness discrimination and harassment, level of comfort reporting discrimination and harassment, perception of how serious such a report would be taken by the university, and knowledge of university supports. Items were rated on a 3-point likert scale (i.e., yes to no) and four of the items included a second, open-ended question (i.e., if yes, tell us about those experiences). Specifically, respondents were asked open-ended questions that inquired about harassment or discrimination, comfort in confiding in a faculty member, and how serious a report about harassment or discrimination would be taken by the university.

The Feedback section included three open-ended questions that asked participants for their perceptions on how helpful they found the department when they arrived, how they would improve the department, and how they find the climate of the Faculty overall. The final section of the survey included demographic information. In this section, items inquired about demographic information such as program, year of study, age, sexual identity, and diversity status.

Procedure

The University of Alberta's Faculty of Education is considered one of the leading faculties in Canada in terms of the offered education and number of enrolled students (University of Alberta, n.d). It is comprised of six departments (i.e., Department of Educational Policy Studies, Department of Educational Psychology, Department of Elementary Education,

Department of Secondary Education, Master of Education in Educational Studies, School of Library and Information Studies) that include various undergraduate programs (i.e., Four-Year Elementary Program, Four-Year Secondary Program, Five-Year Combined Degrees Program, After Degree Programs, Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, Off-Campus Collaborative Programs, etc.) and graduate programs (i.e., Adult, Community and Higher Education, Counselling Psychology, Special Education, Theoretical Peoples Education, etc.; University of Alberta, n.d). For the academic years of 2013 to 2014, there were 3,048 undergraduate students and 873 graduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Education (University of Alberta, 2016). The students within the Faculty are taught by more than 180 full time professors and 103 sessional instructors; as well as supported by more than 50 administrative staff (University of Alberta, n.d).

With the assistance of the Faculty of Education's Undergraduate Student Services and Department Chairs, participants were recruited using a convenience sampling technique. During the months of February to April of 2014, approximately 3,740 emails were sent to all of the Faculty's undergraduate and graduate students requesting their voluntary participation. The sent email included a hyperlink to the climate survey where the participants were taken first to the *Information Letter and Consent Form* (see Appendix B). After providing consent, participants were presented with the 'learning climate', 'discrimination and harassment', 'feedback', and demographic sections of the climate survey (see Appendix C). To compensate participants, they were offered the opportunity to win an iPad. The desired sample size was 400 completed surveys, which would represent 10% of the Faculty of Education student body. A total of 363 surveys were received, however only 269 of these surveys were viable for research purposes; resulting in a useable response rate of 7%. This response rate is lower than reported climate surveys from other universities where response rates between 22% and 25% were found (University of Ottawa, 2016; University of Saskatchewan, 2016).

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

In order to address the first two RQs, I entered the climate survey data into a statistical software program (SPSS). To answer the first RQ, pertaining to the factor structure of the survey, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. The second RQ sought to determine whether or not the students perceived the Faculty climate as positive. Once the factor structure was obtained, descriptive and inferential statistics were performed across groups (i.e., female, male, sexually diverse, Indigenous, disability, visibly diverse, and ‘other diversity’). This allowed for between group comparisons and Pearson’s r correlational analyses with the factors of the climate survey to answer the second RQ. These quantitative analyses were conducted approximately one year prior to the qualitative analyses.

The qualitative data was prepped for interpretation by separating the participants’ open-ended responses from the quantitative dataset. This was done to allow for a visual graphing of qualitative themes. All open-ended responses were paired with the participants’ demographic information and the survey question. The survey question was left intact with the responses to provide context when necessary, not to guide the interpretation. The qualitative data was then organized into age groups for each diversity group (i.e., female, male, sexually diverse, Indigenous, disability, visibly diverse, and ‘other diversity’). These age groups included: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64. It is argued that by organizing the data in this manner, I would be better able to understand the unique and overlapping experiences of the various diversity groups, which fits the goal of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007).

Creswell’s (2013) framework for phenomenological analysis guided the qualitative interpretation of this mixed methods study and addressed RQs 3 and 4. First, I considered and openly disclosed how my personal experiences may have affected my perception of the data (see

next section). Second, I highlighted key statements that appeared to represent a group experience. To ensure that all responses were given equal consideration, I organized the participants' responses into 'positive' and 'negative' comment groups. Third, I took the key statements and reflected on their meaning in order to develop themes. The final steps involved a written description of the university climate. During these stages, I wrote a summary for each diversity group that highlighted their underlying experiences and the most salient themes. I then looked across the diversity groups to identify similarities and discrepancies. The shared and unique experiences became the larger themes that are described in detail.

Researcher-as-Instrument: Potential Biases and Personal Reactions

In qualitative research, researchers use their judgments to interpret participants' experience (Berger, 2015). As a result, there is the risk that personal biases may colour the results and inaccurately portray the phenomenon under investigation, essentially invalidating the results and compromising trustworthiness (Berger, 2015; Morrow, 2005). To limit the likelihood of this occurrence, I kept a reflexivity journal to bring forth any personal reactions to the data. This is a particularly important endeavor given that I am a student in the Faculty's Department of Educational Psychology who has personally shared some of the participants' academic experiences (see Berger, 2015). In the paragraphs that follow, I will be highlighting my personal experiences and biases as a white, straight, cisgender female.

Issues of diversity and discrimination were at the forefront of my education in counselling psychology. It was at the University of Alberta that I learned about my cultural ignorance and how to work with culturally diverse clients. As a result, I view my professors and the university with high esteem. To think that issues of discrimination and harassment occur in the same setting where I have experienced personal growth in my cultural awareness was something I wanted to reject as a possibility. This personal reaction is important to note because it may have biased me

toward results that highlighted the success of my university. It is argued that by separating the comments into 'positive' and 'negative' groups, I was forced to award all types of student experiences equal worth in my interpretation. Having this personal insight allowed me to proceed with caution when reading the 'negative' participant comments.

As mentioned, my university education has highlighted my cultural ignorance and, with that, the cultural stereotypes I hold. I grew up in a small rural town that lacked diversity. It is not uncommon to hear some people from my hometown commenting on how the Indigenous population are lazy with substance abuse issues and that the Muslim population are terrorists wanting to corrupt our government. While I do not personally hold these views, the comments I heard growing up often surface in my mind and bring forth feelings of expected disadvantage for various ethnic groups. It wasn't until my university years that I was exposed to vastness of multiculturalism. Debunking the stereotypes I hold to view the world more honestly is an area for constant growth for my clinical work and myself. With that being said, my personal bias would be to pity individuals from an ethnic group. This emotional reaction may have led me to expect (1) worse university experiences and a lack of opportunity for the participants from ethnic groups, and (2) better university experiences and ample opportunity for the participants from majority groups. Personal awareness of these biases were kept at the forefront of mind while I analyzed the qualitative data.

As a student in the same department as the participants, I have had some similar experiences. For example, I have had concerns about how the academic budget cuts would affect my education. After starting my first semester, I was made aware that our off-campus clinical placement was cut from the program. The following year, there was talk about additional charges for supervision. These experiences made me feel that I was getting a worse education than previous students. Further, I also started to feel that the university saw me as a means to profit

financially as there were more conversations regarding additional costs for tuition than those regarding program growth. Another experience I shared with the participants was a negative reaction to the dated appearance of the Faculty of Education building and a desire for more food court options. A potential risk of these shared student experiences is an over-emphasis on topics that hold personal relevance. While identifying key statements and themes, I was careful to note any judgmental thoughts. When these thoughts arose, I would note them and step aside from the data until my stance was more neutral.

My undergraduate experiences and previous employment may also serve as a potential bias. In my undergraduate degree, I was trained in quantitative research design and worked as a research assistant for over two years doing quantitative data analyses. As a result, I am inclined to approach my research endeavors from a quantitative mindset, which made me naive about the value of qualitative research. Further, as typically done within quantitative research, I had expectations about what I would find from the data analyses. More specifically, I expected the qualitative results to mimic and expand on the findings from the quantitative findings. However, there was nearly a year gap in time between the conducted quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Aware of my quantitative background, I intentionally did not review the quantitative findings prior to my qualitative data analysis to limit any biases.

Chapter 3: Results

Quantitative Results

Data Screening. In keeping with other climate survey analyses, participants who completed less than half of the climate survey were removed (Dartmouth College, 2016; University of Florida, 2016). This reduced the number of participants by 26%, from 362 to 269. The final sample size of 269 is appropriate for the necessary statistical analyses to answer the research questions (Creswell, 1998; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

Factor Structure of the Climate Survey. To answer the first research question, an exploratory factor (EFA) analysis was conducted. Assessing the factor structure of the climate survey is necessary for two reasons. First, it allows the researcher to examine “fit” of predetermined conceptual factors. Second, once the factor loadings have been assessed and factors created, the scores are scaled in order to conduct further analyses. The EFA of the climate survey revealed a new four-factor model that differed from the original three-factor model (see Table 1). The subject to item ratio for the climate survey items ranged from 1:63 to 1:269, which surpasses the suggested ratio of 1:10 ensure sufficient odds of capturing the correct factor structure (Osborne & Costello, 2004). The total sums of squared loadings ranged from 1.26 to 7.44.

Table 1. *Factor Structures of the Climate Survey*

New:	Original:
I. Positive Student Experiences	I. Learning Climate
II. Negative Student Experiences	II. Discrimination and Harassment
III. Dynamic Feedback	III. Feedback
IV. Student Engagement	

Taken together, the new four-factor model accounted for 88% of the variance in scale scores. The first new factor explained 41% of the variance and was comprised of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5A, 7, 8, 9, and 13 from the survey. This factor was labelled “Positive Student Experiences,” as it included items that addressed topics of inclusion and respect. The second new factor explained 26% of the variance and was comprised of items 5B, 6A, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16A. This factor was labelled “Negative Student Experiences,” as it addressed topics of discrimination and harassment. The third new factor explained 14% of the variance and was comprised of item 6B. This factor was labelled “Dynamic Feedback,” as it addressed the topic of positive mentoring and supervision at the graduate level. The final new factor explained 7% of the variance and was comprised of item 10A. This factor was labelled “Student Engagement,” as it addressed the topic of university involvement. Because of the more robust 4-factor model, subsequent analyses were conducted accordingly. And, although it is somewhat unusual to have single-item scales, or factors, they were ultimately kept in the model, in part, because of their conceptual and statistical coherence. See Table 2 for the factor loadings and Cronbach’s alphas for the new, four-factor structure of the survey.

Table 2. *Factor Loadings and Cronbach’s alphas for the New, Four-Factor Climate Survey*

Items	Factor Loadings	α
<i>Positive Student Experiences</i>		0.81
Item 1: Do you feel you are respected and included in the Faculty?	.954	
Item 2: Do you feel others are respected and included in the Faculty?	.821	
Item 3: Overall, do you consider the	.816	

current climate in the Faculty as being:

Negative to Positive?

Item 4: Would you recommend the Faculty of Education to prospective students? .909

Item 5A: Are you aware of student orientations or mentoring programs within the Faculty? .645

Item 7: Is the feedback that you get constructive? .746

Item 8: Do your instructors acknowledge your class contributions? .962

Item 9: Do you feel included in the Faculty? .803

Item 13: Is there someone in the Faculty that you would feel comfortable confiding in about your experiences and observations? .829

Negative Student Experiences

0.44

Item 5B: If yes, are the orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory? .775

Item 6A: If you are an undergraduate student, how often do you get feedback from your program advisor, undergraduate facilitator, field placement supervisor, or others in a supervisory role on what is .608

expected of you in your student program?	
Item 11: Have you personally experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?	.720
Item 12: Are you aware of others who have experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?	.720
Item 14: Do you know where or how to report experiences of discrimination or harassment in the Faculty?	.750
Item 15: If Yes, do you feel your report would be given serious consideration?	.678
Item 16A: Are you aware of the University of Alberta's Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights?	.767
<i>Dynamic Feedback</i>	
Item 6B: If you are a graduate student, how often do you get feedback from your program advisor, undergraduate facilitator, field placement supervisor, or others in a supervisory role on what is expected of you in your student program?	.924
<i>Student Engagement</i>	
Item 10A: Do you attend Faculty	.114

events/activities? (Examples include visiting speakers, social events, etc.)

Within the new four-factor model, results revealed a significant positive correlation between the Positive Student Experiences factor and the Student Engagement factor, $r = 0.203$, $n = 242$, $p = 0.002$, and between the Dynamic Feedback factor and the Student Engagement factor, $r = 0.292$, $n = 63$, $p = 0.020$. So, the more positive experiences and dynamic feedback, the more students felt engaged. And, somewhat predictably, results revealed a significant negative correlation between the Positive Student Experiences factor and the Negative Student Experiences factor, $r = -0.593$, $n = 81$, $p < 0.001$. Although these correlations are not causal links, they make sense, given it would be expected that positive academic experiences, such as inclusion and respect, would have a positive relationship with each other and a negative relationship with negative academic experiences, such as harassment and discrimination. Additionally, if students get dynamic, change-oriented feedback, they become readily engaged in the education process.

Table 3. *Correlations among the Climate Survey Factors (n = 269)*

Factors	I	II	III	IV
I. Positive Student Experiences				
II. Negative Student Experiences	-.593**			
III. Dynamic Feedback	-.010	.026		
IV. Student Engagement	.203**	-.017	.292*	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Faculty Climate. To answer the second research question, independent t-tests, correlations, and frequencies were conducted. Independent t-tests were run to examine potential group differences. For the new four-factor model, there was a significant difference in scores for the ‘other diversity’ group ($M=27.82$, $SD=5.29$) and other students ($M=29.72$, $SD=4.55$) on the Positive Student Experiences factor; $t(226)=2.50$, $p < .05$; Cohen’s $d = 0.39$. This finding reveals the ‘other diversity’ students rated their student experiences as significantly more negative than other students. There was also a significant difference in scores for the Indigenous students ($M=6.00$, $SD=0.00$) and non- Indigenous students ($M=4.79$, $SD=1.93$) on the Dynamic Feedback factor; $t(57)= -0.88$, $p < .05$; Cohen’s $d = 0.89$. This finding reveals the Indigenous graduate students rated their experiences with supervision and mentoring as significantly more positive than other non- Indigenous graduate students.

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationship between the culturally diverse groups and the new four-factor structure of the climate survey (see Table 4). Results revealed a significant negative correlation between the Positive Student Experiences factor and the visibly diverse group, $r = -0.136$, $n = 230$, $p < 0.05$, and the ‘other diversity’ group, $r = -0.163$, $n = 229$, $p < 0.05$. These findings reveal a less positive endorsement on items relating to positive student experiences.

Table 4. *Correlations among the new Climate Survey Factors and Diversity Groups (n = 269)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Positive Student Experiences	-								
2. Negative Student Experiences	-.593**	-							

3. Dynamic Feedback	-.010	.026	-						
4. Student Engagement	.203**	-.017	.292*	-					
5. Gender	.106	-.042	.056	-.002	-				
6. Sexual Diversity	.091	-.042	-.050	-.027	.079	-			
7. Indigenous	-.046	-.077	.115	.065	-.126*	-.029	-		
8. Disability	-.011	-.055	-.185	-.093	.000	.075	.018	-	
9. Visible Diversity	-.136*	.081	.155	.014	.052	-.053	-.122	-.086	-
10. Other Diversity	-.163*	.027	.019	.046	-.005	-.041	-.010	-.015	.290**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Notable frequency scores for the items from the first new factor (see Table 5) suggest that students generally *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are respected and included within the Faculty (item 1; 79.9%, $n = 215$), that others are also respected and included within the Faculty (item 2; 80.7%, $n = 217$), believe that the Faculty's current climate is *positive* or *somewhat positive* (item 3; 78.8%, $n = 212$), would recommend the Faculty to prospective students (item 4; 72.5%, $n = 195$), believe the feedback they receive is constructive (item 7; 55.4%, $n = 149$), believe their instructors *always* or *frequently* acknowledge their class contributions (item 8; 69.1%, $n = 188$), and generally feel included in the Faculty (item 9; 69.5%, $n = 187$). In contrast, and in terms of potential climate-related weaknesses (RQ4), students were *not sure* about or completely *unaware* of student orientations and mentoring programs (item 5A; 51.7%, $n = 139$) and, of particular noteworthiness, did not readily have someone, like professors or support staff, to confide in (item 13; 58.4%; $n = 157$).

Table 5. *Frequencies for Factor 1 of the Climate Survey*

Climate Survey Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1. Do you feel you are respected and included in the Faculty?	Strongly Agree	67	24.9
	Agree	148	55.0
	Undecided	33	12.3
	Disagree	19	7.1
	Strongly Disagree	2	0.7
2. Do you feel others are respected and included in the Faculty?	Strongly Agree	67	24.9
	Agree	150	55.8
	Undecided	40	14.9
	Disagree	11	4.1
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.4
3. Overall, do you consider the current climate in the Faculty as being:	Positive	118	43.9
	Somewhat Positive	94	34.9
	Neutral	32	11.9
	Somewhat Negative	23	8.6
	Negative	1	0.4
4. Would you recommend the Faculty of Education to prospective students?	Yes	195	72.5
	No	24	8.9
	Not Sure	49	18.2
5A. Are you aware of student	Yes	130	48.3

orientations or mentoring programs within the Faculty?	No	96	35.7
	Not Sure	43	16.0
7. Is the feedback that you get constructive?	Yes	149	55.4
	No	73	27.1
	Not Sure	31	11.5
8. Do your instructors acknowledge your class contributions?	Always	64	23.8
	Frequently	124	46.1
	Occasionally	50	18.6
	Rarely	22	8.2
	Never	4	1.5
9. Do you feel included in the Faculty?	Strongly Agree	55	20.4
	Agree	132	49.1
	Undecided	55	20.4
	Disagree	25	9.3
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
13. Is there someone in the Faculty that you would feel comfortable confiding in about your experiences and observations?	Yes	106	39.4
	No	78	29.0
	Not Sure	79	29.4

Note. Item coding varied for the climate survey questions. Missing data accounts for frequency percentages below 100%.

Moreover, the second new factor of the climate survey (see Table 6) highlighted that generally students were *undecided* if they found the student orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory (item 5B; 32%, $n = 86$), in undergraduate programs *never* or *once a year* received

feedback (item 6A; 32.3%, $n = 87$), had not personally experienced discrimination or harassment within the Faculty (item 11; 81.4%, $n = 219$), are not aware of others who have experienced discrimination or harassment within the Faculty (item 12; 72.5%, $n = 195$), unaware of where or how to report experiences with discrimination or harassment (item 14; 75.0%, $n = 202$), did not believe (or were *unsure*) their report of discrimination and harassment would be taken seriously (item 15; 31.6%, $n = 85$), and were unaware of the University of Alberta's Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (item 16A; 69.1%, $n = 186$).

Table 6. *Frequencies for Factor 2 of the Climate Survey*

Climate Survey Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
5B. If yes, are the orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory?	Strongly Agree	15	5.6
	Agree	62	23.0
	Undecided	86	32.0
	Disagree	4	1.5
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
6A. If you are an undergraduate student, how often do you get feedback from your program advisor, undergraduate facilitator, field placement supervisor, or others in a supervisory role on what is	Daily	3	1.1
	Weekly	12	4.5
	Semi-Monthly	13	4.8
	Monthly	23	8.6
	Quarterly	34	12.6
	Semi-Annually	42	15.6
Annually	32	11.9	

expected of you in your student program?	Never	55	20.4
11. Have you personally experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?	Yes	30	11.2
	No	219	81.4
	Not Sure	15	5.6
12. Are you aware of others who have experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?	Yes	54	20.1
	No	195	72.5
	Not Sure	17	6.3
14. Do you know where or how to report experiences of discrimination or harassment in the Faculty?	Yes	61	22.7
	No	154	57.2
	Not Sure	48	17.8
15. If yes, do you feel your report would be given serious consideration?	Yes	76	28.3
	No	16	5.9
	Not Sure	69	25.7
16A. Are you aware of the University of Alberta's Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights?	Yes	57	21.2
	No	186	69.1
	Not Sure	23	8.6

Note. Item coding varied for the climate survey questions. Missing data accounts for frequency percentages below 100%.

The third new factor of the climate survey (see Table 7) revealed that graduate students received relatively little consistent feedback from their thesis supervisor or program advisor, with 6.7% receiving it *quarterly* (item 6B; $n = 18$). For the fourth new factor of the climate survey (see Table 8) frequency results showed that most students never or rarely attend Faculty events or activities (item 10A; 57.6%, $n = 155$).

Table 7. *Frequencies for Factor 3 of the Climate Survey*

Climate Survey Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
6B. If you are a graduate student, how often do you get feedback from your thesis supervisor or program advisor on what is expected of you in your student program?	Daily	1	0.4
	Weekly	14	5.2
	Semi-Monthly	12	4.5
	Monthly	5	1.9
	Quarterly	18	6.7
	Semi-Annually	4	1.5
	Annually	1	0.4
	Never	8	3.0

Note. Item coding varied from 1 (*Never*) to 8 (*Daily*). Missing data accounts for frequency percentages below 100%.

Table 8. *Frequencies for Factor 4 of the Climate Survey*

Climate Survey Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
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10A. Do you attend	Always	7	2.6
Faculty	Frequently	25	9.3
events/activities?	Occasionally	80	29.7
(Examples include	Rarely	92	34.2
visiting speakers,	Never	63	23.4
social events, etc.)			

Note. Item coding varied from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). Missing data accounts for frequency percentages below 100%.

Qualitative Results

To better understand the Faculty's diversity climate (RQ2), and its relative strengths (RQ3) and weaknesses (RQ4), I analyzed the qualitative data, which included 1,417 separate data points/open-ended responses and 228 different participants. Four themes emerged, including Academic Resources, Discrimination and Harassment, Feelings of Inclusion, and Program Concerns (see Table 9). Each theme is discussed below.

Table 9. *Climate Survey Qualitative Themes*

- I. Academic Resources
 - a. Arrival experiences
 - b. Academic advisors and support staff
 - c. Faculty programs, activities, and events
 - d. Physical appearance and structure of the education building
- II. Discrimination and Harassment
 - a. Behaviour towards diversity

- b. Reporting misconduct
- III. Feelings of Inclusion
- a. Desire for meaningful connections
 - b. Feedback
- IV. Concerns about the Future of the Program
- a. Budgetary concerns
 - b. Future job opportunities
-

Theme 1: Academic Resources.

Arrival Experiences. Qualitative data revealed that when new students arrived at the university they felt welcomed. Program checks, orientation, assigned academic advisors, graduate student coordinators, information sessions with question and answer periods, campus tours, wiki, and student services stood out as Faculty strengths and helpful resources for new students. The Faculty was perceived as welcoming, friendly, supportive, and eager to help. When asked about his arrival experience, one student wrote, “It just seemed like an open, friendly, inclusive environment. Made me feel like I made the right choice in attending this institution” (sexually diverse, male, age 25-34, undergraduate, 1-2 years of study). Orientation was identified as a particularly positive experience for various new students. During this time, students appreciated the opportunity to mingle with professors and their fellow students. This ability to bond left students feeling inspired and included in the faculty.

In terms of discernible weaknesses, a difference in arrival experience emerged for student from certain programs. More specifically, after-degree, new transfer, and international students felt a lack of support from the university. These students, from the visibly diverse and ‘other diversity’ groups, viewed orientation and other welcoming events as less helpful because they felt

they did not fit their unique needs. As a result, these students felt left to naively navigate through their education. To these students, the department appeared disorganized and this contributed negatively to their academic experiences. Students in the later years of their education requested a yearly orientation to help address issues unique to each stage of their education (i.e., how to graduate).

Academic Advisors and Support Staff. Another identified strength of the students' arrival experience was one-on-one time with academic advisors. Students valued this time because it eased stress regarding their academic direction and course requirements. Unfortunately, once the welcoming events ended and the semester started, students from all diversity groups felt unsupported, especially by academic advisors. One student shared, "My worst experience in my 5 years at the U of A has been with the Faculty of Education. The administrators don't show that they care at all, and it's very frustrating trying to find help regarding my program" (visibly diverse, female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Some of the frequent complaints related to academic advisors were a lack of availability (particularly as a walk-in service), having to wait weeks for an appointment, not receiving the help requested, staff not available over the phone, receiving inaccurate or incomplete information, feeling rushed out of their offices, emails not answered, and careless errors on program check sheets. Due to these issues, students feel unassisted by the academic advisors and have started to seek guidance from their peers and professors.

The lack of trust toward the abilities of the university support staff is exacerbated by poor experiences with the front desk staff at Undergraduate Student Services (USS). Several students felt that some staff at USS act annoyed by questions and replied with rude responses. One student wrote, "Remind the staff at the USS office that not everybody asking questions is uninformed or in need of being treated like a child" (female, age 45-54, after-degree, 3-5 years of study). In

addition, there are complaints about the USS being understaffed. In terms of group differences, some Indigenous students felt that the Faculty doesn't take initiative. Unlike the other diversity groups, some Indigenous students expect the Faculty to reach out to them with helpful information and questions concerning their education.

Faculty Programs, Activities, and Events. Comments from the students suggest that they are too busy to attend Faculty events/activities or hear about the Faculty events after they have occurred. The students who were too busy to attend the Faculty events, communicated a desire to participate, but had employment, academic, or familial responsibilities that prevented them. These students requested hosting Faculty events/activities during times of the semester that have fewer academic demands (i.e., before midterms begin). The students who heard about the Faculty events after they had occurred, shared a desire for more advertising and communication. Other students were too intimidated by some overly scholarly focused events or felt they have no one to accompany them to the event/activity. Some of the popular Faculty events are those hosted by the Undergraduate or Graduate Student Association (USA, GSA), guest speakers, campus conferences, social events, and information sessions.

In regards to the survey question inquiring about involvement in the university mentorship programs, most students were unaware that such a resource is available. Requests for more information regarding these services were requested from students from the various diversity groups, especially international and visibly diverse students. There is a desire for assistance from the university when it comes to ways to connect with peers and get involved with the Faculty. University resources created for specific diversity groups (i.e., Indigenous, LGBTQ), such as Aboriginal Student Service Centre (ASSC), are highly valued for their ability to connect students with similar experiences and interests.

Physical Appearance and Structure of the Education Building. Another topic raised by several students pertained to the building where the Faculty of Education is located. In terms of the layout of the building, students (1) appreciated the easy access to the USS office on the main floor, and (2) wanted offices moved out of the basement (i.e., Augustana Students Association; ASA). While these students believe that classrooms in the basement are difficult to find, it is when a program's main office is located in the basement that it is most upsetting. When this was the case, these students felt that the department does not value their program, and subsequently felt less included by the department or university.

In terms of the physical appearance of the building, some students requested a building renovation. When asked how to improve the climate of the university, one student shared, "Renovate. Every other building seems to be great and then there's ours. It's embarrassing. It's like no one cares about teachers" (other diversity, female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). The common complaints included limited cafeteria options, distracting noises from the building, a desire for more lounge areas and public seating, uncomfortable classroom layouts, more cheerful artwork, new desks, and more plants. Students believed that these physical changes would improve the overall climate of the Faculty.

Theme 2: Discrimination and Harassment

Behaviour towards Diversity. Students shared feelings of respect and admiration for the Faculty, but small infractions are salient and lead to the perception that work needs to be done. When asked about the campus climate, one student wrote, "Overall it's positive, I feel the faculty welcomes and encourages diversity mostly on paper, but not necessarily in practise" (sexually diverse, male, age 18-24, undergraduate, 1-2 years of study). One diversity issue that commonly arose was the acceptance of the Indigenous population. All diversity groups consistently identified the Indigenous population as the recipient of racism from Faculty members and

students. This racism usually occurs in the form of derogatory comments in and out of the classroom. Several graduate students were particularly attentive to this behaviour from undergraduate students and requested action in the form of a mandatory course on cultural sensitivity, like EDU 211 (Aboriginal Education and Contexts for Professional and Personal Engagement).

Speaking of EDU 211, various students also alluded to the existence of ‘white bashing’. Concern about a course focused on the Indigenous population (i.e., EDU 211) arose. One student wrote, “EDU 211 is out of control. I went into that class excited to learn about the aboriginal culture and have been left with a feeling of anger. There are more positive ways to teach, instead of forcing their opinions down our throats. Very poorly executed” (female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 1-2 years of study). Another student felt that ‘white people’ were shamed to the point of being described as, “emotional abuse making students cry” (other diversity, female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Students commenting on witnessed distress shared a desire to learn about the history of the Indigenous population, but felt that the course was taught in a manner that fuelled continued racism and social distance.

Other marginalized groups included international students, LGBTQ, Asian, East Indian, Lebanese, Muslim, Christians, Cubans, students who speak English as a second language, Latinos, and students younger and older than the majority. Some students with a Christian affiliation believed they were personally discriminated against by subtle “ignorant” comments pertaining to their faith, while students younger or older than the majority felt they were personally discriminated against by a lack of inclusion behaviours. Students who speak English as a second language felt marginalized in terms of meeting education requirements and finding funding or assistantships.

Feelings of disrespect are especially salient for the visibly diverse population, which includes international students, Asian, East Indian, Lebanese, Muslim, Cubans, Latinos. Often, the perception of diversity harassment was shared by witnessing students from the other diversity groups. Their stories highlight how ethnic students are ignored by their professors, ridiculed for their cultural clothing (i.e., hijabs), singled out for their ethnicity in class, and “bullied”. The students who do share their own stories highlight how they believe that they have to defend their culture in class.

Of the marginalized groups, the LGBTQ population shared feelings of discomfort that stems from a lack of awareness regarding relevant and salient issues they face. They want that the university to enforce a queer policy and offer a mandatory course focusing on gender and sexuality. Without such action from the university, some students are hesitant to reveal their sexuality because they are not sure how Faculty members and students would react to them. Further, without a queer policy, these students are unsure how insensitivity and harassment towards their identity would be handled within the department. One majority student wrote, “I have seen other voices silenced or marginalized by students in class on a few occasions. One particular student who I have had several classes with was particularly adept at expressing racist, sexist, and homophobic opinions that were not challenged by the professor” (female, age 45-54, graduate, 3-5 years of study). The existence of clear, outlined expectations appears crucial for the comfort of these students.

While many students have positive experiences with Faculty members, others see the university climate as hostile and not accepting of novel opinions and diversity. Several students believe they have to fit a certain mould to be part of the Faculty. Stories are told where students are “shut down”, “belittled”, and not welcomed back into conversations. One student shared, “I think there needs to be a space for students to not feel alienated if they have a difference of

opinion. In classes we are told to accept everyone, thing, and idea. That is not how the world works. As soon as someone stands for something that is not a collective agreement the student gets shut down. I saw this way too much in this program” (female, age 25-34, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Some professors appear to send the message to students that they do not allow the discussion of various topics in their classroom, which in turn leads to fear of voicing one’s personal opinions. Furthermore, the perceived favouritism towards students who share the professor’s opinions does not improve the classroom climate. Some students believe they must match their professors’ theoretical orientation and opinions to receive respect.

The message that students have to fit a certain mould to be included in the Faculty has negatively affected student involvement. For example, one student stopped attending Faculty events because they felt they were geared toward a type of student they were not, while another student felt they could not comfortably bring their same-sex partner to Faculty events. The lack of cultural sensitivity by some professors and students is making students ashamed to be part of the Faculty of Education and raises student concerns about how fit these individuals are to be future teachers. In addition, several students are sensitive to the racist and stereotypical language used in the classroom (i.e., lame). One student wrote, “There are far too many privileged and primarily white students in this faculty for the voices of racialized people to be heard” (disability, female, age 25-34, graduate, 1-2 years of study). Students understand they will be working with various ethnicities and want adequate training and awareness.

One unique theme that emerged between groups was the perception from some male, majority students that teaching programs are putting cultural sensitivity before beneficial teaching methods. These students see the Faculty as culturally diverse and believe the loss of classroom planning and classroom management courses while cultural courses remain part of the curriculum will not adequately prepare them for their future. Further, while some male students

feel pressure to fit a certain theoretical mould, they feel respected and included in what they see as a female driven profession and department.

There is also the belief among students that professors think they are “untouchable” and therefore will not face repercussions for their behaviour. Comments about Faculty mocking and gossiping about students and their coworkers are not uncommon. The university’s social media accounts (i.e., U of A Confessions on Facebook) are mentioned as avenues for such behaviour. There is also witnessed favouritism towards white, middle class students in terms of granted assistantships. The ‘other diversity’ group perceives mainstream students as naive about discrimination. Ultimately, some students do not believe that the university is stepping in to deal with witnessed harassment and discrimination. As a result, fellow students are viewed as racist, while some Faculty members are viewed as “unfair, rude, and politically incorrect ... the older, meaner staff need to move on” (sexually diverse, female, age 35-44, graduate, 1-2 years of study).

Reporting Misconduct. Some students were able to identify that they would feel comfortable reporting witnessed discrimination or harassment to someone at the university, such as professors, thesis advisors, USA and GSA members, or fellow classmates. All the potential confidants appear to have a relationship with the students, which may indicate that a certain level of closeness is crucial for comfort in reporting misconduct. In line with this notion, some fear does exist in terms of reporting misconduct or offering feedback to certain professors. Some students suspect that they would be penalized or discriminated against for sharing any negative comments or opinions. This may stem from a negative climate surrounding how opposing opinions from professors are handled in the classroom. One student shared, “I wouldn’t say I have experienced discrimination, but I have experienced discomfort and reluctance to express my opinion as the attitude expressed by the teacher and class is negative towards my religious

beliefs” (other diversity, female, age 18-24, after-degree, 1-2 years of study). Professors who are not open to opposing opinions are possibly teaching students to be silent about controversial topics, while fostering feelings of isolation and resentment. Several students have requested signage highlighting how and who to report witnessed harassment and discrimination.

Another theme is that discrimination against certain types of students would not be taken seriously by the Faculty. Some students can identify that they could talk to someone they are close to in the faculty about harassment or discrimination, but they are not convinced it would make a difference. This notion may be fuelled by the fact that mainstream students and Faculty members don’t notice or care to address discrimination when it arises. One student writes, “The sense of exclusion amongst people not like the rest permeates all education activities. Most professors do not address it and, when it is brought up, brush it aside as an issue we should address, but perhaps not today. Moreover, the mainstream seem blind to it, which further increases sense of alienation” (other diversity, female, age 35-44, graduate, 3-5 years of study). Comments like this, highlighting a lack of action towards harassment and discrimination, leads students to question how the university would handle reports of misconduct.

Theme 3: Feelings of Inclusion.

Desire for Meaningful Connections. Some students expressed that they feel respected and welcomed by the faculty, but not included. There is a desire to connect with Faculty members and their peers outside of the classroom. As previously mentioned, students valued the ability to mingle with their peers and Faculty members at the orientation in a casual fashion. One student wrote, “It was nice to have advisors and recruitment officers out in the hallway the first week of classes to get help. More face-to-face interaction like that would be good in creating a more open environment (not just sitting in offices). It would be great to see advisors, dean, etc. come into more classes too” (disability, female, age 25-34, after-degree, 0-1 years of study). It

would appear that some students look to these situations to make long-term connections and to feel part of the department. In the cases where students felt included, there were accompanying comments about being happy and enjoying their learning experiences: “I like the building and seeing people I know. I believe that helps my social well-being and also my psychological. Also, having people around and overhearing other people who have the same interests contributes to a happy environment” (female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study).

A portion of students believe there is no interaction within the Faculty and that it is hard to connect with students on a personal level. Large class sizes may be one factor fuelling this perception as they are identified as impeding the students’ ability to get involved and create meaningful relationships. These students look forward to the later years of their education when the class sizes decrease. When classes are smaller, students feel greater respect and more included in the Faculty. On a larger scale, some students from certain education programs feel a disconnection between departments and within the university. Identified programs include Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS). Several students from these programs believe their programs are viewed as separate from the department. There is a sense of loneliness and desire to prove their program’s relevance. Structural components, such as the location of program offices and the education building feeling isolated from the rest of the university, may play a role.

Thesis advisors and professors are identified as often attempting to get students involved in class activities and academic opportunities. However, not all students are recipients to such Faculty attempts or are able to create a level of relationship they desire. These students request that the department offer assistance by holding social mixers where students and Faculty members can bond. One student wrote, “I wish that there was more of an opportunity for me to interact with the people I’ve met outside of classes. For example, even though it’s relatively

simple for students to organize study groups on their own, it would be nice to have that organizational space set aside for such things on eClass or maybe through some other faculty resource” (other diversity, female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Specific activity requests from students include social mixers, game nights, time to mingle with graduate students, research fairs, and team building events. Students want “more activities including groups, smaller group events so people can get to know each other” (female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 1-2 years of study). These opportunities are especially important for ‘other diversity’ (i.e., off-campus and first year students), Indigenous, and visibly diverse students.

Feedback. Several students expressed a genuine desire to learn through constructive feedback. They want to acquire all necessary skills to find and excel in future teaching positions. Unfortunately, feedback appears to be more readily offered in field placements or from graduate thesis advisors than in the classroom. This upsets some students because they want to know how they can improve beyond a received letter grade. One student wrote, “I paid 6800.00 to be in this program and get told that I will never get a grade higher than a B because that has been the class average for the past ten years. All this says to me is that the professor doesn’t have to really mark anything because as far as their concerned you’re only going to get a B, maybe a B+, but that’s it.” (other diversity, female, age 25-34, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). When they receive solely a letter grade, some students may feel resentful. Various students outwardly express a desire for personalized, specific, and improvement/change-oriented feedback from their professors.

Another theme related to feedback is a sense of fear from both students and professors. For students, there is the perception that if they offer their professors negative feedback concerning their teaching, they will be penalized (i.e., not offered an research assistantship) and that asking for feedback on exam marks will be meet with criticism. For professors, students

sense there is a fear of providing feedback that could be challenged by the student or the university. One student shared, “I have never received feedback without explicitly requesting it. The answers I received seemed more interested in providing the least risky answer as opposed to the most beneficial.” (male, age 35-44, after-degree, 3-5 years of study).

Theme 4: Concerns about the Future of the Program.

Budgetary Concerns. When asked if they would recommend the faculty to perspective students, one student wrote, “I would recommend the faculty but not the program. With the new cuts and modifications to the program, and with the elimination of the minor or elementary education, I don’t feel that the degree holds as much credit.” (female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Concern about how budget cuts will affect the offered education is a salient theme among students. There is heightened awareness pertaining to courses being cut: “I rarely hear positive comments about the faculty, and everyone wants to just finish before everything is cut.” (visibly diverse, female, age 18-24, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). Students in teaching programs are especially upset that classroom management courses and opportunities for hands-on teaching are being eliminated because they are viewed as essential to their future teaching success. There is a concern that without training in these areas, students will be unable to find a job in what is perceived as a competitive job market. Some students believe that the university is more concerned with profiting off tuition from high acceptance rates than the offered education.

Further, several students express feelings of stress that is intensified by a lack of open communication. Comments requesting involvement and awareness pertaining to the effects of budgetary changes are common. These students believe the university is working against them and they want to feel included in decisions about their future. One student shared her experience and perception about how budget cuts have affected her education process: “The new structure of classes takes a backward step for those who are trying to finish their degrees. Devaluing minors

by cutting the course and forcing students to abandon their minor is unfair and demonstrates a lack of respect for student time and money invested into the courses. Graduation has gone from very simple to unnecessarily complex, emotionally destructive, frustrating process. As a student, our best needs are not looked out for; our programs require accountability from the faculty. When this respect is developed between students and staff, the climate will be much more positive than today.” (other diversity, male, age 25-34, undergraduate, 3-5 years of study). While budgetary concerns echo through all groups, it appears most salient for younger females and less salient for males, with the previous quote as an example.

Future Job Opportunities. Among students in teaching programs, there is a sense of hopelessness concerning future career opportunities. Conversations within the Faculty has lead these students to believe they need to have a “plan B” when they graduate because there will be limited career opportunities. The students’ level of stress is exacerbated by what is perceived as a lack of initiative from the department to help rectify the problem. Several students want the Faculty to help by creating networking opportunities, sharing current job postings, offering guidance on how to find teaching jobs, and working with the school boards to create jobs. Further, these students wish that the department would accept students at a rate that reflected the job market. Ultimately, the students just want to see that their future is being considered.

Table 10. *Faculty Strengths and Weaknesses*

Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>Academic Resources</i>	Positive arrival experiences with the orientation, provided supports, resources, and Faculty.	After-degree, new transfer, and international students did not believe that the orientation was specific to

their unique needs.

Academic advisors were helpful during the welcoming events and orientation.

Academic advisors and Undergraduate Student Services (USS) were not always helpful throughout the school semester.

University resources created for specific diversity groups are highly valued.

Events/activities being held during busy times of the school semester.

The location of the USS office was viewed as easily accessible.

Students hearing about events/activities after they had occurred.

Limited events/activities that are casual and that allow for student and faculty mingling.

A lack of awareness pertaining to the mentorship program.

Offices and classrooms in the basement are viewed as degrading.

The unrenovated

*Discrimination and
Harassment*

Faculty perceived as
friendly and encouraging.

Students are able to identify
a person they could
confident in regarding
incidences of discrimination
and harassment.

appearance of the Faculty of
Education building made
students feel
underappreciated by the
university.

Identified discrimination
and harassment towards
various culturally groups,
such as Indigenous,
religious, and visibly
diverse groups.

‘White bashing’ and an
overall negative reaction to
EDU 211.

No clear queer policy for
the LGBTQ population.
Some professors are not
perceived as open to
differing perspectives and
diversity.

The perception that students

need to fit a certain mould
to be included within the
Faculty.

Perceived white favouritism
for funding and academic
opportunities.

Fear of penalty for
providing honest feedback
or reporting misconduct.

Perception that the
university would not take
reported misconduct
serious.

Feelings of Inclusion

Students believe that they
are respected.

There is a desire to connect
with the Faculty outside of
the classroom.

Thesis advisors and
professors share academic
opportunities and encourage
students to get involved in
the Faculty.

Large classes make it hard
for students to bond.

Students from some
programs, such as

*Concerns about the Future
of the Program*

Elementary Education, do
not feel as part of the
Faculty.

Specific feedback not
provided to the students
(unless requested).

Students request more open
communication about
program changes due to
budget cuts.

Courses viewed as
important by the students
are being eliminated.

Students fear they will not
find career employment
after graduation and believe
they need a “plan B”.

Research Question 5 and Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The merging of quantitative and qualitative data is essential for mixed methods research (MMR; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Hanson et al. 2005). The integration of unique data sets allows for a more in-depth analysis and comprehensive understanding of the experienced student climate within the Faculty. Following Creswell’s (2015) model of convergent explanatory MMR inquiry, this integration first occurs at the data collection stage and again at a later point in time following

the analysis of the quantitative data. Ultimately, the aim is to use the qualitative data to fully comprehend, in this case, the climate survey results. The fifth RQ urges the use of the open-ended qualitative data inform/enhance the understanding of the quantitative, survey data.

At first glance, the quantitative results paint a fairly positive picture of the Faculty. As mentioned earlier, many students *agree* they are respected and included in the Faculty and *agree* that others are as well. Further, few students have personally experienced (11.2%, $n = 30$) or witnessed discrimination or harassment (20.1%, $n = 54$). As a result, it makes sense that majority of the students would suggest the Faculty of Education to prospective students (72.5%, $n = 195$). However, the qualitative results provide some conflicting data. The open-ended responses highlight that particular diversity groups have been singled out in classes (e.g., religious groups, Indigenous, international students, Asian, East Indian, Lebanese, Muslim, Cubans, Latinos) and courses where harassment has occurred (i.e., EDU 211). Further, as mentioned, students fear they may be penalized by professors if they express their opinions, which may differ. It is suspected that while a majority of students experience a positive climate within the Faculty, any witnessed discrimination or harassment toward students were salient experiences that affected their perception of the climate.

Contradictory data also emerged in terms of student perceptions of inclusion. Quantitative data suggested that near-majority of students *agree* they are included (49.1%, $n = 132$), while the qualitative data paints a different picture – one of personal isolation. Indigenous and LGBTQ students, for example, shared they felt most connected to university programs and groups that brought together people from their cultural group. Further, all students expressed a desire to create lasting relationships with their classmates and to get to know their professors better. Visibly diverse and ‘other diversity’ students, especially new transfer, and international students,

appear to be the most isolated and request University-organized events where they can mingle with fellow classmates and professors. There appears to be a fine distinction between feelings of ‘respect and inclusion’ and ‘meaningful connections’ for the students.

A discrepancy also exists between other Faculties in the university and the Faculty of Education, as well as between students and professors. Many students compared their department and its features to other departments in the university. The physical appearance and characteristics (i.e., cafeteria, lounge areas, art, layout, art, etc.) of the Faculty of Education building makes some students believe the university undervalues their program. Within the Faculty of Education, programs with classrooms and offices in the basement are, students believe, especially disadvantaged to other programs. From this, there is a sense of seclusion and desire to prove their program’s relevance.

The quantitative data also revealed that many students were unable to identify someone they could disclose concerns regarding discrimination or harassment (58.4%; $n = 157$), they were unaware of where and how to formally file complaints and questioned whether or not their report would be taken seriously (57.2%, $n = 154$). The qualitative data added insight to this finding by highlighting some related student concerns. First, without a clear queer policy put in place, there is hesitation about how seriously the university takes any experienced discrimination or harassment pertaining to students who identify as LGBTQ. Second, when students were able to identify a confidant for perceived discrimination or harassment, what appeared to be essential was a personal relationship with the person. More specifically, students felt most comfortable talking to a professor who has taught them or a fellow member of a university organization, which may in part be due to the lack of student awareness about the University of Alberta’s Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (69.1%, $n = 186$). Another contributing factor may

be broken trust between the student body and university. Echoed throughout the qualitative data were personal examples where the university has, at times, let students down. Examples include a lack of open-communication about budget cuts and issues with academic advisors.

The quantitative results also revealed that one-third of students rarely attended Faculty events or activities (34.2%, $n = 92$). This lack of knowledge may speak to why, in the qualitative data, many students requested opportunities to mingle and bond with fellow students and professors. Several students described a university organized social outlet as essential for their well-being. This is especially important for off-campus, first year, Indigenous, 'other diversity', and visibly diverse students. In terms of why students have not attended Faculty events and activities, the qualitative data revealed that many students are too busy, hear about the events after they have occurred, believe the topics are intimidating, or do not want to attend the function alone. Further, there are requests for smaller, non-academic events where friendships can be established.

As mentioned, when students were asked whether or not they found orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory, the most frequent responses were *undecided* (32%, $n = 86$) to *agree* (23%, $n = 62$). Looking at the qualitative data, it seems that the *undecided* response may stem from the fact students heard about many events after they had occurred or better apply to knowledge about the mentoring program, which all students from all groups requested further information. Knowledge about the mentoring program would be especially fruitful for the students who shared concerns about future employment opportunities and those who requested more hands-on experience. The qualitative data also highlighted issues pertaining to assistance from academic advisors. Their role during orientation was praised for its ability to help decrease stress and provide academic direction, but once the semester started, students from all groups felt

largely unsupported. This lack of support was especially salient for the visibly diverse students participating in an international program who felt left to fend for themselves.

Quantitative data revealed significant group differences in that the ‘other diversity’ students perceived the Faculty’s climate as significantly more negative than the other students. Looking at the quantitative data, one possible contributing factor may be the discussed lack of awareness pertaining to where and how to voice concerns about discrimination (57.2%, $n = 154$). On the other hand, the qualitative data offers additional insight. The group of ‘other diversity’ students is diverse. It consists of single mothers, various religious affiliations, younger and older students than the majority, and students in unique academic situations (i.e., new transfer, part-time studies). It may be that these individuals felt the most segregated from other students based on the limited number of individuals who have shared experiences. The qualitative data also indicated that the ‘other diversity’ students found the orientation less helpful because they felt it did not fit their unique needs. As a result, these students felt left to naively navigate through their education. To these students, the Faculty appeared disorganized, which contributed negatively to their experiences. Further, students who spoke English as a second language felt marginalized in terms of meeting education requirements and finding funding or assistantships.

Another theme was apparent for the ‘other diversity’ group was the previously mentioned discrimination and harassment by some Faculty members. Some students commented on how they had witnessed their fellow students be demeaned or ignored by their professors for holding a perspective that differed from the professor or for their racial ethnicity (i.e., East Indian, Indigenous). Other students shared feelings of being personally attacked for their faith. At times, attacks on the students’ faith were indirect and ignorant comments about ‘the church’ or Christianity. As a result of this witnessed and experienced harassment, ‘other diversity’ students

believed they had to fit a certain mould and this had a negative effect on student involvement. For example, one student said they stopped attending events because they felt they did not belong.

Similarly, while several 'other diversity' students identified someone they could confide in regarding harassment or discrimination, they are not convinced it would make a difference. This notion may be fuelled by the fact mainstream students and Faculty members don't notice or address discrimination when it arises. Perceived favouritism towards White, middle class students, lead 'other diversity' students to question their worth to the program and wonder if their value rests in their tuition payment. Similar to the other student groups, the 'other diversity' students also experienced stress pertaining to the effects of budgetary cuts on their program and future employment options, which may exacerbate their negative experiences within the Faculty.

Chapter 4: Discussion

This thesis employed a convergent sequential mixed methods design to better understand student diversity and well-being across various cultural groups in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. The ultimate aim of this research was to inform policy makers of areas for growth in the Faculty. This aim was achieved by addressing five RQs. The first question addressed the factor structure of the original climate survey. The second question addressed the extent to which the faculty is perceived as supportive and inclusive. The third and fourth questions addressed relative strengths and weaknesses, diversity-wise. The fifth question addressed how, if at all, the open-ended narrative qualitative data informed and enhanced the understanding of the numeric quantitative survey data.

For the first RQ, pertaining to the factor structure of the climate survey, it was hypothesized that the climate survey consisted of three factors, based on its development and initial conceptualization. The original three factors were Learning Climate, Discrimination and Harassment, and Feedback. However, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) revealed that the factor structure of the climate survey differed from the initial conceptualization by the addition of a factor and a slight alteration of a pre-existing factor, which accounted for 88% of the variance in scaled scores. The first new factor explained 41% of the variance and was labelled Positive Student Experiences, as it addressed topics of inclusion and respect. The second new factor explained 26% of the variance and was labelled Negative Student Experiences, as it addressed topics of discrimination and harassment. The third new factor explained 14% of the variance and was labelled Dynamic Feedback, as it addressed topics of positive mentoring and supervision. The final new fourth factor explained 7% of the variance and was labelled Student Engagement, as it addressed topics of involvement within the Faculty. The third and fourth new factors were

single-item factors and, as a result, any interpretations from these factors should be addressed with caution.

Turning to climate surveys administered at other Canadian universities, this four-factor structure bares the most resemblance to the climate surveys administered at the University of Ottawa and the University of Saskatchewan. University of Ottawa looked at a more specific issue, namely sexual violence, and surveyed students across four factors that assessed beliefs, experiences, impact, and willingness to intervene in sexual violence (University of Ottawa, 2016). Other universities, looking at Faculty member experiences, included up to eleven factors that ranged from collegial culture to personal and professional life balance (University of British Columbia, 2016; University of Toronto, 2015). The University of Saskatchewan surveyed students across five factors that assessed overall campus climate, campus experiences, classroom experiences and interactions with staff/faculty, helpfulness of support services, and how to improve campus climate (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Given the emphasis on student experiences, it is argued that the University of Saskatchewan's climate survey bares the most resemblance overall to our climate survey. Further, due to the fact that the University of Saskatchewan has openly shared a complete report of their findings, their research will serve as a comparison for the remaining RQs.

The second RQ inquired about the extent to which the Faculty's climate was perceived as supportive and inclusive. Based on the findings from the University of Alberta's Safe Spaces survey, it was hypothesized that across the various diversity groups results would show that the Faculty created a positive climate for the students (Kinkartz et al., 2013). When asked, "Do you feel you are respected and included in the faculty?" and "Do you feel others are respected and included in the faculty?", the most frequent responses were *agree* or *strongly agree* (79.9%, $n = 215$; 80.7%, $n = 217$). Moreover, these same students rated the current climate of the Faculty as

positive or *somewhat positive* (78.8%, $n = 212$) and agreed that they would recommend the Faculty of Education to prospective students (72.5%, $n = 195$). These findings compare to the University of Saskatchewan where it was also found that students would recommend their university to prospective students (80%) and viewed their university as providing a positive classroom experience (77%; University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

The climate survey also revealed that while most students were aware of student orientations and mentoring programs (48.3%, $n = 130$), many were not (35.7%, $n = 96$). When students were asked if their experiences with orientation and the mentoring program were satisfactory, about a third were *undecided* (32%, $n = 86$). Academic feedback may be another salient concern. The most frequent response by undergraduate students pertaining to how often feedback was received was *never* (20.4%, $n = 55$). Responses for graduate students were more favourable as feedback was identified as occurring most frequently on a quarterly basis (6.7%, $n = 18$). When students did receive feedback, it was perceived as being constructive (55.4%, $n = 149$), which identifies a strength of the Faculty. A third concern is student participation in Faculty events/activities, as 2/3rds of students *rarely* or *occasionally* attended events (63.9%, $n = 172$). After reviewing other climate surveys, it became apparent that questions related to orientation, mentoring programs, and feedback were unique to this climate survey. While no direct comparisons can be made, the University of Saskatchewan did find that their students rated their academic experiences and support services as satisfactory (University of Saskatchewan, 2013), which may, at face value, contrast the lack of program awareness and low rates of academic feedback found from our climate survey.

In terms of discrimination and harassment, a majority of the students had not been recipients to such behaviour (81.4%, $n = 219$) and had not witnessed such behaviour inflicted on others (72.5%, $n = 195$). These rates are similar to the University of Saskatchewan where it was

established that few of students (under 10%) experienced harassment, discrimination, and exclusion (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Looking closer at the climate survey questions that pertained to discrimination and harassment, some issues arise. First, majority of students were not aware of where and how to formally report discrimination or harassment (57.2%, $n = 154$) and while many believe that a report of misconduct would be taken seriously (28.3%, $n = 76$), others were *unsure* (25.7%, $n = 69$). Second, many students were unable to identify someone within the Faculty whom they could confide in if issues of discrimination or harassment arose (58.4%, $n = 157$). Again, these findings, in part, parallel the University of Saskatchewan's climate survey where it was identified that a weakness within their Faculty was their students' knowledge of where and how to report sexual harassment and assault (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Inferential between-group statistics of the new four-factor climate survey revealed two key findings. The first key finding with a nearing moderate effect size was that 'other diversity' students experienced the Faculty's climate as significantly more negative than other students. This finding was shared with the University of Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). The second key finding from our climate survey had a strong effect size and was that the Indigenous students rated their mentoring and supervision as significantly more favourable than the other students. Deeper investigation revealed that the Indigenous students' mean rating for their feedback from their supervisors or program advisors was higher than the other diversity or majority groups. This latter finding highlights Faculty success in providing support to graduate Indigenous students. As mentioned, questions pertaining to the provided academic feedback were unique to this climate survey, which limits the ability to compare these findings with other universities.

The third RQ sought to understand the Faculty's strengths via qualitative data. This data offered insights into several areas of excellence. New students shared many positive arrival experiences with program checks, student orientation, academic advisors, graduate student coordinators, information sessions with a question and answer periods, campus tours, wiki, and student services. In addition, resources created for specific diversity groups (i.e., Indigenous, LGBTQ), such as Aboriginal Student Service Centre (ASSC), were highly valued for their support and social opportunities, which another finding shared with the University of Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). When students could find time, they also enjoyed attending Faculty events and activities hosted by the Undergraduate or Graduate Student Association (USA, GSA), guest speakers, social events, information sessions, and campus conferences. Additionally, an effort by the Faculty (i.e., professors or thesis advisors) to get students involved in academic opportunities and class activities were highly appreciated and made students feel included. The presence of Faculty in the hallways where they were easily accessible for questions and conversation appeared to aid in student comfort and in feelings of inclusion. Further, the male students praised the department for making them feel included and valued in what they perceived as a female dominated profession. These Faculty strengths appear to encompass topics related to inclusion within the Faculty.

The fourth RQ alluded to Faculty's weaknesses. Areas for Faculty growth were highlighted by the qualitative data. First concerns pertaining to Faculty support services will be mentioned. While orientation was previously identified as a strength, it was also a weakness. Visibly diverse and 'other diversity' students (i.e., after-degree, international, and new transfer students) believed the orientation lacked information specific to their unique circumstances. There were also requests from students entering later years of their degrees (e.g., second or third year) for an orientation that was more specific to the year of their degree. These students wanted

information on topics such as ‘how to graduate’ and ‘ways to find employment.’ Moreover, once the orientation concluded, students from all groups felt unsupported by academic advisors, which highlights a need to improve academic resources available to the students throughout the semester.

Students also expressed a desire to attend Faculty events and activities, but found the times inconvenient, topics too scholarly and overwhelming, or believed they had no one to accompany them to the functions. Requests for events that are timed around exams and more casual in nature were common (i.e., mixers and game nights). It was important to the students that the university host such events because, for some students, this is their sole source of opportunities to build relationships with their fellow students. Other student concerns related to how budgetary cuts were affecting their education and requested open communication from the university on the matter. There was a lot of fear pertaining to the future job market and an urge for the department to offer assistance. In addition, students were unaware of the mentorship program and its benefits. This is particularly troubling given that awareness of this service may address some of the former student requests for interaction and guidance.

Another weakness pertained to the Education building itself. Students voiced concerns about the unrenovated appearance and general layout. These concerns include having offices in the basement, distracting noises from the building, uncomfortable classroom layouts, limited art and plant life, a lack of social seating, and few cafeteria dining options. The building’s appearance, utilities, and office/classroom location appeared to convey the message to the students that the university undervalued the Faculty. These discussed issues may be an area for contrast with the University of Saskatchewan where a mean rating of 4.30 (out of 5.00) was found for satisfaction with the university’s support services. The most applicable findings were positive student ratings of academic advisors, the Employment and Career Centre, and food and

drink services (rating of 3.79 and higher out of 5.00; University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Despite these differences, some similarities did arise. These findings being, student requests for more information regarding university groups and increased opportunities for students to engage with their peers (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Weaknesses pertaining to strong negative opinions about some professors will now be discussed. These opinions included beliefs that various professors were not open to opinions that differed from their own, behaved in an arrogant manner as if they would not face repercussions for poor behaviour, would not accept negative feedback, and feared offering students honest feedback that could be challenged. Furthermore, several ethnic groups (e.g., Indigenous, international students, Asian, East Indian, Lebanese, Muslim, Cubans, Latinos) were identified as the recipients of discrimination and harassment from both students, especially undergraduate, and professors. This witnessed discrimination or harassment against ethnic groups may have raised concerns for the LGBTQ population as a queer policy is identified as necessary for their comfort. Similarly, several students believed the department would not take a report of misconduct seriously. This belief may stem from experiences were professors have either initiated or ignored discrimination or harassment in the classroom. In evaluating how to improve their campus climate, the University of Saskatchewan also found that students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including visibly and sexually diverse, were recipients to discrimination and harassment (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). A similar issue with insensitivity towards the Indigenous population was also found (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

The fifth RQ used the open-ended narrative qualitative data to better understand the quantitative closed-ended questions of the climate survey. From the quantitative data, several findings suggest that a positive climate has been achieved within the Faculty. For example, as previously mentioned, many students *agree* they and others are respected and included in the

Faculty and few students have personally experienced (11.2%, $n = 30$) or witnessed discrimination or harassment (20.1%, $n = 54$). However, the qualitative data highlighted several cultural groups who have been singled out in classes (e.g., religious groups, aboriginal, international students, Asian, East Indian, Lebanese, Muslim, Cubans, Latinos) and an accompanying course of concern (i.e., EDU 211). These incidents appear to have created a sense of fear that penalty, in the form of public shame or prohibited academic opportunities, will follow any shared contradicting opinions or experiences with discrimination and harassment. The quantitative data suggested that the students lacked awareness about the University of Alberta's Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (69.1%, $n = 186$) and were unsure whether or not their report would be taken seriously (57.2%, $n = 154$), which may be further exacerbated issues with disclosure. As previously mentioned, the low rates of discrimination and harassment, lack of knowledge about university support services for misconduct, and negative classroom experiences for specific ethnic groups are similar to the climate survey results from the University of Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Student perceptions of inclusion were another area of contradiction within the data. More specifically, while the quantitative data highlights that near-majority of students *agree* they are included (49.1%, $n = 132$), the qualitative data highlights students' pleas for meaningful connections with their peers and professors. These requests appear to be the most salient for students from the 'other diversity' group, such as new transfer and international students, where the quantitative data showed that one-third of students rarely attended Faculty events and activities (34.2%, $n = 92$). The qualitative data revealed several reasons impeding attendance to Faculty events/activities, such as busy schedules, hearing about the events after they have occurred, believing the topics are intimidating, or not wanting to attend the function alone. Lastly, the qualitative data highlighted little previous knowledge about the mentorship program. This

may suggest misleading results from the quantitative climate survey item that asked students whether or not they found orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory. An increased awareness pertaining to the mentorship program would be beneficial to students who shared concerns about future employment opportunities and those who requested more hands-on experience. While many of these specific findings (i.e., reasons for not attending events, mentorship program awareness, etc.) are unique to this climate survey, as mentioned the University of Saskatchewan also found student requests for increased social opportunities to bond with their peers and professors (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Another key finding from the quantitative data was significant group differences in that the ‘other diversity’ students perceived the Faculty’s climate as significantly more negative than the other students. Several of the previously mentioned concerns, such as knowledge of where and how to voice concerns about discrimination (57.2%, $n = 154$) and University of Alberta’s Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights (69.1%, $n = 186$), may be contributing factors. The qualitative, in turn, highlights the diversity within the ‘other diversity’ students (i.e., single mothers, various religious affiliations, younger and older students than the majority, and students in unique academic situations). It possible that these students feel segregated as a result of the limited number of individuals who have shared experiences, which is echoed in this groups comments about how they found the orientation less helpful because they felt it did not fit their unique needs. Further, the ‘other diversity’ population were often identified as the recipients of classroom harassment and believed they were discriminated against in terms of academic opportunities. The University of Saskatchewan found similar factors contributing factors to the negative experiences faced by their visibly diverse students, namely harassing comments, unfair treatment, and exclusion (University of Saskatchewan, 2013).

Limitations

In terms of limitations, the survey itself could be improved. During the qualitative data analysis, it appeared that the climate survey questions 5A (i.e., “Are you aware of student orientations or mentoring programs within the faculty?”) and 5B (i.e., “If yes, are the orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory?”) were loaded questions. More specifically, students had different responses for their knowledge and experiences with student orientations and the mentoring programs. As a result, the quantitative data for these questions may be misrepresentative. Separating these questions into ones that inquired about orientation and mentoring programs in isolation would have strengthened the quantitative data and the subsequent analysis. Items addressing discrimination and harassment could also have been separated and an item addressing exclusion could have been added, mimicking the University of Saskatchewan’s climate survey (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). Further, items addressing the unique types of discrimination and harassment would also be fruitful. This would provide additional knowledge pertaining to negative campus experiences.

Other beneficial additions to the climate survey, all modelled after the University of Saskatchewan, include adding a mental health condition to the demographic questions, addressing satisfaction with various university support services or resources (i.e., library, parking, etc.), and inquiring about plans to leave or remain at the university (University of Saskatchewan, 2013). It should also be emphasized that it is hard to make meaningful between-group comparisons on single-item measures, like the last two factors of the climate survey (i.e., Student Engagement, Dynamic Feedback). Lastly, additional psychometric work, such as a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), could have been conducted to strengthen the results.

This climate study also has several limitations concerning generalizability that must be addressed. The first limitation to generalizability applies to the ability to extend this climate research to the University of Alberta as a whole, as well as other Research-Intensive universities

in Canada. While the climate survey yielded a sample size sufficient statistical purpose, the response rate was low, capturing only 7% of the Faculty of Education, a response well below other climate survey research where response rates between 22% and 25% were found (University of Ottawa, 2016; University of Saskatchewan, 2016). Further, the convenience sampling technique creates ambiguity surrounding whether or not these results are representative of the University of Alberta. Had participants been randomly sampled throughout all the Faculties that comprise the University of Alberta, results may be more representative. Lastly, since participants who had completed less than half of the survey were removed, there was a 26% attrition that must be considered. Taken together, it may be hard to generalize to the entire Faculty student body and make valid inferences.

Another limitation is the quality and overall interpretability of the qualitative data, which lacked depth. Given that the qualitative data consisted solely on the open-ended survey responses, it is notably limited and impoverished. Rich and informative data could have been gathered by focus groups or one-on-one interviews with purposefully sampled students held after the survey administration, similar to the climate survey research conducted by the University of Ottawa (University of Ottawa, 2013). Had such interview data been obtained, traditional ‘member checks’ with participants would have confirmed that I accurately captured the meaning of the open-ended responses, thus increasing the trustworthiness of the qualitative data and interpretation.

Another limitation with this research pertains to the time of the data collection and interpretation. More specifically, the data from the climate survey was gathered in 2014 and analyzed from 2015 to 2016. It is likely that the Faculty’s climate has changed in the two years between data collection and interpretation. As a result, questions regarding the ability of the results to accurately represent the current climate must be raised. However, despite this

limitation, the qualitative data analysis offered unique insight to topics that were important to the students. These topics include the ability to create meaningful relationships, more open communication from the university regarding program changes, and orientations focused on the unique issues faced by visibly diverse and ‘other diversity’ students. Further, it may be argued that without calculated action, several raised concerns and issues would likely persist. For example, without increased advertising, students would likely still be unaware of the mentorship program.

The final limitation addresses an omission during data preparation. Information regarding students’ year of study and level of education was collected as part of the climate survey. Unfortunately, when the data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), this information was not included. This oversight restricted analyses investigating group differences between undergraduate and graduate students.

Implications

Keeping these limitations in mind, the results have important implications for the Faculty and for improving the diversity on campus. First, after-degree, second to fifth year, new-transfer, and international students found the orientation to be less helpful than other students. Although further information is warranted to identify specific avenues for change, there were requests for information on how to graduate. Given the positive comments about peer programs, it may also be suspected that increased awareness about these resources, as well as the mentorship program, would be helpful. Second, the Faculty should maintain the level of support provided by academic advisors during welcoming events throughout the semester as it was viewed as a strength of the Faculty. Comments from the students highlighted careless errors and an inability to readily meet with academic advisors. It may be that additional staff and support is required within their offices.

Third, attendance to Faculty events/activities was recognized as low by the quantitative data. Insight from the qualitative data highlighted that more casual events where students could bond with their peers and professors would be helpful for their well-being and perceived inclusion within the Faculty. Events/activities during less busy times of semester would also be beneficial. Fourth, while the location of the USS office was praised for being easily accessible, concerns were raised about the unrenovated appearance of the building, basement offices and classrooms, and overcrowded classrooms. Faculty efforts to update the Faculty of Education building would improve the campus climate. More specifically, the students made requests for the removal of offices and classrooms from the basement. It may be constructive to utilize the basement space for the requested increased student lounge and work areas or cafeteria dining. The request for decreased classroom sizes would also give students additional opportunity to bond, thus improving their feelings of Faculty inclusion.

Fifth, a Faculty strength was the ability to make students feel welcomed and respected. Encouragement by thesis advisors and professors toward academic opportunities were especially valued. However, students mentioned issues regarding classroom insensitivity towards diversity and contradicting opinions. Efforts by the Faculty to implement a queer policy and increase cultural training for both students and Faculty members would highlight inappropriate behaviour and may make students feel cared for by the Faculty. This would also be an opportunity to increase the limited awareness about the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights. Sixth, all student populations voiced concerns about the future of their programs and career opportunities. Meeting student requests for more open communication concerning program changes and increasing awareness about the mentorship program could help decrease fears.

This research also highlights how current conceptualizations of what constitutes a minority group should be broadened. Moodley (2007) argued that efforts for cultural sensitivity

must extend beyond visibly diverse groups. This research supported this notion by (1) highlighting that within the Faculty of Education the various cultural groups comprised majority of the student body, and (2) that the ‘other diversity’ constitutes a diverse group with unique needs. Further, perceived discrimination or harassment affects both the recipient and bystander, further broadening the necessary scoop for cultural sensitivity efforts.

While many implications can be identified, it is important to keep in mind the previously mentioned limitations that reduce the strength of this research. More specifically, the sample size was small, only capturing 7% of the Faculty of Education; the administered survey was not well-validated, lacking reliability and validity; and the qualitative data lacked depth and ‘member checks’ required to ensure accuracy. Regardless, this research does highlight areas that may require heightened attention and further evaluation.

Directions for Future Research

Insight into the student experiences within the Faculty of Education opens opportunities for future research endeavours that should be conducted with intention and guiding research questions. Attention should be paid to sampling issues (i.e., administering the survey during a less busy time of the semester) and data collection (i.e., using a validated survey instrument and in-depth interview methods). It would also be fruitful to examine the climates of other Faculties within the university; as well as the staff, including professors and administrators. Such evaluation would allow for comparisons between and within the various Faculties. This thesis research also alluded to the existence of microaggressions (see Davis et al., 2016). As a result, valuable information may be gleaned from survey items that inquire about subtle and degrading comments about one’s diversity group membership.

As previously mentioned, the data from the climate survey was collected in 2014, which warrants the need for a re-administration. A new survey of the Faculty’s climate would confirm

the existence of the previously identified Faculty strengths and weaknesses. It would also allow for the separation of the potentially loaded climate survey items (i.e., 5A, 5B) and the addition of items capture the unique student experiences highlighted as important from the qualitative data. More specifically, items related to the existence of meaningful relationships and student involvement in program decisions. Other research endeavours may include the implementation of an annual climate survey for all departments at the University of Alberta. Such research would highlight the strengths and weaknesses within and between departments.

Focus groups would be another way to build off this research. The qualitative data from the climate survey raised several questions that were left with some ambiguous answers. For example, all groups identified the Indigenous population as recipients of discrimination or harassment, yet the Indigenous population rated their experiences with feedback as significantly better than other students. Why is this? Are Indigenous students actively seeking out more feedback? If so, why? Further, it was speculated from the qualitative feedback that the 'other diversity' group experienced the Faculty's climate as significantly more negative than other groups as a result of factors related isolation and unique needs not being met. However, further more specific information needs to be gathered in order to successfully improve the Faculty's climate for these students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis study answered the call for a cross-cultural assessment that moved beyond previously employed 'all' or 'none' fashion approaches (Toporek et al., 2000). The primary emphasis on quantitative data allowed for an efficient evaluation of the Faculty's climate, while the qualitative data provided valuable information that would have otherwise been overlooked. Taken together, this research posits that the Faculty has largely succeeded in

providing students with a positive climate, especially in terms of the academic feedback provided to students who are Indigenous.

Other results identified areas for growth, including improvements in academic resources that meet the distinct needs of diversity groups; rectifying and preventing the few, but salient, bouts of discrimination or harassment; increasing opportunities for meaningful connections and specific feedback; and, addressing student concerns pertaining to their future in the program and career field. Given these themes were especially salient for ‘other diversity’ students, this may in part account for this group’s heightened negative experience of the Faculty’s climate. The perception of ‘being cared for’ and belonging are pivotal to the academic success of minority students (O’Keeffe, 2013). Therefore, it is important that efforts to increase feelings of inclusion continue.

The importance of this research further extends to its ability to meet the ethical and accreditation demands of a university to assess their cross-cultural competence (Sinacore et al., 2011; Gelso et al., 2014). In doing so, work is done to eliminate ignorance and ensure fair treatment starts in the institutions that train our future leaders and the citizens that comprise our society (Gurin et al., 2002). Listening to the voices of the marginalized also starts necessary discussions pertaining to cultural diversity, broadens our conceptualization of marginalized populations, and follows the suggestion to practice cultural consultation (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Sinacore et al., 2011). This in turn, informs Canadian counselling programs about changes in the cultural climate and populations at risk.

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Appendix A
Letter of REB Ethics Approval

2017-02-27, 10:52 AM

**RESEARCH ETHICS OFFICE**

308 Campus Tower
Edmonton, AB, Canada T6G 1K8
Tel: 780.492.0459
Fax: 780.492.9429
www.reo.ualberta.ca

Notification of Approval

Date: February 6, 2014
Study ID: Pro00044944
Principal Investigator: [Kristopher Wells](#)
Study Title: Faculty of Education Climate Survey
Approval Expiry Date: February 3, 2015

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 2. Your application has been reviewed and approved on behalf of the committee.

A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Approval by the Research Ethics Board does not encompass authorization to access the staff, students, facilities or resources of local institutions for the purposes of the research.

Sincerely,

Ian Reade, Ph.D.
Associate Chair, Research Ethics Board 2

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

Appendix B

Climate Survey Consent Form

Faculty of Education Climate Survey

The Faculty of Education is committed to the principle of a respectful and inclusive work and learning environment and endeavours to provide an environment which is welcoming and supportive for everyone. The Faculty's Diversity, Equity, and Respect Committee, working in concert with Human Resource Services' Employment Equity Advisor, has developed the following anonymous survey to collect feedback and insights on the degree of respect and inclusion experienced within the Faculty of Education.

The survey results will be used to inform future conversations, strategic planning, policy development, and training and development opportunities to foster a respectful and inclusive work and learning environment in our Faculty. While we intend to distribute the questionnaire to all members of the Faculty, the first group to receive the survey are students registered in undergraduate and graduate programs in the Faculty of Education. It is important to us to provide opportunities for everyone in the Faculty to safely express their perceptions and experiences related to respect and inclusion within our Faculty and we hope you will take the time to participate.

Please take the time to complete this short anonymous voluntary survey by February 28, 2014. All responses will be held in strict confidence by the University of Alberta's Employment Equity Advisor. The results of the data analysis will be reported in a statistical summary format which will not identify answers of individual participants.

If you are not comfortable responding to any question, you can skip the question but please continue with completing and submitting your survey. Once you have pressed the "submit" button, you will not be able to change your responses.

Please direct any questions about the collection and use of this information to the Diversity, Equity, and Respect Committee (kris.wells@ualberta.ca) or the Employment Equity Advisor (employment.equity@ualberta.ca)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey!

Fern Snart, Dean
Faculty of Education

This survey is administered by the Faculty of Education's Diversity, Equity and Respect Committee and the Employment Equity Program at the University of Alberta.

- Participation in this survey is voluntary. If you are not comfortable answering a question, you can skip to the next question simply by clicking "next" at the bottom of the page.

- All answers are anonymous. The data you enter will only be used for the research purposes described above. You will not be required to provide any directly identifying information about yourself.
- However, if you want to participate in the iPad draw, please include your name and email address at the end of the survey. The collected name and email address will not be associated with survey response. The response will be anonymous.
- In order to participate in the survey you must be a registered undergraduate or graduate student with the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.
- The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your progress is automatically saved.
- You can cancel your participation any time by clicking on the “Cancel” button or by closing the browser anytime. However, once answers are submitted they cannot be deleted or withdrawn as it will be difficult to identify your submitted response in the anonymous database.
- By selecting the option to participate in our study (which is on the next page) you indicate that you have read this statement and that you consent to us using the answers you provide in our research.
- If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact the Faculty’s Diversity, Equity, and Respect Committee (kris.wells@ualberta.ca) or the University of Alberta’s Employment Equity Advisor (employment.equity@ualberta.ca).

Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta has reviewed the plan for this study for its adherence to ethical guidelines. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at [\(780\) 492-2615](tel:7804922615).

Ethics Statement:

The personal information requested on this form is collected and protected under the authority of Section 33 (c) of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It will be used for the purposes of becoming aware of the work and study climate in the Faculty of Education to inform Departmental policies, procedures, and practices. The survey has received approval from the University's Ethics Board and the University's Information and Privacy Office.

Please direct any questions about the collection and use of this information to the Diversity, Equity, and Respect committee (kris.wells@ualberta.ca), or the Employment Equity Advisor (employment.equity@ualberta.ca).

While each person has the opportunity to complete the voluntary questionnaire, we understand that some people may not wish to do so. Knowing that your responses are anonymous, are you willing to complete the survey?

- Yes, I would like to complete the survey
- No, I do not wish to complete the survey

Appendix C

Climate Survey

Section 1: Learning Climate

The following questions ask about your perceptions and experiences of the learning climate in the Faculty. Climate refers to the psychological / social atmosphere.

1. Do you feel you are respected and included in the Faculty?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Why or why not?

2. Do you feel others are respected and included in the Faculty?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Why or why not?

3. Overall, do you consider the current climate in the Faculty as being:

- Positive
- Somewhat Positive
- Neutral
- Somewhat Negative
- Negative

Why or why not?

4. Would you recommend the Faculty of Education to prospective students?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Why or why not?

5A. Are you aware of student orientations or mentoring programs within the Faculty?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

5B. If yes, are the orientation and mentoring programs satisfactory?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Why or why not?

6A. If you are an undergraduate student, how often do you get feedback from your program advisor, undergraduate facilitator, field placement supervisor, or others in a supervisory role on what is expected of you in your student program?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Semi-Monthly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi-Annually
- Annually
- Never

6B. If you are a graduate student, how often do you get feedback from your thesis supervisor or program advisor on what is expected of you in your student program?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Semi-Monthly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Semi-Annually
- Annually
- Never

7. Is the feedback that you get constructive?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Why or why not?

8. Do your instructors acknowledge your class contributions?

- Always
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

Why or why not?

9. Do you feel included in the Faculty?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Why or why not?

10A. Do you attend Faculty events/activities? (Examples include visiting speakers, social events, etc.)

- Always
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

Why or why not?

10B. If yes, which Faculty activities/events do you attend?

Section 2: Discrimination and Harassment

The following questions ask about your perceptions and experiences of discrimination and harassment in the Faculty.

Discrimination is unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or a group that results in negative consequences.

Harassment is a form of aggression that may include physical, verbal or emotional abuse. It is behaviour that demeans, intimidates, threatens or is abusive in nature. It can be repeated or it can be a one-time incident of e.g., bullying, sexual harassment, racial harassment, etc.

[Click here to access the University of Alberta Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy](#) for more information.

11. Have you personally experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

If yes, tell us about those experiences.

12. Are you aware of others who have experienced discrimination or harassment in the Faculty of Education?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

If yes, tell us about those experiences.

13. Is there someone in the Faculty that you would feel comfortable confiding in about your experiences and observations?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

If yes, who?

14. Do you know where or how to report experiences of discrimination or harassment in the Faculty?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

15. If yes, do you feel your report would be given serious consideration?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

If no, why not?

16. Are you aware of the University of Alberta's Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Section 3: Other feedback

17. What did you find helpful about the Faculty when you first arrived?

18. What suggestions do you have on how to improve the climate in the Faculty?

19. What else would you like to say about the climate in the Faculty?

Section 4: Demographic Information

20. Which program are you in?

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- After-degree
- Other

Please specify:

21. What year are you in?

- 0 – 1 year
- 1 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 5 + years

22. To which age group do you belong?

- < 18
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 – 70
- 70 +

23. Do you identify as:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

Other:

24. Are you an Aboriginal person? North American Indian (Status, non-Status, and Treaty), Inuit, or Métis.

- Yes
- No

25. Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning disability.

Are you a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No

26. Members of Visible Minorities

Members of visible minorities are persons, other than Aboriginal Peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color, regardless of their birthplace or citizenship. Members of other ethnic or national groups, such as Ukrainian, Italian, Greek, etc., are not considered to be racially visible unless they also meet the criteria above.

Are you a member of a visible minority?

- Yes
- No

27. Are you a member of a sexual minority such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, intersexual, two-spirit, or queer?

- Yes
- No

28. Are you a member of an identifiable group (other than one defined as a member of a visible minority) based on factors such as place of origin, family, marital status, ancestry, language, etc.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how do you identify?

Thank you for your time. Should you wish to provide additional comments, please contact Catherine Anley, Employment Equity Advisor, employment.equity@ualberta.ca. As with this survey, all additional information will be held in strict confidence.

You are now eligible to enter our contest to win an iPad! This contest information will not be associated in anyway with your survey responses.

If you would like to enter the contest for an iPad, please enter your name and email address below.

Survey Completed

Thank you for taking the survey!