

# CAMPUS CLIMATE DIVERSITY STUDY 2018 REPORT

## Committee Members

Peggy Bergeron, Andrea Hunt, Brian Dempsey, Bob Garfrerick, Chanhong Kang, Ansley Quiros, Katie Owens-Murphy, Rachel Winston, and Yaschica Williams

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

## Commission of Study

As universities and colleges across the nation become more diverse, it is important to recognize the needs and experiences of our students and cultivate a climate that is welcoming of all individuals from all backgrounds. An important step in doing so is to collect campus-wide data to inform policies, programs, and procedures on campus. The purpose of this study was to provide UNA with critical information regarding our campus climate, campus resources, and experiences of our students, faculty, and staff. This study was commissioned by the Office of Academic Affairs and was comprised of members from various colleges and departments. The research committee was notified by email on October 3, 2017 by Dr. Alexander requesting their assistance with the research study. The research committee met for the first time on October 19, 2017 and Peggy Bergeron and Andrea Hunt were nominated to serve as co-chairs of the committee.

## Research Design

The committee used a multi-method design for data collection and met in fall 2017 to develop the survey and focus group questions. The research study was approved by the UNA Institutional Review Board Committee (protocol 059).

## Faculty/Staff Survey

The faculty/staff survey questions were based on a campus climate survey conducted by North Carolina State University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the University of California System's campus climate assessment project. Additional questions were developed by the research committee. Questions addressed experiences at UNA, interactions with others, participation in multicultural activities, role of diversity in higher education, respect and support for different groups on campus, and discrimination in hiring and employment practices (survey available upon request). All faculty and staff were sent a notification from Dr. Alexander via email requesting their participation in an online survey. Participants provided informed consent prior to completing the survey on Qualtrics. Incentives were offered to increase participation. The survey was launched on February 5 and closed on April 2.

## Student Survey

The student survey questions were based on a similar survey conducted by North Carolina State University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Additional questions were developed by the research committee. Questions addressed experiences at UNA, interactions with others, participation in multicultural activities, role of diversity in higher education, respect and support for different groups on campus, and factors that shape attitudes towards diversity on campus (survey available upon request). All students were sent a notification from Dr. Alexander via email requesting their participation in an online survey. Students had to be at least 18 years old to provide consent. The survey was completed on Qualtrics and incentives were offered to increase participation. The survey was launched on February 5 and closed on April 2.

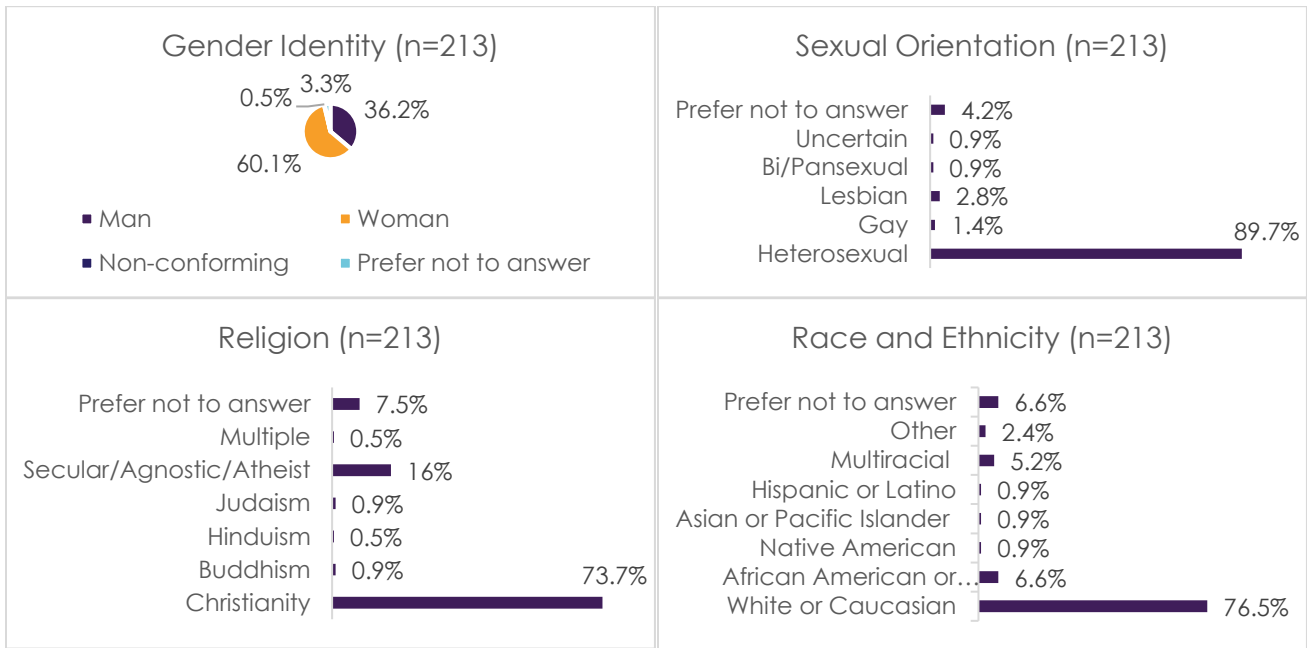
## Focus Groups

There were three focus groups conducted in the spring 2018 semester by Peggy Bergeron and Rachel Winston on February 27, March 1, and March 6. Each participant provided consent for the audio recording of the focus groups. Notes were also taken during the focus groups. After the focus groups were conducted, the digital files were sent to a transcription service. The transcripts were systematically analyzed for dominant themes by the committee members.

## Faculty/Staff Survey Results

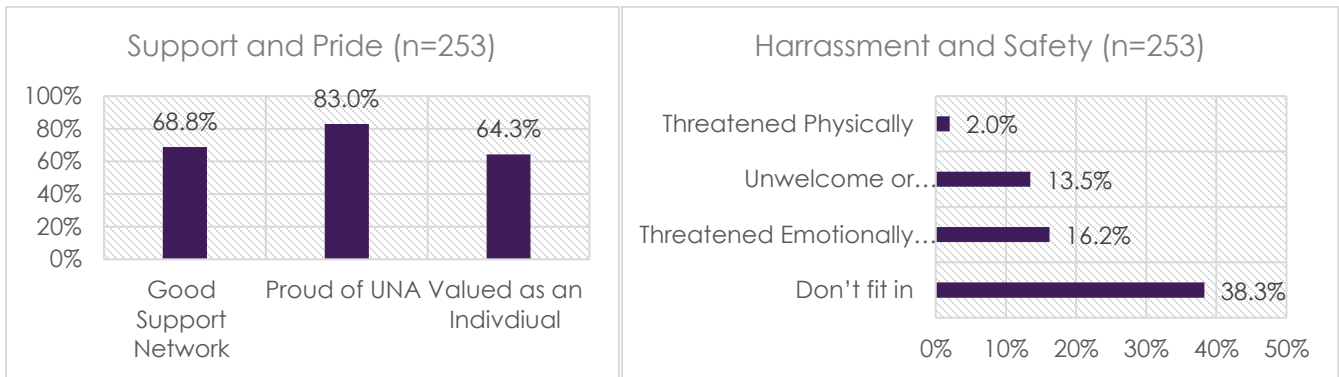
The following are basic demographics describing the sample of faculty (51%) and staff (49%) participants who fully completed the survey (n=213). Response rates varied by question.

# Campus Climate Diversity Study



## Faculty/Staff Overall Experiences at UNA

Faculty and staff (**88.3%**) report an excellent or good overall experience at UNA and **89.1%** are very satisfied or satisfied with their overall work experience. Faculty and staff (**80%**) agree that it is extremely or very important that UNA hold diversity as one of its essential values and most faculty (**73%**) have integrated diversity topics into their course material (e.g., diversity topics, scholarship by authors from diverse populations, examples from a global perspective, etc.).



**Table 1. Faculty/Staff Beliefs about Diversity at UNA (n=199)**

Measures	Strongly Agree/Agree
Good job of implementing diversity policies	61.8%
Expectations for respect are clearly articulated	76.9%
Safe environment to raise concerns of diversity	65.8%
Message from campus leaders is consistent	69.8%
Environment for free expression	65.3%
Distinguish b/t free speech and hate speech	53.3%
Committed to success of minority students	67.8%
Easy to find diversity information on UNA website	44.7%

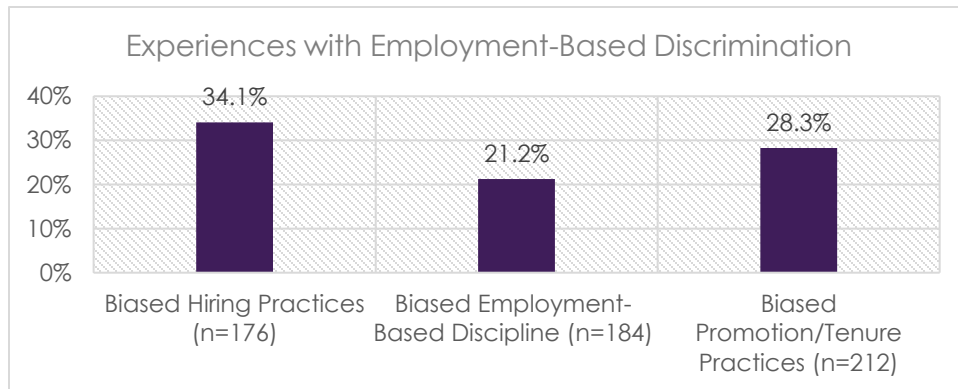
## Campus Climate Diversity Study



UNA tries to diversify applicant pools	54.5%
Too much emphasis on diversity	15.1%
Admitting less qualified students	12.6%
Hiring less qualified employees	13.6%
Diversity topics detract from other knowledge	14.1%

### Beliefs and Experiences with Employment-Based Discrimination at UNA

Faculty and staff were asked whether they had directly experienced or observed biased hiring practices, biased employment-based discipline, or biased tenure/promotion/reclassification practices.



Of those reporting that they had, the discrimination was based on race/ethnicity, age, gender, religion, English proficiency, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, marital status and political views. Participants described other areas in the open-ended comments such as processes within the hiring committee, hiring based on personal connections, departmental ‘fit’, favoritism, and personality clashes. When asked directly about conversations of “good fit” in hiring decisions, **42.1%** of faculty and staff (n=228) strongly agree or agree that at UNA the focus is on personal characteristics versus credentials.

**Table 2. Faculty/Staff Perspectives of Positive Influences on Campus Climate (n=205)**

Measures	
Providing a clear and fair process to resolve conflicts	80.5%
Provide access to counseling for those who experienced discrimination	75.6%
Providing mentorship for new faculty	72.7%
Providing mentorship for new staff	71.7%
Provide diversity training for staff	68.3%
Provide diversity training for faculty	67.8%
Increasing the diversity of the student body	67.3%
Provide diversity training for students	66.8%
Increasing the diversity of the faculty	64.9%
Increasing the diversity of the staff	64.9%
Increasing the diversity of the administration	63.9%
Providing diversity and equity training to search and tenure committees	59.5%
Increasing funding to support efforts to change UNA campus climate	57.1%
Including diversity-related professional experiences as criteria for hiring	47.8%
Provide recognition for including diversity in courses	47.3%

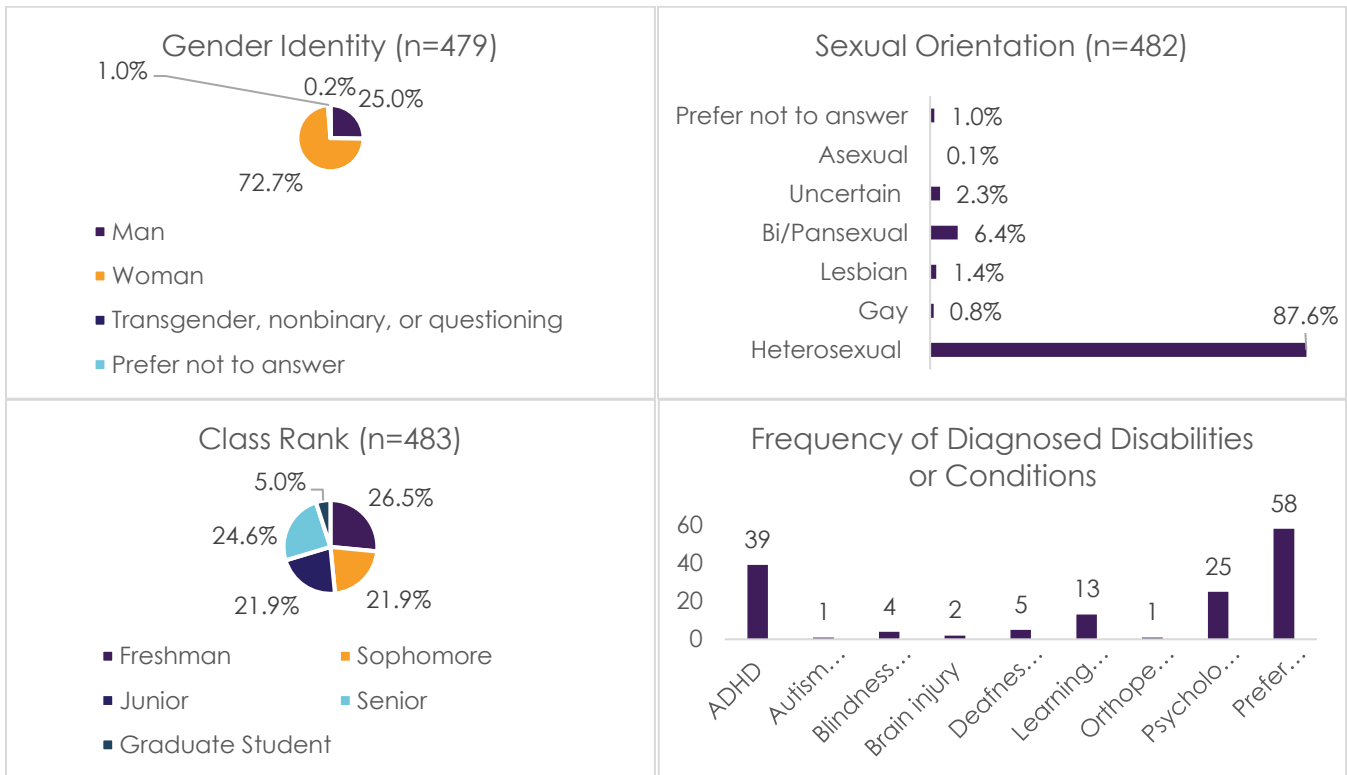


### Faculty and Staff Suggestions

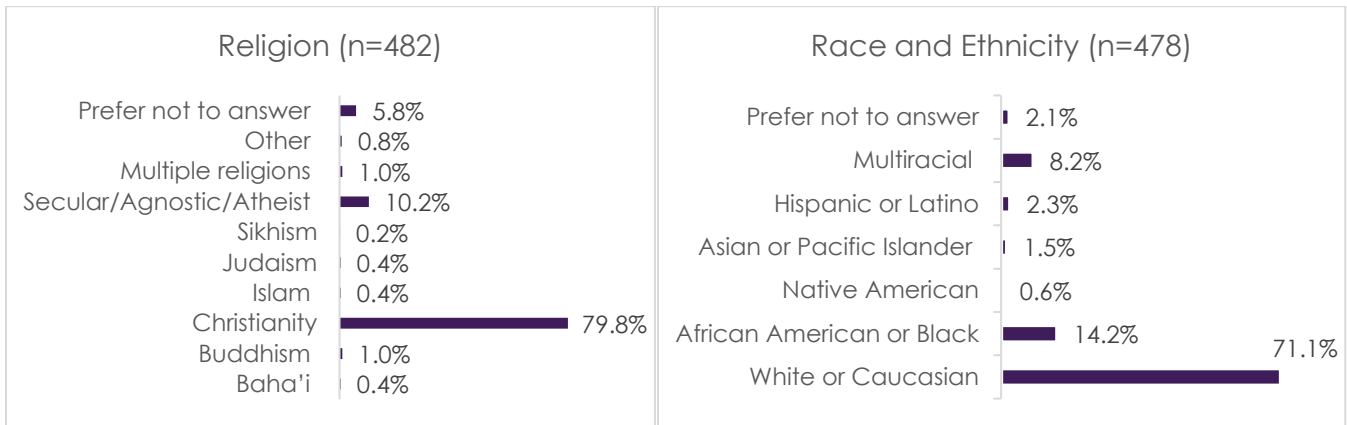
When asked what they thought was working well at UNA to support diversity on campus for both students and employees, the participants ranged from feeling that the University is doing a good job to feeling as if the University is placing too much emphasis on diversity. Open-ended responses also ranged from indicating that there is widespread support for diversity on campus to suggesting that it is compartmentalized in certain departments and units. Faculty and staff suggested that there should be a focus on a shared mission, more inclusiveness, a broader definition of diversity, a policy on free speech and hate speech, and transparent hiring practices that prevent nepotism.

### Student Survey Results

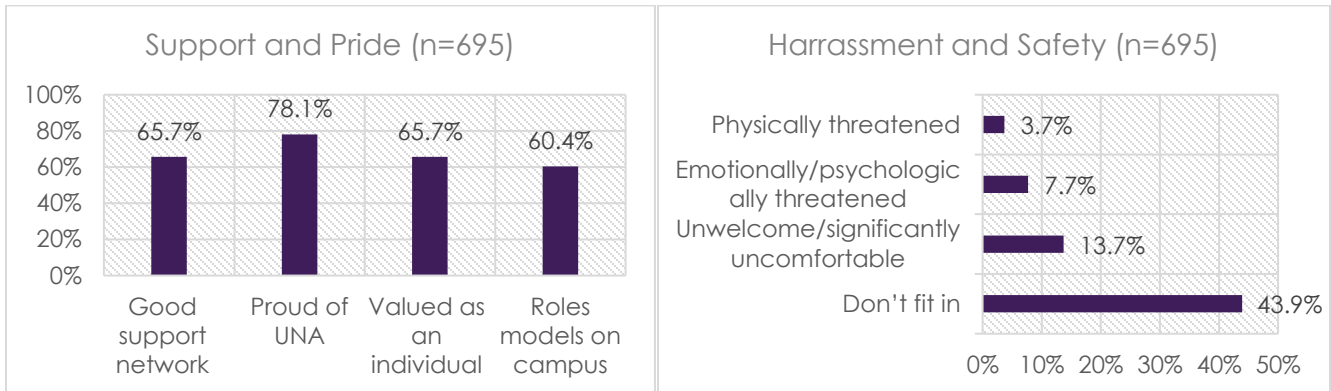
The following are basic demographics describing the sample of student participants who completed the survey. Response rates varied by questions and ranged from 712 responses on the beginning question sets to 481 on later question sets. Diagnosed disabilities and conditions are reported in frequencies rather than the percentages. The data are not mutually exclusive (meaning that a student can report dual diagnoses).



## Campus Climate Diversity Study



Most students in the study (**87.9%**) rate their overall experience at UNA as good or excellent with **88.3%** satisfied or very satisfied with their academic experience and **66.8%** satisfied or very satisfied with their overall social experience.



**Table 3. Student Experiences in the Classroom at UNA (n=578)**

Measures	Strongly Agree/Agree
Professors make students welcome	86.7%
Feel comfortable with students in class	77.9%
Singled out in class	12.8%
Intolerance in class because of students	14.9%
Intolerance in class because of instructor	13.8%
Stereotyped by instructor	11.4%
Stereotyped by students	21.1%
Inappropriate comments about my appearance	7.4%

**Table 4. Reasons Preventing Interactions with Others from Diverse Backgrounds (n=542)**

Measures	
Conflicting feelings about different cultures	28.0%
Worry people won't understand what I'm saying	34.5%
Uncertainty about what to say	41.7%
Fear of appearing insensitive or ignorant	42.6%
Prefer to interact with people like me	37.3%
Lack of opportunity	50.0%

## Campus Climate Diversity Study



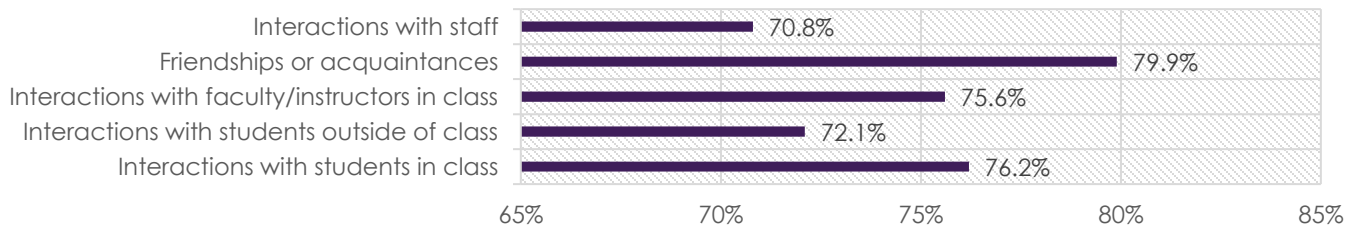
Students overwhelming (**76.3%**) indicated that it is extremely or very important to them that UNA holds diversity as one of its essential values.

- While a student at UNA, **22%** of respondents indicated that they had never had an instructor of a race/ethnicity different from their own.
- Nearly **27%** of respondents had never taken a course where diversity issues were clearly integrated into their content (e.g., diversity topics, scholarship by authors from diverse populations, examples from a global perspective, etc.).
- Since coming to UNA, **39.7%** of students had never attended or participated in diversity or multicultural events, programs, or workshops on campus and an additional 14.5% had attended or participated in only one event. The main reasons for lack of participation were that students were unaware of the events (16%), did not have enough time (14.5%), or the events were not convenient with their schedules (13.8%). Students who did participate in diversity or multicultural events cited broadening their horizons (30.2%), interacting with others (30.9%), and support friends or organizations (27%).

**Table 5. Student Beliefs about Diversity at UNA (n=494)**

Measures	Strongly Agree/Agree
Good job of implementing diversity policies	75.1%
Expectations for respect are clearly articulated	82.2%
Safe environment to raise concerns of diversity	76.3%
Message from campus leaders is consistent	76.9%
Environment for free expression	78.9%
Distinguish b/t free speech and hate speech	65.4%
Committed to success of minority students	70.0%
Easy to find diversity information on UNA website	53.6%
Too much emphasis on diversity	28.7%
Leads to admitting less qualified students	27.9%
Leads to hiring less qualified employees	21.3%
Diversity topics detract from other knowledge	39.9%

Student Perceptions of Positive Influences of Interactions on Thinking about Diversity (n=487)



**Table 6. Experiences as a Student at UNA having Positive Influences on Behaviors (n=469)**

Measures	
Likelihood of discussing diversity related topics with friends	68.7%
Stopping yourself from using offensive language	72.9%
Initiating a conversation with a student of a different race/ethnicity	75.1%
Working on course projects with diverse students	76.8%
Your understanding of diversity	79.1%
Ability to work in job setting with diverse people	80.6%
Comfort with interactions with someone of a different races/ethnicity than your own	78.5%

## Campus Climate Diversity Study



Comfort with interactions with someone of a different sexual orientation than your own	70.4%
Comfort with interactions with someone with a disability	74.8%
Comfort with interactions with someone of a different religion than your own	74.4%
Comfort with interactions with someone from a different country of origin than your own	78.0%

### Student Suggestions

When asked what they thought was working well at UNA to support diversity on campus, students cited the clubs and registered student organizations, campus events, and specifically mentioned Culture Fest. Some students indicated that UNA was placing too much emphasis on diversity while other students suggested that UNA was doing a good job. Still others would like to have more class offerings related to diversity topics, more discussions of diversity topics on campus, continued events on campus, inclusive policies, and training for both faculty and students.

### Faculty/Staff and Student Comparisons

**Table 7. Respect for Different Groups on Campus (excellent or good)**

Measures	Student Responses (n=501-511)	Faculty/Staff Responses (n=205-217)
Faculty respect for racial/ethnic minority students	85.7%	83.4%
Faculty respect for female students	85.9%	86.6%
Faculty respect for transgender students	75.2%	61.2%
Student respect for racial/ethnic minority faculty	81.6%	77.2%
Student respect for female faculty	83.3%	77.3%
Student respect for racial/ethnic minority students	76.5%	68.4%
Student respect for sexual minority students	68.1%	53.8%
Student respect for transgender students	56.9%	40.5%

**Table 8. Heard Negative Comments Made about Different Groups on Campus**

Measures	Student Responses (n=489-500)			Faculty/Staff Responses (n=206-213)		
	Students	Faculty	Staff	Students	Faculty	Staff
Race/ethnicity	64.8%	23.2%	18.5%	65.2%	46.5%	41.9%
Sex (i.e., male, female)	59.2%	27.7%	16.8%	60.8%	48.1%	42.0%
Gender identity	64.0%	21.9%	15.5%	63.8%	41.5%	40.0%
Sexual orientation	62.2%	20.2%	16.0%	64.8%	44.3%	40.5%
Immigration background	50.6%	18.1%	14.1%	56.7%	36.6%	34.8%
Disability status	39.6%	15.3%	13.8%	42.5%	28.6%	27.8%
Religion	53.3%	25.6%	15.2%	54.3%	45.5%	36.8%
Socio-economic status	45.8%	18.2%	14.8%	51.8%	35.7%	32.0%





## Focus Groups

**Table 9. Demographics for Focus Groups**

Focus Group 1 (n=5)	Focus Group 2 (n=7)	Focus Group 3 (n=6)
Women = 5, Men = 0	Women = 5, Men = 2	Women = 3, Men = 3
Heterosexual = 4 Bisexual = 1	Heterosexual = 6 Bisexual = 1	Heterosexual = 4 Bisexual = 1 Gay = 1
African American = 4 White = 1	African American = 3 Asian = 1 Hispanic = 1 White = 2	African American = 4 Multiracial = 2
Mean Age = 20.6 Range = 19-23	Mean Age = 19 Range = 18-21	Mean Age = 21 Range = 19-23
Christian = 5	Christian = 6 Atheist = 1	Christian = 4 Prefer not to answer = 2

From the three focus groups, we discovered a need for required diversity training for all UNA faculty, staff, and students. The students felt that the University has an unclear agenda related to diversity and inclusion on campus. Students expressed a desire to explore what diversity issues mean, and how to incorporate them into their daily lives. The overall theme that emerged during each focus group was that **UNA speaks to the idea of diversity on campus yet falls short of any real implementation.**

## Recommendations

The committee recommends a broader definition of diversity beyond race and offer the following recommendations based on training, communication, curriculum, and policy to assist in this endeavor.

### Training Recommendations

1. Require face-to-face diversity training for UNA students, staff, and faculty. Trainings should take on a variety of different formats including separate trainings for students and employees as well as joint training opportunities.
2. Train professionals (other than Title IX and student conduct) to discuss diversity issues with students.
3. Provide more training to SOAR counselors and RAs on diversity.

### Communication Recommendations

1. Conduct University sponsored panel discussions about diversity.
2. Offer open mic nights for students to discuss diversity.
3. Promote classroom conversations about diversity by including this on faculty teaching evaluations.
4. Conduct small group discussions for students of various topics related to diversity.
5. Offer students more of a voice regarding diversity on campus by polling students more often and use social media more effectively to increase awareness of diversity on campus.

### Curriculum Recommendations

1. Develop a Common Read program and choose a book that focuses on diversity related issues for students to read their first semester at UNA.
2. Encourage faculty to develop more educational opportunities and class activities related to diversity in their courses.
3. Support scholarship and experiential learning strategies that work to improve diversity and inclusion both on campus and in the local community.



4. Develop an African-American/Black studies program.
5. Provide more advertising for our existing programs in Women's Studies, Global Studies, Asian Studies, and Latin American Studies.

### **Policy Recommendations**

1. Design new policies that contribute to an inclusive campus environment that reflect the University approved definition of diversity.
2. Strengthen existing policies regarding discrimination on campus to establish a transparent process for conduct issues, which will ensure equitable treatment and accountability for all students. Students need to be familiar with the role of the Ombudsman in the grievance process or create an additional contact outside of the conduct office for students who feel they have received inequitable treatment in the conduct process.
3. Clarify and articulate the parameters of religion on campus. UNA should also model these set parameters by refraining from endorsing any religion during university-sponsored events (e.g., convocation, graduation, award ceremonies, etc.).
4. Create university-supported Safe Zone training and promote LGBTQ equality.
5. Explore options for themed housing with Residence Life to increase student sense of belonging.
6. Ensure that classes are accessible for students with disabilities and that all campus buildings are in full compliance with ADA.
7. Develop a policy to distinguish and clarify the difference between free speech and hate speech.
8. Develop transparent hiring, promotion, and reappointment processes and utilize them.