

Experiences as a Member of an Underrepresented Group: Students with Disabilities

KEY FINDINGS

Related to the university climate are certain issues or services that are specific to a given population. In the Climate for Diversity survey, one section, Experiences as a Member of an Underrepresented Group, addresses such issues. These key findings focus on the responses of students with disabilities at OSU and include summaries of both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Students with disabilities were asked if they had a series of negative experiences because of their disabilities, if they had utilized the Office of Disability Services, and how they would rate the accessibility of certain University facilities and services.

- Approximately 31% of students with disabilities expressed that they had experienced fear of negative consequences or discrimination from an instructor, TA, or staff member as a result of their disability.
- Fifty percent (50%) of students said they had not used the Office of Disability Services. Almost 18% of students said they were not in need of its services; 7.7% said that they were not aware of the office; another 7.7% responded that their needs were met elsewhere; and 5.1% of students explained that they did not consider themselves as having a disability.
- Of those who used the specified University facilities and/or services, a higher percentage of students (over 35%) rated the accessibility to libraries, public transportation, and cultural events as “good.” On the other hand, over 28% of students rated the accessibility to parking as “poor.”

Students were also provided with the opportunity to provide comments about their experiences as a student with a disability at OSU. Although few students with disabilities provided such comments, their comments illustrated a dichotomous campus climate. In other words, the campus environment seemed unwelcoming for some students with disabilities, while being supportive of others.

- The negative comments, which illustrate the lack of support that these students experienced at OSU, were associated with instructors’ ignorance and accessibility issues to University buildings.
- The positive comments illustrate that some students had not had difficulties at OSU due to their disabilities.