

# Students' Attitudes and Experiences Regarding Diversity

## Student and Parent Orientation Surveys 2000

Office of Residence Life

Report prepared by the Office of Student Affairs Assessment

### Introduction

The Student and Parent Orientation Surveys, conducted by the Office of Residence Life, are geared toward assessing students and parents regarding students' experiences prior to coming to college and their expectations of their experiences at The Ohio State University. The surveys ask respondents about academics, activities, alcohol, diversity, and relationships. The Student Orientation Survey seeks feedback from students regarding their own behavior, previous experiences, and expectations for themselves and for the University. The Parent Orientation Survey, a parallel version of the student survey, asks for parents' perceptions of their son/daughter's behavior, previous experiences, and expectations for college.

The surveys were distributed during summer orientation. Students were asked to complete the survey during an evening session on residence life on the first day of the two-day event. This session was not mandatory but was highly encouraged for students who intended to live in the residence halls. During most orientation programs, this session attracted approximately 50% of students in attendance; during orientation programs for honors students, the percentage in attendance was as high as 75%. In total, 2,904 students responded to the survey, 52.3% of the 5556 incoming students who attended the two-day freshmen orientation program. Parents completed the surveys during a day-two session on residence life. During this time period, parents were given an option to attend a number of different informational sessions. A total of 1,221 parents completed surveys, approximately 19% of the 6,431 parents who attended summer orientation. Because of the nature of both sessions where data were collected, the responses and findings focus on experiences of students who would live in the residence halls their freshmen year and, hence, on traditionally aged students.

For organizational purposes, there are four mini-reports generated from the data of the surveys including reports on 1) Students' Academic Experiences and Expectations, 2) Students' Involvement Outside the Classroom and Students' Relationships with others, 3) Students' Experience and Attitudes Regarding Alcohol Use, and 4) Students' Attitudes and Experiences Regarding Diversity. This report focuses on students' attitudes and experiences regarding diversity. Comparisons are made between students' and parents' responses, between male and female students, and between students of various races/ethnicities.

### Demographics

Of the 2,904 student respondents:

- 53.1% were female, and 46.9% were male
- 84.8% were white/non-Hispanic; 4.5%, Asian American; 6.6%, African American/black; 1.7%, Hispanic/Latino; 1%, multiracial; and less than 1%, other, American Indian, and Non U.S. Citizen/Permanent Residents

Of the 1,221 parent respondents:

- 64.5% were female, and 35.5% were male
- 53.6% were parents of daughters, and 46.4%, of sons.
- 87.5% were parents of white/non-Hispanic students; 4.2%, of Asian American students; 3.8%, of African American/black students; 1.9%, of Hispanic/Latino students; 1% of multiracial and “other” students; and less than 1% of American Indian and Non U.S. Citizen/Permanent Residents

## Findings

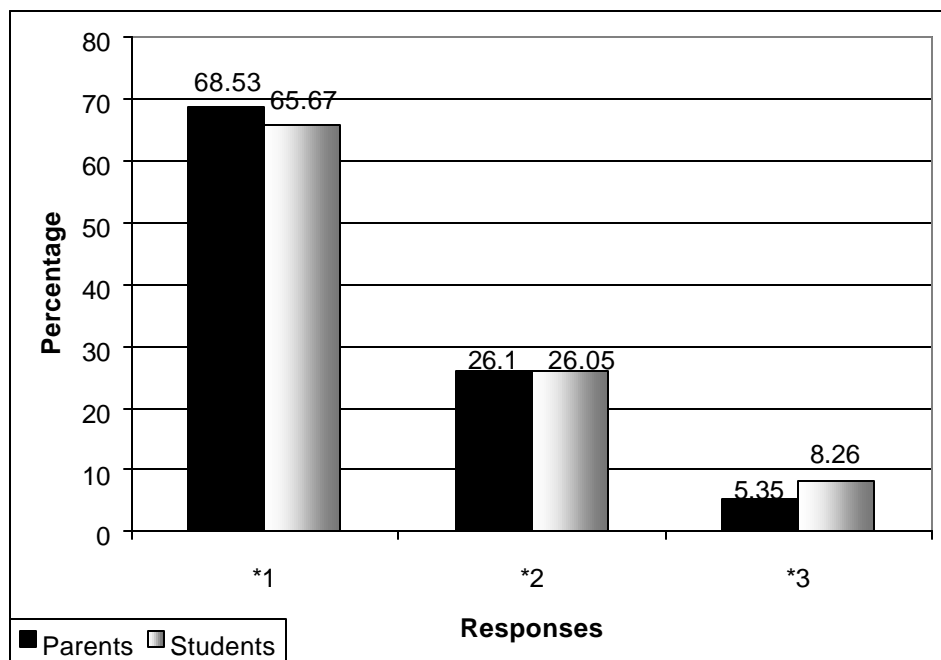
This report focuses on parents’ and students’ perspectives regarding students’ attitudes and experiences regarding diversity. Comparisons are made between responses of parents and students, of male and female students, and of students of various races/ethnicities.

### Comparisons between Parents and Students

In this section, parents’ and students’ responses are compared.

- When asked to describe the area where the student was from, parents’ and students’ responses were very similar. A majority of parents and students (over 65%) responded that the student was from an area that could be described as a community where people were very similar.
- About a quarter of the students were from diverse communities where different populations socialized comfortably.
- Only a small number of parents and students, 5.35% and 8.26% respectively, described the area that the student was from as a diverse community, where groups of people were segregated. (See Chart 1.0)

**Chart 1.0: The student is from an area that could be described as ...: BY PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

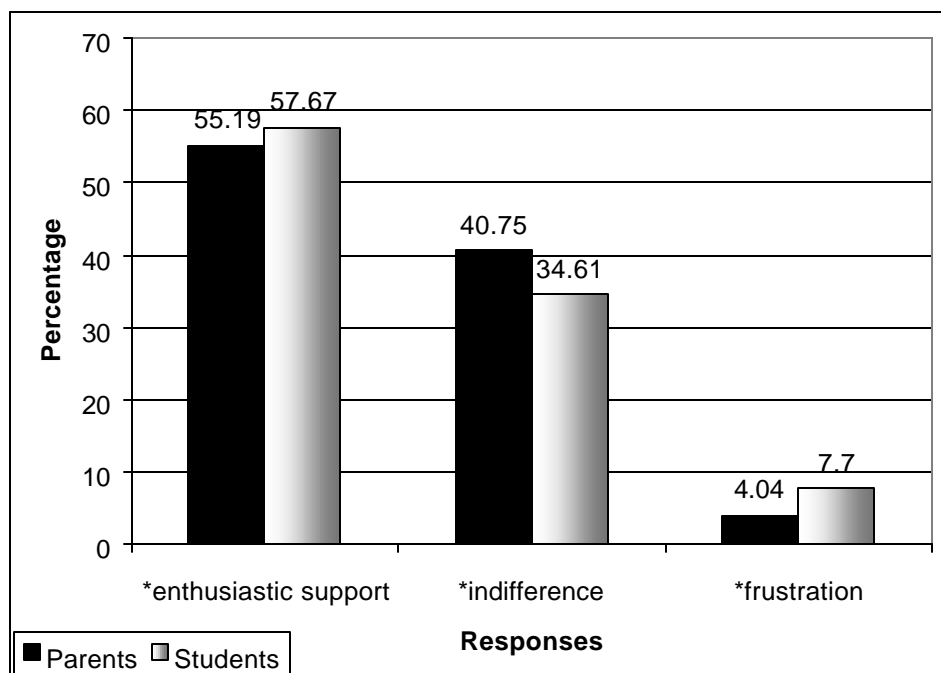


Note:

- \* 1 = a community where people are very similar
- \* 2 = a diverse community, where different populations comfortably socialize
- \* 3 = a diverse community, where groups of people are segregated

- When describing how the student felt about diversity education, the majority of parents and students (over 55%) responded that the student was enthusiastically supportive.
- However, over 40% of parents and 34.61% of students described the student's feelings about diversity education as being indifferent. (See Chart 1.1)

**Chart 1.1: The students' feelings about diversity education could be described as ...: BY PARENTS AND STUDENTS**



Note:

\* enthusiastic support: there are many inequities between populations in the student's society

\* indifference: no opinion and/or a desire to do okay & get what the student needs

\* frustration: there are many people that get unfair benefits because of who they are

In the following series of questions, parents and students were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 the student's comfort level with a roommate of a different background. On this scale, 1 means "most comfortable" and 5 means "least comfortable."

- In general, parents and students responded similarly. A majority of parents and students responded between scales 1 and 3 to students' comfort level with having a roommate of a different academic ability, athletic ability, national origin, physical ability, race or ethnicity, religious affiliation, or from a different U.S. geographical region.
- A majority of parents (over 50%) and students (over 60%) rated the student's comfort level with a roommate of a different U.S. geographical region as "most comfortable."
- However, parents and students rated the student's comfort level with a roommate of a different primary language as less comfortable. Approximately a third of students (33.39%) and of parents (30.06%) rated the comfort level between 4 and 5 ("least comfortable").
- Another concern for parents and students was having the student live with a roommate of a different sexual orientation. More parents (over 60%) rated their child's comfort level as either a 4 or 5 than did students (44.5%). Overall, living with someone of a difference sexual orientation appeared to cause the most discomfort. (See Table 1.0)

**Table 1.0: The level of comfort that the student would have with a roommate of a different...: BY PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

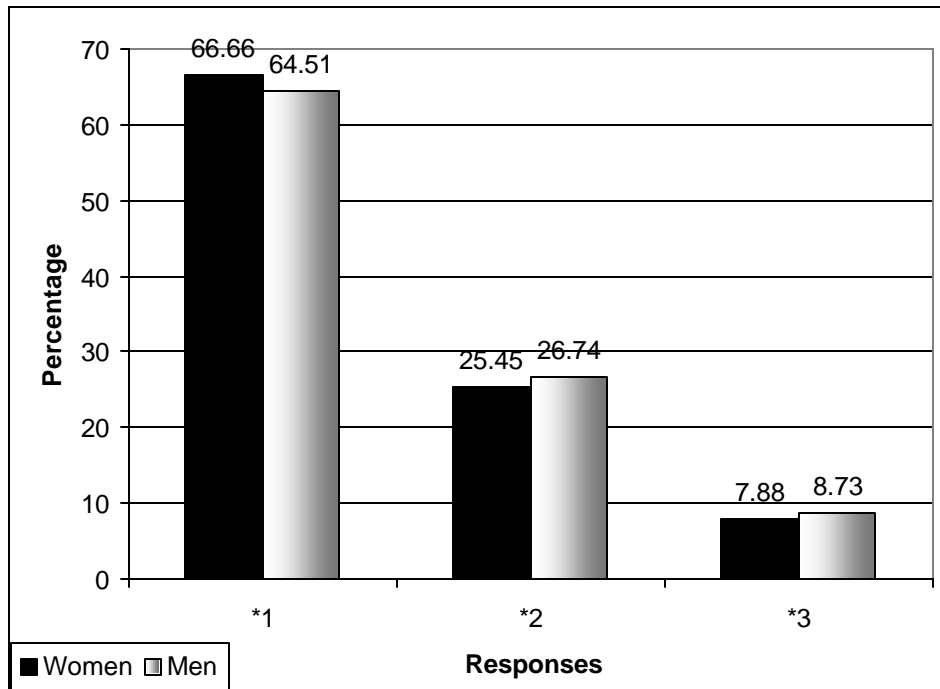
<i>Responses by percentage</i>	<i>Parents</i>					<i>Students</i>				
* Scales	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Academic ability	29.33	30.19	29.42	8.28	2.76	34.50	33.17	26.29	4.19	1.82
Athletic ability	28.89	30.89	30.72	6.44	3.04	42.20	28.17	23.80	4.22	1.58
National origin	25.68	32.94	33.12	7.26	0.97	35.21	29.45	26.73	6.81	1.77
Physical ability	19.43	33.98	35.31	9.31	1.95	26.53	28.96	31.49	10.35	2.64
Primary language	15.60	25.39	28.92	19.92	10.14	19.19	19.69	27.70	20.70	12.69
Race or ethnicity	21.29	30.45	34.77	10.24	3.23	37.93	27.25	25.65	6.74	2.40
Religious affiliation	27.95	33.54	32.37	3.96	2.16	34.43	27.72	27.86	7.18	2.78
Sexual orientation	7.98	12.06	19.34	20.23	40.37	17.04	15.70	22.74	18.53	25.97
Socioeconomic status	26.65	34.28	35.62	3.12	0.71	36.06	29.11	29.48	4.20	1.13
U.S. geographical region	50.58	25.92	21.15	1.26	1.08	60.07	19.90	17.54	1.30	1.16

\* Note: scale 1 means the “most comfortable” and 5 means the “least comfortable”

### Comparisons between Female and Male Students

This section compares female students’ and male students’ responses regarding their attitudes and experiences regarding diversity.

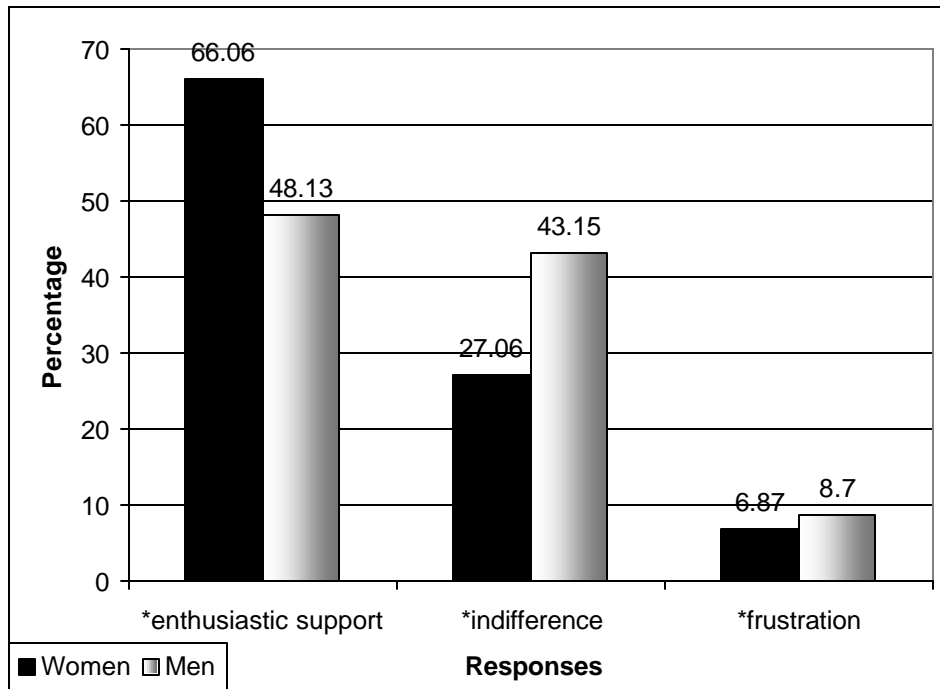
- A slightly higher percentage of female students (66.66%) described the area that they were from as a community where people were very similar compared to male students (64.51%).
- Approximately a quarter of both male (26.74%) and female (25.45%) students responded that they were from an area with a diverse community, one where different populations comfortably socialized.
- Fewer than 9% of students described the area they were from as a diverse community, one where groups of people were segregated. (See Chart 2.0)

**Chart 2.0: I am from an area that could be described as ...: BY GENDER**

Note:

- \* 1 = a community where people are very similar
- \* 2 = a diverse community, where different populations comfortably socialize
- \* 3 = a diverse community, where groups of people are segregated

- More female students (over 66%) described their feelings about diversity education as being enthusiastically supportive than did male students (48.13%).
- Male students, on the other hand, expressed greater “indifference” to diversity education than female students did (43.15% of men compared to 27.06% of women).
- No more than 9% of students responded that they were frustrated regarding their feelings toward diversity education. This response described “frustration” as feeling that “there are many people that get unfair benefits because of who they are.” (See Chart 2.1)

**Chart 2.1: My feelings about diversity education could be described as ....: BY GENDER**

Note:

\* enthusiastic support: there are many inequities between populations in the student's society

\* indifference: no opinion and/or a desire to do okay & get what the student needs

\* frustration: there are many people that get unfair benefits because of who they are

With respect to their comfort level with roommates of various backgrounds, students rated their responses on a scale from 1 to 5. On this scale, 1 means "most comfortable" and 5 means "least comfortable."

- The majority of students rated their comfort level with a roommate from a different U.S. geographical region as "most comfortable." More female students (62.26%) responded this way than did male students (over 57%).
- Students rated their comfort level with a roommate of a different primary language as less comfortable. Furthermore, more male students (over 37.67%) responded this way than did female students (29.91%).
- Compared to female students (19.21%), more male students (over 33%) indicated that they were "least comfortable" with a roommate of a different sexual orientation. (See Table 2.0)

**Table 2.0: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different...: BY GENDER**

<i>Responses by percentage</i>	<i>Women</i>					<i>Men</i>				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
* Scales										
Academic ability	34.25	33.03	27.01	3.99	1.69	34.98	33.04	25.54	4.48	1.93
Athletic ability	44.84	27.37	21.63	4.36	1.77	39.28	29.03	26.31	4.03	1.31
National origin	38.59	29.57	24.79	5.53	1.50	31.47	29.04	28.96	8.39	2.11
Physical ability	26.73	29.39	30.42	10.36	3.06	26.15	28.42	32.73	10.49	2.19
Primary language	19.6	22.13	28.34	18.85	11.06	18.52	17.05	26.74	23.02	14.65
Race or ethnicity	42.35	26.30	23.55	5.85	1.92	32.81	28.49	27.94	7.77	2.98
Religious affiliation	36.18	28.46	26.39	6.47	2.48	32.43	26.78	29.65	7.94	3.17
Sexual orientation	18.94	17.77	25.73	18.32	19.21	14.49	13.48	19.40	18.93	33.67
Socioeconomic status	37.38	29.41	28.86	3.16	1.16	34.78	28.53	30.19	5.37	1.10
U.S. geographical region	62.26	19.58	16.16	1.30	0.68	57.64	20.15	19.13	1.33	1.72

\* Note: scale 1 means the “most comfortable”; 5 means the “least comfortable”

### Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity

This section examines the differences of the students’ responses regarding their attitudes and experiences regarding diversity by race/ethnicity.

- White/Caucasian students (over 70%) were more likely to come from a community where people were very similar than American Indian students (60%), African American students (33.14%), Asian American students (49.19%), and Hispanic students (46.93%).
- Compared to the other groups, more African American students and Hispanic students revealed that they were from a diverse community, one where different populations comfortably socialized instead of from a community where people were very similar.
- Also, more African American students responded that they were from a diverse community, one where groups of people were segregated, than any other racial/ethnic group. (See Table 3.0)

**Table 3.0: I am from an area that could be described as ...: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
*1	60.00	33.14	49.19	46.93	70.08
*2	40.00	43.09	37.90	48.97	22.92
*3	0.00	23.75	12.90	4.08	6.98

Note:

\* 1 = a community where people are very similar

\* 2 = a diverse community, where different populations comfortably socialize

\* 3 = a diverse community, where groups of people are segregated

- A large majority of students of color responded that they enthusiastically supported diversity education.
- While more white/Caucasian students responded they were from a community where the population was more harmonious than any other racial/ethnic group, they were also more likely to describe their feelings about diversity education as being indifferent. (See Table 3.1)

**Table 3.1: My feelings about diversity education could be described as ...: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
*enthusiastic support	80.00	79.76	70.08	77.08	54.20
*indifference	20.00	14.88	23.07	14.58	37.76
*frustration	0.00	5.35	6.83	8.33	8.02

Note:

\* enthusiastic support: there are many inequities between populations in the student's society

\* indifference: no opinion and/or a desire to do okay & get what the student needs

\* frustration: there are many people that get unfair benefits because of who they are

In the following series of questions regarding students' comfort level with roommates of various backgrounds, students were asked to rate their responses on a scale from 1 to 5. On this scale, 1 means "most comfortable" and 5 means "least comfortable."

- Overall, students did not seem uncomfortable with a roommate of a different academic ability; this held true across race/ethnicity. (See Table 4.0)
- Fewer Asian American students (26.05%) rated being "most comfortable" with a roommate of a different athletic ability compared to the other racial/ethnic groups (over 42%). (See Table 4.1)

**Table 4.0: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different academic ability: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	25.00	38.20	20.83	40.42	34.49
Scale 2	75.00	29.21	35.00	46.80	33.04
Scale 3	0.00	29.77	33.33	10.63	26.43
Scale 4	0.00	0.56	7.50	2.12	4.26
Scale 5	0.00	2.24	3.30	0.00	1.74

\*Note: scale 1 means "most comfortable" and 5 means "least comfortable"

**Table 4.1: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different athletic ability: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	50.00	46.02	26.05	48.93	42.45
Scale 2	50.00	23.86	26.89	27.65	28.43
Scale 3	0.00	23.86	36.97	17.02	23.45
Scale 4	0.00	3.40	7.56	4.25	4.20
Scale 5	0.00	2.84	2.52	2.12	1.45

\*Note: scale 1 means "most comfortable" and 5 means "least comfortable"

- More Hispanic students (64.44%) responded that they would be "most comfortable" with a roommate of a different national origin than any other group (below 41%). (See Table 4.2)
- White/Caucasian students tended to be less comfortable with a roommate of a different race or ethnicity than any other racial group. Over 35% of white/Caucasian students rated being "most comfortable" compared to between 40% and 65% of the other racial/ethnic groups. (See Table 4.3)

**Table 4.2: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different national origin: BY****RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	40.00	40.22	38.98	64.44	33.49
Scale 2	20.00	28.73	27.11	20.00	29.83
Scale 3	40.00	24.13	27.11	11.11	27.55
Scale 4	0.00	4.02	4.23	4.44	7.40
Scale 5	0.00	2.87	2.54	0.00	1.72

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

**Table 4.3: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different race or ethnicity: BY****RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	60.00	52.02	40.33	65.11	35.71
Scale 2	0.00	19.65	31.09	16.27	27.97
Scale 3	40.00	23.12	25.21	16.27	26.19
Scale 4	0.00	3.46	2.52	2.32	7.47
Scale 5	0.00	1.73	0.84	0.00	2.63

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

- A lower percentage of Asian American students (27.11%) rated being “most comfortable” with a roommate of a different socioeconomic status than any other racial/ethnic group (over 34%). (See Table 4.4)
- Also, a lower percentage of Asian American students (45.83%) rated being “most comfortable” with a roommate from a different U.S geographical region than any other group (over 53%). (See Table 4.5)

**Table 4.4: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different socioeconomic status: BY****RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	40.00	38.82	27.11	34.88	36.03
Scale 2	40.00	29.41	28.81	32.55	29.14
Scale 3	20.00	27.64	36.44	25.58	29.40
Scale 4	0.00	2.94	6.77	4.65	4.28
Scale 5	0.00	1.17	0.84	2.32	1.12

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

**Table 4.5: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different U.S. geographical region: BY****RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	80.00	53.21	45.83	62.22	61.16
Scale 2	0.00	15.20	20.83	17.77	20.38
Scale 3	20.00	28.65	29.16	15.55	16.03
Scale 4	0.00	0.58	2.50	0.00	1.37
Scale 5	0.00	2.33	1.66	4.44	1.03

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

- More American Indian students (20%) rated 4 and 5 when asked about their comfort level with a roommate of a different religious affiliation compared to the other racial/ethnic groups (under 13%). In contrast, Hispanic students (over 86% rated 1 and 2) were more comfortable having such a roommate. (See Table 4.6)

**Table 4.6: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different religious affiliation: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	40.00	35.83	30.50	43.18	34.24
Scale 2	20.00	23.69	29.66	43.18	27.54
Scale 3	20.00	30.05	27.11	11.36	28.15
Scale 4	20.00	5.78	7.62	2.27	7.39
Scale 5	0.00	4.62	5.08	0.00	2.65

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

- More American Indian students (40%) and African American students (33.52%) rated being “most comfortable” with a roommate of a different physical ability than the other groups (below 34%). (See Table 4.7)

**Table 4.7: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different physical ability: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	40.00	33.52	16.52	26.08	26.13
Scale 2	40.00	20.23	33.88	36.95	29.10
Scale 3	0.00	33.52	39.66	21.73	31.33
Scale 4	0.00	8.09	6.61	15.21	10.89
Scale 5	20.00	4.62	3.30	0.00	2.53

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

- More Hispanic students (44.68%) rated themselves as being “most comfortable” with a roommate of a different primary language than any other group. None of the Hispanic students responded that they would be “least comfortable” having a roommate of a different primary language.
- American Indian students’ responses were split. Sixty percent of them rated their comfort level with a roommate of a different primary language on scale 2, and the other 40% on scale 4. None of them were extremely comfortable or uncomfortable. (See Table 4.8)

**Table 4.8: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different primary language: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	0.00	31.03	22.31	44.68	17.23
Scale 2	60.00	27.01	24.79	23.40	18.34
Scale 3	0.00	22.41	30.57	17.02	28.24
Scale 4	40.00	12.64	15.70	14.89	22.16
Scale 5	0.00	6.89	6.61	0.00	14.01

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”

- African American students and Hispanic students were more comfortable having a roommate of a different sexual orientation than were American Indian students, Asian American students and white/Caucasian students.
- More white/Caucasian students responded that they would be less comfortable having a roommate of different sexual orientation than any other group. (See Table 4.9)

**Table 4.9: The level of comfort that I would have with a roommate of a different sexual orientation: BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

Responses by %	American Indian n = 5	African American n = 190	Asian American n = 129	Hispanic n = 50	White/Caucasian n = 2429
Scale 1	0.00	25.73	15.96	20.00	15.95
Scale 2	50.00	18.12	15.96	31.11	15.13
Scale 3	50.00	23.39	28.57	15.55	22.44
Scale 4	0.00	16.37	13.44	17.77	19.04
Scale 5	0.00	16.37	26.05	15.55	27.42

\*Note: scale 1 means “most comfortable” and 5 means “least comfortable”