

# Exploring Our Diversity: A Conversation about Racial Identity and Disability Resources Work

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

**Access and Inclusion**

and

**Civility and Respect**

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

# Qualitative Survey at Texas A&M

- Email sent in early January to all students affiliated with Disability Resources in Fall 2020
- 3766 students were sent the survey and 417 responded
- 11% response rate

# Questions

- What have instructors, staff, and/or administrators done that made you feel more welcomed or included as a student with a disability?
- What have instructors, staff, and/or administrators done that made you feel unwelcomed or excluded as a student with a disability?
- What have students done that made you feel more welcomed or included as a student with a disability?
- What have students done that made you feel unwelcomed or excluded as a student with a disability?

# Responses

- Overwhelming most popular answers were “I didn’t feel unwelcome” (197) or “n/a” (74) for faculty, staff, and/or administrators question
- Overwhelming most popular answer was “I did not feel unwelcome” (269) for the student question

## “Welcomed” Sample Responses- Students

- I have never experienced students at A&M making me feel unwelcomed or excluded as a student with a disability. My disability is not hard to notice right away, but I have faith that I would not be treated differently. Not only faith, but I witness other students with more apparent physical disabilities being treated as equals through student interactions so I also have confidence most students would be compassionate or understanding at the least. (Undergraduate, White)

## “Welcomed” Sample Responses- Students

- My friends are really good about altering their routes to take the elevator with me (instead of stairs). People also respect when I need to sit or take breaks from activities. When studying, they sometimes try to repeat/re-explain things when it takes me longer to process new info. (Undergraduate, White)
- Many COM (College of Medicine) students take time to check in with their disabled peers and offer to help with note-taking etc. They also read more about the condition someone has, to better understand. It is honestly very amazing. (Professional, Black only or multi-racial with Black)

## “Unwelcomed” Sample responses- Students

- I think small things like joking about having mental illnesses are what bother me the most. It is easy to make light of it but when you actually live with that diagnosis it can be really ostracizing. (Undergraduate, Hispanic or Latino of any race)
- I can't really think of anything, but my disability is also more invisible than a physical one, so I would think most students don't know I have ADHD. It does make me uncomfy in general when peers use the r word or say things like “I'm so ADHD/I'm so OCD” tho (Undergraduate, Multi-racial excluding Black)



# “Unwelcomed” Sample Responses- Students

- Once, there was a girl in my math exam that turned around and said “you’d have to be an idiot to take the entire 2 hours for this exam” not knowing I had a learning disability, and that I’d probably need MORE time, if anything. (Undergraduate, White)

# “Welcomed” Sample Responses- Faculty/staff

- They did not stereotype me, assume anything about me, or put me into a “category”. They didn’t emphasize it because everyone learns differently. They treated me as a college student. They gave me very clear accommodations and instructions for how to get them and were available for any questions I had. Overall, I felt very welcomed! (Undergraduate, White)
- When they work with me to make accommodations instead of assuming that what I struggle with isn't a big deal. Since I have anxiety and it is not visible, some professors will ask me to tell them what exactly is my disability and when I do, they don't take it seriously. It is nice when professors don't pressure me to tell them what I struggle with specifically. (Undergraduate, Hispanic or Latino of any Race)

## “Unwelcomed” Sample Responses- Faculty/Staff

- Ask weird questions about my service dog (Stuff like... What does he protect you from? Why do so many of you need these dogs? And my very favorite: Does he bite? Followed by: If I hit him will he bite?) The 2 "gatekeeping" questions (is that a service dog required for your disability? And what tasks has it been trained to perform?) are to be expected. Normal questions or people being curious also isn't a big deal, but stopping class to ask weird questions, especially in front of all the other students isn't cool. (Undergraduate, Multi-racial excluding Black)
- Criticizing an aspect of quizzes/tests that directly map to an accommodation. For example, telling the class that "the students who know the material will finish within the time limit" or "good engineering students won't need a calculator to solve these equations", or similar comments about noise, distractions, etc. (Graduate, White)

# Session Evaluation

- Your feedback helps shape future programming.
- Thank you for attending!